

DEEPAK NAIR

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PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

- July 2022 — Australian National University (ANU)
Senior Lecturer, Department of International Relations
Coral Bell School of Asia-Pacific Affairs
- 2016–June 2022 National University of Singapore (NUS)
Assistant Professor of Political Science (tenure-track)
- 2006–2010 Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore.
Research Associate

EDUCATION

- 2010- 2015 London School of Economics and Political Science, U.K.
PhD in International Relations
(with LSE PhD full-scholarship).
- 2004-05 London School of Economics and Political Science, U.K.
MSc in International Relations (Distinction).
- 2000-2003 St. Stephen's College, Delhi University, India
BA Hons. History (First Class).

AWARDS & GRANTS

- 2022 ANU Futures Scheme 2.0
- 2022 Anthony Deos Young Scholar Award
Diplomatic Studies Section, International Studies Association (ISA)
- 2021 DPLST Best Article Award
Diplomatic Studies Section, ISA
- For “Sociability in International Politics: Golf and ASEAN’s Cold War Diplomacy” published in the A-ranked journal *International Political Sociology*.
 - The “annual award is presented to the author(s) of the article that best advances the theoretical and empirical study of diplomacy.”

- 2020 Best Article in the European Journal of International Relations (EJIR)
- For “Saving Face in Diplomacy: A Political Sociology of Face-to-Face Interactions in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.”
 - The *EJIR* is an A* journal and flagship journal of the European International Studies Association.
- 2019 Writing Fellowship, National University of Singapore (NUS)
- A competitive one-semester writing fellowship, funded by the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.
- 2016 NUS Research Grant (WBS R-108-000-092-133)
SGD \$40,000
- 2010-14 LSE PhD Scholarship, London School of Economics and Political Science
(full scholarship)
- 2010-14 Cambridge International Scholarship, PhD at St. John’s College,
Cambridge University (full scholarship, declined).

RESEARCH INTERESTS

International political sociology; International practice theory; International relations of Southeast Asia; Diplomacy studies; Interpretive methods.

PUBLICATIONS (single-author)

Journal Articles

1. Deepak Nair “Using Bourdieu’s *Habitus* in International Relations.” *International Studies Quarterly*
 - The concept of habitus is a centerpiece of Pierre Bourdieu’s cultural sociology and is among the most popular conceptual imports into the Bourdieu inspired ‘practice turn’ in IR. There have however been recurrent questions whether IR work using habitus and Bourdieu mainly “re-describe in different language” what scholars already know about world politics. This article argues that a more traditional use of the habitus that pays attention to the *production of the habitus* is key to advancing distinctly Bourdieusian and practice-based accounts of international politics. Looking to Bourdieu’s own work, the article calls for theoretically armed empirical attention to social structure, primary socialization, and embodiment, and it advances a specific strategy for the recovery of habitus in studies of world politics.
 - A* journal¹

¹ The Australian Political Studies Association’s journal rankings for 2022 are available here: <https://auspsa.org.au/apsa-preferred-journal-list/>

2. Deepak Nair (2023) "Populists in the Shadow of Great Power Competition: Duterte, Sukarno, and Sihanouk in Comparative Perspective." *European Journal of International Relations* 29(3):723-750.
 - This article makes a theoretical contribution to the study of populism in International Relations. Rather than right-and left wing parties or individual leaders, this study foregrounds charismatic populists weaving ideologically diverse *coalitions* in contexts of great power struggles for influence. It explores this populist type with a comparative historical study of cases from postcolonial Southeast Asia – Rodrigo Duterte’s populist presidency in the Philippines paired with Cold War neutralists President Sukarno of Indonesia and Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia. The article advances the study of populism in IR by foregrounding broad coalitions in contexts of weak party milieus (common to the postcolonial world), and identifies a novel pathway by which international politics shapes the life-cycle of populist projects.
 - A* journal
 - EJIR is the flagship journal of the European International Studies Association (EISA), and the Standing Group on International Relations of the European Consortium of Political Research (ECPR).

