Graeme Smith

is a research fellow in the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Program at the Australian National University.

Fuqing Dreaming: What Drives Chinese Investment Migration in the South Pacific?

This talk will explore current domestic and international factors, as well as historical trends, that have led to mainland Chinese merchants dominating the retail trade in the South Pacific. Some scholars worry about China’s political and economic footprint in the region without considering the relationship of these migrants to different levels of the Chinese state and to host nation actors. In exploring the motivations and lives of these frontier capitalists, this talk will add nuance to often emotive debates about China’s presence in ‘our’ region.
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This talk will explore current domestic and international factors, as well as historical trends, that have led to mainland Chinese merchants dominating the retail trade in the South Pacific. It will draw on fieldwork and archival research conducted by Dr Smith in Papua New Guinea, Tonga, New Caledonia, the Solomon Islands and the Chinese provinces of Fujian, Guangdong and Yunnan over the past six years. Some scholars worry about China’s political and economic footprint in the region without considering the relationship of these migrants to different levels of the Chinese state and to host nation actors. In exploring the motivations and lives of these frontier capitalists, this talk will add nuance to often emotive debates about China’s presence in ‘our’ region.

GRAEME SMITH is a research fellow in the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Program at the Australian National University. His research has explored the demand for organic produce in Chinese urban centres, the political economy of agricultural service delivery, the role of rural cadres in China’s development, and the persistence of informal land markets in rural China. He also studies Chinese investment in the Asia-Pacific region, with ongoing projects in Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia and Myanmar.

The ANU China Seminar Series is a fortnightly seminar at which invited guests present their latest research on China and the Sinophone world. It aims at a broad audience. Speakers come from across the full range of disciplines and include senior scholars from within and outside ANU, younger academics, post-doctoral research fellows, and advanced graduate students. The seminar series provides an arena in which to discuss China in its widest sense, to acquaint people with a range of China-related research that might otherwise lie outside their scope of contact, and to offer a social setting for discussion of matters of mutual interest. Graduate and Honours students are encouraged to attend in order to familiarise themselves with advanced academic debate and to meet the ANU’s academic community. Seminars are generally held on alternate Thursdays during the semester, from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm.

AFTER THE SEMINAR
To allow for informal discussion, the seminar will be followed by a dinner with the guest speaker at 6.15 pm. All are welcome, though those who attend will need to pay for their own food and drinks. As reservations must be made, please RSVP by noon of the day before the seminar to jasmine.lin@anu.edu.au.

The China Seminar Series is sponsored by the China Institute, with the Australian Centre on China in the World and the College of Asia & the Pacific.

Convenors: Mark Strange (mark.strange@anu.edu.au) and Elisa Nesossi (elisa.nesossi@anu.edu.au).

For further details of the series:
http://chinainstitute.anu.edu.au