

Reconstructing Pluralism and Multiculturalism: An Integrative Systematic Study through Multilayered Recognition & Justice Framework

**Tatang Muh Nasir¹, Feri Indra Irawan², Wilam Nafilah Robaeah³,
Dadang Komara⁴**

^{1, 2} UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia

³ STAI Al-Badar Cipulus Purwakarta, Indonesia

⁴ Universitas Islam Darussalam Ciamis, Indonesia

¹ Email: tatangmuhnasir25@gmail.com

² Email: feri.indra@uinsgd.ac.id

³ Email: wilamnafilah@albadar.ac.id

⁴ Email: dadangkomara52@gmail.com

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Abstract

Despite intensive debates between collective-identity multiculturalism and interaction-focused interculturalism, contemporary literature lacks an applicable theoretical model that systematically bridges the divide between symbolic cultural recognition and structural, policy-based justice. To address this research gap, this study develops a novel conceptual model named the Multilayered Recognition & Justice Framework (MRJF). Utilizing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) guided by PRISMA 2020, we screened 138 Scopus-indexed articles (2020–2025), yielding 32 core papers for qualitative thematic synthesis. The synthesis process mapped these articles into four interconnected dimensions: intercultural dialogue (relational software), symbolic recognition (dignity legitimacy), structural justice (resource distribution), and political representation (policy sustainability) which were then integrated to construct the layered operational structure of the MRJF. Unlike existing fragmented models that focus on single-aspect diversity management, the novelty of the MRJF lies in its capacity to treat these four dimensions as a mutually reinforcing, cohesive policy continuum. Concluding this analysis, this study offers a significant theoretical contribution to the literature on pluralism and multiculturalism by transcending the traditional multicultural-intercultural dichotomy, providing scholars and policymakers with a transformative, dual-layered (hardware and software) evaluative instrument to design highly inclusive, resilient social and educational spaces.

Keywords

Diversity Policy; MRJF; Multiculturalism; Pluralism; SLR

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INTRODUCTION

Pluralism and multiculturalism have taken center stage in global public policy discourse, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that accelerated cross-border mobility and expanded social structures into more complex frameworks (Mansouri & Elias, 2025; Suhendi et al., 2025). Under these globalized conditions, contemporary societies are increasingly characterized by "super-diversity" defined as a dynamic multidimensional state of demographic complexity where variables such as migration channels, legal status, and socio-economic positions intersect to challenge existing value, political, and legal systems (Hasbiyallah & Nasir, 2023; Sabarudin, Erihadiana, et al., 2025; Vertovec, 2022). Historically, this rapid demographic evolution has forced countries with complex histories of colonialism and migration such as the UK, Canada, or Australia to search for flexible, fair, and contextualized policy responses to adapt to diverse identities (Comparative Migration Studies). However, despite widespread policy experimentation, the governance of super-diversity remains theoretically polarized, limiting its effectiveness in creating long-term social cohesion.

At the theoretical level, the multiculturalism and interculturalism approaches represent two dominant poles that are intensively debated. In this study, multiculturalism is conceptualized as a paradigm emphasizing the formal recognition of collective cultural identities and group-differentiated rights, whereas interculturalism is defined as an interactionist approach focusing on dialogic exchange, mutual understanding, and civic integration in shared public spaces (Elias & Mansouri, 2020; Kastoryano, 2018; Virgona et al., 2025). While recent studies suggest that these two models should be complementary rather than dichotomous, existing governance frameworks fail to bridge their conceptual divisions (Comparative Migration Studies). Critics of the "multi-nation" model suggest that cultural recognition without structural justice reinforces social segmentation, creating a facade of "symbolic inclusion" where recognized group identities are celebrated without providing marginalized communities with equal access to resources and decision-making (Ahmad et al., 2023; Irwan et al., 2023; Modood, 2011; Sechandini et al., 2023).

This persistent fragmentation highlights a critical research gap: existing pluralist frameworks lack the conceptual tools to integrate the relational, symbolic, material, and political dimensions of diversity into a unified, actionable model. Within the current literature, symbolic recognition (defined as the public validation of cultural dignity through symbols, minority languages, or festive accommodations) is rarely aligned with structural justice (defined as the equitable redistribution of socio-economic resources and educational opportunities) (Mustikasari, 2018). Furthermore, political representation (defined as the formal inclusion and legislative empowerment of marginalized groups) remains detached from grassroots intercultural dialogue (defined as sustained, egalitarian relational exchanges between diverse groups) (Elias & Mansouri, 2020; Kymlicka, 2018). Consequently, because most studies focus narrowly on isolated dimensions, pluralism policies implemented in various countries remain patchy, reactive, and lacking in systemic continuity (Mupavayenda & Masikane, 2023).

