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## Original Research Article

# Analyzing Power in the Production of Bibi-Baf (Bibi woven) Rugs in the Chaleshtor Region

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## Abstract

Carpet weaving stands as one of Iran's most authentic traditional arts. Studying and scrutinizing this art reveals the existence of power structures, sometimes ruthless, hidden behind its beautiful and captivating facade, playing significant roles in its zenith and decline. The region of Chaleshtor, nestled within the precincts of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province in the realm of Iranian carpet geography, is replete with discursive occurrences that, only under the auspices of attention to the hypertext, structure, and context, can be subject to analysis; particularly, a group of influential women known as 'the Bibis' wielded a remarkably influential role as a microphysic of power in the production of Bibi Baf rugs. Microphysics of power constitutes small currents and minute powers that permeate and reproduce bureaucratic, disciplinary, and psychological forms within smaller, concealed strata of society. During the Qajar era, microphysics of power played a significant role in political and social transformations. The power of Bakhtiari women in Chaleshtor, akin to the power of court women, became the primary factor in creating and producing a distinct genre of carpet in this region, known by the very name of 'Bibi Baf' rugs, renowned for their significance. The most notable characteristic of these rugs crafted at the behest of the Bibis was their incorporation of cultural and political transformations along with conceptual and discursive formulations within themselves. Investigating the role of the Bibis as a microphysics structure in Bibi Baf rugs is the subject of this study, aiming to explore and examine the genesis of the Bibis's micro power by scrutinizing the ongoing political factors in the Bakhtiari women's power system, subsequently assessing and elucidating the constructive role of Bibi Baf as a power institution in carpet production under study. Hence, the principal research question emerges: How has the power of the Bibis influenced the production of rugs known as Bibi Baf? This inquiry, based on theoretical foundations and Michel Foucault's notions of power, delves into the transformations of Bibi Baf rugs in the context of power-resistance, power-knowledge, and power-relationship under the Foucauldian power discourse. The contemplative conclusion drawn unveils that the economic, political, and managerial power of the Bibis constituted one of the most influential factors shaping these types of rugs.

**Keywords:** *Power, Microphysics, the Bibis, Bibi Baf Rugs, Foucault.*

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## Introduction

Power within human societies triggers immensely complex actions and reactions. Opposition, submission, utilization, and the like are actions individuals can manifest towards power. Human societies, comprising multiple interwoven networks, harbor power structures, an inescapable facet of human relationships significantly influencing various aspects of our interactions, “including social, familial, gender-related, and professional relations” (Nazari, 2007, 125 & 126). Foucault presents two overarching postulations regarding power: an economic-based notion where power is acquirable akin to a commodity, and a non-economic-based notion where power isn’t a matter of exchange but an imposition. In this paradigm, power embodies force and repression, suppressing individuals’ desires and nature. From this perspective, power becomes the agent of implementation and creation of an action-reaction relationship (Foucault, 2010, 425). Moreover, power is brought into effect “as action upon action, probable or effective reactions, future or present” (ibid., 425), undoubtedly involving another element, unleashing forces of responses and effects upon which power acts internally (ibid., 426). Power doesn’t always emanate from governance but pervades all aspects of societal life, observable and imperceptible throughout all societal structures. ‘Microphysics of power’ comprises small powers and relatively minute forces that exist in various forms and abundantly within society. These microphysics of power, unlike sovereignty, are not palpable and defined but are disseminated and reproduced in disciplinary, bureaucratic, and psychological forms (Moradi, 2016, 170). Foucault examines the facets of power in ‘microphysics of power’ and delves into analyzing power:

- Power doesn’t exclusively reside in a particular domain but pervades all aspects of life in modern society, lacking a central locus.
- Power, while not owned, profoundly influences the smallest elements of society.
- Power doesn’t necessarily stem from economic relationships and can’t be understood merely through autonomy and dependence.

- Everything and everyone revolves within the orbit of power, wherein power structures are perpetually dynamic and fluid (Foucault, 1985, 12).

