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Linguistic and Cultural Geography of Contemporary Peru

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In view of the recent upsurge of interest in Peruvian regions and regional development (CDI-CEDESA 1984; González de Olarte 1985), it is surprising that none of these discussions of regionalization adequately takes into account language or culture. In many countries, regional divisions have been primarily based on cultural or linguistic patterns, and the greatest challenge has been to achieve balanced development for all ethnic groups.

The available ethnic maps for Peru are based on language. They show spheres of influence for various languages (Pesce 1969) but lack a quantitative basis and do not indicate the numerically preponderant languages and cultures. They also do not distinguish between cultural groups that are not indigenous language speakers.

This report, by using quantitative data of language and ethnicity as found in various censuses, will attempt to map the cultural regions of Peru.

Language as a Cultural Indicator

There are three advantages to using language as a point of departure in mapping and defining culture regions: (1) language is strongly implicated in the transmission of culture and is thus linked to many nonlinguistic cultural traits, such as folklore, religion, and music; (2) language frontiers between groups impede cultural transmission and many times coincide with other cultural boundaries, including agricultural and housing traits; (3) language is a cultural trait that is relatively stable and easy to determine through census information.

Here we will define Peruvian cultural regions primarily in terms of language. We will assume that language is related to other cultural traits and to ethnic self-identity (Stark 1985:485).

Census of Language

There were national censuses of language in 1940, 1961, 1972, and 1981 (tables 1 through 5). These censuses did not reach the entire Peruvian population because of oversight, hostility, or error. In addition, there was a substantial population (*población selvícola*) beyond the reach or knowledge of the Peruvian state.

The census may be treated as a sampling procedure. It most accurately reflects the linguistic characteristics of the population in those districts with a substantial majority speaking a single language. In those districts where more than one language is spoken, there is the possibility that underreporting was more prevalent in one language than in another, biasing the results. Persons may also have lied about their language. Spanish-Indian bilinguals may have claimed to be Spanish monolinguals, and Indian monolinguals may have claimed to be bilingual.

These difficulties may be addressed by several methods. It is wise to combine monolinguals and bilinguals and define as Indian-speaking all who understand an Indian language.

It is also pertinent to use the smallest possible geographical units for mapping, since such small units are more likely to possess uniform linguistic characteristics and adjacent units provide a check on the accuracy of linguistic measurement.

Within the geographical units, the threshold population for linguistic domains should probably be set at less than 50 percent for Indian languages, to correct for underreporting. Elsewhere 33 percent has been found to be a useful threshold value (Knapp 1987).

Characteristics of Language Censuses: Geographical Coverage

The four modern language censuses were performed at varying intervals. In each case, data were provided for the territorial units of Peru (table 1). Peru is divided into *departamentos* (plus one constitutional province); the *departamentos* are in turn divided into *provincias*, which are divided into *distritos.*

The number of *distritos* increased form 1,064 in 1940 to 1,680 in 1981. Each census has provided population data for the urban and rural parts of each *distrito.*

It is difficult to find base maps showing individual *distritos.* The oldest such map in the archives of the Instituto Nacional de Estadística was used for this study (INE 1982); it shows the pattern of *distritos* about the time of the 1981 census (which was virtually unchanged since 1972). Between 1961 and 1972, 185 new *distritos* were formed. Most of these were created in the eastern lowlands, or in highland or coastal areas with relatively few indigenous language speakers. Thus the recent *distrito* map can be used—with appropriate care—to map distributions from the 1961 census.

The only modern census that shows language distributions at the *distrito* level is the 1961 census (table 1). I therefore decided to use this census to map language use in the highlands and the coast.

Language data were not available for rural and urban areas within *distritos*; since I wanted to map rural culture areas, I ignored results from *distritos* containing the provincial capitals where these results differed from those of surrounding *distritos.*

The 1961 census results were never published for the Departments of San Martín, Tacna, and Tumbes. I mapped patterns for these areas using data from 1941 and 1981 censuses.

In 1961, the Huanca dialect of Quechua was reported as a non-Quechua dialect. To correct for this, in areas where Huanca is spoken, the number of speakers of non-Quechua dialects was added to the number of people speaking Quechua.

None of the modern population censuses provides adequate information for the mapping of languages in the eastern lowlands of Peru. A better source is the recent *Directorio de Comunidades Nativas del Perú* (DCCN 1986). This gives the ethno-linguistic group, political district (*distrito*), and population in 1986 for each village. The 1986 population is an adjusted value, based on the population provided the government at the time of inscription, plus an assumed growth since then of 3.5 percent per year.

The directory includes data on 701 villages with 124,411 estimated members in 1986. It does not include data on "acculturated" Indian groups, the most important of which are the Lamistas and the Cocama.

