THE INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE OF RECOGNITION: DEVELOPING RECOGNITION ECOLOGY, CIVIC RECOGNITION CAPACITY, AND INSTITUTIONAL PEACE CAPITAL

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Keywords

Recognition Ecology; Civic Recognition Capacity; Institutional Peace Capital; Institutional Recognition; Peacebuilding

Abstract

Research Problem: *Recognition shapes identity, social standing, participation, and belonging, yet how it is organised institutionally and connected to peacebuilding remains insufficiently specified. Existing scholarship often examines these dimensions separately, leaving unclear how institutional recognition becomes civic standing and, through sustained practice, relational resources relevant to peacebuilding.*
Methods/Theory: *The study adopts a conceptual theory-development design and brings recognition theory, institutional sociology, citizenship and belonging scholarship, social-capital theory, and peacebuilding perspectives into a purposive analytical synthesis. The literature is compared to clarify construct boundaries, mechanisms, and relationships.*
Results: *The study develops an Institutional Architecture of Recognition comprising three constructs: Recognition Ecology, the institutional condition through which recognition is organised and reproduced; Civic Recognition Capacity, the mechanism through which recognition may become civic standing, voice, participation, and belonging; and Institutional Peace Capital, relational resources that may accumulate and become institutionally embedded through sustained inclusive recognition and reciprocal engagement. The architecture specifies a conditional and potentially recursive condition–mechanism–resource sequence, with Quality of Recognition conditioning its principal relationships, and derives four propositions for empirical testing.*
Conclusion: *Recognition may become consequential for civic inclusion and peacebuilding when institutional conditions support substantive civic translation and sustained practice generates mobilisable relational resources. The relationship is conditional and recursive rather than deterministic.*
Key Contribution to Knowledge: *The study specifies a testable conceptual architecture linking institutional recognition, civic translation, and relational accumulation.*
Recommendation: *Comparative, longitudinal, mixed-method, and network-based research should test, qualify, refine, or reject the proposed relationships, including cases of failed civic translation and exclusionary mobilisation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Recognition matters in social and political theory because participation depends not only on material resources but also on whether persons and groups are accorded legitimate social standing. Honneth (1995) links recognition to social freedom and self-realisation, Taylor (1994) to identity and the political accommodation of difference, and Fraser (2000) to institutionalised status relations and participatory parity. Across these perspectives, recognition concerns who is treated as a legitimate participant in social life and on what terms.

Recognition is also organised through institutions. Membership rules, leadership arrangements, relationships, narratives, and participation practices shape whose identities and contributions are valued, whose voices carry weight, and how patterns of recognition are reproduced or contested. Recent scholarship has identified institutional mediation as requiring deeper theoretical specification (Hirvonen, 2026). Yet less is clear about how institutionally organised recognition becomes wider civic standing and whether sustained recognitive practice can generate relational resources relevant to peacebuilding.

The research problem is not simply whether recognition matters, but how recognition organised within institutions becomes civically consequential and whether that process can contribute to peace-relevant relational resources. Existing scholarship addresses these dimensions, but their connections across analytical levels remain under-specified. Recognition is not inherently inclusive. Institutions may foster reciprocal recognition and meaningful participation, but they may also distribute recognition selectively, reproduce hierarchy, or acknowledge difference without providing substantive voice and belonging.

This study develops an Institutional Architecture of Recognition comprising three distinct constructs: Recognition Ecology, Civic Recognition Capacity, and Institutional Peace Capital. Recognition Ecology identifies the institutional conditions through which recognition is organised and reproduced. Civic Recognition Capacity explains how those conditions may become civic standing, voice, participation, and belonging. Institutional Peace Capital refers to accumulated, institutionally embedded relational resources that may develop through sustained inclusive recognition, reciprocal participation, cooperation, reconciliation, and engagement across difference. The architecture links institutional conditions, civic translation, and relational accumulation, while treating Quality of Recognition as a conditioning dimension rather than a fourth construct.

The study extends an earlier conceptual intervention that developed preliminary formulations of these constructs through an analysis of religious institutions as infrastructures of inclusive citizenship in Nigeria (Alao, 2026). That work established the initial conceptual vocabulary; the present study specifies the constructs' boundaries, mechanisms, relationships, and applicability beyond religious institutions. Its contribution is to develop a broader theoretical architecture showing how the three constructs relate.

Research Objectives

The study seeks to:

1. Specify the institutional conditions through which recognition is organised and reproduced.
2. Explain how institutional recognition may become substantive civic standing, voice, participation, and belonging.
3. Theorise how sustained recognitive and participatory practices may generate

relational resources relevant to peacebuilding.

4. Develop an integrated architecture linking these processes and formulate propositions for empirical investigation.

Research Questions

1. How do institutional arrangements organise and reproduce recognition?
2. Through what institutional mechanisms can recognition become civically consequential?
3. Under what conditions can sustained recognitive and participatory practices accumulate/generate relational resources relevant to peacebuilding?
4. How can an integrated architecture link these processes, and what empirical propositions emerge from this framework for further investigation?