According to Foucault, power is diverse, constructive, and progressive rather than merely enforcing force. During the Qajar period, the autocratic system acted as a power structure, evident in both software and hardware aspects such as governmental dominance, economic influence, and bureaucratic frameworks, affecting their creations considerably. Consequently, the fundamental inquiry of this paper emerges: How does the microphysics of power of the Bibis manifest in the region and display its characteristics? The primary assumption suggests that Chaleshtor region, as a locus of power, embodies hardware signs like the autocratic system, castle architectures, attention to the women of Khan families (the Bibis), their tastes, and economic roles.

While Foucault refrains from presenting a definite framework for understanding contemporary political phenomena, attributing it to the inherent ambiguity, referencing his viewpoints lends significance to the role of power relations in unexpected places and manners of creation and production. The primary reason for the emergence of space for the Bibis’ exercise of power in carpet production lies in the fact that carpet weaving, due to its intricate machinery, was not readily feasible for the weavers. The initial costs of setting up a carpet loom were such that it compelled the structure of power—those with authority and capital—to engage weavers and pay meager wages, guiding the conceptualization of colors and patterns in rugs. Hence, it must be acknowledged that rugs stand among the most prominent artifacts where traces of power structures can be discerned, particularly a noteworthy issue worthy of investigation in these works; in every region of Iran, an influential power structure exists, shaping its presumed outcomes consistent throughout its history, culture, and societal structure. Among these, the Bibi Baf rugs, produced during the Qajar era in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province, bear indications of the power of Bakhtiari Khatuns (the Bibis) within themselves, a subject worth examining.

Therefore, this research initially introduces the Bibis within the political system of the Qajar Khans as a power institution and subsequently analyzes the manifestations of the Bibis' taste in the rugs created under their desire and patronage as a text. The selection of rugs has been purposeful, based on their design frequency."

## Literature Review

In the wake of studies conducted on the issue addressed in this research, an inference is made that there hasn't been a cohesive research effort in this domain as needed. The need to reassess the position and importance of women in contemporary Iranian history is among the vital subjects in contemporary research. In her article, Afsaneh Najmabadi (1998) endeavors to shed light on the role of women in contemporary Iranian history. Delrish (1997), in his studies on women in the Qajar era, emphasizes the significant role of women in both production (as well as non-production sectors) in both the domestic and export sectors. However, the crucial point here is that the production mechanism in that era was subject to the prevailing paradigms of the time, both politically and socially. What distinguishes this research from others is the exploration of power microstructures among women who have significant impacts on production and exports. Hence, the background of the subject of this research is introduced in two parts: 1. Foucault's Power System, 2. Bibi Baf Rugs briefly.

Numerous translations of Foucault's writings have been made on power structures, but regarding the analysis of the power discourse in various political and social domains leading to the creation of specific human behavior or new text production, the following sources are notable:

- Mehrdad Navabakhsh and Farouk Karimi (1388) in the *Journal of Political Studies* have extensively delved into the position of the concept of power in society and politics. Another article addressing "the analysis of power relations in Michel Foucault's thought" is by Ali Asghar Davoudi (1390), who not only examines the intellectual origins of Michel Foucault but also delves into the concept of power and its relations with freedom and knowledge according to this thinker. Fateh Moradi (2016) in an article titled

"Representation of the Power Structure in the University Space; Power Microphysics in the University" investigates the importance of knowledge-power, and ideology.

- Within the field of Bibi Baf rugs, similar references can be found. Ghani (2019) in a section of his book titled "Cultural Analysis Lozenge of Chaleshtar Rug," introduces Bibi Baf rugs structurally and provides a few visual examples of these types of rugs. However, there is no mention made regarding the power of the Bibis. In the article "Feminine Discourse in Handwoven Carpets of Qajar and Pahlavi Eras," Taravatimahjoubi, Kateb & Keshavarz Afshar (2022) address the issue of cultural identity of women in the field of handmade carpets and classify the influential elements of this discourse in Iran during the Qajar and early Pahlavi periods.

What distinguishes the present article from other research is the explicit attention paid to the theoretical aspects of power in the process of text creation and a specific emphasis on articulating the personal taste of women in power in the work.