Mapping the Areas of Indian Language Predominance

I decided to map three levels of intensity of non-Spanish language use: nuclei, domains, and spheres (maps.1-3). **Nuclei** (*núcleos*) are areas where over 75 percent of the population speaks an indigenous language or is a member of a native *selva* community. **Domains** (*dominios*) are areas where over 33 percent of the population speaks a native language or is a community member. **Spheres** are areas where over 1.5 percent of the population speaks a native language or is a community member.

Different sources had to be used for different parts of the country. For the highlands and coast, except for Tumbes and Tacna, the 1961 language census was used, since this is the only census with data at the *distrito* level. The number of persons reporting an Indian mother tongue was divided by the total number of persons in the reporting age group for each *distrito. Distritos* that contained the provincial capital were considered urban and thus ignored for mapping purposes.

In Tumbes, data from other censuses suggested that no *distrito* has over 1.5 percent native language speakers, so this *departamento* was considered outside the native language sphere.

In Tacna, data of race and language in the 1940 census suggested the location of the edge of the Aymara domain and nucleus, although with less accuracy and precision than in other *departamentos.*

In San Martín, other censuses suggested that in none of the *distritos* does the Quechua-speaking Lamista population exceed 33 percent of the total population.

In the eastern *selva* section of Peru, the *Directorio de Comunidades Nativas* was used to estimate the number of Indian language speakers. Since the number of speakers would be compared with the population as determined in the 1981 census, it was necessary to readjust the *Directorio* populations backwards in time, again assuming a 3.5 percent per year growth rate. This amounted to 0.842 times the number of community members in 1986.

In addition, the 1981 *selvícola* population needed to be added to the native community totals. The *selvícola* population was estimated in 1981 on the *departamento* level. For each *departamento*, an adjustment factor was calculated based on the proportion of *selvícola* population to other elements of the population. These adjustment factors were used to augment the reported indigenous community members in the component districts. The total calculated indigenous community population (including *selvícola* population) was then divided by the rural population of each *distrito* to get a percentage value of rural indigenous language speakers. The formulas used to calculate the percentage of the indigenous rural population are presented in Appendix 1.

Map 1 indicates the nuclei of indigenous languages in rural Peru. Districts with over 75 percent native language speakers do not occur randomly but rather are aggregated into a few distinct homelands. The largest is in southern highland Peru, where there is a large Quechua-speaking area. There is a smaller Quechua-speaking homeland in the north central highland ("Quechua I"). Isolated islands of Quechua speech include the areas of Cañaris-Incahuasi and Cajamarca. Other culture groups with large nuclei include the Aymara, Aguaruna (including a number of related groups), the area of Campa and Shipibo languages to the east of the central highlands, and the Purús River Valley.

Map 2 indicates the domains of indigenous languages in rural Peru. It includes the central highlands in the Quechua domain and the expansion of the Aguaruna and the Shipibo-Campa regions. In addition, the area along the northeastern border is in the domain of a variety of *selva* groups.

