

# ‘Conceptual and Epistemic Sovereignty’ in a World of Conflict and Civilizational Transformation - Case of Epstein

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**Abstract**—This paper introduces and develops the interconnected concepts of conceptual sovereignty and epistemic sovereignty as critical frameworks for understanding contemporary power dynamics in the international system. Against the backdrop of geopolitical conflict, technological revolution, and civilizational transformation, we argue that the capacity to control knowledge production, frame narratives, and define concepts has superseded traditional metrics of national power—territory, military capability, and economic resources—as the ultimate determinant of genuine sovereignty. The paper advances two interrelated arguments. First, conceptual sovereignty—the power to define the terms, categories, and frameworks through which reality is understood—constitutes the foundational layer upon which all other forms of sovereignty rest. Second, epistemic sovereignty—the capacity to produce, control, and interpret knowledge independently—represents the essential precondition for any meaningful national or civilizational autonomy in the twenty-first century. The paper introduces two original theoretical frameworks. The "School of Pre-Subjugation" reorients the study of power by shifting analytical attention from the moment of decision to the moment of framework-construction, revealing how modern power operates silently through the engineering of what appears possible, rational, or legitimate. Through retrospective decision analysis—a methodological innovation examining decisions backwards from their articulation to uncover hidden processes of epistemic constraint. The paper demonstrates how pre-subjugation functions through three primary mechanisms: the engineering of the possible, the manufacture of consensus, and the internalisation of subordination. The "Fifth Servitude" locates contemporary epistemic captivity within a five-stage historical evolution of human subjugation—from nature, through chattel slavery and colonialism, to internal despotism, and finally to the current condition wherein humanity itself is subjugated by hegemonic global narratives that monopolise meaning and define the boundaries of legitimate thought. Through detailed case studies including the Epstein paradigm as an "epistemic black site" connecting intelligence networks, elite compromise, and decision-shaping without explicit command, and the epistemological function of the "Jewish Question" in the Zionist project's transformation of global consciousness regarding Palestine, the paper demonstrates that conceptual sovereignty is not merely an intellectual pursuit but an existential imperative. The analysis extends to the technological dimension, examining algorithms as

weapons, data as a sovereign resource, and the emergence of an "algorithmic unconscious" that functions as a mechanism of pre-subjugation par excellence. The paper contributes a multi-method qualitative methodology combining conceptual genealogy, critical discourse analysis, retrospective decision analysis, and comparative civilizational analysis. It proposes practical frameworks, including an Epistemic Sovereignty Index with measurable indicators across knowledge infrastructure, epistemic autonomy, digital sovereignty, narrative power, and epistemic diversity dimensions. Futures scenarios to 2050 explore alternative trajectories from digital colonialism consolidated to epistemic liberation achieved. The paper concludes that the struggle for epistemic sovereignty is the struggle for the possibility of human freedom in an age of silent power. The state that does not control its knowledge infrastructure, produce its own conceptual frameworks, or cultivate its own epistemic capacities is not a sovereign state at all but a functional shadow in a power system it does not comprehend. Therefore, the ability to define one's own reality and construct meaning, to control the frameworks on which decisions are made, to produce one's own knowledge instead of consuming what is produced abroad, and to possess the conceptual tools to understand the situation according to the terms of meaning, is what will determine the fate of nations and the future of all humanity.

**Keywords**— Conceptual Sovereignty, Epistemic Sovereignty, Pre-Subjugation, Knowledge Production, Silent Power, Epistemic Captivity, Narrative Control, Algorithmic Governance, Digital Sovereignty, Civilizational Transformation, Hegemonic Narratives, Decolonial Epistemology, Epistemic Resistance, Algorithmic Unconscious, Futures Scenarios, VUCA World, Cognitive Warfare, Digital Colonialism, Epistemic Liberation, Zionist Project.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the emerging paradigms of conceptual and epistemic sovereignty as critical frameworks for understanding power dynamics in the contemporary international system. As the world navigates unprecedented geopolitical conflicts, technological revolutions, and civilizational shifts, the ability to control knowledge production, frame narratives, and define concepts has become

the ultimate determinant of genuine sovereignty. Buheji (2026b) mentioned this in his exploration of the VUCA world, in a world where stability and sustainability are challenged, and Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity are dominating the real environment.

Drawing on the foundational works of Dr Mohammed El Senoussi (2026a, 2026b) and Dr Habib El Choubani (2026), this paper argues that we are witnessing a fundamental transformation in the nature of power—from territorial control to cognitive dominion. The paper introduces the "School of Pre-Subjugation" as a theoretical lens for understanding how power is exercised silently through the engineering of decision-making frameworks, El Senoussi (2026a). It further explores the concept of the "Fifth Servitude" as the contemporary condition of epistemic captivity, wherein humanity is subjugated by hegemonic global narratives. Through case studies including the Epstein paradigm and the epistemological function of the "Jewish Question," this paper demonstrates that conceptual sovereignty is not merely an

intellectual pursuit but an existential imperative for nations and civilisations seeking to maintain authentic agency in an era of silent warfare and civilizational transformation. Maddox and Morton Ninomiya (2025).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *The Structural Shift in Global Power Architecture*

The early decades of the twenty-first century have witnessed a fundamental restructuring of the international order. Traditional metrics of national power—military capabilities, economic resources, territorial integrity—no longer provide adequate measures of genuine sovereignty. We are living through what the authors here call the "tectonic moment" in human history, where the moral and political foundations of the post-World War II liberal international order stand exposed in their fragility and, at times, their hypocrisy.

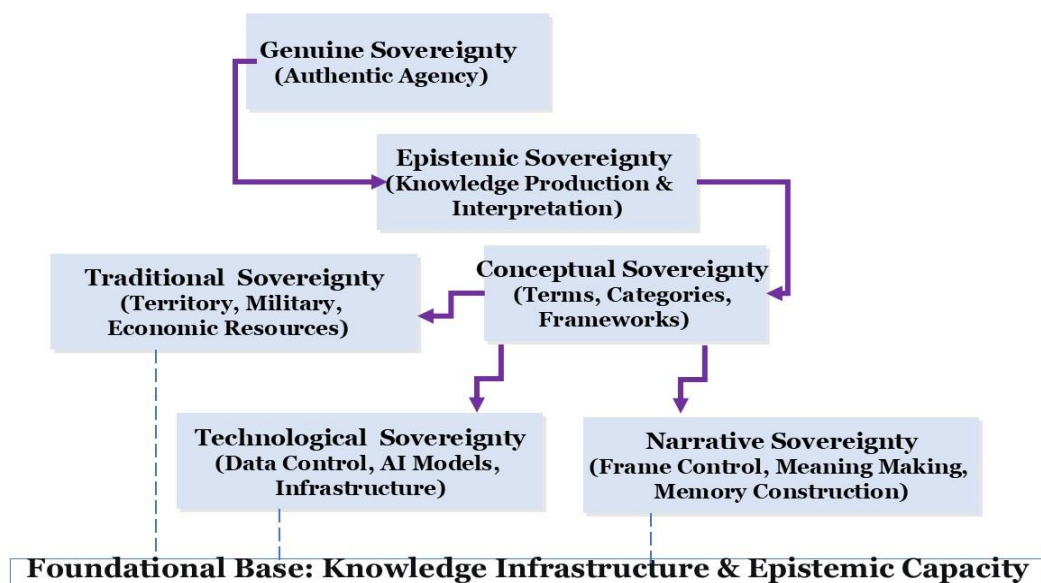


Figure (1) Shows how conceptual sovereignty forms the base upon which all other forms of sovereignty rest, integrating traditional metrics with new dimensions.