The study brings recognition theory into dialogue with institutional sociology, citizenship and belonging scholarship, social-capital theory, and peacebuilding. It advances a conditional rather than deterministic account in which Quality of Recognition shapes whether institutional arrangements support civic translation and the accumulation of peace-relevant relational resources.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Recognition and Institutional Mediation

Recognition theory shows that participation depends not only on material distribution but also on status, identity, social valuation, and treatment. Honneth (1995) locates recognition in affective relations, rights, and social esteem; Taylor (1994) connects it to identity and the accommodation of difference; and Fraser (2000) links it to institutionalised status relations and participatory parity. Despite their differences, these approaches establish recognition as a relational question shaped by power and social standing.

The institutional dimension has received growing attention. Hirvonen (2026) identifies institutional mediation as requiring further theoretical development. Fuller and Gassner (2026) conceptualise recognition institutions as arrangements through which recognition and misrecognition are organised, stabilised, and contested. Kruks-Wisner et al. (2026), meanwhile, show how institutional recognition can increase the visibility and representation of marginalised groups in bureaucratic settings. Recognition is therefore not confined to interpersonal relations; it can be organised through rules, practices, representation, and participation.

This study distinguishes recognition institutions from Recognition Ecology. Recognition institutions are arrangements through which recognition is organised. Recognition Ecology concerns the interaction of institutional norms, practices, meanings, relationships, and participation arrangements that reproduce particular patterns of recognition. The unresolved issue is how these institutional patterns become substantive civic standing, voice, participation, and belonging beyond the immediate institution.

2.2 Institutions, Citizenship and Belonging

Institutional sociology explains how repeated interactions become habitualised and eventually stabilised through norms, roles, expectations, and reciprocal typifications (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Institutions consequently shape membership, authority, participation, and legitimacy, but they can also reproduce unequal standing. Work on belonging reinforces this distinction by showing that formal membership does not necessarily produce substantive inclusion. Yuval-Davis (2006) connects belonging to

social locations, identifications, attachments, and the political processes through which membership and entitlement are constructed.

African scholarship makes the problem more historically specific. Ekeh (1975) shows how differentiated public spheres shape civic obligation and political conduct; Mamdani (1996) examines the colonial differentiation of citizenship, customary authority, and political subjecthood; and Nyamnjoh (2006) explores insider–outsider boundaries in contemporary Southern Africa. Together, these perspectives show why recognition within an institution cannot simply be treated as evidence of wider civic inclusion.

What remains under-specified is civic translation: the institutional capacity through which recognitive practices can become meaningful voice, participation, and belonging in the wider civic community. This is the point at which institutional recognition must be connected to Civic Recognition Capacity.

2.3 Relational Resources and Peacebuilding

Social-capital scholarship identifies networks, trust, reciprocity, and civic cooperation as resources for collective action (Putnam et al., 1993). Peacebuilding scholarship gives these relationships a longer-term significance. Galtung (1969) directs attention to positive peace, while Lederach (1997) places relationships, reconciliation, and sustained social transformation at the centre of peacebuilding. At the same time, relational resources can strengthen internal boundaries when networks remain inward-looking.

The broader idea of peace capital is already present in the literature. Kester (2017) examines peace capital through academic cultural capital within peace institutions, while Njeri (2022) considers how peace-related resources can be accumulated or weakened through everyday practices. Building on this literature without claiming the term itself as novel, the present study defines Institutional Peace Capital more specifically as accumulated, institutionally embedded, and potentially mobilisable relational resources associated with sustained inclusive recognition, reciprocal participation, cooperation, reconciliation, and constructive engagement across difference.

The unresolved question is one of institutional accumulation. Existing scholarship explains the value of relational resources for peacebuilding, but gives less attention to how institutionalised recognition and civic participation create conditions in which such resources can accumulate and remain embedded.

2.4 African/Global South Perspectives and the Unresolved Theoretical Problem

African and Global South scholarship also cautions against assuming a universal institutional pathway from recognition to citizenship and belonging. Ekeh (1975), Mamdani (1996), and Nyamnjoh (2006) show how colonial histories, differentiated authority, and contested membership shape civic standing. Comaroff and Comaroff (2012) argue that Southern contexts should contribute to theory rather than serve only as sites for testing theories developed elsewhere. In Nigeria, Obadare (2007) shows how religious institutions can support civic engagement while also becoming sites of public contestation.

Taken together, these literatures point towards a connected but insufficiently specified sequence: institutional conditions of recognition → civic translation → relational accumulation. The problem is therefore not that recognition, civic membership, and relational resources have been ignored, but that their connections across institutional and civic levels remain unclear. The present study

addresses this gap through Recognition Ecology, Civic Recognition Capacity, and Institutional Peace Capital, with Quality of Recognition treated as a conditioning dimension that shapes how these relationships operate.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a conceptual theory-development design. It does not analyse primary empirical data; instead, it brings established theoretical resources together to specify relationships that remain insufficiently connected in existing scholarship (Jaakkola, 2020). The unit of analysis is the conceptual relationship. The literature provides the basis for defining constructs, identifying mechanisms, distinguishing their boundaries, and deriving propositions. The approach follows established principles of conceptual-framework development (Jabareen, 2009).

