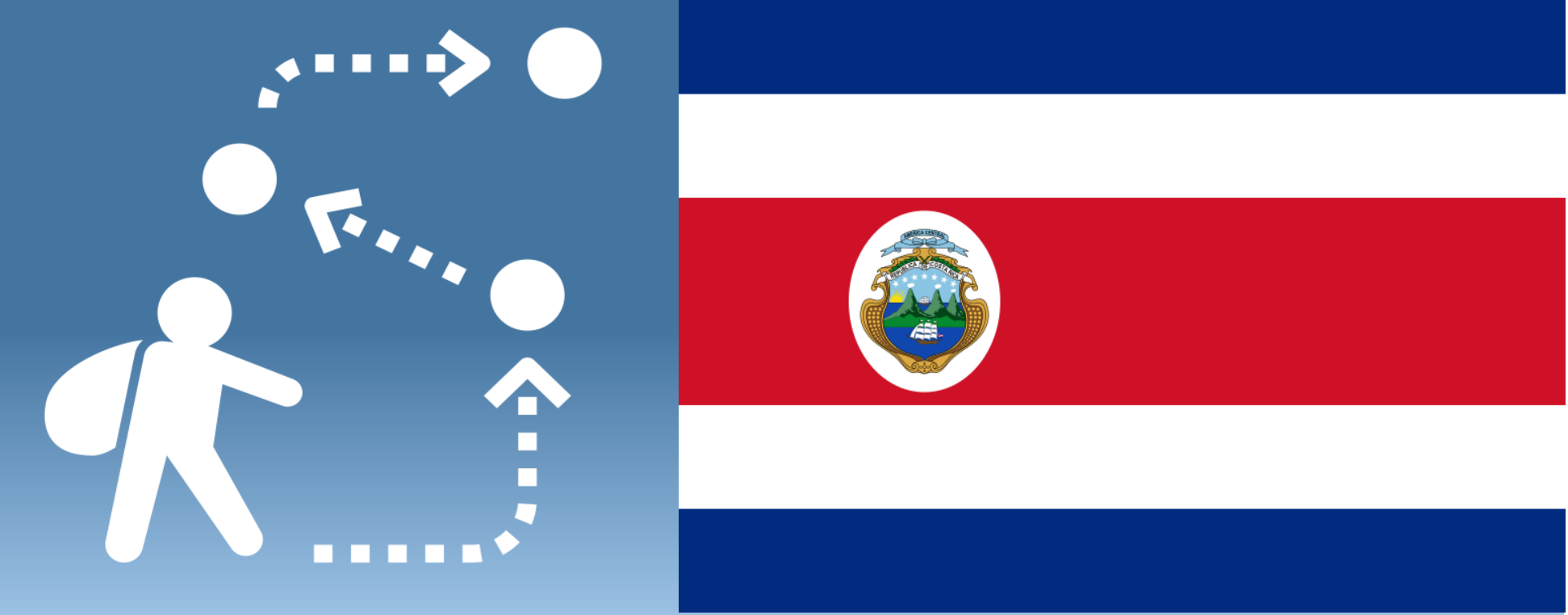


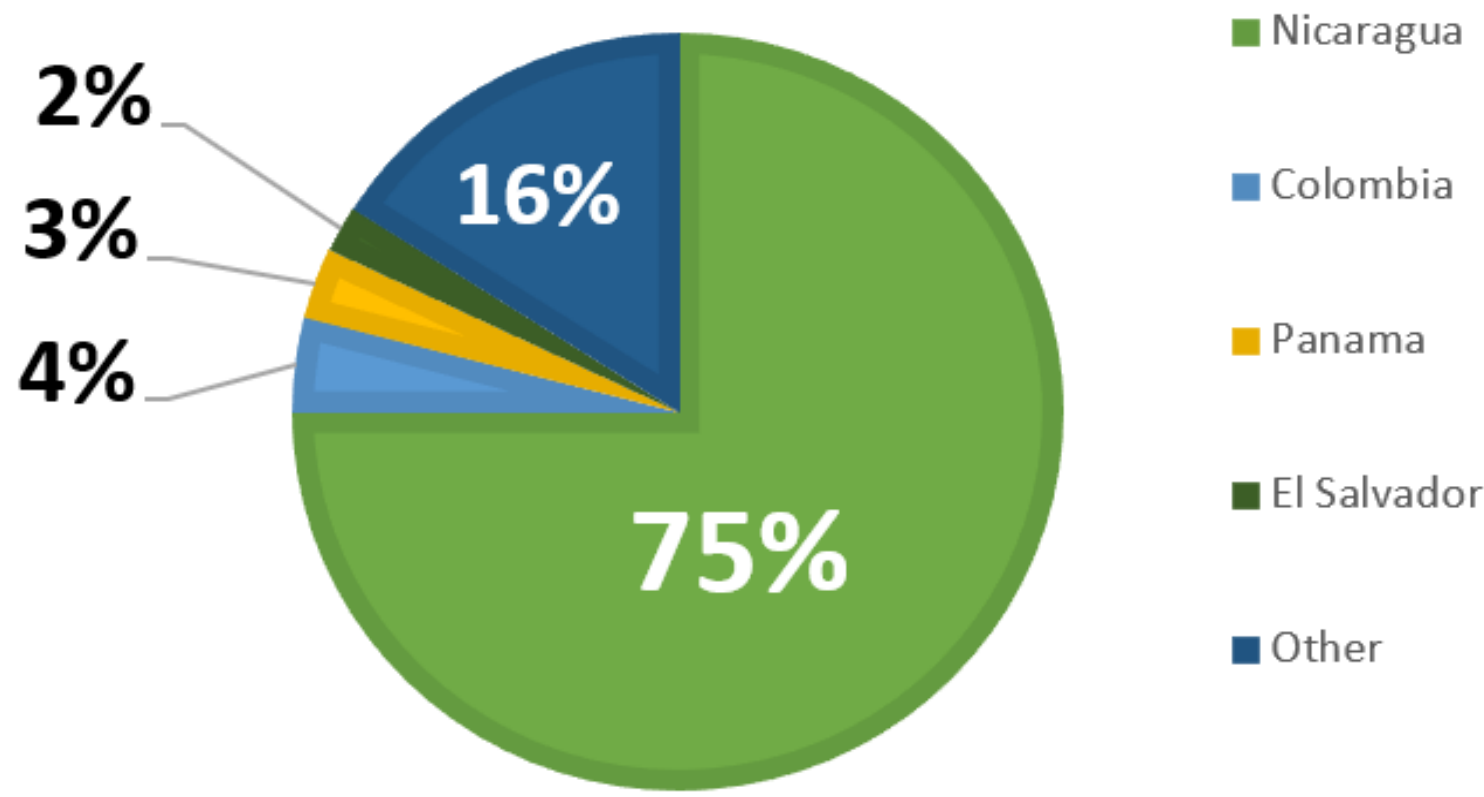
# Bridging the Gap in a Country of Transit:

## Migration and Vulnerability in Costa Rica



### Background

MIGRANTS IN COSTA RICA BY ORIGIN

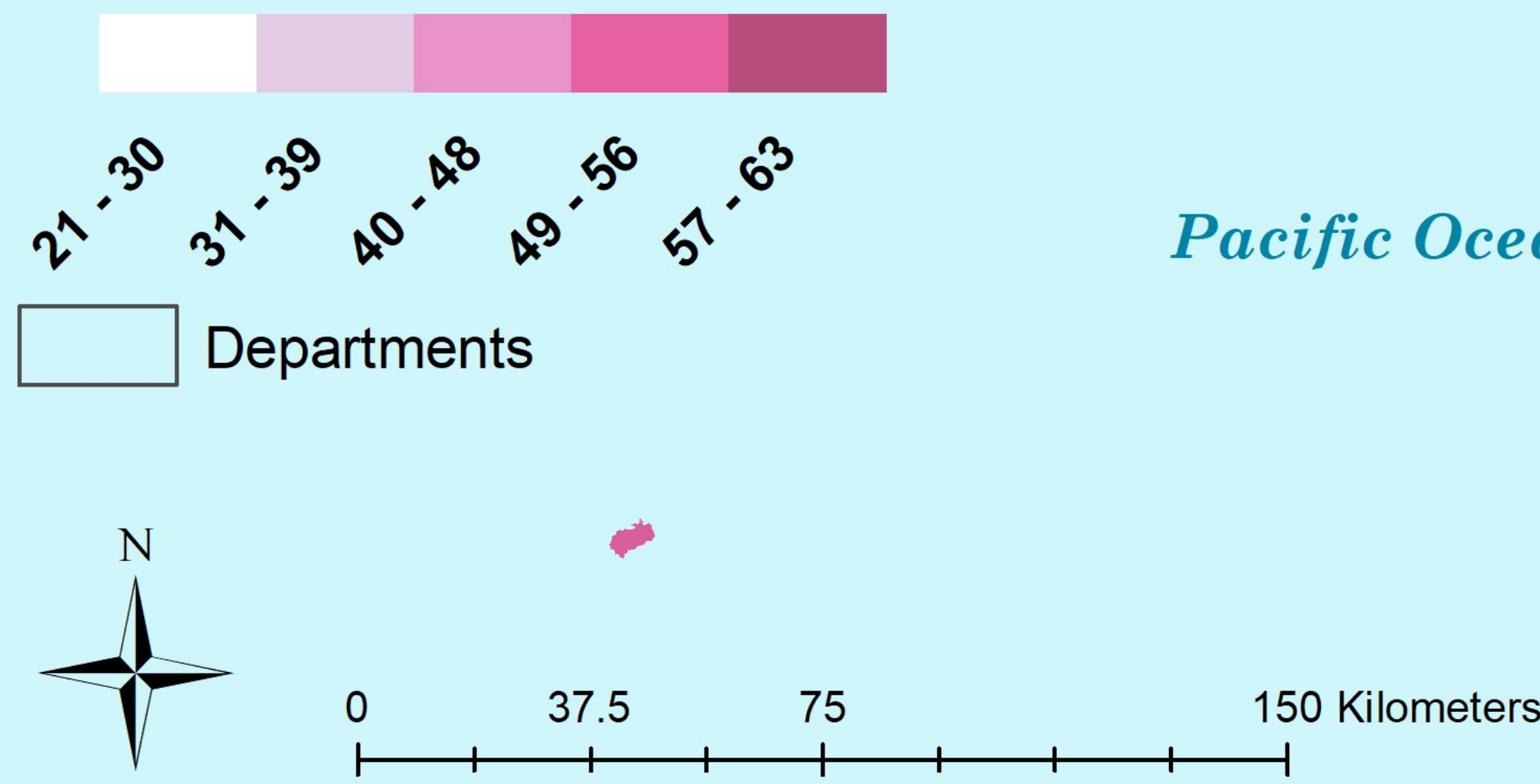


In recent years, Costa Rica has become a transcontinental transit bridge linking migration from South to North America. Costa Rica has registered over 386,000 immigrants and boasts the highest percentage of immigrants per capita in Latin America (9% of the total population). In absolute terms, it ranks sixth in Latin America and the first in Central America in number of foreign residents in the country. Migration to Costa Rica has steadily increased for different reasons and factors: economic restructuring and inequality, labor opportunities, and origin country economic instability, etc. Costa Rica is a transit country for migrants heading to the United States; thus the needs and economic interactions of migrants in Costa Rica will vary depending on factors such as origin, region of settlement, etc. This project aims to inform stakeholders such as small business owners, employers, and local officials in formulating a context for how transit migrants could be best included in the local economy.

### Methods and Results

The most vulnerable districts were evaluated by the calculation of an aggregate vulnerability score (from 1-4, 1 being Least Vulnerable and 4 being the Most Vulnerable). This score was based from a combination of indicators based off of migration, socioeconomic, and infrastructure data. Of these 3 categories, a total of 18 indicators were assessed including: literacy, migrant population, working age population, overall and female unemployment, urban population, entrepreneurship, net labor force, poverty, adolescent pregnancy, housing quality, electricity coverage, electricity coverage and usage in the kitchen, as well as access to cell phones, laptop computers, and cable/satellite services. These 18 indicators were each assigned

### Vulnerability Score by District



a score based on natural breaks and standard deviations then ranked, reclassified, and summed to generate a score. These scores were then put on a map to identify resource-constrained districts with high migrant populations. According to the vulnerability assessment, the areas of Costa Rica most vulnerable due to local socioeconomic and infrastructural conditions are largely in the rural border edges of the country with lower incomes, fewer economic prospects, and less infrastructure. Departments in the center of the country around the capital, San José, such as Cartago and Alajuela were the least resource-constrained and vulnerable but also had markedly higher migration populations (with the exception of a few outliers such as Guanacaste, which is near the Nicaraguan border).

### Limitations

The shortage of data more recent than the last census in 2011 makes it difficult to characterize this phenomenon, especially considering the escalating situation and migration flows passing through the region as of late. Each category was weighted equally, but there was no uniform number of indicators within each category (nine, eight, and one). A future analysis could provide a more nuanced weighting scoring system for a more accurate portrayal of the migration situation and socioeconomic environment.