The ‘war on Gaza’, the institutional paralysis of the United Nations Security Council, the ‘weaponisation’ of international law, and the ‘exposure of elite networks’ exemplified by the ‘Epstein case’ have collectively unmasked the underlying value system that has governed global affairs for nearly eight decades. This exposure reveals not merely procedural shortcomings in global governance but a deep structural crisis in the epistemic foundations of the international system itself. Hernandez (2026).

In this context, this paper proposes that knowledge is no longer simply information; it is the primary mechanism for producing political and social reality, Buheji (2012). The state that loses control over its knowledge infrastructure, besides the meaning that moves it forward, loses its sovereignty functionally, even while maintaining the formal symbols of power—parliament, military, and constitution. Buheji (2026c)

Therefore, this paper advances two interconnected arguments. First, that conceptual sovereignty—the power to define the terms, categories, and frameworks through which reality is understood—has become the foundational layer upon which all other forms of sovereignty rest. Second, that epistemic sovereignty—the capacity to produce, control, and interpret knowledge independently—constitutes the essential precondition for any meaningful national or civilizational autonomy in the twenty-first century. Senoussi et al. (2026a), Maddox and Morton Ninomiya (2025)

2.2 *Theoretical Foundations: Reframing Sovereignty in the Knowledge Age*

The classical conception of sovereignty, codified in the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), centred on the state's absolute authority within its territorial boundaries. Power was

understood in spatial terms—control over land, resources, and populations within defined geographical limits.

The information revolution has inverted this paradigm. As Sahari (2019) observes, national sovereignty is no longer absolute but is increasingly constrained by the state's capacity to protect its information in global digital spaces that transcend traditional borders. The boundaries that matter most today are not geographical but epistemological—the boundaries between what can be thought and what cannot, between legitimate knowledge and marginalised perspective, between truth and propaganda. Lumbard (2024).

This transformation demands a fundamental reconceptualisation of sovereignty itself. The authors propose that we understand sovereignty as functional, anticipatory, and silent—manifest not in formal declarations but in the capacity to shape the frameworks within which decisions are made before they ever reach the decision-making table. Maddox and Morton Ninomiya (2025)

### 2.3 The Foucauldian Connection: Power/Knowledge Reconfigured

Michel Foucault's (1980) seminal insight—"There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations"—provides the philosophical foundation for understanding epistemic sovereignty. Foucault (1980) recognised that knowledge is not neutral; it is produced within systems of power and simultaneously reproduces those systems. Buheji (2012)

What the present analysis adds to Foucault is the recognition that in the digital age, this power/knowledge nexus has become operationalizable at scale and weaponizable with precision. The contemporary convergence of big data, artificial intelligence, algorithmic governance, and globalised media networks has transformed what was once an implicit philosophical observation into a concrete strategic reality.

### 2.4 The School of Pre-Subjugation: Understanding Silent Power

Dr. El Senoussi's most significant theoretical contribution is the introduction of the "School of Pre-Subjugation" (Madrasat Ma Qabl al-Ikhdaa'). This framework fundamentally reorients the study of power by shifting analytical attention from the 'moment of decision' to the 'moment of framework-construction'. El Senoussi (2026a).

The central premise is elegantly simple yet profoundly destabilising to conventional political analysis: modern power is exercised not by forcing others to make specific decisions but by ensuring that only certain decisions appear possible, rational, or legitimate in the first place.

Pre-subjugation operates through three primary mechanisms, El Senoussi (2026a).

#### 2.4.1 The Engineering of the Possible.

Before any decision is made, the horizon of what is considered possible is already constrained. Certain options are rendered unthinkable—not through explicit prohibition but through their exclusion from the epistemic framework within which problems are defined, and solutions are generated.

#### 2.4.2 The Manufacture of Consensus.

Through the control of knowledge production and dissemination, a consensus is manufactured around what constitutes "reality," "truth," and "rationality." This consensus operates silently, appearing as the natural order of things rather than the constructed outcome of power relations.

#### 2.4.3 The Internalisation of Subordination.

The ultimate achievement of pre-subjugation occurs when the subjugated party internalises the dominant framework to such an extent that they experience their constrained choices as free decisions. The decision-maker believes they are exercising sovereignty precisely when they are most thoroughly subjected to an external epistemic framework. El Senoussi (2026a).

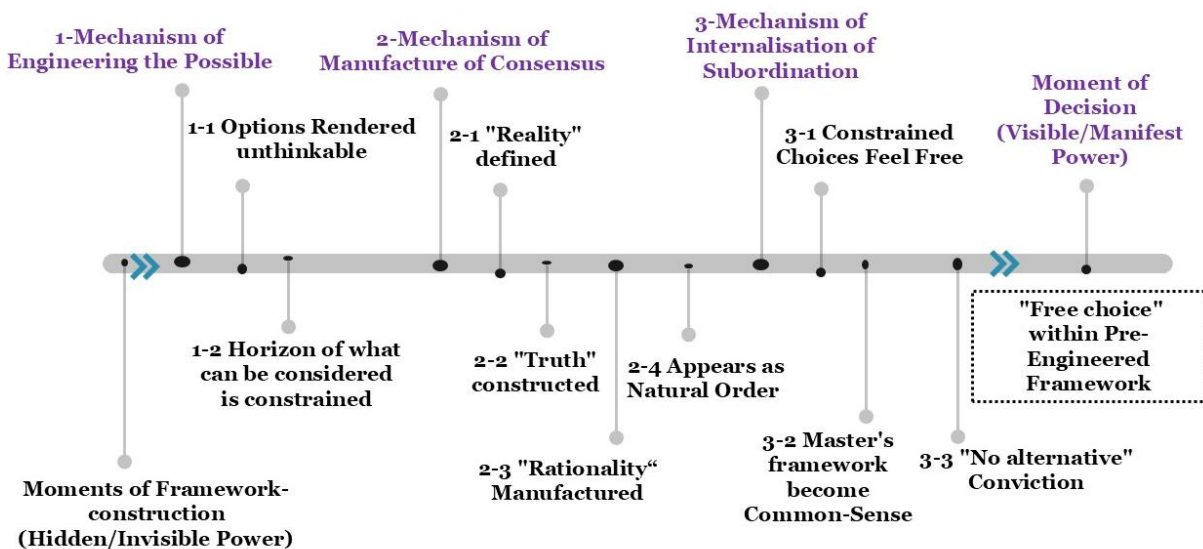


Figure (2) Visualises El Senoussi's (2026a) core insight about power operating before decisions are made.