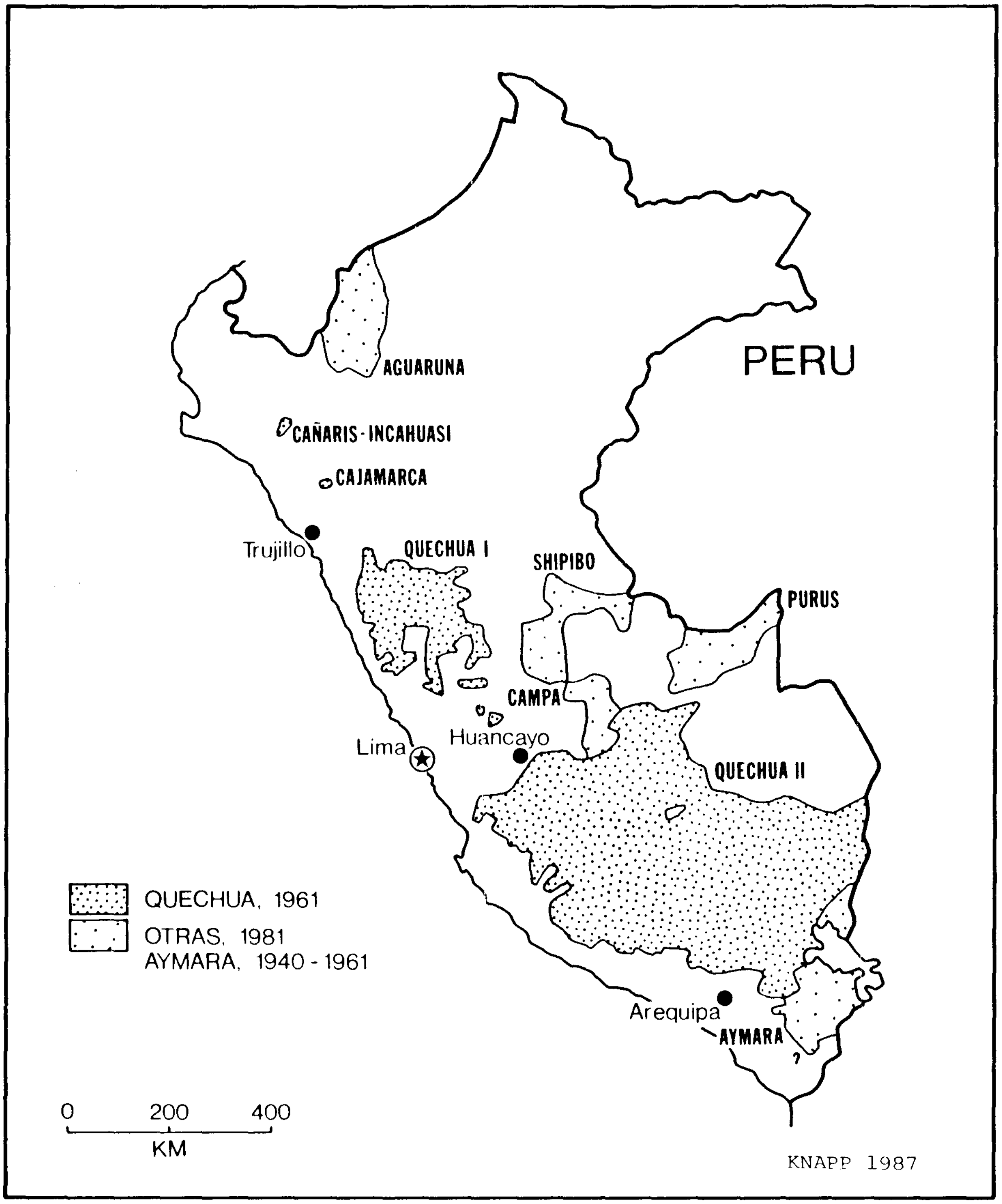
Almost all of Peru is within the sphere of Indian languages (over 1.5 percent indigenous-language speaking in rural area). Map 3 indicates the major region outside the indigenous language sphere; this is a super-Hispanic region, which corresponds to the "*norteño*" region as conceptualized by ordinary Peruvians.

Significance of Geographical Localization of Areas of Indian Speech

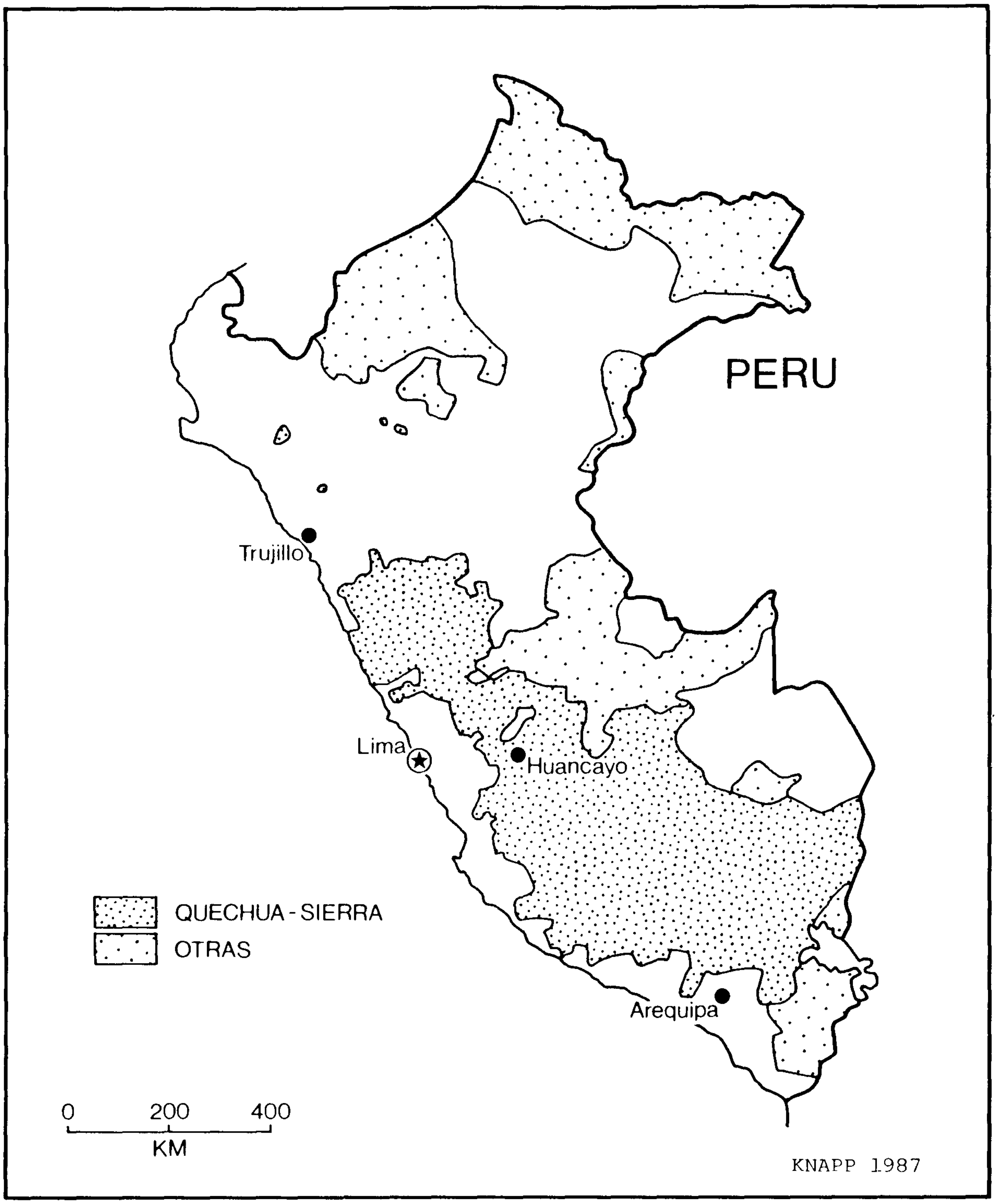
Since Indian language speakers are not dispersed throughout the Peruvian territory, but rather concentrated in certain areas, programs designed to help Indians (bilingual education, etc.) can be targeted at the indigenous domains. Governmental regionalization efforts should take into account the cultural regionalization of Peru.

