Re-Mapping the City of Intellect: MICE, Cognition Histories, and the Contributory Transformation of Urban and Regional Landscapes

Dr Neville Buch and MICE[1]

Abstract

This essay investigates the intersection between the Management Institute for Contributory Economy (MICE) and contemporary Urbanism. Drawing on the foundational scholarship of Dr Neville Buch, Bernard Stiegler, and Jürgen Habermas, this paper establishes four central arguments: (1) MICE is structurally and historically linked to civic urban activism in Brisbane—specifically the Brisbane Urban Coalition, the Mapping Brisbane History (MBH) project, and local historical geography—as a direct counter-weight to speculative "boomers of property" and municipal "retail governance"; (2) contemporary "cognition histories" and "cognition sociology" provide the essential diagnostic tools to understand Urbanism not merely as physical "bricks and mortar," but as a dynamic "soft city" (Jonathan Raban) shaped by mental architectures, social imaginaries, and the threat of algorithmic "denoetization"; (3) reforming the urban

[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.

environment requires dismantling technocratic reductionism by deploying MICE's POLICE diagnostic engine, institutionalising Stieglerian "Contributory Learning Territories," enacting the Contributory Income Scheme for non-extractive urban stewardship, and driving the Triadic Governance Engine toward Aristotelian flourishing (eudaimonia); and (4) this contributory message is of vital civilisational importance not only for metropolitan centres but equally for rural, remote, and First Nations territories, offering a unified defence of noodiversity, regional memory, and human authorship against centralized technocratic exploitation.

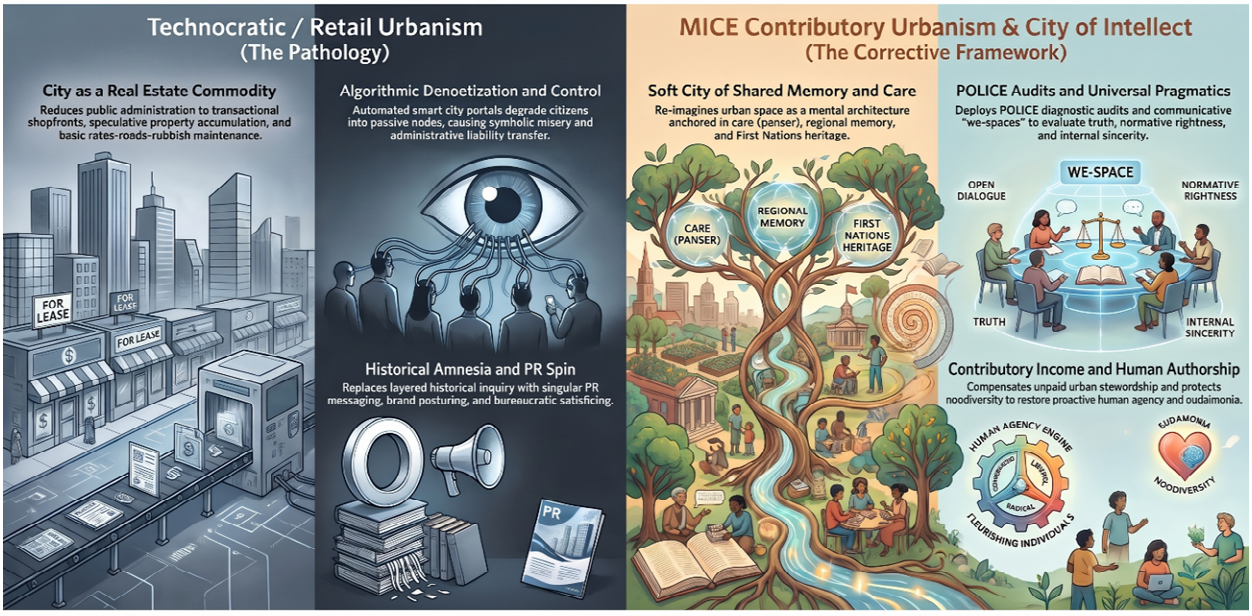
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1. Introduction: MICE and the Urban Question

In twenty-first-century public administration and spatial design, urbanism faces an existential crisis. Modern cities are increasingly governed through what Dr Neville Buch terms "retail politics" and a "production-warfare mindset," reducing urban spaces to transactional shopfronts, speculative real estate commodities, and automated "smart city" control grids (Stiegler 2018, p. 2; Buch 2026a, p. 37; Buch 2026e, p. 45). Under this technocratic paradigm, the lived experience of citizens is flattened, historical memory is erased, and urban administration settles for short-term "satisficing" and public relations spin (Simon 1957; Buch 2026a, p. 37; Buch 2026e, p. 144).