3. Deepak Nair (2021) "Spooks, Goons, 'Intellectuals': The Military-Catholic Network in the Cold War Diplomacy of Suharto's Indonesia," *History and Anthropology* 33(3): 372-390.
 - This article is the first study in Southeast Asian IR to excavate the role of a secretive network (*jaringan*) of military-intelligence officers and Catholic activists who emerged as a highly conservative channel of influence on the foreign policy of Suharto's Indonesia and capitalist Southeast Asia during the Cold War. Besides excavating this network, this article is also step towards a Bourdieu inspired mode of Foreign Policy Analysis: it atomizes this network in sociological terms and probes how the habitus of its members shaped the substance and style of their diplomatic practices.
 - Part of a Special Issue on *Strongmen and Informal Diplomats: Toward an Anthropology of International Relations* edited by anthropologists Sercan Yolacan (Stanford University), Ameem Lufti (Duke University), and Nisha Mathews (NUS).

4. Deepak Nair (2021) "'Hanging Out' While Studying 'Up': Doing Ethnographic Fieldwork in International Relations" *International Studies Review* 23 (4):1300-1327.
 - This article is my contribution to ongoing debates on methods and methodology in IR. I examine the challenges of conducting ethnographic fieldwork among secretive elites and national security bureaucracies when studying 'up' the social structure. Instead of participant observation or semi-structured interviews, the article proposes "hanging out" as an alternative strategy to generate immersion and ethnographic insight.
 - A-ranked journal. *ISR* is a journal of the International Studies Association (ISA).

5. Deepak Nair (2020) “Emotional Labour and the Power of International Bureaucrats.” *International Studies Quarterly* 64 (3): 573-587.
 - This article advances a novel theory on the power of international bureaucrats and international organizations in world politics. It argues that bureaucrats become powerful when they stage emotionally calibrated performances as “servants” before state principals and carve out space for action through “whispering,” “propagating,” cultivating patrons, and building coalitions in the backstage of official interaction. I evaluate this theory with an ethnographic account of the hidden forms of influence exercised by bureaucrats at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. This is a micro-sociological theory on bureaucratic influence in contrast to prevailing principal-agent, constructivist, and psychological accounts that predominate the field.
 - A* journal.
 - *ISQ* is the flagship journal of the International Studies Association.

6. Deepak Nair (2020) “Sociability in International Politics: Golf and ASEAN’s Cold War Diplomacy.” *International Political Sociology* 14 (2): 196-214.
 - The article theorizes sociability – the ‘play form’ of human association – which abounds in the everyday conduct of diplomacy but is mostly consigned to journalistic commentary. The article shows how sociable interactions (over drinks, meals, music) are a sociologically distinct type of interaction and have effects that make them consequential in international politics. I illustrate international sociability by looking closely at the elite and male homosociality fostered from playing golf by generations of ASEAN’s diplomats, which shaped their model of quiet and *sub rosa* conflict management during the Cold War.
 - A-ranked journal. *IPS* is a top journal for critical International Relations scholarship. *IPS* is also an official journal of the International Studies Association.
 - Winner of the 2021 Best Article Prize by the Diplomatic Studies Section of the ISA.

7. Deepak Nair (2019) “Saving Face in Diplomacy: A Political Sociology of Face-to-Face Interactions in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.” *European Journal of International Relations* 25(3): 672-697.
 - A contribution to the study of International Practice Theory (IPT) and ASEAN diplomacy. The article draws on my abiding interest in how the threat of embarrassment structures social interaction. The article does two things. One, it recovers the concept of “face” and “saving face” from culturalist tropes in IR and draws on the sociology of Erving Goffman to advance an account of what face is, where it comes from, and its effect on social interaction. Two, the article applies this non-essentialist account of face to the diplomacy of ASEAN where practitioners have – for generations – invoked an essentialist vocabulary of “face” to describe and mobilize their practice. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, the article recovers what face and face-saving look like in diplomatic practice.
 - A* journal.
 - Winner of the EJIR Best Article Prize 2020.