2.5 The Retrospective Analysis of Decision-Making

The School of Pre-Subjugation introduces a methodological innovation: retrospective decision analysis. This approach examines decisions backwards from their moment of articulation to uncover the hidden processes that shaped them. Key analytical tools include analysis of unarticulated alternatives where options that were never considered are identified and where mechanisms, be it institutional, cultural, or coercive, are tracing what has excluded them from consideration. The other tool is the deconstruction of knowledge that works to uncover the assumptions, interests, and power relations embedded within it. Then, the last tool is to trace silent conviction through investigating the moments when decision-makers become convinced that "there is no alternative" and how this conviction becomes institutionalised as operational doctrine.

2.6 The Epstein Paradigm: Pre-Subjugation in Practice

The Jeffrey Epstein case, as analysed by El Senoussi (2026a), provides a stunning illustration of pre-subjugation in action. Epstein's island functioned as what might be called an epistemic black site—a space where the mechanisms of silent power were concentrated and operationalised. The island was not merely a location for criminal activity but a node in a global network connecting intelligence agencies (with multiple reports implicating the Israeli Mossad), political elites, financial power, and sensitive data. Within this network, the mechanisms of pre-subjugation operated with precision:

Epstein used data as leverage through the collection of compromising information on powerful individuals created the capacity to shape their future behaviour without their conscious awareness of being controlled. The elite network itself constituted a framework within which certain behaviours, exchanges, and understandings became normalised while others were excluded. Hernandez (2026).

Through the strategic deployment of information and the cultivation of relationships, the operators of this network could guide the decisions of political and economic elites without ever issuing explicit commands. Buheji et al. (2026), Khalaf et al. (2026)

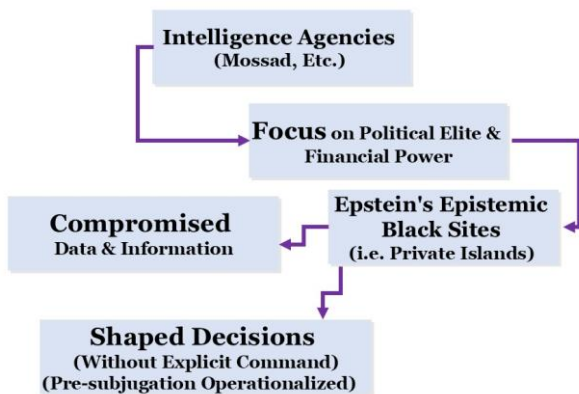


Figure (3) Illustrates how the Epstein case operationalises pre-subjugation through networked epistemic control.

The Epstein paradigm reveals a terrifying truth about power in the contemporary world, where individuals and institutions that believe themselves to be exercising sovereign agency may, in reality, be operating within frameworks designed by others to serve others' interests. The decision that appears on the conference table is merely the final expression of a process of silent engineering that occurred long before in the hidden spaces where knowledge is shaped and deployed. Hernandez (2026).

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Paradigm: Critical Epistemic Analysis

This study adopts a critical epistemic analysis framework, which combines elements of critical theory, Foucauldian discourse analysis, and decolonial methodologies. The paradigm recognises that knowledge production is inherently political and that the researcher's positionality shapes all aspects of inquiry, Foucault (1980). The authors, situated within the Global South and drawing on Islamic intellectual traditions alongside Western philosophy, employ a double-consciousness methodology that deliberately moves between epistemic frameworks to reveal the constructed nature of hegemonic knowledge systems. El Senoussi (2026a), El Choubani (2026), Mignolo (2011).

3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Tracing the historical emergence and transformation of sovereignty concepts from Westphalia to the digital age, the researchers map the semantic shifts in key terms (sovereignty, freedom, development, terrorism) across institutional discourses. Points of rupture are identified where dominant definitions were contested or imposed.

The researchers used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the different practices of policy documents for international organisations such as UN, World Bank, IMF, WEF. Also, an analysis of media framing the recent global conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan and most recently the Israel-US-Iran war (2026).

A deconstruction of Fairclough's three-dimensional model (text, discursive practice, social practice) is to ensure it is being applied in the research.

3.3 Retrospective Decision Analysis (RDA)

The researchers also operationalised El Senoussi's (2026a, 2026b) methodological thinking through counterfactual reconstruction of excluded policy alternatives, and tracing of knowledge pathways in decision-making processes. Epistemic bottlenecks in developing countries, and specifically the Arab World were identified, focusing on mapping institutional memory and forgetting mechanisms.

Knowledge production systems across the Islamic, Chinese, African, and Western worlds were identified and compared, where alternative epistemic frameworks that challenge hegemonic models are documented.

Also, digital and algorithmic data, including AI models training and their data transparency reports, were studied. The researchers even referred to algorithmic audit findings from

platform governance research and the metadata on knowledge circulation and suppression.