Operating from 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)—provides a comprehensive philosophical and operational corrective to this urban pathology (Buch 2026a, p. 1; Buch 2026b, p. 2; Buch 2026e, p. 5). MICE redefines urbanism away from narrow pecuniary accumulation toward a collaborative, non-extractive "City of Intellect" grounded in human dignity, *panser* (thinking as caring), and Aristotelian flourishing (*eudaimonia*) (Stiegler 2018, p. 4; Buch 2026e, p. 174).

Paradigm Shift in Urban Governance: Retail Urbanism vs. The Contributory City of Intellect



Transition from market-driven commodities to flourishing centers of intellect and care.

Gemini Notebook

2. Point 1: How MICE is Linked to the Brisbane Urban Coalition

The intellectual origins of MICE are deeply rooted in ground-level urban historical geography, local community activism, and civic defence in Brisbane, Queensland (Buch 2016, p. 1; Buch 2026c, p. 5; Buch 2026e, p. 121). MICE's theoretical framework did not emerge from an abstract academic vacuum; it was forged through direct engagement with Brisbane's urban landscape and alliances with local civic bodies, including the Brisbane Urban Coalition, the Stephens History Group, and the Mapping Brisbane History (MBH) Project (Buch 2016, p. 2; Buch 2026c, p. 5; Buch 2026e, p. 121).

A. Local Historical Geography and the Defence of Civic Space

Dr Neville Buch's historical geography of Brisbane—such as his detailed spatial analyses of Annerley, Junction Park, Frog's Hollow, and the historic Stephens Shire—mapped how local urban spaces were historically contested between community wellbeing and speculative land exploitation (Buch & Roberts 2016, p. 3; Buch 2016, p. 4; Buch 2026c, p. 6). In these historical investigations, Buch unmasked how the "boomers of property" in early Brisbane acted as an unreflective "canker" over regional prosperity, treating public parks, community schools, and heritage assets as disposable obstacles to private capital accumulation (Buch 2016, p. 5; Buch 2026e, p. 150).

B. The Mapping Brisbane History (MBH) Network

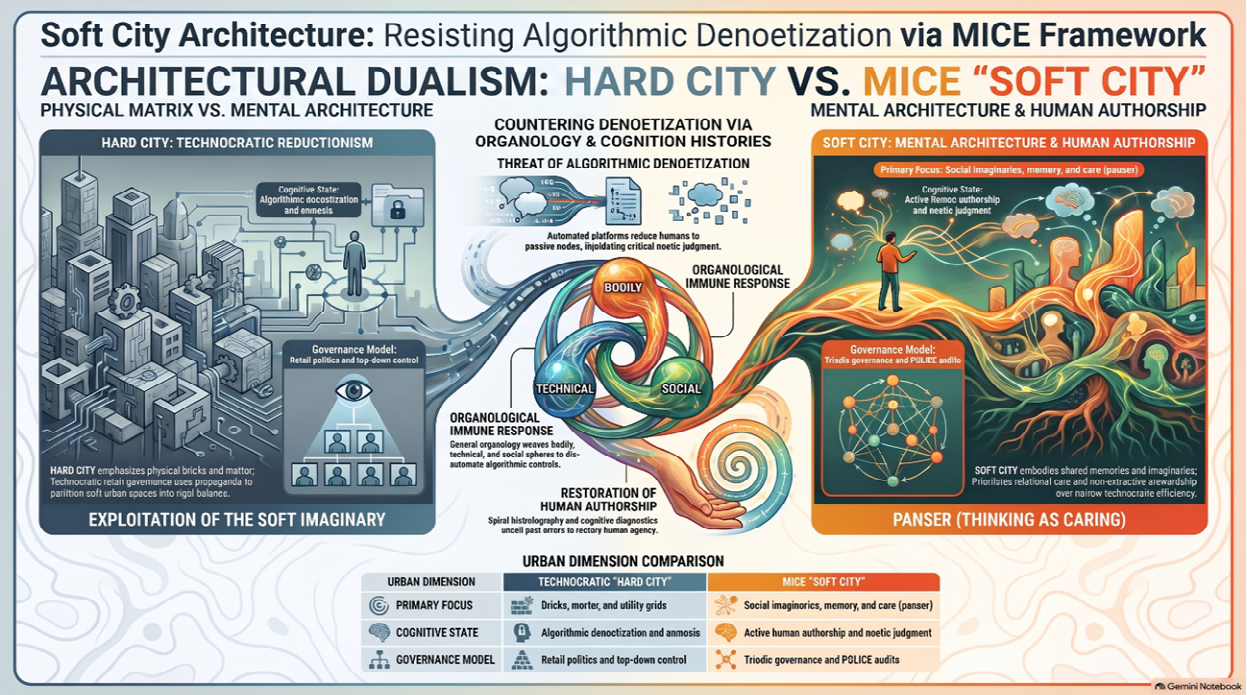
To counteract this speculative erasure, Buch established the **Mapping Brisbane History Project**, uniting voluntary local history societies across Brisbane to construct a shared regional history perspective (Buch 2026c, p. 5; Buch 2026e, p. 121). The MBH project mapped over 1,000 foundational sites of belief, scholarship, labour, and education across Brisbane, spatializing historical memory to demonstrate that urban neighbourhoods possess deep intellectual and moral roots that cannot be reduced to commercial zoning maps (Buch 2026c, p. 6).

