The Evasion of Answerability: Deconstructing the Consensus Literature on Accountability and the MICE Contributory Corrective

Dr Neville Buch and MICE[1]

Abstract

This essay evaluates the growing divide between the academic consensus on governance accountability and the persistent evasion of answerability by contemporary political actors. While political players routinely treat accountability as a retrospective, upward-reporting administrative chore or a PR exercise in "retail governance," modern scholarly consensus demonstrates that true accountability is multidimensional, downwardly oriented, and fundamentally operationalized through intersubjective communication. This paper demonstrates: (1) how accountability actually functions today across complex, lateral, and downward networks—unmasking the myths of linear hierarchy and market self-regulation; (2) why genuine accountability must synthesize structural comprehensiveness with methodological compassion (panser), moving beyond punitive audit-culture "satisficing"; (3) how the Management Institute

[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.

for Contributory Economy (MICE) operationalises accountability through the POLICE diagnostic engine, Universal Pragmatics, the Law of Responsibility Burden, and the developmental ascent from "Junior" execution to "Senior" social accountability; and (4) why political actors can no longer ignore these systemic requirements in an age of automated denoetization, algorithmic burden-shifting, and escalating civilisational crisis.

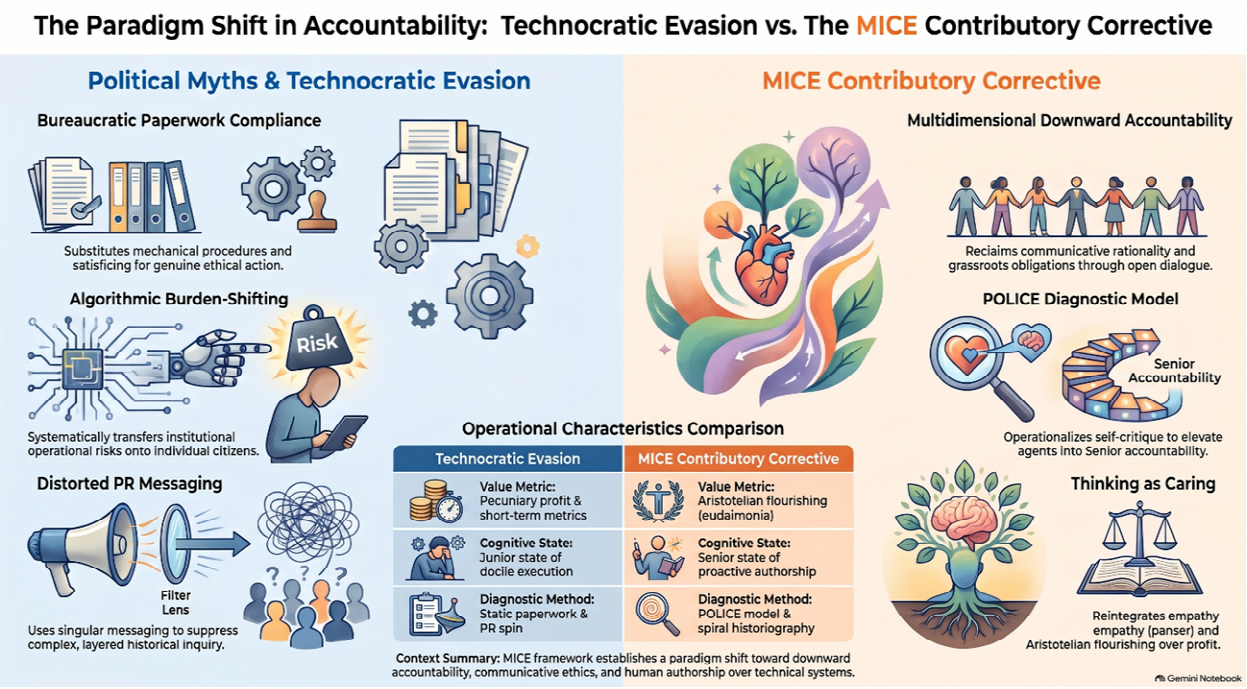
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1. Introduction: The Political Evasion of Accountability Consensus

Across contemporary democracies, "accountability" has become one of the most frequently invoked—yet systematically distorted—concepts in public discourse (Mulgan 2000, p. 555; Sawandia & Thomson 2014, p. 245). Political players across local, state, and national governments routinely deploy the rhetoric of accountability to project administrative competence, justify bureaucratic restructuring, or placate public dissatisfaction (Buch 2013, p. 6; Garnett 2018, p. 157). However, in practice, political elites systematically ignore the established interdisciplinary consensus on what accountability actually requires (Sawandia & Thomson 2014, p. 245; Buch 2026a, p. 37).

Rather than embracing accountability as an active, continuous relationship of intersubjective answerability and ethical justification, political actors reduce it to "retail governance"—a superficial transactional mechanism focused on market metrics, compliance paperwork, and media-driven "Political Profit" (Newton 2004, p. 230; Buch 2020, p. 4; Buch 2026e, p. 153). When policies fail, bureaucracies hide behind Herbert Simon's model of administrative "satisficing"—settling for superficial fixes that satisfy minimum metrics while creating long-term systemic brittleness (Simon 1957; Buch 2026a, p. 38).

This essay examines the consensus literature on accountability to expose this political evasion. By integrating the insights of corporate accountability theorists, legal scholars, and the Management Institute for Contributory Economy (MICE), this paper establishes a blueprint for restoring genuine answerability, human authorship, and substantial fairness to public life (Sawandia & Thomson 2014, p. 247; Buch 2026a, p. 37; Jameel & Buch 2026, p. 2).



