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From Qur□ānic Ma□rifat to Epistemic Decolonization: The Concentric System of Ma□ārif of the Islamic Revolution and Its Spheres of Influence in Progress and Civilizational Renewal

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Abstract

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 was not merely a sociopolitical event in contemporary history; within the theoretical discourse of its founders and intellectual architects, it was conceptualized as an epistemic, Qurʾān-centered, and civilizational turn grounded in authentic Islam (Islām-i Nāb). At the center of this discourse stands a concentric system of Maʿārif (Manẓūmah-yi Maʿārif, the plural of Maʿrifat), an interconnected body of revelatory, rational, and experiential cognitions radially anchored in a monotheistic (tawḥīdī) core. Employing a qualitative analytical-deductive method grounded in scriptural hermeneutics, this study investigates the ontological and epistemological nature of Maʿrifat in the Qurʾān and traces how its plural, Maʿārif, is reconstructed in the primary texts of Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei. The paper first clarifies the semantic and philosophical differences between Qurʾānic Maʿrifat and Western categories (Episteme, Gnosis, Wisdom, and Knowledge), showing how the Qurʾān links sensory observation, rational reflection, and revelation to righteous praxis (ʿamal ṣāliḥ). Second, addressing a conceptual gap in existing scholarship, this article formulates a formal analytical definition of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution—specifying how perennial Islamic principles are reproduced in response to contemporary exigencies—and presents a six-domain thematic matrix alongside a five-element conceptual network. Finally, the study examines how this concentric system challenges epistemic colonialism and shapes lived Muslim agency across discursive, scientific, and institutional spheres in domestic and transnational arenas.

Keywords: *Qurʾānic Maʿrifat; Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution; Epistemic decolonization; Concentric epistemic system (Manẓūmah); Indigenous social sciences; Dynamics of Muslim life.*

1. Introduction

Human communities organize their collective life around the ontological and normative worldviews they inhabit. Recent work in the sociology and anthropology of religion has moved beyond linear secularization models to examine how Islam operates as a public, norm-generating tradition shaping social agency, civic solidarity, and collective meaning in contemporary Muslim societies (Salvatore, 2009; Ahmed, 2022; Al-Attas, 1995). In Islamic social philosophy, Islam is understood as a comprehensive social religion with distinct ontological premises and teleological aims guiding both material and spiritual life (Motahhari, 1999; Javadi Amoli, 2009). Theorists of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran interpret the movement within this perspective as an effort to revive what they term authentic Islamic thought (Islām-i Nāb), re-articulate Qurʾānic teachings under modern conditions, and chart a developmental trajectory distinct from both Western liberal capitalism and Eastern socialist materialism (Davari Ardakani, 2014; Zouelm, 2014). Within the discourse of its leaders, this movement did not conclude in February 1979; after establishing the Islamic political system (niẓām-i Islāmī), it initiated a long-term historical process of Islamic state-building (dawlat-sāzī), societal formation (jāmiʿah-pardāzī), and civilizational renewal (tamaddun-i nawīn-i Islāmī), despite ongoing structural and practical obstacles (Khamenei, S. A., 2019).

A central feature of the intellectual corpus of the Islamic Revolution is its focus on the epistemological foundations of socio-political order. In the Statement on the Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution (February 11, 2019), Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, the second leader of the Islamic Revolution, argues that knowledge (dānish) is the primary basis of national dignity and power, noting that modern Western global dominance was itself enabled by scientific primacy (Khamenei, S. A., 2019). Because the founders of the Revolution view it as an epistemic and cultural transformation, its continuity requires generating and institutionalizing a body of knowledge and deep, guidance-oriented cognition—denoted in the singular as Maʿrifat and in the plural as Maʿārif (occasionally spelled Ma'aref in non-diacritical English works)—consonant with its social philosophy.

This priority of knowledge and culture is grounded in the primary writings of Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini, the first leader of the Islamic Revolution. In his Political-Divine Testament, Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini describes the Islamic Revolution as a divine phenomenon that revived Islam through popular unity and religious motivation. In his June 1980 decree

establishing the Headquarters for the Cultural Revolution, he characterized the 'Cultural Revolution' as an Islamic necessity and a popular demand, stressing the need to reform cultural institutions and universities that, in his assessment, had previously served colonial interests (Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 12, pp. 431–432). One year later, he stated that cultural and university reform stood at the head of national priorities and explained that the Cultural Revolution aimed to reform higher education and overcome cultural dependency on East and West (Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 14, pp. 426–433). Read through its primary texts, the cultural-epistemic dimension is a constitutive pillar of the revolution: for Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini, the revolution is not completed by changing political structures alone, but requires transforming culture, education, knowledge production, and human upbringing (tarbiyat-i insān), replacing Western cultural mimicry with an Islamic-national culture grounded in tawḥīd, divine teachings (maʿārif-i ilāhī), and the Qurʾān (Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 19, pp. 110–111, 355–357).

Continuing this approach, Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, the second leader of the Islamic Revolution, placed public elucidation (tabyīn), insight-building (baṣīrat-afzāyī), and consolidating the Maʿārif of Islam and the Revolution at the top of the Islamic Republic's priorities (Khamenei, S. A., 2016). Because ideological rivals seek to invert the Revolution's message, systematic classification and methodological research on its foundational Maʿārif are viewed as essential to prevent distortion (Khamenei, S. A., 1995), a perspective shared by early constitutional theorists such as Sayyid Mohammad Hosseini Beheshti (1981).

The same emphasis appears in the statements of Ayatollah Sayyid Mojtaba Khamenei, the third leader of the Islamic Revolution. In his message of 14 Khordad 1405 SH (June 4, 2026), he described the statements and writings of Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini and the late second leader as an 'invaluable and unparalleled treasure' and a 'guiding light for the future path,' calling for the preservation, transmission, elucidation, and reproduction of this intellectual heritage for future generations (Khamenei, S. M., 2026). In his Nowruz message at the start of 1405 SH (March 2026), he stressed listening to citizens across diverse social strata and drawing upon their views and lived experiences in diagnosing social problems and designing solutions; and in his Government Week message (August 2026), he emphasized narrating national capabilities while avoiding actions that harm social cohesion (Khamenei, S. M., 2026). Taken together, these foundational and contemporary positions indicate that within the official and intellectual discourse of the Revolution's leaders, Maʿārif (as the plural body of Maʿrifat) are conceptualized as

transformative and civilization-building only when they move beyond mere conceptual transmission and enter lived social praxis, civic upbringing (tarbiyat), and public institutions within a coherent framework of knowledge governance. From the perspective of the sociology of knowledge and contemporary Islamic studies, examining how this epistemic system is internally structured, reproduced, and mobilized provides crucial insights into the dynamics of public religion and non-Western knowledge production. Accordingly, rather than offering a normative theological treatise, this article undertakes a rigorous emic conceptual reconstruction of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution, analyzing how its theoretical architecture mediates the relationship between scriptural epistemology, state-society dynamics, and everyday Muslim agency.

2. Literature Review and Scholarly Contributions

In the primary texts of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei first used the compound expression Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution (Maʿārif-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī) as an explicit analytical category in his message marking the first anniversary of Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini's passing (June 3, 1990), outlining twelve foundational principles (bayyināt) derived from the roots and rulings of Islam (Khamenei, S. A., 1990). Existing scholarship relevant to this inquiry falls into three main streams.

