# Re-Authoring the Democratic Horizon: How Pre-Natal MICE Meets Hassan and Shahan's Challenges and Sustainability of Democracy

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**Abstract**

*This essay evaluates how the pre-natal Management Institute for Contributory Economy (MICE)—led by Dr Neville Buch, Dr Neil Peach, and Dr Michael Macklin—engages with the central thesis of Firoz Hassan and M.A. Shahan's (2026) seminal paper, "Challenges and Sustainability of Democracy in the Twenty-First Century: Institutional and Civic Perspectives." This paper demonstrates: (1) how the "Challenges" identified by Hassan and Shahan—namely technocratic reductionism, digital information disorder, majoritarian populism, and algorithmic "denoetization"—constitute the very diagnostic definition of MICE's POLICE model and critique of limited thinking; (2) how "Sustainability"*

[1] Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) has been fairly used in the production of this work. The tool used is Google NotebookLM (recently rebranded as Gemini Notebook). It is an AI-powered virtual research assistant and thinking partner designed to help a person interact deeply with their own documents. Unlike general chatbots, it is source-grounded, meaning it only generates answers based on the specific PDFs, documents, or links uploaded. The A.I. process in the production of this work has been limited to the attached (prompts) on each of the questions in turn. This ensures an accurate reading of each source. The author then rearranged and re-edited the answers the A.I. provided. The human author publishes this work. A.I. is never an author when used properly. This assistance is not qualitatively different from a human research assistant when that assistance is deemed to have no authorial status but is acknowledged.

*serves as the positive operational definition of MICE through its Contributory Economy, Contributory Income Scheme, noodiversity, and the restoration of noetic agency; (3) what MICE explicitly accomplishes in promoting the progressive "Radical-Liberal-Conservative" triadic governance motto ("radical enough to shift the agenda, liberal enough to allow everyone a decent place, conservative enough to preserve good value"); and (4) why this triadic message is of paramount civilisational importance for rescuing democratic lifeworlds from automated technocratic regression and securing Aristotelian flourishing (eudaimonia).*

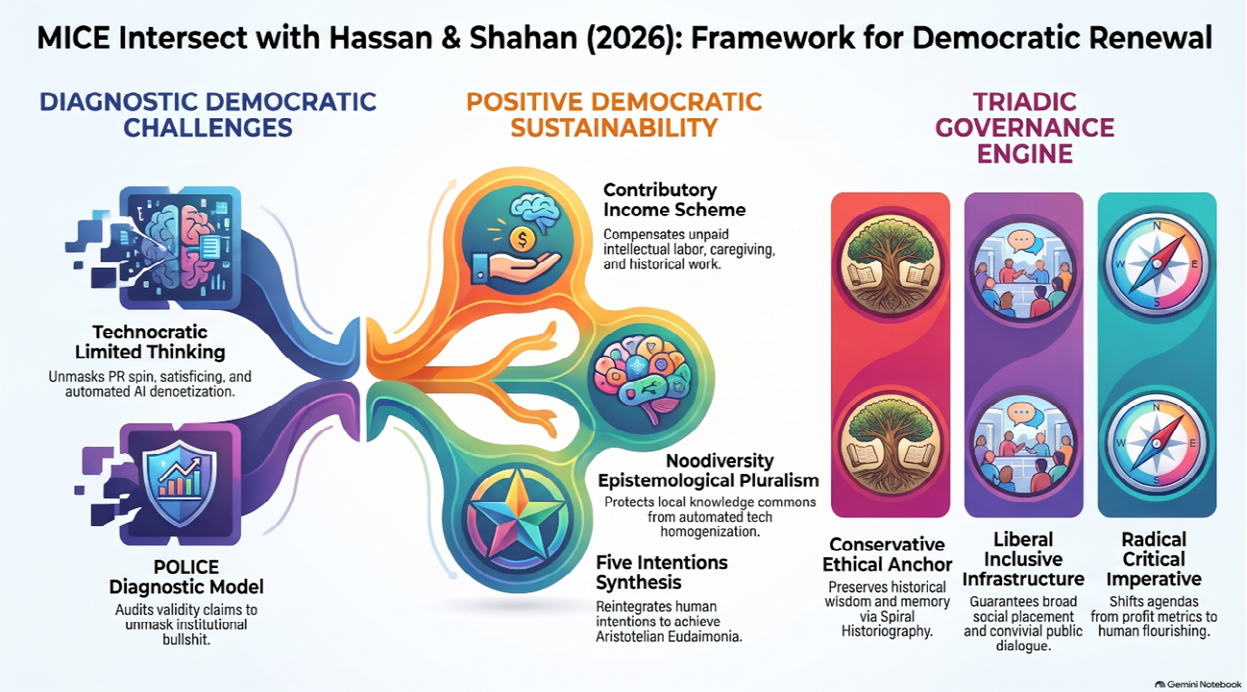
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**1. Introduction: The Pre-Natal MICE and the Twenty-First Century Crisis of Democracy**