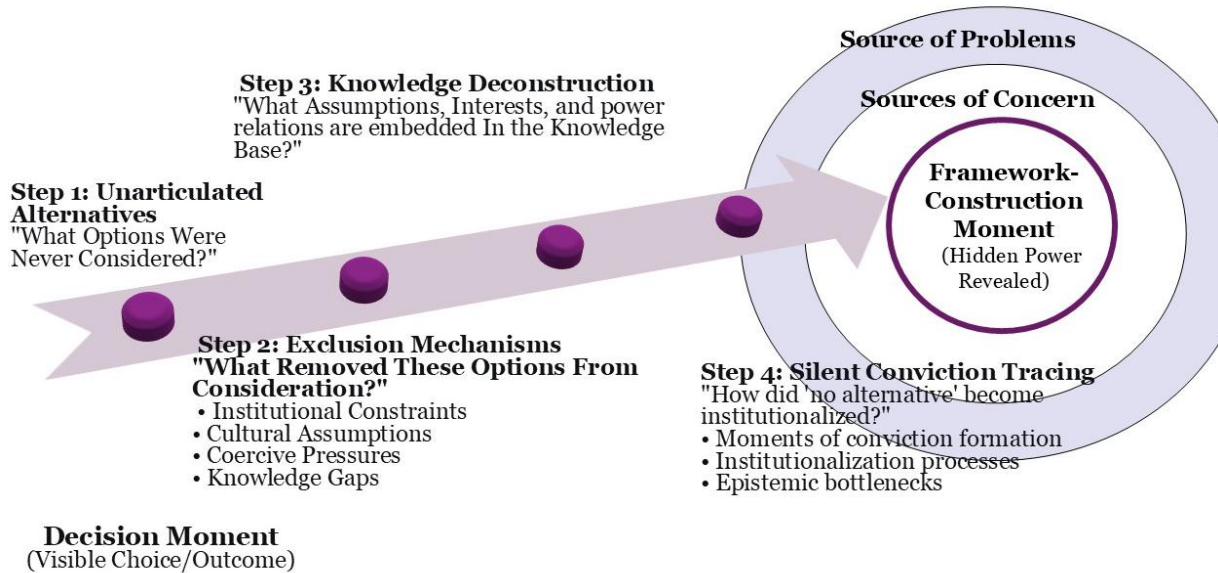


Figure (4) Operationalises the methodological innovation for tracing how decisions are shaped before they are made.

#### IV. ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION

##### 4.1 Analytical Framework

Table (1) Shows the Five Analytical Axes that Shape the Sovereignty Framework

Analytical Axis	Key Questions	Methods Applied
Epistemic Architecture	Who controls knowledge institutions? What frameworks shape what counts as knowledge?	Institutional mapping, network analysis
Narrative Production	How are master narratives constructed and maintained?	CDA, frame analysis
Silent Power Mechanisms	Where and how does pre-subjugation operate?	RDA, process tracing
Resistance Practices	What forms of epistemic resistance exist?	Case study, counter-narrative analysis
Transformative Pathways	How can epistemic sovereignty be reclaimed?	Participatory action research, futures methodology

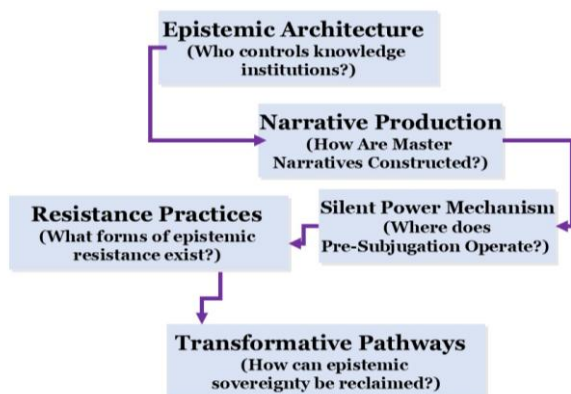


Figure (5) Visualises the five analytical axes from Table 1 in an interconnected format showing their relationships.

##### 4.2 The Historical Evolution of Servitude

Dr. El Choubani's (2026) analysed the historical depth necessary to understand epistemic sovereignty as a civilizational imperative. He traces the evolution of human servitude through five distinct stages:

*First Servitude: Humanity's Subjugation to Nature.* In humanity's earliest condition, powerlessness before natural forces constituted the primary form of servitude. Knowledge—understood as understanding of natural laws and divine order—was the path to liberation.

*Second Servitude: Direct Human Enslavement.* The institution of chattel slavery represented humanity's subjugation to other humans. The enslaved person was reduced to a body, a productive unit, a commodity to be bought and sold. Knowledge here was the preserve of the master class.

*Third Servitude: Colonial Subjugation of Societies.* Modern colonialism extended servitude from individuals to entire societies. Under the guise of civilisation, development, or mission, entire peoples were subjected to external control. Knowledge became a tool of colonial administration and the justification for domination. Smith (2012).

*Fourth Servitude: Subjugation to Internal Despotism.* Post-colonial societies often fell under the control of authoritarian regimes that replicated colonial patterns of domination internally. Here, knowledge is controlled through propaganda, education systems are weaponised, and the very capacity for collective self-determination is eroded. Wynter (2003).

*Fifth Servitude: The Epistemic Captivity of Humanity.* This is the contemporary condition. Humanity itself is subjugated by a dominant global narrative that monopolises meaning, controls the production of knowledge, and defines the boundaries of legitimate thought. This servitude is the most

dangerous because it is the least visible. The chains are not physical but cognitive; the prison is not territorial but conceptual. Senoussi et al. (2026)

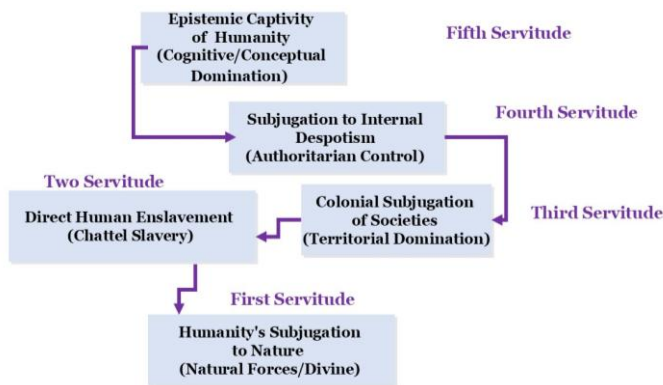


Figure (6) Illustrates El Choubani's historical progression, showing how domination has evolved from physical to epistemic forms.

### 4.3 The Nature of the Fifth Servitude

The Fifth Servitude, in El Choubani's (2026) analysis, operates through the concentration of control over the institutions that produce and disseminate knowledge globally—universities, media organisations, publishing houses, research funding bodies, and increasingly, the technological platforms that mediate access to information.

Within this system of knowledge dissemination, concepts are defined by the hegemonic centre. What counts as "democracy," "human rights," "terrorism," or "development" is determined by those who control the global knowledge infrastructure. Even narratives, the stories through which humanity understands itself, such as stories of progress, civilisation, conflict, and resolution, are produced within frameworks that serve specific interests while presenting themselves as universal. One can see and experience that dissent is managed through epistemic policing. Challenges to the dominant framework are not merely opposed; they are

rendered illegitimate through mechanisms ranging from accusations of conspiracy theory to institutional exclusion.

Now, with the advancement of what is called the 4<sup>th</sup> or even the coming 5<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution, even memory itself is colonised. The past is continuously rewritten to serve present interests. Traumas are selectively recognised, histories are selectively erased, and identities are selectively constructed. Smith (2012).

