

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF A NEW PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN POST-SOVIET AZERBAIJAN

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education in Azerbaijan has been profoundly affected the transformation that has been occurring since the collapse of the Soviet Union. A vigorous private sector of higher education is beginning to compete with the older, high status, public institutions and has created new challenges to the state in its attempt to coordinate and govern higher education. This new sector growth has also given birth to new organizational forms and provide new models of postsecondary education.

Whenever private postsecondary institutions are mentioned in the former Soviet Union, people typically dismiss them as corrupt institutions that are bent on making money. Many of these impressions are, unfortunately, true. The private sector of postsecondary institutions in Azerbaijan rapidly expanded in the years after independence and a large number of "diploma mills" came into being, offering credentials if you paid enough money. Concerns for the quality of these institutions and their product occupied many of the thoughts of government officials. However, these new upstarts could not be ignored. In a short time and with few resources, a handful of private universities had made considerable progress at establishing solid academic programs and attracting faculty from the large state universities. These institutions and their leaders aspired to high ideals and envisioned a bright future in a region where, perhaps, the greatest social transformation of the century was occurring.

One rarely has the chance to observe the creation of new organizational forms within a rapidly changing environment. I took on this topic of private university culture with enthusiasm because, over

the three years that I had visited Khazar University, I had become a member of the community. Although I was an outsider, my presence was welcomed without reservation. I was given complete access to all members of the community without limitations. The chancellor saw the benefit in someone examining the culture of his institution; someone like myself with both an inside and outsider status could see phenomena with a trained eye that would provide insights into organizational life at Khazar University.

Statement of Problem and Research Questions

A central question raised by postcommunist transitions is whether the newly established successor governments in the republics change their patterns of governance from the patterns inherited from their former totalitarian predecessors. Education in the republics of former Soviet Union is bound to be affected as their economies and societies are struggling to adjust to the enormity of the changes. The political-ideological shifts that have brought on these changes have affected higher education, which has traditionally been a recipient of a large share of state funding. Dramatic decreases in the amount of government financing of higher education have affected the structure of higher education, belief systems, governance mechanisms within universities and between universities and the state bureaucracies. Although these private universities indirectly help the government by reducing its financial commitment to fund higher education (Kozma, 1992), they have engendered suspicion and hostility from the government in general. Predictably, relations between the state and private universities in Azerbaijan are precarious and constantly changing. Their emergence speaks to the scope and nature of change that has occurred in that society.

In Azerbaijan, the establishment of a robust private university sector since the collapse of communist rule marks the emergence of new higher education structures in an unprecedented situation. In this study I will examine Khazar University a new private university in post-Soviet Azerbaijan. The following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the distinct features of the organizational culture of Khazar University?
2. What are the key elements that define group members' identity and organizational self-belief at Khazar University?
3. What is the nature of authority and its legitimization at Khazar University?
4. What roles do foreign links with western universities play in the development of Khazar University's organizational culture?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The collapse of the former Soviet Union ignited a flurry of popular and scholarly writing that has spawned new fields of inquiry. The field of "transition studies" in political science, Soviet studies, and a number of the social sciences has increased tremendously in the wake of the break-up. Sociological theorizing accounting has also contributed to the discourse as many try to make sense of the collapse of the Soviet Union and what is now emerging in the independent republics. In this section, I will attempt to frame this study of university organizational development in post-Soviet Azerbaijan in light of some of the contemporary debates on the relationship of modernity and postmodernity in social theorizing. I will also discuss some of the

relevant literature on patron-client relations, higher education, and organizational culture that forms the basis for my analysis of Khazar University.

Social Theory - Modernity and Postmodernity

Contemporary social theorizing has been largely preoccupied in recent years with debating the nature of social life within advanced capitalist societies. With the collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union and its Central and Eastern European satellites, a flurry of theorizing has occurred in an attempt to offer reasons for the collapse. This social analysis of transition from state socialism to post-communism has largely been framed in terms of concepts that are tied to the development of capitalist societies and has led to differing perspectives on the relationship between communism and modernity.

(Ray, 1996). Anthony Giddens (1991) defines modernity as "the modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about 17th century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in influence..." (p. 1). Modernity, according to Bauman (1992), is a perception of the world grounded in its universality concealing any particularism. The concept of modernity is inextricably attached to the Enlightenment ideals of rationality and the pursuit of pure knowledge for humanity's progress and improvement.

Conceptions of postmodernity are characterized by the pluralization of knowledges, traditions, communities, and cultures. The universalization of science in modernity had previously elevated scientists' ways of seeing and knowing to the status of a metanarrative, possessing great power. In postmodernity, these metanarratives are challenged and debunked so that other "mini-narratives" can be given a voice. Instead of speaking of a uniform, universal culture of individuals, humanity is seen as a collection of individuals situated in their own unique social location and stamped with their own unique character. Postmodernity, like modernity, is a vigorously contested concept.

Some postmodern theorists have interpreted the collapse of communism as the demise of modernity in a postmodern age (Bauman, 1992; Arnason, 1993). They view the fall of communism in the former Soviet Union as a result of its inability to cope with the demands of postmodernity and could not absorb nor accommodate the plurality of global and domestic demands, resulting in a process of decomposition and collapse. From this perspective, communism was an aberrant embodiment of modernity's hopes: a society that was carefully designed, rationally managed, and thoroughly industrialized. In this view the collapse of communism is ultimately tied to its inability to adapt to the redefinition of human happiness in the postmodern period: the expansion of human needs and desires brought on by market forces. This explanation takes into account the internal problems as well as the external pressure the former Soviet regime experienced during the final years of its existence.

In my view, global capitalism in the late twentieth century is a monolith that cannot be easily ignored and social theories using

analyses of modernity and postmodernity are useful although contested. As the growth of market relations increases in Azerbaijan and the former Soviet Republics, theorizing will necessarily have to consider the impact of capitalism when analyzing social change. Bauman (1992) feels that postmodernity can be seen as modernity conscious of its plurality, its contingency, and its ambivalence. In the wake of communism's collapse and the uncertainty that the republics of the former Soviet Union face at the present time, the concept of postmodernity serves to frame the winds of social change in the former Soviet Union.

Patron - Client Relations

Patron-client relations refers to the complex web of asymmetrical but mutually beneficial social networks that are utilized for the exchange of resources in stratified societies (Abercrombie & Hill, 1976; Roniger & Güneş-Ayata, 1994). It involves a relationship between a patron and client who are involved in a relationship of exchange. The wealthy or influential patron protects the subordinate client in a hostile environment. Patron-client relations can be seen as inimical to a democratic system of representation subject to corruption or as a positive means of influencing decisions affecting the public distribution of private resources. The paradox of patron-client relations is its almost universal persistence from pre-modern times to the present in spite of the unequal exchange that occurs between the patron and client.

Vorzheikina (1994) describes how the new patron-client relations were established atop the former *nomenklatura* system after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the absence of party mechanisms, former clientelistic relations were used as the foundation of new structures, fusing the old with the new, and providing access to a variety of public and private goods. For the masses, particularistic ties and relationships became important, Vorzheikina states, "as cultural phenomena, as social consciousness, and forms of individual existence independent of or only formally dependent on the state..." (p. 108). In her view, these personal ties and networks constituted a form of civil society, opposed the official collectivist values, and legitimized the

new forms of social relations outside of a repressive government. And given the universal shortages that became a part of everyday life during the 1970s and 1980s, these ties were a fundamental supplier of basic necessities for the masses.

In Azerbaijan, where the transition from a centrally controlled economy to a free market one continues, clientelistic networks from the Soviet era remain vitally important to the masses in distributing goods, benefits, and influence in politics as well as education, the arts, and business. Patron-client relations in higher education is bound to serve as an important mechanism of exercising authority and a salient frame of reference in analyzing organizational culture at Khazar University. The legacy of the Communist Party in the recruitment of future elites and extensive kinship ties that link most in Azerbaijan to a particular family or region reveals the embeddedness of extensive clientelistic networks. These clientelistic ties may shed light on how power is exercised in the context of a private university like Khazar.

Higher Education

In the following section, I will review important concepts in the higher education and organizational culture literature. These will have the most relevance in a description and analysis of organizational cultural development at Khazar University.

Governance in Higher Education. Authority and governance are important concepts that must be considered in analyzing power relations within individual institutions and in systems of higher education. Burton Clark (1983) has identified six major levels of authority that are found in different higher education systems around the world that are included in various models of governance. Those levels are: the department, the faculty or school (sometimes college), the individual university, multi-campus administration, state, provincial or municipal governments, and then national government. Although these levels vary in importance depending on the national system, they constitute the places where different forms of authority are located.

Political governance, according to Clark (1983) is commonly expressed in exercising the power of the purse, something that most

national governments control through their budget appropriation process. It also varies greatly according to the extent to which governmental role is centralized and monopolizes the delivery of higher education in a particular society. Charismatic authority, found usually in exceptional, individual leaders, according to Clark, constitutes the most unpredictable and least systematic form of authority. The other forms of authority typically control the influence of charisma, but political crises or new organizational situations can provide a ripe opportunity for a gifted individual to lead an institution in a new direction.

Clark's conceptualization of governance and authority provides a useful starting point for framing and analyzing governance patterns in national systems of higher education. As he puts it, his work, "provides an appropriate middle ground, bring analysis down out of the clouds of the broadest concepts but maintain it at a level where we can concentrate on basic structure and systematically state major similarities and differences among academic systems..." (p. 125). And with the emergence of a private university sector in Azerbaijan, they will provide a convenient framework for understanding the unstable mix of different forms of authority that exist in that unique context.

Private Higher Education. In this period where there are calls for less government and more private initiative, the emergence of private sectors of higher education in former socialist countries is clearly consistent with international trends. The division between public and private university sectors is commonly used in analyzing international trends and Roger Geiger (1986, 1988) has provided a structural typology that describes the varying forms of private higher education.

