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**Title:** Family stories : oral tradition, memories of the past, and contemporary conflicts over land in Mentawai - Indonesia  
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STELLINGEN
(Propositions)


1 In oral tradition, memorizing past events that once affected a family, kin group or community, is a powerful tool in the establishment of a fundamental understanding of the connections between these past events and current circumstances (this thesis).

2 Mentawaian family stories can be considered an important verbal reflection of the kin groups’ identity (this thesis).

3 The obvious social inter-dependency between the individual Mentawaian kin groups puts their simultaneous strife for economic and political self-sufficiency under constant pressure (this thesis).

4 Different than in the past, when Mentawai kin groups in fear of headhunting practices preferred to stay out of each other’s sight, contemporary conflicts over various natural resources have nowadays brought tens of kin groups together in order to define their rights to the natural resources under dispute (this thesis).

5 While the (self-applied) representing of others during various social, political and religious events in Indonesia is meant to ease processes and serve the communities involved, such is, however, not necessarily the actual outcome.

6 ‘There are two fundamental features that human beings must address in their relationship to their environments: the natural resources that enable people to meet their needs, and the set of challenges that people must adjust to in order to survive’ (Oliver-Smith, 1999: 25-26). The majority of people in developing countries have failed to address these fundamental features.
In order not to lose finesses in meaning intrinsically attached to terminology used by local communities, it is preferable not to replace such local terminology with English translations in academic writing.

When cultural objects are lifted out from the cultural context in which they are produced and redefined as art in another cultural context, the metaphors and symbolism they represent are unlikely to maintain their integrity (Bakker, 2002).

Natural phenomena like earthquakes and tsunamis only turn into disasters when people are compelled to live in places where they cannot protect themselves from the potentially lethal effects of such natural phenomena.

Memory and history are both heavily constructed narratives, with only material and institutionally regulated differences between them.

The best way to make the Dutch understand where I originate from, is telling them I was born on the Indonesian island of Siberut once featuring in the reality series ‘Groeten uit de Rimboe’, broadcasted by the commercial television channel SBS 6, viewed by an estimated 1.5 million people every week.