## Theoretical Foundations

The analysis of the relationship between power and the creation of artworks draws from the principles of post-structuralist paradigm. Understanding the role of power in this context involves an analysis of power based on the "perception of its productive aspect, its regulatory nature, its non-centralized and networked, and dispersed nature in all aspects of society" (Nazari, 2011, 345). According to Foucault, power is "a relationship, not a tangible thing. It's a relationship between individuals that can directly or indirectly explain people's behaviors. The concrete form of any power is something to which the term 'domination' can be applied, and it is what can govern a society, group, community, or individual. By governance, Foucault means the ability to explain someone's behavior based on strategies that include a series of tactics" (Foucault, 1981). In Foucault's definition of power, unlike the classical view, the power structure is not merely negative and repressive. He attempts, as a philosopher, to redefine and rethink the traditional concepts of power within a new framework.

Firstly, in this network-based system, power is exerted not for acquisition but as “a strategy to an effect and the impacts of it, not in terms of how it is acquired, but in terms of arrangements, maneuvers, tactics, techniques, and functions; power is exercised to produce effects, not to take hold” (Deleuze, 2013, 49). In Foucault’s analysis, power is a practice that leads to the alteration or direction of others’ behavior. Hence, “power is neither given, nor exchanged, nor revived; it is exercised and exists only in action” (Delanty, 2003, 39). Foucault’s focus isn’t on how power is seized or acquired but on how it is exercised, implemented, and its direct and indirect effects on what we can call subjects or objects of power (Smart, 1994, 9). Secondly, power is generative in Foucault’s perspective. “What is important for Foucault is to demonstrate that the subject is a product of power, meaning the subject is a product of the techniques of microphysics of power and the normalization process. Accordingly, an individual is a creation of the specific technologies of power in the form of disciplinary techniques” (Hindess, 2001, 134).

## Research Methodology

Based on the theory of the microphysics of power in Michel Foucault’s ideas, power is a constructive force that is not limited solely to the government and its political institutions; rather, it exists in various forms within all components and individuals. In this study, the text “Bibi Baf carpet” was analyzed as a product of a feminine discourse during the Qajar era. In fact, the Bibi Baf rugs, which were products of the power system and were produced based on the influence and power of the Bibis, were analyzed to determine how the feminine micro-physics of power has been recorded in the text of these works. Therefore, the analytical method employed in this research is textual analysis. Hence, while cautioning against delving into the discourse of women’s power during the Qajar era and creating a hegemonic discourse while marginalizing other discourses, the text was interpreted using this specific theory. In essence, the research method involves content analysis and an exploration of the role of power in the emergence and production of behavior, effects, and text.

## Discussion

### • Bibi Baf rugs

The Chaleshtor region, more challenging than ever, has a rich history in carpet weaving with various designs, a craft predominantly pursued by families, especially in the past. Field research revealed that rugs were produced in the Chaleshtor region in two ways:

- Bibi Baf rugs or commissions made under the direction and supervision of the Bibis in the strongholds of Khans. These were high-quality rugs of the finest grade and completely authentic, woven by anonymous weavers in the Chaleshtor region. Despite the passage of years, the weavers’ identities were no longer associated with these rugs; instead, these rugs became known as Bibi Baf. While the Bibis were unaware of the carpet weaving techniques, due solely to their economic and social power and position in the Khans’ courts, they undertook the production of these rugs. As the Bibis used these rugs for personal use, as gifts to their children or as presents to other cities and even to the leaders of European countries, they chose the finest materials and commissioned intricate designs. Consequently, the Bibi Baf rugs gained high value and soon became famous throughout the region (Nasrollah, 2012, Shabaniyan, 2012 & Nasouhi, 2012). Nasouhi, a trader of rugs from the Chaleshtor region, believes that Bibi Baf rugs were the product of competition between the mother-in-law and the bride. Each tried to weave the best carpet, but due to the greater weaving experience, victory lay with the mother-in-law, hence these rugs were known as Bibi Baf (Nasouhi, 2008). Thus, Bibi Baf rugs were of exceptionally high quality, produced through the wealth and supervision of the Bibis, using the best raw materials (hand-picked wool, completely natural and stable dyeing) with the Tabkou weaving method<sup>1</sup>, and crafted by the best weavers in the carpet weaving workshops situated in the strongholds. These workshops, carrying the signature of the Bibis, were somewhat considered the region’s brand. These rugs were woven by anonymous weavers who, despite their toil and endurance of hardships, were paid meager wages and, often, the finished rugs were claimed by the Bibis or their cleaners at the end of the day.