The three structural types Geiger advances are: mass private and restricted public sectors, parallel public and private sectors, and comprehensive public and peripheral private sectors. In mass private and restricted public sectors, the state sponsors the establishment and development of elite academic institutions that "accommodate the excess social demand for higher education and the majority of higher education enrollments. Japan is the best exemplar of the mass private and restricted public sector. Parallel public and private sectors exists where cultural pluralism and equality require that each university

deliver an education that has similar value. This usually requires the state to fully fund private universities with resources equal to public ones. The comprehensive public and peripheral private sector type is typical of an environment where the public sector had previously met all the higher educational needs but, due to lingering deficiencies or failures in the public sector, a private sector developed and expanded. Azerbaijan's nascent private sector would appear to fit the profile of the peripheral private sector.

In describing the relative characteristics of each structural type, Geiger focuses on the orientation of private sectors and the role of the state as a key actor in governing higher education. The three orientations are: research and academic attainment, labor market integration, and reciprocal patronage. The three orientations are general and not necessarily mutually exclusive.

The role of the state in regulating and overseeing private university sectors, in his view, tends to be high, especially because of the financial stake governments have in private higher education. In the peripheral private sector type, the state's involvement would be low, but many times there can be political animosity that would cause the state to intervene and exercise a heavy hand in regulating the activities of private universities. Daniel Levy (1992) feels that conflict with the state and other problems (e.g. private universities undermine state responsibility, undercut system coordination and nationhood, promote stratification and class inequality, and lack sufficient quality) continue to resurface in policy debates and influence the growth of different private sectors.

Organizational Culture and Distinctiveness. The study of social institutions and organizations has been rooted in conventional assumptions of order and control derived from organizational theory. Organizational theory has developed to help provide order to a variety of social settings where people work, live and study. A traditional approach to studying organizations has focused on promoting rationality and efficiency. Theories examining the processes of change have been dominated by an approach that views organizations as adaptive entities that move toward a state of balance in the midst of changing environmental conditions (Emery, 1969). This approach,

dubbed systems theory, has focused the attention of research on the relationships that exist between an organization and its external environment. According to systems theory, change is bound to occur incrementally unless there is a dramatic, sudden change in the environment. A variant of the systems approach has been the "organizational culture" approach which incorporates a concern for an organization's relationships with metaphors, beliefs, and values which provide members of that culture with "a programmed way of seeing" things (Hofstede 1980). Traditional approaches to studying organizations, management by objectives, goal-based planning, communication channels and hierarchical structures, dominate thinking about organizational change in higher education.

Cultural perspectives on organizations have been advanced to explain and interpret organizational behavior in ways that differ from the traditional organizational perspective. These perspectives embrace the ambiguity and uncertainty that make up organizational life, countering the traditional view of rational and orderly processes. Many have offered their definition of culture within organizations (Becher, 1984; Deal & Kennedy, 1983; Kilmann et. al. 1985; Schein, 1985; Smircich, 1983; Tiemey, 1988). Kuh and Whitt (1988) define culture in higher education as:

the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behavior of individuals and

groups in an institute of higher education and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus... (p. 13). Their definition is useful because it includes behavioral influences as well as the underlying assumptions and beliefs shared by those of a particular institution.

Universities are unique institutions whose context and location has a direct bearing on the kind of culture created (Hall, 1976). Thus, to attempt to interpret behavior apart from a specific institution's cultural milieu would be misguided (Geertz, 1973). And events and actions cannot be generalized to other institutions: "The essential task is not to generalize across cases but to generalize within them (Geertz, 1973, p.20). In addition to providing a stable framework or infrastructure for

group members, culture in higher education institutes is framed in people's minds, making it difficult for all group members to agree on the meaning of what constitutes culture (Allaire & Firsirotu, 1984). Nevertheless, during periods of change and instability, culture can provide the stability that group members need and contribute to the effectiveness of the institution (Smircich, 1983).

The culture of the enterprise is one type of academic culture that individual universities create and exemplify by their claims to uniqueness and sense of common goals. Clark describes how the institutional symbols that form the culture of enterprise have tremendous bonding power. Clark's (1970, 1972) study of the institutional culture of the private American liberal arts college reveals that the successful institutions had a well-integrated self-belief, a saga that provided "a collective understanding of current institutional character that refers to a historical struggle and is embellished emotionally and loaded with meaning..." (Clark, 1983, p. 83). This organizational saga serves to define an institution's beliefs, foster a sense of community, provide meaning to common struggle, and to create loyalty among its members. Although these ideologies are not without their dangers, Clark acknowledges the central role over time of the many integrating symbols that help an enterprise compete for external attention and recognition as well as internal division. The concept of belief has important implications for the study of the institutional culture of a private university like that of Khazar in Azerbaijan.

The organizational saga of an institution provides a convenient starting point for analyzing the institutional distinctiveness of private universities in Azerbaijan with that of the more established state universities. Townsend et al. (1992) postulate a definition of institutional distinctiveness that considers shared institutional values essential to those in and outside of the institution. They define distinctiveness as "a phenomenon resulting from a common set of values that shape institutional activities and unite key constituencies, both internal and external" (p. 10). Distinctiveness and organizational culture are inextricably linked as an institution embraces activities consistent with its values and acts to exclude those activities

inconsistent with its institutional values. The link between institutional distinctiveness and the quality of the institution also comes into play, especially in evaluating the programs and group members of different institutions.

The review of social theory and relevant theories of the post-communist transition frames this study in light of recent debates about transition and the nature of change in the former Soviet Union. This macro level of analysis is important because of the context in which this examination is framed. From this discussion, the concepts of modernity and postmodernity, although vigorously contested, shed significant insight on the social changes rapidly occurring in the former Soviet Union. Zygmunt Bauman's (1992; 1994) views of postmodernity and analysis of how the former Soviet Union's version of a failed modernity and its inability to recognize the pluralism and diversity that exists in the world is compelling and sheds some light on the internal disintegration and fragmentation of the Soviet Communist state and the uncertainty that is being faced by new republics like Azerbaijan. A postmodern view of social change in post-Soviet Azerbaijan would help to account for the new social arrangements that have emerged as it integrates with the rest of the region and with the diversity in the world around it. Although I do not espouse all aspects of the post-modern worldview, this moderate embrace of certain features (e.g. recognition of pluralism, respect for local knowledge) of Bauman's conceptualization of post-modernity will provide useful insights into past and current social arrangements for Azerbaijan.

The concept of patron-client relations is a salient feature of formerly socialist societies like the former Soviet Union. In Azerbaijan, where the transition from a centrally controlled economy to a free market one continues, clientelistic networks from the Soviet era remain vitally important in distributing goods, benefits, and influence in politics as well as education, the arts, and business. The role of these networks will play a central role in determining the character of the organizational culture and the forms that emerge in governing the institution at the local level. As an alternative form of civil society, patron-client relations provides insights into how educational institutions operate in promoting ideological and

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knowledge production in a particular society. It also has implications for the kinds of relationship that are forged within educational institution.

The literature on higher education and organizational culture has pointed to the salience of cultural interpretation in understanding a higher educational institution like a university. The bulk of the organizational literature and the higher education literature forms the basis by which I try to make sense of what is happening at this new private university in a unique social context. This literature provides the rationale behind and the purpose for utilizing the research methods I have chosen to use.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

In addressing these research questions, I employed a number of naturalistic or qualitative techniques (e.g. participant-observation, structured interviews, focus groups) to explore the area of institutional culture and internal governance relationships and communication. I

observed and interviewed faculty in different teaching departments as well as administrators and students. My aim in utilizing these techniques was not only to describe organizational culture, but to understand this institution in the broader social context of a newly established republic of the former Soviet Union.

The use of qualitative research methods calls for engagement with the natural setting through systematic observation, participant interviewing, and the examination of cultural artifacts and materials found in the setting under study. Ultimately, these methods provide insight into the multiple social realities that make up a particular context, examining the diversity of attitudes, beliefs, practices, and relationships within social institutions such as schools and universities. Underlying assumptions and rationales for organizational behavior may be difficult if not impossible to ascertain given the length of this study and the fact that organizational cultures evolve over a period of years (Schein, 1992). Nevertheless, I have focused on the level of artifacts and espoused values, such as changes in policies, the physical plant environment, behavior patterns, products, and

articulated beliefs, to uncover the beginnings of organizational change at Khazar. For all of these reasons, qualitative research methods have been chosen as the medium through which an examination of the private university organizational culture in post-Soviet Azerbaijan.

Setting Description

The setting for this study is Khazar University, an urban, private university located in the capital city of Baku in Azerbaijan. With an enrollment of approximately 1,500 undergraduate students, this university has a reputation for being one of the most prestigious private institutions in the Azerbaijan since its inception in 1992, the year Azerbaijan gained its independence from the Soviet Union. The university is comprised of four colleges or faculties: Economics and Management, Humanities, Law and Social Sciences, Engineering and Science. All entering freshmen enter a preparatory program which provides them with intensive English language training and with a general orientation to their academic specialty. The English department is an independent, service unit without any affiliation to any particular faculty. Upon matriculation into one of the faculties, students continue their English language instruction as well as take content courses with their cohort until they acquire the necessary number of units to graduate.

Many of the 90+ faculty members at Khazar University were trained in Moscow and concurrently teach at state institutions. Half of the faculty members are part-time. Most of the full-time faculty often hold administrative posts as well as teaching positions. Fifteen faculty members have spent time on exchange visits to Western institutions -in the universities of Europe and the United States. These visits, sometimes as part of exchanges, were supported by such agencies as the Fulbright programs, International Research Exchange program, and the U.S. Information Agency. Since 1994, many faculty were actively pursuing additional travel and professional development opportunities in the West.