The first stream examines Islamic epistemology and the classification of knowledge. Al-Attas (1995), Bakar (1998), Golshani (2003), Rosenthal (2007), Chittick (2007), and Javadi Amoli (2009) show that in the Qurʾānic worldview, human cognition combines sensory observation, rational demonstration, and divine revelation within a gradational order directed toward moral perfection. Miri (2009) compares Western analytical accounts of propositional knowledge and the Gettier problem (Zagzebski, 1996) with Islamic epistemological criteria, while Mesbah Yazdi (2012, 2016) and Khosropanah Dezfuli (2013, 2024) argue that Islamic human sciences and governance models must rest on a Qurʾān-centered ontology rather than secular positivism.

A second stream explores revolutionary discourse, indigenous social science, and governance. Davari Ardakani (2014), Zouelm (2014), and Jamshidi (2019), who reconstructs Morteza Motahhari's social philosophy, argue that the Islamic Revolution created a distinct semantic world (jahān-i maʿnāyī) requiring indigenous social sciences (ʿilm-i ijtimāʿī-yi Islāmī) based on monotheistic values. Similarly, Malik (2017) analyzes Islamic governance as an ethical philosophy grounded in tawḥīd, public trust (amānah), and consultation (shūrā).

A third stream critiques 'epistemic colonialism' (coloniality of knowledge) across non-Western societies. Studies by Alatas (2006) on academic dependency, Mignolo (2009) on epistemic disobedience, Bhargava (2013) on epistemic injustice, Shih (2010) on academic gatekeeping, Ricaurte (2019) on data epistemologies, Chambers (2020) and Temin (2025) on internal tensions within decolonial theory, Knöchelmann (2021) on publishing inequalities, and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018, 2020) along with Halder and Sharma (2024) on epistemicides, linguicides, and culturecides document how Eurocentric frameworks marginalize non-Western knowledge traditions. Within Islamic studies, Hallaq (2018), Bishara (2021), and Menghini (2022), who analyzes Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr's thematic Qurʾānic exegesis (al-tafsīr al-mawḍūʿī) and al-minhaj al-Islāmī, likewise stress the need for autonomous epistemic paradigms.

Despite this body of work, no previous English-language scholarly study has investigated the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution as an independent theoretical subject, nor has any prior publication offered a formal analytical definition of the concept. Existing works examine Islamic human sciences, religious cognition (Maʿrifat), or epistemic colonialism separately without showing how the plural corpus of Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution functions as a concentric epistemic system (Manẓūmah) linking Qurʾānic epistemology to the specialized academic disciplines of the Islamic Revolution (ʿUlūm-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī, denoting structured branches of scholarly knowledge rather than positivist natural sciences) and lived social praxis. The present article contributes to the literature by: (1) formulating a formal analytical definition of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution and its five core attributes; (2) examining Maʿrifat directly in the Qurʾān to explain why the movement is conceptualized as a Qurʾānic revolution (inqilāb-i Qurʾānī); (3) modeling the five-element conceptual network of revolutionism; (4) constructing a six-domain problem-oriented thematic matrix of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution; (5) explaining the longitudinal link between foundational Maʿārif and the specialized academic disciplines of the Islamic Revolution; and (6) mapping its discursive, scientific, and institutional spheres of influence across domestic and transnational Muslim life.

3. Methodology and Research Design

To extract, conceptualize, and organize theoretical categories from scriptural and discursive texts, this study employs a qualitative analytical-deductive (taḥlīlī–istinbāṭī) method grounded in classical Islamic textual hermeneutics and sociological documentary analysis. Methodologically,

the study situates its inquiry within the sociology of Islamic knowledge, integrating thematic Qurʾānic exegesis (al-tafsīr al-mawḍūʿī, as developed by al-Sadr; see Menghini, 2022) with contextual scriptural analysis (taḥlīl-i siyāqī) and systematic conceptual reconstruction. By adopting an emic analytical posture—reconstructing the internal logic and semantic architecture of a knowledge system through its own foundational texts before situating it within broader global debates on epistemic decolonization—the research design rests on two core epistemological principles: concentric systemic epistemology (manẓūmah-nigarī), which analyzes individual propositions within an interconnected whole radially anchored around tawḥīd (Mesbah Yazdi, 2012, 2016, p. 112), and deductive rationalism (ʿaql-garāyī-yi istinbāṭī), which pairs rational demonstration (ʿaql) with scriptural transmission (naql) within an ijtihādī framework (Manteghi, 2018). Across a longitudinal horizon spanning nearly five decades since 1979, text-research (matn-pajūhī) proceeds through four analytical levels: descriptive classification, analytical elucidation, discovery of the concentric epistemic system (manẓūmah), and the sociological mapping of social praxis design.

Three categories of sources form the textual corpus: (1) the Holy Qurʾān as the primary revelatory source of Islam (focusing on verses concerning maʿrifat, ʿilm, hidāyah, ʿaql, īmān, ʿamal ṣāliḥ, and ḥikmah), examined alongside classical Arabic lexicons (Lisān al-ʿArab [Ibn Manẓūr, n.d.], Mufradāt Alfāẓ al-Qurʾān [al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1992], and al-Muʿjam al-Wasīṭ [Mostafa et al., 1989]) and major exegeses (al-Mīzān [Tabataba'i, 1995] and Tafsīr-i Namūnah [Makarem Shirazi, 2000]); (2) the primary texts of Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini (Ṣaḥīfah-yi Imām, 1999), Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei (An Outline of Islamic Thought in the Qurʾān [2013], the June 3, 1990 foundational message, the Second Phase Statement [2019], Rahnāmah 15 [2025a], and key thematic addresses [1995, 2009, 2015a, 2015b, 2016, 2017, 2021, 2025b]), and the 2026 messages of Ayatollah Sayyid Mojtaba Khamenei; and (3) peer-reviewed scholarship in Islamic epistemology, sociology of Islam, and epistemic decolonization.

The analytical procedure followed four sequential steps: (1) extracting semantic and philosophical conceptions of revolution, Qurʾānic Maʿrifat, and the social agency of knowledge; (2) applying contextual analysis (taḥlīl-i siyāqī), general/particular (ʿāmm wa khāṣṣ) and unqualified/qualified (muṭlaq wa muqayyad) distinctions, and systemic reading (kathrat-khwānī bi-sharṭ-i manẓūmah-sāzī) to model the five-element network; (3) formulating the formal definition, core attributes, twelve foundational principles, conceptual boundaries, and six-domain matrix of the Maʿārif of

the Islamic Revolution; and (4) mapping its discursive, scientific, and institutional spheres across domestic and transnational arenas. Systematic documentary indexing, iterative peer debriefing, and internal theoretical auditing across the primary texts ensured conceptual coherence and analytical trustworthiness.

4. Theoretical and Epistemological Foundations

4.1. Lexical, Sociological, and Islamic Conceptions of Revolution (Inqilāb)

In classical Arabic lexicography, inqilāb (root q-l-b) denotes inversion and radical transformation: 'ḥawwalahu ẓahran li-baṭnin' ('turning a thing inside out or upside down') (Ibn Manẓūr, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 685; Dehkhoda, 1998). In Western political sociology, revolution is predominantly defined through rapid structural breakdown and collective violence. Skocpol (1979, p. 3) defines social revolutions as rapid, basic transformations of state and class structures carried out through class-based revolts, while Huntington (1968, p. 45) defines revolution as 'a rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and government activity and policies.' Conventional sociological definitions thus link revolution to abruptness, structural upheaval, violence, high emotionalism, and low rationality.