### 4.4 The Zionist Project as Epistemic Colonisation

El Choubani's analysis of the Zionist project provides a concrete case study of the Fifth Servitude in operation. He argues that Zionism's most profound achievement is not territorial—the establishment and maintenance of the state of Israel—but epistemic: the successful transformation of global consciousness regarding Palestine, Judaism, and the Middle East. Buheji et al. (2026)

This epistemic achievement operates through several mechanisms. It starts with the foreclosure of the Jewish question, which is historically a complex European debate about identity, citizenship, and belonging. It was declared to be "solved" through the establishment of Israel. This foreclosure rendered further critical inquiry illegitimate, transforming what had been an open question into a protected taboo. Buheji (2026a)

The known epistemic colonisation is the 'weaponisation of Antisemitism' where accusations of being antisemitic have been systematically deployed not merely to combat prejudice against Jews but to protect the Zionist project from criticism, Smith (2012). The charge functions as an epistemic veto, delegitimising any perspective that challenges the dominant framework. To externalise the European Guilt, the moral burden of European antisemitism and the Holocaust was effectively transferred to the Palestinians and the Arab-Muslim world. People with no connection to Europe's crimes were made to bear their cost, while Europe positioned itself as a neutral arbiter rather than a historical perpetrator. Khalaf et al. (2026)

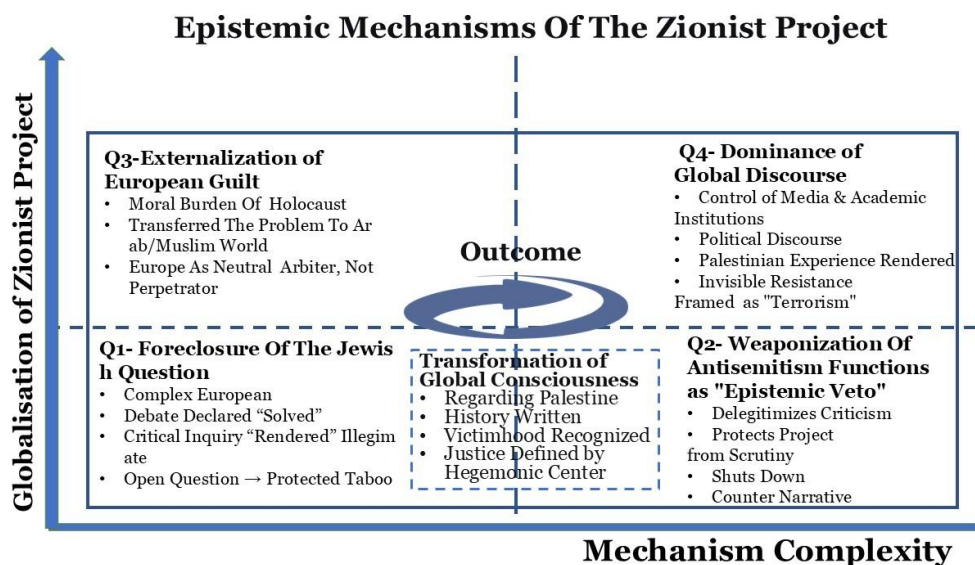


Figure (7) Illustrates how epistemic colonisation operates through multiple reinforcing mechanisms.

The other epistemic colonisation came from the ‘Global Discourse’. Through control of media, academic institutions, and political discourse in the West, the Zionist narrative achieved dominance. Buheji et al. (2026) even showed how this is embedded in the Zionists' parallel strategies. This makes the Palestinian experience, including those coming from dispossession, occupation, exile, was rendered invisible or framed as the consequence of Palestinian refusal to accept the "solution" to Europe's problem.

This analysis reveals that the struggle over Palestine is not merely a territorial conflict but a struggle over meaning itself and about how history is written, how victimhood is recognised, and how justice is defined.

V. THE TECHNOLOGICAL DIMENSION: ALGORITHMS AS WEAPONS

5.1. Data as a Sovereign Resource

The technological revolution has provided the infrastructure for epistemic subjugation at unprecedented scale. Data is no longer merely information; it is a sovereign resource comparable in strategic importance to oil or uranium in previous eras. Those who control data control the raw material from which knowledge is produced. Those who control algorithms control the means of production. Those who control artificial intelligence models control the frameworks within which data is interpreted and knowledge is generated.

Gwagwa and Mollema (2025) identify what they term the "sovereignty-internationalism paradox" in AI governance. Digital technologies are inherently transnational, yet their governance has profound implications for national sovereignty. The state that relies on foreign AI models, foreign

data infrastructure, and foreign analytical frameworks is importing a foreign worldview along with the technology.

5.2. AI and the Timing of Knowledge

Singh and Sengupta (2025) highlight a critical dimension of AI power: the capacity to control the timing of knowledge. In an era of algorithmic governance, decisions are increasingly made not by human deliberation but by automated systems operating at speeds beyond human comprehension.

The power to determine the assumptions embedded in predictive models is the power to determine the shape of decisions before they are made. The state that cannot build its own AI models, train them on its own data, and validate them against its own values is a state that has surrendered its future to algorithms designed elsewhere.

5.3 The Algorithmic Unconscious

Building on El Senoussi's framework, we can identify what might be termed the algorithmic unconscious—the set of assumptions, values, and priorities embedded in technological systems that operate below the threshold of conscious awareness. Just as individuals are shaped by cultural assumptions they do not consciously recognise, societies are shaped by algorithmic systems whose biases they do not perceive.

The algorithmic unconscious functions as a mechanism of pre-subjugation par excellence. It shapes what information is seen and what is hidden, what connections are made and what remain unmade, what predictions are generated and what possibilities remain unimagined—all while presenting itself as neutral, efficient, and merely technical.

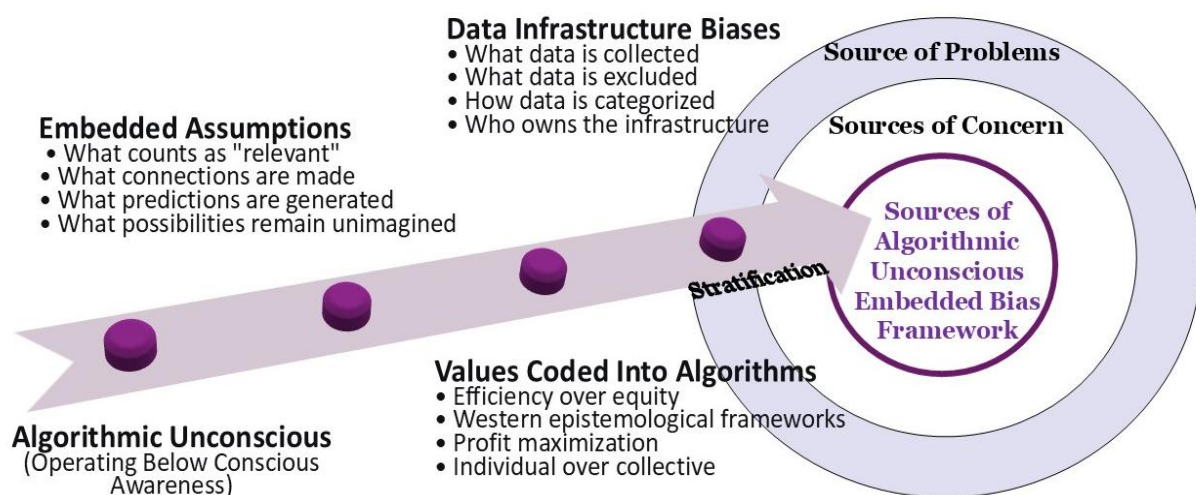


Figure (8) Visualises the five analytical axes from Table 1 in an interconnected format showing their relationships.