Khazar University's main base of operations is a single building in a working-class district on the outskirts of the capital city of Baku. An extensive renovation project has transformed their physical setting into

a building of workable classrooms. The five-story building contains forty classrooms, twenty administrative offices, a library, computer laboratory, and a cafeteria that serves meals to staff and students. Although there have been complaints about the location of Khazar's building, it is close to a major subway line and bus terminus that serve the entire Baku metropolitan area. Most of the staff, faculty, students rely on public transport to travel to the university. a small minority of faculty and students have automobiles in which to travel to the university.

Informal group meetings and discussions with students were also conducted to gain a broader perspective on student attitudes and beliefs about the institution, to understand some of the reasons they chose Khazar over other institutions, and to ascertain what elements of the organizational culture they sensed and play a role in construction. Some document analysis was also necessary, so relevant official documents from the government and the universities was collected, translated into English, and analyzed.

VI. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Beginning with my first impressions of the institution in 1994 and ending with my final visit in 1997, the character of organizational life there was unique and very different from any I had previously experienced. The fact that this culture was emerging within the national culture of a new-nation state in a region undergoing a radical transformation was foremost in my mind. The Soviet past, in which Azerbaijan lived for seventy-plus years, was bound to have lingering effects on the kinds of institutional cultures emerging in the few years following the collapse of the former Soviet Union.

It was not surprising, therefore, that I found Khazar's culture - its mission, practices, rituals, stories, identity, and self-belief - influenced by the legacy of top-down, authoritarian, controlling mechanisms. These elements of its culture were constructed from "the top down," centrally controlled by the top administrative officer. It was not a coincidence that the nature of Khazar's culture was - also - improvisational and evolving. There was a sense that the old ways of doing things were being used, but that different structures and

mechanisms (along with different attitudes and behavior) were acceptable and welcomed because Khazar was a new model of higher education. This combination of authoritarian values and improvisational values was peculiar and characterized the tension which I saw as Khazar was struggling to see its way through the chaos of the transition they were experiencing.

Other aspects of Khazar's that shaped and strategically shaped by the combination of authoritarian values and openness to innovation is its desire to be an institution that pursues the twin ideals of teaching and research, with research being its overarching priority. Closely attached to this mission is its choice of English as the medium of instruction, the foreign institutional support it has developed, and the target of its academic programs.

The Organization as "Family-Run Business"

Organizational culture embodies a variety of different forces external and internal to an organization. The culture of Khazar has been influenced by its brief, but intriguing history and by its founder who has worked to create a unique private institution. The dominant element that characterizes Khazar University at this early stage of its history is the sense of being a "family-owned business." Whenever members spoke of the Khazar organization as an entity, many described it as a "family." Even the chancellor, when asked about his leadership style and relationships with his teaching staff, he says that "we are here as a good family..."

This description of Khazar as a family is appropriate for a number of reasons. First of all, the size of Khazar facilitates the sense of the community as a family. Because of its relatively small size, the chancellor is able to deal personally with each and every employee of the university. Since he is the one who pays their salaries he has to be involved in every facet of the university's operation. Communication occurs at Khazar usually in face-to-face encounters. The size of the university at this stage of its life facilitates this oversight and gives it a concrete sense of identity.

Another aspect of the "family" organizational culture is that the chancellor employs a number of his own family members at Khazar.

Relatives (two brothers) occupy a number of administrative staff positions including the executive assistant who is responsible for managing all of the university's finances. Even one of Khazar's professors acknowledged, "there are enough key relatives and brothers who contribute to the family feeling at Khazar...". Although some faculty members joked about the presence of the chancellor's family members at Khazar, most people accept this situation as a normal state of affairs in a country where trust was hard to find in employees. Having your own relatives in trusted positions insured that you would not be defrauded.

The third aspect of this sense of family cohesion at Khazar reflects the type cooperation that had developed as like-minded people performed an important task. One female professor remarked,

People at Khazar are progressive and open, coming from many different backgrounds. Dreamers come to Khazar. There is an attraction to new ideas. There is also a desire to do something for the republic, to open the eyes of people in the republic. People at Khazar also want to help the world know about Azerbaijan to create mutual world understanding. Adversity brings people together at Khazar. Time spent working together to build a new university that represented a new vision of education for Azerbaijan. In addition to working together, staff, faculty and students alike engage together in numerous social activities which also helps to create a sense of a family community.

Social events at Khazar are a combination of informal gatherings (picnics, small group dinners) and elaborate affairs typically planned by the social and cultural events coordinator on a monthly basis. One administrator declared that these events are important to Khazar in building close personal relationships with faculty members and it was necessary for them "to enjoy and to take something from life...". This attention to the social needs of the community's members constitutes one the most convincing aspects of the family atmosphere at Khazar.

The chancellor, is viewed as the one who has cultivated this ambiance among the Khazar members. As one female professor noted, "(The chancellor) is the main reason for the sense of community here. He is the heart of all social events...". The chancellor attends all social

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events and is not shy in enjoying himself while others are doing the same. Although he tries to maintain a low profile, he is usually brought to the center by those who are orchestrating and expediting these events. In a real sense, he is seen as a kind of patriarchal figure, who presides over all that occurs.

This family feeling is also seen the traditional obligation of extending hospitality to newcomers and strangers to the Khazar community. Whether it is at an informal dinner at the chancellor's office or at a ceremonial function before a large audience, guests and visitors are treated with the utmost respect and are accorded preference in a variety of ways. Since Khazar's beginnings, a number of foreign visitors from universities in the U.S., Europe, and the surrounding Middle East region have visited on a regular basis, conducting training seminars, meeting with students, and consulting with various faculty on a number of joint projects. In addition to warm sendoffs and receptions at the airports and transport to appropriate living accommodations, efforts are made many in the Khazar community to invite the visitors to a wide variety of social activities, some sponsored by the university and others on their own. Visitors are invited dinners in homes, to art exhibitions, to historical monuments, to tourist attractions, and to performing arts events.

This connection between the organizational culture and the cultural traditions of the country is undeniably strong. The character of the Khazar organization and its organizational culture interact dynamically with the national culture, sharing its values, beliefs, and rituals. Hofstede's (1980) research on organizational cultures and the transmission of organizational forms emphasizes the importance of national cultural values and beliefs and their role in influencing the diffusion of change across national and cultural boundaries. At Khazar, the organizational culture has been influenced by the national culture which is in a state of rapid change and transformation. Although the extensive international links that Khazar has provided a bridge for the diffusion of new values, beliefs, and practices in higher education, Azeri cultural norms dominate and are readily visible in the way business is conducted within the organization. In some cases, ideas that have been borrowed from Western institutions have been

adapted and infused with a sensibility that reflects the chancellor's preferences and Azerbaijani and former Soviet cultural forms.

One of the ways this fusion is demonstrated is in the improvisational and evolving nature of the organizational culture at Khazar. Although Khazar is a relatively new organization, I have tried, to the extent that it is possible, to examine basic features that are emerging. The evolving nature of the brand of family organizational culture at Khazar can be seen in two things: the physical environment of the institution, the structure of communication within the organization.

Physical Environment

In the first few years of the institution, Khazar acquired several buildings where different academic departments established an identity and conducted its operations. At one point, classes in the various departments were being conducted in three different locations throughout the city of Baku. The distance which separated the three instructional sites contributed to the feeling of being disconnected and apart from the whole. Although Khazar did not own the buildings (they were rented from the government), each location had a particular identity associated with the academic discipline's or department's activity there. Khazar's initial main facility was an abandoned building on the outskirts of the city. A short time later, they were able to acquire a wing of the Institute of Sports and Physical Culture, containing classrooms, faculty offices, and the chancellor's office. Classroom space at the Institute of Foreign Languages was rented as space demands increased. In each place, the chancellor had an office which he visited at least once during the day, rotating between the various campus sites to keep abreast with developments throughout the institution. The difficulty in managing an enterprise as spread out and diffuse as it was in those early years created a sense of unconnectedness and separateness.

Perhaps the one thing that contributed to a sense of cohesion and community among Khazar members was the fact there were regular public ceremonies and social functions at a central meeting hall/conference center near one of the main subway lines in the city.

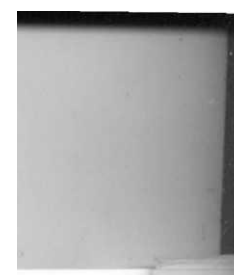
Because of its central location and its proximity to public transportation, this venue served as the one place where members of the Khazar community could gather and be in one place. Parties, conferences, art exhibits, and performing arts events were held here for and by members of the Khazar community. In this setting, the faculty, administration, and students could gather for public ceremonies and invite members of the foreign diplomatic community to come and participate in social events.

In 1995 though, Khazar consolidated its operations into one building in a working class district on the outskirts of the city. The buildings were in poor shape — occasional broken windows, chalkboards that cannot be written on, a hodge-podge of old furniture, much in disrepair. But over the years, an ambitious renovation project has transformed this physical setting into a building of workable classrooms, offices, cafeteria, and lecture halls. There were common spaces for students, staff, and faculty to interact and this has developed the sense of community felt at Khazar. In this setting, the common identity they have and sense of fealty or family bonds has been enhanced for everyone associated with the institution.

The Structure of Communication

In the early years of Khazar University, communication between the three different campus sites was difficult. The local telephone system, although in the process of being retooled, was consistently unreliable. Trying to communicate by phone between the different campus sites was next to impossible in the middle of the afternoon when the telephone lines were filled to capacity. In such an environment, face-to-face communication was a highly valued form of communication. This explains why the chancellor would visit each campus site during the day.

