

# **Engineered Conflicts: The Environment and the Infrastructure of Expertise in India**

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## **Abstract**

The talk presents an accessible summary of a forthcoming book by the same title being published by MIT Press (Cambridge, MA) later this summer. The book (and my talk) will address the politics of expertise in environmental governance. Although set in contemporary India, it has resonances for rest of the so-called developing world. The talk will highlight a number of diverse cases discussed in the book -- ranging from canal irrigation to nanotechnology and nuclear power. The talk, mirroring the book, will discuss the "missing expertise" needed to tackle "wicked" problems in environment and development. The talk (like the book) draws upon emerging literature in a number of related fields, including infrastructure studies, development studies, political economy, and science and technology policy studies.

## **Speaker Profile**

Ravi Rajan is Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore, on Sabbatical from the University of California at Santa Cruz. Rajan is also a Visiting Senior Fellow of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi, and a Visiting Professor at TERI University. He has two broad research interests: a) Environmentally Inclusive Governance; and b) The Governance of Environmental Risks and Disasters. Please browse the appropriate pages for descriptions of each of these fields and his publications therein.

Rajan has made significant contributions to higher education administration. As Provost of College Eight at UC Santa Cruz from 2006 - 2012, he did pioneering work designing a 'green' curriculum aimed at nurturing environmental entrepreneurs. Amongst the highlights are a novel three quarter freshman core course which includes an national award winning sustainability field practicum; a popular online learning and teaching portal based on the latest web based interactive technologies; and a series of programs aimed at forging environmental entrepreneurship amongst students. He has held several faculty leadership appointments at UC Santa Cruz. He served on the Education Abroad Program Committee during 1999-2002; the Committee on Planning and Budget during 2005-07; and the Committee on Educational Policy during 2008-09, where he contributed substantially to the reconceptualizing and redesign of the campus's General Educational Requirements.

Rajan has been a significant presence in national and international academic institutions. He is Chair of the Outreach Committee of the American Society for

Environmental History, and has served on many of its committees in the past, including as the Program Chair for the Society's Annual Meeting. He was a founding member of the editorial board of the journal, *Environment and History*. He currently serves on the editorial board of the journal, *Environmental Justice*, and of the book series of the European Society for Environmental History. He has served as a reviewer for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Economic and Social Research Council (UK), as well as for a number of leading journals and publishers.

Rajan has also served a number of civil society organizations. His public service includes the Presidency of the Board of Directors of Pesticide Action Network, North America (PANNA); board service for the International Media Project, which produces the weekly radio news program, *Making Contact*; membership of the city of Santa Cruz's Green Building Committee, which created the new building code for the city; and Charter Membership of The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE), Silicon Valley, the world's largest not for profit organization for entrepreneurs. He co-founded the Bhopal Group for Information and Action, a documentation and information center on the gas disaster, in 1985, and served on the core group of the Indian environmental organization, Kalpavriksh, during the 1980s. In addition to his scholarly work, Rajan also writes periodic essays in the popular news media.

[http://people.ucsc.edu/~srrajan/home\\_page/Biography.html](http://people.ucsc.edu/~srrajan/home_page/Biography.html)