To substantiate this gap, a comparative look at established frameworks reveals their inherent conceptual limitations. For instance, Will Kymlicka's multicultural citizenship focuses extensively on political rights and structural boundaries but lacks operational mechanisms to foster organic, everyday cross-cultural dialogue. Conversely, Fethi Mansouri's intercultural dialogue index (ICDI) successfully measures the relational software of diversity but does not systematically link these communication indicators to structural resource redistribution or formal legislative quotas (Mansouri & Elias, 2021). Similarly, Nancy Fraser's dual-perspective model of justice addresses the tension between cultural recognition and economic redistribution, yet it lacks an explicit, integrated roadmap for grassroots interfaith and cross-cultural communication in public and educational spaces (Anas et al., 2025; Kuswandi & Nasir, 2025).

In response to these limitations, this study introduces the Multilayered Recognition & Justice Framework (MRJF) as an integrative, multi-level theoretical innovation (Mansouri & Elias, 2025). The MRJF systematically positions itself within the existing literature by structurally coordinating the soft "social software" (intercultural dialogue and symbolic recognition) with the hard "structural hardware" (structural justice and political representation) of diversity governance (Aliyah et al., 2024; Sabarudin, Nasir, et al., 2025). The framework functions as an interconnected, cumulative system: intercultural dialogue builds mutual trust, symbolic recognition legitimizes cultural dignity, structural justice ensures socio-economic equity, and political representation guarantees long-term policy sustainability (Elias & Mansouri, 2020). This layered structure provides clear conceptual guidance for designing pluralism policies that are not only responsive but also transformative in creating sustainable social justice (Kalogerogianni, 2025).

To construct and validate the MRJF, a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using the PRISMA 2020 protocol is uniquely justified (Page et al., 2021). Rather than acting as a mere descriptive synthesis of existing evidence, this SLR is employed as a rigorous, meta-theoretical diagnostic tool to systematically evaluate how these four dimensions have been empirically discussed in the Scopus database between 2020 and 2025. By identifying patterns, contradictions, and empirical connections across 32 rigorously selected articles, the SLR approach provides an objective, evidence-based foundation to construct the MRJF. This methodology ensures that the proposed framework is not speculative, but directly derived from a global synthesis of contemporary empirical realities of diversity management.

By developing the MRJF through this systematic approach, this manuscript makes three distinct contributions to the existing body of literature: Theoretical Contribution: It bridges the multicultural-intercultural impasse by formulating a holistic, dual-layered model (software and hardware) that explains how dialogue, recognition, redistribution, and representation mutually reinforce one another to cultivate resilient social cohesion (Hermawan et al., 2025). Methodological Contribution: It demonstrates a constructive application of the SLR method, illustrating how systematic reviews can be utilized as generative, meta-theoretical tools to build new conceptual frameworks rather than simply summarizing

historical data (Page et al., 2021). Practical Contribution: It delivers an evaluative and operational instrument for educators, civil society actors, and policymakers to diagnose systemic exclusions in public education and urban spaces, facilitating the design of more equitable and inclusive diversity policies (Kalogerogianni, 2025; Mateo-Babiano & Fong, 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