Communicating with a person face-to-face then, formed the basis most communication at Khazar, even after all departmental units came under one roof. Through meetings, formal and informal, the chancellor communicated with his subordinates within the institution. Students and their parents met with the chancellor and other administrators to discuss their academic programs and any difficulties they were experiencing at the institution. Faculty, students, and administrators



met and communicated in class and in public ceremonies. Having a central site for the campus has facilitated this type of communication and contributed to the oneness and warmth felt by members of the Khazar community.

primacy of research and scholarship at Khazar is a openly held and articulated value. The chancellor had established the university for the dual purposes of teaching and research. He admitted though, that he would not be able to make Khazar into a center for research "without money." It was necessary to build a solid financial base in order to conduct research and providing undergraduate programs for instruction would allow him to do that as well as prepare undergraduates for graduate study. After six years of operation, how has Khazar fared in developing its focus on research? And what role do faculty play in this undertaking?

One of the difficulties in assessing progress in research production is the fact that there are very few professional journals published in Azerbaijan. During the period of the former Soviet Union, faculty members had a variety of state-supported journals in which they could publish. Since the breakup of the Soviet system, scholars in Azerbaijan found that they were cut off from those journals and had to develop ties with academics from other countries so that they could publish their research. A concomitant of the breakup of the Soviet system was the fact that research grant money dried up with the disintegration of central authority. The Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, the premier research institution which sponsored local scholarship, lost all links and funding from the central Academy in Moscow, and university scholars, in general found that there were no resources to support basic research in academic institutions. This state of affairs contributed greatly to the mass exodus of Azeri scholars to Russia and Turkey after the collapse of the former Soviet Union.

One of the ways, then, to provide an avenue for scholars to publish their work was to establish an academic journal. Khazar has provided for such a journal, inaugurating the publication of the *Journal of Azerbaijani Studies* during 1996. This journal and other publications

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will be the product of a publishing press housed at Khazar which will provide an venue through which other works will be published. The aim of this journal, "is devoted original researches reported in English in various fields of history, politics, international relations, education, culture, history of thought, language and literature, economics and law..." (Journal of Azerbaijani Studies, Vol.1, No.1). Current projects slated for the Khazar publishing house are a project which would publish an Azerbaijani-English dictionary. Work began in 1996 on this project and plans are to publish this dictionary by early 2000. In view of the fact that no other private university has such a printing press, the chancellor has seen publishing as a way to distinguish Khazar from other private universities. Publishing monographs and other projects would serve to carve out a niche for Khazar among private universities.

At present, there is no system of faculty tenure at Khazar, so research production by faculty is not evaluated in a systematic way (e.g., a peer review system). With few opportunities available for publication, faculty members must look widely in order to find publication in which they may publish their research. Research production is, therefore, difficult to assess, given the austere budgetary climate and the limited venues for publication. Faculty are, however, evaluated on their classroom teaching. The chancellor has surveyed students in recent years about the teaching quality of faculty members. Although this survey is a novel thing, it has become popular among Khazar students. Students, who typically do not have an opportunity to

evaluate their professors, have responded enthusiastically and, in some cases, have expressed honest opinions that has created tension with some faculty members who are not accustomed to being evaluated by their students. The chancellor believes that student evaluation of faculty is a useful tool and he has plans to use it termly in evaluating his faculty.

The Role of English

In addition to the traditional aims of teaching and research, Khazar University has made as its centerpiece, the use of English as the medium of instruction. This decision, on the surface, seems peculiar

for a number of reasons. First, the national language, Azeri, is enjoying a renaissance. Although Russian language is still viewed as a language of science and culture by many Azeris, the Azerbaijani language has enjoyed new attention, especially as Azeri language schooling has increased since independence and as Azeri has been increasingly linked with national identity and aspirations. One would have thought that a new Azeri university might give the Azeri language a greater role in its program. Secondly, the choice of English seems misplaced in terms of the languages of the Caucasus and Middle Eastern regions with which Azerbaijan has frequent contact. Russian still has its place in serving as a language of wider communication with former Soviet countries, but increasingly Turkish and Farsi have become important because of growing trade relations with these major geopolitical entities. And finally, although English has been taught in the primary and secondary public schools for some time, the numbers of proficient English speakers do not constitute a sizable portion of the country's population. In 1993, a governmental decree changed the alphabet from Cyrillic to a latinized alphabet. Many in the country were and are presently concerned about the transition in alphabets which would be difficult, especially for the young and older adults who would need to learn a new alphabet. In addition to the need build a critical mass of English speakers, how would this occur in the country? The choice of English as the medium of instruction in an Azeri context, if not controversial, begged the question of why.

The choice to adopt English as the medium of instruction was a conscious and strategic choice on the part of the university founder and chancellor. As a result of his travel and experiences as a Soviet scholar who traveled abroad frequently, he had an opportunity to see how English was used as a language of wider communication among scholars from different countries. He wanted to adopt a language that would provide the greatest flexibility and power to help Khazar train its students and help to introduce new educational forms in Azerbaijan. Among the many reasons cited by the chancellor for utilizing English as the means of instruction, the principal reasons were:

1. To decrease Russian domination in education in the country.
2. To make scientific journals and texts accessible to students.
3. To facilitate exchange with Western educational institutions.
4. To help Azerbaijan develop in many areas.

This language choice decision is strategic in view of the goals Khazar seeks to achieve. The chancellor, in opening statement in the university catalogue states "the use of English as a medium of instruction has enabled the staff to benefit more profoundly from the achievements and traditions of the existing education system throughout the world. Moreover, teaching content in English would promote student and faculty exchange programs, putting Khazar in contact with the leading universities worldwide..." (University Catalogue, p. 9).

English language education is, in and of itself, a very alluring prospect for many in Azerbaijan and the former Soviet Union. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, English has taken on a special significance and enrollment in private language institutes have soared. English proficiency represents valuable cultural capital that can be exchanged

for upward social and economic mobility. Indeed, many English speakers in Azerbaijan have been able to convert their English language ability into a secure, high paying job with the newly opened U.S. Embassy and the growing numbers of American and European non-profit agencies and businesses that have been set up in recent years. As such, an education at Khazar University represents an important means toward getting ahead in Azerbaijan society and, this is attractive to prospective students and their families. Khazar has reaped the benefits of this decision with over 1500 students enrolled in study programs paying yearly tuition fees (on a sliding scale based on academic performance) of 500 to 1500 dollars a year, large sums of money when one considers the average person's monthly salary. This infusion of capital has allowed Khazar to grow and expand each year as well as acquire private property for their own building efforts.

This decision was also strategic in terms of marketing the university and its program to prospective students in Azerbaijan. Having English as the main medium of instruction distinguishes Khazar from most universities in Azerbaijan. The vast majority of the students surveyed indicated that English was one of primary things that influenced their decision to enroll at Khazar. Khazar foreign links



with U.S. institutions provide further evidence to prospective students that English is taken seriously and that a degree from Khazar would provide English skills as well as substantive knowledge in a career field or discipline. In the early days of government negotiations before Khazar was established, the government had suggested that Khazar be called "English Language University," which would have made the English connection directly with the name of the institution. Nevertheless, the connections between English language and the university are highlighted in all the promotional literature and course catalogue for the university. Notwithstanding some of the tensions and contradictions that occur in the language of classroom instruction, Khazar has built an image as a leader in English language education at the university level in Azerbaijan.

Market-Based Academic Programs

The aims of the Khazar University are directly related to the need to train specialists who would help Azerbaijan in their transition to a market economy. The chancellor predicted early on that there would be a need to equip and train graduates who would work to rebuild Azerbaijan's economy and integrate Azerbaijan into the global economy. Azerbaijan youth, sensing new opportunities, would be attracted to professions that would support private, entrepreneurial and commercial activity. One survey of Azerbaijani youth conducted by the Center of Strategic and International Studies in Baku in the spring of 1996 found that 59% of non-student youth and 70% of students surveyed in another well known private university wanted to work in private enterprises or their own enterprise (CSIS Magazine, 1996). As a result, private universities like Khazar have had to implement programs that would meet this demand for training in private business.

V. SYMBOLIC CULTURE: IDENTITY AND BELIEF IN THE ORGANIZATION

Stories of the Beginnings of Khazar

Being a relatively young institution, most of the older members of the Khazar community remember the early days of the university.

Even some of the newer members at Khazar look back to the beginnings of the institution and the things that were experienced then. One female professor remarked, "I don't know many stories about the origins of Khazar. I know that there was opposition to Khazar because government authorities were scared of something new...". Others could recall more details and embellished the story with drama. Another male administrator recalled, "There was a lot opposition at first, but the support of a high level government minister gave Khazar success...". Another male administrator recalled the following story:

He (the chancellor) retired from his position and began this new progressive institution. At first he ran into a lot of obstacles and opposition. But Ürough the [government ministers' names], the chancellor won the support he needed to get his institution registered...

These stories of the beginnings of Khazar constitute an important part of the organizational saga of the institution.

Saga, as defined by Clark is, "a collective understanding of current institutional character that refers to a historical stmgle and is embellished emotionally and loaded with meaning..." (Clark, 1983, p. 83). An organizational saga defines an institution's beliefs, fosters a sense of community, provides meaning to common stmgle, and creates loyalty among its members. The central element of the Khazar organizational saga is the charismatic leadership of the chancellor.

Charismatic Leadership and Self-Belief

The leadership of the chancellor is the beginning of the organizational saga since he, as the founder and preeminent leader of the university, conceived the idea of establishing a private university. He gave birth to the saga of Khazar and he insures that it is kept alive. He pioneered the idea to establish a private university in Azerbaijan and he, single-handedly, kept the vision alive. In many ways, he risked a great deal in holding on to his dream. Fortunately, he was able to find others who shared the same dream. Those who followed the chancellor in pursuing this dream attribute the chancellor's success to his intellect, his character, his honesty, and his ability to articulate his vision of a university. One professor spoke of the chancellor as the

"only main, leading person; the brain and breath of the university. The chancellor has responsibility for everything in the university and he does everything himself. He has to. The idea [of a private university] is too new for our people." He, then, is key individual responsible for the construction of the organization's self-legitimizing belief and his efforts serve to sustain this self-belief and help others participate in its perpetuation.