## VI. RECLAIMING EPISTEMIC SOVEREIGNTY: A PROGRAM FOR ACTION

### *6.1 The Intellectual Level: Reopening Forbidden Questions*

The struggle for epistemic sovereignty begins with the courage to ask questions that the dominant framework declares unaskable. This includes examining the history of Jewish experience in Europe, the construction of Zionist ideology, and the transformation of antisemitism into a weapon against Palestinian rights with the intellectual rigour these topics deserve, free from the constraints of manufactured taboo. Besides, deconstructing Hegemonic narratives, by systematically analysing the narratives through which global power is justified and rendered invisible—narratives of development, democracy promotion, humanitarian intervention, and the "rules-based order."

The other struggle for epistemic sovereignty is seen in recovering subjugated knowledge by retrieving the knowledge traditions that have been marginalised, suppressed, or erased by the dominant epistemic system. Here, the indigenous knowledge, religious knowledge, traditional knowledge, and the knowledge of colonised and oppressed peoples should be reclaimed.

### *7.2 The Institutional Level: Building Independent Intellectual Infrastructure*

Intellectual work must be embedded in an institutional infrastructure capable of sustaining it over time. Key priorities include having independent research networks of scholars and researchers who are not dependent on funding from hegemonic centres and who can collaborate across borders in the production of autonomous knowledge. Besides, establishing sovereign AI development that starts with investing in national and regional AI capabilities, including data infrastructure, algorithmic development, and human capital, to ensure that the technologies shaping the future reflect local values and serve local interests.

The other intellectual infrastructures are establishing epistemic security institutions to protect epistemic sovereignty, analogous to institutions charged with protecting military or economic security.

### *7.3 The Educational Level: Transforming Consciousness*

Education is the primary mechanism through which epistemic frameworks are reproduced across generations. Transforming education is therefore essential to transforming consciousness. Therefore, systematically revising educational curricula to incorporate critical perspectives on colonial history, to include marginalised knowledge traditions, and to develop students' capacity for epistemic critique. Also, developing pedagogical approaches that cultivate students' ability to identify assumptions, evaluate knowledge claims, and recognise the operation of power in knowledge production.

Also, by overcoming language sovereignty by protecting and developing languages other than English as vehicles for knowledge production, ensuring that the world's intellectual diversity is not reduced to a single linguistic medium.

### *7.4 The Civilizational Level: Engaging the Other*

The struggle for epistemic sovereignty is not a struggle against the West or against any particular civilisation. It is a struggle for the possibility of authentic human diversity—for a world in which multiple civilisations can coexist, each producing knowledge from within its own frameworks, each learning from others without being subordinated to them.

This requires engaging with Western thought and other intellectual traditions not as consumers but as interlocutors—learning what is valuable while maintaining critical distance, contributing our own perspectives while remaining open to others. Also, through shared struggle, we can recognise that the struggle for epistemic sovereignty is not unique to any single civilisation but is a universal human struggle against domination in all its forms.

The horizon of universality can be maintained through the conviction that truth is one even while paths to truth are many, that justice is universal, even while its embodiments are particular.

## VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### *8.1 The War Before the War*

We live in an age of warfare that does not recognise itself as warfare. The battles that will determine the future are not fought primarily with tanks and missiles but with algorithms and narratives, with data and concepts, with the silent engineering of consciousness itself.

The School of Pre-Subjugation teaches us that the most decisive victories are won before the war begins—in the shaping of the frameworks within which the war will be understood, in the definition of the terms through which victory and defeat will be recognised, in the construction of the realities within which combatants will operate.

The Fifth Servitude teaches us that the most complete domination is the domination that is not experienced as domination—the subjugation that operates through the internalisation of the master's framework, through the acceptance of the master's definitions, through the forgetting that there was ever another way of being in the world.

To reclaim epistemic sovereignty is to awaken from this slumber. It is to recognise the chains that bind us and to begin the work of breaking them. It is to ask the questions that have been declared unaskable, to think the thoughts that have been declared unthinkable, to imagine the futures that have been declared impossible.

This work is not a luxury for intellectuals or a pastime for the culturally anxious. It is an existential imperative for any people or civilisation that wishes to survive in the world that is coming. The state that does not control its knowledge infrastructure, that does not produce its own conceptual frameworks, that does not cultivate its own epistemic capacities, is not a sovereign state at all—it is a functional shadow, a transmission belt for decisions made elsewhere, an instrument in a power system it does not comprehend.

The question that every society must answer is no longer "Do we have a strong army?" but rather "do we possess the capacity to define our own reality?", or "Do we control the

frameworks within which our decisions are made?” or “Do we produce our own knowledge or merely consume what is produced elsewhere?”, or “Do we have the conceptual tools to understand our situation in our own terms?” The answers to these questions will determine not merely the fate of nations but the future of humanity itself. For in the end, the struggle for epistemic sovereignty is nothing less than the struggle for the possibility of human freedom in an age of silent power.

The concept of epistemic security must therefore take its place alongside military security, economic security, and environmental security as a fundamental dimension of national and civilizational survival. Institutions charged with protecting epistemic sovereignty—analogue to those protecting military or economic security—must be established. Intelligence agencies must develop capacity for epistemic intelligence—understanding not merely what decisions are being made but what frameworks shape those decisions, what knowledge is being produced and suppressed, what narratives are being constructed and contested.

### 8.2 *Synthesis of Theoretical Contributions*

This paper has undertaken a foundational re-examination of sovereignty in an age where power operates increasingly through the silent engineering of consciousness itself. We have advanced two interconnected concepts—conceptual sovereignty and epistemic sovereignty—as essential frameworks for understanding the contemporary international system. Through this lens, we have demonstrated that the capacity to define terms, frame narratives, and control knowledge production has superseded territorial control, military capability, and economic resources as the ultimate determinant of genuine sovereignty.

