

ORGANIZATION OF COMMERCIALIZATION IN NORTHERN PERU
SOME IMPRESSIONS , by Peter SJØHOLT

The Importance of Studying Commercial Relations
In Third World Countries

There are a number of rationales for studies of commercialization in Third World countries. Most of these countries still rely on a fair degree of subsistence economy. Imperceptibly, however, they are adopting degrees of integrated market economies. Everywhere, there exist some traditions in barter and trade. It is of great importance to unveil the pattern of these systems, and above all, to know how they function in order to make transition to new economic structures as smooth as possible, and see that a fair social and regional redistribution follow in its wake.

Three crucial variables are in this context affected by the organization of commercialization, variables that are to some extent interrelated:

- efficiency in distribution
- control of the process
- the impact of type of commercialization on social redistribution and regional surplus.

From an economic-geographic viewpoint, all the variables are important and have also increasingly come to the fore. The World Bank has, in a number of its studies, pointed to the importance of more control being wielded by peasants in the countryside over sales of their products, a part of the production process traditionally subject to considerable outside exploitation. The Brazilian geographer Milton Santos

(1976) has strongly emphasized the fact that he who controls commercialization to a large extent controls social and regional redistribution, notwithstanding the pattern of organization of production and other important structural parameters. This is particularly the case in countries with strongly centralized economies, a type which is rather prevalent in Latin America. In this part of the world, both the control and redistribution aspects are very relevant study objects. Personally, I came to realize this when studying colonization as a regional development process in the Upper Peruvian Amazon Basin some years ago. It was but natural that I should come to pursue these issues when I became involved in a research project on regional development in Northern Peru. Within this project, it is my task to highlight to what extent regional growth problems can be associated with the organization of commercialization and marketing practices. However, at the present stage of the study, only tentative answers can be given to this question. Analysis should therefore be considered preliminary.

A Note on the Regional Situation
As A Background to Organization of Commercialization

The above-mentioned project covers a so-called micro-region (Bernex 1985) in the Piura Highland in the northern part of the country, bordering on Ecuador (fig. 1). In order to have a more broad view of the organization of commercialization and the marketing process it has been necessary to extend the regional basis, however. It is the intention of my part of the study to analyze commercialization as a factor in the redistribution and as a source of regional surplus or drainage both for marketing of the region's production (export marketing) and for marketing of commodities to the consumers and back to the industry (internal trade network and its functioning). With this approach the system cannot be understood without at least including besides the whole department of Piura also the neighbouring department of Lambayeque to the south and preferably parts of Cajamarca.

The northern region of the country consisting of a coastal subtropical to tropical desert in the lower western part and a mountainous region with a more humid climate to the east, has during the last 100 years, thanks to more elaborate irrigation systems developed into a specialized agricultural coastal region with sugar, cotton and rice production as its mainstay (Delavaud 1984). The eastern mountainous areas, however, have persisted in a subsistence economy, largely built

on maize, wheat, yucca and potato, interspersed with small specialties, coffee growing, and raising of some livestock. In a transition zone, the upper coastal belt, there has, particularly in the department of Piura, developed some specialized fruit growing, the bulk of which is associated with colonization.

A growing urbanization in the coastal areas contrasts with the still overwhelmingly rural districts in the highland or Sierra. This urbanization, which is a corollary to the above-mentioned specialization also owes some of its growth to an industrial development, mainly production of consumer goods, but also of inputs into agriculture and in Piura-Tumbes to a significant petroleum activity. This means a strong and growing market economic structure in the coastal part of the region, a basically subsistence agriculture, but with visible and growing market elements in the mountains.

Both areas have until the reform endeavors of the last 20 years exhibited a strongly polarized structure within agriculture. The specialized enterprises on the coast which were either modernized haciendas or agro-industrial plantations were interspersed with minifundia, on or below subsistence level, supplying a seasonal labor force for the larger units. Also in the mountain areas, old haciendas and smallholder's farms have coexisted, but on a far less specialized and market-oriented basis.

The reform has meant a change of organization of agriculture into production cooperatives, formed out of the former haciendas and plantations on the coast, without, however, solving the acute land problem for the smallholders or minifundistas. Neither has the break-up of estates in the interior catered sufficiently to the needs of land hungry peasants in this area.

After the water monopoly of the earlier landed elite was broken, there has moreover emerged a number of small to medium-sized farms in some few areas, like in the colonization San Lorenzo in Piura. Its entrepreneurial farmers have to a large degree contributed to the new specialized fruit-growing, mentioned above.

The Basis of the Commercialization
Of the Northern Region

When considering potentialities for developing a commercial organization, the basic industrial pattern offers the key to understanding, both as far as marketing of the main products from the area and the distribution of inputs and consumer goods back to the area are concerned.

In the research project most interest is focussed on agriculture and its population both as production and consumption units. This limitation is imposed partly in order to make the analysis manageable and partly from the realization that agriculture in spite of the high urbanization rate makes up the most important resource base of the region. Only briefly will the industrial and craft base be referred to, and then in connection with and as an extension of the agricultural world.

The basic agricultural surplus production of the region, and hence its export base consists, as mentioned earlier, primarily of tropical and subtropical staples like cotton, rice and sugar, and to a lesser extent, of sorghum and maize, to which must be added some fruits which have grown in importance over the years. There is also some milk production, being handled by the transnational food processing industry, however, negligible in this context.