- Rugs woven by the weavers of the Chaleshtor region using personal capital that, in terms of weaving techniques, materials, and primary resources, were at the same level as or higher than the rugs of Group 1 but lacked the Bibi Baf label. These rugs were purchased by traders in Isfahan and exported abroad (Nasouhi, 2013). The main difference between these rugs and the Bibi Baf rugs was that the weavers in the Chaleshtor region, due to grief, suffering, hard work, and enduring life's hardships, used darker colors more often, whereas in the Bibi Baf rugs, due to the affluence of the Khans and consequently the Bibis and the cultural relationship they had with Western governments and other cities, they used brighter colors such as light blue, white, cream, and orange. However, a question that might arise is why Bibi Baf rugs were produced in the first place? In the Chaleshtor region, rugs were produced for various purposes such as practical, decorative, ceremonial, economic, and social uses. Rugs designed as gifts were a subset of these uses (Ghani, 2018, 174). Bibi Baf rugs were classified as a subset of gift rugs and were woven in large sizes like 12, 24, and 35 meters, using ground threads and the Tabriz weaving method. These rugs were specifically woven as gifts for children, especially for the dowry of the Bibis' daughters. For instance, Bibi Khadijeh (the sister of Khoda-Rahm Khan, one of the Khans of the Chaleshtor region) brought a Bibi Baf carpet to Shalmazar after her marriage and migration from the Chaleshtor region, thereby introducing one of the Bibi Baf designs to the Shalmazar region. The Khans of the Chaleshtor region also had dealings with Khans from other parts of the country, especially Kerman and Isfahan. Occasionally, they gifted Bibi Baf style rugs to these Khans. Moreover, on their travels to countries such as England, they used these rugs as souvenirs.

#### • The designs of the Bibi Baf rugs

The designs of Bibi Baf rugs have always been unique and woven with the finest materials. However, one of the major obstacles in their visual examination is the scarcity and rarity of examples of such rugs. Brick, cypress, pine, Lachak-e-Toranj, Boteh Jeqeh, and pictorial rugs (Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8) are among the most important designs

used, each exhibiting differences in pattern, motif, and color based on the Bibis' tastes.

Among these, the pictorial rugs of Bibi Baf exhibit different visual structures. In the following, a brief examination of the patterns of one of these carpet samples, titled 'Three Standing Women,' will be addressed.

Parviz Tanavoli, the author of pictorial rugs, believes that the origin of pictorial Bibi Baf rugs was postcards from Europe. In Fig 8, the main design, 1- a Mehrab-tree, except for the motif of three women in the center of the text, has been entirely designed and woven as a garden carpet. The text of this beautiful garden carpet includes a tree motif with birds such as peacocks, partridges, hoopoes, and deer, which are harmonious, but it is unrelated to animals such as dogs (Tanavoli, 1989, 87). On the other hand, 2- the way the three women stand, probably borrowed from Bibi's images, their clothing style, makeup, brown hair color, and likely a three-stringed instrument, and the dog



Fig 1. Brick-patterned carpet by Bibi Baf. Source: Ghani, 2019, 91.



indicate Western (English) women; however, the designer or weaver has tried to give a native form to Bibi's taste in clothing. Thus, in the design of the Boteh-Jeqeh (a local term, almond-shaped pattern), one of the authentic motifs in the region's rugs, it has been used in the dress of two women. Also, the scattered designs on the women's skirts resemble the Mehrabi or Moharramat patterns in the region's rugs. Large margins of this carpet feature inscriptions or frames, each of which includes bird motifs. In the upper inscriptions of this carpet, a sentence "in the order of Amir Mojahed Bakhtiari, in the year 1329 AH," is observed.

#### • Power of the Bibis

Women during the early Qajar period, within the framework of the patriarchal power structures, solely occupied the role of wives and mothers. However, from the mid-Qajar era, women gradually gained ground in individual and social freedoms and powers. European travels and Iranians traveling abroad led to the advancement of the



Fig 2. Cypress and pine-bordered Bibi Baf carpet. Source: The collection of the Cooperative Union of Rural Handwoven Carpets in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, 2010.



