CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIÓN Y PROMOCIÓN DEL CAMPESINADO

RETURN MIGRATION IN THE ALTO PIURA REGION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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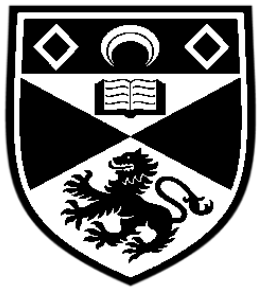

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PRESENTATION

INTRODUCING CIPCA

The Centre for Peasant Research and Promotion (Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado, CIPCA) has an important tradition of developing research about socioeconomic and cultural processes in the Piura region, particularly in rural spaces. As part of this, CIPCA has

contributed to knowledge production focused on making key aspects of this reality visible. The Covid-19 pandemic has revealed latent structural problems in our society and has generated new phenomena. One of the principal ones being that of return migration, not only because of its abrupt start, but also because of its consequences for people's lives and the destinations they have returned to.

The study "Return migration in the Alto Piura in the context of Covid-19" marks a small milestone for CIPCA. It has allowed us to restart research activities and is an opportunity to shape public policy proposals to ensure that they reflect the current reality of rural Peru.

The following research analyses the dynamics of return migration to Alto Piura in the context of the pandemic and promotes discussion of a set of issues that vulnerable populations face, which, apart from the initial displacement that the media covered extensively, has not been adequately addressed by the State. This omission is grave given that this phenomenon has impacted the lives of at least 165 thousand Peruvians, and in the case of Piura specifically, approximately 22 thousand people. Thus, up until now, the phenomenon of return migrants has not been addressed by public policy. There is no existing State agenda concerning the situation faced by these return migrants nor the territories which have received them. It is therefore necessary to deepen knowledge about return migration resulting from the pandemic, in order to develop and implement policies oriented towards providing a state response able to account for the multidimensionality of this phenomenon. This response should be inter-sectoral and will demand the coordination bewteen different levels of government.

CIPCA's efforts towards this have been possible thanks to the invaluable support of the University of St Andrews, Scotland, United Kingdom, with whom CIPCA has an institutional relationship since 2017, generated by their researchers' interest in consulting information about the El Niño Phenomenon collected in our Information Centre. The research project "Phenomenon of opportunities", which the University runs in alliance with a range of institutions from our country, developed from this early collaboration. From this partnership, as well as our analysis of the realities of the problems in the Piura region unveiled by the Covid-19 pandemic, came the idea of the research project entitled "Going back to my rural roots: Covid-19 and return migration in northern Peru". We express our appreciation to the University team, Professor Nina Laurie, Dr Ana Gutiérrez, and the Research Assistant Oliver Calle.

Finally, we thank the anthropologists María Luisa Burneo and Abdul Trelles, the main researchers on this study, for taking on the double task of contributing to restarting research activities in our institution and conducting research which included fieldwork in the midst of pandemic restrictions. We are also thankful to the CIPCA professionals who contributed to the conceptulaistion and implementation of the study, as well as the to the reflection, analysis, and revision of the document; particularly, Christian Flores, Henry García, Mario Rufino, Rocío Farfán, and Magaly Maza.

In these Covid-19 pandemic times, which have unveiled the inefficiencies of the State, social debt, as well as territorial and gender gaps, we hope this research will contribute to the reflection about migratory processes and their effects in rural spaces. In addition, we hope it brings attention to the situation of vulnerability faced by migrant people, particularly women; to the urgent need to address

family agriculture, the main economic activity of these rural spaces; to the important role of organisations, particularly *rondas campesinas* (autonomous peasant patrols); and to the responsibility that the State has to confront this problem.

Rosa Prieto Mendoza
Executive Director
CIPCA

PROLOGUE THE UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

Since it was first founded in the early 1970s, CIPCA has played an important protagonist role in understanding the multiple and changing challenges facing *campesinos* in Piura, and more widely in Peru. This current publication, based on the first rigorous, empirical study to be undertaken and published on the experience of return migration in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Peru, follows CIPCA's long and esteemed history of critical development interventions. It builds on a collaboration with the University of St Andrews, Scotland, UK, which first started in 2017, as part of the 'Finger Printing El Niño Costero' research project led by Newcastle University and funded by the Natural and Environment Research Council of the UK (NERC). This initial collaboration later developed into a formal partnership with the University of St Andrews to explore El Niño desert-food-systems in Sechura. This work has been funded by the Scottish Funding Council Global Challenge Research Fund (SFC GCRF) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council of the UK. Other collaborators on this research are the University of Piura, the National Agrarian University, La Molina and the NGO PRISMA.

As COVID-19 hit Peru, the challenges facing those seeking to return to their rural roots became of collective grave concern. Our 'Rapid Response' SFC GRCF grant was awarded in June 2020 to conduct the research presented here, just as Peru and the UK were coming out of lockdown. We are very grateful to the SFC GCRF for funding this 'first of its kind', original work, carried out by our CIPCA colleagues under very challenging circumstances, and also to the AHRC "Fishing and Framing in the desert" for facilitating the translation of findings into English.

The story of returnee migrant 'Rever', one of those shared in the pages that follow, shows clearly how intimately return migration stories are linked to wider life trajectories before the pandemic, which, in turn, shape imaginaries of possible futures. Rever, who had gained a knowledge about fishing in coastal Piura, was later able to put his skills to good use in Pucusana in order to finance his journey back from Lima. We have yet to know how the current moment will change any of us in terms of how we will be able imagine livelihoods and lives afterwards, what is clear, from this study, however, is that knowledge and understanding gained 'in place' are made mobile through our lives and experience.

Nina Laurie,
University of St. Andrews
October, 2020.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of the novel coronavirus pandemic, the president Martín Vizcarra decreed a state of sanitary emergency and the "compulsory social isolation"[1] on the 15th of March 2020, thus restricting mobility in the national territory. Although necessary, one of the effects of the lockdown was the loss of income for millions of Peruvians. Six months after its implementation, it has been calculated that around 6 million 740 thousand Peruvians have lost their jobs.[2] This is largely

[1] Decreto Supremo 044-2020-PCM, 15th of March, 2020.
[2] Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI) (2020). Informe técnico *Perú: Comportamiento de los Indicadores del Mercado Laboral*: trimestre abril, mayo, junio 2020, p. 3.

explained by the fact that Peru is a country with a labour market characterised by a high percentage of informal jobs – between 65% and 70% - and precarious; in fact, it is one of the region's countries with the largest index of informal labour.[3]

Peru is characterised by having a significant history of migration from the countryside to the city through different periods of the 20th Century (Dobyns and Vázquez, 1963; Martínez, 1961, 1980, 1984; Brougère 1986, 1992; Celestino,1972; Degregori and Golte, 1973; Fuenzalida et al., 1982; Cotlear, 1984. Cited in Golte, 2012: 253). This history explains why a significant percentage of inhabitants of the main cities, such as the capital, Lima, are migrants from diverse parts of the country. Therefore, when following the outbreak of the pandemic, the decree for compulsory social immobility was established, hundreds of thousands of citizens who had lost their jobs in cities, were migrants who had settled there beforehand. After having noticed that the lockdown would be longer than initially presumed, many of these people decided to undertake the journey to return to their places of origin, the majority if which are situated in rural areas across the different regions of Peru. Given necessity and the lack of a clear government strategy to guarantee them a minimum income, a section of this population opted to undertake the return by foot, as a form of survival strategy. Media coverage during the month of April called this group of citizens "*los caminantes*" (the walkers) and referred to the return as "*el éxodo del hambre*" (the exodus of hunger). However, this study reveals that the return migrants had different migratory trajectories when the pandemic started: not all returned in the same conditions. In some cases, we see that the returnees had very precarious jobs; in other cases, they had achieved relative labour stability, but had seen themselves affected by measures such as the suspension of employment just one month into the start of the lockdown. Furthermore, there were those who had saving of between 2 thousand and 3 thousand soles, who, having evaluated their situation as a scenario of high uncertainty, chose to invest in paying for their journeys to return to their places of origin.[4]

As research has shown, migratory processes do not respond to only one type of life strategy (Zoommers, 1998; De Janvry y Sadoulet, 2000). In this sense, to assume that, in a general way, those who decide to return do so in a definitive way or that those who took up the return journey had settled permanently in their chosen cities, does not reflect the reality. Therefore, to adequately analyse the process of return to rural areas generated by the pandemic, we must first recognise the distinction between permanent and seasonal migration. In the latter, there is a variety of migration types, such as the so-called pendular migration, which generally respond to mobilisation in the territory to access temporary employment in recurring seasons. For example, the harvest of certain agro-exporting products at the coast, which attracts migrants from Andean areas; or the '*altoandinas*' (high Andes) area migrations, which occur after the harvest, towards the '*ceja de selva*' (forest area at the foot of the Andes) to work in cocoa, coffee, and coca leaf harvest and then return to the community of origin for the harvest period.

These established territorial flows are important in understanding the dynamics of return in the context of the pandemic (Burneo and Castro, 2020; Mesclier, 2020; Salas 2020). Importantly, the lockdown started in the month of March, when many seasonal migrants where away from their places of origin, while another group were residing permanently in cities. Therefore, as is discussed

[3] World Economic Forum. It's time to tackle the informal economy problem in Latin America. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/03/it-s-time-to-tackle-informal-economy-problem-latin-america/ (visited 6.8.2020).

[4] The government approved the suspension of employment on the 21st of April 2020 with the Decreto Supremo 011-2020-TR.

throughout the study, not all returns were conceived as a definitive project. One important group, young people especially, consider their return to their places of origin to be a temporal measure – likely to last for a few months or a year -, until the pandemic is under control.

This diversity of situations was not recognised by the government nor portrayed in national media communications. Generally, reports and news outlets showed only one face of the migrants: that of the "*caminantes*" who, supposedly, returned in a type of reversed exodus from the city to the countryside. Six months after the mass returns, the reality shows different nuances of the experiences among return migrants. There is a fundamental need to understand the dynamics of migrants' return, as well as their future projects and expectations, also differentiated by gender, so that government actions can incorporate return migration into their public agenda, taking into account the complex scenarios that underpin it. Beyond the specific measures – such as the supreme decrees – to manage the return (transfers, shelters, and quarantines) up until now, the phenomenon of return migration has not been addressed as a topic for public policy. No State agenda currently exists based on first-hand information about the situation of returnees and the regions that receive them.

It is therefore urgent to know about the process of return migration for the elaboration of policy oriented to planning around the issues that arise from these displacements. According to what authorities interviewed in the study pointed out – local governments – are not trained in resolving these issues and lack efficient coordination from their respective regional governments and with the central government to deliver what is needed. An adequate multi-sectorial and multi-level policy to address the situation of return migrants and their communities demands answers to multiple questions. For example: who are the return migrants? What are their migratory trajectories? How have local governments responded to this phenomenon? What strategies have organisations, such as the '*rondas campesinas*', and rural communities carried out? What adaptation strategies have returnees rolled out? Additionally, we must ask: how was the process of reinsertion into rural places carried out? What is the situation and what are the vulnerabilities of returnee women in particular? What are returnees' plans and projects in the short, medium, and long term? And what tensions or problems are being generated as a result of this phenomenon in areas of reception?

With the aim of contributing to these discussions, this study analyses the dynamics of return migrations to Alto Piura in the context of the pandemic. The study was carried out between the months of July and August of this year, with intensive fieldwork over two weeks in different districts and rural areas of the provinces of Morropón, Huancabamba, and Ayabaca.[5] During the study, 71 interviews were held with returnee men and women, as well as with 13 local authorities and organisation representatives.[6] This has been unique and difficult fieldwork, which imposed many challenges on the team. A strict biosecurity protocol was implemented to protect our interviewees, and our own team (see Annex).

The document is organised in six chapters. The first chapter consists of a brief historical revision and a contextualisation of migration in Peru and, in particular, of the flows of return migration to Alto Piura in the context of the pandemic. The second chapter studies the migratory dynamics of the provinces of Morropón, Ayabaca, and Huancabamba, from the testimonials collected during the fieldwork. The third chapter, a descriptive section, presents a characterisation of the people who returned, with data about the places from which they started the return process and their

[5] The fieldwork was carried out between the 22nd of July and the 4th of August 2020. The scope of data collection is detailed in the methodology section.

[6] The details from the interviews carried out and their distribution by type of actor and gender can be seen found Table 2.

socioeconomic conditions prior to lockdown. The fourth chapter analyses the return process, including the criteria which defined the decision to return, the different moments of the lockdown and the routes travelled to get to their places of origin. The fifth chapter analyses the process of reinsertion in their localities and communities and includes the initial actions of institutions and local and communal organisations in facing their return; additionally, it examines the current socioeconomic condition of the returnees. Finally, the sixth chapter picks up on the perceptions of return migration of local authorities and leaders, as well as the expectations and projects of return migrants in the short and medium term, and the perceptions they have about the situation they are going through.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the economist Christian Flores, member of the CIPCA, who accompanied us throughout the fieldwork; without his important work this study would have presented a much larger challenge. We also thank Víctor Velásquez Vílchez, "Vitucho", for ensuring we would arrive safely to the planned location and for, through his anecdotes, making us laugh even in the difficult moments of fieldwork. Finally, our sincere gratitude to the local authorities and leaders who facilitated the compilation of information and, especially, to the returnees who received us in the porches of their homes.

Methodology

General approach

This study aimed to understand the phenomenon of return migration and to gather its nuances and particularities, from the voices of the very actors. The study proposes to describe the situation of returnees, identify trajectory types and explore the different types of reception – and any potential tensions – as well as understand the reasons for return and future expectations.

Given the particular characteristics of the context we are currently facing, this is also an exploratory study, not only because of the newness of the phenomenon, which continues to develop, but also given the complexity of carrying out fieldwork during the pandemic. This demanded the implementation of a series of extraordinary measures and a strict biosecurity protocol, but only allowed the application of a limited range of research techniques. For example, it was impossible to carry out focus groups and participative workshops. Interviews in closed spaces over 60 minutes were also prohibited; interviews were always carried out with the necessary social distance, following biosecurity protocols, and in the open air. However, while these conditions prevented the deployment of techniques which we would have wished to use in an ideal context, they also demanded that we be more systematic in the elaboration and application of our research instruments – adjusting guidelines and practicing them beforehand – and more attentive to the recording of information – not least because each interview was worth a particular effort.

This has thus been a huge professional and emotional challenge for the fieldwork team, who were also in quarantine for the two weeks prior to going into the field and subjected to tests before starting the trip and after concluding fieldwork. This team included Víctor Velásquez Vílchez, the team chauffer and member of the CIPCA for many years, whose presence allowed the team to adhere to all the conditions previously established which, in turn, guaranteed the security of the team and interviewees.

Image 1. Interview with the mayor of Centro Poblado El Higuerón. Photo by Christian Flores.

The institutional presence and the years of work conducted by CIPCA in diverse rural areas in the provinces of Morropón, Huancabamba, and Ayabaca were fundamental to the successful conduct of fieldwork. The confidence authorities and leaders had in the institution allowed them to open their doors to our work. Given the qualitative nature of the study, we did not seek statistical representation by province, but rather a depth of testimonies and a diversity of cases and histories of return migrants that would allow us to describe their trajectories and identify potential trends. The localities and homesteads where the fieldwork was carried out were selected based on three criteria: i) previous conversations with authorities who confirmed the arrival of hundreds of returnees to their localities; ii) a review of the registers of returnees recorded by health centres in the districts and populated centres, who kindly shared these with the CIPCA team several weeks prior to our fieldwork. These registers facilitated the identification of homesteads and districts with a significant presence of returnees of different ages; and iii) contact and prior agreement with authorities and/or social leaders to entry into the areas

Province	District	Locality/Populated Centre
Morropón	San Juan de Bigote	San Juan de Bigote
	Santa Catalina de Mossa	El algodonal
	Salitral	Malacasí
Huancabamba	San Miguel de El Faique	Capital distrital La Capilla El Higuerón
	Canchaque	Maraypampa Coyona
	Ayabaca	Capital distrital

Ayabaca		Olleros
	Paimas	El Algodonal

Table 1. Areas of data collection. Own creation.

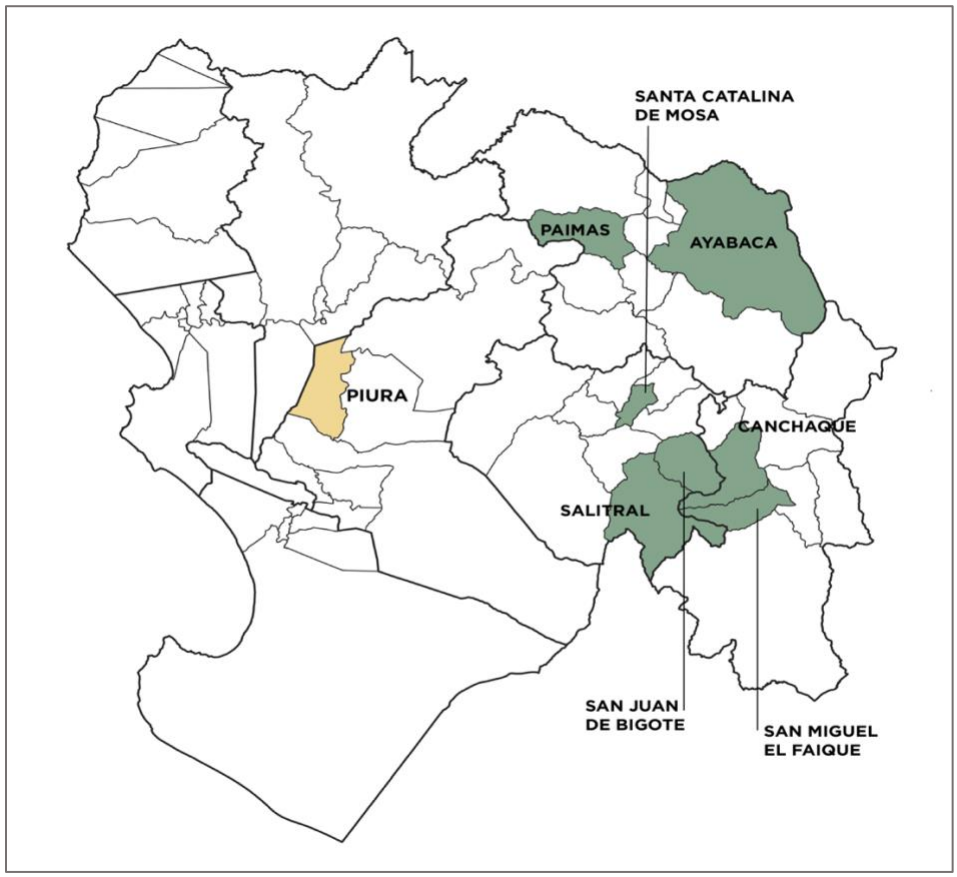


Figure 1: Areas of data collection. Departmental Map. Own creation.

Aims

The primary aim of the study is to describe and analyse the dynamics around return migration in Alto Piura. The interest in this field reflects CIPCA's long history of prior engagement in the area, which has involved a commitment to the population and the local social organisations. In order to achieve the proposed aim, four specific objectives have been established.

O1: Describe and create a characterisation of the return migrants in the context of Alto Piura, in the provinces of Morropón, Huancabamba, and Ayabaca.

From this objective, the following questions are asked: Who are the return migrants (age, gender, productive activities, incomes)? What are their migratory trajectories? What is their place of origin and what routes have they used to return? In what economic and social conditions are these migrants returning? What factors motivate their decision?

O2: Analyse the response of local institutions and organisations in dealing with return migration and migrants.

To develop this objective, the following questions are asked: What has been the response of local governments when facing return migration? What strategies have rural organisations, such as *rondas campesinas* etc., and communities carried out? Have reception strategies been differentiated by gender and age? What types of problems have started to arise from return migration in the locality?

O3: Analyse reinsertion and readaptation strategies of return migrants in their local territories, with an emphasis on the situation of returning women.

The third objective seeks to respond to the following questions: What adaptive strategies have the returnees deployed? What has been their reinsertion process into rural places? What social dynamics

have emerged from this process? What particular situations did women face in returning and what is their current situation? What do returnees currently do in their places of reception?
O4: Analyse the perceptions of/from the return migrants and the narratives that emerge about the return process, differentiating the perceptions by gender.
The fourth specific objective points to the following questions: What narratives, perceptions, and tensions have emerged from returnees towards communities of reception, and what have been those of the communities of reception towards the returnees? What expectations do returnees have about their return to their places of origin? How do they feel about returning to "their land"? What are the returnees' plans and projects in the short, medium, and long term? What future possibilities do women returnees see?
The actors
Data collection was centred around three types of actors:
Return migrants. Men and women who have returned to their places of origin in the provinces of Ayabaca, Morropón, and Huancabamba.
Local authorities: Mayors of district municipalities and populated centres, political authorities (governor or other positions of power) and presidents of district level farmer communities that have received return migrants.
Leaders of social organisations: Members of social organisations present in the territories, like *rondas campesinas*, neighbourhood federations, or others, involved in the management of receiving return migrant.
In addition to this, the study has a particular interest in addressing the situation of female return migrants and identifying points of vulnerability. For this, we sought equality in the application of data collection techniques: we were able to interview a total of 37 women and 36 men returnees (see Table 2). In the case of local authorities and leaders, 8 men and 5 women were interviewed.

Place / Detail	Semi-structured interviews			Trajectories		Closed interviews		Total
	Migrants		Authorities	Migrants		Migrants		
	Men	Women	M/W	Men	Women	Men	Women	
Huancabamba	4	3	5	2	1	8	9	32
Morropón	2	4	5	1	0	6	6	24
Ayabaca	2	4	3	1	3	8	7	28
Total	8	11	13	4	4	21	23	84
					40		44	

Table 1: Sample distribution by data collection technique, type of actor, gender, and scope of study. Own creation.

Data collection techniques
The study design used a combination of mixed methods for data collection which allowed for in-depth collection of information, as well as having a broader idea of the general characteristics of return migrants and their territories. These techniques were: i) semi-structured interviews, ii) migratory life trajectories, and iii) closed interviews.
Closed interviews These were carried out with return migrants and aimed to acquire precise information about their profiles, their socioeconomic characteristics prior to the lockdown and current moment, and the trajectories used throughout their return journey. This technique used a

closed question guide about specific topics. For this, a questionnaire for data collection was elaborated in a survey format.

Semi-structured interviews. These were applied to the three types of actors– returnee men and women, local authorities and leaders -, given their knowledge and/or experience on the topic, the local contexts and surroundings. This technique allowed us to obtain in-depth and detailed information about the territorial dynamics, the return process itself, and the experiences and perceptions of returnees.

Life trajectories (with an emphasis on migration). This technique aimed to recognise the dynamics of migration throughout the lives of the returnees and their narratives with respect to their migratory experiences. Although this kind of technique tends to centre itself on the timeline of the actors' lives, for this particular study its application was centred around what has been named *migratory trajectories.* Through this technique, life stories of returnees were collected, whose transversal axis is that of migratory experiences, including their return migration in the context of the pandemic.