In twenty-first-century political theory, democracy stands at a precarious juncture. In their landmark qualitative study, *Challenges and Sustainability of Democracy in the Twenty-First Century*, Firoz Hassan (M.A. Shahan) establishes that while democratic governance commands broad global legitimacy, its operational effectiveness, moral authority, and qualitative depth are severely eroded by structural distortions, information manipulation, and elitist disengagement (Hassan 2026, pp. 35–36). Hassan and Shahan argue that standard institutional engineering—such as electoral mechanics and formal constitutional design—is structurally incapable of stemming democratic backsliding unless accompanied by an integrated, character-centred, and value-driven civic renewal (Hassan 2026, pp. 36, 42–44).

Simultaneously, operating from its pre-natal, pre-launch developmental phase in Brisbane, Australia, the **Management Institute for Contributory Economy (MICE)**—founded by independent historian and sociologist of knowledge Dr Neville Buch alongside co-founders Dr Neil Peach and Dr Michael Macklin (retired)—has forged an epistemological and governance architecture designed to answer this precise crisis (Buch 2026a, p. 1; Buch 2026b, p. 2; Buch 2026e, p. 5). Far from being a conventional policy think-tank, pre-natal MICE functions as an intellectual immune system (Buch 2026e, p. 173).

This essay demonstrates how pre-natal MICE directly intersects with and operationalises Hassan and Shahan's (2026) findings, proving that MICE's foundational architecture was constructed to diagnose democratic pathologies and provide the concrete institutional tools required for long-term democratic sustainability.




## 2. Point 1: How "Challenges" is the Very Definition of MICE

The first major point of alignment is that the contemporary "Challenges" facing democracy, as mapped by Hassan and Shahan (2026), constitute the exact negative definition and diagnostic justification for MICE.

### A. Mapping the Systemic Pathologies

Hassan and Shahan (2026, pp. 35–38, 41–42) identify a complex constellation of challenges threatening modern democracy:

- **The Erosion of Public Trust and Elite Capture:** Perceptions of institutional corruption, transactional political marketing, and opaque governance processes that reduce democracy to an empty ritual (Hassan 2026, pp. 35, 41–42).
- **Technocratic Reductionism and "Job-Ready" Instrumentalism:** The reduction of active citizenship to narrow economic utility, where public policy is driven by short-term "satisficing" and commercial metrics rather than moral reasoning (Simon 1957; Buch 2020, p. 4; Hassan 2026, p. 36; Buch 2026e, p. 37).

- **Digital Information Disorder and Algorithmic Denoetization:** The proliferation of algorithm-driven misinformation, hyper-polarized media ecosystems, and automated technical systems that bypass human discernment, causing what Bernard Stiegler and Neville Buch define as "denoetization"—the mechanical liquidation of the collective capacity to think and judge (Stiegler 2018; Buch 2026e, p. 54; Hassan 2026, p. 42).

**B. MICE as the Diagnostic Immune System**

Pre-natal MICE defines its core identity precisely as a response to these challenges (Buch 2026a, p. 12; Buch 2026e, p. 1). MICE diagnoses this state as "Limited Thinking"—a cognitive failure where public administration is trapped in a "production-warfare mindset," focusing obsessively on *how* to execute tasks quickly while completely forgetting *why* those tasks matter for human flourishing (Buch 2026a, p. 37; Buch 2026e, p. 37).