- Flagship journal of the European International Studies Association (EISA) and the Standing Group on International Relations of the ECPR.
8. Deepak Nair (2011) “ASEAN’s Core Norms in the Context of the ‘Global Economic and Financial Crisis’: Is the Crisis a Catalyst for Institutional Development?” *Asian Survey* 51(2): 245-267.
- Examines the relationship between crisis and institutional change. Explores this link with an up-close account of the impact of the Global Financial Crisis (2008-2009) on ASEAN’s major institutional overhaul with the ASEAN Charter.
 - Founded in 1935, *Asian Survey* is among the oldest and best-known specialist journals on Asian studies.
9. Deepak Nair (2009) “Regionalism in the Asia-Pacific/East Asia: A Frustrated Regionalism?” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 31(1):110-142.
- Surveys the landscape of regional arrangements in the Asia-Pacific in the post-Cold War period and examines why they have been unable to realize their stated goals. The article assesses “inclusive” and “exclusive” models of multilateral diplomacy and argues these projects are often “frustrated” by a combination of geopolitical constraints alongside the interest of ruling state elites.
 - *Contemporary Southeast Asia* is one of the leading specialist journals on Southeast Asian studies.

Book Chapters

1. Deepak Nair. (Accepted and forthcoming in 2024). “A Diplomatic Image and its Afterlife: Bangkok 1967 and ASEAN’s Creation Myth.” In Naoko Shimazu and Mathew Philips eds. *Diplomatic Images: Cold War Asia* (Cambridge University Press).
 - A cutting-edge collection of essays that pushes the boundaries of visual international relations by looking at images, exhibitions, waxworks, magazines, and paintings. The Book uses these images (rather than archival documents) to offer a fresh look at the Cold War in Asia. My contribution draws on cultural critic Walter Benjamin to probe an image associated with the origin myths of ASEAN.
2. Deepak Nair (2023) “International Relations in Southeast Asia” in Patrick James (ed.) *Oxford Bibliographies in Political Science*. (Oxford University Press).
 - This bibliographical essay that re-imagines what Southeast Asian IR can look like beyond the confines of IR approaches. It goes beyond apolitical ‘regionalism studies’ (which dominate the field) and draws on new scholarship on Southeast Asia from other fields: namely, Comparative Politics, Area Studies, and Cold War International History.

Other Peer-Reviewed Publications

1. Deepak Nair (2021) H-Diplo Teaching Roundtable XXII-50: Teaching Roundtable on the Cold War in IR. *H-Diplo/H-Net Humanities & Social Science Online*.
 - I foreground the politics of teaching the Cold War in the postcolonial Third World—specifically, in Southeast Asia where the Cold War intersected with decolonization struggles. I especially reflect on my experience of teaching the tendentiously remembered Third Indochina War to students in Singapore and Southeast Asia.
2. Deepak Nair (2016) “Learning Diplomacy: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam Diplomats in ASEAN” *Trends in Southeast Asia Series*, Issue 14 (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies: Singapore).
 - Draws on my fieldwork among diplomats from Southeast Asia’s post-socialist states of Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Laos as they learned to speak English and perform in the register of Anglophone diplomacy. An account of IR ‘socialization’ that is embodied, everyday, and in practice.
3. Deepak Nair (2016) “A Strong Secretariat, a Strong ASEAN? A Re-evaluation,” *ISEAS Perspectives* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies: Singapore).
 - A policy oriented publication that intervenes in an old debate among Southeast Asian scholars on whether and how to “strengthen” ASEAN’s bureaucratic machinery.

Public Commentary

Nair, Deepak (2021) “ASEAN on Myanmar’s Coup: Revisiting Cold War Diplomacy on Cambodia,” *New Mandala*

- My essay is a commentary on how ASEAN can intercede in diplomatic recognition struggles in favour of Myanmar’s democratic opposition ousted by the 2021 coup.

Works In Progress

Article manuscripts in-preparation

- “Beyond the West and Whiteness: The Postcolonial Afterlives of Race in International Relations”
- “Performing Non-Alignment: A Dramaturgical Account.”