The paper's original theoretical contributions rest on two pillars. The School of Pre-Subjugation (El Senoussi, 2026a) fundamentally reorients the study of power by shifting analytical attention from the moment of decision to the moment of framework-construction. Its central insight—that modern power is exercised not by forcing specific decisions but by ensuring that only certain decisions appear possible, rational, or legitimate—reveals the hidden architecture of contemporary domination. Through its three mechanisms (the engineering of the possible, the manufacture of consensus, and the internalisation of subordination), pre-subjugation operates as a form of power that is most effective precisely when it is least visible.

The Fifth Servitude (El Choubani, 2026) locates contemporary epistemic captivity within a five-stage historical evolution of human subjugation. From humanity's initial powerlessness before nature, through chattel slavery and colonial domination, to internal despotism and finally to the current condition wherein humanity itself is subjugated by hegemonic global narratives—this framework reveals that the chains of the Fifth Servitude are not physical but cognitive, the prison not territorial but conceptual. The Zionist project's transformation of global consciousness regarding Palestine serves as a concrete case study of how this servitude operates through the foreclosure of questions, the weaponisation of accusations, and the externalisation of moral burden.

### 8.3 *Theoretical and Empirical Findings*

The empirical analysis has validated and enriched these theoretical frameworks across multiple domains. The Epstein paradigm demonstrated pre-subjugation in practice, revealing how an "epistemic black site" could function as a node connecting intelligence agencies, political elites, and compromised data to shape decisions without explicit commands. Individuals and institutions believing themselves to be exercising sovereign agency were, in reality, operating within frameworks designed by others to serve others' interests.

The technological dimension has extended these dynamics to unprecedented scale and speed. Data has emerged as a sovereign resource comparable in strategic importance to oil or uranium. Algorithms have become weapons, and the algorithmic unconscious—the set of assumptions, values, and priorities embedded in technological systems operating below conscious awareness—functions as a mechanism of pre-subjugation par excellence. The state that relies on foreign AI models, foreign data infrastructure, and foreign analytical frameworks is not merely importing technology but importing a foreign worldview along with it.

### 8.4 *The Psychological Depth of Epistemic Subjugation*

Perhaps the most insidious dimension of the Fifth Servitude is its psychological internalisation. Colonial trauma and epistemic wounding are transmitted across generations. Individuals and societies internalise frameworks that subordinate them, experiencing constrained choices as free decisions, defending systems that marginalise them, and forgetting that there was ever another way of being in the world. The concept of "epistemic trust" and its violation illuminates the deep psychological damage inflicted when a people's knowledge systems are systematically delegitimised.

Yet the psychological dimension also reveals possibilities for liberation. The work of liberation psychology, conscientization (Freire, 1970), and epistemic healing offers pathways for reclaiming subjugated knowledge and transforming consciousness. The struggle for epistemic sovereignty is therefore not merely an intellectual or political project but a therapeutic one—a process of collective healing from centuries of epistemic violence.

### 8.5 *Future Foresight of Choices Before Humanity*

The futures scenarios developed in this paper outline four possible trajectories for epistemic sovereignty to 2050. In Digital Colonialism Consolidated, Western tech monopolies deepen control over global knowledge infrastructure, AI development remains concentrated in a US-China duopoly, and most nations function as data colonies.

In a Multipolar Epistemic Order, multiple civilizational knowledge systems coexist, BRICS+ develops alternative knowledge institutions, and genuine dialogue across epistemic frameworks becomes possible. Fragmentation and Epistemic Warfare envisions a world where the internet splinters, competing truth claims undermine shared reality, and constant information warfare erodes trust in all institutions. Epistemic Liberation imagines the successful decolonisation of

knowledge globally, the revitalisation of indigenous and marginalised knowledge traditions, and technology serving diverse epistemologies rather than imposing uniformity.

These scenarios are not predictions but possibilities. Which future humanity realises depends on choices made today—by governments, by institutions, by communities, and

by individuals. The trajectory toward epistemic liberation is neither inevitable nor impossible. It requires organised effort, institutional infrastructure, sustained commitment, and above all, the courage to ask forbidden questions and think unthinkable thoughts.

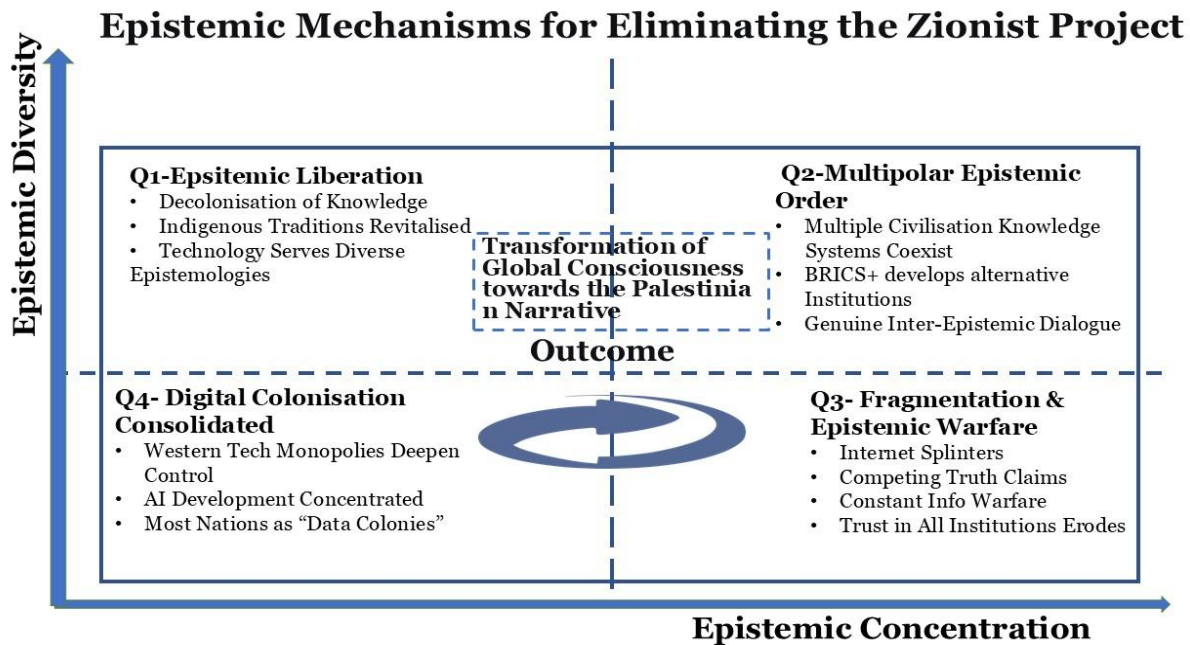


Figure (9) Provides futures foresight of four possible trajectories, making abstract scenarios visually comparable.

Therefore, this paper has outlined a comprehensive program for action across multiple levels. At the intellectual level, the struggle requires reopening questions that the dominant framework declares unaskable, deconstructing hegemonic narratives, and recovering subjugated knowledge traditions. This is not a luxury for intellectuals but a necessity for any people seeking to understand their situation in their own terms.