TABLE 1. Estimated harvest of some important crops in Piura 1984 and 1985 (in metric tons).

	<u>Rice</u>	<u>Maiz</u>	<u>Cotton</u>	<u>Potatoes</u>	<u>Sorghum</u>
1983	75,800	23,600	na	14,400	16,300
1985	120,900	27,700	80,900	12,800	20,200
	<u>Coffee</u>	<u>Bananas</u>	<u>Lemon</u>	<u>Mango</u>	
1983	5,000	13,000	20,300	31,200	
1985	4,400	30,000	27,500	66,600	

Table 1 gives a pretty good picture of the production potential at the present technological level by the estimates of the Piura harvests for a number of important crops in 1983 and 1985. Of these, the 1985 crop should be taken as the more normal one. The 1983 figures were affected by the inundation disaster early that year, which caused considerable damage in parts of the industry. Adding sugar to the above list, a crop mostly grown south of Piura, should give the full breadth of the production base in the whole region.

This zone with 2.3 million inhabitants (1981), 14% of the country total, is the main producer of rice in the country (approximately 55%), a figure which has been increasing in recent years. The region is also the largest single zone of cotton production. In the field of fruits, it has grown to become the main mango and lemon producer in the country, and what is not disclosed in the tables, a growing supplier of papaya, as a consequence of diseases and plagues in the Selva area.

For these products, the region is not only an important supplier to the processing industry, but has increasingly become a substantial producer for the Lima market, the leader in lemon, of growing importance for mango, papaya, and bananas.

The fact that much of the production mentioned above more than in other areas in Peru is taken care of by large-scale modern enterprises gives perspectives to the potentials for commercial development also the other way round - in supplying inputs to the industry. The 2.3 million population, of which 60% are urban dwellers, finally constitute an important and growing consumer market.

Method and Approach of the Study

When analyzing commercialization as a system, trying also to get behind its manifestations on the surface to include its functioning - for whom, at whose benefit, or at whose expense - plus its role in the wider development process, methodology should be very seriously considered. This includes methods of disclosing the structure of the system, its components, the entry of flows into it and their channeling within the system. However, it also includes calculations and estimates of exits into other systems and how exogenous factors are affecting the working of it.

This very complicated process may be approached in several ways, but basically in two. On one hand, there is a macro approach to the study, on the other, a micro point of departure.

The former which by Scott (1985) is called a historical method, purports to look at marketing and its organization from a very broad societal viewpoint, analyzing structural relationships by means of gross data, including treatment of the role of the state through financial and price policies and other regulations. The latter method is basically, in its more or less pure form, a technocratic, minute recording of flows within the system, compiled at the micro level and very often confined to a single product and its marketing procedures.

The present study will to some extent combine elements from both methods. It is the objective to establish for the region concerned as complete a picture as possible of the system as it is functioning and disclose its links to the general socio-economic development and wider policies pursued. Simultaneously, the data for analyzing the functioning of the system will be composed of samples of real flows in different parts of the system-as far as possible following the flows - a typical micro oriented procedure with minute field registration.

At the present moment, it is not easy to advance very far beyond disclosing the sheer organization of the marketing complex, leaving the functioning for future analysis. Only parts of the empirical material needed to sustain or refute hypotheses about the latter dimension is available. It is possible though, by applying some already existing findings from other research (regrettably scarce) and by interpreting carefully some of the fragmentary knowledge which is processed

from the first stage of the field study to give some preliminary assessment of the functioning of the system in a more broad regional perspective.

Organization of Commercialization in Northern Peru

According to figure 2--which is a relatively complicated picture of the structure of commercialization--there is a private and a public sphere in organization. Within the private chain, numerous links exist both in the marketing of agricultural products (left side), and in the supply of commodities to consumers and industry (right side). Not all this complicated organization pertains to all fields of production and consumption. There are differences from product to product or group of products and between types of producers. For some of these, there may exist only one or two stages in the process. On the other hand, there are even more complicated structures, as for instance, Lima wholesalers selling agricultural products to provincial wholesalers.

The system, as it has developed, is overwhelmingly private. The role of the state in organizing commercialization is far from negligible, however. Basically, it pertains to providing some infrastructure, rules of conduct and regulations, and by control seeing that these are obeyed. Mostly this has applied to price control of some basic staple foods - a role which has been changing from time to time and under different administrations. In distribution proper, the state has gener-

ally confined its participation to some very few foodstuffs, widening or narrowing its monopoly of first hand collection and distribution over time. In the field of inputs back to agriculture, state enterprises have long had an important say in marketing.

Generally, the public enterprises play a role only in the initial stage of the process. There were, to be true, some attempt at public supermarket retailing under the last military government (1968-1980). The chain has since been dismantled, some of the outlets closed down, others detached from public ownership and operating on their own. Today, the only exclusively public handling of products from agriculture concerns the rice harvest, and rice imports in times of scarcity, organized by the agency ECASA. Besides this, some assembling and further distribution of cotton, maize and potatoes take place through the ENCI, a statal organization whose primary task is to organize sales of inputs back to agriculture, particularly of fertilizers for which there exists a monopoly, but also of seeds, pesticides, and other important inputs into production.

In these fields the importance of the public bodies is paramount, a fact which make their influence stronger in Northern Peru than in most other regions. This is due to the aforementioned structure of agriculture, the large rice production and the modern agriculture with its input consuming character.