CHAPTER 1

MIGRATIONS IN PERU AND THE CONTEXT OF RETURNS TO RURAL AREAS DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

Migrations: A long story of territorial mobility

Peru has a long history of migrations and mobilities in the territory. There is extensive literature from different approaches on the theme since the 1950s. The migratory process which has received the most attention in social sciences is that of Andean migrants to the coast, particularly to the city of Lima. And, as Jurgën Golte points out in his rigorous evaluation of migration in Peru, "although there was also a mass migration towards the Eastern slopes of the Andes, it did not arouse the same interest as did the conversion of cities by migrants[7]" (2012: 253). By the start of the 1980s and with the Agrarian Reform underway, the anthropologist Matos Mar wrote his classic book *Desborde Popular y Crisis del Estado. El nuevo rostro del Perú en la década de 1980 (Popular Overflow and State Crisis. The new face of Peru in the decade of the 1980s)* (1984), in which he portrays the new face of Lima city and society, transformed by migrants, particularly Andean.

Peru in the second half of the 20th Century is composed of a highly mobile society (Golte and Adams 1987, Golte 1999, cited in Golte 2012: 254). The motives for migratory movements are varied, but they share the common element of a search for a better personal or family situation, which has been conceived as such in notions or ideas of development, understood as "progress" or "modernity" (2012: 254). In this way, Matos Mar's *Popular Overflow and State Crisis* (1984), referred to the search for a modernity constructed from below and for the people, from a set of strategies – social capital, parental networks, informality -, which configure contemporary Lima and who mobilise themselves in demographic and social terms. These migratory movements stem from personal and family life decisions and strategies, which in many cases imply a change of permanent residence. This does not mean, however, that family or community ties are broken, but rather that they are extended over territories. On the other hand, in 20th Century Peruvian history, there have also been migratory processes triggered by internal violence, mainly in the 1980s. These moves were a response to critical situations, which generated forced displacement in many cases (Degregori, 1996).

Although the emphasis of migratory studies in Peru has been put on movements from the countryside to the city, these are not the only ones that exist in the country. In fact, internal migration – generally pendular or seasonal – is fundamental for understanding the current dynamics of rural families, as demonstrated by the National Censuses of 2012 and 2017. These migrations imply a set of displacements between different points within the national territory, for example, between the southern area of Ayacucho and Huancavelica and the coast of Ica, during the harvest months for exportation; or in the case of the northern area, thousands of people circulate from the mountain ranges of Cajamarca and Lambayeque towards the coast during the peak seasons for recruiting labour. However, spatial flows are not related only to agricultural employment, but can also be related to fishing, mainly artisanal fishing, and diverse services, such as construction.

These processes are inscribed in a rural space, which has undergone significant changes during the last three decades. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Peru, and also occurs in different Latin American countries (Giarraca, 2001). To address these changes analytically, a series of authors proposed a focus on the *new rurality*, which shifted understandings of rural territories as not only

[7] "*si bien existía igualmente una migración masiva hacia la vertiente oriental de los Andes, ésta no suscitó el mismo interés que alcanzaba la conversión de las ciudades por los migrantes*"

agricultural, but also multifunctional (De Grammont and Martínez, 2009). Similarly, a more dynamic perspective was introduced in order to understand the diverse strategies deployed by rural families yet articulated within urban dynamics and spaces. In the article *Cambios en la ruralidad y en las estrategias de vida en el mundo rural (Changes in rurality and in life strategies in the rural world)* for SEPIA XV (2014), Alejandro Diez points out that the focus of the new rurality implies analysin "the multiple interrelations between urban and rural spaces which supposes and explains a series of transformations of the rural space and modifies with it our perspectives of the analysis[8]" (2014: 5). One of the important factors in this interrelation is the circulation of people between both spaces and between multiple intermediate points (farmers, miners, fishers, craftsmen, agricultural entrepreneurs, and people employed in services).

The most recent data, from the years 2000 and subsequently, highlight that internal migration is characterised by the movement of citizens from rural Andean spaces to coastal cities, among which along-side Lima, in the south Ica, Arequipa, Moquegua, and Tacna, are important and in the north Chimbote, Trujillo, Chiclayo, and Piura stand out. As such, between the years 2012 and 2017, approximately 3 million people were mobilised, while for the year 2015 there were 7 million internal migrants throughout all of Peru. The 2017 National Census informs that over a period of 5 years, 11.4% of the national population migrated, with the coastal districts being those whose population increased the most. By contrast, 88.7% of mountainous districts have lost population due to migration.

Focusing on the context of the study, Piura stands out as the third region in the country with the greatest number of people, after Cajamarca and Puno, who migrate to other regions. At a departmental level, its rate of internal migration is of 2.5% which is manifested in two ways: i) seasonal, when for example, the harvest period in agro-export countries and large farms begins; and ii) permanent, when migrants stay in a city to live there definitively. Of the eight provinces, Talara, Paita, Sechura, Sullana, and Piura are those which attract a larger quantity of migrants, while Ayabaca, Morropón, and Huancabamba are the provinces from which most migrants leave; thus, internal migration in Piura is characterised by the mobility from mountain to coast. In Piura, rural women (51.9%) tend to emigrate more than men (48.1%). On the other hand, migrants tend to dedicate themselves to different productive activities, those which stand out include fishing and aquaculture, as well a work in services such as accommodation and restaurants, commerce, transport and construction, among others (International Organization for Migration, 2015).

The most recent studies on migratory processes have been centred around the relation between rural spaces and rural youth. These conclude that a large quantity of young people who decide to migrate from rural contexts to urban ones do so more from necessity than because of a desire to leave their places of origin. They decide to migrate in search of better educational conditions (C. Urrutia and Trivelli 2019) and young rural women are those who migrate most (Boyd 2019). Migration becomes a strategy to improve economic and educational levels, and to acquire territorial capital[9], which allows rural young people to develop long-term life projects (A. Urritia and Trivelli 2018). In this sense, migration continues to play a central role in the lives of the rural youth. In these processes, intermediate cities that have better transport infrastructure, greater economic dynamics and more

[8] "*la interrelación múltiple entre espacios urbanos y rurales que supone y explica una serie de transformaciones del espacio rural y modifica con ello nuestras perspectivas de análisis*."

[9] The authors understand territorial capital as the "set of elements at the disposal of the territory, both material and immaterial, which may constitute, in a certain way, assets, and otherwise, difficulties" (The concept of 'territorial capital' is taken from the European Leader Observatory 1999: 16, cited in A. Urrutia and Trivelli 2018).

varied educational offers, have taken on a fundamental role because, by not being forced to migrate to Lima, they have allowed young people not to become fully separated from their places of origin. In addition, intermediate cities are considered less hostile spaces, in which less discrimination is suffered and where experience is gained that allows them to value their places of origin (H. Asensio 2019, A. Urrutia and Trivelli 2018). Thus, recent rural migration is a process marked by the mobilisation of young people, unlike the migratory processes of previous decades.

The trends described above, however, respond to a scenario prior to that unleashed by the Covid-19 pandemic in Peru in March 2020. The lockdown measures adopted by the government led to thousands of migrants, settled in various cities across the country, to seek to return to their places of origin. Towards the end of April 2020, the government registered 167 thousand requests from Peruvians seeking to return to their places of origin, Piura being the destination with the highest number of people registered (22,000). In the following months, return migrations continued and not everyone was recorded in official registers. Some authors raised preliminary ideas, highlighting that this "return" should not be understood as unidirectional and definitive in all cases (Burneo, M. and Castro, A. 2020), but rather be seen as a process of mobility rather than migration (Salas 2020). The argument was that not all the returnees were permanently settled in the cities anyway; while some were former migrants who were helpless when they lost their jobs during the "compulsory social isolation" imposed by the Peruvian government, others were people who were there for study reasons (for two or three years) or temporarily for seasonal employment reasons. The next section outlines the scenario in which the returnees decided to return and the context of the migrations in the provinces of Morropón, Huancabamba, and Ayabaca is presented.

The context of return migrations and returnees to Alto Piura (Morropón, Huancabamba, and Ayabaca)

On March 15th, 2020, President Vizcarra's government decreed a lockdown at the national level. This measure of "compulsory social isolation" was announced together with a State of Emergency that imposed the total closure of borders and transportation. The lockdown imposed a halt to productive activities and the closure of all commercial establishments. In this sense, the rights to freedom of assembly and mobility and free movement in the national territory were restricted. In this context, hundreds of thousands of Peruvians were left without jobs and without income.[10] Compared to the same trimester of 2019, during the second trimester of 2020 the population in employment has fallen by 39.6%. As Jaramillo points out, the bulk of this fall is concentrated in urban areas, where employment fell by 49%, and in the case of the self-employed, it had fallen by 42% by the end of July (in mid-June this fall reached 64%). In the informal sector, employment fell 65% at the end of June and 45% at the end of July. The most vulnerable were young people under 25 years of age, since 53% of them lost their jobs from the beginning of the lockdown until the end of July. In the country's cities, employment fell by 42% in the second trimester of the year (Ñopo and Pajita, 2020). The situation is even worse for women, who have been the most affected: in the second trimester of 2020, there was a 45% drop in the female EAP compared to the first trimester of the year, compared to a lower rate of 35% in th male's. Given the situation, Trivelli concludes that "(…) the drop in

[10] Source: Miguel Jaramillo (2020) in: https://elcomercio.pe/economia/peru/anatomia-de-una-debacle-economica-el-mercado-laboral-peruano-en-el-2020-por-miguel-jaramillo-opinion-noticia/?ref=ecr (visited 01.09.2020)

employment (comparing the mobile year 2019/2020 with the similar period 2018/2019) is 1.5 times higher for women (9.2% vs 6.1%). And these figures will continue to worsen".[11]
This situation, especially for the informal sector, implied that thousands of migrant families - permanent or temporary - lost their income. Faced with the difficult socioeconomic situation, added to the other factors that we present throughout the report, these people decided to start the process of returning to their places of origin.
When the return process escalated, the central government implemented a series of emergency measures and decrees, but these were insufficient to tackle such a broad and complex problem. Additionally, the current government focused on those called "the walkers" and on migration from Lima and other departmental capitals on the country's coast. However, the exit points were diverse, as are the situations and realities of the returnees. Fieldwork has made it possible to account for a series of different trajectories: on the one hand, only a small group benefited from the measure ordered by the central government and executed by the regional governments; and on the other hand, the majority returned to their places of origin using clandestine transport – trucks warehouses, *custers*, vans and private cars -, which they organised using their own economic resources and social capital, such as networks of relatives or acquaintances "of the people" that provided transportation by sections and legs of the journey until reaching the final destination. Likewise, many returned from peri-urban provinces and areas in different parts of the country.

Rules approved by the Peruvian State referring to returnees [12]

Decreto de Urgencia 043-2020, dictates extraordinary measures with the aim of acquiring goods and services necessary for the quarantine accommodation and food for people who are obliged to be displaced in the country, as a result of the declaration of a State of Emergency given COVID-19.

Resolución Ministerial 204-2020-MINSA, approves the Technical Guide for the exceptional transfer of people who are outside their ordinary residence as a result of the application of the social immobilisation provisions, modified by the Resolución Ministerial 337-2020-MINSA.

Resolución Ministerial 097-2020-PCM, approves the Guidelines for the transfer and quarantine of people who are outside their habitual residence, as a result of the measures of social isolation due to the National Emergency for COVID-19.

Resolución de Secretaría de Descentralización 008-2020-PCM/SD, updates the Guidelines for the transfer and quarantine of people who are away from their habitual residence, as a result of the social isolation measures for the National Emergency given COVID-19 approved by Resolución Ministerial 097-2020-PCM.

The map presented below (Image 2) is based on the closed interviews applied to 44 returnees. In it, the diversity of places from which the returnees returned to Alto Piura is displayed. The map also

[11] "(…) la caída en el empleo (comparando el año móvil 2019/2020 con similar período 2018/2019) es 1,5 veces mayor para las mujeres (9,2% vs 6,1%). Y estas cifras aún seguirán empeorando": Carolina Trivelli (2020) brings to light the vulnerability of women and employment loss, in: https://iep.org.pe/noticias/columna-una-respuesta-desproporcionada-por-carolina-trivelli/ (visited 11.09.2020)

[12] Specialists from the Defence Institute proposed that the returnees be recognised as internally displaced persons. They recommend the application of the law number 28223, Law of the internal displaced persons, and they question the guidelines issued by the presidency of the council of ministers (Resolución Ministerial N.° 097-2020-PCM) as they are insufficient to guarantee a safe return for internal migrants during confinement. Seen 5-09-2020: https://www.idl.org.pe/ley-de-desplazados-debe-aplicarse-a-los-retornantes/

shows that many were found in coastal provinces of the same department of Piura or in peri-urban areas of the coast, such as the Virú district in La Libertad. From the semi-structured interviews carried out in the field, it was found that a group of the returnees were seasonal or temporary migrants.[13]

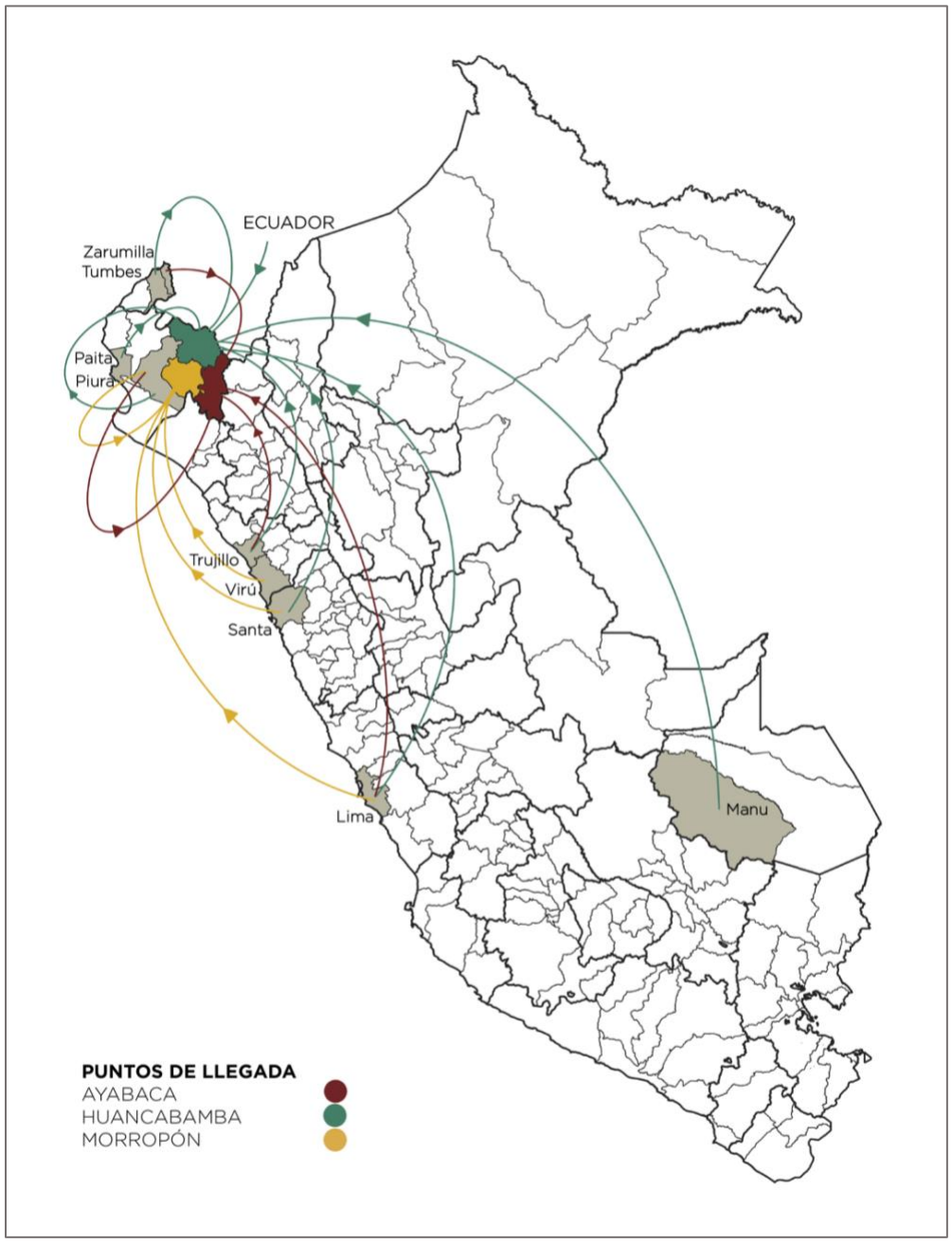


Image 1. Points of exit and arrival of returnees to Alto Piura. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation..

The flow map (Image 3) shows the intensity of returns from the places identified in the closed interviews. It shows the places of origin and points of arrival in Alto Piura (Morropón, Huancabamba and Ayabaca). It is observed that the majority of return flows come from the city of Lima and from the department of Piura itself, particularly from the coastal provinces: Sechura, Talara, Paita, and Piura city.

[13] This topic is described in-depth in Chapter 3 of this report.

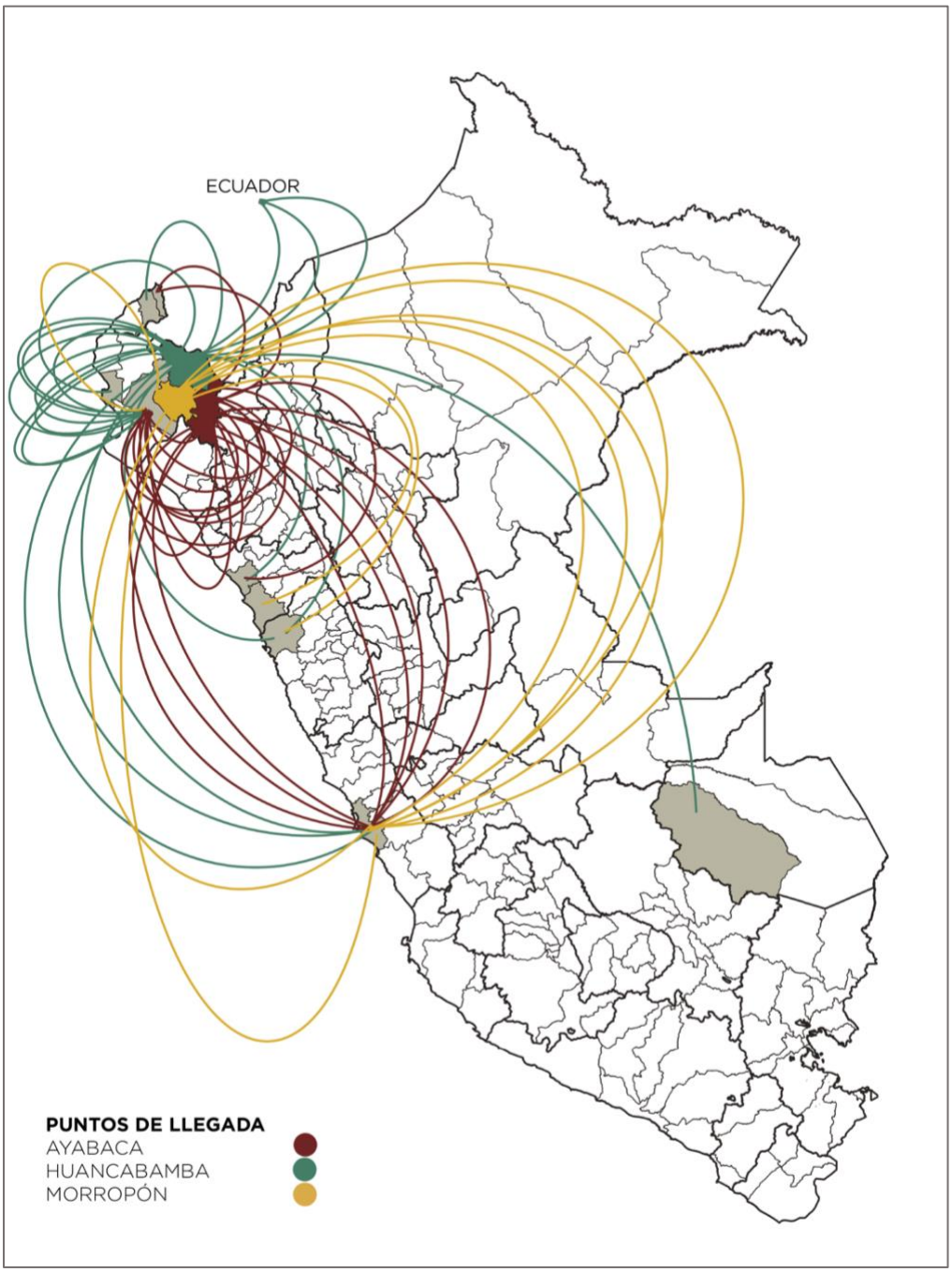


Image 2. Flows and areas of departure and arrival of returnees going to Alto Piura. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

An overview of the returns to Alto Piura from the registers of health centres

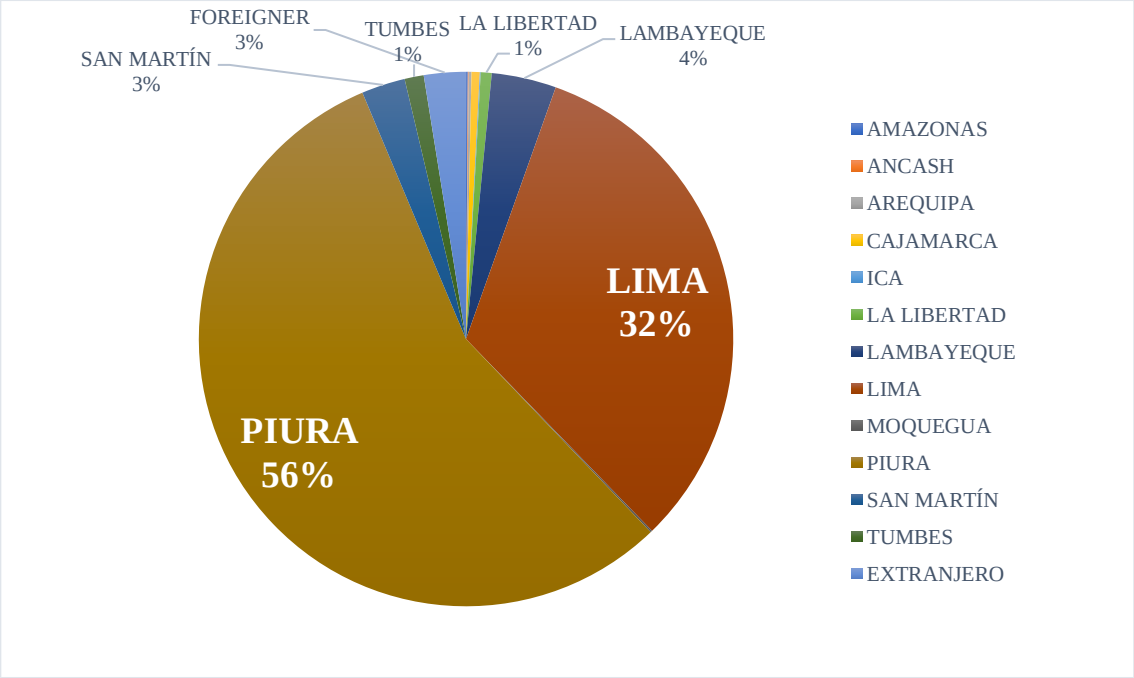
The health centres in the different districts of Alto Piura did an important job in registering the returnees.[14] The local governments, and, particularly, the peasant '*rondas*' and communities and health centres, managed the accounting of the returnees, who had to register in the "gates"[15] placed at

[14] The registration of the returnees in rolls was a local initiative aimed at keeping a record and having some control over the people who returned. The information was collected by the members of the health centers and, in many cases, filled out by hand or in scattered files. Today, they are of utmost importance and relevance for public policy and academic purposes, because there are no official records or information about those who returned without using the transportation organized by the government.