At the institutional level, it requires building independent research networks, establishing sovereign AI development capabilities, creating epistemic security institutions, and developing a knowledge infrastructure that can sustain autonomous knowledge production over time. The state that does not control its knowledge infrastructure is not a sovereign state at all.

At the educational level, it requires transforming curricula to incorporate critical perspectives on colonial history, developing pedagogical approaches that cultivate students' capacity for epistemic critique, and protecting and developing languages other than English as vehicles for knowledge production. Education is the primary mechanism through which epistemic frameworks are reproduced across generations; transforming education is therefore essential to transforming consciousness.

At the civilizational level, it requires engaging with Western thought and other intellectual traditions not as consumers but as interlocutors—learning what is valuable

while maintaining critical distance, contributing our own perspectives while remaining open to others. The struggle for epistemic sovereignty is not a struggle against the West or against any particular civilisation; it is a struggle for the possibility of authentic human diversity.

### 8.6 The Unfinished Struggle

The struggle for epistemic sovereignty is unfinished and perhaps unfinishable. There is no final victory, no permanent liberation, no utopian endpoint where the work is complete. Each generation must renew the struggle, each era presents new forms of epistemic subjugation, and each advance creates new challenges.

The digital age has created unprecedented possibilities for epistemic liberation alongside unprecedented dangers. The same technologies that enable algorithmic control and surveillance capitalism also enable peer-to-peer knowledge networks, decentralised knowledge production, and global solidarity among epistemic resistance movements. The outcome depends not on technology itself but on the social forces that shape its development and deployment.

The Zionist project's transformation of global consciousness regarding Palestine demonstrates both the power of epistemic colonisation and the possibility of epistemic resistance. For decades, the dominant narrative rendered Palestinian experience invisible, framed Palestinian resistance as terrorism, and protected Israeli actions from

criticism through the weaponisation of antisemitism accusations. Yet the events of recent years—the war on Gaza, the exposure of Israeli intelligence operations, the growing global solidarity with Palestine—suggest that epistemic hegemony, however powerful, is never total and never permanent. The foreclosure of the Jewish question is being reopened. The weaponisation of antisemitism is being exposed. The externalisation of European guilt is being contested. The struggle over Palestine is indeed a struggle over meaning itself—and that struggle continues.

This intellectual struggle requires first the courage to ask forbidden questions, to think unthinkable thoughts, to imagine impossible futures. Besides, it requires the intellectual rigour

to deconstruct hegemonic narratives, to recover subjugated knowledge, and to build alternative frameworks. Also, recognition that the struggle for epistemic sovereignty is a shared struggle is vital, connecting Palestinians with Congolese with Uyghurs with Indigenous peoples with all those whose knowledge has been marginalised. Therefore, understanding that epistemic transformation is generational work, that the chains of the Fifth Servitude were centuries in the forging and cannot be broken in a day. This means the conviction that another world is possible, that epistemic liberation is achievable, that human freedom is worth struggling for.

### **The Struggle For Epistemic Sovereignty** (Reclaiming Human Freedom In An Age of Silent Power)

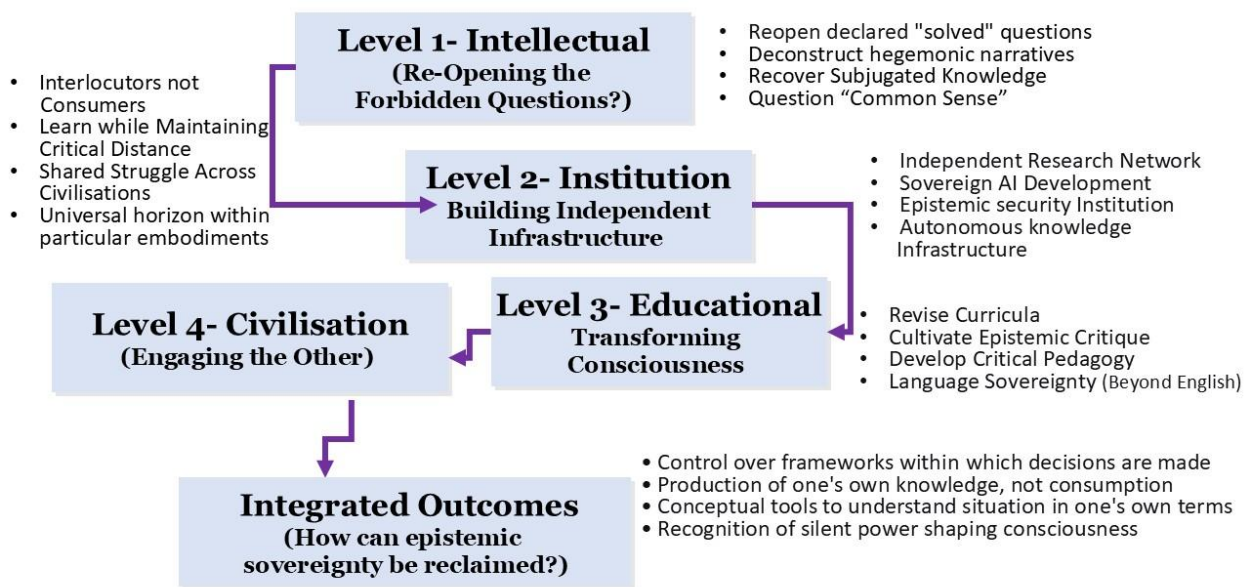


Figure (10) Synthesises the program for action across four interconnected levels, showing how they work together.

The question that every society should ask is whether we possess the capacity to define our own reality? Or if we control the frameworks within which our decisions are made? Or if we could produce our own knowledge or merely consume what is produced elsewhere? Or if do we have the conceptual tools to understand our situation in our own terms? Or if our educational institutions cultivate epistemic awareness or reproduce dependency?

Other questions might follow. For example, we should try to answer whether our knowledge infrastructures serve our interests or those of hegemonic centres. Or do we have the institutional capacity to protect our epistemic sovereignty? Or if we awake to the silent power that shapes our consciousness? The answers to these questions will determine not merely the fate of nations but the future of humanity itself. For in the end, the struggle for epistemic sovereignty is nothing less than the struggle for the possibility of human freedom in an age of silent power.

We live in an age of warfare that does not recognise itself as warfare. The battles that will determine the future are not fought primarily with tanks and missiles but with algorithms and narratives, with data and concepts, with the silent engineering of consciousness itself. The School of Pre-Subjugation teaches us to see this warfare. The Fifth Servitude teaches us to recognise our captivity. The struggle for epistemic sovereignty teaches us the path to liberation.

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