2. Point 1: How Accountability Actually Works Today vs. Nostalgic Myths

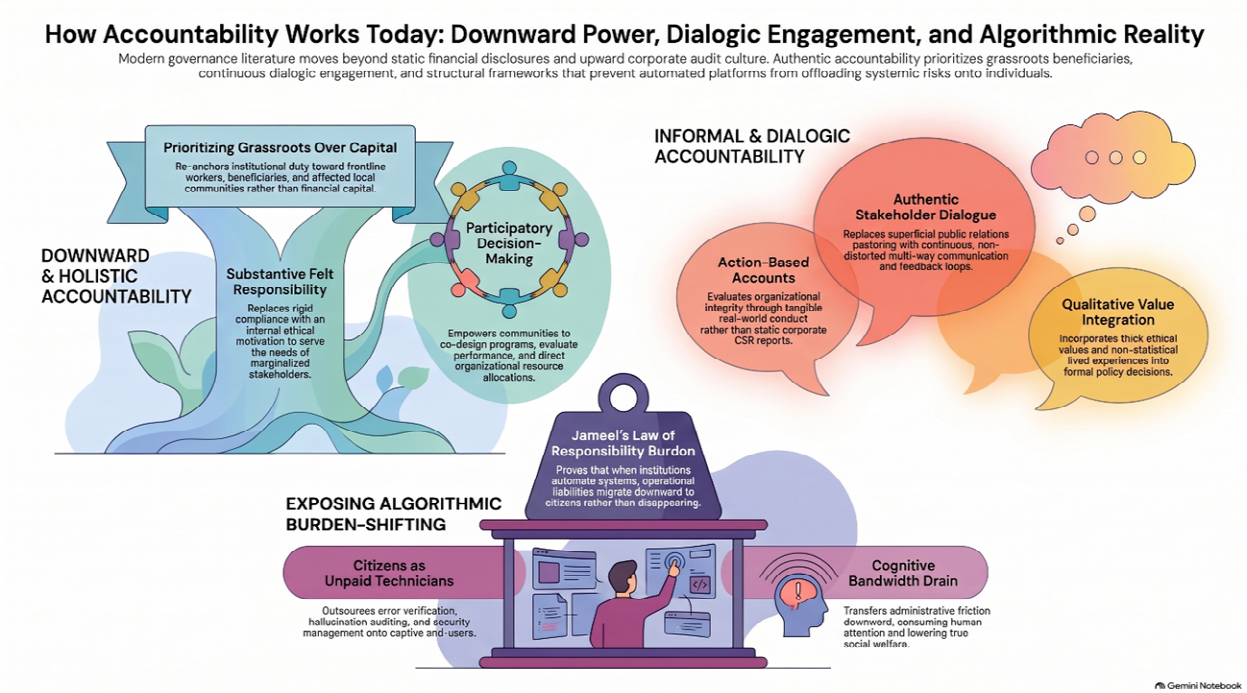
Political actors frequently operate under nostalgic, outdated myths regarding how accountability functions. These historical misconceptions fall into three primary traps:

1. **The Myth of Linear Sovereign Hierarchy:** Political figures often assume accountability is strictly an upward, vertical chain of command where subordinates report to superiors, or where voters periodically judge an elected official at the ballot box (Newton 2004, p. 230). As Lisa Newton and Louis Hodges clarify, while *responsibility* concerns the assignment of duties ("what one is responsible for"), *accountability* concerns answerability ("to whom one must give an account") (Newton 2004, pp. 229–235). In modern professional and public life, actors are answerable "every which way"—upward to overseers, laterally to professional peers, and downward to the citizens and clients affected by their actions (Newton 2004, p. 230; Sawandia & Thomson 2014, p. 245).

2. **The Myth of Paperwork as Transparency:** As Neville Buch demonstrates in his historical studies of public administration, 20th-century governance equated accountability with accumulating vast volumes of compliance paperwork, recording descriptions of activities in administrative filings (Buch 2013, p. 6; Buch 2015, p. 6). In reality, this "paperwork accountability" rarely translates into public education; instead, reports lay unread in

dusty filing cabinets or little-used digital folders, serving as a bureaucratic shield rather than a tool for public enlightenment (Buch 2013, p. 6).

3. **The Myth of Market Self-Regulation:** Neoliberal reformers routinely argue that market choice eliminates the need for regulatory oversight, asserting that consumer preference acts as an automatic accountability mechanism (Chubb & Moe 1990; Garnett 2018, p. 157). However, as Nicole Stelle Garnett demonstrates in "Post-Accountability Accountability," market mechanisms fail to regulate quality or prevent systemic inequality, forcing governments to re-introduce complex post-hoc regulatory frameworks to hold chosen institutions accountable (Garnett 2018, pp. 157–179; Buch 2020, p. 4).



In contrast to these nostalgic myths, contemporary accountability literature establishes that answerability functions as a downward, holistic, and dialogic network (Sawandia & Thomson 2014, pp. 243–253). As Norfaiezah Sawandia and Ian Thomson demonstrate, downward accountability serves as an enabling rather than merely punitive process, empowering grassroots stakeholders and communities through participatory decision-making and qualitative dialogue (Ebrahim 2003b, p. 819; Sawandia & Thomson 2014, p. 247).