To combat these challenges, pre-natal MICE developed its primary diagnostic engine: the **POLICE model** (**P**hilosophically, **O**ntology, **L**ogic, **I**ntersect, **C**ompatibility, **E**ducation) (Buch & Peach 2024; Buch 2026e, p. 74). The POLICE model acts as a rigorous "crap-detector," auditing policy documents, digital AI roadmaps, and municipal strategies to unmask "institutional bullshit," expose PR spin, and reveal where automated portals shift unpriced operational burdens downward onto citizens (Frankfurt 2005; Buch & Peach 2024; Jameel 2026b, p. 1; Hassan 2026, p. 42). Thus, democratic challenges are not an external nuisance to MICE; they are the very raison d'être that defines MICE's analytical methodology.



### 3. Point 2: How "Sustainability" is the Very Definition of MICE

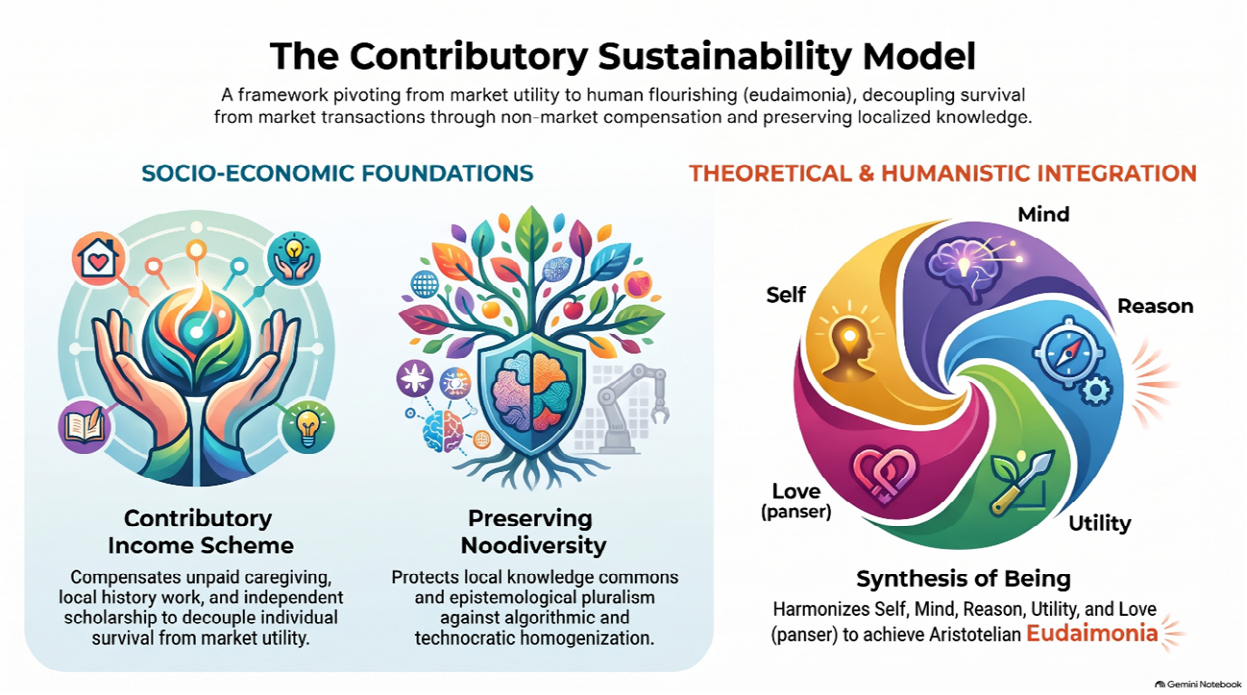
If democratic "Challenges" form the negative definition of MICE, democratic "Sustainability" forms its positive, constructive definition.

#### A. Moving Beyond Procedural Mechanics to Moral Foundations

A central thesis of Hassan and Shahan (2026, pp. 35, 42–44) is that democratic sustainability cannot be achieved through constitutional re-engineering alone. Procedural democratization without parallel civic maturation inevitably yields low-quality, fragile, or illiberal outcomes (Zakaria 2003; Hassan 2026, p. 43). Sustainable democracy requires a "moral ecosystem grounded in character, responsibility, and constructive civic consciousness" (Hassan 2026, p. 42).