Islamic political thinkers—honored within post-revolutionary Iranian discourse with the title of 'Martyr' (Shahīd)—theorize revolution on markedly different ontological grounds. Viewing the prophetic mission (biʿthah) as an emancipatory movement based on rejecting false authorities (ṭāghūt), affirming tawḥīd, and establishing social equity (qisṭ), they do not treat authentic revolution as an irrational or necessarily violent eruption. Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr defines revolution as a purposeful movement grounded in clear doctrinal principles that seeks deep transformation across individual, social, and political life and society’s root criteria (cited in Jamshidi, 1998, p. 12). Morteza Motahhari (1999, p. 82) likewise defines revolution as a conscious uprising to replace an unjust status quo with a normatively desirable order (waḍʿ-i maṭlūb), while Sayyid Mohammad Hosseini Beheshti (1981) interprets the Islamic Revolution as a long-term social and civilizational project.

4.2. Three Analytical Levels of the Islamic Revolution

A rigorous sociological and epistemological analysis of the Islamic Revolution requires distinguishing three analytical levels (Zouelm, 2014, pp. 31–48). The first is the eventual or historical level (buʿd-i rūydādī), referring to the socio-historical uprising between June 5, 1963 (15 Khordad 1342 SH) and February 11, 1979 (22 Bahman 1357 SH) that ended Pahlavi rule and established a new political system. The second is the processual or movement level (buʿd-i jaryānī), denoting an ongoing intellectual-political stream rooted in the prophetic mission (biʿthah) and contemporary Islamic awakening, continuing across post-revolutionary social developments. The third is the discursive or intellectual level (buʿd-i guftimānī yā andīshah-ī), representing a transnational intellectual framework and competing paradigm vis-à-vis Western secular modernity.

Conflating these three levels obscures the continuity of the movement: observers who treat the revolution as a finished episode restrict their attention to the historical event of 1979, whereas viewed as an ongoing social stream and an intellectual discourse, the revolution remains active and trans-local (Zouelm, 2014, pp. 31–48). In the present study, 'the Islamic Revolution' refers specifically to an authentic Islamic thought and discourse (andīshah wa guftimān-i nāb-i Islāmī) that provides the intellectual foundation for both the historical event and the continuing revolutionary movement. From the perspective of its theorists and leaders, building the desirable social order (sākht-i waḍʿ-i maṭlūb) is a gradual historical process (ṣayrūrat). Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei defines revolution in the Islamic context as 'a living and evolving popular, comprehensive, progressive, rational, and deep transformation in the foundations, infrastructures, and primary pillars of a society, which does not necessarily carry the meaning of violence and conflict, and whose fruition is gradual and requires the passage of time' (Khamenei, S. A., 2025a). In this view, both the emergence (ḥudūth) and the continuity (baqāʾ) of a revolution depend on rationality rather than fleeting emotion, while violence is treated as contingent rather than essential.

4.3. Ontology and Epistemology of Maʿrifat in the Holy Qurʾān

To understand why theorists of the Islamic Revolution describe it as a Qurʾānic revolution (inqilāb-i Qurʾānī) and ground its epistemic corpus in Maʿārif (the plural of Maʿrifat), the singular concept of Maʿrifat must first be examined in classical Arabic lexicography and Qurʾānic exegesis. In Lisān al-ʿArab, Ibn Manẓūr defines Maʿrifat (root ʿ-r-f) as 'Idrāku al-shayʾi bi-tafakkurin wa tadabburin

fī atharihi, wa hiya akhaṣṣu min al-ʿilm' ('apprehending a thing through reflection [tafakkur] and contemplation [tadabbur] upon its signs and traces; it is more specific than ʿilm, which may be general, whereas maʿrifat is realized only through detailed particularity') (Ibn Manẓūr, n.d., Vol. 9, p. 237). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (1992, p. 560) similarly notes in Mufradāt Alfāẓ al-Qurʾān that Maʿrifat means perceiving a thing by reflecting upon its signs, which is why theologians state 'Allāhu yuʿrafu wa lā yuqālu yuʿlam' ('God is known through Maʿrifat rather than encompassed by general ʿilm'), and al-Muʿjam al-Wasīṭ (Mostafa et al., 1989, Vol. 2, p. 623) defines it as distinguishing a thing from all else after prior ignorance (jahl). While the singular Maʿrifat denotes the act and state of deep, reflective cognition, its plural form, Maʿārif, refers to the structured body of foundational teachings, cognitions, and verities attained through this path.

In Qurʾānic exegesis, Maʿrifat denotes deep cognition accompanied by inner awareness, presence of heart (ḥuḍūr-i qalb), and existential commitment, linking cognition directly to faith (īmān) and righteous action (ʿamal ṣāliḥ) (Tabataba'i, 1995, Vol. 18, p. 372; Javadi Amoli, 2009; Rosenthal, 2007). The Qurʾān identifies three sources of Maʿrifat (Golshani, 2003; Bakar, 1998; Javadi Amoli, 2009): (1) sensory perception and experience (ḥiss wa tajribah), initial faculties granted at birth (Qurʾān 16:78; 46:26; 67:23) that remain barren if severed from moral gratitude (shukr); (2) intellect and reflection (ʿaql wa tafakkur) upon cosmic and historical signs (āyāt) (Qurʾān 2:164; 2:242; 13:3); and (3) divine revelation (waḥy wa hidāyah), an infallible light (nūr) guiding finite reason and experience (Qurʾān 2:2; 5:15; 16:44).

Exegetical analysis indicates four primary features of Qurʾānic Maʿrifat: (i) guidance-orientation (hidāyat-miḥwarī), directing cognition toward righteous action; (ii) gradational hierarchy (marātib dāshtan), rising from sensory perception to rational demonstration and cordial certitude (maʿrifat-i qalbī wa shuhūdī) (Javadi Amoli, 2009; Al-Attas, 1995); (iii) an intrinsic bond with faith and reverential awe (khashyah) before God (Qurʾān 35:28; 58:11; Makarem Shirazi, 2000, Vol. 18, p. 145); and (iv) concentric systemic coherence (manẓūmah-ī būdan), reflecting Islam's interconnected principles governing collective life (Khamenei, S. A., 2013). We render Manẓūmah as a 'concentric system' because its constituent Maʿārif are not merely horizontally networked, but radially anchored around the central gravitational core of tawḥīd (divine unity), from which ontological, ethical, and sociopolitical rings emanate. Teleologically, the ultimate aim of Maʿrifat in the Qurʾān is divine proximity and servitude: 'And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me [li-yaʿbudūn]' (Qurʾān 51:56), where 'li-yaʿbudūn' is interpreted in Tafsīr al-Mīzān

as 'li-yaʿrifūn' ('that they may attain Maʿrifat of Me'), freeing the human being from ignorance (jahl) and egoism (Tabataba'i, 1995, Vol. 18, p. 372). Accordingly, in this study, Maʿrifat is defined as a firm, validated conviction regarding a cognitive proposition, attained by an individual or society through reason, reflection, empirical experience, revelation, intuition, or sound education, which generates insight and guides normative action.

4.4. Comparative Epistemology: Qurʾānic Maʿrifat and Western Equivalents

In English-language scholarship, Islamic epistemological terms are commonly rendered as Episteme, Gnosis, Wisdom, or Knowledge. A comparative evaluation shows, however, that none of these four terms singly captures the integrated sensory, rational, cordial, revelatory, and practical dimensions of Qurʾānic Maʿrifat (Table 1). Retaining the transliterated forms Maʿrifat (singular: deep reflective cognition) and Maʿārif (plural: the structured body of foundational cognitions and teachings) therefore provides greater conceptual precision.

