GAUTAM NAIR

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Harvard Kennedy School — Cambridge, MA
Associate Professor of Public Policy (on term) — 2026-2030
Assistant Professor of Public Policy — 2020-2026

Faculty Co-Chair of the Weatherhead Research Cluster on Business and Government; Faculty Affiliate of the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, Center for International Development, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Institute for Quantitative Social Science, and Stone Program in Wealth Distribution, Inequality, and Social Policy; Steering Committee Member of the Mittal South Asia Institute

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Comparative and International Political Economy; Distributive Politics; Welfare Policy; Business-Government Relations; Political Development; South Asia

EDUCATION

Yale University — New Haven, CT, US
Ph.D. in Political Science — 2020

University of Chicago — Chicago, IL, US
M.A., Social Sciences Division — 2011

Colby College — Waterville, ME, US
B.A., Economics — 2008

RESEARCH

Book

1. Gautam Nair. *Retail State: The Politics of Consumption Welfare in India and Beyond*. *Cambridge University Press*, Forthcoming.

Peer-Reviewed Publications

1. Gautam Nair. "Voter Demand, Clientelism, or Cronyism? Voters, Business, and the Politics of Publicly Provided Consumer Goods." *Comparative Political Studies*, accepted conditionally.
2. Gautam Nair and Federico Sturzenegger. "Great Dilution: The Global Impact of the US Inflation Shock on Sovereign Debt." *IMF Economic Review*, 2023.
3. Gautam Nair and Kyle Peyton. "Building Mass Support for Global Pandemic Recovery Efforts in the United States." *PNAS Nexus* 1 (4) 2022.

4. Gautam Nair and Nicholas Sambanis. "Violence Exposure and Ethnic Identification: Evidence from Kashmir." *International Organization* 73 (2) 2019, 329-363.
5. Gautam Nair. "Misperceptions of Relative Affluence and Support for International Redistribution." *The Journal of Politics* 80 (3) 2018, 815-830.
6. Dan Slater, Benjamin Smith, and Gautam Nair. "Economic Origins of Democratic Breakdown? The Redistributive Model and the Postcolonial State." *Perspectives on Politics* 12 (2), 2014, 353-374.
7. Edwin Adkins, Sandy Eapen, Flora Kaluwile, Gautam Nair, and Vijay Modi. "Off-grid Energy Services for the Poor: Introducing LED Lighting in the Millennium Villages Project in Malawi." *Energy Policy* 38 (2), 2010, 1087-1097.

Book Manuscripts

1. Gautam Nair. *Incidental Representation: Business, Democracy, and the Public Good*. In progress, book workshop held in March 2026.
2. Alisha Holland and Gautam Nair, editors. *The Contracting State: The Politics of Privatized Government*. Under Review.

Selected Working Papers

1. Gautam Nair, Akshay Dixit, and Rajat Saini. "Group-targeted wealth transfers reduce inequality and intergroup conflict but trigger policy backlash." Under revision at *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

   MPSA 2026 Paula D. McClain Award for best paper overall

   MPSA 2026 Kellogg/Notre Dame Award for best paper in comparative politics

   APSA 2025 Class and Inequality Section best paper on social inequality
2. Gautam Nair, Owen Bernstein, and Richard Zeckhauser. "Incidental Representation: Big Retail, Consumers, and Trade Liberalization."

   APSA 2026 Section on American Political Economy best paper
3. Gautam Nair and German Feierherd. "Credit Coalitions: Financing Minority Enterprise under Majority Rule."
4. Naveen Bharathi, Anwesha Bhattacharya, and Gautam Nair. "Women's Political Representation and Female Enterprise: New Data and Evidence from South India."
5. Michael Allen and Gautam Nair. "Buying Right: The Partisan Politics of Retail Consolidation in the United States."
6. Michael Allen and Gautam Nair. "The Representation of Consumers in Trade Politics: Theory and Evidence from Congressional Speech."

GENERAL INTEREST WRITING, CASES, AND COMMENTARY

1. "India's Surprising Election Results A 'Watershed Moment'." Gautam Nair. Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation. Featured in *Harvard Gazette*.

2. "Giant of the Region, Microcosm of Latin America: The History and Political Economy of Brazil." Bethany Romano, Gautam Nair, and Jeeyang Rhee Baum. Harvard Kennedy School Case 2291, 2024.
3. "Milestone or Misstep? Corruption, Development, and Democracy After Brazil's Lava Jato Probe." Pamela Varley, Gautam Nair, and Jeeyang Rhee Baum. Harvard Kennedy School Case 2290, 2024.
4. "The US Inflation Bonanza for Sovereign Debtors." Gautam Nair and Federico Sturzenegger. *Project Syndicate*, September 29, 2022.
5. Book review of *A Business History of India* by Tirthankar Roy. *Pacific Affairs*, 2021.
6. "Most Americans Vastly Underestimate how Rich They are Compared to the Rest of the World. Does it Matter?" *Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog*, August 23, 2018.

