Founded in 1947 as a homeland for South Asia’s Muslims, Pakistan has been beset by conflict throughout its existence. Alyssa Ayres’ fascinating study examines Pakistan’s troubled history by exploring the importance of culture to political legitimacy. As she explains, early leaders selected Urdu, the first language of a small percentage of Pakistanis, as the natural symbol of the nation’s great cultural past. But due to its limited base, great efforts would be required to propagate Urdu and make it truly national. This paradox underscores the importance of cultural policies for national identity formation. In Pakistan’s case, the process also fuelled resentments. By comparing Pakistan’s experience with those of India and Indonesia, independent around the same time, 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.

Alyssa Ayres is Director for India and South Asia at McLarty Associates, Washington, DC. A cultural historian of modern South Asia, she has carried out research in India, Pakistan, and Indonesia. She has co-edited three books, including one forthcoming on power realignments between China, India, and the United States, as well as two volumes in Asia Society’s India Briefing series. She received an AB magna cum laude from Harvard, and an MA and PhD from the University of Chicago.
Map 1 (a) Basic map of Pakistan (b) Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan/East Bengal province of Pakistan.

Names and boundary representation are not necessarily authoritative.
Speaking Like a State

Language and Nationalism in Pakistan

Alyssa Ayres
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi
Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK
Published in the United States of America by
Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521519311

© Alyssa Ayres 2009

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2009

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-51931-1 hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to
in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such
websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of illustrations</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of tables</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note on transliteration</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Articulating a new nation</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Urdu and the nation</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The nation and its margins</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The case of Punjab, part I: elite efforts</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 The case of Punjab, part II: popular culture</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 History and local absence</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Bringing back the local past</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Speaking like a state: language planning</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Religion, nation, language</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Conclusion</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bibliography**  
**Index**

© Cambridge University Press  
www.cambridge.org
Figures

1 Cover image from the third edition of the pamphlet, “What Does the Pakistan National Movement Stand For?” (Cambridge: The Pakistan National Movement, 1942 [1933])

2 Cartoon: throne of education (from Saeed Ahmad Farani, *Punjabi Zabani Nahin Maregi*) 89

3 Cartoon: “This is the journey to the economic goal in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan?” (from Saeed Ahmad Farani, *Punjabi Zabani Nahin Maregi*) 90

4 Cartoon: Punjabi? Urdu, English inside? (from Saeed Ahmad Farani, *Punjabi Zabani Nahin Maregi*) 90

5 Cartoon: “Untitled” (from Saeed Ahmad Farani, *Punjabi Zabani Nahin Maregi*) 91

6 Film poster for *Maula Jaat* 94

7 Film poster for *Maula Jaat in London* 95

8 Pakistan in geological times (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, *Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation*) 107

9 Pakistan at the dawn of history (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, *Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation*) 108

10 Pakistan in the eighth century AD (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, *Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation*) 109

11 Pakistan in the eleventh century AD (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, *Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation*) 110

12 Pakistan in the thirteenth century AD (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, *Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation*) 111

13 Pakistan in AD 1318 (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, *Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation*) 112

14 Pakistan in AD 1398 (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, *Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation*) 113
List of illustrations

15 Pakistan in AD 1525 (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation) 114
16 Pakistan in AD 1605 (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation) 115
17 Pakistan in AD 1700 (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation) 116
18 Pakistan in AD 1751 (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation) 117
19 Pakistan in AD 1780 (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation) 118
20 Pakistan in AD 1795 (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation) 119
21 Pakistan in AD 1933 (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation) 120
22 The Pak Millat in 1940 (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation) 121
23 The Pak Millat in 1942 (from Choudhary Rahmat Ali, Pakistan: The Fatherland of the Pak Nation) 122

Maps

1a Basic map of Pakistan page ii
1b Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan/East Bengal province of Pakistan ii
2 Map of Pakistan and surrounding areas showing ethnic/linguistic boundaries 47
3 Map of Punjab Province of Pakistan 66
4a India – before the linguistic states reorganization (state boundaries of 1950) 159
4b India – after the linguistic states reorganization (states as of 2008) 159
5 Map of Indonesia showing ethnic/linguistic boundaries 170
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The reach of Indonesian in Indonesia</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Number of terms coined by subject area in Indonesian</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgments

No work is ever the product of a single individual, and I owe great debts to a very long list of people. This book’s path was influenced by scholarly curiosities inflected by a desire for life outside the cloistered ivory tower. In the mid 1990s I interrupted my doctoral studies to serve first with the International Committee of the Red Cross, and then with the Asia Society in New York. That nagging sense of unfinished work led me to resume my academic program, which included a dissertation that grew into this book. Mentors from my time at the Asia Society encouraged me to make the leap, and I am deeply grateful to Nicholas Platt, Marshall M. Bouton, Robert W. Radtke, Vishakha N. Desai and Frank G. Wisner of the extended Society family for steering me in the right direction.

