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Hadi Pi: It would be good for any Iraqis if they want to read. So it's not about the culture, but in the last chapter, in a couple of the chapters, I talk about how, if the Yazidis want to maintain their culture, there are some of the things they can do.

Uh, I, there are, so I think mostly our work because, uh, You know, being a teacher here and seeing the life here and seeing the both sides of the worlds and all different

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Hadi Pi: cultures and working and seeing how, how hard to, to achieve anything. I mean, when you. It's ethically. You can say things are easy, look way easier. You can throw some money ideas over there, but the problem is when you try to change anything in the world, then that's the problem. It's very, very hard. So looking at that and looking how people, especially the young generation Yazidi and the non Yazidi, it is dealing with some of these problems. I thought it would be good to kind of write a book where we'll be. Kind of advice, good advice for how to deal with some of these big issues and avoid them and, and be more kind of practical. And so there was one of them is dealing with the issue of, of, of nationalism in Iraq and among Yazidis, it is. The, the problem of practicality. And I talk a lot about our organization, how we started the challenges, the things we,

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Hadi Pi: the things where we almost led us to fail the things where we were very successful at. And especially the, the personnel. You can say communication, how hard to communicate with other people and work with them, how you can maintain a relation like five, six years with the same group and work together in. And achieve anything and I'd make sure when there are disagreement, like sometimes there is big disagreements, how you can, how you can avoid that. Someone is going to just get up and leave and they're going to come back. So, and there is also one about what there was one of culture specifically about culture, but I've, I decided to drop that one because I don't have time. So there will be four chapters, basically about probably a hundred and close to 50 pages, but it's all dense, not, not any extra and it's all dense. So I don't know if anybody's going to read it's going to be an Arabic. So I don't know. Anybody's going to read it.

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That's the language I wanted to initially, uh, write it in English, but then my goal is mostly for the people over there. So somehow I just decided, but English would be much easier because all the. Uh, sources in the books and the things I use, they are, they are English. There are few Arabic, uh, resources that I rely on.

So it's mostly English resources and I have to sometimes translate and make sure the paraphrasing I'm not cheating the author or the whatever who said it. So it's. Yeah, but I hope, I don't know. Hopefully I can finish it and just put it there next year. I don't know.

Oh, yeah. Yeah. It's actually, it's, it's, it's been an opening. I like there because here's what I mean, even if, uh, I don't know how much familiarity you guys would because in psychology

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Hadi Pi: you have this autopilot that the things you take it for granted in your life, you don't think about driving when you drive. But if when I came here, I had to think about driving, be very conscious. It was too much work and effort for me to learn these things. But after I learned, and I got my license, now it's autopilot. So everything you do, like I, you say, hi, how are you have a chat? But for me that, none of that, it's, it's an, it's a, it's taken for granted. It's auto. Like I have to think about what I'm going to say. How I'm going to even handshake with you. So when I came here and certainly I started looking at my culture and everything from a different point of view, now I am very conscious and I look at it how I was doing things and how I'm doing things.

But when I was back in Iraq, living in my culture, it was just autopilot, automatic. I automatically things go and I know what to do or to do, but, and I never thought about looking at it another way.

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Hadi Pi: Like why I do this? Or, or should I do this or not? And then how much this work, how much this is an hour, but coming here, I had to look at it in a very, very different way. So, yeah, it's it's it's it's I don't know, at least that's for me. I don't know how many people go through that, to be honest, I have not asked anyone, but I know that was at least my experience. Uh, yeah. I got the chance to meet many, many immigrants who, whether they were successful immigrants or the, the people who had problems. I actually very conscious now when people get in trouble in our community and I try to find out why they get in trouble when there is a, uh, an like, when kids fail, especially kids fail. Like why I try to be very conscious. Like I told you, the problem with, we have now problems with the new generation, especially the, the, the families.

Usually they are more conservative and the kids are more liberal. And there is this, this,

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Hadi Pi: this clash now, and there is this, this individuality. Now these kids do everything. They were not allowed probably or not would do it because, so, yeah, I mean, I, I. And I talked to my

friends a lot and I see their experiences. I have friends who have kids in and they talk a lot. He said, and I mean, I never, I did not expect this would come now, everything. I know my norms and I'm trying to preserve my kids, even, even don't pay attention to it. It's not important to them. Now I have to rethink like, uh, like what I'm going to do. So it's yeah, it's, it's, it's been an, I would say not an opening eye, but it's sometimes.

It's it's everything again, it's changing because in Iraq, usually that was the note. Um, if two people got married, unless there is a huge, huge problem, and then they will stay together.