#### B. The Contributory Model as the Engine of Sustainability

Pre-natal MICE operationalises this exact insight through the **Contributory Economy** (Buch 2026a, p. 14; Buch 2026e, p. 44). MICE redefines sustainability away from narrow, fragile, market-driven "efficiency" toward systemic, socio-ecological resilience (Buch 2026e, p. 47). In MICE theory, an over-emphasis on short-term efficiency creates fragile brittleness; true sustainability requires preserving the capacity to adapt to contingent historical disruptions (Buch 2026e, p. 47).



MICE defines democratic sustainability through three concrete operational pillars:

1. **The Contributory Income Scheme:** Providing non-extractive social compensation for unpaid intellectual labour, community caregiving (*panser*), and local historical preservation, ensuring citizens have the economic security required for active democratic participation (Stiegler 2010; Buch 2026a, p. 56; Buch 2026e, p. 75).

2. **Protecting Noodiversity (Epistemological Pluralism):** Safeguarding local knowledge commons and diverse cultural folkways from automated homogenization, creating the cognitive substrate for genuine public deliberation (Stiegler 2020, p. 33; Buch 2026e, p. 158).

3. **The Synthesis of Being:** Reintegrating the five human intentions—**Self** (identity), **Mind** (synoptic judgment), **Reason** (procedural logic), **Utility** (social welfare), and **Love** (*panser / thinking as caring*)—as the ultimate metric of social value, measuring progress through Aristotelian Flourishing (*Eudaimonia*) (Buch 2026a, p. 54; Buch 2026e, p. 160).

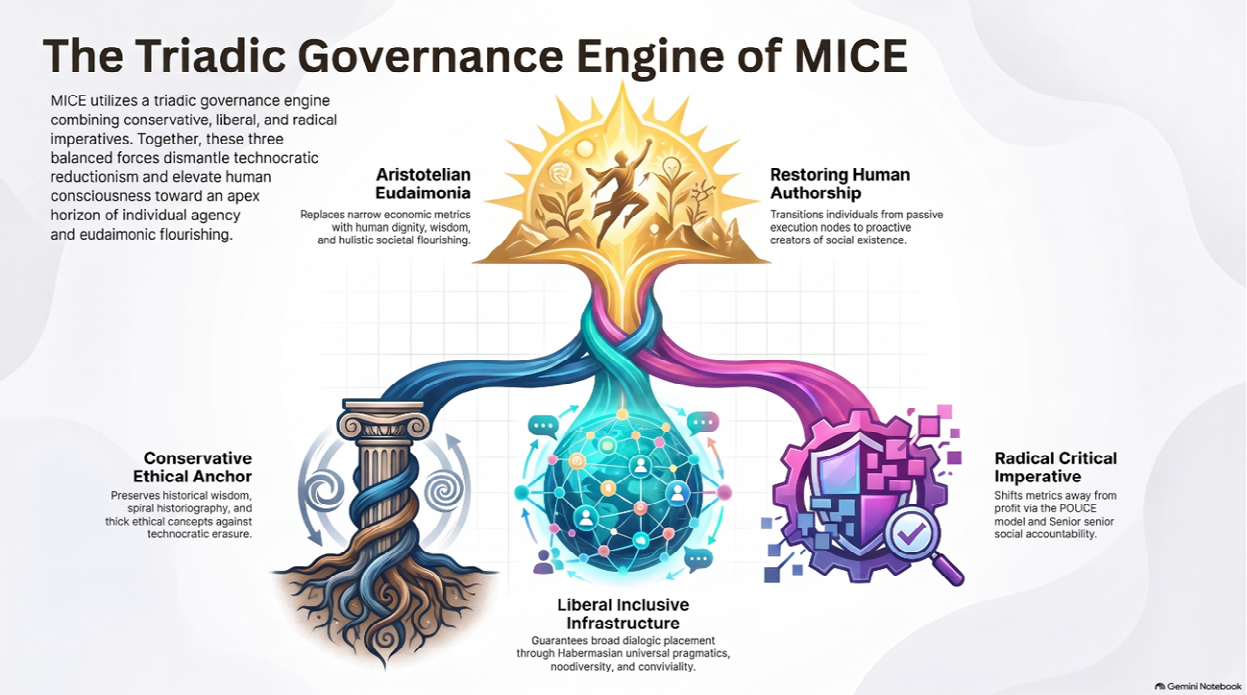
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## 4. Point 3: What MICE Does for Promoting the Message of "Radical-Liberal-Conservative" ("Progressive") Democracy