Fig 3. Bibi Baf Lachak Taranj carpet. Source: Author's Archive.



Fig 4. Lachak Taranj carpet with enamel flower pattern. Source: Author's Archive.





Fig 5. Lachak Taranj carpet with enamel flower pattern.  
Source: Author's Archive.

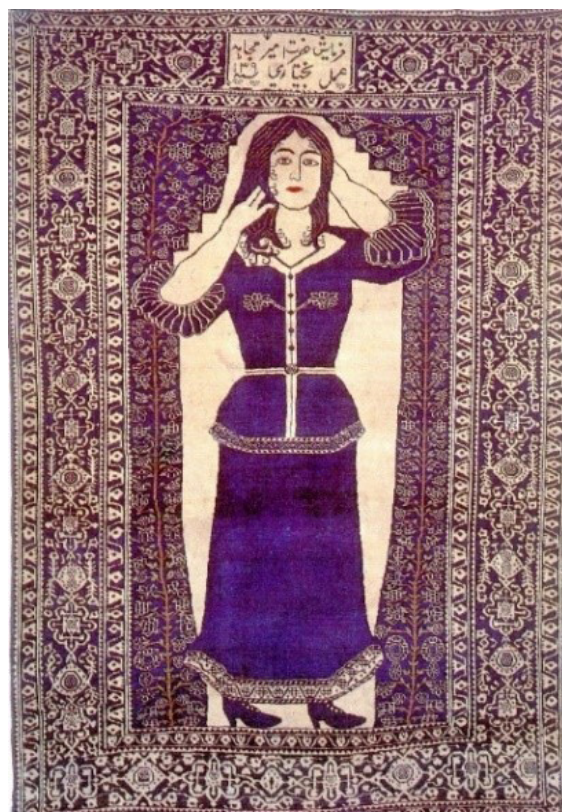


Fig 7. Bibi Baf carpet of a standing woman. Source: Tanavoli, 1989, 85.

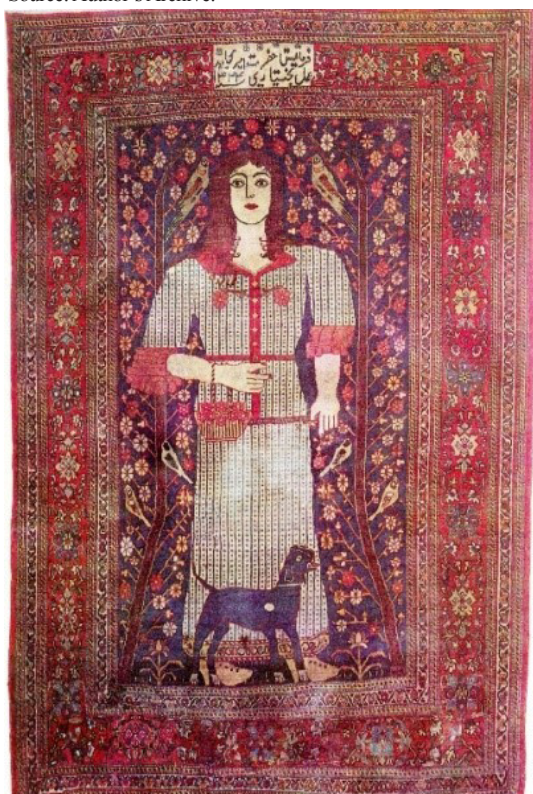


Fig 6. Bibi Baf carpet of a standing woman accompanied by her dog.  
Source: Tanavoli, 1989, 84.



