

The Chinese presence in the interior land of Sarawak is a common phenomenon. Chinese trade with the local indigenous people has been established since the colonial times or even before then. Chinese presence in the rural area had changed the landscape and the land use. Besides that, the Chinese traders have introduced a credit system, which basically supported the local cash cropping. The mutual dependence between the Chinese and the Iban has made rural business successful. In the early days, river or water was the main link between the urban and rural areas. This geographical factor was an advantage for the Chinese enabling them to maintain their monopoly on the rural market. However, in the present where roads have been constructed throughout Sarawak, the Chinese trade has changed significantly. With the arrival of the road, the monopoly of the Chinese traders on the rural business is shattered. Their business declined and the market becomes open. A case study was conducted in Ng Wak Bazaar. Both qualitative and quantitative information was collected. The study found that the bazaar in the early days had fulfilled the Chinese trader's dream of success despite the hardship. The hardship was paid off when they marked up the price of goods sold to the local people. Besides that, the spatial advantage helped the traders to buy cash commodities at a lower price from the local people. The study concludes that the bazaar is still important for the Iban community living in the area, especially for cash croppers. The local community only depends on the bazaar for supporting their agricultural activities and there is decreased dependence for food and household essentials.

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Abstrak

Kehadiran orang Cina di kawasan pedalaman Sarawak bukanlah sesuatu yang baru. Sejak dari zaman penjajahan lagi, orang Cina telah bertapak dan berniaga dengan orang di kawasan luar bandar. Kehadiran mereka secara tidak langsung telah mengubah landskap luar bandar dan penggunaan tanah. Orang Cina telah memperkenalkan sistem kredit untuk membantu petani di luar bandar. Keadaan saling bergantung di antara orang Cina dan orang Iban di luar bandar ini telah menjadikan perniagaan orang Cina di luar bandar ini semakin maju. Di samping, kemajuan perniagaan ini disokong oleh kemudahan pengangkutan yang berasaskan sungai pada masa tersebut. Dengan keadaan ini, orang Cina mampu memonopoli pasaran komoditi di sesuatu kawasan luar bandar. Namun, dengan perkembangan infrastruktur yang semakin pesat, perniagaan orang Cina di luar bandar telah terjejas. Satu kajian kes telah dijalankan di sebuah bazaar Cina iaitu di Ng Wak. Data kualitatif and kuantitatif telah diambil untuk mengkaji kawasan ini. Antara hasil kajian adalah perniagaan di luar bandar ini banyak membantu petani Cina dari segi kehidupan mereka. Walaupun perniagaan ini sukar, namun ia diatasi dengan menaikkan harga barang yang dijual kepada penduduk kampung dan juga membeli komoditi pada harga yang lebih murah daripada kawasan lain. Orang Iban yang tinggal di kawasan tersebut nampaknya masih bergantung kepada petani Cina terutama dari segi kredit untuk meneruskan aktiviti pertanian mereka. Namun pergantungan dari segi lain seperti untuk makanan dan keperluan lain telah menurun kerana terdapat pengangkutan jalan raya yang menghubungkan kawasan tersebut dengan kawasan bandar.