The rest of the marketing process for these products and the channeling of all other commodity flows are taken care of by a differentiated system of middlemen. There is little direct link between producers and consumers via market-places in Northern Peru. Most commodities produced in the region and sold in the periodic markets or other market places have already been handled by middlemen.

For the great staple products like sugar, rice and cotton, there exists a long established further processing and commercialization system in the region proper. The products are mainly taken care of by what, in the figure, is termed regional wholesalers and local and regional industry, mills in the case of rice, refineries in the case of sugar. As to cotton, which is by and large of outstanding quality, a long staple fiber, highly demanded in the world market, much of the export takes place directly from the region among other places from the harbor of Paita.

For other staple products and for fruit, a pretty complicated process is taking place. The actors of the system may be assemblers, truckdrivers, and wholesalers of different type, all of them being parts of a chain linked to Lima - a rather centralized system. For several articles originating in agriculture, truck-drivers often play a decisive role, not only in transportation, but as commercial middlemen, buying directly from farmers or from assemblers. Vis-a-vis small and medium sized producers in situations with difficult transpor-

tation conditions and for products which are easily perishable, truck-drivers may virtually impose a monopoly, skimming high profits from their trade. Not so in Northern Peru. The function of the truck-driver is here nearly exclusively transportation. Neither is the role of the local or regional wholesaler paramount for these products, enhancing the role of the assemblers and the central wholesalers in Lima. This is particularly true of fruit, of which lemon, bananas, mango and increasingly papaya, are handled in a centralized fashion, the initiative and the strongest bargaining power resting with the wholesalers of the capital. Only very few producers have been able to develop a marketing of their own, selling directly to wholesalers in the capital. There is some local and regional fruit processing, particularly of juices and oil. The regulatory role of this industry is slight, however, representing only about a tenth of the volume of production.

An interesting, more decentralized system has emerged as far as the reverse process of commercialization is concerned. To be true, the distributors of products back to the industry and to the final consumers are not wholly independent of those handling the products originating in the region. Some of the local and regional wholesalers who acted as brokers in the primary product chain also play some part in distribution the other way round. The overlapping is shown in figure 1, and is particularly true of products of which the region does not produce a surplus. Mostly, however, the actors of the distribution

within the region specialize on this function only. The process is particularly centered on Chiclayo as the wholesale center, whose influence is felt far into Piura and Cajamarca. This is reflected in figure 3, which shows employment in wholesaling by provinces. Some care should be exercised in interpreting the distribution, due to inaccuracy of data and possible differences in productivity between places. However, the preeminence of Chiclayo in the central place hierarchy is so clear that the other explanations can be ruled out as major factors. Some of the superiority is due to benefits of concentration. This is particularly significant for growth in areas with low purchasing power. Earlier, the activities in Piura were very much fragmented geographically -- located in at least three nearly equal-sized cities, while Chiclayo represented a concentrated commercial milieu. The growing concentration of people and activities to the city of Piura during the last 10-year period seems, in fact, to have altered the picture somewhat. The positive shift of employment to Piura and also to cities in Cajamarca (fig. 4) reflects, however, retailing and more specialized wholesaling activities rather than growth in general wholesaling. This industry is still to a large extent concentrated to Chiclayo.

How can the perseverance of Chiclayo's strong position in wholesaling be explained? It should in the first place be sought endogeneously, as an activity derived from entrepreneurial skill, mostly from young cajamaricans coming to Chiclayo in pursuit of commercial opportunities. Most of them have