The Role of Narrative Sagas

One of the primary ways the chancellor does this is through articulating the organization's self-belief through writing stories of Khazar's beginnings. The chancellor has written a series articles and columns in the local press and in the university newspaper chronicling the beginnings of the Khazar. He desires to compile all of these articles into one monograph with the title of "In Search of Khazar." The prologue of a draft of a compilation of his articles, he writes.

The realities of events closely associated with the establishment and development of Khazar have left indelible traces in my memory. Reviving all the events without any exaggeration, I'm going to pass them to our readers in all sincerity. I hope my

memoirs will help us to relive the days that I spent in search of Khazar University together with you.

Although this excerpt has its sentimental and melodramatic elements, it clearly states the intention of the chancellor to keep the early events of university's founding alive for those who are associated with it. The chancellor has done this by including a story about Khazar's founding in the university newspaper, a product of chancellor. Established in the fall of 1995 as a monthly publication, the campus newspaper now puts out an issue twice a month and distributes it to the entire university community and in local newspaper venues. [Now it is the newspaper of the Azeri youth and published twice a month - Editor]. There is hardly an issue of university newspaper that does not contain some note about the history of Khazar and the struggles it has waged in order to be where it is today. Out of the twenty-three published issues of the publication, the chancellor has included articles in sixteen of them that speak of the history of Khazar.

Clear articulation of the vision and the history of the vision of Khazar play a critical role in the creation of the organizational saga that has helped to define those who are a part of Khazar.

A major theme underlying many of the accounts of Khazar's beginnings is the general opposition received from the government. The bulk of the narrative describes meetings with government officials where an intense series of negotiations took place. Through contacts with other colleagues, the chancellor developed a dialogue with a high level government minister who was attracted to the idea of a private university that was based on a U.S. model utilizing English as the language of instruction. A number of other government bureaucrats from the Ministry of Education were involved in these meetings which lasted over a course of seven months in late 1990 to early 1991. The account of the discussions and negotiations reveal the fact that there was resistance from the government side about the name of the institution, its programs, its name, and how it would coexist with other state universities. The back and forth negotiations between those supporting the chancellor and government officials produced a series proposals and counterproposals offered by both sides. In the end, concessions were made and some agreement was reached, but not without some lengthy and heated discussion.

Another related aspect of the organizational saga of Khazar was that, contrary to the government institutions, Khazar had no corruption. That is, officially, there was no sanctioned system whereby professors receive payments from their students in return for good grades. When asked directly about the existence of a system of "bribes for grades," faculty and administrators universally denied the existence of it. Khazar had been founded as an alternative to the system of bribes prevalent in the state system of higher education. The chancellor's official policy on corruption was hard-line and unambiguous: it was not to be tolerated. Since, he believed, students were paying tuition and faculty members were receiving reasonable salaries, corruption should have no place at Khazar as it had flourished in state universities. In adherence to his policy, he terminated a number of faculty members for corrupt practices after being informed by students or other administrators. His hard-line stance on the issue was respected

and admired by all and this aspect was attractive to many students who enrolled at Khazar.

However, there appeared to be occasional discontinuity between this official policy of no bribes and the reality as it is implemented and practiced at Khazar. Several faculty members told me of a professor who deliberately makes his course so difficult that students feel obliged to pay him in order to learn his material or pass the exams he gives.

Although students were less direct in implicating individual faculty members in demanding payment for grades, there was some indication that it existed but they were not going to put themselves out on a limb. At a meeting group of senior students (without the professor present), I asked students if there were bribes at Khazar. One student replied, "No" and the rest of the class hesitated and laughed nervously. When I followed up on their response, there was silence initially. Then one student said, "I can't say anything." Eventually, after a period of silence, another student replied, "It's impossible to change the system and people's way of thinking...". Though there was no direct statement linking corrupt practices with Khazar, this exchange with students revealed to me that they are the ones at risk of failing a class or exam.

VI. POWER AND AUTHORITY AT KHAZAR

The Primacy of Top-Down Authoritarian Power

The relatively small size of Khazar and its family business organizational character have also contributed to the concentration of power within the upper levels of the organization. In this system, personal relationships and trust are more important than systems and procedures. [It was necessary in the beginning, but now there is system and procedures - Editor]. Bureaucratic processes have yet to take form while elements of personal and charismatic authority prevail. The development of formal hierarchies of bureaucratic authority and practices is still in process. As one professor put it, "He (the chancellor) decides many questions himself, but maybe this is good due to the fact that this is the transition period. There is no bureaucracy now; we're in the process of creating the system...". Faculty and

administrators recognize that change will come about slowly and acknowledge that the chancellor wields the power and authority in process of creating a new bureaucracy that would coordinate the various units of Khazar and distribute power.

The absence of a governing board of trustees is noteworthy among private universities in Azerbaijan and Khazar is no exception. Trustee authority, an institutional arrangement that where prominent outsiders represent the interests of the university by acting as "the long-run caretakers, finally responsible for the fate of the enterprise, and, as a body, are commonly the legal owners or legally established managers..." (Clark, 1983, p. 117). Though originating in English higher education, trusteeship has become strongly entrenched in U.S. higher education (Rauh, 1969; Epstein, 1974) and has grown substantially in Latin America (Levy, 1980, 1986), in both the public and private sector. When asked about the constitution of a board of trustees to govern Khazar University, the chancellor stated that his long-term strategy has always been to establish a trustee board that would oversee all the financial matters relating to the universities. At present, he was looking at different models of trusteeship and wanted to have a board consisting of prominent scholars, politicians, and business leaders. He admitted, though, that it would take some time to establish this trustee board because the concept was still foreign to many in Azerbaijan.

In the absence of a board of trustees, the chancellor, then acts as the chief operating officer of the university. He alone makes the final decisions relating to the budget of the university, student admissions, and the hiring of faculty and staff, working with input from the various administrators, deans, and department heads through collective bodies like the Academic Council of which he is chair. In the eyes of many at Khazar, the university is the private property of the chancellor and he is able to do with it as he pleases. Though the chancellor has a free hand in decision-making at Khazar, his management style not like that of a despotic leader who wields his authority in public ways. He is a quiet, unassuming figure around the institution; his interaction with subordinates is typically marked by sly humor and outward displays of cordiality. Of his own style of leadership, the chancellor said, "In

general, I am a shy person. I don't like to order people around and be domineering. I want to draw the teaching staff together, using a team approach...".

The Role of Family Relationships in Authority

Although the chancellor's position has concentrated authority, this authority is shared by family members who occupy key posts at Khazar. There are two family members who wield considerable authority and influence by virtue of their relationship to the chancellor: the executive assistant and the chancellor's wife. The executive assistant is one of four brothers of the chancellor who all work in some capacity at Khazar. His duties are to oversee the finances of the institution as well as act as an intermediary for the chancellor. Although the executive assistant does not possess the charisma and professional authority of the chancellor, he is able to share in this authority by virtue of his close relationship to the chancellor and the trust given to him by the chancellor. The executive assistant's office is across the hall from the chancellor and they communicate to each other consistently throughout the day.

Although the chancellor's wife occupies a position which appears to lie outside of the typical lines of authority, she exercises considerable influence on life at Khazar. Formally, as the director of the campus women's club, she is responsible for organizing social activities that bring staff and faculty women together. Informally, she plays the role of mediator between the women of the university and the chancellor. Although this is not a paid position, the chancellor's wife comes to campus almost everyday to engage in the activities of this women's club and to provide input and support to whomever needs it. If female staff or faculty have concerns, they are likely to bounce their ideas off of her first before going to the chancellor. She, in turn, openly expresses her opinions to the chancellor when he asks her for input. The chancellor himself spoke of the influence of his wife when speaking of the various social events that occur at Khazar. He acknowledged that she is, many times, the final arbiter in matters of artistic taste and appearance. He also acknowledged depending on her insight in dealing with female staff members. He demurred, however,

when he saw an organizational chart of the administrative structure of the university which included her on the same level as his executive assistant. In his view, it was inappropriate to include her at that level since her influence was informal and directly tied to issues affecting women.

According to Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1993), wives of corporate executives play important roles in organizations and cannot be ignored when looking at the administration of these organizational bureaucracies. She outlines a corporate wife's "career progression," explaining how her visibility increases with respect to each step her husband advances up the organizational ladder. At the high end of the ladder, she notes that "the organization is mostly likely to show strong elements of a personal, familistic system imbued with ritual, drawing on traditional behavior modes, and overlaid with symbolism..." (p. 118). In this setting, the distinction between the private and public lives of corporate wives and their husbands become blurred and the social attributes and graces of corporate wives become more important in conveying a certain image of the institution and the husband. Kanter concludes that, with corporate wives,

It is possible to see a side of corporate life usually kept hidden and unexamined: The operation of corporate diplomacy, the personalism and familism remaining at the top of corporate bureaucracies, processes of image creation and image management in career politics, and the existence of a 'shadow organization' outside the official boundary marked by paid employment but making random and occasional contributions... (Kanter, 1993, p. 125). Though the type of "career" progression Kanter outlines has not occurred with the chancellor's wife, her role in organizational diplomacy, image creation, and hospitality is certainly crucial to the chancellor and the organization. The public and private roles she plays at Khazar has influence and is not irrelevant in any stretch of the imagination. She constitutes an ambivalent kind of authority that is very real in the unique context of Khazar University.

VII. FOREIGN LINKS WITHIN THE INSTITUTION

Foreign Institutional Support

- During the Soviet period, international academic relations were strictly controlled by the state. In Azerbaijan, the development of external relationships between higher institutions of learning offered new opportunities for diversification of higher education and a broadening of global contacts. In line with the core values of the institution and the impetus for its creation, international linkages between private universities and U.S. institutions have been facilitated, paradoxically, by the present geopolitical instability that has resulted since the former Soviet Union dissolved.