Fig 8. Pictorial Bibi Baf carpet of three standing women.  
Source: Tanavoli, 1989, 86.



idea of women's liberation in the minds of progressive Iranians (Delrish, 1997, 179). Among these were the Bibis, mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters who, utilizing their social and economic positions, engaged in carpet production. The Bibis would responsibly undertake the roles and duties of their husbands when they were engaged in other affairs, especially when the husbands were away in Tehran or distant provinces. Women managed household affairs and the lives of family members and dependents admirably (Rice, 1987, 132). "The position and status of a Bibi were such that others envied her status. She had an independent existence from her husband, having separate arrangements. If her husband mistreated her, she had the right to return to her father's or brother's house whenever she wished. Her children respected her. She had the right to meet most of her relatives and family members whenever and for however long she desired (McBean Ross, 1994, 101). Moreover, the Bibis had their own special powers and used them for personal dealings (Rice, 1987, 60 & 59). The influence and power of the Bibis were to the extent that they were involved in judging and resolving disputes. Sometimes, farmers sought refuge with the Bibi from direct oppression and injustice (McBean Ross, 1994, 99). Consulting the Bibis was always beneficial. For example, the strategies of Bibi Sahib Jan during the conquest of Isfahan are an example of this issue (ibid., 103). Or Bibi Maryam, who fought against the Cossacks and earned the title of a commander during the guardianship of the Constitutional Revolution. Besides politics, one of the areas in which the Bibis played a role was in economic affairs, such as Bibi Saghar, the daughter of Zargham Al-Sultan-e Faradonbe'i and the wife of Khoda-Rahm Khan, who was among those involved in Chaleshtor in the production of Bibi Baf rugs.

#### • The Theoretical dimensions of the power of the bibis in the carpet production process

##### - Power and resistance

According to Foucault's analyses, there is nothing outside power. In this case, there is either submission and compliance to power or resistance. Considering this point, the era of Bibi Baf carpet weaving was limited to

a particular period that was intertwined with the power and vigor of Khans. It began during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah and concluded during the time of Reza Shah with the disappearance of the Khans, and their wives no longer ordered Bibi Baf rugs. Even after the collapse of the Khans, some of their survivors placed orders for these specific types of rugs, which were scarce (Ghani, 2019, 50). The main reason for this change and transformation was that the privilege of this art was in the hands of the Bibis. Therefore, power here is presented as an institution that determines social relationships and privileges, while resistance is portrayed as the reaction demonstrated by some of the surviving Khans towards power. Regarding the relationship between power and resistance, it is noteworthy that in the past, some weavers usually, due to a lack of access to necessary facilities to set up a carpet loom in their personal homes, especially due to a shortage of capital, were in economically weaker conditions. Weavers, due to the need for income and livelihood, would submit to working conditions in the Bibi's workshops.

##### - Power and relationship

The analysis of power relations in Foucault's view essentially involves a network of influences, effects, and relationships among forces. This network never forms a singular shape of dominance over individuals (Jahangiri, 2014, 26). The relationships between the Bibis and weavers, leading to the creation of rugs, are examinable from two perspectives: first, due to the connection of Khans with Western countries, a sense of aestheticism and aristocratic life emerged among the Bibis, and second, their relationship with the weavers, shaping the newly formed taste of the Bibis, manifested in the design and execution of the carpet. Power plays led to the creation of different rugs in Chaleshtor, where European cultural influences in Bibi Baf rugs are evident, from patterns to color schemes. Cultural relationships, encompassing music, art, film, fashion, and lifestyle, between the Khans and the West, as well as Khans from other cities in Iran, significantly influenced the taste of the Bibis, encouraging them toward Western styles and trends. On the other hand, gifting Bibi Baf rugs to Khans in other cities or countries increased



the fame and recognition of the Bibis, serving as a means to enhance their power and status in the realm of art and indigenous culture.

Color Palette in traditional rugs woven by families predominantly featured dark colors like indigo, brown, and black, reflecting the challenges and hardships of life, such as enduring sorrow and toil. However, in Bibi Baf rugs, woven by affluent individuals with cultural connections, the use of brighter colors like light blue, white, cream, and orange was common.

The difference in the color palette of these two types of rugs is attributed to cultural, social, and environmental factors related to their production. Traditional carpet weavers, living in harsher conditions, used dark colors; meanwhile, Bibi Baf rugs, perceived as symbols of wealth, stability, and social standing, featured brighter, warmer colors, symbolizing the energy, enthusiasm, and zeal of the Bibis. The production of these rugs with these changes required direct supervision by the Bibis; thus, centralized workshops, where weavers attended at specific times and stopped work at designated hours, were the tangible outcome of this relationship<sup>4</sup>.