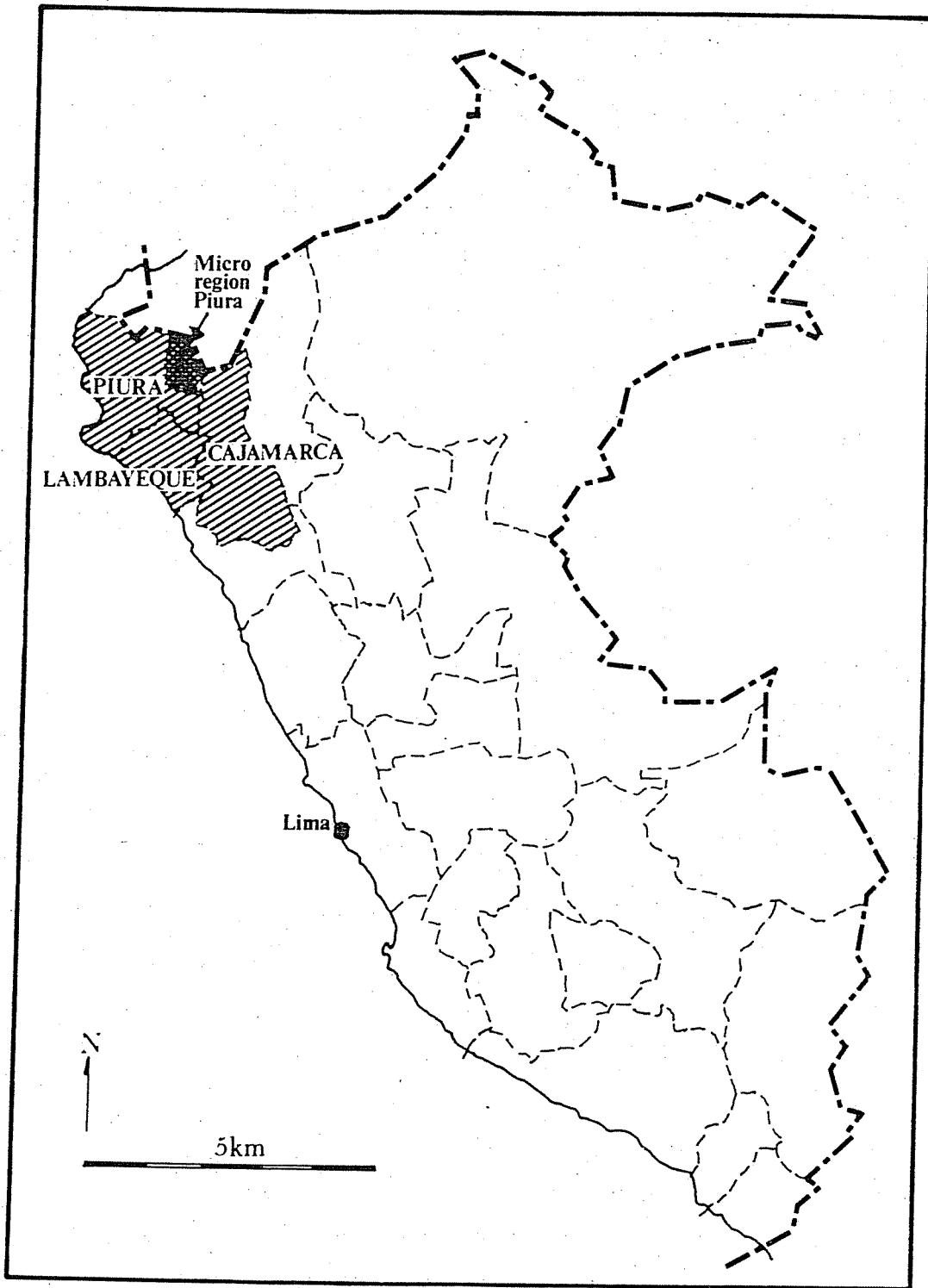


Fig. 1. The micro region and the broad study area in Northern Peru.

PERU
 WHOLESAL
 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES 1981.

TOWNS IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF PIURA, LAMBAYEQUE
 AND CAJAMARCA IN NORTHWESTERN PERU.

SCALE 1 : 2.5 MILL.