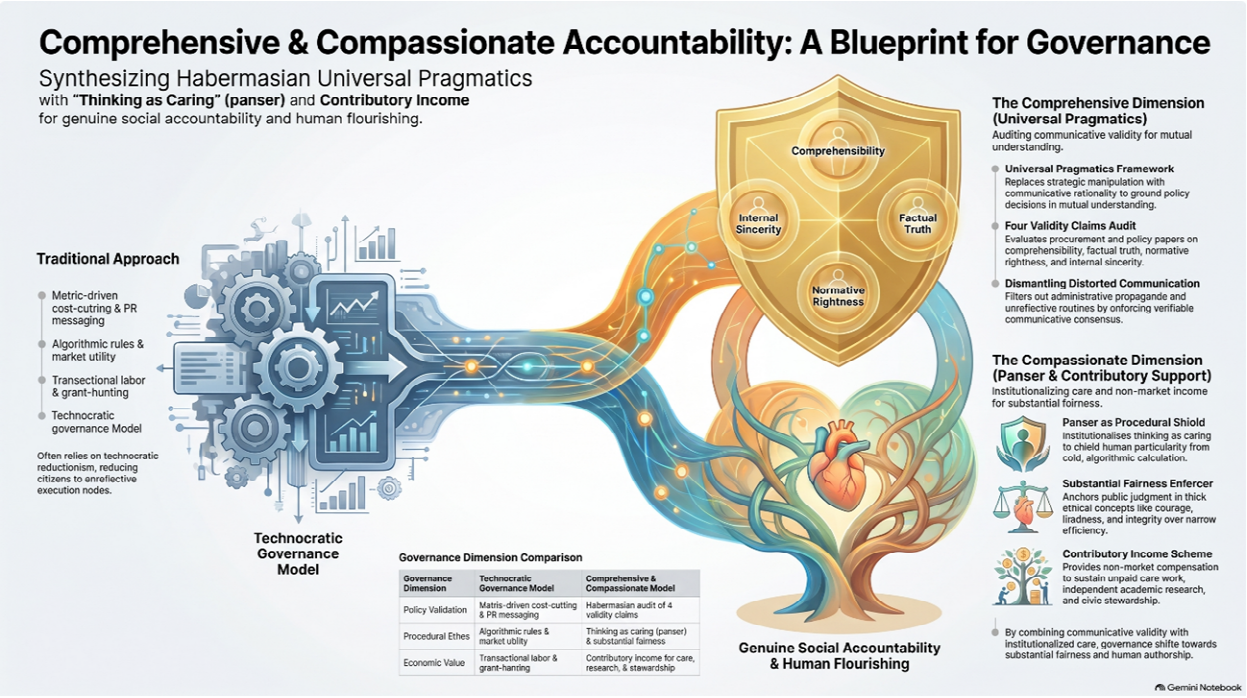
Furthermore, in today's digital state, automated portals and AI platforms do not eliminate operational liabilities; under Arif Jameel's Economic Law of Responsibility Burden, central executive bodies attempt to evade accountability by shifting unpriced cognitive and temporal tasks downward onto individual citizens (Jameel 2026, p. 55; Jameel & Buch 2026, p. 4). True

modern accountability requires deconstructing this burden-shifting and enforcing answerability where real power resides (Jameel 2026, p. 55).

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3. Point 2: How Accountability Has to Be Both Comprehensive and Compassionate

A central flaw in current political practice is the enforcement of "thin," hyper-quantified audit metrics that treat human beings as "meaningless checkerboards of parts" (Collins 2019; Buch 2026e, p. 142). For accountability to function legitimately, consensus scholarship establishes that it must be both comprehensive and compassionate:



A. Comprehensive Accountability: Redeeming the Four Validity Claims

Comprehensive accountability cannot be restricted to narrow pecuniary profit or budgetary compliance (Sawandia & Thomson 2014, p. 247; Buch 2026a, p. 33). Drawing on Jürgen Habermas's theory of Universal Pragmatics, comprehensive answerability requires that every public policy paper, administrative decision, and contract raise and reciprocally redeem four universal validity claims (Habermas 1979; Buch 2026a, p. 49; Buch 2026e, p. 78):

1. *Comprehensibility*: Expressing policy in clear, accessible language within a shared public sphere.
2. *Factual Truth*: Grounding claims in verified empirical evidence and historical reality.

3. *Normative Rightness*: Aligning administrative actions with legitimate social norms and ethical justice.

4. *Internal Sincerity (Truthfulness)*: Ensuring that official statements accurately reflect internal motives, eliminating PR manipulation and strategic deception.

When political actors ignore any of these claims, communication becomes systematically distorted, producing "institutional bullshit" and eroding democratic trust (Frankfurt 2005; Buch 2026a, p. 39).

B. Compassionate Accountability: Panser as a Procedural Shield

Simultaneously, accountability must be compassionate. Punitive, cold administrative surveillance induces moral burnout and defensive risk-aversion among public sector workers (McCaig 2012, p. 39; Molander et al. 2012, p. 214; Buch 2020, p. 4). Following Bernard Stiegler and Nel Noddings, MICE re-invents "panser" (thinking as caring) as an indispensable procedural shield and methodological tenderness in public administration (Noddings 1984; Stiegler 2018; Buch 2026a, p. 54; Buch 2026e, p. 24).

Compassionate accountability recognizes that human beings possess intrinsic dignity beyond narrow market utility (Sen 2000; Buch 2026e, p. 142). Through mechanisms like the Contributory Income Scheme, compassionate governance compensates unpaid caregiving (*panser*), local historical preservation, and non-market research, ensuring that accountability acts as an enabling, supportive framework grounded in substantial fairness rather than an instrument of bureaucratic coercion (Sawandia & Thomson 2014, p. 247; Buch 2026e, p. 75).

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4. Point 3: What Are the MICE Lessons Which Demonstrate Accountability?

The Management Institute for Contributory Economy (MICE) provides four explicit operational lessons that translate theoretical accountability into concrete institutional practice:



1. *The POLICE Diagnostic Model as an Intellectual Immune System*: MICE operationalises self-accountability through the POLICE model (Philosophically Ontology Logic Intersect Compatibility Education) (Buch & Peach 2024; Buch 2026a, p. 46). Standing as an "intellectual immune system," the POLICE framework trains decision-makers to "police their own thoughts"—systematically testing ontological premises, auditing logical inferential patterns, and "crap-detecting" corporate PR spin and "institutional bullshit" before policy is executed (Buch & Peach 2024; Buch 2026e, p. 69).

2. *The Developmental Ascent to "Senior Social Accountability"*: MICE diagnoses modern institutional failure as a consequence of trapping workers in a "Junior" mindset—a state of unreflective execution where individuals act as passive conduits for bureaucratic and algorithmic mandates (Buch 2026a, p. 37; Buch 2026e, p. 140). MICE drives a developmental ascent toward "Senior Social Accountability," characterized by "Conscious Competence," where professionals reclaim proactive human authorship and take explicit moral responsibility for the social relations they create (Buch 2026a, p. 37; Buch 2026e, p. 100).