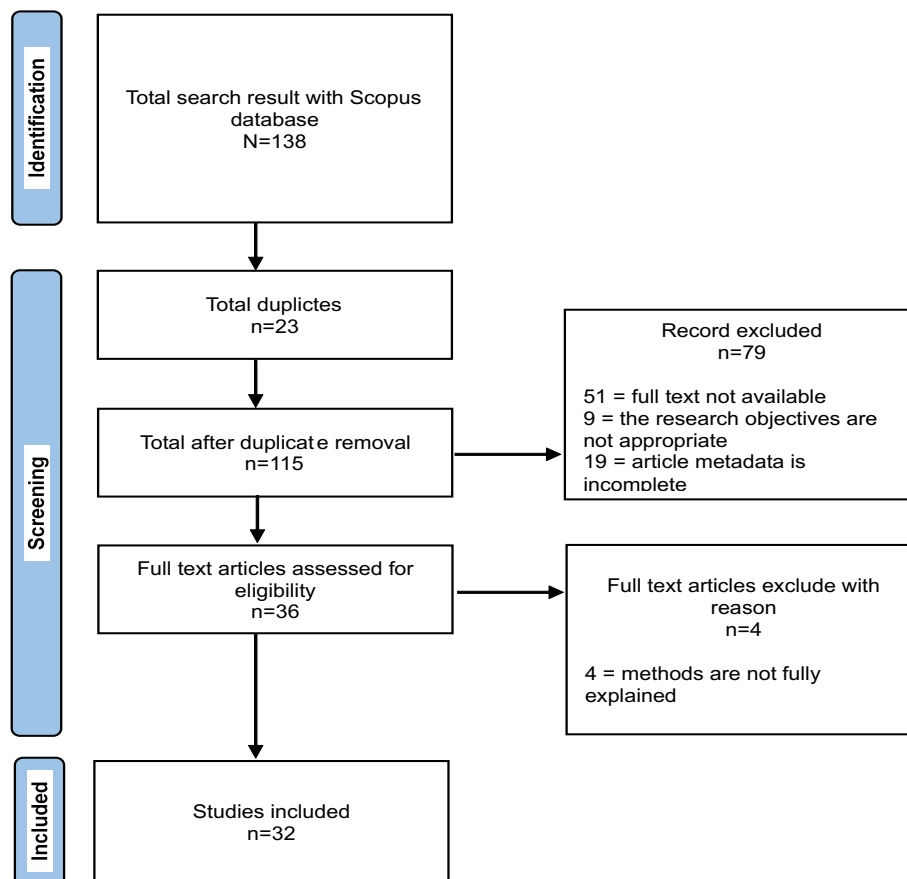
This study employs a qualitative design featuring a systematic literature review (SLR) guided strictly by the PRISMA 2020 protocol (Page et al., 2021). Methodologically, this study is grounded in documentary analysis defined as a systematic procedure for evaluating printed and electronic documents to extract meaningful qualitative evidence and thematic content analysis, defined as a rigorous method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting recurring patterns (themes) within qualitative data. The literature search was systematically executed on November 15, 2025, across the Scopus database using the specific Boolean search query: pluralism, multiculturalism, governance, diversity policy, and intercultural dialogue. The search was restricted to English-language journal articles published between 2020 and 2025; this temporal range (2020–2025) was strategically selected to capture the rapid evolution of "super-diversity" discourses and transformative policy paradigm shifts that accelerated globally in the immediate post-pandemic era (Mansouri & Elias, 2025). Through a rigorous multi-stage screening process, a total of 138 initial documents were identified, which were systematically screened based on predefined inclusion criteria (original research papers focusing on systemic diversity governance, policy integration, or structural equity) and exclusion criteria (editorial notes, book reviews, or non-peer-reviewed papers), resulting in 32 core articles eligible for complete documentary analysis (Page et al., 2021).

To extract deep insights from the selected papers, this study systematically implemented the thematic content analysis model by Miles & Huberman, which consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During the data reduction stage, the researchers systematically coded the text segments of the 32 selected articles. The four core analytical dimensions intercultural dialogue, symbolic recognition, structural justice, and political representation were established *a priori* based on the foundational theories of pluralism and justice governance (Elias & Mansouri, 2020). These *a priori* dimensions were subsequently refined inductively during the coding process to accommodate emerging empirical nuances from the contemporary literature. In the data display stage, the synthesized qualitative data were organized and structured using matrix tables and visual networks to systematically map the conceptual interconnections between the four dimensions (Mansouri & Elias, 2025). Finally, in the conclusion drawing and verification stage, the synthesized matrix was used to build the conceptual architecture of the Multilayered Recognition & Justice Framework (MRJF), confirming its validity through rigorous internal peer debriefing.

To ensure the trustworthiness, reliability, and validity of the thematic content analysis, the coding process was conducted in pairs by two independent

researchers. Prior to coding, a pilot coding session was performed on 10% of the articles to align interpretations. To guarantee coding consistency and resolve any coding disagreements, a structured consensus-seeking protocol was implemented: whenever a discrepancy in theme assignment or textual interpretation occurred between the two primary researchers, a third independent senior researcher was consulted to facilitate a collaborative review until a 100% inter-coder agreement was reached. This multi-layered investigator triangulation minimized individual subjectivity, thereby ensuring that the thematic synthesis and the subsequent development of the MRJF were rigorously grounded in the empirical literature and free from analytical bias.

Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart



RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The thematic synthesis of the selected literature reveals a distinct convergence of contemporary scholarship around four foundational dimensions of diversity governance, which emerged dynamically through a multi-stage qualitative coding of the 32 analyzed articles. During the initial open coding stage, raw textual data detailing grass-roots community interactions, systemic institutional barriers, and socio-economic struggles were systematically extracted and subsequently grouped during axial coding based on their conceptual intersections. Specifically, codes tracking face-to-face communication, prejudice

reduction, and shared public spaces consolidated into the theme of Intercultural Dialogue (ICD) (10 articles); codes mapping identity validation, minority language accommodations, and public symbols crystallized into Cultural and Symbolic Recognition (8 articles); codes addressing systemic resource disparities and unequal public service access emerged as Structural Justice (7 articles); and codes concerning formal legislative power, minority quotas, and decision-making mechanisms clustered into Political Representation (7 articles). Rather than operating in isolation, these four synthesized themes form a cumulative, interdependent continuum progressing from relational "software" to institutional "hardware" that directly establishes the multi-level conceptual architecture of the proposed Multilayered Recognition & Justice Framework (MRJF), as systematically structured in Table 1.

The qualitative thematic analysis of the 32 reviewed papers reveals a highly integrated landscape of diversity governance, demonstrating how relational practices and institutional mechanisms cross-cut different geographic and socio-political settings. Rather than treating the four emerging themes as isolated categories, the synthesized literature highlights profound conceptual alignments, divergent focus areas, and synergistic patterns across the studied publications.

Relational Foundation: Intercultural Dialogue (ICD)

Intercultural Dialogue (ICD) emerges as the analytical cornerstone of the synthesized literature, not merely due to its high thematic frequency (10 articles), but because of its foundational position within the social software of diversity. Methodologically, scholars agree that dialogue is the primary mechanism that translates abstract tolerance into active, interpersonal engagement.

A synthesis of the literature reveals two primary patterns in how ICD is studied: The Relational-Cohesion Pattern: Studies such as Elias and Mansouri (2020) and Sweid and Elias (2021) conceptualize dialogue as a dynamic communicative tool designed to dismantle structural prejudices and build cross-cultural trust within everyday public, educational, and local spaces. Under this pattern, dialogue is viewed as an open-ended social process. The Policy-Intervention Pattern: Conversely, empirical studies evaluating integration programs in Canada and Australia analyze ICD as a structured, state-sponsored administrative instrument.

While both patterns share the goal of reducing intergroup tension, they differ in execution: the Relational-Cohesion model relies on grassroots, organic interaction, whereas the Policy-Intervention model emphasizes institutionalized, top-down programs. Despite these differences in scale, the overarching consensus across all 10 articles is that without active relational dialogue to build mutual trust, any top-down diversity policy will fail to gain societal legitimacy.

Dignity Legitimacy: Cultural and Symbolic Recognition

Once interpersonal trust is initiated through dialogue, it must be reinforced by formal status, leading to the second major theme: Cultural and Symbolic Recognition (8 articles). The synthesized literature reveals a strong similarity in how scholars conceptualize symbolic recognition such as national holiday

accommodations, support for minority languages, and visual representations in public urban areas as the fundamental basis for establishing minority dignity.

However, the literature exhibits a critical conceptual tension regarding the limits of this dimension: "Soft Inclusion" vs. Structural Barrier: Scholars like Chin and Levey (2022) argue that symbolic accommodations act as a powerful form of "soft inclusion" that substantially enhances a citizen's sense of belonging and institutional trust. The Tokenism Critique: In contrast, other critical studies in the dataset caution that symbolic recognition can easily degenerate into "empty tokenism" or a superficial mask that hides deep-seated material inequalities if it is not accompanied by socio-economic redistribution. This tension demonstrates that symbolic dignity and structural resource allocation are inherently linked; celebrating cultural difference in public symbols is insufficient if those celebrated groups remain socio-economically marginalized.

Institutional Hardware: Structural Justice and Political Representation

To prevent the pitfalls of empty symbolism, the reviewed literature shifts toward the hard institutional mechanisms of diversity governance, represented by Structural Justice (7 articles) and Political Representation (7 articles). Structural Justice: The literature on structural justice focuses heavily on material redistribution, advocating for affirmative actions, economic support, and equitable access to public services and education to correct historical and systemic socioeconomic gaps. Political Representation: Conversely, studies on political representation focus on the distribution of decision-making power, emphasizing the necessity of formal political quotas, consultative councils, and active legislative presence.

The primary similarity between these two themes is their mutual focus on institutional "hardware" transforming diversity from a moral preference into a legally binding, equitable reality. Their main difference lies in their operational targets: structural justice aims to alleviate material disparities, whereas political representation aims to secure systemic power. The literature demonstrates that these two dimensions are highly dependent on one another; legislative representation is the primary political engine required to enact and protect redistributive justice policies, while structural equity is necessary to enable marginalized groups to participate effectively in political processes.