[15] Term which refers to the stop and control points in the territory to prevent the passing of passers-by.

the access and exit points of each district and in the health centres of their respective localities. Although complete information is not available for all cases, we were able to access information on the place of departure, the date of departure, the sex and the age of those who returned to some districts of Alto Piura.[16] In total, the registers contain information on 2,066 returnees (1,240 men and 826 women). The general overview that we present below uses the information from these registers, but not the information collected during our field work; however, we consider that its reading is of utmost importance to contextualize the research.

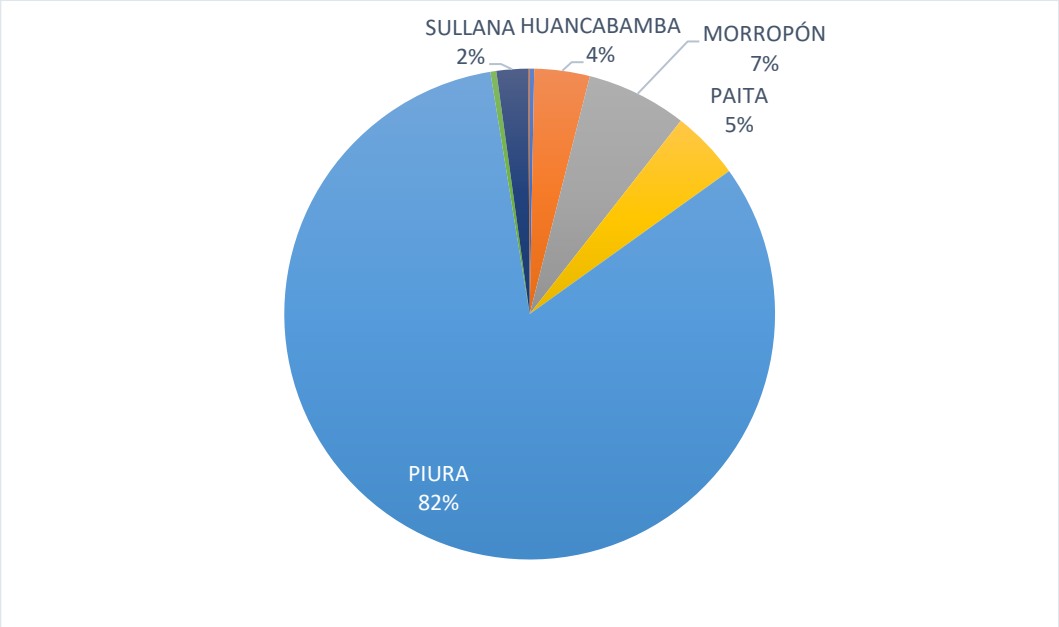
A first important issue, which coincides with the field findings (see flow maps: Images 2 and 3), is that the vast majority of returnees (56%), undertook the trip from various cities of Piura, and another important group (32%) travelled from Lima, at (see Graph 1). They have also returned from other cities in the country, particularly from the coast, and from some border areas such as Frías or Loja, in Ecuador.



Graph 1. Returnees to Alto Piura by place of departure. Source: Health centres. Own creation.

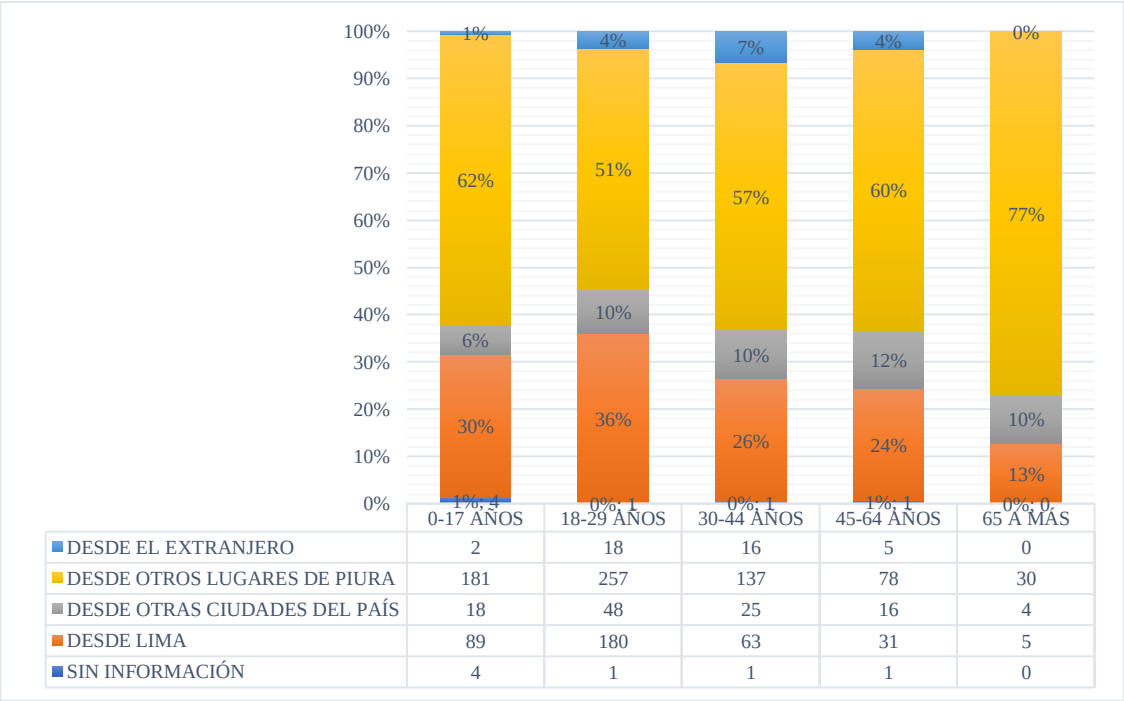
In the case of those who have returned to Alto Piura from other parts of the department (Graph 2), the province of Piura stands out, and particularly the city, with 82% recording having come from here. We cannot fail to point out that 11% of returns from the departmental capitals came to the Alto Piura provinces of Morropón and Huancabamba.

[16] The registry data collections information of a total of 2,066 men and women returnees (Lacking departure information: 251 cases. Lacking arrival dates: 846 cases).



Graph 2. Returnees to Alto Piura from other provinces of Piura. Source: Health centres. Own creation.

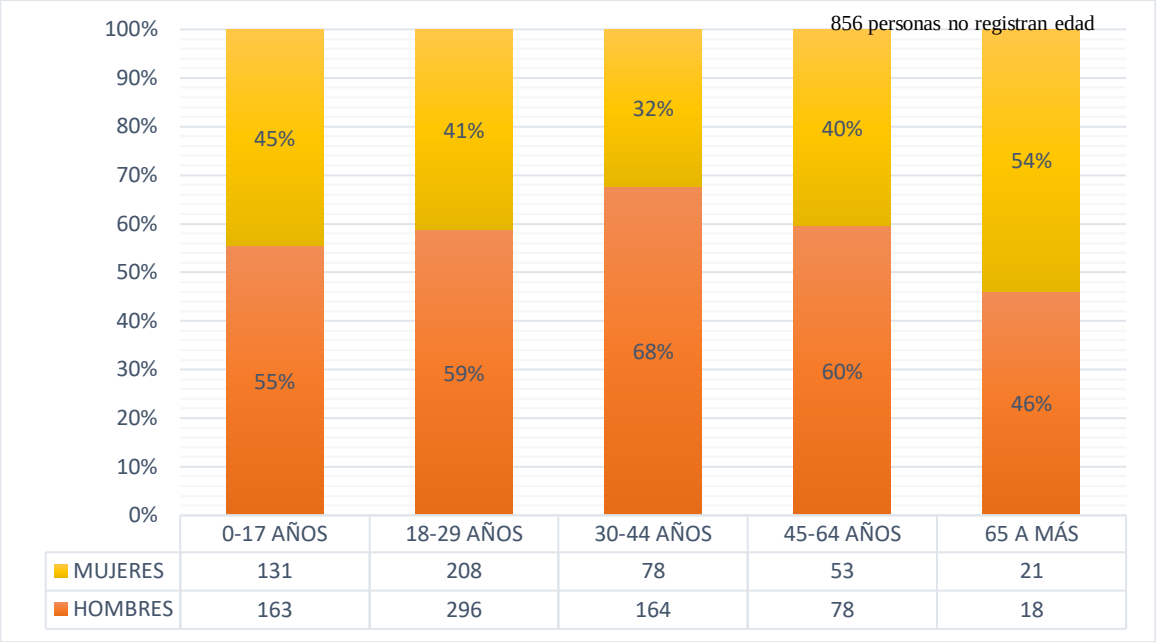
When crossing the variables of place of origin and age groups, it becomes notable that older adults, over 65 years of age, returned in greater numbers from Piura (77%) and, to a lesser extent, from Lima (13%). This varies in the case of young people between 18 and 29 years of age, who returned in greater numbers from Piura (51%) and, in second place, from Lima (36%).



	0-17 AÑOS	18-29 AÑOS	30-44 AÑOS	45-64 AÑOS	65 A MÁS
DESDE EL EXTRANJERO	2	18	16	5	0
DESDE OTROS LUGARES DE PIURA	181	257	137	78	30
DESDE OTRAS CIUDADES DEL PAÍS	18	48	25	16	4
DESDE LIMA	89	180	63	31	5
SIN INFORMACIÓN	4	1	1	1	0

Graph 3: Returnees to Alto Piura by age group and place of departure. Source: Health centres. Own creation.

Regarding the sex and age of the returnees to Alto Piura, on average, 60% of these are men; women make up the remaining 40%. Most of these are young people between 18 and 29 years old (25%). Furthermore, in the age group between 18 and 29 years, more men (59%) than women (41%) have returned, and the greatest difference in sex by age group is found among those between 30 and 44 years old, in which the percentage of male returnees is double that of women (see Graph 3).



Graph 4. Return migrants by age group and sex. Source: Health centres. Own creation.

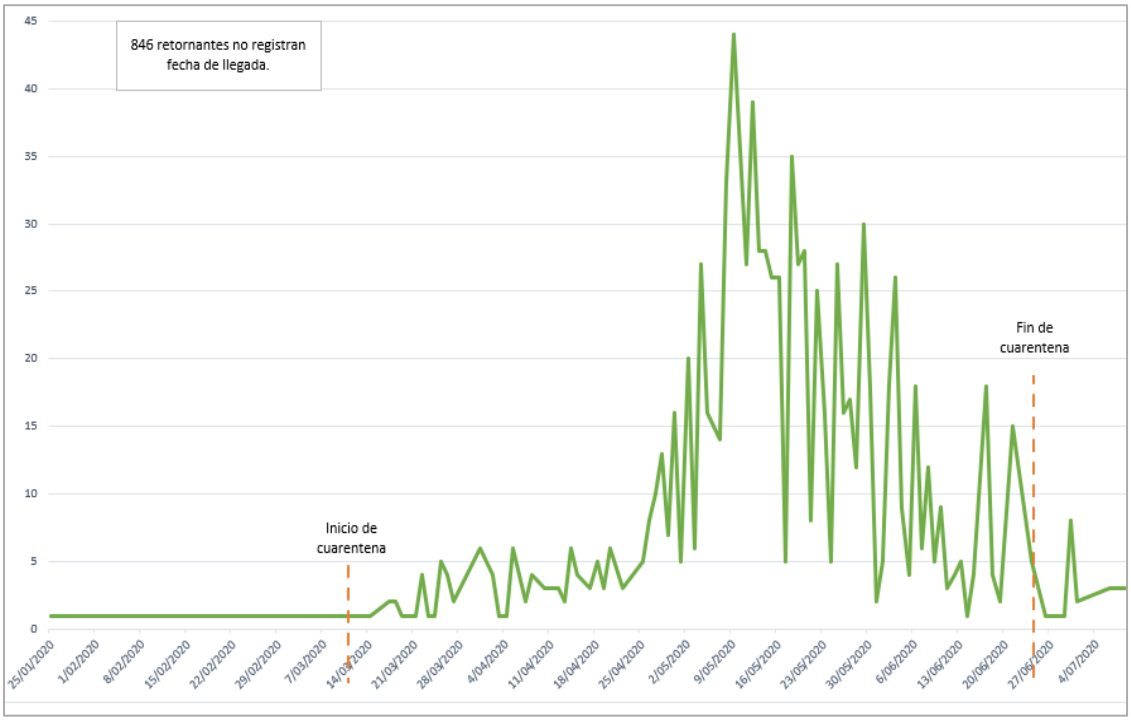
This information coincides with the fieldwork findings: it was found that the majority of returnees are made up of young couples with small children. On the other hand, those over 45 years old represent, on average, 6% of the total number registered. This data is relevant since future projects and the expectations of returnees vary depending on the life course stage at which they encountered the pandemic. As we will see in chapter six, intergenerational differences are a point to take into account for local planning and public policies that are developed to address the issue of returns.

Finally, we have considered it relevant to collect the temporary dynamics of the returns to Alto Piura. The analysis of the information shows that the majority of returns were undertaken after the first lockdown period (see Graphs 3 and 4). The returnees waited and respected the government's measures; in the interviews, many indicate that they expected to return to their activities after 15 days. However, after several weeks, and coinciding with the delay in the approval of the "universal bond", these people were without income and without state aid. It is only when the lockdown was extended for the fourth time, around week eight of the pandemic, that the vast majority of returnees to Alto Piura embarked on the return journey. This coincides with what was collected in the interviews we conducted during the fieldwork, which allow us to delve into the reasons for the return (chapters four and five).

Most of our interviewees point out that they did not make the decision just after the pandemic began, but that it was made weeks later, as a result of the evaluation of a set of factors: absence of government aid, savings, household situation, little possibility of recovering employment, travel risks, travel expenses, among others. As can be seen in Graphs 5 and 6, the majority of returns occur between weeks eight and twelve of the lockdown (and their respective extensions), with a peak in week ten. These figures, based on a total of 1,220 returnees,[17] could be indicating that most of them were waiting - or evaluating - a possible scenario in which they could have stayed in the cities of residence. Our interviews in the field, carried out with a total of 71 returnees men and women, and 13 authorities and leaders, account for this period of uncertainty in which some thought that the pandemic would last less time or that they would receive greater support from the central or regional governments. Six months later, very few of those interviewed reported receiving any of the

[17] Of 2,066 returnees that appear in the registers, 846 people did not complete the information for this variable (date of arrival in the town). For this reason, this graph is based on information from 1,120 male and female returnees.

vouchers.[18] Only 5 of the 63 returnees participating in our closed interviews (44) and semi-structured interviews (19) indicated that they had been beneficiaries of a bond granted by the government before deciding to return; in one of the cases, cashing the bonus had not been possible.



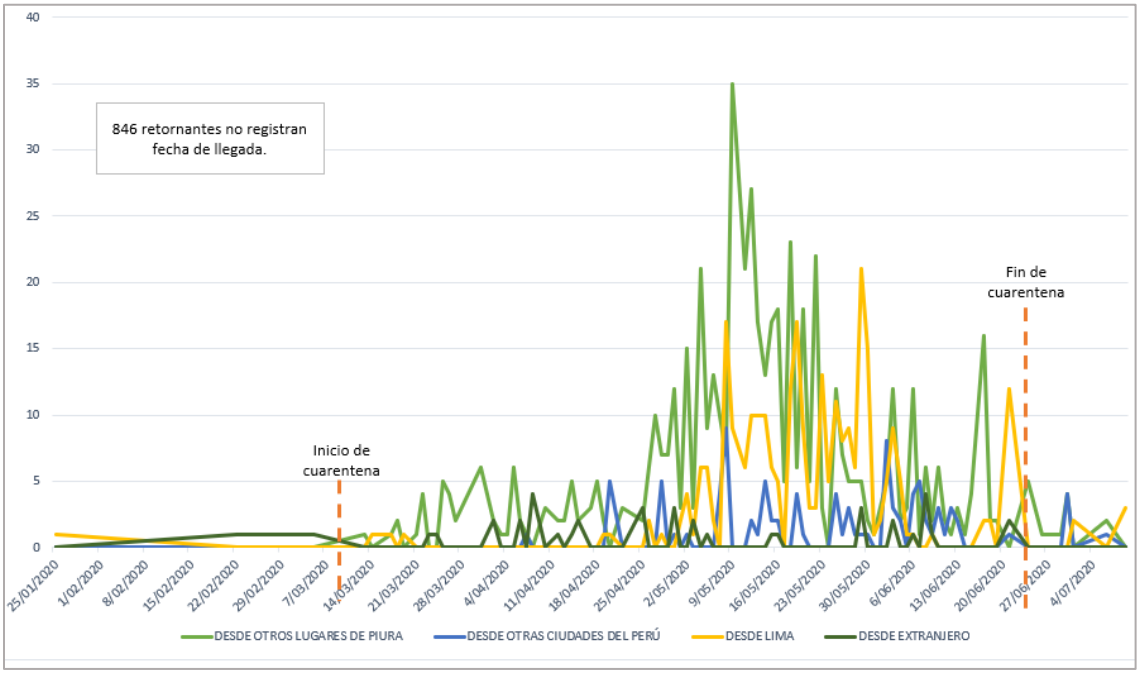
Graph 5. Returnees to Alto Piura by their given arrival date. Source: Health centres. Own creation.

Graph 5 shows that the return curve begins to rise from week seven of lockdown (the week of April 25th), which coincides with the announcement made by President Vizcarra on April 23rd, to extend the lockdown for the third time, until 10th of May. But the highest peak of returns occurs around weeks nine and ten of the quarantine (between May 9th and 25th), that is, just after the announcement of the fourth extension of the lockdown - made on May 8th - until the last week of May. These findings highlight the importance of drawing attention to the situation of constant uncertainty in which people found themselves during lockdown; even more so for those who had lost their jobs. The constant extensions of compulsory lockdown and the absence of a universal bond (until the end of May), seemingly played a definitive role in the critical decision of many returnees.[19]

[18] Government bonds: **'I stay at home' bonus**. This first bond was delivered for a value of S / 380, it was directed to around 2.5 million families in situations of poverty, extreme poverty or at risk of falling into it. With the extension of the lockdown, it was extended to a second payment of S / 380 each (the distribution began on March 23 - first payment - and the beginning of May - second payment -). **Independent Bonus**. Aimed at 800,000 self-employed households in high-risk situations given the pandemic. According to the latest information provided by the State, there would be a total of 773,288 beneficiary households (it was distributed from April 8 - first payment - and from April 28 - second payment -). **Rural bond.** Aimed at 837,000 households living in poverty and extreme poverty in rural areas, it is S / 760 and was delivered in a single payment since May 13. **Universal Family Bonus**. This S / 760 bonus is aimed at those households whose members did not receive an income greater than S / 3,000 per month during the state of emergency. Initially, the Government announced that this measure would benefit 75% of the country's households, that is, around 6.8 million families (its distribution began on May 20; however, due to distribution problems, delivery times were lengthened, and this lasted until August). **Second Universal Family Bond.** On July 28, President Martín Vizcarra announced the creation of a second S / 760 bond that would benefit some 8.5 million Peruvian households, but this was officially approved on August 20.

[19] Lockdown began March 15 (ended March 30); March 26 - 1st extension (ended April 12); April 8 - 2nd extension (ended April 26); April 23 - 3rd extension (ended May 10); May 8 - 4th extension (ended May 24); May 22 - 5th extension (to end on June 30). One month of lockdown is celebrated. June 26 - it is announced that quarantine will be lifted from July 1, but then the state of emergency is extended until July 31.

Finally, a new announcement on May 22 dictated a fifth extension of the lockdown, this time for a month. This announcement coincided with new return peaks between weeks twelve and thirteen. Graph 6 shows the return dates according to the weeks of lockdown and places of origin. The green line follows the returns that occurred from cities in the department of Piura, and the yellow line, from Lima. Returns from Piura intensify towards week eight, peaking at week ten, while the returns from Lima intensify in week ten and twelve. It is interesting to note that arrivals from Lima are one or two weeks later than those from the department of Piura itself. This could be explained both by the complexity of making the decision and by the greater planning that a return from Lima required: organising long journeys, including vehicle changes, and the transfer of all their belongings. Despite this, a significant increase in returns from Lima to Alto Piura can finally be observed in the week of May 30, just a few days after the announcement of the fifth lockdown extension, this time for a month.



Graph 6. Frequency of returns by date and place of departure. Source: Health centres. Own creation

To summarise, the information presented allows us to point out that the returnees to Alto Piura were scattered in different cities, especially on the country's coast, with a significant weight in the capital, Lima. However, most of the returnees were established - permanently or temporarily - in other cities of the department of Piura itself. In addition to this, it is important to collect not only the variety of return points, but also the fluctuations in arrival times to Alto Piura. Graphs 5 and 6 show that the returns did not occur *en masse* as soon as the pandemic began, but rather after more than a month and a half. During this time, the returnees saw their situation deteriorate, to finally decide to undertake the return trip, assuming, in many cases, the risks of contagion and dangerous situations. This is confirmed by the interviews, in which the returnees indicate that they could have "held out" a little longer in Lima or other cities if they had a clearer picture or had a government bond in the first few two months. Faced with the uncertainty, many decided to return. On the other hand, had the government managed internal transfers differently, perhaps those who were going to return due to the loss of their jobs would have been able to return to Alto Piura with a small amount of capital. Instead, with everything they spent on the way - including payments to the police at different points on the road - they arrived at their places of origin in a precarious situation, with just a few soles in their pockets.

CHAPTER 2

MIGRATORY PROCESSES IN THE ALTO PIURA

Alto Piura is recognised by its authorities as an area with a high migratory mobility. Migration processes tend to be both temporary and permanent, and are characterised by the mass migration of young people, men and women, of school age or of legal age, who, given the limited educational and job offer in their places of origin, travel to the coastal areas to seek better opportunities for personal and family development. The provinces of Alto Piura have different migratory dynamics that have been consolidated over the last 20 years, in which the places migrants travel to, the activities they move to engage with, and their life expectancies differ. This section will highlight the types of migration and migratory dynamics in Alto Piura, especially those of returnees to the provinces of Ayabaca, Huancabamba and Morropón.

Types of migration

Authorities and migrants recognise that agriculture in Alto Piura is an unattractive and limited activity. One of the reasons is that water is a scarce resource and the water infrastructure is precarious, hence expanses of land cannot be cultivated. Additionally, job and educational opportunities for young people are scarce in all three provinces, as there are no colleges with attractive careers and the job on offer are poorly paid.[20] As a consequence, migrating is an alternative strategy to access better job opportunities and a greater range of educational opportunities.

This situation has given rise to the consolidation of two different, but not exclusive, types of migratory processes in Alto Piura during the last 20 years: i) temporary; and ii) permanent ones.