TEACHING

"The Politics of Development" (Harvard Kennedy School, MPA/ID core curriculum)

"Politics and Policy in South Asia" (HKS, elective)

"Colonialism and Political Development" (HKS, Mid-Career Summer Program)

"State and Business in India under Socialism and Reform," (Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania and Yale School of Management)

Faculty lead, Wharton School Global Immersion Program to India (2019)

INVITED TALKS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (LAST FIVE YEARS)

2026: Harvard-MIT Seminar on the State and Capitalism Since 1800, American Political Science Association, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, Columbia University Identity and International Political Economy Conference (planned)

2025: University of Pennsylvania, Tufts University Fletcher School, HKS Faculty Lunch Seminar, Harvard Government Department, Brown University, Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) Annual Meeting, American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting, International Political Economy Society (IPES) Conference, Northeast Universities Development Conference

2024: Northeastern University Economics/Public Policy, Indian Statistical Institute Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development, APSA, MPSA, IPES

2023: HKS LIEP Workshop, Yale School of Management, IPES, APSA

2022: Yale University Jackson School, IPES, APSA

2021: WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Yale University, Boston University, APSA, MPSA

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND HONORS

Best Paper on the American Political Economy, APSA American Political Economy Section 2026
MPSA Paula D. McClain MPSA Award for Best Paper (any field) 2026
MPSA Kellogg/Notre Dame MPSA Award for Best Paper (comparative politics) 2026

MPSA Robert H. Durr Award Honorable Mention (application of quantitative methods to a substantive topic) 2026
Harvard Bloomberg Center for Cities Research Grant 2026
Best Paper on Social Inequality, APSA Class and Inequality Section 2025
Harvard Weatherhead Research Cluster Award (with Alisha Holland, Meg Rithmire, and Dani Rodrik) 2025
Harvard Weatherhead Center Distinguished Faculty Research Associate 2025
Harvard Weatherhead Center Semester Leave Grant 2025
HKS "Dinner on the Dean" Teaching Award 2024
Harvard University GenAI Grant 2024, 2025
Harvard Stone Inequality Grant 2023
Harvard Weatherhead Center Medium Faculty Grant 2023
Harvard Weatherhead Research Cluster Award Jeff Frieden, and Dani Rodrik) 2022
Harvard Weatherhead Center Small Faculty Grant 2022
Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Sciences (IQSS) Undergraduate Research Scholars Program 2021-2024
Time Sharing Experiments in the Social Sciences (TESS/NSF) Young Investigator Award (with Kyle Peyton) 2021
Harvard Mittal South Asia Institute Grant 2020, 2023
Yale University PhD received with Distinction 2020
National Science Foundation (NSF) Dissertation Grant SES 1747451 $24,323 2018
Time Sharing Experiments in the Social Sciences (TESS/NSF) 2015
NSF TESS Real Stakes Competition Winning Proposal 2015
Yale John Hay Whitney Fellow 2017 - 18
Yale Institution for Social and Policy Studies Field Experiments Grant 2017
Yale MacMillan Center International Dissertation Research Fellowship 2016 - 17
Yale Leitner Program in Political Economy Grant 2015 - 18
Yale South Asia Studies Council Grant 2015 - 17
Yale Institution for Social and Policy Studies Policy Fellow 2015 - 16
Yale Overbrook Fellow 2014 - 15
University of Chicago M.A. Honors 2011
University of Chicago Committee on International Relations Thesis Honors 2011
University of Chicago Second Year Specialization Fellowship 2010 - 11
University of Chicago University Scholarship (full scholarship) 2009 - 11
Colby College Davis Scholarship (full scholarship) 2004 - 08

CONFERENCES CO-ORGANIZED

Business & Government in a Fracturing World, Harvard, Cambridge, MA, US 2026
Business and Government Conference, Harvard, Cambridge, MA, US 2025
The Contracting State, Harvard, Cambridge, MA, US 2024
Northeast Workshop in Empirical Political Science, Harvard, Cambridge, MA, US 2024
Political Economy of Institutions Conference (in memory of Frances McCall Rosenbluth), Yale, New Haven, CT, US 2022

Political and Economic Development Conference, Yale, New Haven, CT, US 2019

SERVICE

Faculty Coordinator: Brown-Harvard-MIT Joint Seminar in South Asian Politics (2021-Present); Ash Center Global Challenges to Democracy Seminar Series (2023-2024, 2025-2026)

Faculty Advisor, Harvard India Conference (2021-2026)

Admissions Committee, MPA/ID Program, Harvard Kennedy School (2020-2024)

Advisor: Akshay Dixit (PhD, committee member, postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton University and Assistant Professor at Dartmouth), Kevin Carney (PhD, committee member, postdoctoral fellowship at University of Chicago and Assistant Professor, University of Michigan), Salvador Ascensio Pastora (PhD, commitee member, Senior Deputy Director, Altor Finanzas e Infraestructura Mexico), 8 Masters' theses supervised (2 won best thesis prize)

Selection/Steering Committee: Weatherhead Center Doctoral Grants (2024), Stone Inequality Research Grants (2024), Mittal South Asia Seed for Change (2024), IQSS Student Grants (2023), Mittal South Asia Institute

Reviewer: *American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, American Sociological Review, BMJ Global Health, British Journal of Political Science, Comparative Political Studies, Experimental Economics, Fulbright-Nehru Doctoral Research Fellowship, International Organization, Journal of Politics, Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization, Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics, PLOS One, Political Science Research and Methods, Review of International Political Economy*

EXPERIENCE

University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, PA, US
Visiting Dissertation Fellow, Center for the Advanced Study of India 2019-20

Brookings Institution India Center New Delhi, India
Visiting Scholar 2016-17

Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) New Haven, CT, US
Initiative Associate, US Finance Initiative 2011-13

Sustainable Engineering Lab, Earth Institute at Columbia University New York, NY, US
Research Analyst, Energy Group 2008-09

September, 2026