The geographical localization of Indian languages suggests that even if languages are lost over time, the territories may organize indigenous cultural consciousness. This clearly cannot occur in those cases where an ethnic minority lacks a territorial domain.

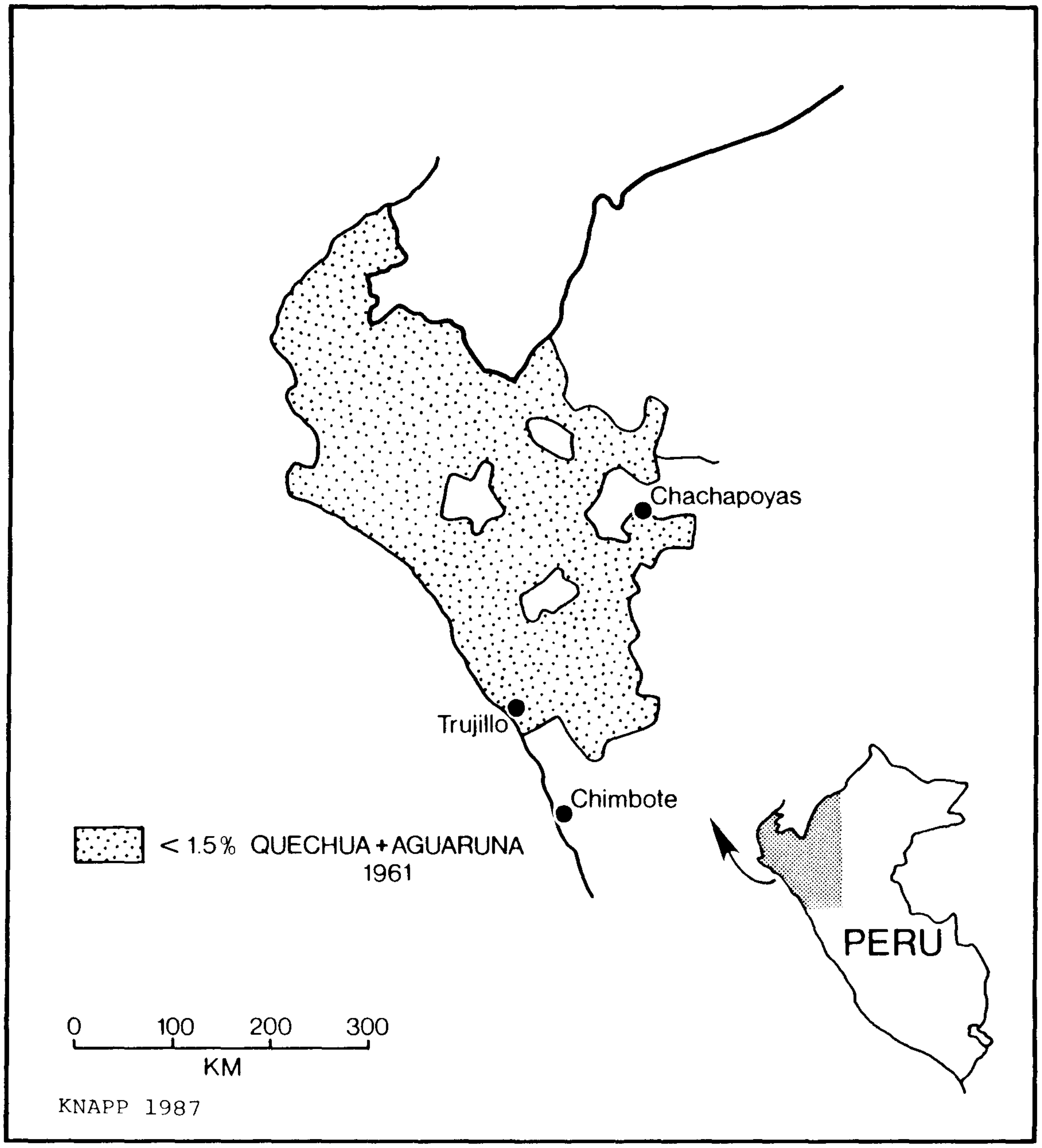
Maps 1 through 3 raise interesting issues of the historical evolution of indigenous cultural regions. Kubler (1952) has provided an analysis of the changing geographical distribution of highland Indian populations from 1795 through the census of 1940; his analysis focuses on caste or race rather than on language, but it makes clear that the patterns of maps 1 and 2 can be traced back at least two hundred years.