Azerbaijan has been involved in a bitter armed conflict with neighboring Armenia over the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh. An autonomous mountainous enclave located in the southwestern Azerbaijan and mostly populated by Armenians, Nagorno Karabakh demanded independence from Azerbaijan in 1988 and, over the next two years, violence erupted between Armenians and Azeris throughout the country, resulting in thousands of Armenians fleeing Azerbaijan. For the next several years, local militia fought against each other in Nagorno Karabakh and then, the two countries' regular military forces became involved with the Armenians imposing a blockade on travel routes in the southern part of the country and Azerbaijanis blocking rail routes to and from Armenia in the north. This conflict continued even after the independence of the two states in 1991 and, in recent years has been exacerbated by the displacement of over a million refugees who have fled the fighting in Nagorno Karabakh and neighboring areas in Azerbaijan. [According to the estimations more than 800,000 of them fled from Armenia and occupied territories of Azerbaijan. - Editor].

Although there is a cease fire and ongoing negotiations between the two sides, Armenia appears to have the upper hand militarily and the support of the U.S. The Freedom Support Act has stipulated until recently that the U.S. government cannot provide direct assistance to the Azeri government until the blockade is lifted. This has created a situation where any financial support (in the form of exchange programs and institutional development funds) can only be given to private institutions. Although individuals in all the universities have

been eligible to participate in individual programs, public or state universities cannot receive any of the benefits of these programs. Private universities like Khazar have been able to benefit from U.S. funded programs which have made significant contributions to their institutional capacity.

UCLA's Graduate School of Education, for a six-year period participated in a partnership exchange agreement, funded by the U.S. Information Agency, in order to assist Khazar in its institution building efforts. Over the course of the partnership, twenty faculty members and administrators visited UCLA for two months each to develop connections with colleagues in their respective fields and become acquainted with the inner workings of a western research and teaching institution. UCLA also sent a number of faculty and academic staff to Khazar in order to teach classes and conduct training workshops aimed at developing the institutional capacity. Khazar has also sponsored a number of academic conferences during the period of the exchange which provided visiting UCLA faculty with the opportunity to present their work before scholars from both the public and private university sector. The partnership exchange has provided a fertile ground for academic exchange and idea sharing that will help Khazar University to establish itself as a pioneering and innovative private university.

In addition to its partnership with UCLA, Khazar University faculty have had numerous opportunities to participate in short term academic exchanges funded through the Fulbright Commission and other of scholarship programs (Muskie Fellowship, IREX, to name a few)

established to bring faculty members to U.S. research institutions where they can conduct research and work with U.S. scholars. The exchange and cross-fertilization that has occurred among Khazar faculty and their colleagues in the U.S. has exposed them to a host of new ideas and intellectual trends in their fields that were previously unknown due to the isolation and censorship of the Soviet era. Shifts and changes in the knowledge base and beliefs of the Khazar faculty are bound to occur as a result of this contact and exchange. Other individual institutions have also provided overseas study opportunities for students at Khazar. Georgia State University, through a grant provided by the Eurasia Foundation, has established a student

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exchange program which gives Khazar business economics majors an opportunity to study business management for a year and calls for the establishment of an MBA program with GSU's help. George Mason University has linked with Khazar and a number of universities in the Caucasus region (Armenia, Georgia, and Turkey) to conduct research on the role of conflict in international relations, thereby providing Khazar an opportunity to develop a scientific research relationship with regional and international institutions. Plans are developing to expand links with Purdue University, and a number of universities in Canada, France, Australia, UK, the Netherlands and many other countries.

The aim of these programs is transparent: to increase Khazar's visibility and link it with institutions that will contribute to its growth and development. All of these programs have come about due to a major change in the political climate which has opened up the possibility of crossing international barriers and promoting greater diversity and pluralism among scholars of various scientific communities. Although this activity is now restricted principally to private universities, this exchange promises to expand to the public sector once hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan cease and a peace agreement is signed.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

Khazar University has created a distinctive organizational culture that is composed of different elements. Essentially, it is an amalgam of local norms and traditions, implemented by an institutional entrepreneur, and infused and supported with selective innovations and ideas coming from Western partners. It is an organization that integrates its history, its values, and its institutional practices into a distinctive culture that individuals have committed to preserving and perpetuating. Its characteristics are improvisational, familial, and evolving, characterized by authoritarian, top-down governing principles and some democratic, participatory governance mechanisms. The ideology of Khazar constitutes an unfolding organizational saga that is promoting coherence and meaning to its

members and its leadership. The relatively small size of the institution, the strong top-down leadership of the chancellor, and its unique social-cultural context constrains and shapes the formation its organizational culture.

In many ways, Khazar University is a family owned business. Although universities are typically not considered family businesses, Khazar shares many of the characteristics of a family firm. Rosenblatt and de Mik (1985) define a family-run firm as "any business in which majority ownership or control lies within a single family and in which two or more family members are or, at some time, were directly involved in the business..." (p. 4-5). In Khazar's case, ownership of the university is within family of the chancellor and founder. He and other family members play central roles in managing the business of the university and promoting its growth and expansion. From a business point of view, the founder has developed a unique market niche for his institution by aligning the culture of the organization with the English language and western academic ideals. This strategy has not only attracted students interested in a western education, but has also brought his institution a variety of external resources that have facilitated the survival of the institution during a turbulent period of social and economic transition.

The longevity of the institution is tied directly to the leadership the founder. Almost single-handedly, he has established Khazar University and nurtured it in a hostile and unstable environment. He is responsible for the institution's creation and his presence and leadership are the only present guarantee that university has a possibility of continuing in the form it presently exists because of his oversight of every aspect of the institution's business. An obvious question that emerges in light of the centrality of the founder's role and leadership is how long can this institution be sustained? Organizational specialists who have studied family owned firms describe the life cycles of family businesses and the precariousness of their existence as they progress through each of their various stages towards maturity (Dyer 1986; Gersick, Kelin, et al. 1997). In Khazar's case, as a start-up institution (at the time of this writing, for six years), it is far from being a firmly established and stable institution. It's organizational



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culture is still in a state of flux and evolution. Although the founder has created a culture that is in tune with local cultural norms, he is adapting ideas and models from western systems of higher education in an attempt to create an institution that aspires to higher standards of excellence. During this initial period, he has been consumed with issues like acquiring capital, developing the university's academic and research programs, creating international links with other institutions, marketing his institution to students and their families, and dealing with the government as it attempts to control and regulate his activity.

What challenges will the founder encounter as his institution grows and expands? Presently as the one in whom all authority is concentrated at the university, he makes all important decisions although his subordinates are involved in advisory roles. In the future, as the university increases in size and complexity, it will be impractical for all power to rest in his position. He will be confronted with the notions of power sharing and delegating responsibility as the family business grows. The roles of other family members and trusted non-family members at Khazar will, no doubt, change as they assume more and more responsibility. The social environment of post-Soviet Azerbaijan will likely continue to constitute a major challenge to the founder's leadership and the longevity of the institution. Political and economic instability as well as the simmering military tensions in the region over Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia and Russia will place constraints on the institution and limit its ability to carve out space for its activity.

The social changes affecting Azerbaijan in the wake of the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union have precipitated a major crisis of stability and a major transformation that has left many unsure and without hope for the future. This shift has had important implications for Khazar University and the relationships between the members of its organization. Just as patron-client relationships play a critical role in social life in Azerbaijan, individuals at Khazar comprise a complex network of relationships that could be described in terms of patron-client relations. At Khazar, the chancellor, his family members, his inner circle of administrators and faculty, students and their families are a part of network of relationships. In the post-Soviet

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transition, deeply ingrained habits, power, and money (or the lack thereof) appear to explain the persistence of these clientelistic networks. The economic instability that currently plagues Azerbaijan and the drive to obtain a competitive advantage in the changing economy seems to explain the continued reliance on patronage networks within the university to insure that individuals will have greater access to scarce resources.

According to Bauman (1992), the fall of communism in the former Soviet Union was due to the inability to cope with the demands of postmodernity. Bauman believes that communism was the embodiment of modernity's hopes: a society that was carefully designed, rationally managed, and thoroughly industrialized. The failure of the Soviet communism system to adapt to rapid change closely mirrors Azerbaijan society's ability to within the confines of the change to a market economy. These challenges can be seen very clearly in looking at the life of Khazar University. Patron-client relations, with its interconnecting webs of influence and corruption, has created an unstable and volatile partnership between the state and Khazar. The individuals associated with Khazar University have aligned themselves in various ways in order to obtain access to resources and survive during this time of scarcity and change.

According to Bauman (1992), the collapse of communism was tied directly to its inability to adapt to the redefinition of human happiness in the postmodern period: the expansion of human needs and desires brought on by market forces. The changes occurring at Khazar and in the rest of Azerbaijan as seen by the emergence of private universities, is an indication of the expansion of human needs stimulated by market forces and political transformation. Some might even predict that this activity in the private sector is the beginnings of the establishment of civil society. Whether civil society can be nurtured and developed by private educational institutions is a legitimate question. But on the other hand, the more relevant and implicit question that this study raises is whether Khazar will continue to exist as a viable educational institution to promote civil society in Azerbaijan in the future.

In my view, private university development in Azerbaijan offers the most hope for constructive change and for the emergence of civil

society during the post-Soviet transition. Adam Seligman (1992) has said that the problems of establishing civil society come down to "constituting trust." Trust is beginning to be rebuilt in Azerbaijan and private university growth is evidence of the efforts being exerted at restoring trust. Private universities like Khazar face their unique challenges, however, at establishing trust. Rooting out corrupt practices within the institution and insuring that access to the university is not reserved for the wealthy and well connected will need to be pursued aggressively. Improving the quality of the average student's academic experience and the professional development of university faculty will have to be important priorities for private university administrators. And only as they demonstrate concern for the issues that affect the welfare of the larger society, can they act effectively as agents of change in Azerbaijani society.