Temporary migration occurs among young people and adults who travel during the dry season to other provinces of the region and other nearby regions - such as Tumbes, Lambayeque, La Libertad, Cajamarca - or to Lima, in search of temporary jobs that allow them to supplement their income with agricultural activity. In these cases, migrants usually work for agro-industrial companies (Piura, La Libertad), as laborers for owners of medium and small farms, as fishermen (Tumbes, Piura), or as employees in companies across different sectors (textiles and plastics in Lima). The places to which they migrate depend on their network of contacts - family or friends -, the distance and the experiences of their compatriots. In addition, across the three provinces journeys are usually made between the months of December and March, although they can extend until June.

Another pattern is also formed by young people of school age, between 14 and 16 years old, who take advantage of the school vacations months to travel to nearby provinces or to Lima to visit members of their nuclear or extended family who live in coastal cities. On these trips, which are usually made with other members of their family between the months of December and March, young people take the opportunity to work as laborers or helpers in businesses, restaurants and shops, which allows them to save some money for their school expenses for the coming year. These cases become more frequent among young people whose parents, brothers or uncles reside permanently in the cities, and so allows the visit to last for weeks or months without representing a great economic expense.

Examples of specific cases that reflect this type of migration are those of Eddie and Jhonny, who have returned to Alto Piura as a result of the pandemic. Eddie who is now 40 years of age and is from the town of Coyona in the district of Canchaque (Huancabamba), travelled for the first time to

[20] In the interviews carried out, the interviewees pointed out that the pay for one day of working between 10 and 12 hours in private agricultural land fluctuates between S/ 30 and S/ 40, depending on whether it is sowing or harvest season. The daily pay for construction work fluctuates between S/ 40 and S/ 60, depending on the task and the specialisation of the worker.

Jaén –in the neighbouring department of Cajamarca– after finishing his fourth year of high school at the age of 16. He travelled with the idea of looking for work, to "have a way to support myself", given that he was unable to find work in Coyona. In Jaén, where his uncles lived, he worked as a labourer for a few months during the coffee harvest season. At the end of that first experience, he returned to Coyona with the idea of leaving his studies and dedicating himself to full-time work. Since then, and for over 20 years, he has constantly travelled during the dry season to the cities of Piura, Trujillo and Jaén to work as a labourer in construction or any other type of job he can find. By contrast Jhonny, aged 22, who is from the El Higuerón village in the district of San Miguel de El Faique (Huancabamba), travelled to Lima for the first time in December 2014, after finishing his fourth year of secondary education. He did so with the idea of getting to know the city, to visit his mother and get a job to save money for his school supplies. His trip lasted three months, and, although he could not find a job, he thought about returning to Lima after finishing his fifth year of high school, a plan that he fulfilled the following year.

Permanent migration is most widespread among young people who perceive limited work and educational opportunities in their places of origin. As the president of the *ronda campesina* in El Algodonal in Ayabaca argues, young people migrate because "they seek to excel, achieve their goals and improve their personal and family economies". Those who migrate permanently are usually young people who have just finished high school, have relatives who live in cities and know, from the experiences of their family or friends, that the chances of finding work are higher and better paid. Permanent migration processes are not always associated with fixed life plans; on the contrary, they tend to be processes whose consolidation depends on various factors, among which are job stability, an educational project, and personal and family progress. Throughout this process, the option to return is always present if not taken up. Indeed, *"young people leave for a long time, as far as I remember very few have returned, usually it is almost definitive,"*, says one authority. There are two main ways in which permanent migratory processes are consolidated: i) those who, without having prior migratory experience, leave their places of origin and do not return; ii) those who, after some experiences of temporary migration, perceive of better job opportunities outside their place of origin and little by little decide to settle permanently. A special situation is that of young women, who tend to migrate permanently at the end of their secondary studies when they see that the opportunities and job offers are primarily aimed at men in their places of origin.

Although the motivations to migrate tend to focus on two reasons - better job opportunities and greater access to education - the interviewees maintain that only a minority of young people really migrate to study, and that the vast majority, who come from rural areas, aim to work as their first option. However, these motivations are not exclusive: the majority of young returnees interviewed commented that, although they migrated mainly to look for work, studying was part of their life expectancy. Similar to what happens with temporary migrations, in these cases the places where people migrate to are also usually cities where they have close friends or family.

The case of Blanca, who has returned to Alto Piura from the city of Chimbote –on the coast of the department of Áncash–, exemplifies this type of permanent migration and illustrates the situation of young women. Originally from the province of Morropón and 38 years old, she left the Salitral district for the first time at the age of 16, having just finished her secondary studies. She travelled to Chimbote, where her sisters lived, with the idea of working, settling down and, if possible, studying a technical career. She remembers that she decided to travel because her family's economic condition was precarious and because the job opportunities for a young woman were minimal in her place of origin; thus, she points out that the expectations of personal progress for women, “beyond being a

housewife", were null. She has lived in Chimbote for more than 20 years, has worked intermittently as a seller in markets or clothing stores, was unable to study, and throughout that time period she returned to Salitral to visit her parents once every one or two years. Today, Blanca finds herself in a situation of uncertainty, without a job, without money, and has to find a way to support her father and her young son.

Local migratory dynamics

The types of migration and the places from which people migrate explain the migratory dynamics in each of the provinces. The places that host migrants are intermediate or large coastal cities, or in the high jungle (of the neighbouring departments), which have been consolidated in local narratives as those areas where "the opportunities for work or study are better." Thus, a long local migratory trajectory has been established and particular expectations are generated in each of these places that have become part of the migrants' life strategies.

In Ayabaca, migrants mainly opt for Piura (city), Sullana, Paita, Tumbes, Lima, and some border points with Ecuador. People tend to travel to Piura to work in restaurants or agro-industrial companies, and to a lesser extent to study. Men tend to migrate to Paita and Tumbes to engage in fishing activities, while women choose to work in small businesses or restaurants. Men who live in the border districts usually travel to Ecuador to engage in artisanal mining and agriculture; not many women travel to these areas.

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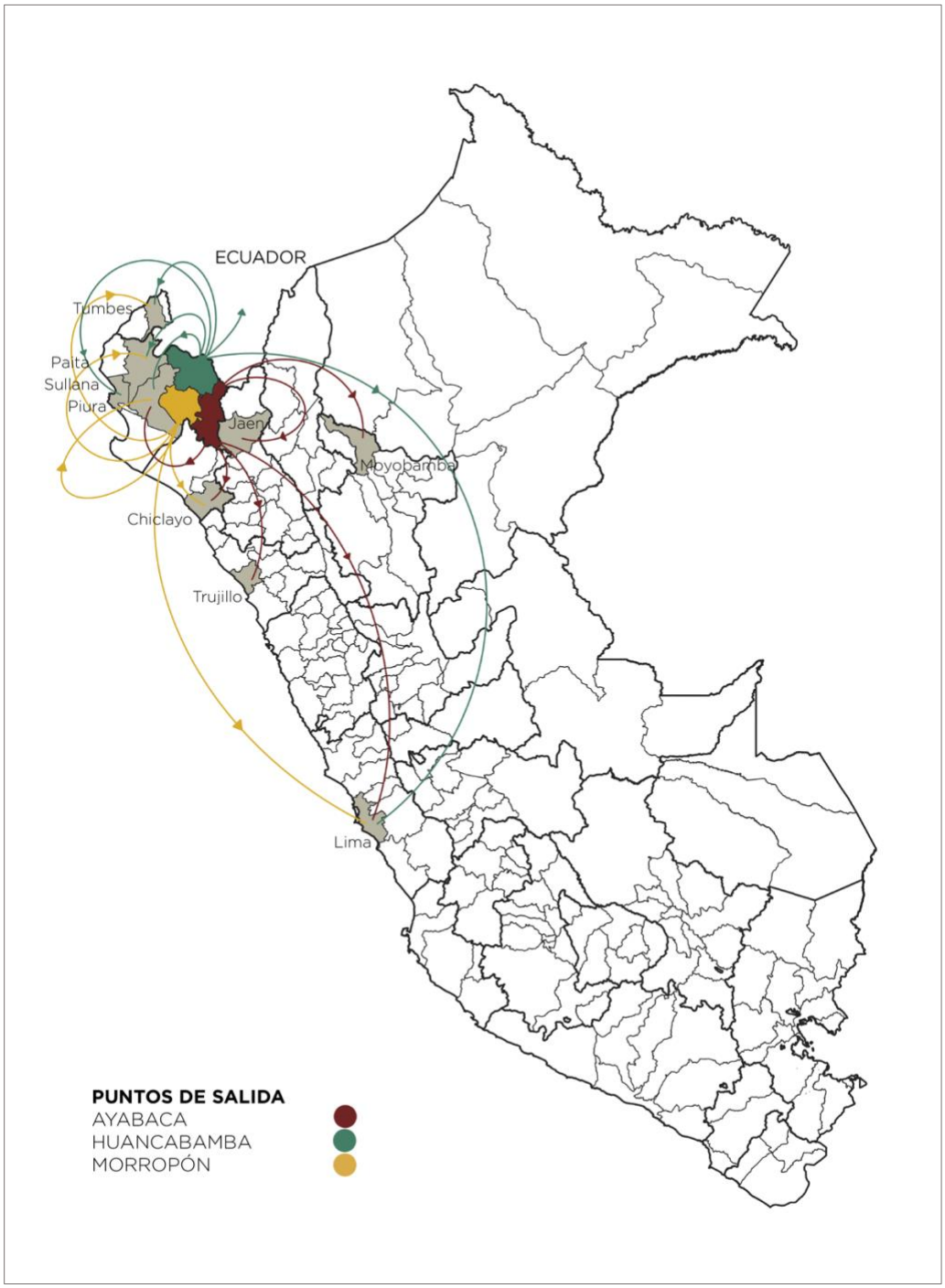

Image 3. Places of emigration in Ayabaca, Huancabamba, and Morropón. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation

In Huancabamba, on the other hand, the recurring places of migration are Jaén (in Cajamarca), Moyobamba (in San Martín), Piura (city), and the coastal cities of Trujillo and Chiclayo. Men often migrate to Jaén and Moyobamba to work as labourers in coffee and cocoa crops. Men and women usually travel to Piura to work in agro-industrial companies, particularly those dedicated to the export of grapes. Likewise, the men who travel to the city of Piura work in construction and the women in markets, restaurants or small shops. To a lesser extent, there are also young people who travel to Piura to study. Trujillo and Chiclayo are destinations to which people mainly travel to work in construction or other indeterminate temporary jobs. Finally, in the case of the province of Morropón, closer to Piura, the places to which people usually migrate are more diverse, but they are mainly concentrated in Piura (city), Lima and Chiclayo, and to a lesser extent Sullana and Tumbes. In Piura and Chiclayo, migrants engage in commercial activities, some set up their own businesses,

others sell food as street vendors, work in markets, restaurants or shops. In Tumbes or Sullana the activities are diverse: fishing, construction, transportation, agriculture.

The city of Lima deserves special attention. The capital of the country is perceived as the ideal place to migrate and as the city that offers greater job opportunities and personal advancement: "many people go to Lima because they say there is a lot of work generation," says a local leader. Lima is also perceived to be the city where the possibilities of independence and of "being my own boss", as another interviewee affirms, are higher than in the rest of the cities around the country. This discourse has been consolidated through the shared experiences of countrymen or relatives who have established themselves in the city with relative success. In this sense, these expectations and associated narratives encourage many migrants to travel to the city of Lima without being clear about what they will do and what they will work on, “they are going to look for it”, but with the objective of being in a better condition than they would be in their places of origin.

From the analysis of the semi-structured interviews and migratory trajectories, it has been made clear that those who migrate to any of the indicated places, intermittently move between formal jobs –but with short contracts– and informal ones. In fact, the interviewees affirm that, regardless of where they arrive, the jobs are usually temporary and these vary between working for agribusinesses or as labourers in farms, fishermen on an artisanal boat or, in urban areas, working as street vendors, guards, kitchen assistants, salespeople in businesses, among others. In some cases, they have contracts, but these are usually monthly or by trimester. Although these activities are replicated in all cities, it is in Lima where there are higher expectations of finding some job stability, through work in formal plastics companies, textile workshops or other forms of manufacturing.

The migration of young people is something that parents promote or support because there is a general idea among them that migrating is equivalent to being better off and opens a window of opportunities for their children’s’ progress. As one interviewee pointed out, *"a father sees the way the children leave, how to look for them, they are not happy here, because they have nothing to gain from it*”. This perception ends up pushing young people to start their migratory trajectories. Regardless of whether they end up being successful or whether they can be consolidated, it is clear to them that a part of their life strategies will be marked by the accumulated experiences of migration.

What has been stated up to this point serves to account for the different migration trajectories of the returnees who participated in this study. Next, two trajectories – those of adult men and young women - that outline local migratory dynamics will be evaluated in detail. Edar, from the town of Coyona (Huancabamba), 36, migrated to Piura for the first time after finishing his secondary education. He did so to enlist in the army so that he could gain new experience and see new places. At the end of his military service, he returned to Coyona and dedicated himself to working on the family farm, on his father's land. He was there for three years, when he decided to travel to Lima with the intention of looking for a better job and saving money to build his house. Already in Lima, he worked as a watchman. Remember that the salary was very low, so he decided to return to Coyona after a year. At the age of 30, he returned with the idea of dedicating himself to agriculture, but the situation was not the best. Soon after, he decided to travel to the city of Sullana to work in whatever he could in order to save money and build his house. He was in Sullana for five years, where he had various jobs, although he emphasises that they were very exhausting. His work day lasted 12 hours in a company that processed wool. Last year his boss told him that in addition to working during the day, he had to take care of the premises, so he started working 24 hours, without a break. He was in the processor during the day and took care of the premises at night. It is in this

context that this year, due to the pandemic, he returns to Coyona. In the future, Edar has the idea of travelling again to save as much as possible and be able to finish building his house and stay and live in his place of origin.
Daxina, from the urban center of Ayabaca and 21 years old, travelled to Trujillo for the first time at the age of 12 for a few months to visit her grandparents who live there. Four years later, when she finished her secondary education, she returned to Trujillo, this time to start her university studies, since the higher institutions in her place of origin did not have the careers that she wanted to study. She decided to go out *because "outside there are more opportunities than here, so I thought"*, since in Ayabaca the possibilities of improvement for women are limited: *"they dedicate themselves to being at home, there are few opportunities, if you go abroad there are more"* – she points out –, unlike the men who are dedicated to agriculture. She has returned to Ayabaca due to the pandemic but plans to return to Trujillo to continue her studies, graduate, and stay there or travel to another region where she can develop professionally. In the long term, she aims to get out of the country.

The previous cases show us how migration is understood as part of the very life strategies of many of the returnees from the three provinces of Alto Piura. In these, spatial mobility is understood as part of personal and family projects that aim to expand their future life possibilities. That being said, temporary or permanent migration should not be seen as an exceptional phenomenon, but rather as part of the very social dynamics that have taken hold in the last 20 years in these provinces. In fact, 25 of the 27 migrants interviewed in depth (19 in semi-structured interviews and 8 in migratory trajectories) had gone through more than one migration process.
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CHAPTER 3

CHARACTERISING THE RETURN MIGRANTS IN ALTO PIURA

This descriptive chapter aims to characterise the men and women who have returned to their places of origin in the provinces of Morropón, Huancabamba, and Ayabaca. The main source for this is the 44 closed interviews conducted with the returnees from Alto Piura.[21] Two aspects to be highlighted in this chapter are the following: the first is that, although an important group of returnees has been in cities for many years, another significant group of returnees is made up of seasonal migrants. The second aspect is that, despite the fact that many had lived in the city for more than a decade, they had not managed to consolidate their life projects and were in a situation of considerable socioeconomic precariousness. These trends are described in a general way in the following sections; the details of the cases will be seen from the migratory trajectories analysed in the fourth chapter.

General characteristics

The men and women who have returned to Alto Piura are mostly young. Among our interviewees, we found that the majority were concentrated in the age group 18 to 30 (27 of the total) followed by people between 31 and 50 years of age (14 in total). Only three people interviewed are older than 50 years (see Table 3). These figures show that it is the youth and young adults, those who are among the working-age population (PET), who have been the main protagonists in the return migration process.

Age	Men	Women	Total
18 to 30	13	14	27
31 to 50	7	7	14
Older than 50 years	1	2	3
Total	21	23	44

Table 3. Age groups of return migrants. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

According to our closed interviews, almost half of the returnees have completed high school, men and women alike. Likewise, we find that almost a third of the returnees have accessed higher education: nine of them have completed higher education - technical or university - and another four have incomplete university studies. When disaggregating the information by sex, we see that it is the returnee women who have achieved the highest educational attainment: a total of ten women compared to three men.

On the other hand, in the group of returnees who did not manage to complete their regular basic studies (EBR) - incomplete secondary school -, 8 male returnees stand out compared to 3 women. Only one woman stated that she had not studied EBR. These returnees with unfinished or uneducated EBR represent a quarter of all interviewees.

Education Level	Men	Women	Total
Complete primary	2	1	3
Incomplete primary	0	1	1
Complete secondary	10	9	19
Incomplete secondary	6	1	7
University complete	1	3	4
University incomplete	0	4	4

[21] A total of 71 tools were applied to returnees for this study (19 semi-structured interviews, 8 life trajectories, and 44 closed interviews), in addition to semi-structured interviews to 13 local authorities and leaders. The frames and analysis presented in the section are based only on the 44 closed interviews.

Superior technical	2	3	5
Without education	0	1	1
Total	21	23	44

Table 2. Education level of returnees. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

Regarding the family situation, more than half of the returnees indicated that they were single, 19 indicated that they were married or cohabiting, and 2 were separated. More than half of those interviewed said they had children - 13 women and 11 men - (see Table 5). In addition, of the total of those interviewed, ten people have only one child, nine have between two and three, and the rest have four or five children. This means that a significant group of returnees were young men and women who were beginning their migratory trajectories in the cities. As we will see in Chapter 5, based on the personal stories collected, many of them have interrupted their plans due to the pandemic, but plan to resume them in the medium term. Those who have small children are in a situation of greater uncertainty and with greater apprehension about the family burden.

Number of children	Total
01	10
02	07
03	02
04	03
05	02
Don’t have any	20
Total	44

Table 3. Number of children returnees have. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation

Knowing the family burden of returnees is important to understand the current needs they have in their places of origin. We found that 26 of the 44 interviewees reported having relatives who depend on them. This group is made up of all returnees with children and two people who claimed to be responsible for their parents and nephews. The problem that emerges from this is that they have practically no income and depend entirely on the help of their families. This implies, in turn, that receiving families must modify the distribution of income and food in the family basket, in order to feed more people.

Migrant situation before the return process

Before the pandemic, returnees were settled in cities, they had jobs, but they were not consolidated migrants nor were they in a process of accumulation (Zoomers, 1998).[22] Thus, for example, we did not find that the returned we interviewed owned their own homes in the cities where they were living. Among our interviewees, a quarter lived with their partner and their children, while ten of them lived with their siblings. A few people lived with other relatives such as uncles (as), grandparents (as), among others. On this point, it is important to note that the vast majority of returnees with children lived in independent but rented houses. This situation has changed with their return, since most of them currently live with relatives who host them, that is, with more people.

[22] Zoomers (1998) proposes “typical” *life strategies* for rural families, in which he identifies strategies of subsistence, consolidation, assistance, and accumulation. In the case of migrants, those whose migratory trajectories have reached a moment of economic stability and who have at least one of their life projects completed, whether it be having given their children a career, having a home, or their own business, could be considered as consolidated. Those in the process of accumulation could be consolidated migrants who have managed to accumulate some economic capital and have bought a property or who have a prosperous business, and are increasing their capital.

Who did you live with before returning?	Total	Number of people in the household
Spouse/ cohabitor and children	18	3 ó 4
Siblings	10	2
Other family members	8	3
Children	3	4
Alone	4	1
Parents	1	2
Total	44	

Table 4. People with whom the returnees lived before returning. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

It is interesting to note that ten of the returnees lived with their brothers or sisters before the start of the lockdown. In most cases, these households were made up of them, their relative and the latter's nuclear family - partner and child. This can be explained either because they are single young people or because temporary migrants who travel during the first months of the year tend to stay with their relatives. Even so, it has been found that the returnees lived in households composed of no more than 5 people. Beyond the composition of the household, this shows us that the migrants had an important support network in their close relatives that allowed them to migrate and have a place of reception, from which to undertake their personal projects.

The situation regarding the composition of their households and the number of members in the household has changed with the displacement towards their places of origin (see Table 7). Currently, only 8 of the 44 returnees interviewed indicated that they are living in a private home, the rest are living with a relative, especially their parents. This has had the effect that, in addition to living with their nuclear family and their parents, the returnees share their homes with the families of their siblings who have also returned; we found that 32 of the 44 interviewees are in this situation. This has led to the recomposing of homes and cases of overcrowding. The cases of Kely and Edar, from the El Algodonal village, Paimas (Ayabaca), illustrate this situation. These cousins lived with their nuclear family in Paita and Piura, respectively. With the pandemic, they have returned to their grandmother's house in El Algodonal. Currently, three families live in her grandmother's house, 12 people in total.

Where do you currently live?	Men	Women	Total
Private home	4	4	8
Family home	17	19	36
Total	21	23	44

Table 5. Type of current housing in the place of return. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation..

The data collected regarding the returnees' places of departure when returning to Alto Piura indicates that most of them, about half, were in Lima, 10 men and 11 women (see table 8). A second group of returnees was living in other provinces of the Piura department itself. Finally, Trujillo (La Libertad), Tumbes (Tumbes) are in third place.

Place of departure	Men	Women	Total

Ecuador	1	0	1
Lima	10	11	21
Madre de Dios	1	0	1
Piura	4	10	14
Sullana	1	0	1
Trujillo	2	0	2
Tumbes	2	2	4
Total	21	23	44

Table 6. Place of departure of returnees. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation..

Regarding the length of residence in the returnees' places of departure, the field data suggest that both medium and long-term migratory projects have been reversed as a result of the health and economic crisis generated by the pandemic. As can be seen in Table 9, the length of residence in the places of departure of the returnees interviewed varies between relatively short stays of less than one year and long stays of more than 20 years. The cases of migratory trajectories that we have collected and will present in the next chapter allow us to illustrate this range of situations that returnees experience; it can be deduced from this analysis that the consolidation of these trajectories is not a linear process, but rather involves a set of aspirations and decisions that are taken (and shaped) over time. For example, there are temporary migration projects, which little by little take the form of permanent ones. Or, on the contrary, permanent migration projects are interrupted or that show several comings and goings over the years, even varying from cities and regions.

Length of residence	Total
Less than 1 year	16
Between 1 and 10 years	8
Between 11 and 20 years	8
Over 20 years	12
Total	44

Table 7. Length of residence in cities, before the pandemic. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, migration out of Alto Piura is strongly associated with the expectation of access to better job opportunities. Indeed, we found that 33 of the 44 interviewees were working before the pandemic (20 men and 13 women), while only 5 people were there for health, vacation or education reasons (See Table 10). Additionally, two women said they were simultaneously working and studying, and four women were there for family work reasons (their husbands' work).[23]

Why are you out of your place of origin?	Total
Work	33
Health	1
Education	2
Holidays	2
Commerce	1
Others	5

[23] Its important to clarify that the answer on which table 10 is based had as a question "¿why are you out of your place of origin?". The objective was to identify the main reason for the migration. However, this does not mean that, in some cases, those who responded that were there for health, education, vacation, trade or other reasons, have not been working in parallel. That is why the amounts vary with respect to the total number of people who reported having had monthly income before returning.