#### **- Power and knowledge**

Today, a form of knowledge without the presence of power is unimaginable (Haqiqat, 2013, 64). Throughout history, many kings and rulers in their controlled territories issued orders for the creation of works based on their needs, necessities, or displays of power. The existence of various structures in the lands of Iran during the Safavid and Ottoman eras is an example of this kind of thinking. Until recently, rugs had a lesser role in this regard, and architecture, due to its physical structure, played more of such a role. In the Qajar era, with the significance of women in managing palaces and fortresses, the industries under their supervision also became tools for displaying power. Changes in the dimensions and inclination toward weaving large fabric rugs that required broader looms and dyeing systems also demanded the Bibis to acquaint themselves with the knowledge of crafting these rugs. The Bibis passed down their knowledge and experience in carpet weaving from generation to generation, preserving

and maintaining the tradition of Bibi Baf rugs and fostering connections between different generations in traditional Chaleshtor society over time.

On the other hand, carpet production allowed the Bibis to strengthen their individual, cultural, and social identity using local patterns and designs. This occurrence gave the Bibis greater self-confidence since they understood that with this type of production, they could transform into a valuable symbol of their feminine culture and identity. They also sought to reproduce the traditional carpet of the Chaleshtor region with further innovation and creativity. This combination of traditional art with new innovations became an opportunity to generate new knowledge and truths. In the following sections and in [Tables 1 & 2](#), an attempt has been made to analyze the influence and taste of the Bibis through content analysis of the rugs.

#### **Conclusion**

In this present study, relying on the theoretical foundations of power concepts based on Michel Foucault's theory, the transformations in the Bibi Baf rugs were examined and analyzed within the framework of the power-resistance discourse, power-knowledge, and power-relationship. The findings indicated that the Bibis, as an influential and authoritative group of women, exercised microphysics of power in this region and, through their economic, political, social, and managerial power, determined the structure (design, color, quality, dimensions, etc.) and content of Bibi Baf rugs. In a way, the power system of the Bibis, as a primary factor, played a vital role in shaping Bibi Baf rugs and, consequently, had an important role in displaying and promoting their power. The Foucauldian power-resistance discourse demonstrated that during the period of weaving Bibi Baf rugs, power was in the hands of the Bibis and the common people did not benefit from this art and its aesthetics. With the disappearance of the Bibis, the number of orders for these rugs decreased. Therefore, power played a determining role in social relations and privileges here, and resistance manifested itself in the reactions of some remnants of the common people against power. In terms of power-knowledge, during the Qajar

Table 1. Analysis of the designs, patterns, and colors of Chaleshtor rugs and the Bibi Baf rugs. Source: Authors

Variables	Traditional rugs (non-Bibi baf)	Bibi Baf Rugs	Analysis
Design	-Lachak Toranj -Brick -Frame Designs	-Brick patterns -Cypress and pine tree motifs -Lachak-toranj -Boteh-jeqeh -Pictorial rugs.	-The Bibis' foreign interactions acquainted them with Western postcards, leading them to depict an image of feminine figures - symbols of the Bibis themselves - within a rectangular framework, portraying gardens filled with trees, birds, and more, on the text of their rugs.
Color	-Dark Blue -Dark Red -Indigo	-Warm colors -Bright blues -White -Cream -Orange	-In Bibi Baf rugs, due to the affluence of the Bibis and their relatively carefree life, they were encouraged to use livelier colors.
Pattern	-Types of botanical patterns (weeping willow, pine, cypress, almond trees, etc.) -Various patterns inspired by the surrounding environment and nature such as: sickle, scissors, sugar bowl, ladybug, etc.	-Cypress trees -Pine trees -Human figures -Domestic animals figures (dogs) Flowers -Inscriptions.	-In brick-patterned, rectangular, and Lachak-Toranj rugs, both groups shared patterns, but there were differences in the use of colors. In some of the Bibi Baf rugs, certain pattern motifs like the weeping willow were not woven. -The presence of inscriptions with the name of the commissioner and the weaving date is only observed in Bibi Baf rugs.

Table 2. Possible abstractions in the approach to power from Foucault's perspective and its examples in Bibi Baf rugs. Source: Authors.