Table 1. Comparative Epistemological Analysis of Qurʾānic Maʿrifat and Its Closest Western Equivalents

Epistemic Category	Intellectual Tradition & Key Theorists	Core Epistemological Meaning	Convergence and Divergence vis-à-vis Qurʾānic Maʿrifat
Episteme	Classical Greek & Continental Philosophy (Plato, 1992, p. 187c; Foucault, 1970, p. 168; Zagzebski, 1996; Miri, 2009)	In Plato's Theaetetus, justified true belief contrasted with opinion (doxa). In Foucault (1970), the historical a priori governing discourse in a given epoch.	Shares Maʿrifat's emphasis on demonstrative certainty (itqān), but in modern analytical philosophy is detached from revelation and eschatological purpose.
Gnosis	Western Esoteric & Mystical Traditions (Jonas, 2001, pp. 42–45)	Interior, esoteric, and salvific cognition arising from direct spiritual illumination.	Reflects the cordial (qalbī) and intuitive (shuhūdī) depth of Maʿrifat, yet in Western Gnosticism often entails anti-cosmic dualism and rejects public law and empirical reason.
Wisdom (Ḥikmah)	Classical Moral Philosophy & Qurʾānic Exegesis (Tabataba'i, 1995; Javadi Amoli, 2009)	Theoretical and practical discernment that grasps the truth of things and directs righteous action.	Aligns closely with Qurʾānic Maʿrifat in its link to īmān and ʿamal ṣāliḥ, though Maʿrifat specifically denotes the pathway of detailed recognition leading to wisdom.
Knowledge	Modern Analytical & Social Sciences	A broad category ranging from empirical data processing and general awareness to propositional and technical knowing.	Serves as the most common general translation, but in secular social science is largely reduced to value-neutral, sensory-empirical information.
Maʿrifat (sing.) / Maʿārif (pl.) (Usage in This Study)	Qurʾānic Epistemology and Islamic Revolutionary Thought	Maʿrifat denotes firm, validated cognition integrating sense, intellect, intuition, and revelation across a gradational hierarchy; its plural, Maʿārif, denotes the interconnected corpus of foundational teachings.	Combines the demonstrative rigor of Episteme, the interior depth of Gnosis, and the practical orientation of Wisdom within a monotheistic social worldview.

5. The Concentric System (Manẓūmah) of Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution

5.1. The Islamic Revolution as a Qurʾānic Revolution and the Five-Element Network

Because the discourse of the Islamic Revolution draws its legitimacy, social goals, and epistemic standards directly from the Qurʾān, its founders and theorists conceptualize it as a Qurʾānic revolution (inqilāb-i Qurʾānī) seeking to realize Qurʾānic teachings in collective life (Khomeini, 1999, Vol. 19, pp. 355–357; Khamenei, S. A., 2013). In An Outline of Islamic Thought in the Qurʾān (Ṭarḥ-i Kullī-yi Andīshah-yi Islāmī dar Qurʾān, 2013), Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei structures the intellectual foundation of Islamic revolutionary Maʿārif around four Qurʾānic pillars: (1) conscious and responsible faith (īmān-i āgāhānah wa masʾūlānah), grounded in insight (baṣīrat) rather than blind imitation; (2) social monotheism and the negation of false powers (tawḥīd wa nafy-i ṭāghūt)—wherein tawḥīd is not merely an abstract theological belief in the existence of the One God (Allāh), but an active principle in social life entailing the rejection of domination by false authorities (ṭāghūts, colonialism, and autocracy) and the structuring of social orders upon a monotheistic worldview, thereby serving as the foundation of the Islamic Revolution's pursuit of independence, anti-hegemonic resistance (istikbār-sitīzī), and divine-monotheistic civilizational renewal; (3) prophethood and social mission (nubuwwat wa risālat-i ijtimāʿī), viewing the prophets as commissioned to establish social equity (qisṭ); and (4) divine guardianship (wilāyah) and the bond between the community and religious leadership, underpinning internal solidarity, independence from external domination, and the theory of wilāyat-i faqīh (Khamenei, S. A., 2013).

Within this Qurʾānic epistemology, Intellect (ʿaql) guides the human being toward Faith (īmān), while Faith removes egoistic barriers to reason and deepens rational insight. Built around this dual core are three operational components: Knowledge and Insight (ʿilm wa baṣīrat), Praxis (ʿamal), and Ethics (akhlāq). As shown in Figure 1, these five elements form an interconnected network in which Maʿrifat strengthens intellect and faith, while ethical praxis reinforces cognitive clarity. Morteza Motahhari's Man and Faith (Insān wa Īmān, 2006, pp. 22–34) substantiates this mutual dependence: faith illuminated by knowledge is protected from superstition (khurāfāt), dogmatism (jumūd), and fanaticism, whereas knowledge detached from faith becomes an instrument of domination (in Motahhari's image, a lamp in the hand of a thief at midnight). Knowledge supplies capability and speed in transforming the external world, while faith supplies moral direction and self-reform (Motahhari, 2006, pp. 22–34).

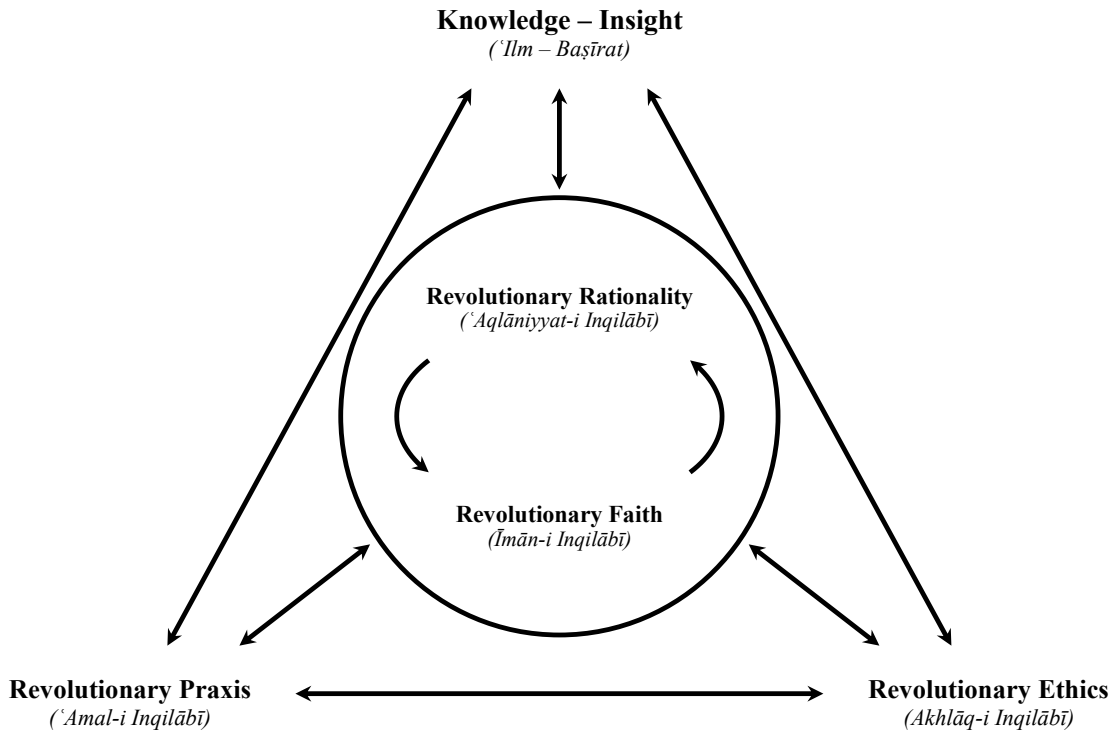


Figure 1. The Five-Element Conceptual Network of Revolutionism in Islamic Revolutionary Thought.

