Shipping, Migration, and Economic Activities of Buton People
In Maluku Islands

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Abstract

The navigation and migration traditions of Buton people have become an essential matter in searching for spices in Indonesia, particularly in Maluku Islands. The conditions of the area which have not been supporting the agriculture and the pressure of the social structure have forced the migration in great scales and had lasted since 17th century. The presence of Buton people as the laborers of spice plantation in Maluku since the colonial period had led them successful as the farmers and hence had made them play an important role in the socio-economic and political activities in Maluku Islands, especially in Ambon city and in the West part of Seram regency. Another important role of Buton people was their navigation capacity, and hence they acted as the distributors of spices; in fact, this was an economic activity which Buton people has played as a maritime ethnic in Indonesia.

Keywords: navigation, migration, economic activities