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Abstract

This dissertation aims to study the intangible musical heritage surrounding the process of carpet weaving in Iran. In particular, I will analyze the development, distribution, structure and practice of a phenomenon addressed in the present research as *Naqshe Khani* (Carpet Singing) and its effects on carpet weavers and the process of carpet weaving itself.

For the investigation of these complex phenomena, an interdisciplinary approach will be employed drawing on theories from Ethnomusicology, Social Theories, Anthropology, Ethnology and Psychology and the results from a pilot study.

Using a qualitative approach, I plan to deploy primary methods of data elicitation such as in-depth interviews, life histories and participant observation, the results of which will be triangulated with supplemental techniques: weavers' performances; field notes and written documents (historical texts and diaries).

Singing Cultures around Carpet weaving in Iran

Carpet weaving in Iran has developed its own unique style of work melodies intertwined with the weaving process.

A demo documentary on the intangible cultural heritage in Iran can be found here: <https://youtu.be/5iS1GixOCL4>

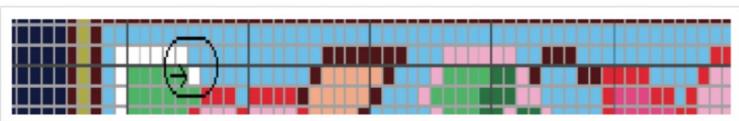


Carpet weaving moments, © Mehdi Aminian, 2018, Iran

Two categories of work music traditions that accompany carpet weaving:

1. Naqshe Khani (Pattern Singing)

- consists of recitals and tunes which serve as a guide of patterns for the weavers while they are weaving
- dialogue between weavers in which one dictates the patterns and the other(s) responds by confirming that the task is done
- each carpet zone has its own reciting/singing style and customized vocabulary for Pattern Singing
- example: "Sefid yeki pish raft!" (White goes one front!) and the response to it "pish raft" (It went!)



Example of Pattern Singing: *White goes one front!*

A demo of a documentary on the *Naqshe Khani* phenomenon can be found here: <https://youtu.be/vhgHJ6xiau8>

2. The Singings, Prayers and Religious Chants

- The melodies the weavers sing while weaving are very different in nature. In most cases, the melodies they sing reflect their emotional or physical state at the time of weaving
- An example of a Qashqai nomad weaver singing while weaving: <https://youtu.be/NhqyIN8CPDg>



Research Questions

The following research questions, which were drafted prior to the pilot study, were central for developing the research frame and structure:

- What role do sung or recited genres have on the process of carpet weaving?
- What styles of Naqshe Khani exists today in Iran? In which languages or dialects are they performed?
- Can there be any common patterns of the performed genres identified accompanying the weaving process in the different regions?
- What impact has Naqshe Khani had on the process of carpet weaving?
- Are there crucial differences between carpets belonging to the same category (region and style) which are woven by Naqshe Khani and the ones woven using printed models, woven from memory or imaginary weaving?

Aims and Objectives

At the end of this research, the following results are anticipated:

- Synchronic analysis of the current conditions of existence of the intangible cultural heritage (oral) around carpet weaving
- Analysis of the development and the role of *Naqshe Khani* in the carpet weaving tradition, the current degree of practice of *Naqshe Khani* and the effects of its decline
- Comparative musical and linguistic analysis of the *Naqshe Khani* in four regions of Iran
- Analysis of the musical construction of the *Pattern Singing* from a modal perspective and mode distribution of Dastgah
- Realisation of a typology of the existing cultural heritage around carpet weaving which will be duly archived, disseminated with an open-access policy within the documentation and publication platform of the Commission "Vanishing Language and Cultural Heritage" at the Austrian Academy of Sciences

Methods

A qualitative contrastive approach with different methods of data elicitation:

- **primary methods** of data elicitation such as in-depth interviews, life histories, participant observation
- **supplemental techniques**: weavers' performances; field notes and written documents (historical texts and diaries)
- the data based on narratives will be subjected to an inductive content analysis
- the analysis of the musical construction of the Naqshe Khani will be carried out from a modal perspective and mode distribution of Dastgah



States in Iran where Naqshe Khani is assumed to be practiced

Stages of Data Sampling

Stages	Description	Goal
Preliminary interaction with the weavers	Preparation for the interview, recognizing inhibitions, adjusting methodological approach	- obtaining an outline of weavers' profile and background - Understanding the context .
Life history / Background Interview	The personal info and background of weaving	Establishing database of all weavers' data and their background.
In-depth interview and performance recording	Directed questions regarding specific tasks or technical questions	Documentation and identification of the various weavers' knowledge on the oral and singing cultures

Reference

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