PERU
AGUARUNA
CAÑARIS-INCAHUASI
CAJAMARCA
Trujillo
QUECHUA I
SHIPIBO
PURUS
CAMPA
Huancayo
Lima
QUECHUA II
Arequipa
AYMARA
?
QUECHUA, 1961
OTRAS, 1981
AYMARA, 1940 - 1961
0
200
400
KM
KNAPP 1987

Map 1. Nuclei of Indigenous Languages in Rural Peru


PERU
Trujillo
Lima
Huancayo
Arequipa
QUECHUA-SIERRA
OTRAS
0
200
400
KM
KNAPP 1987

Map 2. Domains of Indigenous Languages in Rural Peru


Chachapoyas
Trujillo
Chimbote
< 1.5% QUECHUA + AGUARUNA 1961
PERU
0 100 200 300
KM
KNAPP 1987

Map 3. Region Outside of Sphere of Indigenous Languages in Peru

Modern Cultural Regions of Peru

If areas in which indigenous speech predominates constitute cultural regions, one may ask about the existence of non-Indian culture regions in modern Peru. For example, the last census with information on race, the census of 1940, permits us to map the sphere of the black population (map 4), which, clearly, is especially important on the central coast.

Similarly, the census of 1961 contained a question about the custom of chewing coca. The northern limit of coca chewing (see map 5) helps to indicate the presence of populations that may not speak Quechua but still evince considerable Indian cultural traits.

I have been unable to locate any previous attempt to map the cultural regions of Peru. Map 5 is a tentative effort, based on the assumption that the great regions of Indian language dominance have served to isolate and define distinct intervening areas of mestizo or Creole culture. These intervening areas, in turn, owe their origins to the historical presence of novel agricultural strategies or the in-migration of non-Indian ethnic groups.

Map 5 is somewhat different from the preceding maps in that it is based on a composite of linguistic and nonlinguistic information. It is meant to refer to the situation about 1981. Sixteen regions are defined, which are indicated by the letters A and A1 through N. These regions will be briefly described below.