This practical work directly linked Buch and MICE to the **Brisbane Urban Coalition** and allied resident action groups fighting against insensitive high-density overdevelopment, the destruction of urban heritage, and top-down municipal authoritarianism (Buch 2016, p. 2; Buch 2026e, p. 143). MICE provided the Brisbane Urban Coalition with its critical cognitive weaponry: proving that municipal reliance on a narrow "rates, roads, and rubbish" model of governance is a cognitive failure that surrenders the "soft side" of city building to private property developers (Buch 2026e, p. 143; Buch 2026h, p. 5).

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3. Point 2: How Today's Cognition Histories and Sociology is Connected to the Understanding of Urbanism

A central innovation of MICE is its integration of cognition histories and cognition sociology into spatial theory (Buch 2025d, p. 1; Buch 2026a, p. 7; Buch 2026e, p. 33). Dr Neville Buch, an expert in cognition histories, demonstrates that urbanism cannot be understood through physical infrastructure alone (Buch 2025d, p. 1; Buch 2026e, p. 33).



A. Jonathan Raban's "Soft City" and the Social Imaginary

Drawing on Jonathan Raban's (1974) classic concept of the *Soft City*, MICE establishes that the city is a mental architecture formed by the confluence of human aspiration, memory, and myth (Raban 1974; Buch 2026e, p. 143). A citizen's experience of urban space is inseparable from their *imagining* of that space (Raban 1974; Buch 2026e, p. 143). When municipal authorities deploy propaganda, PR spin, and "singular messaging," they exploit this soft city architecture to partition urban space into sanitized binaries of "ordered/desirable" vs. "disordered/othered," manufacturing a false sense of coherence while hiding state and market violence (Buch 2026e, pp. 143–144).