The University of Chicago incubated the ideas in this book, and supported me with many fellowships over the years. I thank Sheldon Pollock, Arjun Appadurai, and Carol A. Breckenridge for their reassurance and guidance as I returned to Chicago after six years away. Rapid changes in geopolitics meant that my original plan to carry out research in Pakistan was held up, along with my Fulbright-Hays fellowship, due to a security deterioration that remains the case today. Muzaffar Alam had the foresight to suggest a “Plan B,” which fairly quickly became the primary line of inquiry. I could not have completed this work without his advice, nor the generosity and warmth of Rizwana Alam. Sumit Ganguly of Indiana University devoted more time to thoughtful critique of my chapters than I ever could have imagined. Ronald Grigor Suny offered many important suggestions to push this work toward greater accessibility for a broader readership, for which I am very grateful. But my greatest intellectual debt surely goes to Sheldon Pollock, who made sure I did not fall victim to numerous setbacks – and later encouraged me to keep pushing forward on the long path to making this a publishable book. A year-long residency at the Franke Institute for the Humanities allowed exclusive focus on research and writing during my final year, for which I thank Jim Chandler and Margot Browning. Thank you also to Jim Nye,
Acknowledgments

Sally Noble, Bronwen Bledsoe, Tom Thuerer, Elena Bashir, and Chika Kinoshita for all their wisdom and help.

In Pakistan, feedback from Imran Ali at the Lahore University of Management Sciences, and Tariq Rahman at Quaid-i-Azam University proved very helpful early on. Thank you to Anwar and Nabila Khan in Lahore, and to Sughra Imam for her kindness in Islamabad back in 2002. Pakistan's chair of the national language authority, Fateh Muhammad Malik, spent hours discussing language and nation. In Jakarta, where I spent six weeks at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, I must express a special thanks to Hadi Soesastro and Clara Juwono of CSIS. I learned an enormous amount about Indonesia's experience with national language formation as the result of my time there. Anton Moeliono, former head of Indonesia's Pusat Bahasa, provided the kind of insights that only a scholar-practitioner could. Many thanks as well to John McGlynn, founder of the Lontar Foundation, for his unflaggingly good advice over the years. Interviews with Harimurti Kridalaksana, Lucy Montolalu, Chaider Bumualim, and Melani Budianta were invaluable. And Uri Tadmor shared his knowledge of all manner of subjects with infectious enthusiasm.

As the material here made its way to publication, I received constructive criticism and comments on the ideas here in discussions, as well as on drafts and articles, all of which greatly improved this work. Thank you to Amarjit Chandan, Daniel W. Drezner, Saeed Ahmad Farani, Husain Haqqani, C. Raja Mohan, Philip Oldenburg, Safir Rammah, Alok Rai, Kazim Saeed, Sunil Sharma, E. Sridharan, and Ashley J. Tellis, as well as the thoughtful critique from five anonymous referees – three for the Journal of Asian Studies, where the material on Punjab was published in 2008, and the two Cambridge reviewers who vetted this book in manuscript. The usual disclaimer, of course, applies.

There could be no better house for this book than Cambridge, and I am deeply grateful to Senior Commissioning Editor Marigold Acland for seeing the merits of this work from the very beginning. Sarah Green kept everything together as we moved into production. Once in production, Jamie Hood of Out of House Publishing and Gail Welsh guided the manuscript to its completion. Several extraordinary people read the book in page proof, and I will be forever grateful to R. Nicholas Burns, Bruce Riedel, Vishakha N. Desai, and Marshall M. Bouton for committing time they did not have to do so.

The nearly eight years over which this book was researched, written, revised numerous times, and ultimately published required enormous self-discipline. It would not have been possible for me to maintain this focus without my parents, who stepped in to help when I needed it. Last but not least, I thank Sadanand Dhume for his encouragement and support not just in life, but also on the page.
Note on transliteration

Urdu poses a number of transliteration problems. It contains sounds particular to Indic languages, such as a series of retroflex consonants and a differentiation between aspirated and unaspirated consonants. A font with diacritics used for Indic languages might be a good base. However, Urdu is written in a modified Arabic script, which introduces many additional distinct characters into the orthography. Many of these letters are not pronounced with any degree of distinction; the Urdu zal, ze, zwad, and zoi all sound the same, though to an Arabic speaker the four letters are very much distinct.

No font easily allows the transliteration of all the distinct Indic sounds as well as Perso-Arabic letters. In Pakistan, new experiments with romanization of Urdu are far less precise than the Library of Congress and Annual of Urdu Studies systems. So, for ease of reading, this book utilizes a hybrid scheme based on pronunciation, somewhere in between that of the Library of Congress romanization and the romanized Urdu variations in widespread use on the Internet. Words that appear more commonly in English, such as ulema, are not marked.

Vowels a ā i ī u ū e ai o au

Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>be</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>dāl</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>swād</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>gāf</th>
<th>g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pe</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>dāl</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>zwād</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>lām</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>zāl</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>toi</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>mīm</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>re</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>zoi</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>nūn</td>
<td>n / n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>se</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>re</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>'ain</td>
<td>'</td>
<td>vāo</td>
<td>v / w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jīm</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>ze</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>ghain</td>
<td>gh</td>
<td>he</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ce</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>zhe</td>
<td>zh</td>
<td>fē</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>docashmī-he</td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>sīn</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>qāf</td>
<td>q</td>
<td>yē</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khe</td>
<td>kh</td>
<td>shīn</td>
<td>sh</td>
<td>kāf</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>hamza</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1 Aspirated consonants are indicated with an “h.” Thus ghar = house, acchā = good.
Note on transliteration

2 Retroflex sounds, as depicted above, are differentiated by a dot below the letter.
3 The velar fricatives from Arabic (ghain and khec) are indicated with a subscript line.
4 Izāfat is indicated with -e-. Thus jang-e-āzādī and tahrīk-e-pākistān.
5 The v/w of conjunction is written o.
6 Doubled letters are written twice. Thus qisse.