5.2. Reproducing Qurʾānic Maʿārif and the Theory of the 'Revolutionary System'

Within the discourse of the Revolution's leaders and theorists, the post-1979 order has actively reproduced (bāz-tawlīd) and applied Islamic Maʿārif in public life. Addressing the Assembly of Experts (February 22, 2021; see also Khamenei, S. A., 2015a), Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei explains that updating Islam's epistemic system (manẓūmah-yi maʿrifatī) does not alter its essential principles, but operates through tanabbuh (intellectual awakening prompted by practical societal need): many truths remain latent in the Qurʾān and the Sunnah until an Islamic political system confronts new domestic and international challenges, prompting qualified scholars practiced in Qurʾānic contemplation (tadabbur) to deduce fresh concepts while avoiding both eclectic (iltiqāṭī) and rigid (mutaḥajjir) readings (Khamenei, S. A., 2021). Crucially for the sociology of Muslim life, translating Maʿārif into operational social norms mobilizes grassroots civic agency: for example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, public elucidation of the Qurʾānic principle of muwāsāt (empathetic solidarity and mutual aid) inspired thousands of neighborhood-level networks of 'faithful aid' (kumak-i muʾminānah) across Iran, demonstrating how abstract scriptural Maʿārif are enacted as lived solidarity by ordinary believers and intermediary civic associations (ḥalqah-hā-yi miyānī) outside state bureaucracy (Khamenei, S. A., 2021, 2025b).

At the institutional level, this continuous reproduction of Maʿārif is conceptualized through the theory of the 'Revolutionary System' (niẓām-i inqilābī), articulated by Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei in the Second Phase Statement (2019). Drawing on Mullā Ṣadrā's doctrine of trans-substantial motion (al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah) in Transcendental Theosophy (al-ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah), proponents view the Revolutionary System as a unified structure that derives its norms from divine legislation and evolves gradually toward civilizational goals (Mesbah Yazdi, 2012; Khosropanah Dezfuli, 2024), seeking to combine legal-institutional order (qānūn-mandī) with dynamic revolutionary idealism (ārmān-garāyī) while resisting bureaucratic routinization.

5.3. Formal Definition, Core Attributes, and the Twelve Foundational Principles

As noted in Section 2, scholarly literature has not previously offered a formal analytical definition of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution (as the plural epistemic corpus derived from Qurʾānic Maʿrifat). Presenting this definition as one of the conceptual contributions of the present study, we formulate it within the movement's epistemic paradigm as follows:

> *Definition of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution: Within the epistemic paradigm of the Islamic Revolution, the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution (plural of Maʿrifat) are conceptualized as cognitions and convictions (bāwar-hā) rooted in the foundations and principles of what its theorists term authentic Islam (Islām-i Nāb), some of which, within the scientific, cultural, and social environment formed after the 1979 Revolution, have been reproduced in accordance with contemporary exigencies, a dynamic intellectual outlook, and historical-operational experiences, and a portion of which have attained concrete social and institutional embodiment. Understood by adherents as firm and validated convictions (bāwar-hā-yi mutqan wa muʿtabar), they generate collective insight (bīnish) and possess intrinsic motivational and socially extending capacities (qābiliyyat-i angīzishī wa imtidād-bakhshī-yi ijtimāʿī).*

As this definition specifies, the corpus of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution encompasses perennial principles of authentic Islam alongside teachings that have been reproduced and re-articulated by the leaders and thinkers of the Revolution in response to contemporary societal challenges. Based on this definition, the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution exhibit five defining attributes: (1) rootedness in the foundations of Islam (innate / fiṭrī); (2) rationality (ʿaqlānī); (3) concentric systemic coherence (manẓūmah-ī); (4) contemporaneity (bi-rūz); and (5) social comprehensiveness (jāmiʿ wa ijtimāʿī). Furthermore, an analysis of Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei's message on the first anniversary of Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini's passing

(June 3, 1990) identifies twelve foundational principles (bayyināt) of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution (Table 2).

Table 2. The Twelve Foundational Principles of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution (Extracted from Khamenei, S. A., 1990)

No.	Foundational Principle	Core Normative and Epistemic Proposition (Khamenei, S. A., 1990)
1	Actualization of Islam in Social Life	The primary mission of the Islamic Republic is to implement Islamic teachings in public life and build a model society.
2	Intellectual Leadership of Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini	The path and school of Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini, the first leader of the Islamic Revolution, defines the trajectory and core indicators of the movement.
3	Social Justice and Islamic Equity (Qisṭ)	The most immediate objective of establishing the Islamic political system is the realization of social justice and equity (qisṭ-i Islāmī).
4	National Unity (Waḥdat-i Millī)	Unity of expression (waḥdat-i kalimah) has been the key to national resilience and remains the main safeguard against division.
5	Anti-Hegemonic Foreign Relations	Preserving independence and dignity in foreign relations is a foundational rule, and the question of Palestine is treated as a primary issue of the Islamic world.
6	Freedom and Popular Sovereignty	Reliance on popular will and public discernment is an essential pillar of governance grounded in Qurʾānic human agency.
7	State–Nation Cooperation	Mutual trust and collaboration between citizens and public officials form a central feature of popular Islamic governance.
8	National Construction (Sāzandagī)	Material reconstruction and overcoming historical underdevelopment inherited from past autocracy are viewed as collective duties.
9	Scientific Advancement & Public Insight	Expanding scientific research, cultivating talent, and raising public awareness and Maʿrifat are core priorities of the Revolution.
10	Role of Religious Scholars (Rūḥāniyyat)	Religious scholars have played a central role in forming the Islamic system and preserving religious thought by linking knowledge with action (ʿilm bā ʿamal).
11	Honoring Selfless Devotees	Those who sacrificed their lives or health to defend and consolidate the Revolution are held in enduring public respect.

No.	Foundational Principle	Core Normative and Epistemic Proposition (Khamenei, S. A., 1990)
12	Future Horizon & Eschatological Hope	Relying on divine promise and messianic hope, society moves toward the long-term goals articulated by the first leader of the Islamic Revolution.

5.4. Conceptual Demarcation and the Six-Domain Thematic Matrix

For analytical clarity, the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution must be distinguished from three adjacent concepts in contemporary Islamic studies: Thought (andīshah), Discourse (guftimān), and Intellectual System (niẓām wa manẓūmah-yi fikrī) (Zouelm, 2014). Table 3 summarizes these distinctions.

Table 3. Conceptual Demarcation Between the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution and Adjacent Analytical Categories

Analytical Category	Conceptual Definition	Relationship to the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution
Thought of the Islamic Revolution (Andīshah)	The foundational philosophical wellspring rooted in authentic Islam (Islām-i Nāb), encompassing macro-theories and primary roots (Zouelm, 2014).	Serves as the theoretical source (khāstgāh) from which the principles and validated convictions of the Maʿārif emerge.
Discourse of the Islamic Revolution (Guftimān)	The socially established perspective that gains public acceptance and reshapes collective imaginaries within a historical period (Zouelm, 2014).	The Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution form the 'hard core' (hastah-yi sakht) and persuasive logic sustaining this public discourse.
Intellectual System (Niẓām wa Manẓūmah-yi Fikrī)	The internally coherent theoretical architecture designed for comprehensive human progress, emphasizing harmony among all parts (Zouelm, 2014).	The cognitive propositions of Maʿārif serve as the building blocks of this architecture, linking foundational principles to historical answers.
Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution (pl. of Maʿrifat)	Firm, validated convictions rooted in authentic Islam, some of which have been reproduced in post-1979 social reality and partially embodied in institutions.	Acts as the mediating epistemic bridge connecting philosophical Thought with public Discourse, scientific paradigm-building, and institutional praxis.