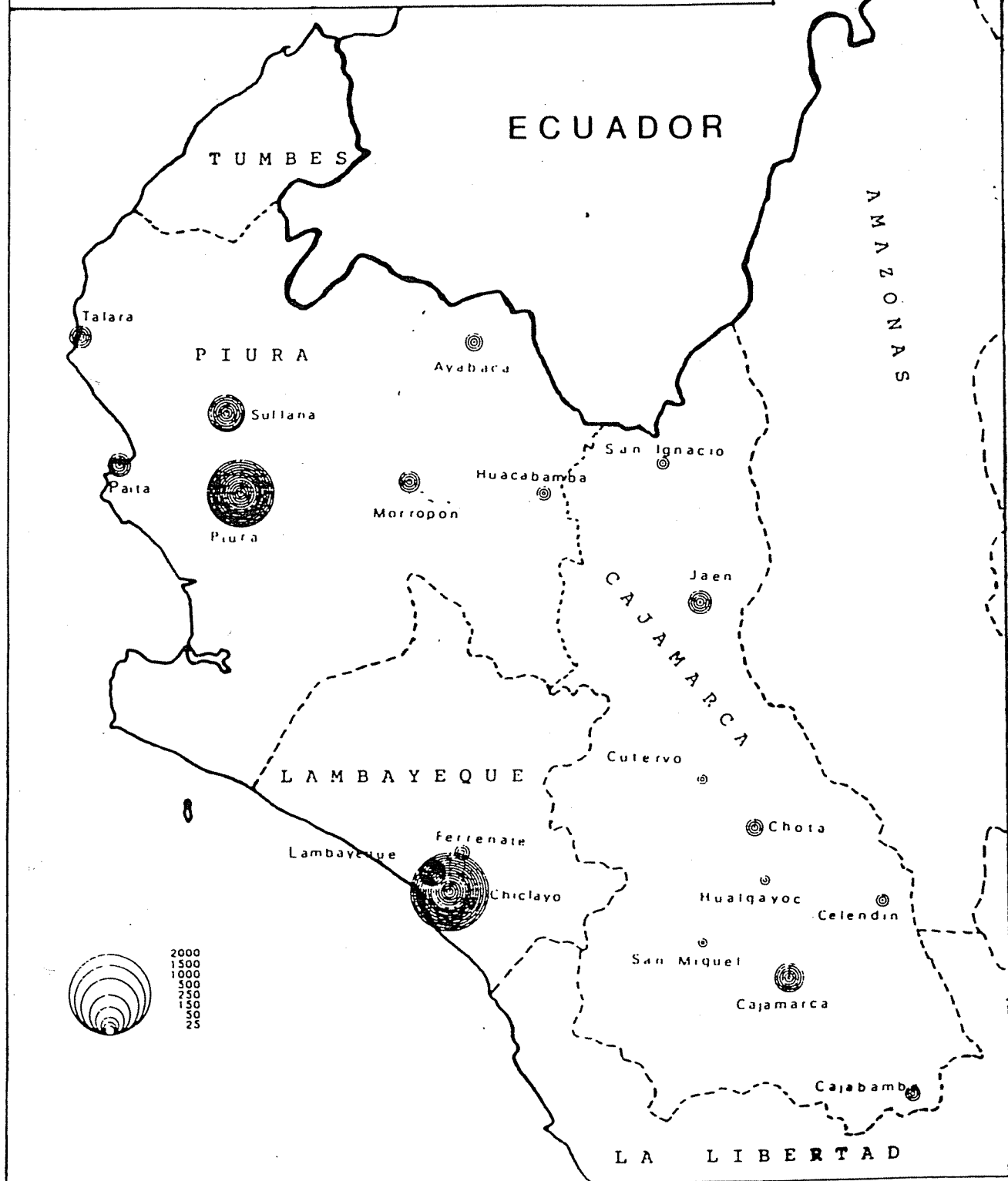


Fig. 3. Employment in wholesale trade in Northern Peru, by provinces 1981.

PERU REDISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYEES IN TRADING 1972 - 1981.

TOWNS IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF PIURA, LAMBAYEQUE
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Fig. 4. Shift share of employment in commercial activities (wholesale and retail trade, registered) in Northern Peru 1972-1981.

specialized as wholesalers in textile and clothing, later extending their activity into the field of hardware and general convenience goods. They are all taking opportunity of the central position of Chiclayo in a period of ever increased trucking.

The increased mobility has given birth to a more differentiated and decentralized, extremely flexible system than in the marketing of the region's own products. In some areas, especially for supplying the Sierra areas, the truck drivers play a more active role, also as dealers. There exists, furthermore, a tier of minor, local wholesalers dependent on the Chiclayo system. It is this group who makes up much of the industry in smaller places (figure 3). Simultaneously, retailers, particularly the larger ones, play an active role as transporters, using the Chiclayo supply as a cash and carry system, a pattern of distribution practised far into the department of Piura. The recent growth of the role of the city of Piura is to some extent duplicate, but mostly rather complementary, the city taking care of more specialized wholesaling of inputs back to agriculture, commodities which are of special importance in this part of the region.

The Functioning of the System

Some Preliminary Findings and Comments

In an assessment of how a system works and performs, it is important to ask: From which viewpoint? On whose part?

As the objective of this research project centers on the role of commercialization in agricultural and regional development, the functioning of the system will be analyzed from the

angle of the region and its people.

In most literature on commercial organization and marketing practice, there is a bias in the direction of viewing the intermediate stages between producer and consumers as "surplus getters," some of whom are considered parasites and rather superfluous in the marketing chain (Egoavil 1976). This pertains particularly to middlemen outside the area, where also the biggest wholesalers reside. Concomitantly, both the primary producers and the regions are deprived of important value added, that under more favorable conditions might accrue to them. This view is put forward by many Peruvian micro-oriented researchers like Esculies (1977). Also macro-oriented scholars end up with the same conclusion. Hopkins (1981) infers excessive middleman returns by the fact that consumer prices have risen far more than producer prices over the last 15 years. These studies leave little evidence of where in the chain profits have accrued, however. Micro studies point in this context to the big wholesalers, mainly in the capital, as the big gainers, owing to their size and bargaining power and their control of shipments. The latter variable is particularly underlined by Martinez and Tealdo (1980). For potatoes, Scott (1986) comes to another conclusion, and suggests more minute research on value added in the ultimate link of the chain, among the retailers.

There can be no doubt that an "unnecessary" drain of resources out of the producing areas is taking place in some

fields of agricultural production. In an earlier study (Sjøholt 1986), it was found that prices of fruit rose five to six times from the farm gate in the Selva Central to the final consumer in Lima. Differences between producers were great, however, and tended to be associated with type of commercialization. Larger farmers with direct access to the distribution network in the capital secured for themselves and the region more value added than smaller, more scattered producers, particularly those who had to rely on truck-drivers for commercialization of their products.

Making inferences by analogy is naturally of limited value in our particular situation. Although some of the earlier findings undoubtedly have some validity for the functioning of the system in Northern Peru also, there are differences, which make a more direct approach necessary.

State control pervades the system more strongly in our region than in most other regions of the country. Although some of the regulations may be by-passed, because of faulty control infrastructure, state policies and the statal bureaucracy will have an important say in the size of value which will be plowed back to the region. Most observers agree that price policies, although somewhat inconsistent (Saulniers 1985), have generally tended to discriminate against the producers, particularly of rice and sugar, products of magnitude in this region. The state distribution agencies furthermore are very centralized enterprises, often relying on the state for their

liquidity and being nearly constantly in arrears with payment to the producers. Conversely, some ripple effects in processing and further commercialization undoubtedly fall on the region. There likewise exist hidden multipliers through fraud, like smuggling of rice to countries with a far higher price level, in this region particularly to Ecuador, by alleged middlemen, impossible to control by the bureaucratized state agency ECASA.

For cotton, the commercialization has been pretty much monopolized by the big business and financial concern Romero in Piura (Palacio 1986). In this field, the state enterprise ENCI has had an important function in encroaching upon the monopoly. Cooperatives have increasingly come to market their production through this channel. Some value is added in pre-processing, even of the exported cotton, thus retaining a fair share of surplus value, if not with the producers, at any rate in the region.