Total	44

Table 8. Motives for migrating from their place of origin. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

Regarding the type of work performed by migrants before returning, a high degree of informality is found in their jobs, even among dependent workers: 20 of the 44 interviewees indicated that they had been working for a company or institution, but their contracts were, in many cases, under "spoken agreements" and with piece-rate payments. On the other hand, 16 people stated that they were independent workers and engaged in commercial activities or as street vendors. Likewise, when examining the average monthly income of returnees before the pandemic (see Table 11), we see that 21 generated income below the minimum living wage.[24] Only two of them generated income between S/ 2000 and S/ 3000. This job insecurity is reflected in the fact that 31 of the 39 interviewees who worked said they had lost their jobs in the first weeks of lockdown.

Average monthly income before the pandemic	Total
Less than S/ 950	21
S/ 950 - S/ 2000	16
S/ 2000 - S/ 3000	2
Did not have an income	5
Total	44

Table 9. Average monthly income prior to the lockdown. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

It is clear that compulsory lockdown has severely impacted the economy of migrants who have returned to their places of origin. This is reflected in the fact that 31 of the 44 interviewees indicated that the lack of economic resources and the inability to generate income was the main reason that determined the decision to return (see Table 12), although, as we will see in the following chapters, this was not the only criterion.

Main reason for return	Total
Being with family	2
Lack of economic resources	31
Death of a parent	1
Had not planned on staying	1
To support agricultural labour	1
Family problem	1
Family health	3
Fear of illness	4
Total	44

Table 10. Main reason for return. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation

The results presented thus far allow us to confirm that the migrants and their families returned mainly because they found themselves in a situation of economic precariousness and social vulnerability, despite the fact that the majority had been living permanently in the city for several years. One issue worth drawing attention to is that migrants with between 10 and 20 years of residence in another city have had to return to Alto Piura. This can give us an idea of the social and economic conditions in which the returnees found themselves: what was conceived as a "better situation" or the desired progress, hid what was actually a situation of vulnerability, with a high rate

[24] In Peru, the minimum living wage is S/ 930, which equates to U$ 265 (at the exchange rate of September 2020).

of informality, precarious jobs and without social protection that would guarantee a minimum of security to be able to face the pandemic.

CHAPTER 4

RETURN PROCESSES TO ALTO PIURA

News of the pandemic and the onset of the nationwide lockdown on March 15th 2020, pushed hundreds of thousands of people to stop working and lose their jobs as government-issued regulations tightened. The mandatory lockdown that was initially ordered for 15 days lasted for more than 100 days and placed temporary and permanent migrants, who were already in a precarious and unstable economic and labour situation, in a more vulnerable position. This led to the beginning of a mass phenomenon of people seeking to return to their places of origin in mid-April due to a lack of money, the assurance that they would not be able to get their jobs back, the collapse of the public health system, fear of contagion, and the uncertainty of not knowing what would happen to them and their families in the coming months.

The phenomenon of return migration gained prominence in the national media. Media showed thousands of citizens who were stationed on roads waiting for the authorities to transfer them. Due to the gravity of the situation, an important group people, began the return trip by walking long stretches and using informal transport. However, although the press showed this phenomenon on the front pages, little is known about the returnees, their life trajectories, and the factors that determined their decision to migrate. This section analyses the return processes of migrants: their situation before the pandemic, their life projects, the decision to return and the return itself, taking into account the routes they took as well as the experiences and fears they had to go through.

Circumstances prior to the lockdown: returnees' activities and expectations

At the beginning of the year 2020, thousands of citizens of Alto Piura were in different regions of the country as migrants. Those who were permanently residing in various cities of the country worked in activities, formal and informal, that had provided them with a certain economic balance. These activities allowed them to pay their rents, services and to be able to support their family, albeit having limited options for saving. Many of them lived in rented mini-apartments with their partners and children, and in some cases with nephews, parents, brothers or brothers-in-law who were temporarily looking for work. Other permanent migrants lived in small rented rooms, wherr they lived alone or with their partners and children.

The case of Estalin is an example of permanent migration. A 26-year-old native of San Juan de Bigote, Morropón province, he had lived in Lima since he was 17 years old. For 6 years he had been working as an assistant and coordinator in a small catering company, in which he had found some economic stability that allowed him to pay the rent of a mini-apartment in Los Olivos district and to support his family. He did not have a formal contract; the place where he worked was a family business that paid him in cash every 15 days, and did not provide him with health insurance or employment benefits. Another case is that of Luis (30 years old), also from San Juan de Bigote that worked as an operator in a textile company for almost 10 years. His job allowed him to rent an apartment where he lived with his partner, his daughter and his brother, and to support his family. He remembers that he thought he had a stable job and that he had managed to "progress in Lima". His employment contract was renewed every 3 or every 6 months, but when the state of emergency started, the situation changed and he was not able to renew his contract.

Others had temporarily moved at the end of 2019 to look for jobs or visit their families. Taking advantage of this move, some decided to remain in their families' homes for a few months at the beginning of 2020 as a way to make some money before going back to their homes.

This is the case of Aida, a 41-year-old returnee from the district of Olleros, Ayabaca. She travelled with her husband and three children to Paita in December 2019 to visit her older children who have

resided there for several years. In Paita, her husband would seek seasonal work as a fisherman. She had planned to return to Olleros with her three children in March 2020 and her husband would remain working until the end of the fishing season. The beginning of the lockdown changed her plans. Similar is the case of Eddie, from Coyona, Huancabamba, 40 years old. Eddie usually travels for the first months of the year and during the dry season to Piura to look for temporary jobs. In March 2020, he was working in the construction industry, a job he had gotten thanks to a friend who worked in the same site. He wanted to work until July and then return to Coyona to continue working on the farm.

The cases presented, along with those that have been analysed, show that returnees before the start of the compulsory lockdown were working in various areas (kitchen assistants, occasional construction jobs, street vendors, store vendors, among others). All of them informal jobs that were settled through verbal arrangements, were paid on a daily basis, weekly or biweekly in cash and did not offer any type of social or health security. In these cases, the possibilities for savings were minimal.

The few returnees who had a formal job worked in sectors that have special labour regimes - such as agro-industrial, textile, micro and small enterprises or SMEs, among others - or as subcontractors, which placed them in a situation of vulnerability in the face of extraordinary situations such as the pandemic. Their employment contracts were renewed every three or six months, their labour rights were curtailed and when they were fired, they had no social benefits and lost their health insurance. In these cases, although they had a steady income, the possibilities of saving were few, since their salaries were close to the minimum wage stipulated by law. On average, a young couple with children, with this type of jobs, had a monthly income that ranged between S/ 1500 and S/ 2000 out of which S/ 800 or S/ 1000 were used to pay for their housing (usually small rented apartments), and the rest was divided between the payment of services, food, and their children's needs.

On the other hand, we found similarities between the projects that migrants had in the short and medium term before the lockdown. Those who were permanently established had plans and projects linked to the consolidation of their life projects. In general, they sought economic independence – through starting their own businesses– as well as improving their living conditions, which is often linked to become the owners of their homes. That is the case of Kely (30 years old), from Paimas, Ayabaca, who was in Tumbes working as a private therapist. For 2020, she had planned to continue working independently to help her parents financially and save for her professional degree so that she could start her own office and *"be my own boss"*. However, *"the pandemic has made us go back in time"* - she tells us - referring to the fact that her projects have been truncated and she had to return to her place of origin without savings.

The case of Sebastián, from Coyona, 43 years old, is similar. He had been in Lima since 2012 and worked in the San Fernando poultry company since 2017 with contracts that were renewed every three months; he wasn't on the payroll, but he thought he had stability. Among his plans was to work in Lima until 2022, and then return to Coyona to finish building his house and start a business with his savings. The pandemic cut off his projects. Or the case of Edar (23 years old), from Paimas who, after having been working occasionally in different places, arrived in the city of Piura in 2019 to settle with his partner and two children. At the beginning of this year, he was working as an agricultural worker for an agro-industrial company and wanted to buy a motorcycle with his savings. This will enable him to work independently and, in the medium term, build his house on the land that he had occupied years ago in a peri-urban district in the city of Piura. The lockdown put him out of work forcing him to spend all his savings over the first two months.

Those who were on a temporary basis sought to save as much money as possible in order to maintain themselves over the dry season months in their places of origin, finance the agricultural campaign, finish truncated projects, or start small businesses. For example, Rever, from Olleros, Ayabaca, 33 years old, travelled to Lima with the intention to work until the month of August 2020. With his work in construction, he sought to save money to be able to finish building his house in Olleros. Eddie, on the other hand, was in Piura with the plan to work until July, return to Coyona and buy a piece of land near his parents' house with the money saved, in which he would slowly build his home. Today, this project, like those of Rever, Kely and Sebastián, has been paralysed. All of them perceive that the future is uncertain for their families.

The lockdown context and reasons for return

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic caught the Alto Piura migrants settled in different cities by surprise. Although many of them were aware of the measures being taken in other countries, they assumed that Peru would not reach those levels. The interviewees indicate that because of this they did not take concrete actions at the beginning of the pandemic or in the face of the first announcement of the state of emergency on March 15, 2020. It was assumed that the spread of the virus would be controlled and focalised, that it would not reach the levels it did. It is with the first extensions of lockdown that they realised the seriousness of their situation and began to seriously evaluate the possibility of return.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the more than 100 days of national lockdown - between March 16 and July 1, 2020 - placed thousands of migrants in a vulnerable economic and social situation. All the returnees interviewed indicated having lost their sources of income during this period. Several of those who worked informally, through contracts or oral agreements, were fired on March 16. And although their bosses told them it would only be for the first fifteen days; they were not called again. Those who worked independently, as street vendors or in their own businesses, had to stop their activities. Those who had formal contracts (3-6 months) were left without work or compensation for their work.

That being said, the lockdown period and its effects on return migrants can be divided into three stages. The first was during the first fifteen days of lockdown determined by the government. The second was during the first extension, which took place in early April; and, the third stage was when the lockdown was extended for the second time (this was repeated up to a fifth extension) and after that it became clear that it would continue for several more weeks.

During the first stage, the general idea among the interviewees was that the lockdown would only last 15 days. They recall having complied with the initial measure in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19: they left their jobs, stocked up with basic foods, and spent the lockdown days in their homes. Aida, from Olleros, remembers that *"we were happy that they said it was only going to be fifteen days"*. Hence, those first fifteen days, there was a general feeling of tranquillity and the measures that had been dictated were complied with. Some even point out that they took these days as holidays, in which they took the opportunity to enjoy time at home and with their family after having worked for several years without pause.

However, during this first stage, the interviewees indicated that they had lost their jobs. Despite this, which meant an almost total cut in their regular income, the widespread idea that the lockdown would not extend beyond the fifteen days made many assume that finding a new job or returning to the previous one would not be complicated and their economy and that of their families would not be so affected: *"it will pass, to continue working"*, Edar thought at the time. This initial security caused many to use their savings to pay for their homes and food. Most people comment that they did not

consider returning at all, except a small group of returnees who were in a more precarious situation due to being visiting or out of work.

For the second stage, the feeling of relative tranquillity of the first fifteen days of lockdown diminished when the first extension was put in place. By this time, the first 15 days had passed and most of those interviewed had already lost their jobs and used most of their savings. Others, who still had savings, calculated that these would only be enough for one more month. It is in this second moment that the potential of another lockdown extension became a real possibility. This, in addition to the daily news about the exponential increase in contagion, the collapse of the health system, and the reality that it would not be easy to go back to work, made many of the migrants begin to consider the possibility of returning to their places of origin. At least there they would move in with relatives and therefore would not have to pay rent, and they would get access to the food harvested in the farms of family members or close relatives.

Aida recalls that at that time *"there was more concern because my husband, my whole family couldn't go out to work".* A similar feeling was that of Kely, who began to worry about the lack of work for herself, her parents and her siblings. They were all living in the same house and the money they had managed to collect together decreased every day. Kely was especially concerned about how, without work and now with no savings, she was going to feed her young son. Both worked independently and were surviving with the money they earned every day and the support they received from their partners or relatives. Estalin, who worked in a small family business, recalls that it was during the lockdown extensions given in April that *"we [her partner and she] went in to evaluate the possibility of returning",* as her savings were running out. At some point, she even thought about going out to work as a street vendor to sell alcohol or masks, but decided not to do it to take care of the health of her partner and her little son. By that time, the fear of contracting the coronavirus, the ignorance of its effects, and the realisation that if they got sick they would not have any money and where to go to self-isolate became even more important than generating economic income.

It is in this second stage that those who no longer had money began to contact their families and the authorities of their places of origin to get help to return or receive some type of financial support. Due to this, citizens and authorities of the districts of origin, such as El Higuerón and Coyona, in Huancabamba, or San Juan de Bigote, in Morropón, self-organized to help each other. Thus, the first shipments of food began arriving from the families of the migrants who were in Piura and Lima. Food was shipped once a week through hired trucks or the municipality that provided the service. In El Higuerón, for example, the district municipality made a truck available to the families of the migrants that would bring free food and parcels once or twice a week to the city of Piura.

Despite the efforts made, the third stage - which corresponds to the second, third, fourth and fifth extension of the quarantine - placed migrants in a situation of greater vulnerability. It was at this time that the migrants decided that returning to their places of origin was the best option; this triggered the mass urban-rural displacements that occurred from the second week of April onwards. The analysis of the testimonies of the returnees shows that this stage has two moments; the first, during the second and third week of April, where returns were few, controlled, and the phenomenon was concentrated to those migrants who were in a more precarious economic situation (this corresponds, to a certain extent, to the image projected by the media). The second moment occurred from the fourth week of April to the end of May, when the number of returns increased exponentially due to the fact that the lockdown continued and that, by that time, the majority of

migrants had exhausted almost all of their savings, did not have a close support network, and most had not been beneficiaries of the bonds granted by the government.

Eddie, who had lost his job and exhausted his savings during the first 15 days, began to receive help from his relatives who sent him food via parcels from Coyona to the city of Piura. When the third and fourth extension of the quarantine occurred, he decided to return to his place of origin, but did not dare to do so for fear of getting on a bus and getting infected on the return journey. Because of that, he decided to stay longer and wait for the situation to calm down; however, when the extension of the quarantine was announced for the fifth time, he began to look for any means to return to Coyona. The situation of Carmen, from Salitral and 43 years old, is similar: she remembers that as the quarantine continued without employment, she began to feel anguish and despair because she did not have money to feed her children. In this context, she received food baskets from the local church and from the municipality of the Lima district in which she lived, although these were only enough for a few days. Upon learning that a social organisation was giving free food every day, she decided to eat there. Carmen remembers that the help she received at that time allowed her to sustain herself during those weeks when she did not know if the lockdown would last longer.

It is during this third stage that many of the migrants decided to seek work to save money and to return, call their relatives to ask for financial help or, those few who had had a formal job, use the money from their pension fund or their compensation for time of service (CTS) to undertake the trip. A case that reflects this situation is that of Rever, originally from Olleros (Ayabaca) who migrated for the first time to the city of Piura at the age of 17. He returned to his place of origin after a month when he could not find a job. Later, he travelled to Lima following the advice of his relatives, where he worked for two years in a bakery and in a textile company. Given his low salary, he decided to migrate again, this time to the city of Paita, department of Piura, where he dedicated himself to squid and mahi-mahi fishing. He lived there for several years. When the fishing activity declined, he decided to return to Olleros and from there he began to migrate sporadically with his family to Lima. He had been in Lima since October 2019, just six months before the pandemic. After spending his savings during the first weeks of confinement and, pressured by a lack of money, with a son and a partner to support, he had to find a way out. Thus, the third week of May, he decided to move clandestinely to Pucusana, a fishing district 58 km south of Lima. He stayed in Pucusana for 2 weeks working as a fisherman on informal boats, which allowed him to save enough to pay for the trip back to his place of origin.

It is important to note that, although the lack of financial resources was the main reason for return, other factors that had an important weight also stand out, such as not having health insurance, fear of contagion, anguish and the impossibility to mobilise later if things got worse. For Edar, the lack of work was the trigger: *"we have to return to Paimas because nothing happens here, there is no work, there is nothing and she [his wife] said now, now, let's go,"* he recalls what he told his wife when they decided to return. Eddie decided to return to his family for the same reason, his financial situation was critical, and he had nowhere to get more money. Sabina reflects on the issue and affirms that *"on the coast, if you don't work, you don't eat",* and at that time there was no work on the coast, so returning to the mountains was the best solution. For Estalin *"mainly the houses' rent, it was an apartment and it was two months' rent,"* she says was the main reason. And although the owner gave her payment facilities, she did not want to accumulate debts that she would not be able to pay.

Another important reason was the fear of catching Covid-19. Aida recalls that when the quarantine was extended throughout April, another of her concerns was the health of her children. By that time,

the infection rate was high and some of her neighbours had died or become ill. In those circumstances, the possibility of them being infected and not being able to do anything other than wait to get better at home was what prompted her to return. The fear of not knowing how to face the disease was strong: without health insurance and money, the migrants were unprotected.

On the other hand, another factor mentioned by the interviewees was the possibility of having greater freedom of movement in their places of origin. In fact, in general, in cities, migrants and their families lived in mini-apartments or small rooms, and after spending a month without being able to leave, the stress and little space to move became a problem for them. On the other hand, the level of contagion was lower in their places of origin as there is more space and therefore less chances of getting infected. Finally, another reason was to be closer to their support networks, the countrymen and their families, who would support them in any eventuality: *"we will be better there, with our family. One has lived in poverty and knows how poverty is and you cannot have money, but food will not be lacking, there will always be something to put in your mouth",* concluded another returnee.

This being said, it can be affirmed that the decision to return was strategic and the result of the returnees' analysis of their vulnerability: without work, without health insurance, without money to support their families, without the possibility of resuming their jobs in the short term, with fear of contracting Covid-19 and infecting their relatives and minor children - and not having money to undertake the treatment -, and living for several weeks in small spaces without the possibility of mobilizing. Those who had some money decided to use what was left of their savings to undertake the return.

The return journeys

Once the decision was made, the migrants and their families began to organise their return trips and evaluate the costs and the means they could use. At that time, interprovincial land travel and domestic flights were prohibited, transfers organized by the government were insufficient, so the only option was to hire informal cars or buses. This, added to the uncertainty about what the trip would be like in hiding, what it would cost and the money they had, made the return journeys a dramatic experience. In this section, the return trips will be analysed through the testimonies and experiences that the returnees narrated.

At first, the migrants turned to the authorities in their home districts to see if they could help them with transportation. The initial response from the authorities was positive. The municipal manager of the district of San Juan de Bigote (Morropón) confirmed that, at that time, the district mayor received calls from migrants who were in Lima and Piura, in which they asked the municipality to help them return. Upon receiving so many calls, the mayor created a group in the application WhatsApp, where he communicated to the migrants the progress of coordination with the provincial and regional government. As a young returnee recalls, at the beginning the district mayor had all the disposition and trust that he would help them with mobility, they decided to stay at home to wait for the coordination between authorities to prosper. However, as the days went by, they noticed that the coordination had stalled and they began to look for other ways to travel.

By the second week of April, news about return migrants increased. The reports, focused on those returning from Lima, showed thousands of people stationed on the roads outside the city, who had been prevented by the armed forces or police from continuing their journey on foot. In this context, the government published the Resolución Ministerial No. 097-2020-PCM that gave "guidelines for the transfer and quarantine of people who are away from their habitual residence, as a result of the measures of social isolation due to the National Emergency". The resolution was intended to register the returnees, to be tested for Covid-19, to be transferred to their places of origin, and to remain in

quarantine for two weeks upon arrival in their region of origin. More than 167 thousand people registered nationwide. In the case of Piura, more than 22 thousand Piurans who were in different parts of the country registered and remained expectant about the day they would finally return. However, regional governments, to which the national government delegated responsibility for the relocation, were overwhelmed by demand and did not have the ability to manage returns. This generated a longer delay in the transfer, which caused the migrants to decide to undertake the return on their own.

The analysis of the means of transport used, costs and total time of the trips made by the returnees allows us to assess that the way in which the return trip was made and the time it took depended on several factors: i) the support networks - family, friends or countrymen - which they had in their place of residence and in their place of origin; ii) the economic resources they had; and iii) the distance between the places of departure and arrival.

With regards to expenses, returnees affirm that mobility prices rose exponentially given the demand and police control during the route. Thus, there are people who hired private cars to make a direct trip from Lima to Piura and paid between S/ 300 and S/ 500 per person.[25] Similar amounts, although smaller, were spent by people who returned from Lima in trucks, or those who travelled alternating between foot, buses and trucks, whose total expenses fluctuated between S/ 300 and S/ 400 per person. In the latter cases, the travel time was up to five days. The returnees who travelled from departments closer to Piura such as Tumbes, La Libertad, Ancash or even from the city of Piura, ended up spending, on average, S/ 200, and in the most extreme cases S/ 400 per person. For these cases, the costs depended on whether they hired a car to transfer them directly or if they made various stops.

The analysis of costs and means of travel allows us to affirm that those who spent more did not always travel more safely and quickly. In order to plan a trip in better conditions, the support, social and family networks, which the returnees had in their places of origin and origin, were essential. The cases that we have collected for Huancabamba, Morropón and Ayabaca, allow us to outline this.

Sebastián, from Coyona (Huancabamba) and 43 years old, was in Lima with his two children when the lockdown was declared. After the lockdown's fourth extension, he decided to leave with his children. He communicated with different countrymen who lived in Lima via Whatsapp to see if there was any way to return. They told him that a group was going to travel by foot on May 11, because there was no other way. That day he left his home to the Ancón district where his countrymen were to meet. Upon arrival, the group had already left and decided to walk with their children. They evaded a police checkpoint, walked along the Pasamayo serpentine and after a few kilometres a truck stopped and took them to Chancay (Huaral province, 78 km from the city of Lima). In Chancay he found a fruit truck that was going to Chiclayo, a city in the department of Lambayeque, which is located 2.5 hours south of the city of Piura (see Image 5). He spoke with the driver and he agreed to take them at the cost of S/ 120 per person. They travelled all night and, when they reached Chiclayo, the driver told him that he could take them to a highway that would bring them closer to their final destination if they paid S/ 50 more each. The truck left them four kilometres from the agreed place and they had to walk for several hours until they found a hamlet where they could eat: *"we travelled without water, we had nothing, we were thirsty",* he recalls. From that, village they hired a car that ended up charging them different amounts of money for each section travelled. Close to their destination, in Loma Alta, Canchaque, the police and military

[25] For reference, the usual average cost with a formal transport company from Lima to Piura is around S/ 80 and S/ 130.

detained them, searched them and transferred them to the health post. From there a police vehicle took him to his village in Alto Piura. The trip ended up costing him a total of approximately S/ 1000, between transportation and food.

Sebastián affirms that he did not tell his family in Coyona that he was returning, he only informed them when he arrived in Canchaque (Huancabamba). His departure was not planned as in other cases that we have collected, but rather driven by anguish when he saw that the lockdown was going to be extended and that his savings were running out. During the trip, he remembers that he was afraid of catching the virus, especially when he travelled in the truck with other returnees. In addition, he comments that seeing so many people walking on the road was something that shocked him.