Synthesized Coherence: The Cumulative Continuum

Ultimately, the synthesis of these four themes reveals that they do not operate as parallel, independent strategies, but rather as a highly coherent, cumulative continuum of diversity governance. They are conceptually mapped into a dual-layered structure: intercultural dialogue serves as the initial spark that builds grassroots trust; this trust is formalized through symbolic recognition to establish dignity; this dignity is protected from material marginalization through structural justice; and the entire ecosystem is made sustainable over time through formal political representation. By identifying these deep functional linkages, the SLR results demonstrate that effective diversity governance requires the simultaneous, coordinated integration of all four dimensions. This structural

continuum directly justifies and forms the conceptual architecture of the proposed Multilayered Recognition & Justice Framework (MRJF).

Table 1. Synthesis of SLR Findings and Conceptual Dimensions

Main Theme	Representative Studies	Key Synthesized Findings (Thematic Core)	Core Political Tension	Socio-
Intercultural Dialogue (ICD)	Elias & Mansouri (2020); Sweid & Elias (2021)	Functions as the primary relational "software" of pluralism. It builds mutual trust, reduces intergroup prejudice, and transforms passive tolerance into active, empathetic civic engagement in shared public and educational spaces.	Grassroots Engagement vs. Top-Down Mandate: Tension between spontaneous, community-led dialogue and institutionalized, state-sponsored integration programs.	
Cultural & Symbolic Recognition	Chin & Levey (2022); Tremblay & Giroux (2023)	Validates minority identities in the public sphere through symbolic policies (e.g., regional language services, public holidays, cultural monuments) to cultivate a deep sense of collective ownership.	"Soft Inclusion" vs. "Tokenism": Tension between symbolic recognition that successfully builds institutional trust and superficial "tokenism" that masks ongoing material inequalities.	
Structural Justice	Mustikasari (2018); Safdar et al. (2024)	Constitutes the material "hardware" of diversity governance. It targets systematic socio-economic redistribution through affirmative action, educational access, and the equitable allocation of public resources.	Distributive Equity vs. Structural Inertia: Conflict between redistributive policy interventions and systemic socio-economic structures that protect dominant group privileges.	
Political Representation	Roberts & Kymlicka (2023)	Secures the formal legislative power	Descriptive Representation vs.	

and sustainability of inclusion policies by institutionalizing minority representation quotas, advisory councils, and direct participation in decision-making.	Substantive Influence: Tension between the mere numerical presence of minority groups in public institutions and their actual power to influence policy outcomes.
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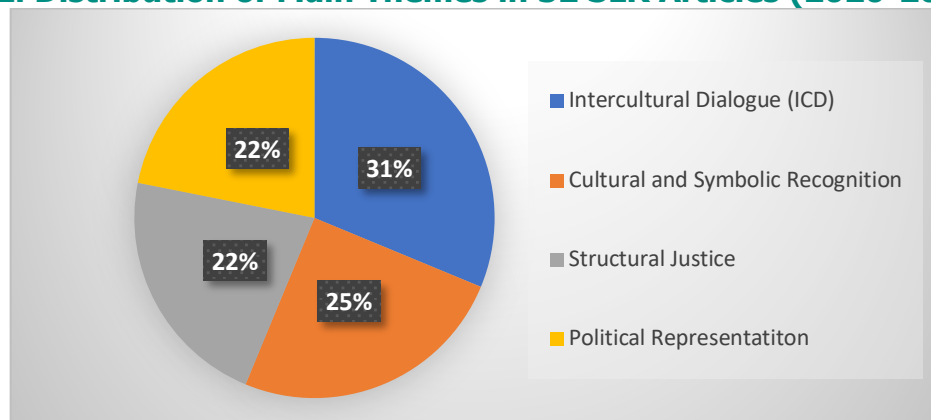
Interpretive Synthesis: The Software-Hardware Interplay

Interpreting the data in Table 1 reveals that the success of contemporary pluralism depends on the continuous feedback loop between its "social software" (Intercultural Dialogue and Symbolic Recognition) and its "policy hardware" (Structural Justice and Political Representation). The literature demonstrates that when states implement these dimensions in isolation, diversity governance inevitably falters due to unresolved socio-political tensions.

For instance, focusing exclusively on the relational software (dialogue and symbols) without reinforcing it with policy hardware (redistribution and representation) creates a highly fragile social peace. While grassroots dialogue (ICD) and the celebration of minority heritage (Symbolic Recognition) are highly effective at building initial trust and dignity, they remain vulnerable to the critiques of "empty tokenism". If marginalized communities are symbolically celebrated but continue to face systemic exclusion from quality education, economic opportunities, and formal legislative channels, their initial institutional trust quickly turns into systemic alienation.