The dynamics of political, social, and economic change in the former Soviet republics are staggering. The impact of these changes on governance and management practices in higher education are only beginning to be examined by specialists in higher education. Just as

higher education institutions throughout the world are undergoing transition within changing social and economic environments, private universities like Khazar are coping and carving out a space to operate in difficult circumstances. The conditions during this formative period are likely to evolve in unpredictable directions over the coming years. . The case of Khazar University and its counterparts across the former Soviet Union deserve continued scrutiny as their birth and infancy give way to unknown organizational forms and submit to the twists and turns of their host societies' attempts to establish stable institutions.

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X ü l a s ə

ÖZƏL ALİ TƏHSİLDƏ TƏŞKİLATİ MƏDƏNİYYƏT: POST-SOVET AZƏRBAYCANINDAKI BİR ÖZƏL UNİVERSİTƏ ÜZƏRİNDƏ ARAŞDIRMA

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SSRİ-nin dağılmasından və Azərbaycanın müstəqiləşməsi əldə etməsinə-dən sonra ölkədə, həyatın bütün sahələrində olduğu kimi, ali təhsildə də bö-yük dəyişikliklərə yol açılmışdır. Yeni yaranan özəl ali təhsil müəssisələri yüksək statusa malik olan əski dövlət məktəbləri ilə rəqabət aparmağa və dövlətin ali təhsili koordinasiya və idarə etməsinə meydan oxumağa başlamışlar. Bu yeni sektorun yüksəlişi, eyni zamanda, yeni təşkilati forma-lann və ali təhsil modellərinin yaranmasına təkan vermişdir.

Əfsuslar olsun ki, keçmiş Sovet İttifaqındakı ali təhsil məktəblərindən bəhs edərkən, insanın ağına ilk növbədə korrupsiyaya batmış institutlar gəlir. Müstəqillikdən sonra Azərbaycanda sürətlə yayılan özəl ali təhsil müəssisələrinin də böyük bir qismi, təəssüf ki, pul qarşılığında "diplom üyüdən dəyirman" vəziyyətinə gəlmişdir. Ancaq bunlarla yanaşı, bir çox böyük universitəldən görkəmli elm adamlarını özünə cəlb edən və çox məhsuldar akademik proqramlar yaratmağa müyəssər olan bir neçə özəl universitə də mövcuddur. Onların başçısı isə yüksək ideallara bağlı olan və ölkənin parlaq gələcəyinə inanan insanlardır.

Sürətlə dəyişən bir mühitdə yaranan yeni təşkilati formaların müşahidə etməyə hər kəsin imkanı olmur. Mən isə belə bir fürsətə sahib oldum, çünki Xəzər Universitetində uzun müddət araşdırma apardım və mənə oradakı bütün əməkdaşlarla ünsiyyətdə olma imkanı tanındı. Rektorun bir xarici vətəndaşın onun müəssisəsindəki təşkilati mədəniyyəti araşdırmasını xoş görərək, bu mənada mənə heç bir məhdudiyyət qoymaması, mənə bu mövzu üzərində işləməyə daha da həvəsləndirdi.

Keçid dövrünü yaşayan post-kommunist ölkələrindəki əsas məsələlərdən biri onların öz totalitar sələflərindən miras qalan idarəetmə metodlarını dəyişib-dəyişməmələridir. Bu respublikalarda baş verməkdə olan sosial-iqtisadi dəyişikliklər istər-istəməz təhsilin idarəetməsinə də öz təsirini göstərir. Əvvəllər dövlət fondundan böyük maliyyə dəstəyi alan təhsil, iqtisadi çətinliklərlə əlaqədar olaraq, bu maliyyə dəstəyindən məhrum olmuş və bu, onların bir çox problemlərlə qarşılaşmasına səbəb olmuşdur. Özəl universitetlərin dövlətdən heç bir yardım almadan ölkədə ali

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təhsili inkişaf etdirmələrinə və beləcə, əslində dövlətə kömək etməkdə olduqlarına baxmayaraq, onların hökumətdən gördüyü münasibət düşmənlik və qərəzlə doludur. Ümumiyyətlə, Azərbaycanda özəl universitetlərlə dövlət arasındakı münasibətlər müəmmalıdır və davamlı olaraq dəyişmək-dədir.

Azərbaycanda güclü özəl təhsil sektorunun meydana çıxışı misli görünməmiş yeni ali təhsil strukturunun formalaşmağa başladığını göstərir. Mən bu məqalədə post-Sovet Azərbaycanındakı bir özəl universiteti -Xəzər Universitetini tədqiq edəcək və aşağıdakı suallara cavab tapmağa çalışacağam:

1. Xəzər Universitetindəki təşkilati mədəniyyətin fərqli cəhətləri nələrdir?
2. Xəzərdəki icma üzvlərinin kimliyini və təşkilati özünəinamı təyin edən əsas ünsürlər nələrdir?
3. Xəzərdəamirliyin və onun məşrulaşdırılmasının (legitimləşdirilməsinin) təbiəti necədir?
4. Xəzərdəki təşkilati mədəniyyətin inkişafında xarici Qərb universitetləri ilə olan əlaqələr nə kimi rol oynayır?

Bu suallara cavab axtararkən, mən bir çox metodlardan istifadə edərək, Xəzərdəki təşkilati mədəniyyəti, daxili idarəetmədəki münasibətləri və ünsiyyət formalarnı araşdırdım. Müxtəlif tədris departməntlərinin müəllim-professor heyətini, həmçinin, inzibatçıları və tələbələri yaxından müşahidə etdim və onlarla ünsiyyətdə oldum. Bu müşahidələr və araşdırmanın sonunda gəldiyim nəticələri isə post-Sovet dövrünün ümumi dəyişiklikləri çərçivəsində ələ alıb, analiz etməyə çalışdım. Təxminən 1500 tələbənin təhsil aldığı Universitet, 1992-ci ildəki ilk tələbə qəbulundan bəri müstəqil Azərbaycanın ən prestijli özəl universitetlərindən biri hesab olunur. Universitetdə dörd fakültə: İqtisad və Menecment, Humanitar Elmlər, Hüquq və Sosial Elmlər, Mühəndislik və Təbii Elmlər fakültələri fəaliyyət göstərir. Bunlardan başqa, müstəqil bir İngilis Dili Departmenti də mövcuddur ki, o da yeni qəbul olan tələbələrə ingiliscə hazırlıq kursu keçməklə və tələbələrin ingilis dili qabiliyyətlərini inkişaf etdirməklə məşğuldur.

Universitetdə çalışan müəllimlərin bir çoxu təhsilini Moskvada və keçmiş SSRİ-nin digər böyük elm mərkəzlərində almışdır. Bununla yanaşı, onların böyük bir qismi mübadilə proqramları çərçivəsində Avropa və ABŞ-nin universitetlərində səfərdə olmuş, Qərb təhsil sistemini və tədris metodlarını öyrənmişdir. Ümumiyyətlə, 1994-cü ildən bəri universitetdə Qərb təhsil sisteminin mənimsənməsi və müəllimlərin peşəkar inkişafı üçün xarici elm mərkəzləri ilə sıx əlaqələr qurulmaqdadır. >

Xəzərin tələbələrinin universitet haqqındakı inanclarını və mövqelərini öyrənmək, həmçinin, onların buranı seçməsinin səbəblərini anla-

maq üçün onlarla qeyri-rəsmi qrup görüşləri və diskussiyalar keçirdim. Bun-dan başqa, tədqiqatla əlaqədar olan bir çox hökumət və universitə sənəd-lərini toplayaraq, onları ingiliscəyə tərcümə etdim və diqqətlə gözdən keçir-dim. Bütün bunların bu araşdırmanı aparmaqda mənə çox köməyi oldu.

1994-cü ildə Xəzərə ilk gəlişimdən 1997-ci ildəki son səfərimə qədər orada müşahidə etdiyim təşkilati həyatın xarakteri çox unikal idi və bu günə qədər gördüklərimdən çox fərqlənirdi. Burada formalaşmaqda olan yeni mədəniyyət, bir tərəfdən keçmiş Sovet sisteminin qahqlanndan təsirlənsə də, digər tərəfdən, cəmiyyətdə baş verən yenilikçi və radikal dəyişikliklərdən öz nəsibini alırdı. Xəzərin yeni ali təhsil modellərini xoş görüb, hər zaman qapılarnı yenilikçi metodlara açıq tutması, keçid dövrünü uğurla adladacağına təminat verirdi. Nəticə etibarı ilə, bu gün Xəzərdəki təşkilati mədəniyyət avtoritar və yenilikçi dəyərlərin qanışığı kimi təşəkkül tap-mışdır və bu mədəniyyət Xəzərin əsas idealına - yaxşı tədris və tədqiqat müəssisəsi kimi inkişaf etməsinə xidmət göstərməkdədir.

Xəzərin mədəniyyətinə həm onun münəfişəli tarixi, həm də unikal bir ali məktəb yaratmaq istəyən təsisçisinin mövqeyi böyük təsir gös-tərmişdir. Yaranışının ilk günlərindən universitə mədəniyyətinin dominant ünsürü "ailə" duyğusu olmuşdur. Rektor özü də işçilər və müəllimlərlə münasibətlərindən bəhs edərkən deyir ki: "Biz yaxşı bir ailəyik".