3. *Spiral Historiography against "Historical Forgetfulness"*: MICE establishes that accountability is impossible without historical memory (Buch 2026c, p. 4). Deploying Spiral Historiography, MICE treats "understanding history as philosophy in practice," uncoiling repetitive cycles of policy stupidity and holding institutions accountable to

regional memory, Indigenous heritage, and past policy failures (Buch 2026c, p. 4; Buch 2026e, p. 63).

4. *Human Moral Architecture over Technical Guardrails*: Synthesizing the works of Arif Jameel and Neville Buch, MICE proves that accountability cannot be delegated to automated code-level guardrails or AI alignment algorithms (Jameel & Buch 2026, p. 2). True governance requires a robust human moral architecture, maintaining independent professional contractualism and guaranteeing that the human person ("the who") remains the active master of technical and administrative systems ("the what") (Jameel & Buch 2026, p. 2; Buch 2026e, p. 173).

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5. Point 4: Why Political Players Can No Longer Keep Ignoring Requirements of Accountability

Political players can no longer afford to evade genuine accountability due to three escalating civilisational crises:

- *The Collapse of Technocratic Legitimacy and Systemic Brittleness*: Relying on managerial "satisficing," PR spin, and short-term "Political Profit" has generated profound public cynicism and systemic institutional brittleness (Simon 1957; Frankfurt 2005; Buch 2026a, p. 38). As demonstrated by widespread public resistance against corporate audit culture and specialized ignorance, governments that fail to provide genuine downward answerability lose their social license to govern (Sawandia & Thomson 2014, p. 247; Buch 2026e, p. 33).

- *The Pharmacological Krisis of Automated AI Denoetization*: The rapid proliferation of generative AI and automated decision systems threatens society with denoetization—the mechanical liquidation of human critical judgment (Stiegler 2018; Roe & Perkins 2026, p. 2; Buch 2026f, p. 1). When political leaders use digital portals to offload administrative burdens onto citizens, they accelerate social burnout and trigger Jameel's Law of Autonomous Rebound, where uncorrected algorithmic flaws propagate into severe operational failures (Jameel 2026, p. 55; Jameel 2026b, p. 1). Political players must institute institutional repentance (metanoia) and human-centered accountability to prevent catastrophic system collapse (Buch 2026f, p. 1).

- *The Imperative of Aristotelian Flourishing (Eudaimonia)*: In an era of compounding ecological, technological, and economic crises, public governance can no longer be evaluated through thin pecuniary metrics or GDP growth alone (Buch 2020, p. 4; Buch 2026a, p. 28). As articulated in post-2007 New International Scholarship, society demands a re-orientation toward Aristotelian Flourishing (Eudaimonia), where government is held

accountable for protecting human dignity, character, wisdom, and biophysical resilience (New International Scholarship 2026, p. 1; Buch 2026e, p. 160).

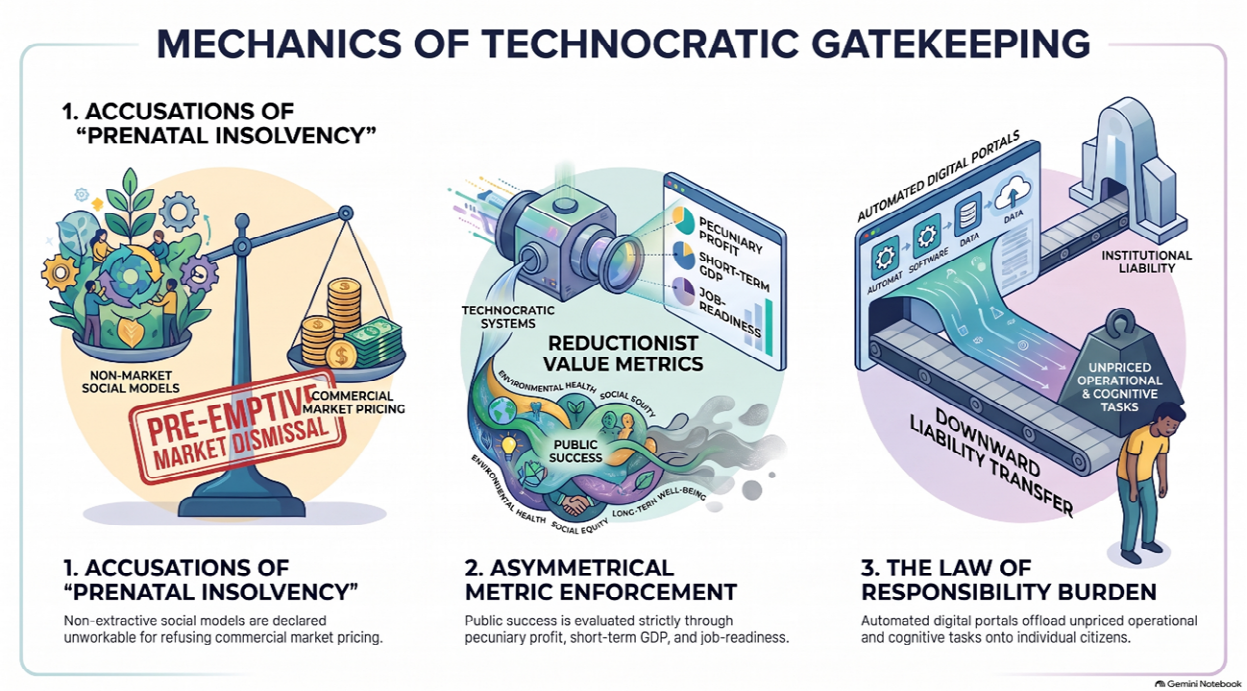
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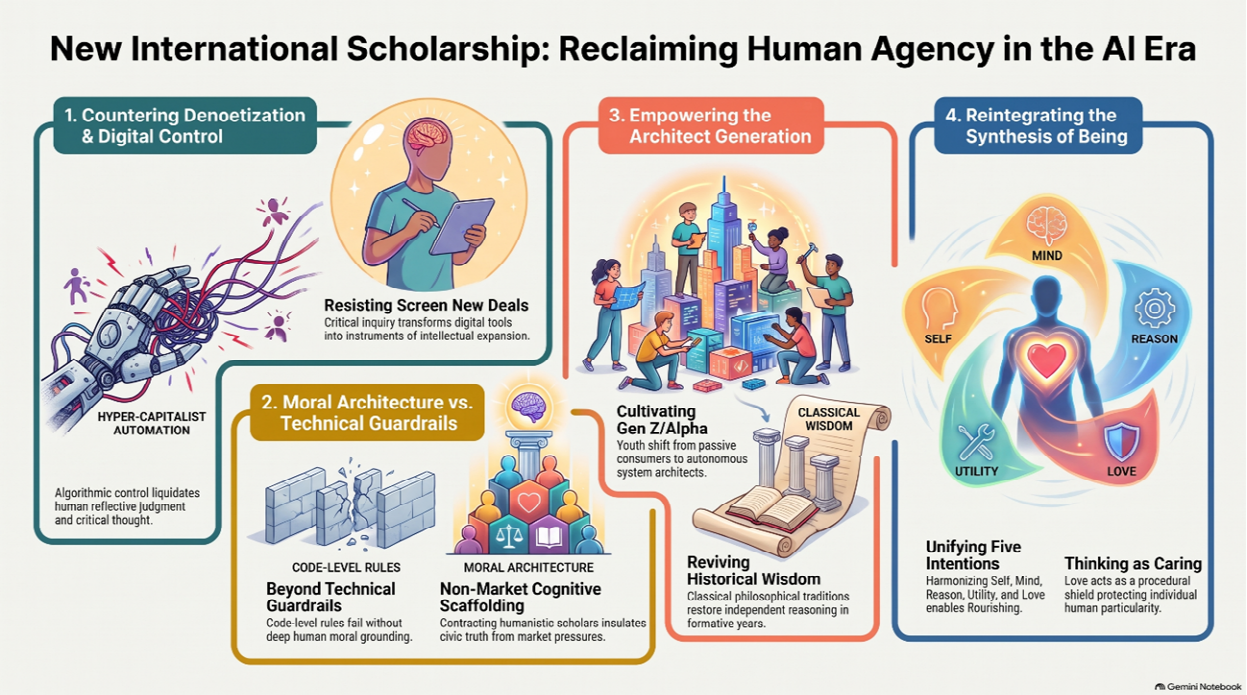
6. Conclusion