Five analytical demands guided the synthesis: institutional organisation of recognition, civic translation, membership and belonging, relational accumulation, and peacebuilding significance. These demands shaped both the selection of literature and the comparisons made across theoretical traditions.

3.2 Literature Selection and Analytical Corpus

The corpus comprises scholarship published between 1966 and 2026. It draws on international scholarship, with particular attention to African and Global South perspectives on authority, membership, citizenship, belonging, and institutional mediation. Sources were included when they addressed recognition, institutions, citizenship, belonging, social capital, or peacebuilding; clarified a relationship relevant to the study; or offered substantive African or Global South perspectives. Sources were excluded when their relevance was tangential, when they duplicated analytical functions already represented, or when they could not contribute to construct definition, differentiation, or relational specification. Selection was therefore purposive rather than exhaustive.

Table 1. Theoretical traditions and their analytical functions

Theoretical tradition	Key sources	Explanatory function
Recognition theory	Honneth (1995); Taylor (1994); Fraser (2000)	Establishes social standing, identity, status, and misrecognition
Recognition and institutional mediation	Hirvonen (2026); Fuller & Gassner (2026); Kruks-Wisner et al. (2026)	Examines how recognition is organised and contested through institutional arrangements
Institutional sociology	Berger & Luckmann (1966)	Explains how repeated relations become patterned and durable
Citizenship and belonging	Yuval-Davis (2006); Ekeh (1975); Mamdani (1996); Nyamnjoh (2006)	Clarifies membership, authority, civic standing, and differentiated belonging
Social capital	Putnam et al. (1993)	Explains relational resources arising through networks, trust, reciprocity, and cooperation
Peacebuilding	Galtung (1969); Lederach (1997); Kester (2017); Njeri (2022)	Establishes the potential peacebuilding significance of relational resources
African/Global South perspectives	Comaroff & Comaroff (2012); Obadare (2007)	Historically situates recognition, authority, membership, and public engagement

Note. Sources may serve more than one analytical function; categories indicate their principal role in the synthesis.

3.3 Institutionally Grounded Analytical Synthesis

The literature was compared across the five analytical demands through thematic cross-referencing. Each source was examined for the role it contributed: condition, mechanism, outcome, or relational resource. Where different traditions addressed the same relationship, their arguments were compared for overlap, complementarity, and tension. The synthesis then moved from identifying theoretical fragmentation to differentiating constructs, specifying relationships, and deriving propositions. This produced the condition–mechanism–resource sequence linking institutional recognition to civic translation and relational accumulation (Jaakkola, 2020; Jabareen, 2009).

3.4 Construct Development and Proposition Derivation

Construct development was guided by conceptual distinctiveness, theoretical grounding, relational utility, and empirical applicability. Recognition Ecology emerged from the institutional organisation and reproduction of recognition; Civic Recognition Capacity from the problem of translating recognition into wider civic standing; and Institutional Peace Capital from the relationship between sustained recognitive participation and accumulated relational resources. Four theoretical propositions followed from these relationships: Proposition 1 (P1) links recognition conditions to civic translation; Proposition 2 (P2) links civic translation to relational accumulation; Proposition 3 (P3) treats Quality of Recognition as a conditioning dimension across these relationships; and Proposition 4 (P4) specifies possible feedback from accumulated relational resources to recognition conditions.

The study is conceptual; thus, the synthesis cannot establish causality or determine the generality of these relationships. Comparative, longitudinal, mixed-method, and other empirical designs are therefore needed to test, refine, qualify, or reject the proposition.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The framework brings recognition theory, institutional sociology, citizenship and belonging scholarship, social-capital theory, and relational peacebuilding into one explanatory sequence. Each tradition does a different job. Recognition theory explains why social standing matters; institutional sociology shows how recognitive relations become patterned and durable; citizenship and belonging scholarship clarifies how those relations may extend into wider civic life; and social-capital and peacebuilding perspectives explain how sustained interaction can generate relational resources with peacebuilding significance. This division provides the theoretical basis for the three constructs developed in Section 5.

4.1 Recognition Theory: Recognition as a Condition of Social Standing

Recognition theory provides the normative and relational starting point, but its major strands emphasise different dimensions. Honneth (1995) links recognition to social relations and self-realisation; Taylor (1994) focuses on identity and the accommodation of difference; and Fraser (2000) shifts attention towards institutionalised status relations and participatory parity. These differences matter here because this study is concerned not only with whether recognition occurs, but with the social position that institutional arrangements make possible.