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Hadi Pi: Doesn't matter how many problems they have, especially the woman will not try to get a divorce because it would be hard on them. And a lot of cases, the men will keep the kids. And the woman would not get to get the kids. And so coming here and also, so now they both men and women, they have more freedom now. They, they both can, can. The, the things, they were not a problem in Iraq. They suddenly became a problem here and now, especially for the men. Now they have to deal with the idea that everything they used to do in Iraq. Wasn't normal for them. Now it's the same thing for the women, for the girls. And that's something probably a lot of. It's hard for them to adjust to adjust. Now they have to, this is a reality, but also marrying from outside, we have many cases where we have Yazidis who made it from outside.

Some of the cases, their families were very harsh

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Hadi Pi: on them. I know of a couple of families. They did not talk to their kids for four years, but then they had to. You know, it's become a reality that they had to go back to them and just now deal with it. And so, and I have a lot of, a lot of easy, the kids would come to me or come to the other end. They will discuss this point. We had this, we had the Yazidi club and a North star in this one day, we discussed this, what do you think? And we had like a questionnaire for them. And, and to be honest, most of the kids do not agree with the idea of marrying from only inside, although they would prefer because they know their culture and everything would be easy, but they don't want to restrict it. And so, again, this is one of the challenges that a friend of mine, she's a Yazidi, she's a teacher too, and we talked the other day about this point to now how we can deal

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Hadi Pi: with community issues. And at the same time trying to maintain it. And that's, uh, an issue to me as I, uh, I was very open about this.

I got a lot of criticism that this needs to go away. And we had a problem when some Yazidi survivors had children from ISIS fighters and they wanted to bring their kids because although they are from rape, although they are from terrorists, but they, they said that our kids and we, we raised them for years and we don't want to give them up. And a lot of, so the, religious the

head of religious spiritual concept. He said they should bring their kids. But then because there was a criticism in the community, he changed what he said. He said, then the whole council said, no, we cannot do that. Because if we bring this, then that's mean we opening a door. That we may not be able to close it anymore. So I talked to the German TV,

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Hadi Pi: Its called DWI, a very famous German TV channel it's in Arabic. And I was having this argument with an Iraqi lawyer about this for like 20 minutes. And I was open. I was like to me as a, as a human rights activist as Yazidi, these women should accept them. We should accept them as Yazidi. These, if they raised them as Yazidi, this, but I faced many I face a lot of criticism. So there is, there is a huge debate inside the community where the debate will lead. I think it will, it will force upon us to accept it. Although half of the community probably don't want to, but I think it's just a matter of time. The rest of us will have to accept it.

The you mean the kids from ISIS, ISIS fighters there are about, yeah. Over, over the number. I know there's, some people was estimated a thousand. I know there are at least 300, 350,

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Hadi Pi: because, and so, and those women who wanted to keep these kids. Uh, they stayed in Syria. They said either we don't go back or we take our kids. So yeah, it's, it's, it's a huge issue. It's not an ad. We, we work with many government, including the Iraqi government and the German. They are open to the idea. The U.S. is open to the idea that maybe relocating them with their moms so they can then their, their mothers would decide whether they want to raise them as Yazidi or or whatever, but yeah, it's a big issue.

Uh, yes, we have a lot of partners. So we, we have many organizations. We actually, uh, we spoke with the, the Christian community in Iraq and their organizations. If we can find a place and so there was some German organizations

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Hadi Pi: and again, the German government was open to that idea too. And the U.S. also, if we can find them a place. Uh, within the Christian community. So those women can be there and raise their kids and then leave them to the future where they can just, so, yeah, we have many sites that we work, work with them, but unfortunately that it's still a challenge and people kind of almost forgot about them. And I am not sure what's going to happen.

So, again, this is, this is home. Absolutely for me, but that's home too. Okay. So it's like, imagine you born and raised in California. And then you came here and lived here for 20 years. So this is absolutely home. You have many things you can relate to and it's home. You feel home and you have friends and everything, but also you've born and raise right there.

So that's also home.

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Hadi Pi: So a for. for. I can, I can probably answer in a behalf of the community that I don't think the new generation who are born and raised here, they will go back, especially in such a situation. I have a friend who took his family and his daughters is 10 years old and she was crying every single day over there. Because living in that heat seen all those people in need, seeing no schools, nothing. She, she, she, she used to cry every single day. She, she couldn't wait to, to come back here so that girl will not go and live there. But does she have connection with it? She wants to help them? Absolutely. For a person like me who lived all his life there, I would want to go and I want to live there. I want to help people, but I also have to realize that my daughters would probably not go on that they, they would, they would want to go visit. They want to help. They want to see. So I,

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Hadi Pi: I that's why one of the problems, the plans and future, I think if my kids go to college after they, I have two kids. If they are in college, then probably is the time for me to say they are good on their own. And I can go back there, do something.