Conversely, attempting to enforce policy hardware (Structural Justice and Political Representation) without cultivating the necessary social software (dialogue and mutual trust) leads to severe implementation barriers. Top-down affirmative actions or legislative quotas for minorities, when implemented in a polarized social environment lacking active cross-cultural communication, often trigger intense social backlash and meritocratic resentment from majority groups. Without the trust built through intercultural dialogue, redistributive policies are easily framed as unfair privileges rather than essential corrections to structural injustice.

Ultimately, this interpretive synthesis shows that these four dimensions are fundamentally interdependent and cumulative. Relational dialogue creates the mutual trust necessary to legitimize symbolic recognition. Once cultural dignity is recognized, it demands structural protection through the fair distribution of material resources, which in turn must be protected and sustained through formal legislative representation. This critical interdependence is precisely what justifies the structured, integrated design of the Multilayered Recognition & Justice Framework (MRJF).

Figure 2. Distribution of Main Themes in 32 SLR Articles (2020-2025)

Source: SLR with the PRISMA 2020 approach to the Scopus database

Rather than merely illustrating a numerical breakdown of the reviewed literature, the thematic distribution in Figure 2 reveals critical structural characteristics of current academic discourse that directly justify the development of the Multilayered Recognition & Justice Framework (MRJF). The dominant shares of Intercultural Dialogue (31.25%) and Cultural & Symbolic Recognition (25%) highlight a significant scholarly bias toward the "social software" of diversity governance, indicating that contemporary research is heavily concentrated on relational, communicative, and identity-validation aspects. While these soft dimensions are vital for grassroots trust, their over-representation explains why global diversity policies often remain normatively strong but operationally weak, frequently sliding into symbolic tokenism. Conversely, the smaller, fragmented shares allocated to the institutional "hardware" of pluralism Structural Justice (21.8%) and Political Representation (21.8%) expose a critical scholarly gap, revealing that material redistribution and formal legislative empowerment are often treated as secondary or isolated issues. Ultimately, this academic imbalance directly supports the primary objective of this study, confirming that governing super-diversity through a single-track approach is fundamentally inadequate and solidifying the rationale for the MRJF to integrate these four fragmented dimensions into a cohesive, mutually reinforcing, and highly operational policy continuum.

Figure 2. Distribution of main themes in 32 articles resulting from a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) published in Scopus journals during the period 2020–2025. Rather than serving as a passive visual description, the thematic distribution in Figure 2 exposes a deep conceptual fragmentation within contemporary literature, highlighting a critical need to understand how these four dimensions dynamically interact before they can be integrated. The conceptual relationship among these themes is fundamentally cumulative: grassroots intercultural dialogue (31.25%) builds the initial relational trust required to legitimize cultural and symbolic recognition (25%) in the public sphere; yet, this symbolic dignity remains highly vulnerable to superficial tokenism unless it is anchored by structural justice (21.8%) to ensure material socio-economic redistribution. To guarantee the long-term protection and legal sustainability of these redistributive policies, formal political representation (21.8%) must be

established as the final legislative anchor. Stacking these four historically isolated dimensions sequentially progressing from relational software (dialogue and recognition) to institutional hardware (redistribution and representation) directly bridges the traditional multicultural-intercultural impasse, thereby providing the explicit conceptual integration that constructs and validates the Multilayered Recognition & Justice Framework (MRJF).

The critical synthesis of the 32 reviewed articles elevates Intercultural Dialogue (ICD) from a mere communicative instrument into the core relational "software" that dynamically anchors the entire Multilayered Recognition & Justice Framework (MRJF). While foundational literature positions active engagement in local, school-based, and interfaith dialogue forums as a key mechanism for generating social cohesion and reducing group prejudices the synthesized evidence from this study goes further by demonstrating how these grassroots communicative dynamics are structurally interdependent with institutional outcomes (Efruan & Dami, 2019; Elias & Mansouri, 2020). Specifically, the systematic review shows that the transformative social trust and shared moral values generated through structured cross-cultural interactions do not operate in a vacuum; rather, they serve as the necessary cognitive precursor that legitimizes "hard" policy interventions, such as symbolic recognition and structural resource redistribution (Hermawan et al., 2025; Jaenudin et al., 2023; Mansouri & Elias, 2025). Without this organic relational foundation, state-mandated diversity policies are frequently perceived by dominant groups as unfair impositions, which triggers socio-political backlash. Consequently, our findings strengthen the MRJF by showing that ICD is not merely an isolated educational tool for tolerance, but a strategic social mechanism that builds the cultural readiness and grassroots legitimacy required to implement and sustain redistributive justice and formal political representation.