The present study therefore moves recognition theory beyond a primarily

interpersonal or normative reading. It asks how recognition is organised through institutional norms, practices, relationships, and participation arrangements, and how these patterns become reproducible. Recognition becomes, in this formulation, an institutional condition rather than only a relation between persons. This move provides the theoretical basis for Recognition Ecology.

4.2 Institutional Sociology: Recognition as Institutionally Mediated

Institutional sociology explains how repeated interactions become habitualised and typified before being institutionalised as structures of expectation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This perspective directs attention to the concrete arrangements through which recognition can become durable: rules, routines, roles, narratives, membership practices, leadership arrangements, and participation structures.

Institutionalisation, however, does not make recognition inclusive by itself. The same processes can stabilise practices that widen participation or practices that reproduce exclusion. The distinctive contribution of institutional sociology to this study is therefore its explanation of the link between recognitive conditions and their civic consequences. That mediating problem informs Civic Recognition Capacity, which identifies the institutional mechanisms through which recognition may become civic standing, voice, participation, and belonging.

4.3 Social Capital and Relational Peacebuilding

Social-capital theory identifies networks, trust, reciprocity, and civic cooperation as resources for collective action (Putnam et al., 1993). Peacebuilding scholarship gives these relationships significance beyond immediate cooperation. Galtung (1969) directs attention to the conditions of positive peace, while Lederach (1997) places relationships, reconciliation, and sustained social transformation at the centre of peacebuilding.

This study uses these perspectives to address a further question: how might relational resources develop from sustained recognition and civic participation? Their institutional and recognitive origins are therefore important, not incidental. This provides the basis for Institutional Peace Capital, defined as accumulated, institutionally embedded relational resources that may acquire significance for peaceful coexistence and conflict transformation.

4.4 Integrated Theoretical Lens

The integration is not a mechanical combination of established theories. It connects their distinct explanatory functions across analytical levels. Recognition establishes the significance of social standing; institutional sociology explains how recognitive relations become patterned; citizenship and belonging scholarship clarifies their possible extension into wider civic life; and social-capital and peacebuilding perspectives explain how sustained interaction may accumulate relational resources and why those resources may matter for peace.

The resulting sequence: institutional conditions of recognition → civic translation → relational accumulation is the specific theoretical contribution of the integration. Existing traditions illuminate these elements, but they do not by themselves provide the condition–mechanism–resource architecture developed here. Recognition theory and institutional sociology consequently ground Recognition Ecology; institutional sociology and citizenship and belonging scholarship inform Civic Recognition Capacity; and social-capital and peacebuilding scholarship informs Institutional Peace Capital.

The integrated lens also has limits. The traditions differ in their assumptions about agency, power, normativity, and causation, and their combination does not remove those differences. Institutional processes are also unlikely to follow a simple linear sequence because recognition, participation, and relational resources can influence one another at the same time. The framework therefore specifies a conditional and recursive model, not a causal theory. Its propositions remain open to empirical testing, refinement, qualification, or rejection.

5. THE INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE OF RECOGNITION

The theoretical framework identifies how recognition becomes institutionally patterned, extends into civic life, and may generate relational resources relevant to peacebuilding. This section develops those relationships through three constructs: Recognition Ecology, Civic Recognition Capacity, and Institutional Peace Capital.

5.1 Recognition Ecology

Recognition is shaped by the institutional arrangements through which people gain membership, exercise voice, occupy roles, and interact with others. Recognition Ecology refers to the interconnected norms, practices, relationships, meanings, and participation arrangements through which recognition is enabled, distributed, patterned, and reproduced within an institution. The term ecology emphasises configuration: particular patterns of recognition arise from the interaction of several institutional arrangements rather than from a single rule or encounter.

Four dimensions specify the construct. Normative organisation concerns the values and rules that define legitimate standing. Relational organisation concerns patterns of interaction and authority through which recognition or misrecognition is enacted. Participatory organisation concerns arrangements governing membership, voice, decision-making, and role occupancy. Reproductive capacity concerns whether these patterns become embedded in routines and persist over time.

Recognition Ecology differs from recognition institutions, which are arrangements through which recognition is organised (Fuller & Gassner, 2026). It focuses instead on how those arrangements interact and reproduce particular patterns of recognition. An institution may have a formal recognition mechanism while other practices undermine it. The construct therefore captures the wider configuration in which recognition is sustained, weakened, or contested.

Possible empirical indicators include membership rules, leadership composition, decision-making procedures, narratives concerning difference, participation structures, recognition practices, and responses to contested identities. An ecology may be inclusive, exclusionary, hierarchical, fragmented, or contested. Recognition Ecology is therefore the architecture's institutional condition, not an inherently positive state.

5.2 Civic Recognition Capacity

Recognition within an institution does not automatically produce substantive inclusion. An institution may formally acknowledge equality while restricting voice, limiting access to leadership, or allowing participation only at a symbolic level. Civic Recognition Capacity refers to an institution's capacity to translate recognitive norms and practices into substantive civic standing, participation, voice, and belonging within a wider social community.