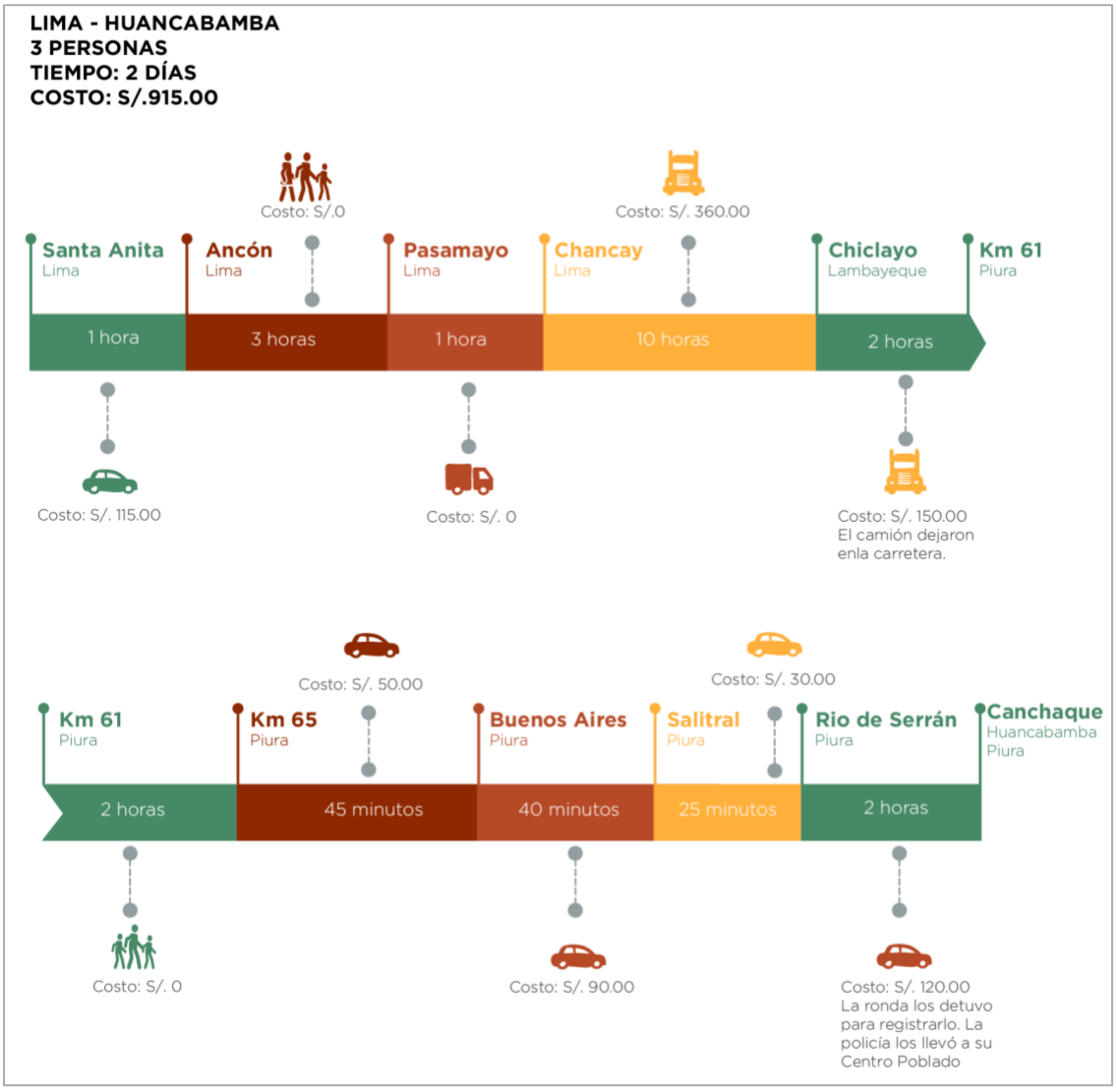

Image 4. Representation of the trip from Lima to Huancabamba with stopping points, expenses, and means used. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation

A different case is that of Jhonny, from El Higuerón (Huancabamba) and 22 years old, who was with his family - wife and a daughter - in Lima before the lockdown. He states that the decision to return was taken as the lockdown was extended. The concern for the health of his family, his wife, who was pregnant, and his little daughter was growing. In addition to this, the restaurant where he worked stopped paying him a month after the lockdown began, so he started to live on his savings. Thus, he began to look for a way to return and contacted his relatives in his place of origin and also friends who lived in Lima. They informed him that there were countrymen who were doing the direct taxi service in informal cars and charged S/ 1800 for the transfer - S/ 450 for each seat -. The only way was that or walking back, which for them was not an option due to his wife's pregnancy.

When the government extended the lockdown for the fifth time, this time for a month, he decided to return, spend all the money he had, and borrow to reach the full amount. When notifying his relatives that he was going back, one of his uncles contacted him and told him that he could take him and charged him the same: S/ 450 for each one, but that they had to contact another person to complete the fourth seat. Jhonny and his wife decided to travel with their uncle and bear the cost of the fourth seat to avoid exposure to the virus that was represented by travelling with an unknown passenger. He indicates that he decided to travel by this means because it was the safest. Although, he mentions that he was afraid of having an accident during the trip, it took 24 hours; the car never stopped and the driver, his uncle, never rested. In addition, they were afraid that the police would arrest them and return them to Lima, where they no longer had any more money to live.

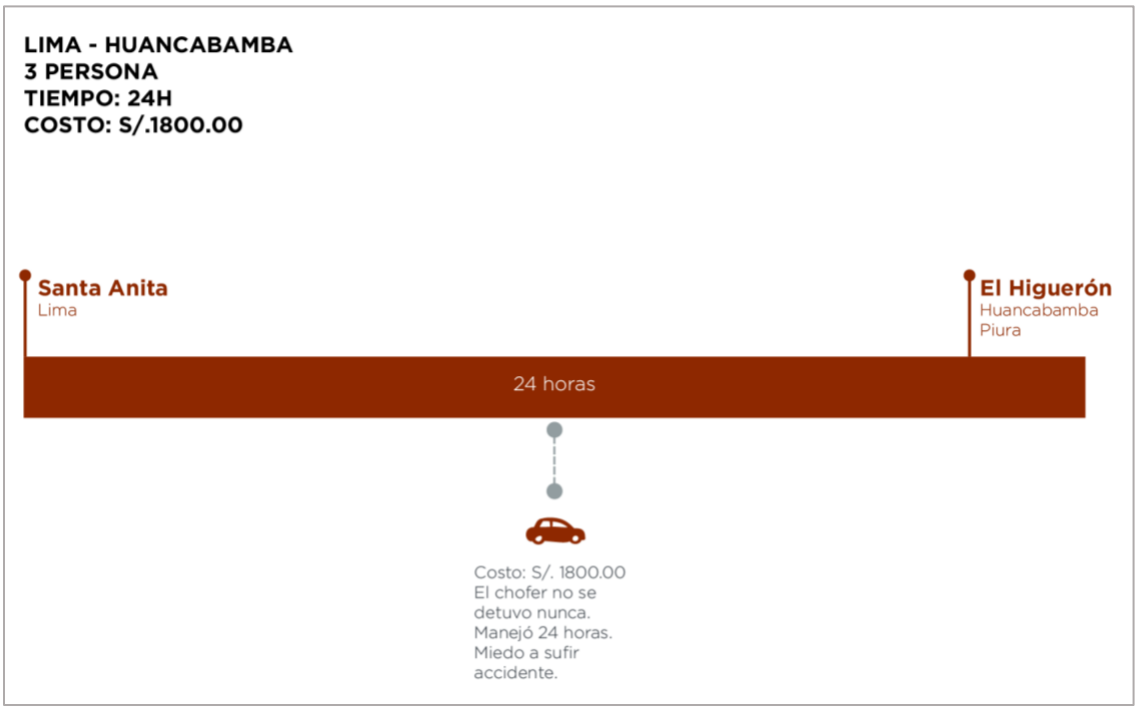

Image 5. Representation of the trip from Lima to Huancabamba (Piura) with stopping points, expenses, and means used. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation

On the other hand, in the case of Morropón, most of the returnees interviewed who returned from Lima and other places outside of Piura made the trip in trucks. In the San Juan de Bigote district, a local moving and cargo company ended up picking up the majority of returnees. This was made possible due to local organisation, especially the families of the returnees, who communicated through WhatsApp and reported the departure dates and pick-up places. An example is the case of Estalin, 26 years old. He and his wife decided to return to San Juan de Bigote at the end of April. They were registered in the registers that the central government had set up for people who wanted to return to their places of origin. After a few days, with no answer, they decided to search on their own and turn to family and friends. After two weeks they were notified by WhatsApp that a moving truck could take their things to San Juan de Bigote. They had to take their belongings because they could no longer afford to rent the apartment where they lived. During the following days, and seeing that they could not find any other type of mobility, they decided to convince the truck driver to take them along with their things. After insisting, he accepted.

On May 7th, they arrived at the agreed place. There, they saw that more people were going to travel in the truck and, furthermore, that it was a closed chamber, without ventilation. The driver told them that they were going to go inside, locked up to avoid the police checkpoints. Estalin and his wife

agreed. Before starting the trip, the men managed to convince the driver to allow their partners and minor children to travel ahead, along with him.

" At that moment, we entered given the despair, but there came a moment when we panicked, seeing that everything was closed, 'suddenly we are going to drown here', the women. Supposedly we were nine people, that's what we had agreed with the man, but he arrived with the car and in the end there were fifteen in our group and there were about five who stayed behind, who did not get in because they did not fit.".

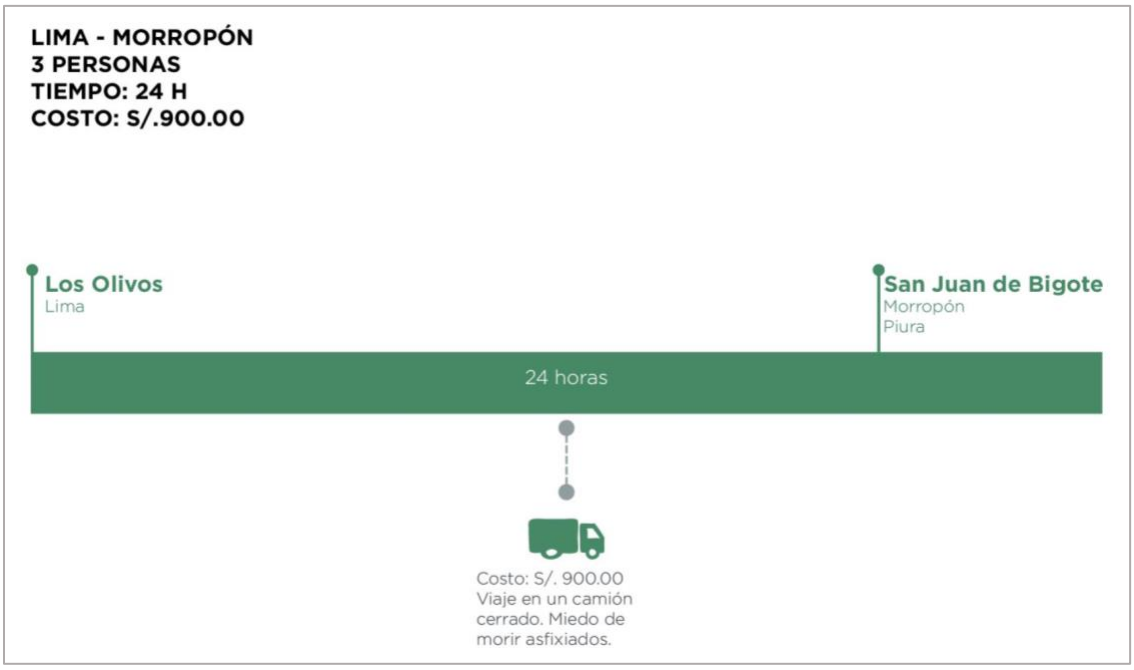

Image 7. Representation of the journey from Lima to Morropón (Piura) with stopping points, expenses, and means used. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

They made a 12-hour journey fully locked in. The driver later opened the chamber hatch a little to let air in. Finally, they reached their destination after 24 hours. The trip was marked by the fear of suffocation and the fear that the police would arrest them and return to Lima: *"the experience was ugly and maddening and also worrying. Because we were worried that the police would see us, they even saw us and took us to a police station and we stayed there for 3 hours. It wasn't allowed, but he was from the area and in the end he felt sorry and let the car pass".* The couple also recalls that, in addition to this, the fear of catching Covid-19 was always present. Luis, Pascuala, Carmen and most of the returnees who came to San Juan de Bigote from Lima also travelled in the same way.

Aida's case shows a very different journey, but it also meant moments of great anguish. When the lockdown was decreed, she was in La Tortuga fishermen's cove, Paita (Piura), visiting with her husband - who had travelled there to seek temporary work as a fisherman - and their three children. He affirms that at the beginning they were happy to know that the lockdown would only last 15 days, but with the first and second extension, the economic situation of his family declined: *"on the coast you have to have your money to buy, if not, what is thrown into the pot?",* Aida comments, remembering that by that time they no longer had any more money. Even so, they decided to stay as her husband insisted that the lockdown would be lifted and she could go to work. However, on April 29th, a week after the third extension and when analysing her financial situation, Aida decided to return: *"if you want to go, let's go, if you want to stay, stay, I'm going with my children,"* she remembers she told her husband, as her stress about being locked up and her concern about the possibility of getting sick and not having resources to treat herself or family support in the area increased.

Faced with this situation, along with her husband, they began the return on May 4. They left at 7 in the morning. They went to a car stop to get transport that would transfer them to the city of Paita. In Paita, they took a truck that charged them S/ 250 to take them to the city of Sullana. In Sullana they looked for cars that would bring them closer to Ayabaca and they found some cars that were taxiing to Las Lomas (see Image 8). On the way, the military detained them and did not want to let them pass because they were carrying a baby; after talking to them, they finally let them pass. From there, the trip to Paimas alternated between motorcycle taxis, taxis, and long hours of travel on foot that Aida does not remember exactly, but she was charged between S/ 10 and S/ 50 for short sections. From Paimas, they took a motorcycle taxi that charged S/ 150 to the Tondopa Bridge, although her husband had to make that trip on foot, since he did not fit into the vehicle.

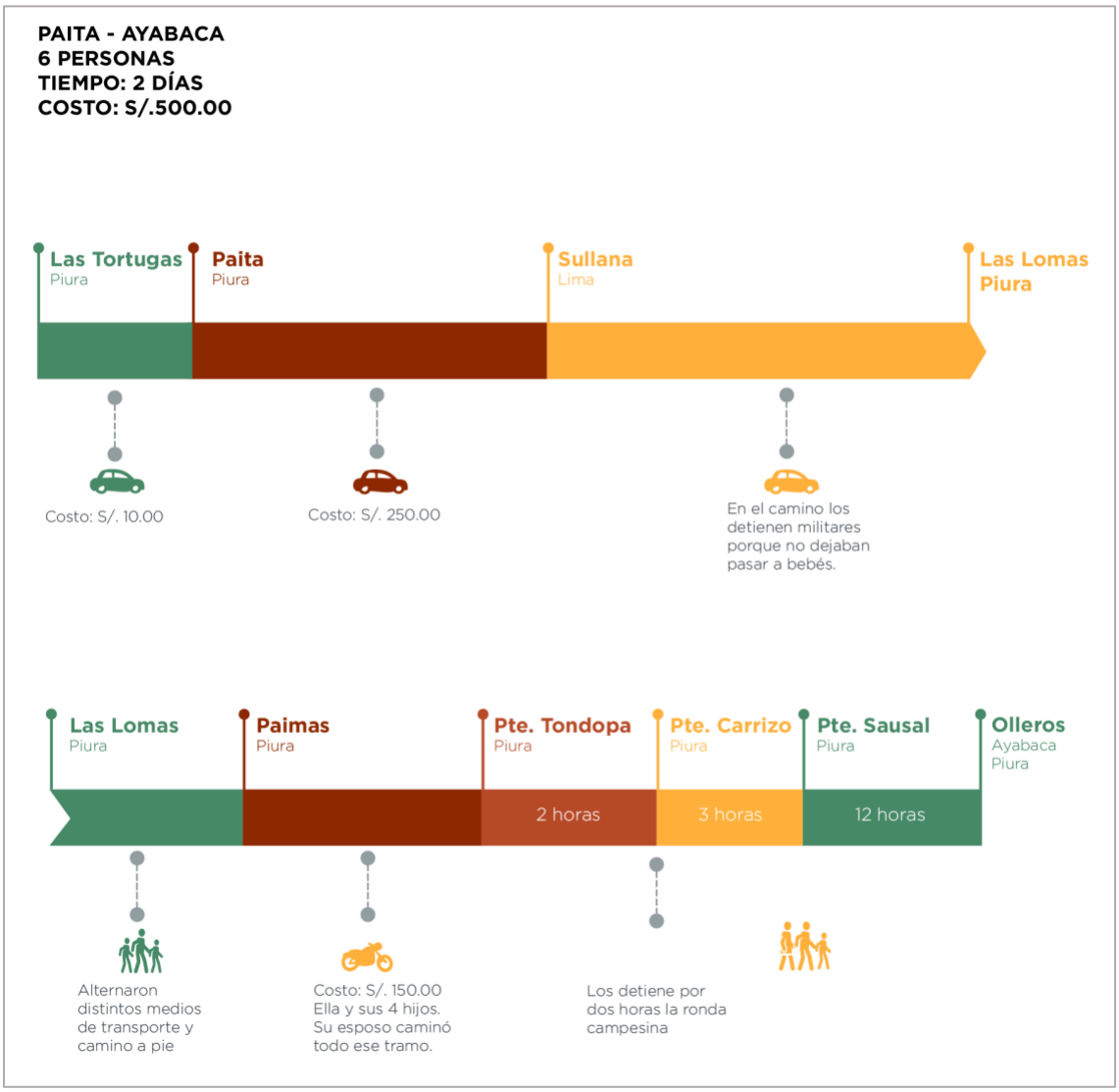

Image 8. Representation of the trip to Paita (Piura coast) to Ayabaca (Alto Piura) with stopping points, expenses, and means used. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

Aida remembers that they reached the bridge in the middle of the afternoon and it started to rain. The *ronda campesina* stopped them for two hours at a checkpoint and they then continued walking in the middle of a heavy rain. They had to sleep behind a house, in the open, without a coat and in the rain, *"my clothes were all wet, I cried, all day without eating, but God gave us strength"*. The next day they walked all morning and arrived in Olleros, Ayabaca, at 6pm. The return trip is a difficult experience to assimilate: *"Shame, it had given me a heart ache, like a tightening of the chest, a shame, when we came here we went to bathe, remedies and I didn't even want to cook, nothing, I couldn't even stand up, I was walking on all fours, because it hurt"*. Aida comments that it is

something that to this day she has trouble remembering. The trip for her and her family lasted 37 hours and generated a total expense of between S/ 400 and S/ 500.

In addition to the cases described, which we have collected by applying semi-structured interviews and migratory trajectories, the closed interviews provided us with information on other travel modalities used by the returnees, although not with the previous detail. Even so, we believe it is important to mention them as they show the various ways in which many other returnees travelled, especially those who were returning from coastal cities other than Lima. For example, a person travelled alone from Virú (La Libertad) to Ayabaca (Alto Piura) in a single day, but with different stops and in different informal cars that raised their prices depending on the demand of the moment and the desperation of the returnees. In this specific case, the returnee spent a total of S/ 390 for the entire journey, which lasted approximately 8 hours for a journey of about 600 kilometres.

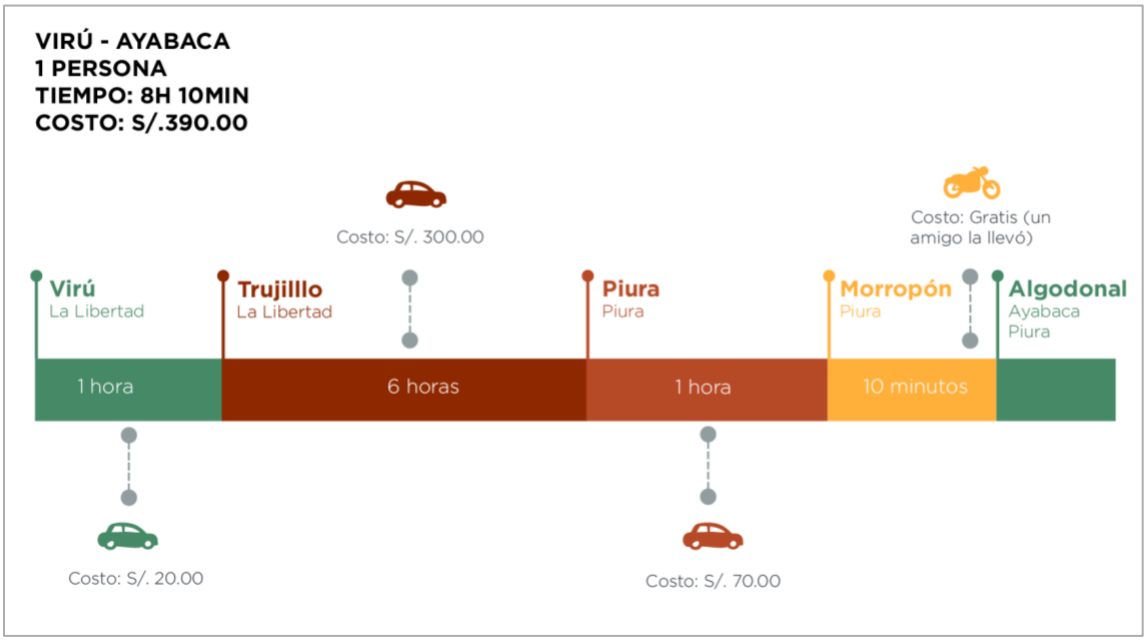

Image 9. Representation of the journey from Virú (La Libertad) to Ayabaca (Piurs) with stopping points, expenses, and means used. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

In another case, a family consisting of three people travelled from Chimbote (Ancash) to Paimas (Ayabaca) also in a staggered manner in *custers* and informal cars. On the way, they had to give money to the police on two occasions so that they would let them continue with their trip and not be detained. In this case, the family made the trip in a single day over 9 hours and spent a total of S/ 885, approximately S/ 300 per person. It should be noted that many of the interviewees reported having been detained by the police or military at different points in their trip. In some cases, those interviewed acknowledge that the drivers of the cars they hired had to pay the police to let them pass. Some returnees even stated that when they made a deal with the driver who was going to take them, this amount already included the expenses "for the police" (see Image 10).