Yeah, I think answering one of the earlier questions, I said the geography is very important to the Yazidi community and it says the whole culture. So Yazidi's used to take their dead back to Iraq to bury them because in Iraq, every Holy place, there is a cemetery. So, and the people take their deads where they're these Holy places. So they get the chance to visit their dead. And those holidays, whether it's Wednesday, Friday, we have certain Holy Holy days and throughout the year, but when ISIS took over and destroyed 42 years, Yazidi Holy places and, and, and 80% of the Yazidi population became an a in a, in 24 hours.

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Hadi Pi: This place and refugee comes and people. Here in Lincoln, uh, realize that it's, that's not easy to do it anymore. So why, since we call this home, why we just don't have a cemetery here. And I think one of the goals will be to build like a shrine on that land. So it's going to be this version of what we had in Iraq. You have a Holy site, you have a cemetery, so people can go there and visit their dead. So, and I think that's, that's where, yeah. After 2014 people realized that some of us may never go back. Some of us may never be able to call that home again.

So I think it was more a, was a, more of a. You can assimilate in a metaphorical way. You can say at the center, many people come

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Hadi Pi: because they feel that over there. Like, for example, when I was in Iraq and when I was a child and we had a Holy site in Sinjra in the mountain and we also had like a. I like a small house there. So my family used to go there on the weekends and stay there in the mountain. And that was my escape. Every time there was a problem in Iraq, there was a, there was bad news or I go home from college. I would just go there. That was a beautiful area. And just kind of forget about everything and. It's also as a Holy site.

So, and I think some of us here relate to that one. Like I don't have any other places. So maybe if I go to the center, I will see some, some people like me and we can chat and have some, some comfort. And so that's what actually, I meant it's just, it's just a lot of people go there just even when they have nothing, nothing to do or nothing, they need help with, they just see, Oh, maybe I go there and just find someone to talk to.

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Hadi Pi: Uh, last year we did this year. Unfortunately we don't because last year we had, uh, the year before we had Salima. So she was teaching this cultural class in Kurmanji. She was teaching them some of about their culture in language. And then the year after we had the Yazidi club in both North star and Lincoln high, but this year, because we have two, uh, two people who, none of them feel comfortable to come and work with the kids and they are not sure of the kids would come. So I I'm now part of the international club that I started with my other friends teachers, because I. As a teacher, I did not want to start any anything for only Yazidi kids, because most of my kids are not Yazidi that I teach them. So unfortunately we don't have that, that one, but we still have that group who they come to the center and they ask us when there is anything, like we, we took them to the refugee day in Omaha. Uh, we we send them to many events here in, in, in Lincoln, whether there's cultural

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Hadi Pi: events or even in UNL. So, but the club, we don't have the club this year.

I, I'm not sure, but I, I would say. At least 50, 75 kids. And then that could Yazidi because in that school, yeah, that's a quite number and Lincoln high about the same number and maybe more.

I can, I can, I can say my, my point of view. I, I did not have problems here in Lincoln. And, uh, I did not have, I have many, many people who actually helped me a lot. I have my advisor, Theresa Catalano, uh, for example, Dr. Thomas who helped me, I had, I took some classes with many other professors and after the class they offered any help.

They can, uh, I have many, many other friends

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Hadi Pi: who are Americans born and raised here. I did not have a lot of problems. I probably had a couple of minor incidents, but that's that's could happen with somebody who born and raised here, but I am also aware of everything going on in America and I'm aware of the American history. And so. And that affect everything. So, and to be politically correct sometimes. And that's why when we were managing Nadia's campaign for four years, that was one of the biggest challenges that we faced with Nadia. And she's, she's very aware of that. So, uh, for example, you have in America, you have, there is, there is a history in America and we have the burden of that history.

So although I'm an immigrant and I came to this country and I'm a, from minority, but I have to be very careful to who I associate myself with

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Hadi Pi: and what I say, what I don't say. Okay. So, and then where we helping Nadia with her campaign, basically managing, we found her campaign. Actually, we were very aware of this issue. And a lot of times like whether these are liberals would try to take us to this site, whether they are conservatives, take us to the site or sometimes using Nadia for their own causes. There are some, uh, like feminists. Or there are some anti gays or there are, so you have to be very careful as, so an always, we, we advise Nadia, we are working on a minority issue is in another country. We have to be very aware of the problems of the U.S. political cultural history of the U.S. and we have to do our best to avoid, to be part of any. Any group against any, any other groups. And so we maintain good relations with everyone and that, but that was that's, that's a challenge