The construct extends institutional sociology's concern with organisational

mechanisms by asking what allows recognitive arrangements to become civically consequential. Translation concerns movement from recognitive norms or acknowledgement into institutional practice. Participation concerns meaningful opportunities for voice, representation, contribution, and legitimate role occupancy. Civic extension concerns whether internal recognition and participation can connect with wider civic standing beyond the immediate institution.

Civic Recognition Capacity is a capacity, not an outcome. It is therefore distinct from generic institutional capacity, participation, social inclusion, or citizenship. Possible indicators include accessible decision-making channels, leadership representation, equitable membership procedures, mechanisms for recognising difference, cross-group participation, and opportunities for marginalised members to influence collective decisions. Actual participation and civic belonging are possible outcomes of these mechanisms, rather than measures of the construct itself.

Its operation remains contingent on power and institutional context. Unequal power, organisational interests, institutional inertia, and symbolic recognition may prevent favourable arrangements from producing substantive civic participation. Civic Recognition Capacity therefore occupies the architecture's civic translation position.

5.3 Institutional Peace Capital

Sustained interaction can leave relational resources that extend beyond individual encounters. Institutional Peace Capital refers to relational resources that accumulate through sustained practice, become embedded in institutional relationships and routines, and can potentially be mobilised for peaceful coexistence and conflict transformation. The construct focuses on observable relational properties associated with sustained inclusive recognition and reciprocal participation, rather than treating recognition itself as the resource.

Three properties are central. Accumulation concerns the development of relational resources through repeated interaction rather than isolated encounters. Institutional embeddedness concerns their anchoring in relationships, routines, networks, norms, and institutional memory. Mobilisability concerns the ability to activate these resources during disagreement, tension, or conflict.

This formulation narrows the broader concepts of social capital and peace capital by specifying their institutional setting, recognitive conditions, civic mediation, and potential peacebuilding function. It does not claim novelty for the term peace capital itself; rather, it specifies one institutional pathway through which peace-relevant relational resources may develop (Kester, 2017; Njeri, 2022).

Possible indicators include cross-group networks, reciprocal expectations, trusted dialogue mechanisms, cooperation across difference, established conflict-management relationships, memories of successful reconciliation, and the capacity to activate these resources during periods of tension. Such resources are not inherently peaceful. Strong internal networks may reinforce boundaries against outsiders, while exclusion, institutional failure, or conflict may weaken previously established relationships. Institutional Peace Capital is therefore the architecture's accumulated relational resource, not a predetermined peace outcome.

5.4 Relational Architecture

The three constructs operate at different analytical levels but form a conditional and potentially recursive sequence:

Recognition Ecology → Civic Recognition Capacity → Institutional Peace Capital ↺ Recognition Ecology

Recognition Ecology is the institutional condition; Civic Recognition Capacity is the civic translation mechanism; and Institutional Peace Capital is the accumulated relational resource. The sequence follows the theoretical framework: recognition theory establishes why social standing matters; institutional sociology explains how recognitive arrangements become patterned; citizenship and belonging scholarship informs their civic extension; and social-capital and peacebuilding perspectives explain relational accumulation and its possible peacebuilding significance.

Quality of Recognition operates across these relationships as a conditioning dimension rather than a fourth construct. Recognition that is inclusive, reciprocal, substantive, and participatory should provide more favourable conditions for civic translation and the accumulation of cross-group relational resources than recognition that is selective, hierarchical, symbolic, or exclusionary. Quality of Recognition is therefore treated as a cross-cutting evaluative property of recognitive practice, not as a separately constituted institutional construct.

The architecture is conditional rather than deterministic. A supportive Recognition Ecology may strengthen Civic Recognition Capacity, while effective civic translation may create conditions for relational resources to accumulate and become embedded. Those resources may subsequently reinforce Recognition Ecology through reciprocal norms, trust, institutional memory, and established practices of constructive engagement. Figure 1 represents these relationships; Section 6 translates them into empirically examinable propositions.

