**Social, Ecological and Psycographic Carrying Capacities in the Urban Santa Cruz, Galapagos**

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The Galapagos Islands were declared the first UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978 and are as such considered one of the most important tourist destinations in the world, especially among nature enthusiasts. The islands are known as a living laboratory for the study of unique natural phenomena such as the geological formation of islands and the ecological and evolutionary processes that shape species. However, the surge in population and tourism within the archipelago, especially since the 1950s, reshaped the islands, rendering them hubs of cultural, economic, and ecological significance.

In this new context, the Galapagos Islands also serve as a laboratory for the exploration of a range of critical issues, including the sustainability of tourism and its intricate connection with food systems, water security, cultural values, human interactions, and socio-environmental conflicts of residents within protected areas. Definitely, the major drivers of dramatic change in the Galápagos ecosystem are directly or indirectly related to the development of tourism and include population growth, an increase in the number of tourists, and the introduction of invasive species resulting in the UNESCO inclusion of the archipelago in the list of World Heritage Sites in Danger in 2007 and the call to the Ecuadorian government to a better management of tourism in Galápagos. Currently, the situation persists and is arguably even more severe. These numbers raised concerns about this path, questioning to what extent Galápagos can support the fast increase in the number of tourists as well as the capacity to cope with it.

Our empirical work aims to analyze the ecological, social (residents), and psychographic (tourists) carrying capacities of tourism in the Galápagos, specifically focusing on Santa Cruz Island. We conducted on-site surveys and found that, in general, residents have still a positive perception of tourism, as well as tourists and visitors to beaches near the urban area. However, there is a neutral perception regarding the crowdedness of the beaches, with some concerns related to waste management, overcrowding, the decline of flora and fauna, and habitat degradation. The results of this study can help evaluate different perspectives from residents and visitors to propose effective site management strategies and improve the distribution of tourist flows, particularly in proximity to urban areas. Furthermore, determining the carrying capacities of Santa Cruz, while considering social and ecological concerns, will be a key issue for ensuring the destination's sustainability.