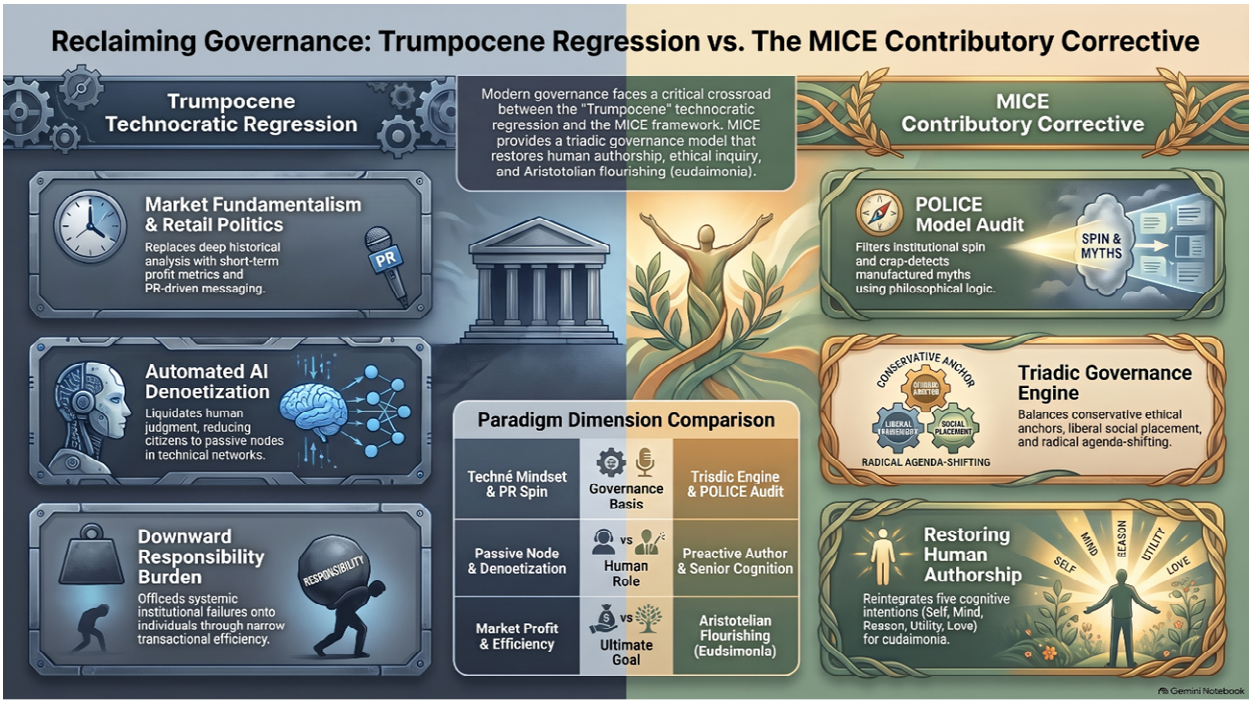
The academic consensus on accountability is clear: genuine answerability is not a static compliance exercise, a market-driven commodity, or a top-down bureaucratic surveillance tool (Newton 2004, p. 230; Garnett 2018, p. 157; Sawandia & Thomson 2014, p. 245). It is an intersubjective, downwardly oriented, and compassionate commitment to truth-telling, mutual understanding, and social justice (Habermas 1979; Sawandia & Thomson 2014, p. 247; Buch 2026e, p. 78).