Book Manuscript (In preparation; single-author)

Title: “Doing Nothing”: ASEAN and the Cultural Production of Inaction

Book Abstract

This book is about how seemingly bogus, banal, and empty activity can have powerful political effects. It intervenes in a long running debate on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – a diplomatic project forged at the height of the Cold War in Southeast Asia that has outlasted Afro-Asian, Socialist, and Black internationalist projects of postcolonial worldmaking in the twentieth century. The debate is as interminable as it has been inconclusive: Does ASEAN do anything that matters? Supporters argue that dialogic encounters in ASEAN’s diplomatic meetings foster confidence, transform identities, and bring peace to Southeast Asia. Critics decry ASEAN’s record of “inaction” in the face of human rights abuses, military coups, civil society crackdowns, and looming security challenges. This book suggests that neither “supporters” nor “critics” get ASEAN right. Despite their differences, both camps overlook the burgeoning mass of everyday activity in ASEAN over meetings upon meetings, documents upon documents, and routine bureaucratic performances that constitute the everyday production of this diplomatic project. The book argues that it is the *effect* of this banal cultural production of ASEAN to produce the effect of “nothing;” to prevent certain outcomes from eventuating, to make “nothing” – as it were – to happen. ASEAN’s “inaction” is an accomplishment that requires a great deal of effort. What *is* being actively produced, instead, is an anti-political harmony by which ASEAN’s infrastructure of meetings and banal activity deflects, sluices, and drains contention from the “political.” Drawing on long-term fieldwork in the circuits of ASEAN diplomacy, this book makes an original contribution to understanding ASEAN and advances a novel practice account of culture in International Relations.

TEACHING & SUPERVISION**Courses Taught**

1. International Relations of the Asia-Pacific (ANU)
 - Postgraduate course. Convenor and lecturer.
 - Redesigned the course from a more current affairs course to one with historical depth (on decolonization, the Indochina Wars) and new theoretical frameworks (focusing on race, gender, and emotions).
 - 26 students in 2022; 42 students in 2023 (semester 2, 2023).
2. Southeast Asian Politics (NUS)
 - Comparative politics module for undergraduates.
 - Used Comparative Historical Analysis to explain political stasis and change with a focus on five Southeast Asian states: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam and Myanmar.
 - 70 students (average)

- Student Feedback in 2021: Survey response ratio: 76% (54/71 students). Teaching score (Lecture): 4.5/5. Teaching Award Nominations: 16.

3. Singapore's Foreign Policy (NUS)

- Advanced a political sociology approach to foreign policy making with a Singaporean empirical backdrop.
- 120 undergraduates per year (average)
- Student Feedback in 2021: Survey response ratio: 80% (111/139 students). Teaching score (Lecture): 4.4/5. Teaching Award nominations: 21.

4. Seminar in International Relations of Southeast Asia (NUS)

- Convenor and lecturer for this undergraduate course. Redesigned the syllabus to combine area studies, Cold War history, and comparative politics.
- 35-40 students (average)
- Student Feedback in 2021: Survey response ratio 76% (25/33 students). Teaching score: 4.5/5. Teaching Award Nominations: 7.

Supervision

PhD (NUS)

- Member of supervisory panel for George May, NUS Political Science Department (thesis on a practice theory account of UN anti-trafficking).
- Thesis Examiner for Sorasich Swangslip, PhD candidate in Department of Southeast Asian Studies, NUS. For thesis titled: "The Localization of Foreign Words: The Impact on Thailand's Foreign Policy formation and Practices."

Supervisor for BA Honours Thesis (NUS)

- Neo Yi Chong Isaac (2019) "The Politics of Status: Examining Middle Class Support for Right Wing Populist Leaders in the Philippines and Indonesia."
- Kee Wei Jian Darren (2019) "India's Relations with Southeast Asia."
- Maegan Liew Chew Min (2020) "The place of public diplomacy in Sino-Singapore relations: Managing 'Chineseness'."

Independent Study Module/ISM (NUS)

ISM is an opportunity for independent study where students earn credits (worth one-course) by working closely with a faculty member on a topic of their choice and by drafting a final essay.

- Hanna Tay (2017) "Diplomacy between New Order Indonesia and Singapore during the Cold War."
- Amanda See (2018) "Why are Some Strong Personalities More Successful in Party Politics Than Others? A Comparison Between Lee Kuan Yew and Mahathir Bin Mohamed."