Sixteen Culture Regions

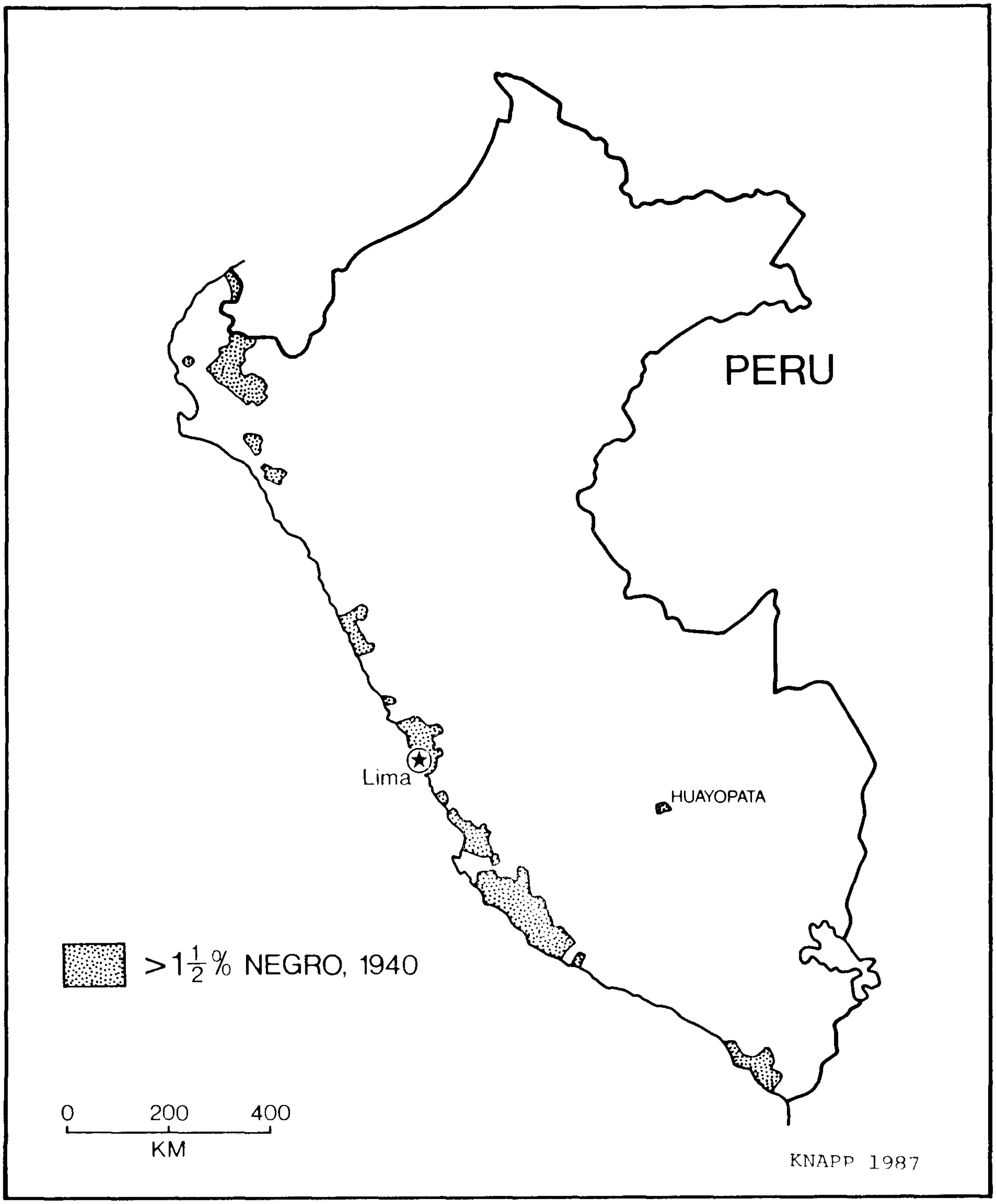
Región Norteña (A, map 5). This region is outside the sphere of indigenous languages (map 3) and, in addition, exhibits relatively few other indigenous culture traits; coca chewing is not practiced. Eighteenth-century censuses show a relatively high number of non-Indian persons in this region. There are some local areas of blacks (map 4); there is also a small area of Quechua speakers at Incahuasi-Cañaris. Cities include Trujillo, Chiclayo, and Piura. This region also extends into the Loja province of southern Ecuador, which is also, for the most part, outside of the Quechua sphere. People from this region have been important in colonizing the Peruvian northeast (regions M and B, map 5) and have brought with them such technologies as rice agriculture.

"Cajamarquino" Region (A^1, map 5). This region is, for the most part, also outside the Quechua sphere, but it exhibits numerous other indigenous traits, e.g. coca chewing. The problem of the development of a mestizo cultural identity in part of this area is discussed by Brush (1977:50-53).

