

Anthropology in our Backyards

Immigrant entrepreneurship and transcultural dynamics

*- A study of Chinese dominance in the grocery retail sector
in contemporary Panama and Belize*

Professor Josephine Smart B.Ed., B.Sc.
(Calgary), M.A., Ph.D. (Toronto)
Department of Anthropology and
Archaeology, University of Calgary

Thursday
Oct 15, 2015
7:00 p.m.

UNBC
Room 7-212



Abstract:

This paper focuses exclusively on the post-1990 Chinese dominance in the grocery retail sector in both Panama and Belize. Drawing on empirical data collected in Panama and Belize in 2013 and 2015, supplemented with past research on petty business ties between China, Hong Kong, Canada, and USA, and informed by the literature on Chinese immigration to North America and Latin America past and current, this paper will critically examine and articulate the emerging and expanding economic and social ties between China and Latin America since 1990. The rapid rise of Chinese ownership and presence in the grocery retail sector in Panama and Belize provides a focus of investigation to explore the conditions, practices and the specific entanglements of various transnational, social, cultural, policy and economic links that give rise to the current dominance of Chinese ownership in the grocery retail sector in these two countries, and its impact on local people and society.