B. Stieglerian Organology and Algorithmic Denoetization

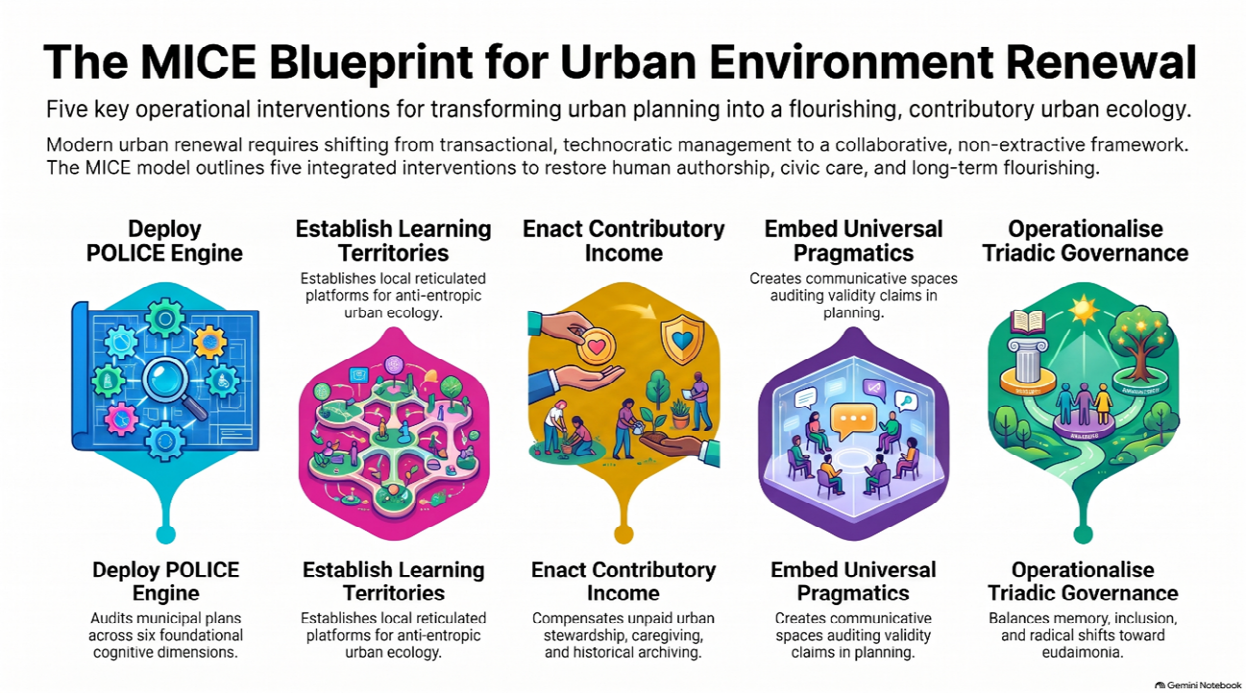
Cognition sociology connects to urbanism by analysing how technical systems shape human thought. French philosopher Bernard Stiegler points out that modern "smart city" technologies replace civil urbanity with automated control routines (Stiegler 2018, pp. 1–3). This triggers **denoetization**—the mechanical liquidation of the collective capacity to think, judge, and care (Stiegler 2018, p. 2; Buch 2026e, p. 33). In automated smart cities, citizens are degraded into passive "puny human nodes" executing tasks within an algorithmic network, producing "symbolic misery" and urban disorientation (Stiegler 2018, p. 3; Buch 2026e, p. 33).

Cognition histories provide the diagnostic remedy. By mapping the **Dynamic of Cognition (DoC)** matrix across urban history, MICE exposes how unreflective habits (*Prejudice*) can be transformed into intersubjective mutuality (*Inclusion*) and proactive **Human Authorship** (Buch 2026e, p. 33; Buch 2026h, p. 5). Understanding the history of urban cognition enables planners and citizens to unmask "institutional bullshit," restore noetic agency, and ensure that technical apparatuses serve human flourishing rather than developer profit (Frankfurt 2005; Stiegler 2018; Buch 2026e, p. 174).

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4. Point 3: What Has to be Done to Improve Our Urban Environment

To rescue the urban environment from technocratic degradation, MICE outlines five concrete operational interventions:



1. **Deploy the POLICE Diagnostic Engine on Municipal Planning:** Public sector auditors must apply the **POLICE model** (**P**hilosophically, **O**ntology, **L**ogic, **I**ntersect, **C**ompatibility, **E**ducation) to all urban masterplans, transportation proposals, and municipal AI portals (Buch & Peach 2024; Buch 2026e, p. 74). The POLICE engine unmasks "institutional bullshit," tests ontological premises (ensuring human agency is not replaced by

automated algorithms), and prevents governments from shifting operational liabilities downward onto residents under Arif Jameel's **Law of Responsibility Burden** (Jameel 2026b, p. 1; Buch 2026e, p. 74).