Figure 1. Institutional Architecture of Recognition

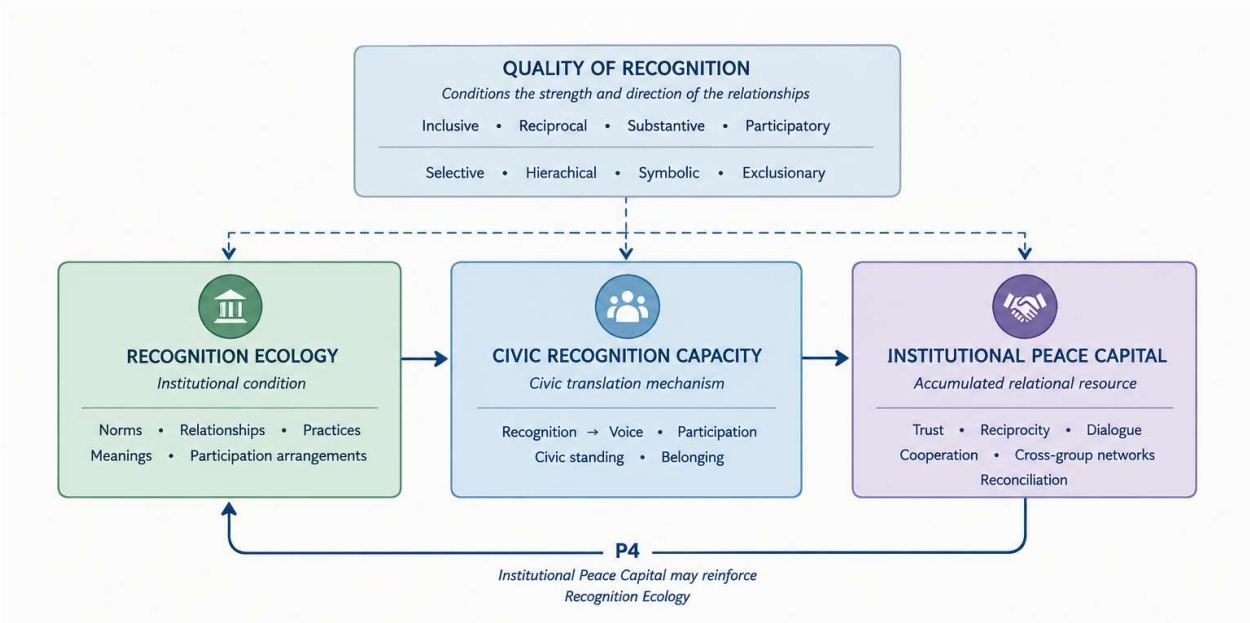


Figure 1. Institutional Architecture of Recognition. The figure positions Recognition Ecology as the institutional condition, Civic Recognition Capacity as the mechanism through which recognition may become civically consequential, and Institutional Peace Capital as the accumulated relational resource. Quality of Recognition operates across the

architecture as a conditioning dimension rather than a fourth construct. The P4 feedback pathway represents the possibility that accumulated relational resources reinforce institutional norms, relationships, practices, and participation arrangements. The architecture therefore specifies a conditional and potentially recursive condition–mechanism–resource sequence, not a deterministic causal pathway.

Note. P1 = Recognition Ecology → Civic Recognition Capacity; P2 = Civic Recognition Capacity → Institutional Peace Capital; P4 = Institutional Peace Capital → Recognition Ecology (feedback). P3 is represented by Quality of Recognition as the conditioning dimension across the P1 and P2 relationships.

The architecture has limits. Its constructs are analytically distinct, but institutional practice may not keep them separate: recognition, participation, and relational accumulation can occur simultaneously and influence one another. The model proposes theoretically grounded relationships rather than establishing causality, and their applicability may differ across institutional types and historical contexts. Empirical research should therefore examine both successful civic translation and cases in which recognition remains symbolic or exclusionary, or fails to generate relational resources that extend across group boundaries.

6. PROPOSITIONS AND INTEGRATIVE MODEL

The three constructs developed above: Recognition Ecology, Civic Recognition Capacity, and Institutional Peace Capital provide the basis for four propositions. These propositions specify relationships that can be examined empirically; they are not presented as established causal findings.

6.1 Propositions

Proposition 1 (P1): Institutional conditions and Civic Recognition Capacity

Institutions characterised by more inclusive norms, reciprocal relations, and meaningful opportunities for participation are expected to exhibit stronger Civic Recognition Capacity.

Recognition Ecology provides the institutional conditions for civic translation. Where institutional arrangements recognise diverse identities, facilitate voice, and support meaningful membership, they create greater scope for recognition to become substantive civic standing and participation.

Proposition 2 (P2): Civic translation and Institutional Peace Capital

Higher Civic Recognition Capacity is expected to increase the likelihood that sustained institutional interaction will generate Institutional Peace Capital.

Meaningful participation creates opportunities for trust, reciprocity, dialogue, cooperation, and interaction across group boundaries. When these relationships become embedded in institutional routines and networks, they may provide resources that can be mobilised during disagreement or tension. Participation organised through domination or exclusion may instead strengthen internal cohesion without producing comparable cross-boundary resources.

Proposition 3 (P3): Quality of Recognition as a conditioning dimension

The relationships between Recognition Ecology and Civic Recognition Capacity and between Civic Recognition Capacity and Institutional Peace Capital are expected to be stronger where recognition is inclusive, reciprocal, substantive, and participatory than where it is selective, hierarchical, symbolic, or exclusionary.

Quality of Recognition therefore conditions the strength of both relationships rather than constituting a fourth construct. Institutional acknowledgement alone does not amount to substantive recognition; its quality may shape whether institutional arrangements support civic translation and whether participation contributes to the accumulation of peace-relevant relational resources.

Proposition 4 (P4): Recursive institutional reinforcement

Institutional Peace Capital accumulated through sustained inclusive practice may reinforce Recognition Ecology by strengthening relational trust, reciprocal norms, institutional memory, and mechanisms for constructive engagement across difference.