Alongside the twelve principles, Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei introduced the 'Geometry of the Revolution' (handasah-yi inqilāb) (Khamenei, S. A., 2015b), identifying seven main lines in

Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini's thought: the people, national independence, adherence to Islamic foundations, struggle against domination, Palestine, people's livelihood, and supporting the oppressed. Building on this framework through inductive-deductive thematic coding of the five-decade corpus of primary texts (1979–2026), another contribution of the present article is a problem-oriented thematic matrix (niẓām-i mawḍūʿāt) of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution across six macro-domains (Table 4). Methodologically, the themes categorized in Table 4 were derived by cross-indexing recurrent normative coordinates in the primary textual corpus with concrete socio-political, cultural, and technological problem-spaces addressed by the Revolution's leadership over time. Crucially, in this matrix, concrete policy sectors—such as taxation, banking, urban planning, environment, or artificial intelligence—are not treated as merely technical bureaucratic subjects; rather, they enter the thematic system of Maʿārif precisely insofar as they are problematized, normatively evaluated, and restructured through the perceptual lens of the eight Foundational Principles (Mabānī) in Domain 1 (e.g., eliminating usury and waste, realizing distributive equity, and preserving human dignity). While Domain 1 forms the invariant epistemic core, the five operational domains remain open to periodic ijtihādī updating in response to shifting historical realities.

Table 4. Dimensions and Components of the Thematic System Related to the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution Across Six Macro-Domains

Macro-Domain	Dimensions and Problem-Oriented Thematic Components
1. Foundational Principles (Mabānī - Invariant Core)	Divine Unity (Tawḥīd); Divine Guardianship (Wilāyah); Justice (ʿAdālat); Freedom (Āzādī); Eschatological Faith (Maʿād-Bāwarī); Rationality (ʿAqlāniyyat); Spirituality (Maʿnawiyyat); Epistemic Authority of Revelation (Ḥujjiyyat-i Maʿrifat-i Waḥyānī).
2. Political Domain (Siyāsī)	Adversary Recognition & Anti-Hegemony (Istikbār-Sitīzī); International Relations; Axis of Resistance (Jabhah-yi Muqāwamat); Religious Democracy (Mardum-Sālārī-yi Dīnī); Political Insight (Baṣīrat); Domestic Politics; National Interests; West Asia Region; Jihād of Elucidation (Jihād-i Tabyīn); Achievements of the Islamic Revolution; Question of Palestine; Line of the First Leader (Khaṭṭ-i Imām); New Islamic Civilization; Political Independence; Human Rights; Authentic Islam.

Macro-Domain	Dimensions and Problem-Oriented Thematic Components
3. Sociocultural Domain (Farhangī–Ijtimāʿī)	Islamic-Iranian Way of Life (Sabk-i Zindagī); Media; Public Culture; Art; History; Persian Poetry, Language & Literature; Culture of Sacrifice (Farhang-i Īthār); Book Reading; Cyberspace; Cultural Soft War; Family & Population; Muslim Woman Model; Modesty & Chastity (Ḥijāb wa ʿIfāf); Fertility & Demographic Youthfulness; Social Harms; National Unity & Cohesion; National Dignity & Authority; Public Trust; Hope; Independence; National Zeal; Faith & Spirituality; Social Justice; Psychological Security; Social Vitality; Civic Participation; Labor & Workers; Sports; Health & Well-being.
4. Scientific & Technological Domain (ʿIlmī wa Fanāwarī)	Global Scientific Authority (Marjaʿiyyat-i ʿIlmī); Software Movement & Knowledge Production (Junbish-i Narm-Afzārī); Scientific Power & Influence; Useful Knowledge (ʿIlm-i Nāfiʿ); Evaluability of Science; Commercialization of Knowledge; Research & Innovation; Knowledge-Based Economy; Emerging Technologies; Artificial Intelligence; Science Diplomacy; Basic Sciences.
5. Economic, Energy & Infrastructural Domain	Energy; Consumption Optimization; Housing & Urban Planning; Water; Agriculture; Environment; Natural Resources; Industrial Development; Transportation; Non-Oil Economy; Entrepreneurship & Employment; Anti-Smuggling; Economic Diplomacy; People-Centered Economy; Economic Justice; Economic Warfare; Production Surge; Inflation Control; Removing Production Barriers; Investment; Productivity; Banking Reform; Taxation System.
6. Defense & Security Domain (Difāʿī–Amniyyatī)	National Security; Soft Power (Qudrat-i Narm); Soft & Cognitive Warfare (Jang-i Narm wa ShināKhtī); Deterrence (Bāzdārandagī); Hybrid Warfare (Jang-i Tarkībī); Threat Neutralization; Sustainable Security (Amniyyat-i Pāydār).

6. Epistemic Decolonization and Spheres of Influence in Progress and Civilizational Renewal

6.1. Confronting Epistemic Colonialism and the Specialized 'Disciplines of the Islamic Revolution' (ʿUlūm-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī)

In the discourse of the leaders of the Islamic Revolution, a society's epistemological and moral premises determine how 'progress' (pīshraft) is defined and evaluated. As argued by Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei (2009), whereas the historical rise of Western capitalism was linked to the absolutization of private accumulation and the colonial extraction of Eastern wealth (such as British imperial exploitation of the Indian subcontinent during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), an Islamic worldview that regards colonialism and plunder as illegitimate defines progress through social justice, moral legitimacy, and human dignity.

Decolonial scholarship shows that imperial dominance relies not only on material force, but on epistemic colonialism (istiʿmār-i maʿrifatī): imposing intellectual hegemony so that colonized societies view their own heritage as a wasteland of failure and internalize Eurocentric categories as universal norms (Bhargava, 2013, p. 413; Mignolo, 2009; Alatas, 2006). As Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr argued, political liberation requires methodological emancipation through an autonomous Islamic methodology (al-minhaj al-Islāmī) (Menghini, 2022, pp. 136–140). Five mechanisms of epistemic colonialism stand out in this literature: (1) displacing indigenous concepts with colonizers' categories, creating epistemic injustice (Bhargava, 2013, p. 413); (2) institutionalizing Western positivist science as the sole standard of valid knowledge (Halder & Sharma, 2024, p. 1; Hallaq, 2018); (3) multidimensional epistemic violence, including epistemicides, linguicides, and culturecides (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, 2020, p. 1); (4) academic gatekeeping in publishing and accreditation (Shih, 2010, p. 44; Knöchelmann, 2021); and (5) modern data colonialism (Ricaurte, 2019, p. 352).

In response, theorists of the Islamic Revolution advocate epistemic decolonization (istiʿmār-zidāyī-yi maʿrifatī), combining critical engagement with global scholarship and indigenous knowledge production grounded in 'Useful Knowledge' (al-ʿilm al-nāfiʿ)—evaluating scholarship by its capacity to solve human and social problems in harmony with a monotheistic ontology (Javadi Amoli, 2009; Khosropanah Dezfuli, 2013; Jamshidi, 2019). This approach underpins the specialized academic 'Disciplines of the Islamic Revolution' (ʿUlūm-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī; where ʿulūm in the Islamic classification of knowledge denotes structured scholarly disciplines and branches of knowledge rather than positivist natural sciences), in which the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution provide the normative and epistemological foundations, while specialized academic fields formalize and theorize those Maʿārif into structured disciplinary models.