Power Approach Abstractions	Examples in Bibi Baf Carpets
Power-Resistance	-Submission of weavers to money and wages -Submission due to the importance of the Khan and his family's role in all aspects of the subjects' lives, especially disputes or tribal and family problems. -Weavers' submission to their social conditions and economic constraints and their dependence on the power of the Bibis -Weavers' dependency on carpet weaving activities and providing for their families' livelihoods
Power-Knowledge	-Knowledge and power of the Bibis in their traditional society -Expertise in creating large-scale rugs, uniform coloring, innovative pattern designs -Feeling self-confidence and self-respect -Power of knowledge in the innovation and design of rugs -Producing rugs as pioneering artworks in a more challenging traditional society -Self-expression and showcasing the power and knowledge of the Bibis through the language of art (rugs). -Generating new knowledge and truth using a traditional-indigenous space and art
Power-Relationship	-Changes in the tastes of the Bibis due to relations with the West -The exercise of power to implement the tastes of the Bibis (the motif of "Boteh-Jeqeh" on women's clothing) -The gifting of Bibi Baf rugs



era, women and specifically the Bibis played an important role in managing affairs in the region, in a way that the production of Bibi Baf rugs, based on their knowledge and personal experience, had turned into a tool for displaying their power, which also granted them self-confidence and expertise in carpet production. Moreover, producing Bibi Baf rugs enabled them to reinforce their cultural and social identity and, through innovation and creativity, create new rugs. The Bibis showcased their power and knowledge through Bibi Baf rugs, arriving at a form of self-expression. The unique indigenous patterns and motifs, the use of warm and vibrant colors, the quality and precision in selecting raw materials, supervision over weaving, and the large dimensions of the carpet fabric all allowed them to display their identity and power in the language of art (Bibi Baf rugs). According to Foucault's theory of power-relationship, power is considered as a relationship between forces. The connections of the Bibis and the common people with Western countries and other cities led to interactions where the Bibis' tastes leaned more toward Western styles. These transformations in Bibi Baf rugs, from design to color schemes, were noticeable, as, due to economic affluence and cultural interactions, they used warm and vibrant colors in their rugs contrary to traditional or non-Bibi Baf rugs. Moreover, gifting Bibi Baf rugs to other countries and to the people of other cities enhanced the recognition and reputation of the Bibis in the field of indigenous art and culture. Ultimately, it can be stated that Bibi Baf rugs are a manifestation of dynamic power-resistance interactions in the traditional space of carpet weaving in the Chaleshtor region, demonstrating how such rugs can reflect the power of the Bibis as producers within a discursive space.

### Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest in conducting this research.

### Endnote

1. In Chaleshtor region carpets, two techniques are employed: Alghaji (double weft) and Tabkoo (single weft). In the Tabkoo technique, a woolen weft is used for both the back and front, with a consistent thickness. The process begins with weaving a few centimeters of Shaleh weaving (kilim weaving) after the

warp by a twill weaving method, using a thread similar to the Chaleh thread, and rarely starting with two colors. After weaving approximately five to seven centimeters of Shaleh, carpet weaving begins. Following the completion of one row, it is time for weft insertion. By lifting the Haaf comb and applying hand pressure to the lower Shaheh, an opening is created through which a rope with a diameter of about half a centimeter passes between the warps, pounding to ensure that the back and front threads reach an angle slightly higher than 45 degrees. Subsequently, using the same rope, the weft is passed through the layers of Shaleh, and once again, it is beaten down on the weft. This action results in tighter knots and a high-quality carpet. It is noteworthy that in the past, the majority of carpets in the region were woven using the Tabkoo technique, and this technique continues to be prevalent in the area.

2. Row of knots in the carpet

3. Secretary

4. An elderly lady, who had spent her entire life in the Bibi workshop weaving, recalls, 'I was one of the apprentices in the Bibi workshop. From morning till evening, we, along with other apprentices, were busy weaving. Every night, Bibi would carefully supervise us upon her return, ensuring that no workshop patterns were taken outside or copied. Although we often tried to memorize the patterns, the original design could never be retained (Ghani, 2020, p.176).' Furthermore, at the end of carpet weaving, the Bibis, due to the uniqueness of their designs and patterns, would discard the original plan to preserve the distinctiveness of the woven carpet.

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