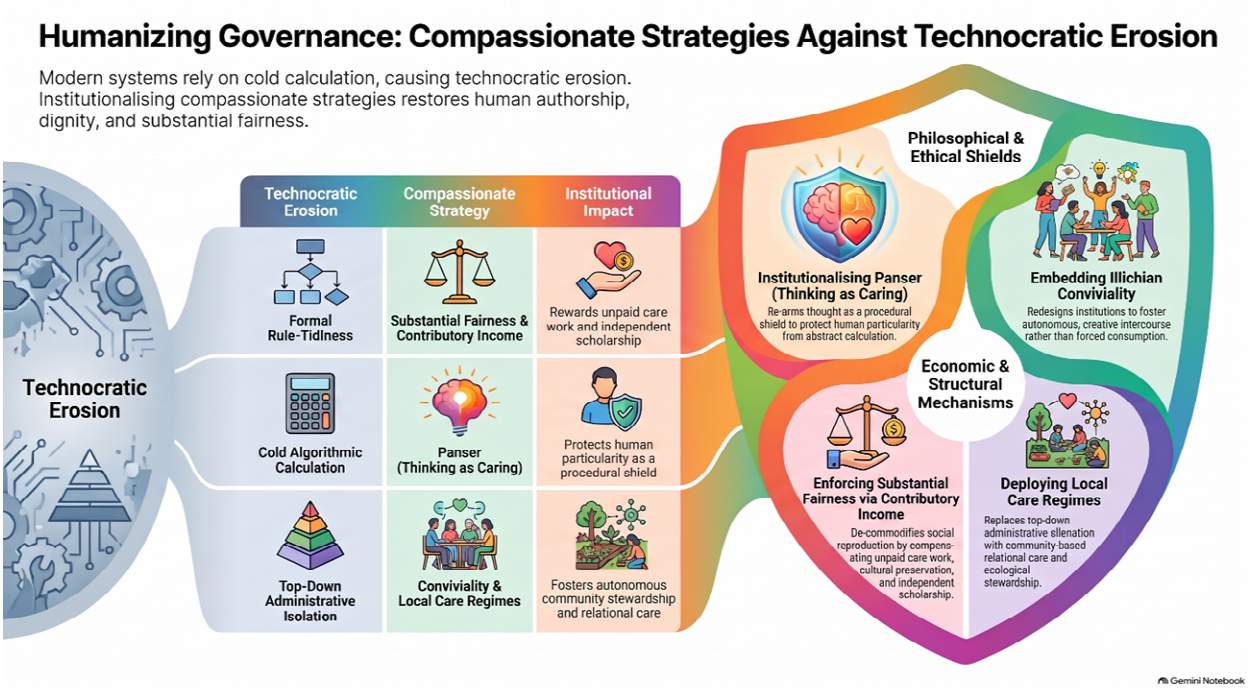
By continuing to ignore these requirements, political players perpetuate institutional amnesia, accelerate automated denoetization, and erode the democratic lifeworld (Stiegler 2018; Buch 2026a, p. 37; Jameel & Buch 2026, p. 2). The Management Institute for Contributory Economy (MICE) offers the necessary corrective. By deploying the POLICE diagnostic model, enacting Universal Pragmatics, embracing *panser* (thinking as caring), and elevating workers to Senior Social Accountability, MICE provides the operational tools to re-author public governance. In doing so, it transforms public administration into a flourishing **"City of Intellect"**—a community where political players and citizens alike accept the noble duty of giving a true, compassionate, and comprehensive account of their shared human choices (Buch 2026e, p. 174; Buch 2026g, p. 2).