Undergraduate Research Opportunity Programme / UROP (NUS)

The UROP is an innovative program that offers undergraduate students an opportunity to undertake research work under the wings of a faculty member who are Principal Investigators for an ongoing project. UROP lasts for one semester and students are assessed for the quality of data collection, journal reflections, and a final essay. I supervised 13 undergraduate students under the UROP at NUS

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Journal Editing

1. 2021- Present: Associate Editor, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* (HJD).
<https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/hjd>

The *Hague Journal of Diplomacy* is the world's leading specialist journal on diplomacy. Our 5-member editorial team includes key scholars of diplomacy in IR today: Halvard Leira, Marcus Holmes, Jeremie Cornut, Constance Duncombe, and Jan Melissen. As Associate Editor, I handle all regular submissions for the Asia-Pacific region. I also proposed a concept note for a Special Issue on *Caste in Diplomacy*, which was approved and for which I am the assigned editor. The Special Issue will be published in 2024. This will be the very first effort to foreground caste – an economic, political, and scriptural source of social stratification associated with South Asia– as a broader source of hierarchy and power in diplomacy and IR.

2. 2009-2013: Associate Editor, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*
<https://www.jstor.org/journal/contsoutasia>

Contemporary Southeast Asia is one of the oldest and most prominent area studies and IR journals on Southeast Asia based in the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.

Elected Office 2019-2023.

Member-at-Large, Diplomatic Studies Section, International Studies Association (ISA).

The ISA Diplomatic Studies Section has approximately 400 members from all parts of the world. In this role, I prepared the Section's program for ISA annual conventions in 2020, 2021, and 2022. I also engaged in initiatives to make diplomacy studies more accessible and representative of its membership via selection of new members and travel grants.

Journal Reviewer

Asian Journal of Political Science
Cambridge Review of International Affairs
Contemporary Southeast Asia
European Journal of International Relations
European Journal of International Security
Global Constitutionalism
Hague Journal of Diplomacy
International Political Sociology
International Affairs
International Studies Quarterly

International Studies Review
International Relations of the Asia-Pacific
Politics & Gender
Review of International Political Economy

Editorial Board

Cooperation and Conflict

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

May 2023 5th New Diplomatic History (NDH) Conference in Turku, Finland.

- Invited to deliver the Opening Keynote on Day 1 of the conference. Keynote title: “Studying Difference: Avoiding Innocence and Ignorance in Encounters with Diplomatic Culture.”
- The NDH is a network at the crossroads of diplomatic history and cultural studies. It comprises over 200 historians and political scientists working on diplomacy and publishes the journal *Diplomatica*.

INVITED TALKS (fully or partially funded)

Oct 2022 Copenhagen University, Denmark (in-person)
Nordic Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (NIAS)

Feb 2022 Northern Illinois University, USA (online)
Centre for Southeast Asian Studies

Nov 2021 McGill University, Canada (in-person)
Political Science Department, CIPSS Speaker Series

May 2019 Stanford University, USA (in-person)
Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Centre

May 2019 Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) (in-person)
Hong Kong Department of Government and Public Administration

PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS

2022

- Diplomacy Workshop at the Royal Danish Society of Science and Letters, Copenhagen 29-30 August.
- ISA Nashville. Co-organized Panels on “Bourdieu in International Relations” and panel on “Interpersonal Contact in Diplomacy.”

2021

- ISA virtual. Organized panel on “International Sociability” & participated in Roundtable on Intersectionality in Diplomacy Studies.
- 3rd New Diplomatic History Conference at Aarhus (paper presenter, online).

2019

- EISA, Sofia, September (paper presenter)
- EuroSEAS, Berlin, (presenter and convenor of panel “Rethinking Southeast Asian IR”).
- APSA Annual Meeting, Washington, USA, August (paper presenter)
- ‘Rethinking Asian Diplomacy’ Workshop, ARI-NUS, (co-convenor).
- ISA Asia-Pacific, Singapore, July (paper presenter).
- ISA Annual Convention Toronto, Canada, March (paper presenter).

2018

- ISA Annual Convention, San Francisco, USA, March. Invited to Co-Chair. Critical Methods Café table on ethnography.
- Yale-NUS Diplomatic Images Workshop, Singapore, April (paper presenter).
- Millennium LSE-NUS Theory Workshop, Singapore, July (paper presenter).
- Asia Research Institute (NUS) Informal Diplomats Workshop, December (paper presenter).

2017

- ISA Annual Convention, Presidential Roundtable on “Theorizing Change in Practice Theory,” Baltimore, USA (paper presenter).
- European Consortium of Political Research (ECPR), Oslo (paper presenter).