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Hadi Pi: even here. Like if I want to express myself, uh, some people will look at me either I am with this side or I'm with that side. And it's very hard to maintain, to be neutral. There is no one can, and I think that's also caused cause problem, because for example, many Yazidi because of the administration, the vice president, they helping you see this a lot. And now I believe probably 80, 90% of Yazidi will vote for Trump, but there is also probably 10, 15%. They are absolutely against it. But that does not mean Yazidi are with, with whatever Trump is trying to achieve, but it's just because his vice-president is, is, is, is working with Yazidi. He's receiving us whenever we need. He dedicated 360 millions to our areas. So they, they feel that that's, that's what I should vote for it. Well, for example, when Hillary Clinton was trying to run for the presidency, she said, I'm going to bring 60,000

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Hadi Pi: Syrian, but she never mentioned Yazidi or Christian. So I assume you see, Yazidi will not vote for that, although they don't hide anyone there, but just the, this the, unfortunately the reality. So it's. It's hard. It's very, very hard in a lot of times. I think for me, the best way I look at, I believe myself, I'm from every single country culture in this world. I am an African, I am in South American. I am an American, I'm a middle Eastern. I consider myself as having an

international culture, but. When we talk about issues, sometimes I have to be aware that maybe, although I don't have any of these biases, but maybe you listening to me, you will just immediately, you will assume that I'm going this way or that way, or I'm against that way or with, with this one, because I have to say my opinion.

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Hadi Pi: Yeah, I think there are, unfortunately now people are no one can in America be, be neutral. I don't think so. Anyone can, it's very hard. Yeah. Like it's, it's very hard. Like I told you, I am not part of any political parties, but at the end of the day I have to go vote or somebody will ask me about an issue. Or do you think of that? And then I have to say, like, for example, the immigration issue, the us immigration system was a curse. A lot of people I've used it, but that does not mean when I talk about immigration issues. I am against immigration. Actually I am an immigrant, but there are a lot of things need to be fixed about that system. So when I talk about immigration, for example, many people can certainly see, Oh, he's he's anti immigration. Or some people can say he's with, uh, for open immigration or whatever, but it's based on the interpretation. So, but sometimes you have to say your point of view, regardless where people think, unfortunately.

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Hadi Pi: I of course with the army, you have the, the idea of one country, a strong country, a one military for the country. Um, with defending the values of this country. Uh, mostly I'm not this, I'm not generalizing this own every single soldier officer. Sure. I've seen corrupted people. I've seen bad people in the military, but that's the case. But when you come to the civilian life, unfortunately that's not the case. You have many Americas, you have different values. You have different views, even on the military, you have different views on what the American constitution means to many people. So I think that's, that was a, that was a huge change for me because with the army, that, that is the thing.

Mostly, mostly I will not say entirely, but mostly that there is this America with some values and one army, and we defending this, these people. Or these values.

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Hadi Pi: So, but the civilian life is way, way different because soldiers, you know, they die for that, to be honest. They, they die for that. It's it's that simple. I mean, uh, a lot of people in the army I talked to, they don't have big salaries or they are not business funds. Like some people here, they, they, they own millions or billions, but it's still they were doing everything. They were dying every single day. My best friend who was Yazidi, the interpreter with me, died. As soldiers wounded with him, I worked for a colonial. He went to some other places. Like in few days, he, I heard that he got killed. Uh, I was drinking an Iraqi tea with a couple of guys who were working on. We used to buy these. And these old weapons in so all kinds of weapons and even mines in

grenades and, and, and just, we finished our tea, they went to work and one of them went off on them. They both died. We picked their pieces.

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Hadi Pi: So, but I don't think many people had the doubt that why they, why they chose that path. So, and I think, but in the civilian life, there is just different it's way different.

Uh, I think my, the most significant is just, uh, everything is within the reach. Yes, because in my town, if you want it to go to a good doctor, you will have to go to a big city. If, if you wanted to go to a hospital, you go to a big city. If you want it to go to a college, I had to leave my town and go to Mozel. To go to the college and in the town, you basically know almost, not everybody. My town was kind of a big town, but at least I knew everybody on my street the next street after, and the next street after the one that it, and, and so it's, but here you might never

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Hadi Pi: talk to your neighbors. Like you, you don't know them, you don't know, you don't know anything about, so there were a lot of things actually changed. So now we have to adjust like I have now. I, I know that, Oh, it's okay if I don't know my neighbors, but I know the college is within 10 minutes away instead of going to a different living in a different place. And the hospital is closed, the school is closed. So it's it's yeah, it's kinda different.