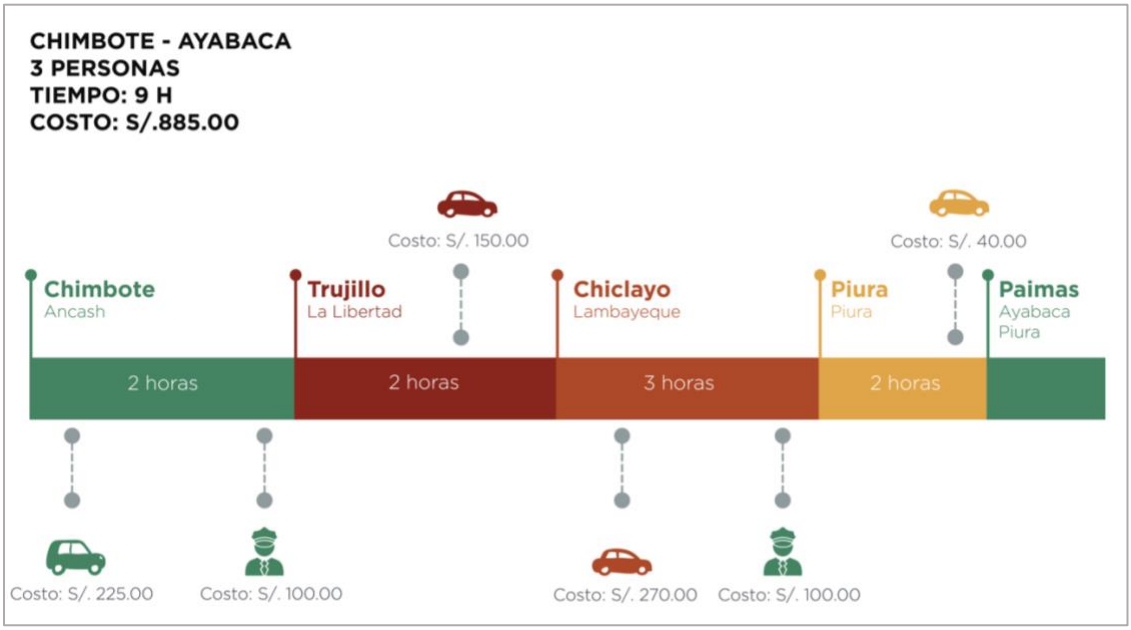

Image 10. Representation of the journey from Chimbote (Ancash) to Ayabaca (Piura) with stopping points, expenses, and means used. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

Finally, in closed interviews, 35 of the 44 male and female returnees claimed to have travelled accompanied by their mother, children, brothers or sisters, or other relatives. This data is important because it shows that the process of return migration as a result of the pandemic has displaced entire families.

Who did you travel with? (multiple answers)	Number	Percentage (%)
Mother	1	2,0
Sons/daughters	16	31,4
Siblings	7	13,7
Other family members	19	37,3
Friends	8	15,7
Total	51	100

Table 11. People who accompanied the returnees throughout the trip. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

In turn, 30 of the 44 people interviewed stated that they did not receive any type of support during their return trip. The remaining 14 did receive support from friends, family, or strangers who helped them on the journey by providing them with food and transportation. It is striking that only one person reported having received help from the municipality, which accounts for the limited response capacity that both local and regional governments had.

What support did you receive?	Number	Percentaje (%)
Did not receive support	30	68,1
Food	1	2,3
Drinks and water	1	2,3
Food and transport	1	2,3
Money	1	2,3
Transport	9	20,5
Quarantine accommodation	1	2,3
Total	44	100,0

Table 12 Types of help received on the return journey. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

As we have described in this chapter, returnees found various ways to return to their places of origin, in some cases subjecting themselves to high-risk situations and trips that lasted days. What is common among these various routes is that they all tried to manage their return through formal channels, but due to the delay or absence of response from the national or regional governments, they finally chose to return on their own, even if that meant breaking the law, hiring informal transport, and exposing themselves to situations of possible contagion or risk of accidents. They made expenses that accounted for all the savings they had left on these trips; in addition to this, in the different testimonies, the fact that the only support they had on their return journeys was that provided by their family or countryman networks stands out, which in many cases defined the way in which they travelled, in the face of a slow response from the state that, at least in the cases collected, never came.

CHAPTER 5
REINTEGRATION PROCESSES

This section analyses the processes of reintegration of returnees; first, the initial actions of local institutions and organizations, as well as the responses of the families of returnees in the Alto Piura provinces. And, secondly, the current situation of the returnees: what they are currently doing and what difficulties they are going through.

Local actions addressing return migration

The beginning of the lockdown and the fear of contagion caused a series of coordination practices at the local level between authorities, social organizations and citizens in general, as soon as the "mandatory social immobilisation" was declared. Initially, these focused on taking concrete actions in each of the districts so that residents would comply with the mandatory quarantine, including the restriction of trucks, public transport buses, or collective cars into particular areas. Hilton Chuquihuanga, president of the sub-committee of the Ronda Campesina of Algodonal in the district of Paimas (Ayabaca), recalls that between the third and fourth week of March the municipal authorities, members of the district citizen security committee, and leaders of the peasant community agreed to control the entry and exit points of the district, isolate those who entered as a way to prevent the "arrival" of the virus. The *ronda campesina* was tasked with controlling the access points, while the district citizen security committee and the police were in charge of patrolling the streets of the urban centre of the district. Similar responses occurred in other districts and provinces

of Alto Piura. In this first moment, the central concern of local institutions and organizations was to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

It was not until the second half of April, with the arrival of the first returnees, that the focus of attention changed. In his testimony, Hilton claims that the arrival of returnees became a issue of concern, when people who were visiting nearby locations were taken by surprise by the onset of lockdown and as a result began to return. At that time, the massive return of migrants was something that was not planned and was not expected to occur. However, with the news that came from Lima about "the walkers" and the first calls from migrants received by the authorities asking for help to return, this became a matter of major concern. Fanny Tocto, in charge of the health post in El Higuerón (Huancabamba) confirms that both the lieutenant governor, the sub-prefect, the mayor, the police, the army, and the *rondas campesinas* approached the post to coordinate and take action before the imminent arrival of returnees. In her district, there had been cases of returnees who, having been alerted of the checkpoints and gates placed by the *rondas*, took alternate routes to get to their relatives' homes. Once installed there, they did not respect the adopted measures, they left their homes and did not comply with the quarantine.

Because of this, in districts such as San Juan de Bigote, several institutions and organisations created a protocol that included: receiving the returnees, registering them, taking them to the designated places to quarantine for 14 or 15 days, taking care of them, and then moving them to their relatives' homes. The protocols - similar in all the districts visited in Alto Piura - established that the *rondas campesinas* and the citizen security committees would be in charge of controlling entry and exit. The police would be in charge of maintaining public order and the local government of the installation of the premises where the returnees would quarantine, they would also be in charge of providing food to the members of the peasant patrols or citizen security committees and returnees. Finally, the health centres would be in charge of registering, conducting rapid tests (if any), and monitoring the health of returnees during their quarantine.

All those who were interviewed recognized that the role played by the *rondas campesinas* was fundamental. These organizations were the first to take action at the local level; there is a general consensus on the great work they did during the first months of lockdown. According to some interviewees, without the peasant patrols, the districts and communities would not have been able to control the traffic of trucks, buses, cars and people, which would have exposed the population to a greater risk of contagion from Covid-19. Likewise, during the period of arrival of the returnees, it was the *ronderos* who were more exposed to being infected. Their days consisted of being at the access points where gates had been placed for several hours throughout the day and night. In places where there were no *rondas campesinas*, District Security Committees were formed or reactivated in order to control the influx of people.

The returnees interviewed coincide in pointing to these *rondas* as important actors for territorial control and maintenance of public order in the context of the lockdown. This was because the *rondas* are the actors with the greatest legitimacy in the different territories of Alto Piura and can impose punishments and sanctions on citizens who violate social norms of coexistence. Initially, the rounds did not allow anyone to enter the town due to the fear of someone being a Covid-19 carrier. Many returnees decided to extend their stay in their places of residence (or where they were temporarily) knowing, through their relatives, that the rounds still did not allow entry into the territory. However, due to the pressure of the families of the returnees and the authorities, the rounds allowed their entry under several conditions. People were required to isolate themselves and comply with a strict quarantine for 15 days, either in the temporary facilities implemented by the municipality - usually

schools or municipal premises where pallets and mattresses were installed and returnees were separated by family - or at the home of the returnees' relatives. Thus, when Norly returned to Coyona, it was decided that she should go to her family's house to quarantine. She remembers that she complied with the authorities' orders, although some days she would leave the house by using the back door. The *rondas campesinas* found out what she was doing and sent a notification to her address stating that it had been detected that she was not complying with the quarantine and that if she persisted in doing so they would impose a fine of S/ 200 and whip her father twelve times.

Figure 2: Poster at the side of the road to Ayabaca, placed during the weeks with highest return rates. It reads "No stopping". Photo: Abdul Trelles.

This experience serves to illustrate the hard work that local authorities and leaders did to contain the spread of Covid-19, which entail the supervision of hundreds of returnees. Hilton notes that every time someone arrived at checkpoints, they were asked where they were going. If they were from the place, they were informed about the rules that they had to follow in order to enter, they were also provided with general information about Covid-19 transmission and symptoms. All those who arrived were disinfected, especially on their shoes and hands, in addition to spraying alcohol on the entire car. With the passing of weeks, due to the exponential increase in returnees and the fear of getting infected, the *ronderos* stopped having direct contact with those who arrived at the gate; they were only informed that they had to quarantine and they were monitored to ensure they were going directly to their homes. When asked about what a surveillance day was like, Hilton recalls:

"It was exhausting and stressful having a big load. Stressful because the population came, insulted us, said all sorts of things. Psychologically we had to be patient. From there, we were standing all day or else sitting. Lunch was brought to us at 4, 3 in the afternoon. What we would do was buy cookies, some soda, or water to drink. From there we got to the houses, the family did not have to eat, if you were a father of a family your wife did not have anything to throw into the pot: it was a drama. But the population, the authorities have to understand. It was a bit traumatic because you came to your house thinking you carry the disease, that you are going to infect your family, or

that in 15 days I was going to get the symptoms. It was chaos in your brain, you didn't know what you were going to do tomorrow, how you were going to wake up, it was difficult for many."

The initial unity among the various actors present in the territory that managed to contain the spread of Covid-19 gradually disappeared as economic resources were depleted and fatigue, anguish, and fear increased among the members of the *rondas campesinas* and district safety committees. Representatives of the rounds affirm that the municipality was the first to stop complying with the agreements, as a *rondero* leader from Ayabaca tells:

"They abandoned us, they didn't give us gloves or if they did they were ones that would tear off when touched; they gave us masks of this type, made of a material like cardboard, parchment paper, from that they made us a mask. That was donated by the municipality. They did not provide us with gel and alcohol, the round itself had to buy it around there".

The person in charge of a health centre in the district of San Miguel de El Faique commented that the same thing happened in her town: the local government stopped supporting the *rondas*, they no longer gave them food or materials, so the citizens had to support them, this was they only way in which they could control the points of access to the town.

The authorities of San Juan de Bigote affirm that during the first weeks, the work was quite coordinated, but since they did not receive any special budget to attend the pandemic crisis or the phenomenon of return migration, the scarce resources they had ran out and they had to stop supporting the rounds and the district citizen security committee. Additionally, the coordination with the Regional Government (GORE) was intermittent, initially the GORE was concerned in helping the returnees and the districts, but when the central government ordered that only the GORE should be in charge of taking care of the returnees, local governments were put aside. In addition, they affirm that the coordination between the central government and the regional and local governments were problematic, since the central government wanted all returnees to be tested, however they had no tests and when the tests arrived they only limited the travel of 500 people a day. This led to the removal of the gates in the first two weeks of June in most of the districts, and the rounds and district security committees stopped controlling the access points.

Finally, something important to note is that the actions taken by the district municipalities were limited to receiving returnees; basically their installation in premises for quarantine. After that, the authorities have not developed any intervention plans or policies focused on returnees for the short or medium term in any of the visited districts. In fact, when we asked the returnees who had supported them since their return, only 10 of them stated that they had received any support from the municipality, which consisted of food baskets during their time in quarantine.

Support received	Total
District municipality	10
Social organisations	1
Family members	20
Others	5
Did not receive support	8
Total	44

Table 2: Actors who supported migrants. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

It is important to highlight the support that they have received and are receiving from the families themselves, something that for the returnees has been of utmost importance. This support has consisted of giving them a place in their homes, helping them financially or with housework, and

raising children. For example, this is the case of Luis, who since his arrival receives the support of his father-in-law to feed his family and currently lives in his house.

The actual situation of returnees

The return of migrants to their places of origin conveys a great change in regards to the situation in which they were before the pandemic. Despite the fact that many of the migrants were engaged in informal activities, owned small businesses or formal jobs with salaries that were close to the minimum wage, they had a monthly income that allowed them to pay for their homes and services, and in some cases save a small amount of money. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the return trip involved, for some, spending all their savings, and for others, borrowing money from their parents or close relatives. Thus, by the end of July and the beginning of August 2020, two or three months after having returned, the migrants and their families found themselves in a very precarious economic situation.

The majority of young and adult men are now engaging in agricultural activity, especially on the lands of their parents, grandparents or other relatives, although this does not include any remuneration.[26] It does, however, imply support with food, housing or, eventually, when a product is sold, a small amount of money. At the same time, other men work as labourers in neighbouring farms two to three times a week, for which they receive a wage of between S/ 30 and S/ 40. However, this type of work is scarce. A small group has also sought work in small construction sites, where they pay between S/ 15 and S/ 30 per day. However, the general idea that the interviewees conveyed to us is that paid jobs are few and very occasional, therefore there are very little chances to earn a steady income every week. Rever, Edar, Eddie, Johnny, Estalin, Luis, among others, are currently in the same situation: without work, without their own land, with minimal income, and dedicating themselves to small unpaid family farming.

The situation of women is even more vulnerable. In a place where job opportunities are minimal and geared towards men, currently none of the 15 women interviewed have managed to get a job. Kely's testimony exemplifies this situation, *"I go to observe, to see [the family's farm], to eat some fruit, but nothing else. It pains me to tell you, but I know I would be a hindrance for them, because I don't know how to work, I don't know anything about working the land,"* and continues:

"I feel incomplete, I am used to having an economic income at home, to having no one giving me a sol, used at not having to ask please. I am used to working and if I have to learn to work in the fields, I will have to. But this situation is getting out of control, because I am getting bored, I do nothing, I say to myself 'what do I do', I need an income, my son needs something, his father is also in the same situation and I cannot force him. If he doesn't have it, I don't have it, the baby gets sick ... and my uncles or my dad go out. And that hurts me, because he is at an age where he cannot work. I should work and I should support him, but the situation here is bad, where, where am I going to get money".

And while some of the women help on family land, they do not receive any financial compensation. Furthermore, they cannot work as labourers on third-party farms because the owners prefer to hire men.

There are also cases of "migrant women" who have arrived at the place of origin of their husbands and therefore are in a situation of greater vulnerability, since they do not have a close direct family member and are in a place that they do not recognise as theirs. This is the case of Andrea, 18 years old and originally from Tarma (Junín), who currently helps her husband on her family's land,

[26] GRADE researcher Hugo Ñopo (2020) has shown how, while urban employment fell, rural employment of young men rose; this is explained by unpaid agricultural employment. The case we present is, precisely, part of this group.

although she does not receive any payment. Since she arrived in Maraypampa, Andrea has not had a paid job and is mainly engaged in housework at the home of the in-laws. Women then are now in charge of the household and the upbringing of their children who receive classes through radio or television.

Figure 3: Andrea and Gustavo, young returnee couple. They currently live in Gustavo's parents' house. They work in agriculture at the family ranch. Photo: Abdul Trelles.

Analysing in detail the activities that the returnees are involved in, of the total of 71 returnees interviewed (semi-structured interviews, closed interviews, and migratory trajectories), 30 stated that they dedicate themselves to small unpaid family farming. Here it is important to note that only 2 out of 30 people work on their own land with twice as many men than women. A smaller group is made up of those who are engaged in small businesses or earning occasional wages through construction. It must be noted that those who claim to dedicate themselves only to housework are all women, they represent a fifth of the total. Only two people indicated that they were working on small projects of the municipality, such as the communal garden, but only for daily wages.

Activity	Men	Women	Total
Agriculture	20	10	30
Household labour	0	15	15
Commerce	2	5	7
Construction	3	0	3
Education	1	1	2
Municipality	1	1	2
Is not working	5	5	10

Taxi or motorcycle taxi	2	0	2
Total	34	37	71

Table 3: Returnee's current activities. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

The new situation of returnees has caused a sharp drop in family income. In most families, since the return, the man is the only one who is doing paid work, albeit occasional, with very low income and, in many cases, parallel to unpaid agricultural activities. Thus, despite the fact that the majority are engaged in some economic activity, only half of a total of 44 interviewees are paid for the work that they perform. Of those who receive a payment, more than half earn less than the minimum living wage. Going into detail, we see that the majority of those interviewed affirmed that they currently receive an income of less than 400 soles per month. Important to highlight that 18 of the 44 returnees (men and women) stated that before lockdown their income exceeded S/ 950 per month. Currently, only one of them receives income higher than that. Additionally, the number of those who had no income before the pandemic went from 5 to 20 people

Current average monthly income	Total
Less than S/. 950	23
S/.950 - S/.2000	1
Sub Total	24
Do not have an income	20
Total	44

Table 4: Current average returnee incomes. Source: Fieldwork. Own creation.

Furthermore, the return of entire families has had an overcrowding effect. Particularly among families in which the sons or daughters have returned to their own homes. During field work, it was possible to see that up to three families had returned to a single house; thus, the space that included only one adult couple is now compose by ten or fifteen people. In other cases, some parents with small homes have provided their returned children with a small piece of land so they can build their own home. In El Higuerón, the mayor of the town pointed out that approximately 15 new homes are currently being built for returnees, who, taking advantage of the dry season, are making adobe blocks for the construction of their future houses.

Finally, as the returnees point out, the reintegration process involves a series of challenges. For example, in the case of young people, having to dedicate themselves to activities that they had not previously engaged in or had done as children. For middle-adults it included the realisation of finding themselves in a situation of daily subsistence.

For women, the return has implied a strong shift: from having relative economic independence, the vast majority of them have become dedicated only to their home and to depend entirely on their husbands. One issue to be highlighted is that during field work we noticed that there are migrant women from other areas of the country; that is, wives of returnees whose place of origin is different, but who decided to accompany their husbands on their return, as illustrated above with the case of Andrea. Another case explains how the returnee is from another province in the department of Piura, but in which she currently has no family members. As a result, she decided to travel to her husband's place of origin since there he would have better job opportunities or access to land since he has a network of relatives. For these women, the situation is one of double vulnerability: without work,

without an extended family, in a place that is not theirs and where no one knows them, they entirely depend economically and socially on their husband and their husband's family.

CHAPTER 6
PERCEPTIONS OF RETURN AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The return process has reconfigured migrants' plans and expectations for the future. Medium and long term plans have been put on hold and short term plans - those for 2020 - have been cut short. The current situation of returnees has forced them to make new plans, less ambitious and adapted to the context of being in the middle of a pandemic. On the other hand, the arrival of a high number of young families to rural areas where before the confinement were mostly adults and older adults, has opened new perspectives and local tensions. Authorities, leaders and citizens have conflicting views on whether this process will be permanent or temporary and what effects it may have at the local level.

Although the short time that has passed is still insufficient to talk about impacts - in particular, on the issue of natural resources -,25 it is possible to identify new processes that have been generated by return migration. This section shows the initial effects and local expectations on return migration. Likewise, it collects the projects and personal and family plans of the returnees, to give an account of how their life strategies have been reconfigured.

INITIAL EFFECTS AND LOCAL EXPECTATIONS ON RETURN MIGRATION

The news about the covid-19 and the arrival of the returnees caused a great commotion at the local level. Although the shared idea was that they should be allowed to enter, because "they were born here and are children of the place", there were also cases of people who did not want anyone to enter the district. This, says Estalin, caused an initial tension, in which relatives had to go to the authorities and put pressure on them to let the returnees in.
Interviewees say that in the first weeks after their arrival they were treated with hostility and fear by some villagers. Therefore, in order to avoid comments and accusations of being carriers of covid-19, they decided to keep more time in quarantine. One of the returnees says she felt "strange and sad" to see how they were treated once they arrived: put them in quarantine, disinfect them, keep them away from people and control that they do not leave their homes. There was resistance from people to receive them and the controls were excessive. Andrea, from Maraypampa, 18, says she was embarrassed when she arrived, as some accused her of carrying the covid-19 and she felt that she was always being watched to see if she developed any symptoms. And although this treatment has diminished, Andrea perceives that people still look at her strangely and treat her differently. When people from her village pass by her house and she is at the door, they do not greet her or move away from her in order to avoid any kind of contact, physical or visual. This, despite the fact that she returned more than two months ago, was quarantined and already tested negative.

The authorities interviewed agree with these observations, although they maintain that control and quarantine were necessary, because it was not known who could be a carrier of the virus. They also point out that there is a perception in the locality of returnees as those who did not want to be in their village any more, but were forced to return: "if there is no pandemic they do not return, people have left because they need work. But some left 'I don't want to belong here anymore', but when the pandemic hit they came back, to their land, whatever," says one authority. However, beyond the initial reception and comments like the one above, no major tension has been encountered because of return migration.

What this process has generated are different expectations and views on the role that returnees can have as drivers of change in the locality. In this sense, the authorities have different answers about the possible contribution of migrants, especially young people, to local development. On the one hand, there are those who think that the return of young men to a district or

population centre where only older adults remain can boost agriculture, since "young people have more strength to work the land". In this respect, Alfredo, the municipal agent in Canchaque, welcomes the return: "with more coming, with people returning to their land, I know that there will be more development for the village". That is why, together with some community leaders, they are proposing that farmland be given to the families who have returned. He points out, however, that this land is far from the centre of the village and is difficult to access.

On the other hand, there are those who say that the returnees are the ones who had fewer resources and were more vulnerable, so they do not know what they could do now. There are also doubts about whether they will stay or not. One municipal representative said that "we don't know what to do with the returnees, because we don't know what they want or what they think". She points out that it is for this reason that the municipality has no plans, at least for the time being, to carry out any plans aimed at the reintegration of returnees. Furthermore, as hundreds of families have returned, especially to the urban districts, without their own homes, they fear that a process of invasion of municipal land could be unleashed.

Other authorities point out that with the arrival of returnees to the urban area, canteens are being opened, attracting "bad people". They also note that since the young people have nothing to work for, they are thinking of taking out loans to buy motorbike taxis and work: "that puts the country backwards, because they are young people who should have studied, but did not. These motorbike taxis are a backward step for the country".

In the opinion of the authorities and leaders, the massive return will affect the local labour dynamics. Because so many people have returned, the demand for work has increased, "there are more people looking for work in agriculture or construction," but the supply remains the same. This leads to increased competition for low-paying jobs that may become even more precarious. And they add that, by not finding work, returnees may engage in "other improper things", referring to the fact that lack of work may promote increased crime.

An idea that is repeated by the interviewees is that it is too early to know if the migratory process will be permanent or temporary. At the same time, there is a perception. The general feeling is that the current conditions in the districts of Alto Piura are not attractive enough to motivate permanent migration. This is due to the lack of well-paid job offers, the situation of small-scale agriculture and the "limited possibilities for local development". Regarding young people, most of the authorities interviewed agree that the return process is temporary and that most will leave as soon as the pandemic is under control. As one municipal authority states: "young people may say they will stay, but in one or two years they may leave again". They point out that, on the one hand, in rural communities, hamlets or population centres, older leaders are often reluctant to give young people opportunities to take up positions of leadership or to propose new things. They comment that phrases such as "what do you know, if you are just learning" are recurrent when young people propose new ideas to improve the situation of their communities. On the other hand, they stress that work on the farm is "strong" and people "are no longer used to picking up a lamp" or "no longer want to go to be employed".