The inclusion of Islamic theological perspectives via Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13) which highlights that human diversity in gender, tribe, and nationality is divinely ordained specifically for mutual acquaintance (*li-ta'arafu*) serves as a robust ontological foundation that strengthens the relational software of the Multilayered Recognition & Justice Framework (MRJF). In a scholarly context, this Quranic imperative transcends mere normative tolerance; it provides a deep-seated ethical rationale for Intercultural Dialogue by conceptualizing cross-cultural engagement as a spiritual and social necessity rather than an optional policy preference. Within the MRJF architecture, the concept of *li-ta'arafu* (knowing one another) functions as the primary catalyst that transforms passive coexistence into active, reciprocal dialogue, thereby establishing the grassroots trust and shared moral values required to legitimize subsequent "hard" policy layers like symbolic recognition and structural resource redistribution (Hermawan et al., 2025)(Hermawan et al., 2025; Robaeah et al., 2023, 2024). By framing diversity as an inescapable divine design, this theological insight systematically bridges the gap between grassroots relational ethics and systemic policy governance, demonstrating that sustainable social justice cannot be achieved

through top-down mandates unless it is anchored in a deeply internalized culture of mutual understanding and respect:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

13. O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may 'get to' know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware (Al-Qur'an, 2019).

Critical Evaluation of the Social Software: Validating and Extending Fraser's Recognition

The systematic review findings provide profound empirical validation for Nancy Fraser's dual-perspective theory of justice, yet they simultaneously demand a critical extension of her model within contemporary pluralism governance. Fraser postulations that social justice requires the simultaneous alignment of cultural recognition and economic redistribution to avoid the pitfalls of identity-based marginalization. The analyzed literature confirms that "soft inclusion" strategies such as integrating regional languages into public services, accommodating religious visual symbols, and formally celebrating minority cultures substantially elevate institutional trust and cultivate a resilient sense of state loyalty among vulnerable groups (Erihadiana, 2019; Mckim, 2023).

However, our synthesis explicitly challenges the limits of Fraser's original framework by revealing a critical operational void: Fraser predominantly theorizes recognition as a structural end-state, largely overlooking the communicative process required to achieve it. The SLR data demonstrates that symbolic recognition cannot be successfully institutionalized through top-down state decrees alone; rather, its societal legitimacy is directly dependent on the relational trust generated through grassroots Intercultural Dialogue (ICD) (Elias & Mansouri, 2020). Without a robust foundation of cross-cultural communication to mitigate majority resentment, formal symbolic accommodations are frequently perceived as unwarranted privileges, triggering intense socio-political backlash (Alkaf et al., 2022; Fadhil & Sudrajat, 2023). Thus, our findings extend Fraser's perspective by demonstrating that cultural recognition is not merely a static structural counterweight to redistribution, but a dynamic process that requires continuous dialogic software to maintain its social stability.

Epistemological Critique of the Institutional Hardware: Rawlsian Limitations in Super-Diversity

In analyzing the material "hardware" of diversity governance, the synthesized evidence strongly confirms the relevance of John Rawls' distributive justice particularly his difference principle by demonstrating that affirmative educational and economic interventions successfully minimize systemic socioeconomic disparities and enhance minority integration (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025; Mustikasari, 2018). Nevertheless, a critical analysis of the review findings exposes the inherent limitations of applying classical Rawlsian theory to

contemporary super-diverse societies (Joseph et al., 2021; Langemeyer et al., 2024; Murray et al., 2023; Mustikasari, 2018). Rawls assumes a highly institutionalized, politically closed state structure where resource redistribution is managed via centralized, top-down mechanisms.

In contrast, the contemporary empirical literature reveals that top-down redistribution is fundamentally insufficient if marginalized communities lack the structural power to shape the distributive mechanisms themselves. As evidenced by the synthesized data, resource allocation without formal Political Representation inevitably degenerates into paternalistic governance, where state-mandated aid fails to address the shifting, intersectional realities of super-diversity (Kymlicka, 2018; Sauer & Seuring, 2023). Consequently, Rawls' theory falls short because it prioritizes material distribution over political agency. Our review results correct this limitation by demonstrating that structural justice cannot operate independently; it requires a direct, legally binding integration with formal legislative quotas and consultative policy dialogue forums to transform passive recipients of welfare into active architects of public policy (Kymlicka, 2018; Tania et al., 2024).