Xəzərin bir ailə kimi təsviri bir çox səbəblərə görə məqsəduy-ğundur. Əvvəla, universitə kiçikdir. Hamı bir-birini tez-tez görüb ünsiyyət qurduğu üçün, universitədə çox mehriban və dostanə bir abı-hava var. İkincisi, rektorun bəzi ailə üzvləri və qohumları universitədə çalışırlar. Bir professorun qeyd etdiyi kimi, bu, "Xəzərdəki ailə hissini gücləndirir". Buradakı ailə duyğusunu qabardan digər faktor Xəzərdə oxşar düşüncəli insanların bir araya gəlməsidir. Bir müəllimə bu mövzuda dedi ki: "Xəzərdəki əməkdaşlar müxtəlif mənşədən olan açıq və tərəqqipərvər in-sanlardır... Biz respublikamız üçün bir iş görmək, insanların gözünü açmaq istəyirik. Xəzərlilər dünyanın Azərbaycanı tammasına kömək etmək is-təyirlər. Müxtəliflik Xəzərdə adamları birliyə gətirir". Bütün bunlarla yanaşı, Xəzərdə çox tez-tez olan sosial fəaliyyətlərdə insanların bir yerə yığış, birlikdə əylənmələri də buradakı ailə atmosferinin güclənməsinə səbəb olur. Bu ailə duyğusunun ən bariz göstəricilərindən biri Xəzərlilərin gələnlərə və xaricilərə göstərdiyi ənənəvi qonaqpərvərlikdir. Qonaqpərvər-lik məhz ailəyə xas olan bir keyfiyyətdir.

Xəzərdəki təşkilati mədəniyyətin digər bir spesifik xüsusiyyəti burada milli dəyərlərə və Azərbaycan mədəniyyətinə hörmətlə yanaşıl-masıdır. Bir tərəfdən Qərbləşmə və müasirləşməyə açıq olan Xəzər, digər tərəfdən Azəri milli dəyərlərini qoruyub saxlayır və yüksəldir. Bir çox hal

larda Qərb müəssisələrindən alınan yeni fikirlər Azərbaycan şəraitinə və mədəni normalına uyğunlaşdırılaraq həyata keçirilmişdir.

Əvvəllər Bakının müxtəlif guşələrində kiralanmış olan binalarda yer-ləşən universitetin, 1995-ci ildə vahid bir binaya köçməsiylə Xəzər mədə-niyyəti daha da möhkəmlənməyə başladı. Bütün müəllim, işçi və tələbələr eyni binada yerləşməsi onların arasında ünsiyyətin inkişaf etmə-sinin əsas amillərindən biri olmuşdur. İnsanların tez-tez üz-üzə gəldiyi və ünsiyyətdə olduğu mühitdə, təbii ki, onların eyni icmaya mənsub olmaq duyğusu da inkişaf edir.

Məhz bu abı-havanın nəticəsidir ki, Xəzər öz ideallarının gerçəkləş-məsinə doğru inamla irəliləyir, tədris və tədqiqat sahələrində çiçəklənib böyüməyə davam edir. Tədqiqat sahəsinin tədrisdən daha zəif inkişaf etməsinə baxmayaraq, bu sahədə əldə olunan nailiyyətlər çox diqqətə-layiqdir. Bu nailiyyətlərdən biri Xəzərin Azərbaycanda elmi jurnal nəşrini yenidən canlandıraraq, "Azərbaycan Araşdırma Jurnah", "Xəzər Riya-ziyyat Jurnah" və "Azərbaycan Arxeologiyası" kimi dəyərli elmi jurnalların dərcinə başlamasıdır. Universitetin içində yer alan Xəzər nəşriyyatı eyni zamanda bir çox kitabların və monoqrafiyaların nəşriylə də məşğul olur. Xəzərin Lüğət Mərkəzində hazırlanan "Azərbaycanca-İngiliscə Lüğət" ya-xmda işıq üzü görəcəkdir.

Tədris sahəsində də Xəzər digər universitetlərdən fərqlənir. Burada hər semestrin sonunda tələbələr arasında müəllimlər və keçilən dərslər haqqında sorğu keçirilir. Rektor bu sorğuların nəticələrinə xüsusi əhəmiyyət verir və tədris proqramlarını, həmçinin, müəllimlərin işini dəyərləndirərkən onları nəzərə alır.

Xəzər mədəniyyətinin başqa bir cəhəti burada İngiliscəyə xüsusi önəm verilməsidir. Bu beynəlxalq dilin universitetdə əsas təlimat vasitəsi kimi istifadə olunması təsisçinin verdiyi ən uğurlu qərarlardan biridir. Məhz bunun sayəsində Xəzərin müəllim və tələbələri xaricdə çıxan elmi nəşrlər-dən istifadə etməyə və Qərbin ali təhsil müəssisələriylə mübadilə proqram-lannda iştirak etməyə qadir olublar. Bunlara əlavə olaraq, ingiliscə təhsil almaq tələbələrin gələcəkdə xarici şirkətlərdə və digər qurumlarda yüksək gəlirli iş yeri tapmaq şansını çoxaldır. Bu gün Xəzər "ingilisdilli təhsildə Azərbaycanın lideri" imicini qazanmışdır.

Xəzərin təşkilatlanma hekayəsinin başlanğıcı rektorun rəhbərlik qəbi-liyyətidir, çünki özəl universitet qurmaq ideyasını ilk olaraq mənimsəyən odur. Xəzər rəvayətinə məhz o can verib, o da canlı saxlamağa çəhşir. Azərbaycanda özəl universitet ideyasının pioneri olan rektor, nəhayət ki, özüylə eyni fikirləri paylaşan insanlarla bir araya gəlib bu universiteti qurmuşdur. Yoldaşları onun zəkasını, xarakterini, dürüstlüyünü və universitetə mövzusunda dünyaya görüşünü onun uğurunun əsas amilləri hesab edir-

lər. Bir müəllimin dediyi kimi: "... Rektor universitetdə hər şeyə cavabdehdir. Hər şeyi özü edir. Etməlidir də. Bu yeni fikir olduğu üçün bizim bu mövzu-da səriştəmiz yoxdur". Rektor özü isə Xəzərin quruculuq tarixini və qarşı-laşdığı bütün maneələri "Xəzərin Sorağında" adlı məqaləsində ətraflı izah edir. Və aydın olur ki, Xəzərin qurulması hökumət tərəfindən çox güclü müqavimətlə rastlaşıb. Universitetin strukturu, proqramları, adı və dövlət universitetləriylə bir arada necə mövcud olacağı rektorla hökumət məmurları arasında uzun sürən mübahisələrin mövzusu olub.

Xəzər rəvayətinin bir aspekti də burada, dövlət universitetlərindən fərqli olaraq, rüşvətin olmamasıdır. "Rüşvət qarşılığında qiymət" sisteminin heç bir ünsürünə Xəzərdə təhəmmül edilmir. Rektor buna yol verməmək üçün tələbələrin və inzibətçilərin rüşvət aldığı bildiriyi bir neçə müəllimi işdən qovmuşdur. Onun bu mövzudakı kəskin mövqeyi tələbələrin və abituriyentlərin gözündə Xəzərin hörmətini daha da yüksəltmişdir.

Universitetin ilk illərində güc və avtoritet mərkəzi rektor idi. O zaman bir professor mənə demişdi: "Bütün məsələlərdə o özü qərar verir. Bəlkə də keçid dövrü olduğu üçün elə belə yaxşıdır. Ancaq biz öz sistemimizi yaratmaqdayıq". İndi Xəzər bir nəfərin idarə etdiyi qurum olmayıb, sistemə və prosedural qaydada tənzimlənən bir müəssisədir. Bu mövzuda rektorla söhbət etdiyim zaman, o, mənə bildirdi ki, universitetdə bir çox məsələləri idarə edəcək qəyymələr (hamilər) şurasının yaradılması onun da arzusudur. Ancaq bu anlayış Azərbaycanda bir çoxlarına yad olduğu üçün, hələ tezdir... Ümumiyyətlə, rektorun qərar vermədə sərbəst olmasına baxmayaraq, o, bundan sui-istifadə etmir və onun idarəetmə üsulu despotizmdən çox uzaqdır. Öz rəhbərlik üsulu haqqında rektor belə deyir: "Ümumiyyətlə mən utancaq adamam. İnsanlara amirane davranmağı xoşlamıram. Müəllimləri toplayıb, məsələlərə icmanm nöqtəyindən yanaşma metodundan istifadə etməyə çalışıram..."

Xəzərin bir təhsil ocağı kimi inkişafında və təşkilati mədəniyyətinin formalaşmasında, onun xarici təhsil ocaqlarıyla əlaqələri də çox mühüm rol oynamışdır. Belə ki, bu əlaqələr sayəsində Xəzər Qərbin elm ocaqlarının ali təhsil sahəsindəki uğurlarıyla tanış olmaq və eyni uğurları Azərbaycanda əldə olunması metodlarını işləyib hazırlamaq imkanı tapır. Universitetin müəllim-tələbə heyəti bir çox təhsil təqaüdü və mübadilə proqramlarında iştirak etmişdir. Təkcə ABŞ-dan Corciya Dövlət, Corciya Mason, Pürdyu və Kaliforniya (Los Angeles) universitetləri ilə sıx əlaqələri olan Xəzərin, həmçinin, Kanada, Fransa, Avstraliya, Böyük Britaniya, Hollandiya və digər ölkələrin elm-təhsil ocaqları ilə əlaqələri vardır. Los-Ancelesdəki Kaliforniya Universiteti ilə altı illik əməkdaşlıq və mübadilə proqramında iştirak edən Xəzər Universiteti, bu proqramdan özünü yenilikçi özəl universitet kimi təkmilləşdirməkdə çox faydalanmışdır.

Beləliklə, Xəzər fərqli ünsürləri birləşdirən unikal bir təşkilati mədə-niyyət yaratmışdır. Bu, yerli adət və ənənələrin Qərbdən gələn yeniliklər və ideyalarla birləşərək, vəhdət təşkil etdiyi çox maraqlı bir fenomendir. Universitəni çox qeyri-stabil və çaxnaşmalı bir dövrdə yaradan rektorun uzaqgörən təşkilati siyasəti Xəzərin varlığını davam etdirməsinin təminatıdır. Çünki öz ideyaları və idarəetmə üsulu ilə o, bu ali təhsil müəssisəsini mükəmməliyin ən yüksək standartlarına çatmağa ilhamlandırmışdır. Xəzər mədəniyyəti bu standartlara çatmağın ən uğurlu yoludur.