



Speaking Like a State: Language and Nationalism in Pakistan

Alyssa Ayres

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Speaking Like a State: Language and Nationalism in Pakistan Alyssa Ayres

Alyssa Ayres' fascinating study examines Pakistan's troubled history by exploring the importance of culture to political legitimacy. Early leaders selected Urdu as the natural symbol of the nation's great cultural past, but due to its limited base great efforts would be required to make it truly national. This paradox underscores the importance of cultural policies for national identity formation. By comparing Pakistan's experience with those of India and Indonesia, the author analyzes how their national language policies led to very different outcomes. The lessons of these large multiethnic states offer insights for the understanding of culture, identity, and nationalism throughout the world. The book is aimed at scholars in the fields of history, political theory, and South Asian studies, as well as those interested in the history of culture and nationalism in one of the world's most complex, and challenging, countries.

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