To bridge democratic critique with institutional practice, pre-natal MICE promotes a unique, synthesised governance philosophy encapsulated in the official **MICE Motto**:

> *"Radical enough to shift the agenda, liberal enough to allow everyone a decent place in the social environment, and conservative enough to preserve the legacy of good value for Contributory Economy"* (Buch 2026b, p. 2; Buch 2026e, p. 7; Buch 2026g, p. 1).

While traditional political discourse treats Conservatism, Liberalism, and Radicalism as mutually hostile ideological silos, MICE synthesises them into an **"Accurate Centralism"** or a genuinely progressive **Radical Centre** (Mouffe 2000, p. 1; Buch 2025b, p. 2; Buch 2026b, p. 2).




**A. The Conservative Anchor: Preserving the Legacy of Good Value**

MICE operationalises conservative thought not as party-political reaction, but as the protection of intergenerational "long circuits" of memory, historical context, and "thick ethical concepts" (such as character, wisdom, and substantial fairness) against technocratic erasure (Buch 2026c, p. 4; Buch 2026e, p. 85). Through Spiral Historiography—the axiom that *"understanding history is philosophy in practice"*—MICE uncoils past intellectual errors, ensuring that contemporary democratic reform remains anchored in historical truth (Buch 2026c, p. 4; Buch 2026e, p. 82).

**B. The Liberal Infrastructure: Allowing Everyone a Decent Place**

MICE operationalises liberal thought by guaranteeing inclusive dialogic placement, individual dignity, and unconstrained public dialogue (Buch 2026e, p. 87). Drawing on Jürgen Habermas's Universal Pragmatics, MICE establishes communicative "we-spaces" where citizens reciprocally evaluate four universal validity claims: comprehensibility, factual truth, normative rightness, and internal sincerity (truthfulness) (Habermas 1979; Buch 2026e, p. 74). Combined with Ivan Illich's concept of *conviviality*, MICE guarantees that democratic tools remain accessible to all citizens (Illich 1973; Buch 2026e, p. 90).

**C. The Radical Imperative: Shifting the Contemporary Agenda**

MICE operationalises radical thought by providing the critical force required to dismantle neoliberal market hegemony and unmask "institutional bullshit" (Buch 2026e, p. 91). It drives a developmental ascent from "Junior" unreflective execution (where citizens are passive conduits in automated systems) to "Senior" social accountability, restoring proactive Human Authorship over technological and economic apparatuses (Buch 2026e, p. 173).

