

An international learning experience

- Prof. Wiebe Bijker, professor of Technology and Society, director of studies for the Research Master in Cultures of Arts, Science and Technology (CAST), Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
- Ranjit Pal Singh, CAST student, Huygens grant recipient (Nuffic)

Ranjit is the first student from India in the CAST programme, and a research assistant to Wiebe in his projects on vulnerabilities in technological cultures.

Ranjit: "I was working as a journalist in Ahmedabad, India, when Wiebe gave a lecture there. I conducted his interview for my newspaper, got interested in this programme, and – two years down the line – here I am."

Wiebe: "The links to India are initially built through research lines. I know Ranjit's professor Shiv Visvanathan very well through our research cooperation. Ranjit travelled to Maastricht along that path, and hopefully others will follow."

Wiebe: "CAST teaches you how to study society, particularly the relations between the arts, science, technology and culture. The research is grounded in methods instead of topics, so it could cover topics ranging from the Chernobyl victims to the history of the Zeppelin."

Ranjit: "It's like showing a horse the sources to drink from, instead of taking it to the water every day."



Ranjit: "Problem-Based Learning has its special advantages. Smaller groups and longer discussions give you a unique experience of engaging with concepts and problems. Since it's difficult to hide when there are a maximum of twelve students in discussions, you have to be prepared. It's a learning experience in itself."

Wiebe: "The dynamics within the group of students are extremely important. Ranjit invited everyone to his place and asked them to cook something from their own country as an ice-breaker."

Ranjit: "Education through PBL is like a journey you take with your fellow students. We have eight different nationalities and academic backgrounds in our class of twelve students. Slowly, you realise that your country is not the centre of the world. There are so many valuable insights that you can get in a cross-disciplinary discussion."

Wiebe: "India is richer than any other culture or country I know of. It provides a laboratory for every problem that you can think of and it offers some unique solutions. There's no place in the world where you can learn as much as in India. In that sense it does seem to be the centre of the world. It's definitely more the centre of the world than the Netherlands."