6.2. Tripartite Spheres of Influence and the Five-Stage Civilizational Trajectory

As depicted in Figure 2, the strategic capacities and spheres of influence of the Concentric System of Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution operate across three interrelated domains: (1) the discursive sphere (public elucidation and insight-building), which acts as the foundational lever (nuqṭah-yi ahrumī) for the other two spheres by cultivating public consciousness and discernment (baṣīrat); (2) the scientific sphere, which revises epistemological validity criteria in the humanities and social sciences and develops the specialized academic disciplines of the Islamic Revolution (ʿUlūm-i

Inqilāb-i Islāmī); and (3) the practical-institutional sphere, in which revolutionary Maʿārif inform state structures, policy design, and administrative ethics within the Revolutionary System to advance Islamic state-building (dawlat-sāzī).

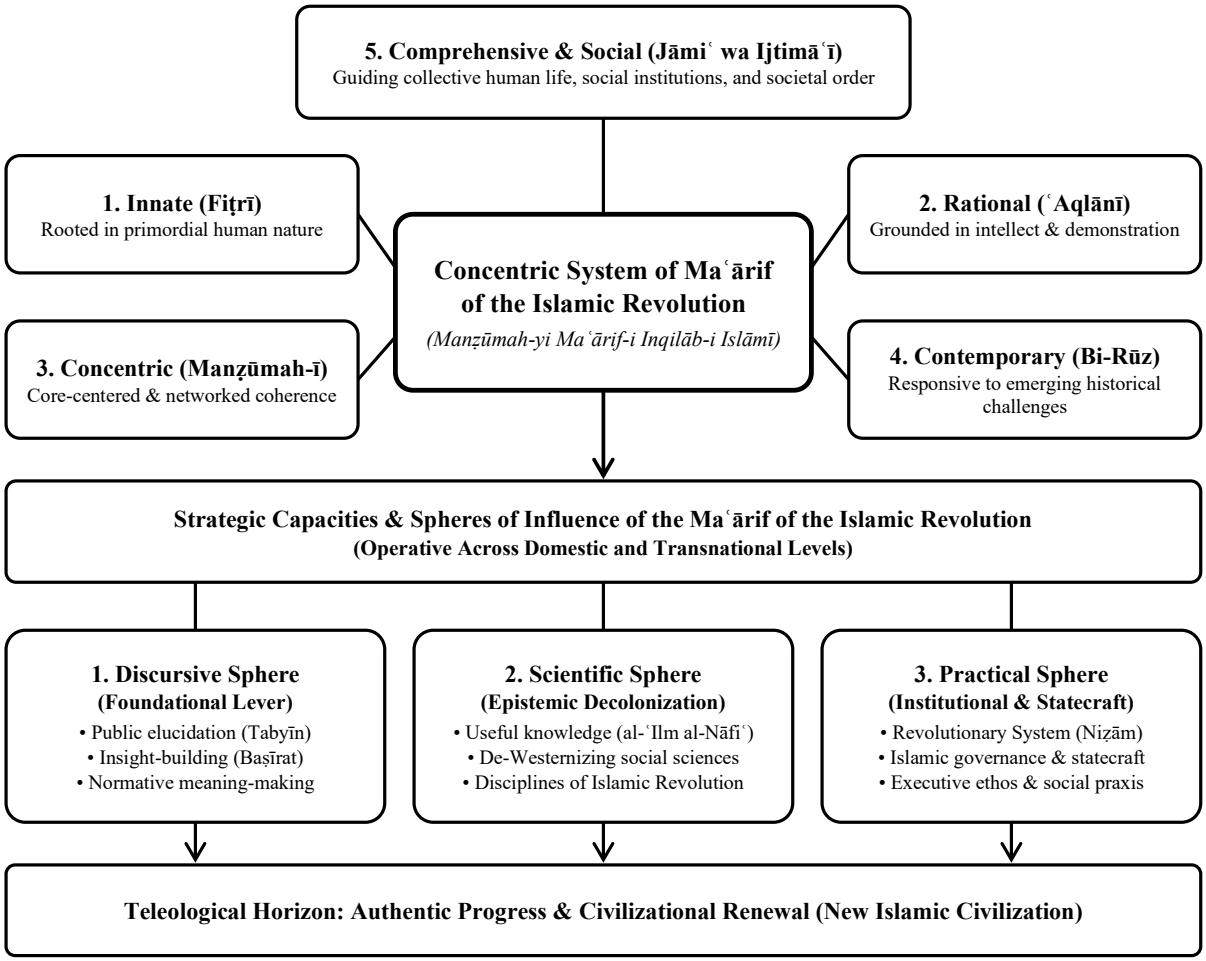


Figure 2. Conceptual Model of the Concentric System of Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution, Its Five Attributes, and Its Three Spheres of Influence.

Within the framework set out by Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei (2017), these three spheres drive a five-stage evolutionary process toward civilizational renewal: (1) the Islamic Revolution, (2) the Islamic System, (3) the Islamic State (institutionalizing Islamic norms across governance), (4) the Islamic Society, and (5) the New Islamic Civilization, defined not as territorial expansion, but as the intellectual and moral appeal of Islamic thought among nations (Figure 3). From a sociological perspective on the dynamics of contemporary Muslim life, the critical transition from Stage 3 (Islamic State) to Stage 4 (Islamic Society) brings into sharp relief the structural tensions between top-down bureaucratic institutionalization and bottom-up normative internalization. Within the

sociology of religion, any grand epistemic paradigm seeking institutional embodiment inevitably confronts what Weberian sociology terms the 'routinization' of charisma and the secularizing inertia of modern state bureaucracy. Crucially, this sociological tension is explicitly recognized within the reflexive discourse of the Revolution's leadership itself: as Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei notes, until executive institutions, economic structures, and administrative behaviors are genuinely reformed in Stage 3, the realization of an authentic Islamic way of life (sabk-i zindagī-yi Islāmī) in Stage 4 risks remaining at the level of discursive aspiration or formalistic compliance rather than organic societal realization (Khamenei, S. A., 2017, 2025b). In contemporary Iranian society, this transition is further complicated by concrete socio-cultural dynamics—including generational shifts, economic pressures, the pervasive reach of globalized digital media, and institutional friction within universities regarding the indigenization of the social sciences. Within the theoretical architecture of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution, overcoming these structural obstacles cannot be achieved through coercive state bureaucracy alone; rather, it relies on public elucidation (tabyīn), dialogical engagement with diverse social strata (as emphasized in the 2026 messages of Ayatollah Sayyid Mojtaba Khamenei; see Khamenei, S. M., 2026), and the autonomous agency of grassroots community networks, seminaries, universities, and intermediary civic associations (ḥalqah-hā-yi miyānī). It is precisely within these intermediary spaces—exemplified by neighborhood networks of empathetic solidarity (muwāsāt), youth cultural initiatives, and local problem-solving collectives—that abstract scriptural Maʿārif are negotiated, internalized, and enacted as lived Muslim agency in everyday life.