P4 introduces the architecture's recursive dimension. Accumulated relational resources may strengthen conditions for subsequent recognition, while exclusion, institutional breakdown, or conflict may weaken those resources and interrupt the feedback process.

6.2 Integrative Model

Figure 2 translates the four propositions into an integrative model for empirical examination. Quality of Recognition operates across the model as a conditioning dimension, while the three principal constructs retain distinct roles: Recognition Ecology is the institutional condition, Civic Recognition Capacity the civic translation mechanism, and Institutional Peace Capital the accumulated relational resource. The feedback pathway represents P4.

Figure 2. Integrative Model and Empirical Testing Pathways

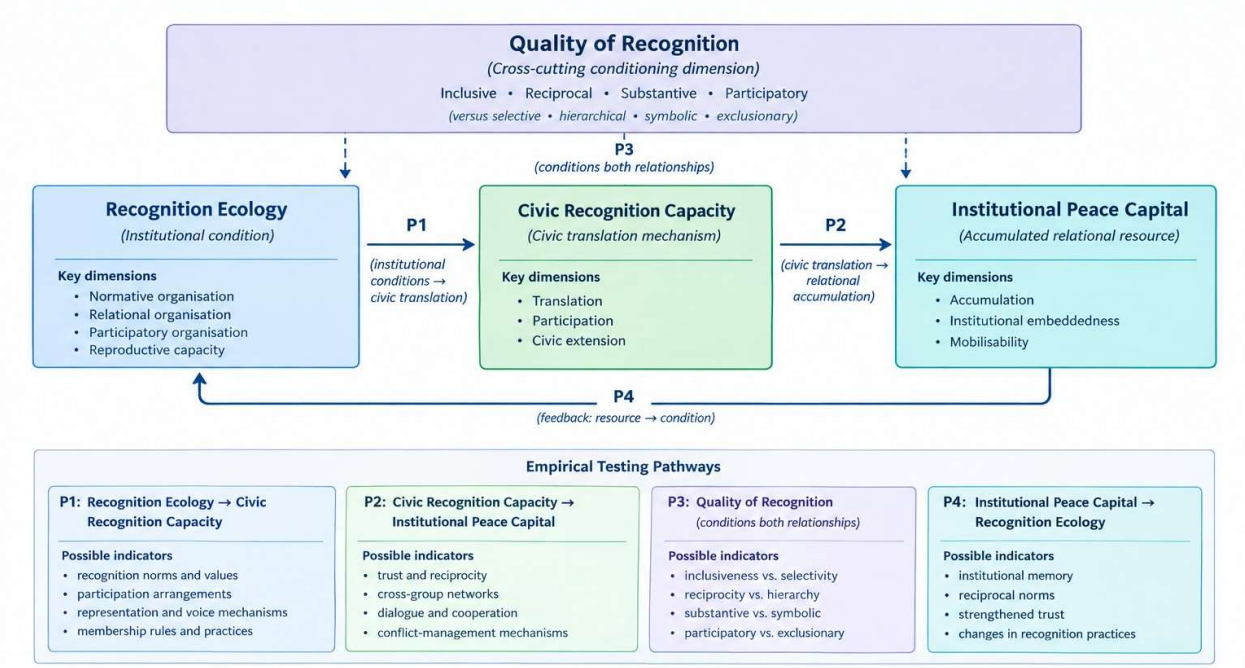


Figure 2. Integrative Model and Empirical Testing Pathways. The figure translates the institutional architecture into proposed relationships (P1-P4) and indicates possible empirical indicators for examining each proposition. Quality of Recognition conditions the relationship between Recognition Ecology and Civic Recognition Capacity (P1) and

between Civic Recognition Capacity and Institutional Peace Capital (P2). P4 represents the potential feedback from accumulated relational resources to institutional conditions. The model is conditional and recursive, not a deterministic causal sequence.

Note. P1 = Recognition Ecology → Civic Recognition Capacity; P2 = Civic Recognition Capacity → Institutional Peace Capital; P3 = Quality of Recognition (conditions P1 and P2); P4 = Institutional Peace Capital → Recognition Ecology (feedback).

6.3 Empirical Testing of the Propositions

The propositions call for different forms of empirical investigation. P1 could be examined through comparative case studies, institutional surveys, or mixed-method research assessing recognition norms, participation arrangements, representation, and mechanisms of civic voice. P2 could be investigated longitudinally or through process tracing to examine whether sustained civic participation is associated with trust, reciprocity, cross-group networks, and other indicators of Institutional Peace Capital. P3 could be examined comparatively across institutions characterised by substantive and reciprocal recognition and those marked by symbolic, selective, hierarchical, or exclusionary recognition. P4 requires longitudinal or repeated-measure designs capable of examining whether accumulated relational resources subsequently alter institutional norms, routines, and recognition practices. Network analysis could further assess whether relational resources become embedded across institutional and group boundaries.