As far as perishable products are concerned, it is an established fact that prices paid by the processing plants for oils and juice are generally far lower than what may be attained in fresh fruit marketing. These enterprises generally perform only an extraction function, leaving the rest of the processing to more central plants, e.g., in Lima, depriving the region of more surplus. One exception are some lemon oil factories which also export their products directly through the harbor of Paita in Piura.

Scant pre-processing is also common in the marketing of fresh produce. Our data supply is still too fragmentary to dare give a more in depth evaluation of this commercial process and its channeling of value added. On the positive side, the most prominent drainage factor -- large scale direct marketing by truck drivers -- seems largely to be absent in this area. On the other hand, there are few large producers, able to manage their own commercialization, directly to the capital. Assemblers are numerous, generally inferior in bargaining power to the wholesalers of the capital.

The system seems to function least satisfactorily for the socio-economic weaker part of the producers and for regions poorest in resources, those most isolated and left behind. This is typical of the Sierra region, where the whole array of intermediaries come into function. Deliveries by farmers are small, often negligible, generally received by the retailer, who markets them through the truck-driver, and he again sells the products to the local or regional wholesaler. This is, however, not the end of the chain. Only the high rate of subsistence of this particular economy gives some protection against dire exploitation of the farmers. Changing the marketing organization should therefore be given high priorities in development strategies for this micro region.

As far as marketing of inputs into agriculture and of commodities for the final consumer are concerned, the system seems to function more satisfactorily. The state monopolies

have through their more decentralized distributors, who are even in some instances located to the production cooperatives, found a flexible way of chaneling needed inputs. In the field of consumer goods, of which daily necessities make up the bulk, the concentration to Chiclayo as a wholesale center has given some cost reducing scale benefits in the further distribution process. The wholesalers generally obtain very favorable discount rates from producers and other wholesalers, mainly in Lima, by personal contact. Some of these benefits are passed on to their customers in order to be competitive. We found in our field study that several consumer goods matched prices for corresponding goods in Lima retail outlets, at any rate in coastal towns.

In retailing, periodic markets and fixed retail outlets generally share the market. According to interviews, which we conducted in market-places and in shops, most customers patronize both types of outlets, trying to reap the highest possible profits from the offers. Periodic markets have their best bargains in locally produced foodstuffs. However, few producers sell directly to customers in marketplaces, at any rate in Piura. Most articles, sold here are imported. Even in many Piura towns, fresh products originate in Chiclayo.

Also in the field of retailing, the Sierra gets the fewest benefits. Part of the year isolation will raise prices, due to heavy rains and road blockades, even the ones subject to control. Sacrcity of supplies, particularly of perishable pro-

ducts, is also common. Even at this time, however, some of the shops showed a surprisingly high level of supply, considering the still high subsistence level and low purchasing power among the population.

Summary and Further Perspectives for the Study

Commercialization is an increasingly important but often neglected field in development research. Its importance derives from the fact that market transactions more and more pervade production and consumption at the same time as the process itself will determine the channeling of multiplier effects, or their antithesis regional leakage.

By preliminary findings from a research project in Peru, it is established that market relations as organized and practiced are far from unambiguous. They differ not only between products, but between product destinations, and the producers themselves. There is evidence of some regional drainage, directly caused by the organization and the functioning of commercialization. The statal commercial agencies cannot be wholly acquitted of these charges. Findings furthermore indicate that least profits accrue to the small, socially and geographically marginalized peasants and to the remoter regions in most kinds of transactions. The more central areas, however, benefit, as far as distribution to the final consumer is concerned, from a relatively efficient system, entered on Chiclayo wholesaling.

For lack of comprehensive data, it is yet premature to jump to any further conclusions. It is hoped to be able to produce substantial and conclusive analyses of the problem during the next couple of years. These will cover more explicitly both mainly subsistence-farmers, medium-sized market-producers and the production cooperatives, each group specializing for the market partly in similar products, but also partly in product niches of their own.

