

The Latin America Research Group at the University of Victoria Proudly Presents:



Vulnerability and adaptation to climate change in indigenous communities in Guatemala and Canada

WHO: Lorenzo Magzul, PhD candidate
Faculty of Land and Foods Systems, UBC
WHEN: 28 January, 2:30 pm
WHERE: First Peoples House, Room 160, UVic

The burning of fossil fuels and other human activities are causing global warming. Impacts of global warming such as droughts and floods are not uniform; societies who are most vulnerable—those least able to adapt—will be affected most. Indigenous communities are vulnerable to climate change impacts because they already face challenging socio-economic and environmental conditions compared to the dominant societies that surround them. Despite the many challenges, some indigenous communities have better adaptive capacity than others by developing strategies for coping with a changing climate and climate variability. Some of these adaptation strategies include the sustainable management of resources, diverse source of income and the maintenance and enhancement of social support systems –social capital. This study compares the vulnerability and adaptive capacity of two indigenous communities: the Blood Tribe, in Canada, and the town of Patzun, in Guatemala. Understanding the vulnerability of these two indigenous communities and identifying adaptation strategies that they are using can provide adaptation insights to other indigenous communities and other vulnerable sectors impacted by climate change.

Lorenzo Magzul is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems at the University of British Columbia. Over the past 5 years he worked as a Research Fellow for a SSHRC funded project called Institutional Adaptations to Climate Change (<http://www.parc.ca/mcri/index.php>). The project was a Canada-Chile case study on adaptation to climate change and involved a team of researchers from various Canadian and Chilean universities and partner organizations. Included in the various research initiatives was the vulnerability assessment of a group of rural communities in the South Saskatchewan River Basin (SSRB) in Western Canada and the Elqui River Basin (ERB) in Northern Chile.