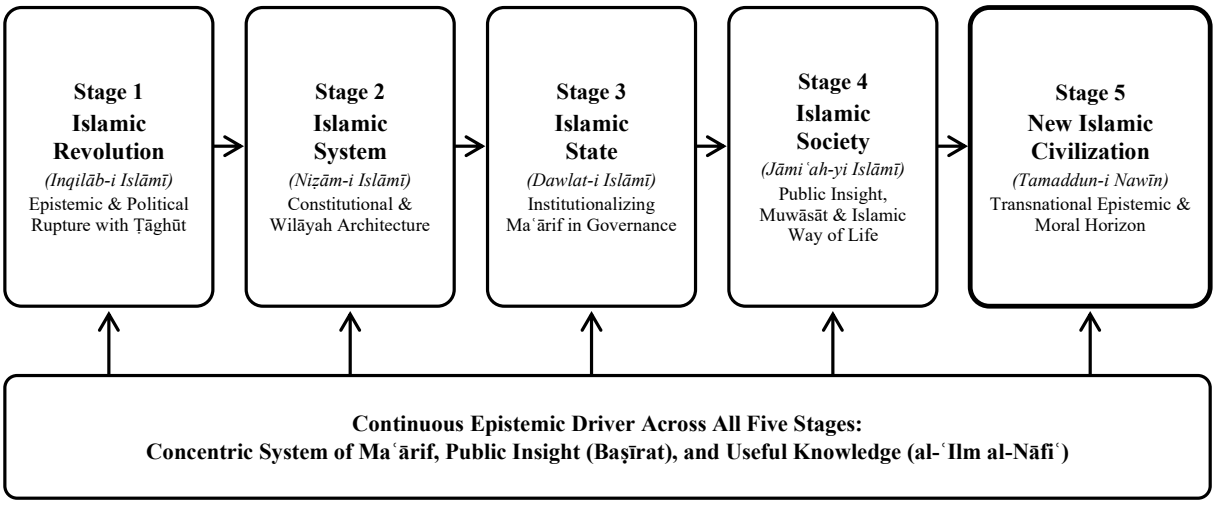


Figure 3. The Five-Stage Trajectory of Realizing the Goals of the Islamic Revolution in the Discourse of Its Leaders.

Across spatial arenas, the capacities of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution operate at both domestic and transnational levels (Table 5). Domestically, they function across cognitive–discursive, institutional–functional, and scientific–epistemic layers, shaping public debate, administrative norms, and indigenous social science. Transnationally, they operate across a discursive–civilizational layer—generating shared meaning and 'epistemic soft power' (qudrat-i narm-i maʿrifatī) around human dignity, justice, and anti-hegemonic resistance—and an epistemic–scientific layer that challenges Eurocentric positivism through an integrated paradigm of revelation, reason, and empirical inquiry.

Table 5. Multi-Level Analytical Matrix of the Domestic and Transnational Spheres of Influence of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution

Spatial Arena	Level of Realization	Primary Mechanism of Influence	Operational & Civilizational Outcomes
Domestic Arena (National Identity & Structure)	1. Cognitive–Discursive Level	Articulating normative coordinate concepts (social tawḥīd, structural justice, religious democracy, muwāsāt) through public elucidation (tabyīn).	Distinguishing indigenous problem-diagnosis from imported models; turning public insight (baṣīrat) into collective social agency.
Domestic Arena (National Identity & Structure)	2. Institutional–Functional Level	Translating revolutionary Maʿārif into constitutional rules, administrative norms, and public policy criteria.	Normative steering of public administration; preventing technocratic secularization; advancing Islamic State-building (Stage 3).
Domestic Arena (National Identity & Structure)	3. Scientific–Epistemic Level	Revising epistemic validity criteria and conceptual foundations in the humanities and social sciences based on al-ʿilm al-nāfiʿ.	Developing indigenous academic disciplines of the Islamic Revolution (ʿUlūm-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī); reducing domestic academic dependency.
Transnational Arena (Epistemic Soft Power)	1. Discursive–Civilizational Level	Projecting trans-local values (human dignity, anti-hegemonic resistance, global justice) through shared meaning-making.	Forming transnational emancipatory discourses; exercising epistemic soft power among global justice-seeking movements.
Transnational Arena (Epistemic Soft Power)	2. Epistemic–Scientific Level	Critiquing Eurocentric epistemological hegemony and articulating an integrated waḥy–ʿaql–tajribah scientific paradigm.	Offering a competing non-Western paradigm in global social science; expanding scholarly networks toward the New Islamic Civilization (Stage 5).

7. Conclusion and Scholarly Recommendations

7.1. Analytical Synthesis

This study has analyzed the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution (the plural corpus of Qurʾānic Maʿrifat) as a concentric epistemic system (Manẓūmah) grounded in the Qurʾān, where Maʿrifat unites sensory observation, rational reflection, and revelation within a guidance-oriented hierarchy

tied to faith and righteous praxis. Addressing a conceptual gap in prior scholarship, the article formulated a formal analytical definition of the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution as validated convictions rooted in authentic Islam, some of which have been reproduced in the post-revolutionary environment in response to contemporary exigencies and embodied in social institutions. Modeling these cognitions within a five-element conceptual network and a six-domain problem-oriented thematic matrix, the study showed that Maʿārif become civilization-building when they move beyond conceptual transmission into guidance, civic upbringing, and lived social praxis within a knowledge governance framework across discursive, scientific, and institutional spheres.

7.2. Agenda for Future Comparative, Theoretical, and Empirical Research

Because the epistemological questions raised by the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution engage broader global debates in the sociology of knowledge, contemporary Islamic studies, and decolonial social theory, their analytical examination opens several fertile avenues for international scholarship. Moving beyond the conceptual reconstruction presented in this study, five priority directions are proposed for future theoretical, comparative, and empirical research:

1. Critical Inter-Paradigmatic Dialogue in the Sociology of Knowledge: Future scholarship in Islamic studies, sociology of religion, and comparative political thought can place the Maʿārif of the Islamic Revolution—and its conceptualization of knowledge governance (ḥukmrānī-yi dānish)—in critical dialogue with competing contemporary Islamic reformist currents as well as Western post-secular and critical social theories (e.g., Habermasian post-secularism or Foucauldian power-knowledge critiques) to evaluate how religious epistemologies negotiate institutional modernity.

2. Cross-Regional Comparative Decolonial Studies: Researchers in global social theory can investigate this Qurʾān-centered epistemological paradigm (specifically al-ʿilm al-nāfiʿ, the concentric manẓūmah model, and the integration of waḥy, ʿaql, and tajribah) in systematic comparison with Latin American (coloniality of power/knowledge), African (epistemic freedom), and East/South Asian indigenous social science frameworks. Such comparative inquiries can clarify the theoretical points of convergence and divergence between theocentric Islamic decoloniality and predominantly secular postcolonial critiques.

3. Conceptual History (Begriffsgeschichte) and Multilingual Discourse Analysis: Digital humanities scholars and historians of modern Islamic thought can conduct diachronic, corpus-

assisted lexical analyses of key technical categories reconstructed in this study—such as maʿrifat, maʿārif, manẓūmah, tanabbuh, tabyīn, baṣīrat, muwāsāt, and niẓām-i inqilābī. Developing annotated multilingual conceptual lexicons will enable international researchers to trace how classical scriptural and philosophical terms acquire new sociological meanings within post-1979 political and civic discourse.

4. Methodological Evaluation of Non-Positivist and Indigenous Social Sciences: Building on the longitudinal link between foundational Maʿārif and the specialized academic disciplines of the Islamic Revolution (ʿUlūm-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī), sociologists of knowledge can empirically and methodologically examine ongoing efforts in Iranian and Muslim-world universities to design non-positivist curricula and research frameworks. Such studies should critically assess both the theoretical contributions and the institutional challenges of integrating normative ethical teleology with rigorous empirical social inquiry.

5. Ethnographic and Empirical Operationalization in Lived Muslim Experience: Finally, sociologists and anthropologists of contemporary Islam can operationalize macro-epistemic concepts—such as social tawḥīd, qisṭ (equity), and muwāsāt (empathetic solidarity)—into empirical indicators and ethnographic research designs. Fieldwork examining intermediary civic associations (ḥalqah-hā-yi miyānī), grassroots charity networks, generational attitudes, and emerging governance arenas (such as the ethical regulation of artificial intelligence or environmental policy) will illuminate how top-down epistemic discourses are received, contested, adapted, or enacted by ordinary Muslim citizens in everyday life.

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