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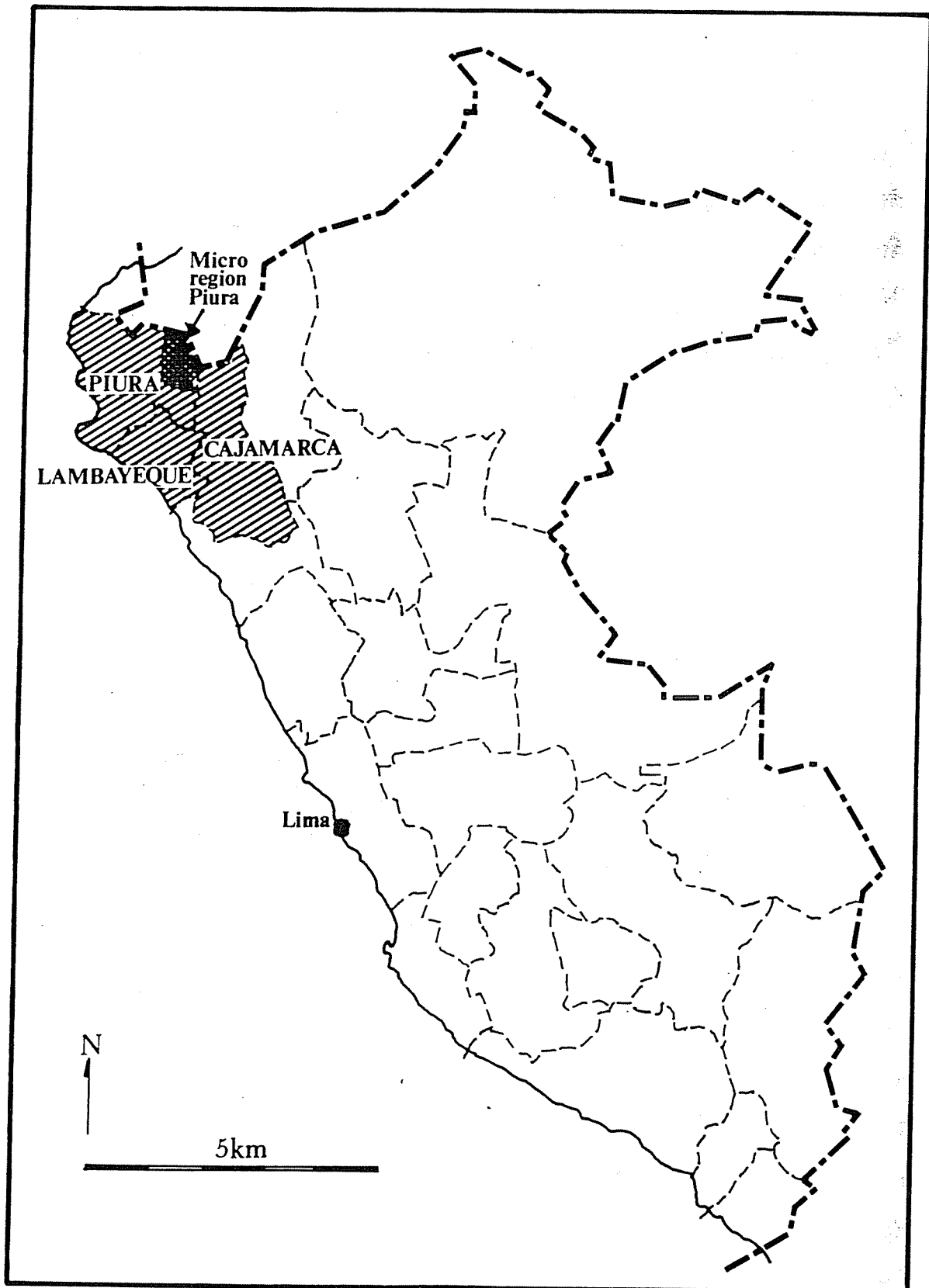


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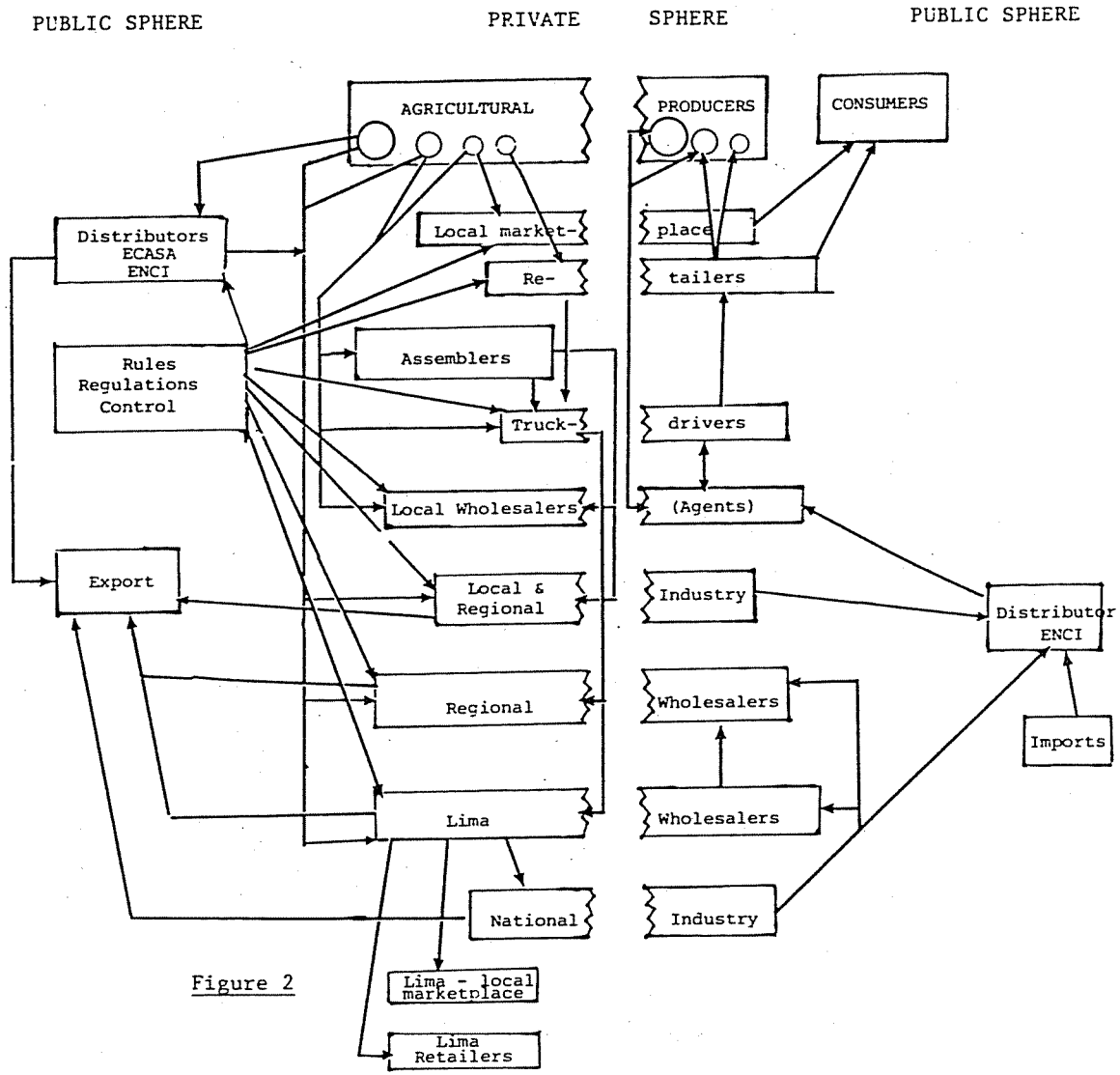