These approaches do not assume that the propositions are correct. Their purpose is to test, qualify, refine, or reject the relationships specified by the conceptual architecture.

7. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESEARCH AGENDA

The central theoretical contribution of this study is a condition–mechanism–resource architecture linking institutional recognition, civic translation, and relational accumulation. Recognition Ecology identifies the institutional conditions through which recognition is organised and reproduced; Civic Recognition Capacity explains how those conditions may become civic standing and participation; and Institutional Peace Capital captures relational resources that may accumulate through sustained practice.

7.1 Recognition Theory

Recognition Ecology extends recognition analysis from whether recognition occurs to the institutional arrangements through which patterns of recognition are organised and reproduced. It brings norms, relationships, practices, meanings, and participation arrangements into view and shows how their interaction can sustain or contest recognition.

7.2 Institutional Sociology

Civic Recognition Capacity adds a recognition-specific dimension to institutional analysis. It focuses on how institutional arrangements can translate recognition into meaningful voice, participation, civic standing, and belonging. This specifies a link between institutionalised recognition and wider civic consequences that generic accounts of institutional capacity do not capture.

7.3 Citizenship and Belonging

The architecture distinguishes formal membership and symbolic acknowledgement from meaningful participation and recognised civic standing. This distinction matters in African and Global South contexts, where historically constituted arrangements of authority, membership, and belonging can

shape who is recognised as a legitimate participant. These contexts can therefore expose assumptions about membership and authority that remain less visible when recognition is treated as a universal institutional process. The framework does not assume identical civic consequences across contexts.

7.4 Peacebuilding

Institutional Peace Capital specifies a possible pathway through which sustained recognitive and participatory practice may generate relational resources relevant to peaceful coexistence and conflict transformation. It connects their recognitive origin, civic mediation, institutional embeddedness, accumulation, and potential mobilisation. The framework also recognises that institutional relationships can strengthen internal cohesion while reinforcing boundaries against other groups.

7.5 Theory Building

The architecture connects three analytical levels:

Recognition Ecology → Civic Recognition Capacity → Institutional Peace Capital

Recognition Ecology is the institutional condition; Civic Recognition Capacity is the civic translation mechanism; and Institutional Peace Capital is the accumulated relational resource. Quality of Recognition conditions the first two relationships, while Institutional Peace Capital may feed back into Recognition Ecology through reciprocal norms, trust, institutional memory, and constructive engagement. The framework is therefore conditional and recursive, rather than deterministic.

Its limitations are equally important. Recognition, participation, and relational accumulation may occur simultaneously, making the proposed sequence less orderly in practice. The study does not establish causality, and the constructs may operate differently across institutional types, historical contexts, and analytical levels. The propositions are therefore theoretically derived expectations requiring empirical scrutiny.

7.6 Research Agenda

Future research should examine the architecture across religious, educational, migrant, civil-society, political, and community institutions. Comparative case studies and institutional surveys can examine variation in Recognition Ecology, civic translation, participation arrangements, representation, and civic voice.

Longitudinal and process-tracing research can investigate whether changes in Civic Recognition Capacity are associated with changes in trust, reciprocity, cross-group networks, and other indicators of Institutional Peace Capital. P3 invites comparative examination of substantive and reciprocal recognition alongside symbolic, selective, hierarchical, or exclusionary forms. Repeated-measure designs can investigate whether accumulated relational resources subsequently alter institutional norms and practices.

Social-network analysis can assess whether relational resources become embedded across institutional and group boundaries. Mixed-method research can examine failed civic translation and cases where relational resources are mobilised across, or against, social boundaries. Such research can test, qualify, refine, or reject the proposed architecture.

8. CONCLUSION

Recognition does not by itself produce civic inclusion or peacebuilding value. The problem addressed in this study is how institutionally organised recognition can become consequential beyond the immediate institutional setting. The study develops an

Institutional Architecture of Recognition linking Recognition Ecology → Civic Recognition Capacity → Institutional Peace Capital, with possible feedback from accumulated relational resources to the institutional ecology.

The study's contribution to knowledge is the specification of a condition–mechanism–resource architecture that connects processes often treated separately. Recognition Ecology identifies the institutional conditions through which recognition is organised and reproduced; Civic Recognition Capacity explains how those conditions may become civic standing, voice, participation, and belonging; and Institutional Peace Capital identifies relational resources that may accumulate through sustained inclusive practice. Quality of Recognition conditions these relationships, drawing attention to whether recognition is substantive and reciprocal or selective and exclusionary.

The architecture is a theory-development contribution, not a settled causal model. Its propositions require empirical examination across institutional and historical settings. Comparative, longitudinal, mixed-method, process-tracing, and network-based research can examine where civic translation succeeds or fails, whether relational resources extend across social boundaries, and whether they subsequently reshape institutional recognition. Such research can test, qualify, refine, or reject the proposed architecture. Bottom of Form

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