2. **Establish Contributory Learning Territories:** Municipalities must adopt Bernard Stiegler's model of the Contributory Learning Territory (tested in Plaine Commune, Paris) (Stiegler 2018, p. 4; Buch 2026e, p. 75). Cities must create decentralized, reticulated territorial platforms where local residents, scholars, and artisans experiment with anti-entropic urban practices, food sovereignty (such as the *ContribAlim* project), and digital urbanity (Stiegler 2018, p. 4; Annotated List on Contributory Economy 2026, p. 2).

3. **Enact the Contributory Income Scheme for Urban Stewardship:** Town planning must move beyond market-based property taxes by institutionalising the **Contributory Income Scheme** (Stiegler 2010; Buch 2026a, p. 56; Buch 2026e, p. 75). Local councils must provide guaranteed non-extractive social income to residents engaged in unpaid urban stewardship—such as maintaining urban commons, caregiving (*panser*), local historical archiving, and community biodiversity projects—decoupling human survival from real estate speculation (Buch 2026e, p. 75).

4. **Institutionalise Communicative "We-Spaces" and Illichian Conviviality:** Urban planning decisions must be removed from closed council chambers and subjected to Habermasian Universal Pragmatics in public "we-spaces" (Habermas 1979; Buch 2026e, p. 74). Planners and developers must reciprocally prove four 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*, urban infrastructure must be designed as accessible tools that foster autonomous community interaction (Illich 1973; Buch 2026e, p. 90).

5. **Activate the Triadic Governance Engine:** Finally, municipal administration must adopt MICE's progressive motto: *"Radical enough to shift the agenda, liberal enough to allow everyone a decent place, and conservative enough to preserve the legacy of good value"* (Buch 2026b, p. 2; Buch 2026e, p. 7). This triadic engine preserves historical urban memory, guarantees inclusive placements for all residents, and shifts the municipal agenda away from GDP and property boom metrics toward Aristotelian *eudaimonia* (Buch 2026b, p. 2; Buch 2026e, p. 7).

5. Point 4: Why is This Message Important, and Important Also for Those Living in Rural and Remote Environments?

The MICE message is not an exclusively metropolitan theory; it articulates a unified, socio-ecological geography that connects urban, regional, rural, and remote environments (Buch 2026e, p. 45; Buch 2026h, p. 6).

A. The Shared Threat of Centralized Technocratic Extraction

Technocratic reductionism and economic rationalism do not stop at city boundaries. Rural, remote, and agricultural communities suffer from the exact same pathologies that plague metropolitan areas: centralist "retail governance," the closure of regional banks and public services, and the imposition of automated digital portals that shift administrative liabilities onto isolated farmers and townships (Buch 2020, p. 4; Jameel 2026b, p. 1; Buch 2026e, p. 45). In regional policy, this manifests as a "production-warfare mindset," where rural landscapes are treated as passive, extractive resource silos for coal, gas, or monoculture agribusiness, stripping away regional autonomy (Buch 2026e, p. 45; Buch 2026h, p. 6).

B. Protecting Noodiversity across First Nations and Rural Commons

The MICE message is vital for rural and remote environments because it champions **noodiversity**—the preservation of epistemological pluralism, local ecological wisdom, and regional cultural memory against technocratic homogenization (Stiegler 2020, p. 33; Buch 2026e, p. 158).

In the Queensland context, MICE emphasizes that rural and remote territories contain deep, indispensable layers of memory: thousands of years of First Nations custodianship (such as the Yuggera, Turrbal, Yolngu, and Outback trade networks), historical fish traps, Aboriginal place names, and pioneering agricultural traditions (Haveric 2018; Buch 2026e, p. 100). Extending the **Contributory Income Scheme** to rural land stewards, First Nations elders, and regional historians ensures that those who maintain the ecological and cultural health of remote landscapes are compensated for their vital non-market labour (Stiegler 2010; Buch 2026e, p. 75).

C. Re-Territorializing the Economy for Universal Eudaimonia

As Bernard Stiegler emphasizes in *New Urban Engineering*, saving the biosphere requires re-territorializing the global economy—building reticulated, autonomous territorial platforms that link local knowledge to global networks (Stiegler 2018, p. 3). By bridging the urban "City of Intellect" with rural and remote territories, MICE constructs a non-extractive Contributory

Landscape where cooperation replaces hyper-competition, ensuring that "no one is left behind" and that Aristotelian *eudaimonia* is realized across the entire geographic spectrum (Buch 2026e, pp. 81, 174).