PLANS AND EXPECTATIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF RETURN MIGRANTS

Regarding the returnees, they have had to rethink their plans and projects in the short and medium term. In this sense, it is clear for them that to become independent, to implement their own business or to consolidate economically, are projects that have been postponed without a clear idea of when they will be able to resume. Thus, there is great uncertainty regarding what will happen in the medium and long term.

The return is perceived by the returnees as a setback in their life strategies. Taking up the words of the interviewees, when they migrated, they did it to progress and be better, to have better living conditions and work opportunities. As one of the

women returnees states "young people go to work, to have their little meal, [here] even if they work there are no jobs, 20 soles, 30 soles a day, there are none". This is something that Catalina agrees with, an older adult returnee who points out from her experience:

"More is suffered by working [here], so they go to the coast to work, because there they have at least their little plate to dress in. Young people want to work and they go far away. Here], to earn a little bit [100 soles], you suffer, and it's not just one person, but several".

From the interviews conducted, we found two large groups of returnees: i) those who plan to stay and, ii) those who will migrate again as soon as the pandemic is under control (and they point out this with belief).

The main characteristic of the first group is that it is made up of citizens over 35 years old, who have returned with their families and have taken their return as a turning point, which has transformed their life projects and stopped their migration process. Most of these migrants have assumed this moment as a permanent return, in which the desire to seek better work opportunities and living conditions - which had motivated their previous migrations - has been exhausted. They feel that they did not manage to achieve their goals or to consolidate in the place where they were and that it is no longer worthwhile to continue trying this path. In this group, we find those who plan to build their own houses, find some work activity that will allow them to subsist during this period and be better off in the coming years. In short, to restart their lives in their places of origin.

The case of Marcos, from San Juan de Bigote and 43 years old, belongs to this first group. After leaving his district at the age of 16 with the intention of "working and progressing", he was in Piura and then in the city of Huancabamba for more than 20 years working as a farmer. After a few years he opened his own business. He says that Huancabamba was where he did best: he had managed to open two restaurants and was also working in the provincial municipality. After separating from his partner, he decided to move to Canchaque, where he started again from scratch working on construction sites. There he met an engineer who told him that in Juliaca, Puno, he could work in mining camps as a cook, something he had studied. He travelled to Puno and worked for different mining companies for more than six years. During this period he felt that he was doing well and began to save up with the idea of returning to Piura and setting up his own restaurant or other business by 2021 or 2022. Before the pandemic, he saw that his plans would be fulfilled, as he had a stable job and an income of more than S/ 2500 per month, which allowed him to save. Fulfilling his life project, being independent and having his own house in Piura, seemed a close goal.

The pandemic radically changed Marcos' plans. He returned to Piura to visit his parents and the beginning of the confinement took him by surprise in San Juan de Bigote. From that moment on he has not been able to leave. His savings, the product of several years' work, have been exhausted during the months of confinement and his income has been reduced to a minimum. He works only once or twice a week, when he finds a job for a day's wage, which generates about S/ 60 per week. His life has changed radically; he now seeks any form of work to "survive" and says he will not migrate again:

"It's one thing that the age one is, we don't gather the strength anymore, everything. I was born here and I don't want to go around with my wife and son, even if I have a low salary... but I'm here now (...) apart from the fact that the pandemic has come, that you can't work. And here you only take out your newspaper, 30 soles, 40 soles, it doesn't go out anymore and there it is, just for food. I was used to more than 3,000 [soles]. Now I'm working in the municipality, coming to earn 700 soles is a big blow [...] It's very sad, because it's not enough for the habits we've had. [...] I have had to cut down on my children's pensions, the life I had with my wife and son, cut down on everything to be able to support myself with what I earn. There is no more".

Although in the long term he hopes to be able to fulfil some of his plans at home, he knows that it will take longer and be more complicated than before, as there are no jobs in his district and he no longer has the capital to start the small business he once dreamed of.

On the other hand, there is the second group, made up of young people under 35 who still have great expectations for their future and plan to carry out their life projects. They perceive the moment of pandemic, and its return, as a pause in their lives. Once the situation is normalised, they plan to migrate again and resume their plans. They are the least willing to stay, because they consider the work offered in their districts to be "exhausting and poorly paid". In a similar situation are young women, who have decided to migrate again as soon as the pandemic is over. This is because they have noticed that despite the years that have passed since they first migrated, the situation in their places of origin remains the same: they think that there are few opportunities for women. And although they all recognise that life in their places of origin is "quieter", this is not enough reason to stay. However, they know that the return will take some time, so they will put in place a series of strategies to avoid falling back into a precarious situation. For example, the men are thinking of going out to a nearby town first, assessing the situation there and if all goes well, moving in with their family. Others think about returning to the same place they were before confinement, but they point out that they will do this first alone or with their partners in order to work, save enough, settle down and then bring their children.

Edar, for example, plans to migrate again because "the countryside", as he says, has cut off his personal development and that of his family, and now his income is minimal. He stresses that with or without young people the situation in the countryside is the same and will remain so: "there will be no work and no good education". He believes that his current situation will only change when he returns to Piura to work in agro-industrial companies or whatever he finds. In the future, he plans to buy a motorbike and become an independent worker.

Jhonny plans to migrate again. His plan is first to travel to Piura, work there for a while and then return to Lima. He will first go to Piura because his partner's family has a house there, where he can live without generating more expenses. He has also thought of travelling to Paita, to go fishing, to save money and to travel to Lima as another possibility. Her medium and long term plan is to save up to build her house in Piura. Although he says that he feels some uncertainty about what will happen, the only thing he is clear about is that to get his family through, he has to migrate.

Andrea plans to migrate again. She says that her projects have only slowed down, but she will resume them once the situation improves. She plans to stay, in the best case scenario, for this year in the town centre. Then he plans to go to Piura to work and, in the future, dreams of buying a house. In addition, he wants to resume his technical studies as a specialist in pharmacy, complete them and work in his profession. Her clear decision is to migrate again because "now in the countryside all work is for men, not so much for women. That's why he [his partner] goes out to work. I go, I help, but it's not like working and earning your own money," something she aims at.

Of the 44 returnees who responded to the closed interview (see Figure 16), half indicated that they plan to migrate again and that the return is a temporary measure; 18 indicated that they plan to stay permanently and 5 have not yet decided. This coincides with the information collected in the semi-structured interviews and in the life trajectories of other returnees: an important group expects to continue their migration trajectories in the future, while others are waiting for the progress of the pandemic and the economic situation of the country to make a decision.

Table 18
Decision to stay by gender

Do you plan to stay here permanently?	Men	Women	Total
Yes	9	9	18
No	9	12	21
Depends/still don't know	3	2	5
Total	21	23	44

Source: Field work. Author survey

Finally, something common to all the people interviewed is the concern they feel about the future of their economic and employment situation. Currently, most returnees are under a subsistence economy, the little income they have is entirely devoted to food expenses. The general impression of those who have decided to stay is that their economy has completely broken down, and that they will have to work for years to return to an economic situation similar to that before confinement. Those who plan to migrate again hope that the context of the pandemic will improve and, like the previous group, point out that they are surviving on the little money they generate. They usually plan to return to the cities where they were before the pandemic, but with new life goals. Until this happens, travel has stopped and the vast majority of young people plan to stay at least until the first quarter of next year, which coincides with news of the arrival of the vaccine.

CONCLUSIONS

The study of returnees to Alto Piura in the context of the new coronavirus pandemic brings us closer to a process that has only recently emerged but which, nevertheless, is part of a long history of migration in Peru. From the field work carried out in the provinces of Morropón, Huancabamba and Ayabaca, experiences have been reconstructed which show that return migration is a phenomenon which is framed by different migratory trajectories: some permanent, others temporary; some initial or for subsistence and others in the process of consolidation. Several of the returnees were migrants who had been living in the cities for years or decades. However, a group of them were outside their place of origin as part of a migratory cycle that can last from two or three months to a few years, and which involves different points of mobility in the territory. We have also identified cases in which returnees assume that the life projects they had planned have been cut short, but we also found cases of returnees - especially young people - who say that they will migrate again when the pandemic is under control and that they will resume their plans outside their place of origin.

With regard to the characteristics of return migrants, the study sought to answer questions such as: What was their socioeconomic situation before the pandemic? What are their migratory trajectories? How did they decide to return, among others? It was identified that at least half are young families with young children. These were generally at the beginning of their migratory trajectories and were still far from a moment of consolidation. The group of returnees between 30 and 50 years old who were in the cities for more than 10 or 20 years, had not reached a situation of consolidation or accumulation either; they indicate that rather, they had as a project in the medium term, to put their own business or buy a house. On the other hand, although almost all the people interviewed were employed, half of them had a monthly income below the minimum wage.

A common denominator to the previous situation of the returnees is the precariousness of the employment. Most of them had informal jobs and, although some indicated that they had stable jobs, they later detailed that their contract was "verbal". On the other hand, those who indicated that they had formal jobs did not have long contracts, but these were renewed every three or six months. In addition, they had no social benefits, and those who had health insurance lost it as soon as they were laid off;

this happened soon after the government introduced mandatory confinement. Thus, what the pandemic revealed is that the situation that returnees perceived as relatively stable was actually very fragile. One point to highlight is that several interviewees said they thought "we had stability" or that they were doing well because they could cover their expenses, and that with the pandemic they realized how vulnerable their working relationship was.

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Regarding the decision to return, beyond the diversity of situations, it is possible to identify common factors among the interviewed returnees. The first one is that none of them undertook the return trip as soon as the compulsory confinement started. As described throughout this report, most undertook the return between weeks nine and ten, and some even lasted until the thirteenth week of confinement. There are several reasons for this: (i) they thought it would not last as long (ii) they thought they would get more help from the state; (iii) given the risk of contagion and the spread of the virus, they spent their few savings during the first weeks to respect the quarantine. A second factor is their perception of vulnerability to the context of the pandemic; most of the returnees interviewed do not have social security or health insurance, so they felt that, in case they became seriously ill, they would not be able to cope with the situation. This perception increased with the news of the collapse of the public health system and the high prices of private clinics, which demanded payments of around 25 thousand soles just to accept a patient's admission. In spite of this, the vast majority of returnees expected an eventual lifting of the confinement with the idea that they would return to their daily work, but the constant extensions of the confinement - added to the absence of a universal bonus which had not been announced until the third week of April - acted as a trigger for them to decide to undertake the return.

As for the return process itself, this is conceived as a difficult, risky and even painful moment. As we have described in chapter 4, many were exposed to dangerous situations, both because of the risk of contagion of the coronavirus and because of accidents. In spite of this, it should be noted that family and landscape networks mitigated this situation by providing support and information; otherwise, it is likely that many of these returns would have occurred even under worse conditions.

One point to draw attention to is that many of the interviewees reported having tried to organise their return through official means; that is, through the state's return registers. And, in fact, many registered in them and were waiting for their transfer for some weeks. However, when they did not receive any response from the entities in charge, and in view of the situation that was beginning to be urgent, they decided to undertake the trip by their own means. Some took the decision to spend what was left of their savings in order to hire cars, trucks, custers and other means which we have described above, and others had to get into debt with relatives in order to return. A separate issue is that several of the returnees pointed out that the payments agreed with the drivers already included a "quota" for the police to let them pass at the points of the road where gates had been placed.

The return of hundreds of families to districts and population centres led to the initial deployment of local institutions. Firstly, to control the access points in the territory and, secondly, to organise the quarantine of the new arrivals. In this process, the peasant patrols and the district citizen security committees played a fundamental role. Although at the beginning the district municipalities coordinated with the organizations to implement quarantine facilities, they did not take additional measures later on. It was the peasant patrols, district committees for citizen security and peasant communities that have exercised the function of vigilance and managing the re-entry of returnees into their communities. The families also looked after them during the quarantine by bringing them shelter, clothing and food. It is important, therefore, to highlight the role that social organisations have played both in territorial control and in managing the arrival of the returnees in Alto Piura, which may have had an important effect in preventing the further spread of the virus in rural areas.

Until the end of the fieldwork, there was no agenda or planning measures by local governments to address the issue of return. Some authorities claim that they do not know the future plans of the returnees. Therefore, it is necessary to draw the attention of the local, regional and national government instances on the need to manage the reintegration process in the medium and long term. There are several issues arising from return migration; among them, they highlight the lack of employment and the food security of the population. We have found that most returnees have been engaged in small-scale family farming, which is an unpaid activity, but they will soon need income to cover their families' expenses. Many have been working on their families' farms, but do not have access to their own land; in areas where there are peasant communities, the community can play an important role in regulating future decisions on access to and distribution of land. This, however, is not without its potential tensions.

Women returnees are in a more vulnerable situation. Many of the women interviewed say that they feel that their life plans have "regressed". They feel sad and uncomfortable about being totally dependent on their husbands or families, when they have already become accustomed to generating their own income, even if only a small amount. After their return, they have become fully involved in domestic work and child rearing and, as they point out in the interviews, they do not see much scope for personal development, since the little employment that exists in the villages is mainly oriented towards male labour (agricultural labourers for day labour, construction, motorbike taxis). In addition, there are cases of women who are not originally from the area, but who met their partners during their migratory trajectories, and are now in Alto Piura because it is their husbands' place of origin. Not having their own family or friendship networks and not knowing the local dynamics, they are in a particularly vulnerable situation.

With regard to expectations for the future, it is possible to identify two trends: those who say they want to migrate again as soon as the pandemic is over, and those who see return as something definitive. Although they are a minority, there is also a group that is not yet clear about whether they will stay. In the first case, they are mainly young single men and women, and young couples with small children; in the second case, they are older returnees who feel it would be very difficult to start over in the city. The returnees that make up this second group, feel more comfortable with their current situation compared to the one they were in during the confinement, but they express their dissatisfaction, grief or disappointment for what happened

and feel that the return is a kind of failure in their life projects. They are currently looking for ways to build their own houses and gradually reintegrate into the dynamics of the locality or community; in short, they feel that they are beginning to rebuild their life projects.

In conclusion, it is important to draw attention to three issues. The first one is the lack of information about the returnees: about their situation, their needs and their future plans. The registers in which the returnees were registered for the transfer are clearly insufficient since, as we have shown in this study, these returned by multiple ways. The second issue is the need to address the phenomenon of return in all its complexity, since there is a diversity of situations and migratory trajectories that it is essential to consider in order to design public policies to address them. The third issue is that the return process requires a multidimensional treatment; and that, in addition, it addresses not only the problems of returnees but also the reception capacity (in terms of resources, employment, services, etc.) of the localities of arrival. This last point implies a multisectoral approach, as well as the coordination between the different levels of government and with the social and communal organizations.

We hope, therefore, that this document will contribute to a better understanding of the situation of men and women returning to Alto Piura and, based on this case study, highlight the importance of knowing the return processes and their effects on other areas of the country.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions presented allow the following general recommendations to be outlined. Firstly, themes will be proposed for future research that have emerged from this study, and on which more in-depth thematic and time-sensitive research is needed. Secondly, issues on the public agenda will be raised that appear to be urgent and should be taken into account by the responsible state institutions in the short and medium term.

Possible lines of research

Although they are not the only ones, some of the topics in which the study shows that it is essential to go deeper are the following:

1) The pressure on resources. While during the fieldwork, the returnees were helping out on their families' farms, those who will remain will need land to cultivate. As the Alto Piura is an area with little irrigation infrastructure, arable land is not abundant. Although there are different situations depending on each province, this is an issue that will soon become evident. Both the local authorities and the returnees interviewed pointed out that the lack of land is one reason why many young people will choose to migrate again. In areas where peasant communities are present, they will play a key role - through their communal assemblies - in decisions about future land allocations (if this is feasible).

2) Local and community policy. It is possible to observe in the local environments, different readings on the consequences of the return process: some see the positive side, but others start thinking about the problems to come. In time, probably some issues will arise about the condition of the returnee families that consider the return as something definitive. For example, at the communal level, it will have to be decided whether returnees will be reinserted as qualified communal farmers and what requirements they will have to meet; whether they will be able to access new land (if any) or exercise their inheritance rights; and so on. On the other hand, the issue of youth emerges as a possible point of tension; young returnees have new requirements and will seek to have a voice in the community's public affairs.

3) Employment and seasonal migration dynamics. In the absence of employment, returnees are working in what is presented to them on a daily basis: an agricultural or construction day, for example. But local economies will most likely not be able to sustain the labour supply or meet the need for income in the coming months. As we have seen in this document, Alto Piura has a history of migration to nearby areas in other departments such as Jaén (Cajamarca) or Moyobamba (San Martín) and, on the other hand, to coastal (Talara, Paita) or commercial (Sullana) cities in Piura itself. What new migratory dynamics will this situation generate? What flows in the territory will occur or increase? How will this change the life strategies of families and what effect will it have on a possible second wave of contagion? These are urgent issues that need to be studied in the short and medium term.

4) The situation of returning women. Throughout the document we have tried to show the cases of women returnees who are in a situation of special vulnerability. They have lost their economic independence, they are living in the houses of their in-laws or brothers-in-law with their children and they dedicate themselves almost exclusively to the housework. This is an issue that needs to be addressed in order to identify potential situations of gender-based violence, but also to highlight the frustration of life projects that are perceived as being truncated, which causes fear and sadness.

b. Issues for a public policy agenda

The process of return migration is multidimensional. It has consequences on different aspects of the lives of returnees and their localities, requiring a multi-sectoral approach. The following are the main points that emerge from the study carried out and that require urgent attention. Although these refer to the Alto Piura, they may be applicable to other areas of the country.

1) Generation of information on returnees. The government needs updated and more in-depth information on the people who have returned to their places of origin, particularly in rural areas. Not only about numbers and socio-demographic profiles, but also about the current situation of the returnees, their expectations and their future plans. Otherwise, it will not be possible to formulate medium and long term policies that allow the design of diversified strategies of reception, reintegration, territorial planning, among others.

2) Establish support for family farming as a regional policy priority. As in many other areas of the country, the Alto Piura is an area characterized by small-scale farming. Agricultural activity is mainly family farming and this has been strongly affected by the pandemic (falling prices, decapitalization to finance the next campaign, loss of crops, problems with intermediaries, etc.). In addition, it is now essential for the food security of rural households, which have become more numerous as they take in returning family members. Family farming requires urgent support from sub-national levels of government and from the national executive.

3) Attention to vulnerable women returnees This is an issue that requires the joint attention of all competent institutions. The study shows that women returnees do not see many ways out of their current situation, given the characteristics of the low supply of employment (mostly male) in their localities. Also, they are in a situation of emotional stress, because they are completely dependent on their partners' families. Therefore, it is necessary a comprehensive policy aimed at addressing the situation of women returnees.

4) Territorial conditioning of the reception areas. Many of the areas where the returnees have returned are areas with few services and difficult access. Today, with the thousands of returnees new needs of connectivity, public services and spatial planning will arise. For example, one issue that is beginning to generate concern is the need for new housing areas for those returnees who have decided to stay permanently and will soon need to build their houses.

5) Permanent coordination with local and community organizations. The peasant patrols and the district committees of citizen security have played a very important role in managing the arrival of the returnees. However, state entities do not always take them into account for the design and implementation of policies. As territorial actors with mobilization capacity, they need to be considered in the planning required to address the issue of return migration, the situation of families and the effects of this process on the local/rural host environments.

To address the issues raised, it is essential to ensure greater articulation and coordination between the various levels and sectors of the State. What happened with the return trips promoted by the central government showed that delegating functions without an adequate coordination and accompaniment had direct implications on the returning families, their travel experiences and their current socio-economic situation. People who have returned to their places of origin, either for a short period or to stay permanently, find themselves in a situation marked by uncertainty and vulnerability. It is the responsibility of the State to promote short- and medium-term policies that aim to improve the conditions in which returning migrants currently find themselves in different areas of the country.

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ANNEX BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL FOR THE FIELD TRIP IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The field team is coordinated from Lima by the head of research. The field team will be composed of the responsible researcher, a research assistant assigned by CIPCA and the driver assigned by CIPCA, who must be a member driver of the institution (not an external person hired only for services).

The field work will be supported by a vehicle under the responsibility of CIPCA. The team will move only in the vehicle assigned by CIPCA, driven by the driver, who will be in charge of all the transfers made during the two weeks of field work.

Requirements for departure

The field team, in this case by the responsible researcher, the research assistant and the driver, must have been quarantined two weeks before the departure to the field.
All members of the field team must undergo a covid-19 test one day prior to departure.
The field team and assigned driver must be provided with appropriate personal protective equipment, including a sufficient number of disposable masks (two boxes of 100) and a face shield for interactions with others. Also, several litres of alcohol and alcohol gel.
The field team must be committed to using their mask at all times.
The team will purchase water bottles before departure, both for consumption and for hand washing in case they reach areas where soap and water are not accessible.
The team will carry their test results printed on a mica and show them to any authority and person who requests them.

All team members must commit to the following biosecurity protocol during the route and stay in the field:

No third party is allowed in the CIPCA van, in which only a maximum of three people should be moved: one in front and two in back.26
The driver will start the vehicle only if all authorised occupants have their implements (mask/face shield) on board.
The windows of the van must always be open.
The equipment must always have liquid alcohol (70 degrees) or gel (between 63 and 75), for disinfecting hands, handles and other utensils such as mobile phones, keys and recorders.
Disinfection of hands and handles should be carried out after each stop.
Disposable PPE should not be left in the vehicle, but should be collected in a bag and placed in waste bins at accommodation sites.
Occupants are advised to avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth, and to maintain a minimum social distance of 1.5 meters from all persons with whom they interact.
The stay should be previously coordinated by the CIPCA team, in a clean space with adequate ventilation.
The team will disinfect their individual rooms with alcohol (handles, locks, keys, etc.). The team will carry their own pillowcases. The administration of the accommodation will be asked not to clean the room on the days of the stay.
In the event that any of the occupants present symptoms during the planned activities, these will be automatically suspended until further tests are carried out.

For the application of the instruments for collecting information, the following must be strictly complied with:

The interviewer will conduct the interview ONLY with the person being interviewed (there should never be a group of people gathered together)
Interviews or surveys in closed spaces are strictly forbidden.
Semi-structured interviews shall always be conducted in open air spaces and a minimum distance of one and a half metres shall be kept between the interviewer and the person being interviewed.
Closed interviews shall always be conducted in the open air and a minimum distance of one and a half meters shall be kept between the interviewer and the interviewee.
The life trajectories will be constructed from interviews and the filling out of cards; once delivered, the cards should be coded and stored in a secure plastic package (hermetically sealed bag with elastic bands).
Semi-structured interviews will NOT exceed 60 minutes of exchange with the interviewee.
Closed interviews should not exceed 25 minutes of interaction with the respondent.
All printed materials used in the different interview modalities should be stored in a manila envelope, which should be sealed at the end of the day.

Upon return from the field:

Team members must remain in quarantine for two weeks.
Team members will undergo a rapid test and a molecular test, after the relevant waiting days for each test.

Piura, July 18, 2020