The Systematic Architecture of MRJF: Interdependent Integration and Theoretical Novelty

The development of the Multilayered Recognition & Justice Framework (MRJF) is not an abrupt conceptual invention, but a direct theoretical synthesis derived from the systemic interconnections discovered within the 32 reviewed articles (Mansouri & Elias, 2025). The review findings systematically reject single-track approaches to pluralism by illustrating that isolated interventions inevitably trigger systemic failures (Mupavayenda & Masikane, 2023). When these four dimensions are analyzed together, a highly synchronized feedback loop emerges from the literature: grassroots intercultural dialogue builds the necessary social trust to legitimize public symbolic recognition; this symbolic dignity demands material security through structural redistribution; and structural equity must be locked in place through formal political representation to protect it from changing political regimes (Arif et al., 2023; Kymlicka, 2018).

these dimensions into a cumulative, layered continuum, the MRJF establishes a major theoretical contribution that surpasses established models of pluralism and multiculturalism: Comparison with Established Frameworks: While Will Kymlicka's multicultural citizenship focuses heavily on minority legal rights but overlooks daily cross-cultural interaction, and Fethi Mansouri's intercultural index indexes communication but lacks teeth in economic redistribution, the MRJF successfully bridges this gap (Elias & Mansouri, 2020; Mansouri & Elias, 2021). The Software-Hardware Nexus: The framework coordinates the ethical "social software" (values, practices, and dialogue) with the institutional "policy hardware" (quotas, services, and redistribution) into a single, cohesive evaluative instrument (Aliyah et al., 2024; Hermawan et al., 2025; Jaenudin et al., 2023; Sabarudin, Nasir, et al., 2025). This structural synthesis provides the framework with its distinct conceptual and methodological advantage, moving beyond fragmented models to offer a comprehensive roadmap for diversity governance.

Evidence-Based Implications for Intercultural Pedagogy

Finally, the review findings generate concrete, evidence-based implications for the field of education, shifting the discourse away from generalized assertions of tolerance toward a highly strategic intercultural pedagogical approach (Kalogerogianni, 2025). The synthesized data demonstrates that educational institutions frequently serve as the primary societal arena where the software and hardware of pluralism collide. By translating the multi-layered mechanics of the MRJF into educational practice, schools can move beyond basic multicultural festivals which represent superficial symbolic recognition and instead integrate structured, cross-cultural dialogic modules directly into the core curriculum to build early social resilience against polarization (Hasbiyallah & Nasir, 2023; Hermawan et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the review highlights that for education to act as a genuine vehicle for social transformation, pedagogical changes must be backed by structural justice interventions, including affirmative access to high-quality public schooling and equal resource allocation for marginalized student populations (Eden et al., 2024; Mustikasari, 2018). When schools structurally combine early dialogic training with equitable institutional access, they transform from simple spaces of learning into resilient, democratic arenas capable of dismantling systemic biases (Kalogerogianni, 2025; Nasir et al., 2026). This comprehensive approach ensures that the educational internalization of pluralism is structurally grounded, providing students with the collaborative competencies needed to actively sustain a fair, super-diverse society.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully fulfills its primary objective by establishing the Multilayered Recognition & Justice Framework (MRJF) as a transformative conceptual model for diversity governance, constructed directly from a systematic synthesis of contemporary literature. The theoretical contribution of the MRJF lies in its unique ability to transcend the long-standing multicultural-intercultural impasse; unlike traditional legalistic multicultural citizenship models that lack operational cross-cultural communication, or conventional intercultural dialogue indexes that lack structural enforcement, the MRJF systematically bridges the gap between normative social "software" and operational institutional "hardware". By demonstrating that grassroots intercultural dialogue, public symbolic recognition, structural redistribution, and formal political representation are inherently cumulative and interdependent, this framework provides a highly cohesive evaluative instrument that treats diversity management as a single, continuous policy spectrum. To operationalize these findings, it is recommended that policymakers and educators move away from fragmented interventions and implement the MRJF through a structured, multi-level approach: establishing institutionalized cross-identity dialogue forums to build baseline social trust, redesigning school curricula to feature intercultural pedagogical modules, enforcing targeted affirmative actions to address socioeconomic disparities, and

institutionalizing mandatory legislative quotas to secure long-term policy sustainability.

Despite its significant conceptual insights, this study possesses inherent methodological limitations that provide clear directions for future scholarly research. Because this framework was developed using a systematic literature review strictly bounded by Scopus-indexed publications from 2020 to 2025, the theoretical architecture of the MRJF remains macro-conceptual and requires empirical validation across diverse, localized socio-political contexts. Future research should focus on testing the operational feasibility of the MRJF through longitudinal case studies and empirical urban policy evaluations to analyze how the feedback loop between the software and hardware layers functions under different democratic regimes. Additionally, future studies should explore the specific operational challenges of implementing the MRJF within marginalized community settings, thereby expanding the framework's practical utility and ensuring its continuous refinement in addressing the evolving, intersectional complexities of global super-diversity.

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