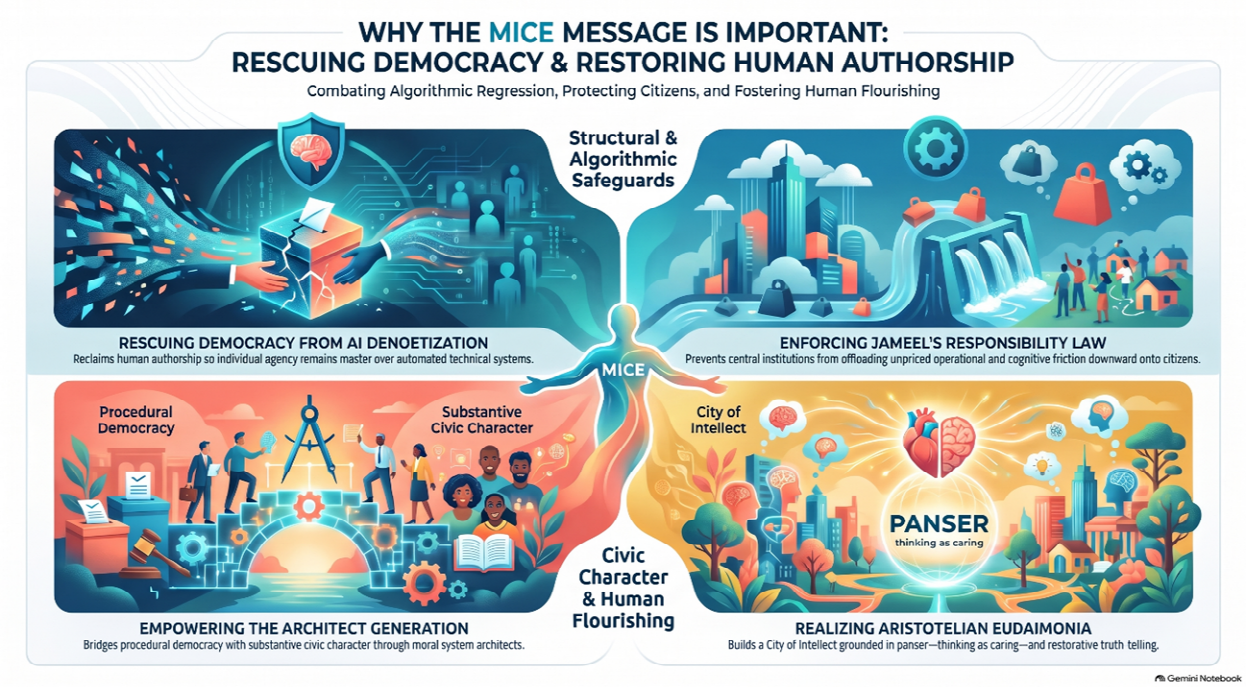
**D. Rescuing the Radical Centre from "Third Way" Compromise**

Crucially, MICE's Radical Centre is explicitly distinct from the neoliberal "Third Way" critique posed by Chantal Mouffe (2000, p. 1; Buch 2026b, p. 2). Mouffe correctly warns that "Third Way" politics creates a "democratic deficit" by attempting to eliminate political conflict through market consensus (Mouffe 2000, p. 2). In contrast, Dr Neville Buch's "accurate centralism" does not evade conflict; it provides a rigorous procedural discipline (the POLICE model and Universal Pragmatics) to ensure that democratic contestation occurs through rational-critical dialogue rather than majoritarian polarization or corporate PR manipulation (Mouffe 2000; Buch 2025b, p. 2; Buch 2026b, p. 2).

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**5. Point 4: Why This Message is Important**

The triadic, contributory message promoted by MICE is of vital civilisational importance for four explicit reasons:




1. **Rescuing Human Agency from Automated AI Denoetization:** As generative AI and automated platform capitalism accelerate "the immense regression," human judgment is systematically liquidated (Stiegler 2018; Buch 2026e, p. 12). The MICE message provides the only integrated operational framework that enforces Human Authorship, ensuring that the concrete human person ("the who") remains the conscious master of technological apparatuses ("the what") (Buch 2026e, p. 174).

2. **Stopping Downward Responsibility Burden-Shifting:** As government bureaucracies deploy automated AI portals, they trigger Arif Jameel's **Economic Law of Responsibility Burden**, transferring unpriced operational liabilities and cognitive friction downward onto individual citizens (Jameel 2026b, p. 1). The MICE message equips public sector auditors with the POLICE model to enforce mandatory human-in-the-loop safeguards and protect citizens from automated exploitation (Jameel & Buch 2026, p. 2).

3. **Fulfilling the Imperative for Value-Driven Civic Character:** By uniting Buch's cognitional ascent with Hassan and Shahan's (2026) call for character-centred citizenship (and Jameel's **Architect Generation Theory**), MICE elevates young citizens from passive consumers of digital content into moral system architects who take responsibility for the democratic lifeworld (Jameel 2006, p. 2; Hassan 2026, p. 42; Jameel & Buch 2026, p. 2).

4. **Building the Flourishing City of Intellect:** Ultimately, democracy cannot survive if it remains a cold, transactional market game. The MICE message transforms public administration into a **"City of Intellect"**—a flourishing public sphere where communicative rationality, *panser* (thinking as caring), substantial fairness, and Aristotelian *eudaimonia* thrive (Stiegler 2018; Buch 2026e, p. 174; Buch 2026g, p. 2).