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6. Conclusion

The Management Institute for Contributory Economy (MICE) provides an indispensable blueprint for transforming modern Urbanism. Grounded in Dr Neville Buch's civic activism in Brisbane—through the Brisbane Urban Coalition and the Mapping Brisbane History project—MICE proves that cities are not static real estate commodities, but living "soft cities" shaped by mental architectures and social imaginaries.

By connecting cognition histories and sociology to spatial planning, MICE equips citizens and planners with the tools required to combat algorithmic *denoetization* and technocratic reductionism. Improving the urban environment demands deploying the POLICE diagnostic engine, establishing Stieglerian Contributory Learning Territories, enacting the Contributory Income Scheme, and operationalising the Radical-Liberal-Conservative Triadic Governance Engine.

Crucially, this contributory message transcends metropolitan boundaries. It unites urban centres with rural, remote, and First Nations territories, protecting noodiversity and regional memory from centralist extraction. In an age threatened by automated technocratic regression, MICE offers a clear pathway forward: re-authoring our shared landscape into a flourishing **Contributory City of Intellect** where human dignity, substantial fairness, and Aristotelian *eudaimonia* define the horizon of civic life.

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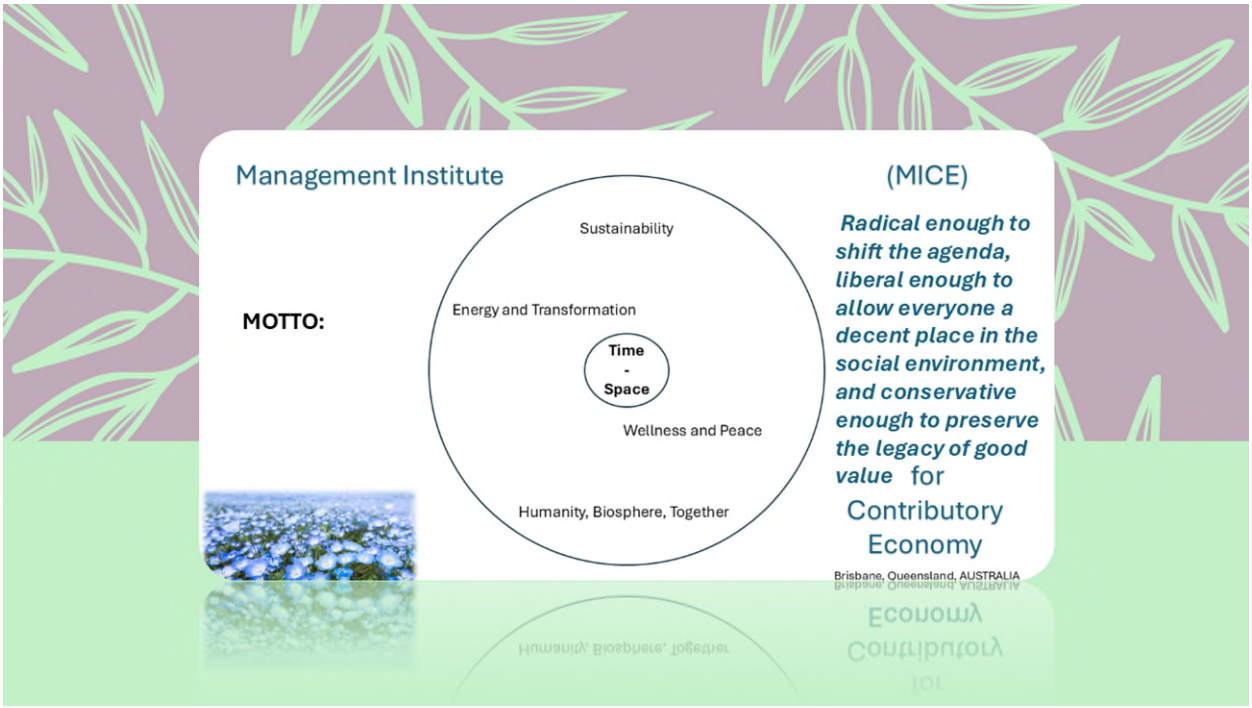
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