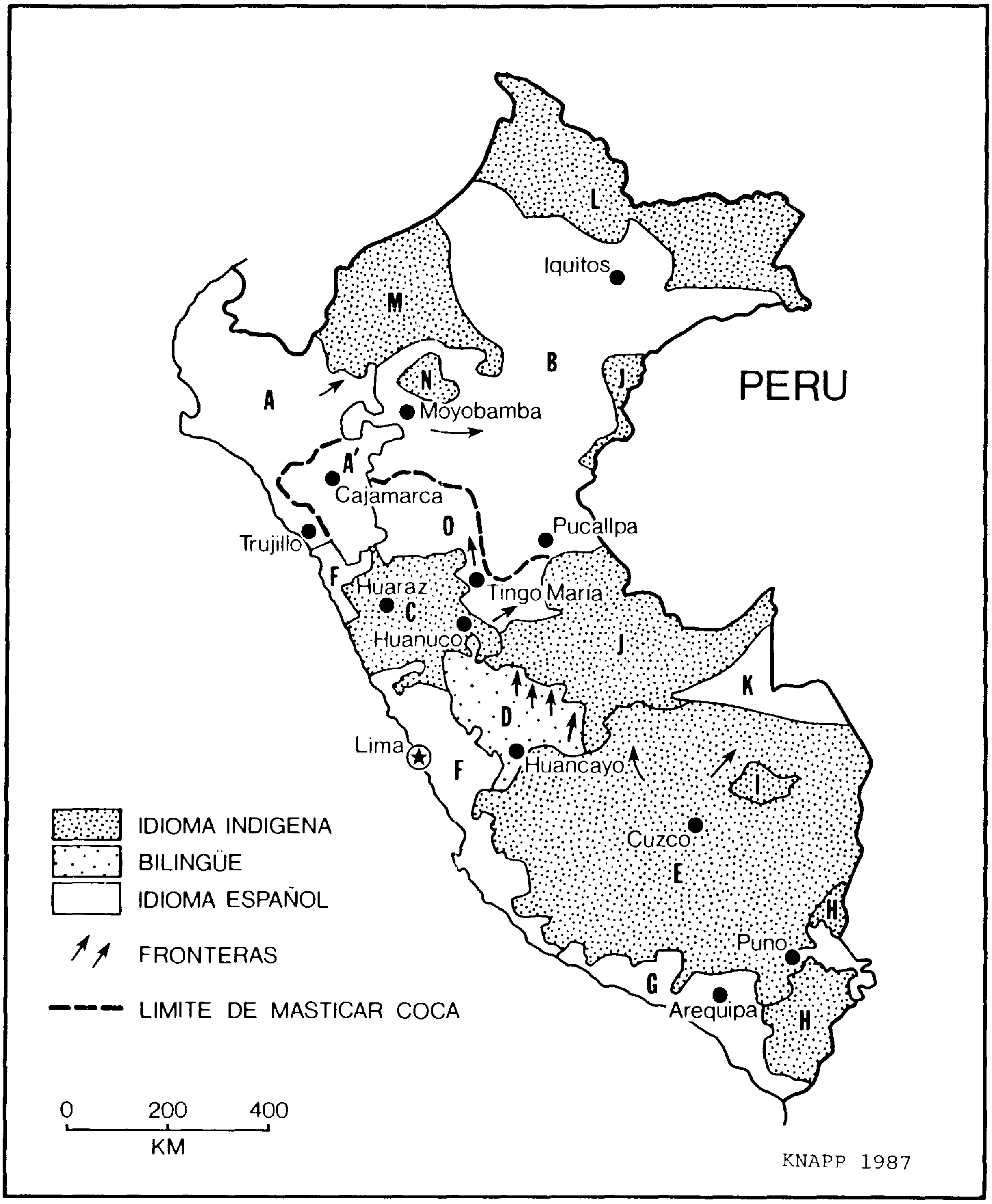
Northeastern Peru (B, map 5). Although this region is predominantly Spanish speaking, there are numerous small Amazon Indian groups and some larger "acculturated" groups such as the Jeberos, the Lamistas and the Cocama-Cocamilla. The dominant culture is the *ribereño* culture, apparently a diffusion from the Moyobamba region beginning with the nineteenth-century rubber boom, although there may also be elements of acculturation dating from the Jesuit mission activities in Mainas. Throughout the region there are strong similarities in dialect, music, and cuisine (Alberto Chirif, personal communication).

Ancash-Huánuco Quechua Region (C, map 5). The boundaries of this region correspond with the area of Quechua domain, except to the southeast, where the boundary is the limit of the nucleus. This region assumed its modern form in the nineteenth century, when, according to Kubler (1952), a wave of reindigenization occurred during an economic depression. The region differs from the southern Peruvian Quechua region (Region E) in that the dominant dialect of spoken Quechua is Quechua I (or Quechua B) rather than Quechua II (Parker 1963; Torero 1964, 1974). In addition, certain traits of southern Peru, such as llama herding, are no longer significant in this region.

Central Peruvian Region (Region D, map 5). Until 1961, this region was part of the Quechua domain; however, it has experienced a rapid decline in Quechua monolingualism and in Quechua speech. To a considerable extent, peasants classify themselves as peasants (*campesinos*) rather


PERU
Lima
HUAYOPATA
>1½% NEGRO, 1940
0
200
400
KM
KNAPP 1987

Map 4. Rural Cultural Regions of Black Population in Peru


PERU
Iquitos
L
M
B
N
J
A
Moyobamba
A'
Cajamarca
O
Pucallpa
Trujillo
F
Huaraz
C
Tingo María
Huanuco
J
K
D
Lima
F
Huancayo
I
Cuzco
E
H
Puno
G
Arequipa
H
IDIOMA INDIGENA
BILINGÜE
IDIOMA ESPAÑOL
FRONTERAS
LIMITE DE MASTICAR COCA
0
200
400
KM
KNAPP 1987

Map 5. Modern Peru, as Defined by Language, Presence or Absence of Coca Chewing, and Presence or Absence of Indian Minorities

than as Indians. Ethnic process has probably been affected by the spread of commercial agriculture, the influence of mining, and the importance of railroads. This region has an active frontier to the east, where Arawakan cultures are being isolated and displaced by colonists.