Figure 2

Figure 2. The organization of commercialization, particularly applied to Northern Peru.
 Left side Marketing chain of products, originating in northern agriculture
 Right side Marketing chain back to agriculture and the population at large (consumers).

PERU

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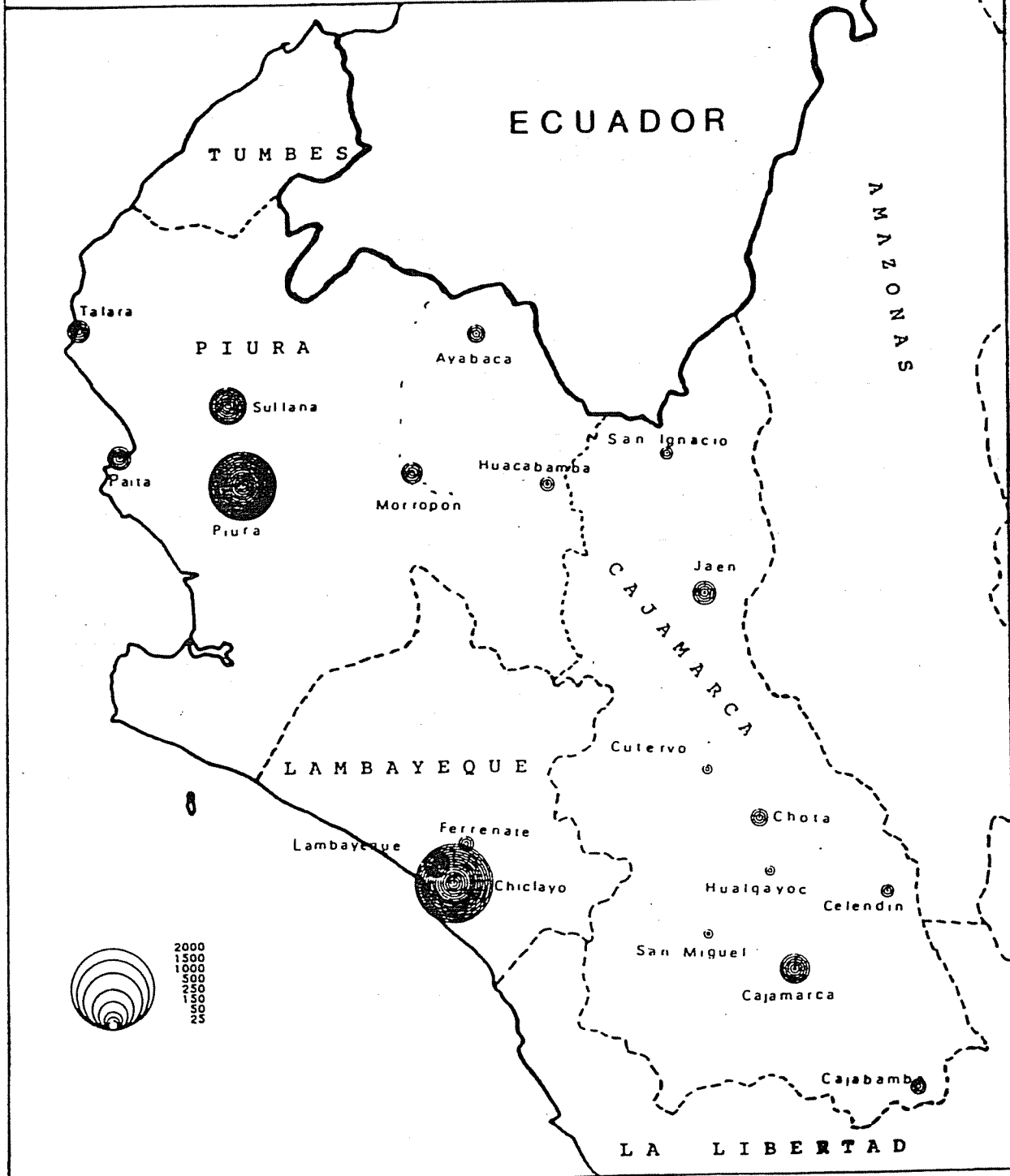


Fig. 3. Employment in wholesale trade in Northern Peru, by provinces 1981.

PERU

REDISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYEES
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