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**6. Conclusion**

The synthesis between Firoz Hassan and M.A. Shahan's (2026) *Challenges and Sustainability of Democracy* and the pre-natal Management Institute for Contributory Economy (MICE) reveals a profound alignment in contemporary political philosophy.

Hassan and Shahan correctly diagnose that twenty-first-century democracy cannot be saved by formal institutional engineering alone, calling for a character-centred, value-driven civic renewal. Pre-natal MICE provides the precise operational blueprint required to answer this call. MICE defines its diagnostic identity through democratic "Challenges" (deploying the POLICE model against technocratic "satisficing" and AI denoetization) and its constructive identity through democratic "Sustainability" (building the Contributory Economy, Contributory Income Scheme, and noodiversity).

By promoting its progressive Radical-Liberal-Conservative triadic governance engine, MICE offers an "accurate centralism" that preserves historical wisdom, guarantees inclusive social placement, and shifts the civilisational agenda toward human dignity. In an era threatened by automated technocratic regression, the MICE message is indispensable: it restores Human Authorship, empowers the Architect Generation, and secures a flourishing Contributory City of Intellect grounded in truth-telling, substantial fairness, and Aristotelian *eudaimonia*.

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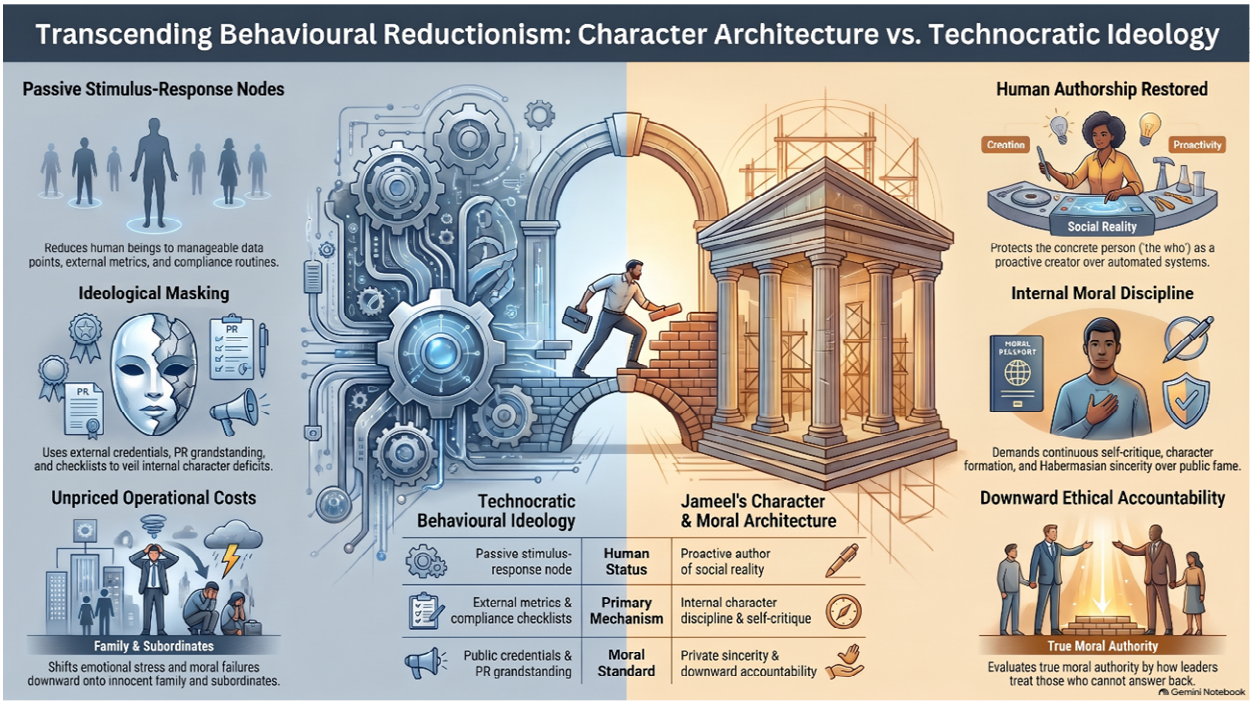
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