South Peruvian Quechua Region (E, map 5). This is the heart of the "*trapecio andino*" and is marked by a notable dominance of Quechua (dialect II [Mannheim 1985]), as well as such traditional subsistence traits as llama herding. For many anthropologists this is the Andes. It is the largest and most populated of the indigenous culture regions in any Andean country and the presence of the Inca capital, Cusco, adds to its distinctiveness. Any system of political or administrative regions that ignores this region is obviously culturally inappropriate. On the basis of recent evidence, this region is extending via colonization into the *selva* to the north.

Central Peruvian Coast (Region F, map 5). This is the heartland of "Creole" culture. There is a greater Quechua presence than in the *norteño* region, due to migration from the adjacent highlands, but the reasons for the region's distinctiveness are to be sought in the viceregal heritage of Lima, the distinctive way of life developed on central coastal plantations with slave labor (note the strong black presence as indicated in map 4), and the subsequent migrations of Chinese, Europeans, and others to the core of the Peruvian economy.

Arequipeño Region (G, map 5). This region is centered on irrigated highland basins and cool coastal valleys where Quechua is present but not dominant. As elsewhere on the coast, slaves were important in colonial times, but blacks are less evident on the modern ethnic map than in central coastal Peru (map 4). In general, there is less ethnic diversity here than on the central coast.

Aymara Region (H, map 5). This is the domain of Aymara speech and completes the *trapecio andino*. There is some indication that this region is culturally distinctive in other ways, e.g., because of the importance of quinoa. The region extends across the Bolivian border to the east.

Amaraceri-Machiguenga Region (I, map 5). This appears to be the largest area of Madre de Dios where indigenous language speakers are still predominant over Quechua-speaking immigrant gold seekers.

Arahuaca-Pano Region (J, map 5). This region includes the Campa and Shipibo-Conibo peoples, two of the most numerous Amazon Indian groups in Peru. Although the Shipibo appear to have good prospects for continuing domination of their rural territory, the Campa have been subject to continuing conflicts with in-migrating colonists from central and southern Peru.

Tahuamanu Region (K, map 5). This area appears to have received migrants from Brazil, Bolivia, and Cusco, in addition to having indigenous settlements.

Indigenous Region of the Peruvian North (L, map 5). This region is marked by the presence of numerous distinct Indian groups, including the Napo Quechua, Bora, Huitoto, Yagua, and Ticuna. The region continues north into Ecuador, where Huaorani and Quichua are important.

Jibaroan Region (M, map 5). This region contains many groups, but the most numerous are members of the Jibaroan language group, including the Aguaruna. This region continues into Ecuador, where it includes the Shuar and Achuar. The peoples of this region are relatively well organized, and it seems likely that this will remain an area of Amazon Indian dominance for the foreseeable future.

Chayahuita Region (N, map 5). This is dominated by Chayahuita culture.

The Frontier of Huánuco (O, map 5). This region is an area where recent migrants have predominated over indigenous people. The migrants in general are not Quechua speaking, but coca has traditionally been culturally important and there is currently much coca agriculture. The major thrusts of colonization are along the upper Huallaga to the north and toward Pachitea in the east.

Culture Regions and Frontiers

One of the attractions of using the culture region approach is that the Peruvian frontier can be subdivided culturally. In general, there are five Peruvian frontiers:

1. *Frontera norteña* (A/M). This involves an expansion of *norteño* culture into areas of Jibaroan culture, often associated with rice growing.
2. *Frontera San Martinense* (B). This is the oldest frontier and is largely complete, as the original culture from Moyobamba has spread to the Brazilian border.
3. *Frontera de Huánuco* (O). This coca frontier has been very active.
4. *Frontera central* (D/J). This frontier has involved the most critical conflict of cultures, as the Campa have been actively encircled or pushed back by settlers. Local road construction has played a vital role. Due to the proximity of Lima, commercial agriculture is most feasible here. Foreign migrants, such as the Germans of Oxapamba, have been locally important.
5. *Frontera cusqueña* (E). The search for gold has driven highland Quechua speakers into the sparsely populated lowlands of Madre de Dios.

Conclusions

The results of this preliminary report may prove useful to a variety of persons interested in Peruvian cultures. For planning purposes, the cultural map of Peru should be consulted as often as maps of soils, vegetation, altitudinal zones, or political subdivision. Only thus can a future that takes into account the aspirations of Peru's varied ethnic groups be assured.