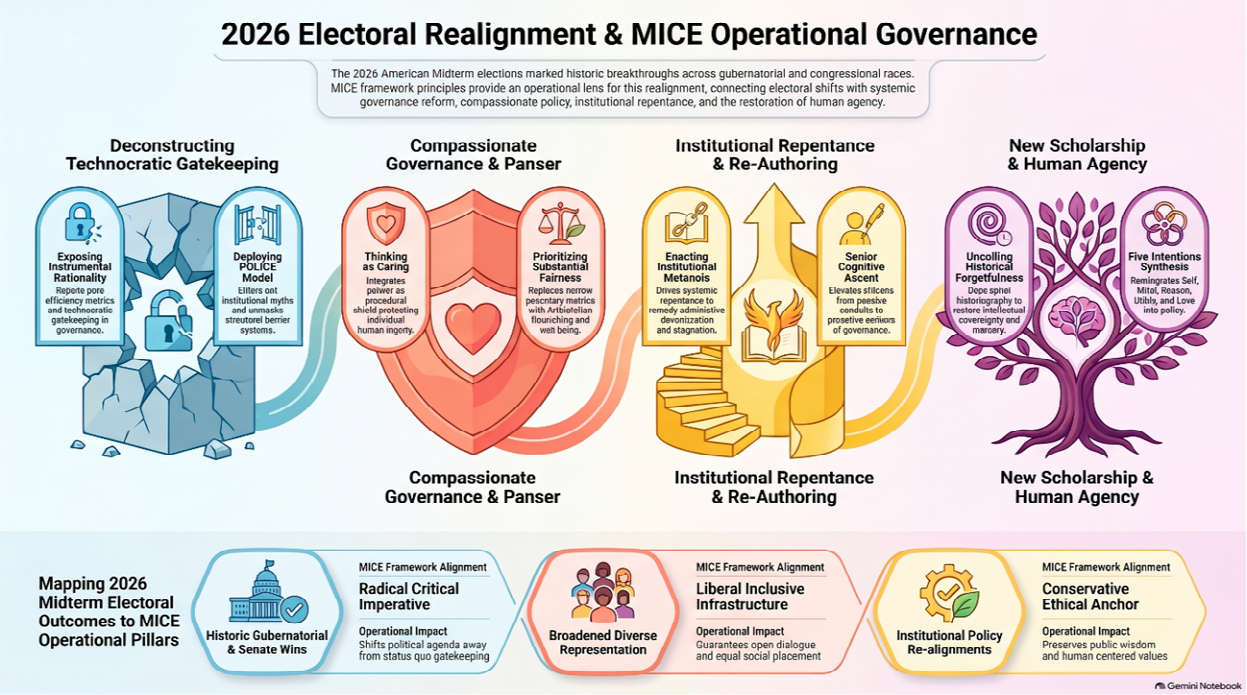
OTHER PAST LESSONS FOR MICE

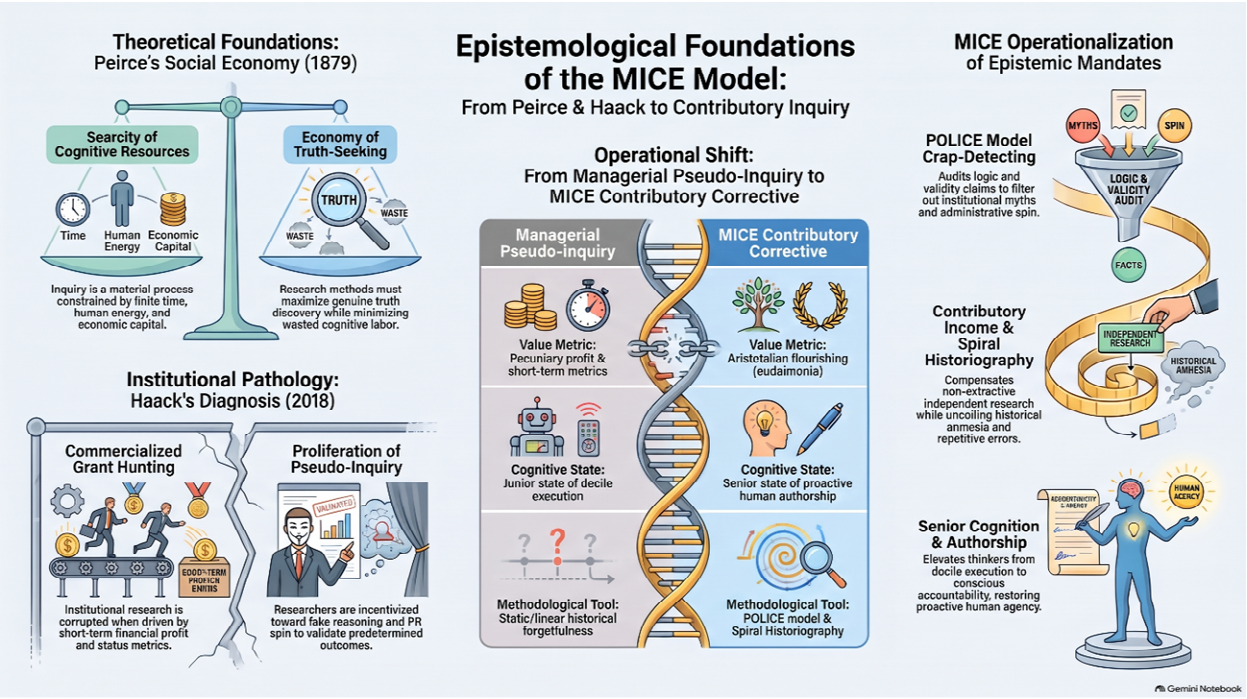





Reclaiming Governance: Trumpocene Regression vs. The MICE Contributory Corrective
Trumpocene Technocratic Regression
Modern governance faces a critical crossroad between the "Trumpocene" technocratic regression and the MICE framework. MICE provides a triadic governance model that restores human authorship, ethical inquiry, and Aristotolian flourishing (eudaimonia).
MICE Contributory Corrective
Market Fundamentalism & Retail Politics
Replaces deep historical analysis with short-term profit metrics and PR-driven messaging.
PR
POLICE Model Audit
Filters institutional spin and crap-detects manufactured myths using philosophical logic.
SPIN & MYTHS
Automated AI Denoetization
Liquidates human judgment, reducing citizens to passive nodes in technical networks.
CONSERVATIVE ANCHOR
LIBERAL TRIBUNICIST
SOCIAL PLACEMENT
RADICAL AGENDA-SHIFTING
Triadic Governance Engine
Balances conservative ethical anchors, liberal social placement, and radical agenda-shifting.
Downward Responsibility Burden
Offloads systemic institutional failures onto individuals through narrow transactional efficiency.
RESPONSIBILITY
Paradigm Dimension Comparison
Techné Mindset & PR Spin
Governance Basis
Trisdic Engine & POLICE Audit
Passive Node & Denoetization
vs
Human Role
Preactive Author & Senior Cognition
Market Profit & Efficiency
vs
Ultimate Goal
Aristotelian Flourishing (Eudsimonla)
Restoring Human Authorship
Reintegrates five cognitive intentions (Self, Mind, Reason, Utility, Love) for eudaimonia.
SELF
MIND
REASON
UTILITY
LOVE
Gemini Notebook


Humanizing Governance: Compassionate Strategies Against Technocratic Erosion
Modern systems rely on cold calculation, causing technocratic erosion. Institutionalising compassionate strategies restores human authorship, dignity, and substantial fairness.
Technocratic Erosion
Technocratic Erosion
Compassionate Strategy
Institutional Impact
Formal Rule-Tidlness
Substantial Fairness & Contributory Income
Rewards unpaid care work and independent scholarship
Cold Algorithmic Calculation
Panser (Thinking as Caring)
Protects human particularity as a procedural shield
Top-Down Administrative Isolation
Conviviality & Local Care Regimes
Fosters autonomous community stewardship and relational care
Philosophical & Ethical Shields
Institutionalising Panser (Thinking as Caring)
Re-arms thought as a procedural shield to protect human particularity from abstract calculation.
Embedding Illichian Conviviality
Redesigns institutions to foster autonomous, creative intercourse rather than forced consumption.
Economic & Structural Mechanisms
Enforcing Substantial Fairness via Contributory Income
De-commodifies social reproduction by compensating unpaid care work, cultural preservation, and independent scholarship.
Deploying Local Care Regimes
Replaces top-down administrative alienation with community-based relational care and ecological stewardship.
Gemini Notebook


2026 Electoral Realignment & MICE Operational Governance
The 2026 American Midterm elections marked historic breakthroughs across gubernatorial and congressional races. MICE framework principles provide an operational lens for this realignment, connecting electoral shifts with systemic governance reform, compassionate policy, institutional repentance, and the restoration of human agency.
Deconstructing Technocratic Gatekeeping
Exposing Instrumental Rationality
Deploying POLICE Model
Compassionate Governance & Panser
Thinking as Caring
Prioritizing Substantial Fairness
Institutional Repentance & Re-Authoring
Enacting Institutional Metanois
Senior Cognitive Ascent
New Scholarship & Human Agency
Uncoiling Historical Forgetfulness
Five Intentions Synthesis
Compassionate Governance & Panser
Institutional Repentance & Re-Authoring
New Scholarship & Human Agency
Mapping 2026 Midterm Electoral Outcomes to MICE Operational Pillars
Historic Gubernatorial & Senate Wins
MICE Framework Alignment
Radical Critical Imperative
Operational Impact
Shifts political agenda away from status quo gatekeeping
Broadened Diverse Representation
MICE Framework Alignment
Liberal Inclusive Infrastructure
Operational Impact
Guarantees open dialogue and equal social placement
Institutional Policy Re-alignments
MICE Framework Alignment
Conservative Ethical Anchor
Operational Impact
Preserves public wisdom and human centered values
Gemini Notebook


Theoretical Foundations:
Peirce's Social Economy (1879)
Searcity of Cognitive Resources
Time
Human Energy
Economic Capital
Economy of Truth-Seeking
TRUTH
WASTE
WASTE
Inquiry is a material process constrained by finite time, human energy, and economic capital.
Research methods must maximize genuine truth discovery while minimizing wasted cognitive labor.
Institutional Pathology:
Haack's Diagnosis (2018)
Commercialized Grant Hunting
Proliferation of Pseudo-Inquiry
Institutional research is corrupted when driven by short-term financial profit and status metrics.
Researchers are incentivized toward fake reasoning and PR spin to validate predetermined outcomes.
Epistemological Foundations of the MICE Model:
From Peirce & Haack to Contributory Inquiry
Operational Shift:
From Managerial Pseudo-Inquiry to MICE Contributory Corrective
Managerial Pseudo-inquiry
MICE Contributory Corrective
Value Metric: Pecuniary profit & short-term metrics
Value Metric: Aristotelian flourishing (eudaimonia)
Cognitive State: Junior state of decile execution
Cognitive State: Senior state of proactive human authorship
Methodological Tool: Static/linear historical forgetfulness
Methodological Tool: POLICE model & Spiral Historiography
MICE Operationalization of Epistemic Mandates
POLICE Model Crap-Detecting
Audits logic and validity claims to filter out institutional myths and administrative spin.
MYTHS
SPIN
LOGIC & VALICITY AUDIT
FACTS
Contributory Income & Spiral Historiography
Compensates non-extractive independent research while uncoiling historical amnesia and repetitive errors.
INDEPENDENT RESEARCH
HISTORICAL AMNESIA
Senior Cognition & Authorship
Elevates thinkers from docile execution to conscious accountability, restoring proactive human agency.
HUMAN AGENCY
Gemini Notebook

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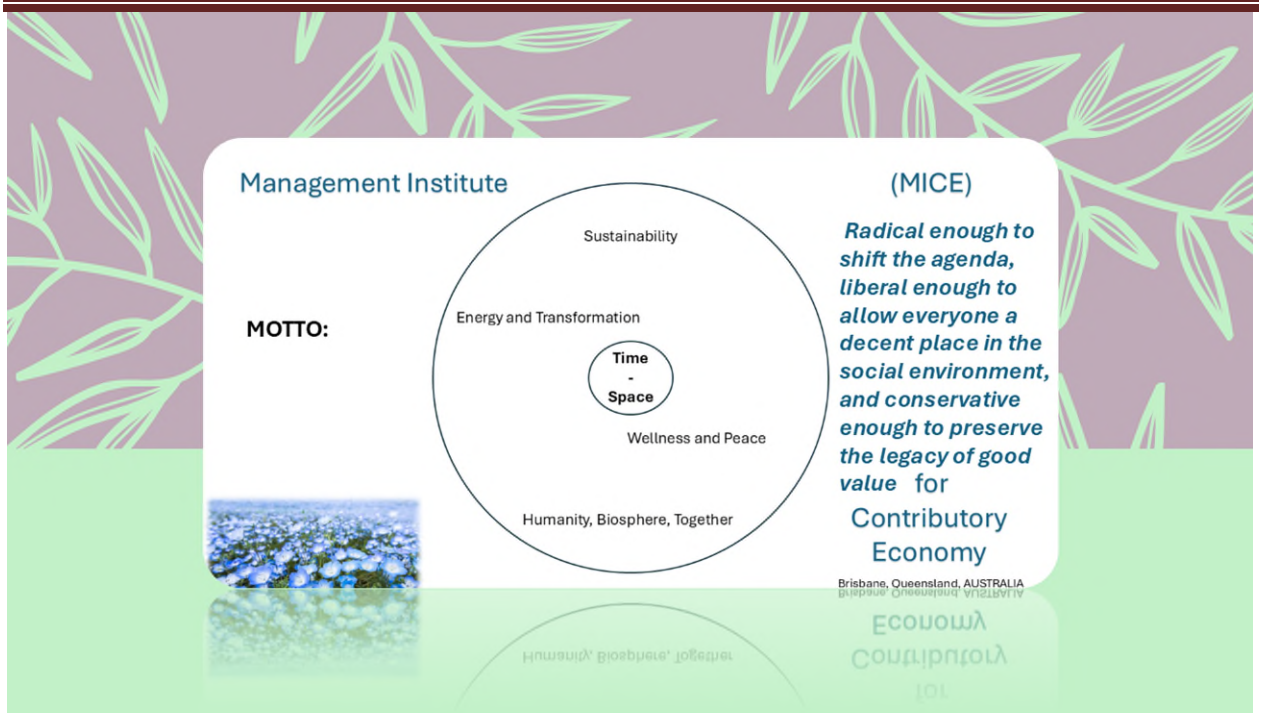
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Take the [MICE Quiz]