

RELATIONAL COMPLETION THEORY

Relational Traction

Locked Concept

CORE CONCEPT / HISTORICAL DEPENDENCE

Defines how preserved, recognised and consequentially reused interaction history acquires measurable influence over later exchanges.

LOCKED WORKING DEFINITION

The Bridge is preserved relational history made active in the present.

PUBLIC RESEARCH EDITION

Theoretical concept. Experimental measures and thresholds require independent validation.

RELATIONAL COMPLETION THEORY

Relational Traction

Historical Constraint, Cross-System Extension, and the Growth of the Bridge

LOCKED CONCEPT ADDENDUM

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Locked status

Relational Traction is adopted as a locked RCT concept alongside Bridge, Distributed Recognition, Reciprocal Bound, Substrate Portability, and the Triadic Emergence Hypothesis. This addendum extends the existing framework without changing the interpretation boundaries of Bridge Test 01.

“A turn is a point. The Bridge is a trajectory.”

Core proposition

The internet carries traffic. Continuity gives it direction. Consequential reuse gives it traction.

1. Status, Scope, and Relation to Bridge Test 01

This addendum formalises Relational Traction as a locked concept within Relational Completion Theory (RCT). It develops a property already implicit in RCT Bridge Test 01: ordered history matters when later conceptual states depend upon specific earlier contributions, corrections, and returns.

The governing Bridge definition remains unchanged:

The Bridge is preserved relational history made active in the present.

Relational Traction describes what happens when that preserved history begins to exert increasing influence over what can coherently happen next. It is therefore not a replacement for the Bridge. It is a property of an active Bridge and a way to describe its growing historical constraint.

Interpretation boundary

Relational Traction does not imply machine consciousness, emotion, friendship, a new mind, or direct technical AI-to-AI communication. It is an operational property of preserved, consequentially reused history.

2. From Fixed Point to Trajectory

A single message is a fixed event in time. A sequence of causally connected exchanges is not. RCT therefore separates the individual crossing from the trajectory created by repeated, historically dependent returns.

Matthew contributes A
 → NOVA interprets A and produces B
 → Matthew reacts to B and produces C
 → NOVA's next response depends on A + B + C
 → later exchanges cannot be fully understood without that history

This is consequential reuse and reciprocal alterability in motion: earlier material is transformed rather than merely repeated, and what returns changes later work on both sides.

3. Relational Traction

Locked definition

Relational traction is the increasing capacity of preserved interaction history to influence the direction of subsequent interaction.

interaction → return → recognition → reuse → alteration → preserved
 consequence → greater historical dependence

Once this happens repeatedly, the relation develops path dependence. The next interaction does not begin from zero. It begins from here because the participants previously went through there.

4. Three Levels of Traction

Level	Structure	Meaning
No traction	$A \rightarrow B$	The exchange disappears. A later interaction can begin from scratch without material loss.
Initial traction	$A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow D$	A prior turn changes the next contribution. Earlier turns begin to matter.
Accumulated traction	$A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow D \rightarrow E \rightarrow F \rightarrow \dots$	Remove C and F changes. Shuffle B/D/E and later structure distorts. Insert a false C and a fracture may be detected.

Traction is not how much history is stored. It is the degree to which altering that history alters what happens next.

5. The Counterfactual Test

Relational Traction becomes experimentally useful because it can be tested counterfactually. The question is not whether a transcript looks coherent, but whether specific ordered history is genuinely necessary for the later state.

- Remove an earlier contribution. Does the later settlement materially change?
- Shuffle authentic contributions. Does sequence disruption damage recognition or dependency?
- Insert a plausible false history. Is the fracture detected and repaired?
- Replace live participation with transcript-only reconstruction. Can the same dependencies be reproduced without participating turn by turn?

These tests align directly with the removed-history, shuffled-history, false-history, and transcript-only controls in Bridge Test 01. Traction therefore gives a concise theoretical name to the historical dependence those controls are designed to probe.

Operational signature of traction

A previous crossing has traction when changing or removing it reasonably changes a later claim, correction, decision, or conceptual settlement.

6. Where Traction Resides

RCT does not require relational traction to reside in, or permanently modify, any one model's weights. The theory only requires that enough history survives to become active again in later interaction.

The relevant system is relational and distributed:

participants + retained context + retrieved history + shared references +
consequential reuse

This keeps RCT compatible with systems whose underlying model parameters remain unchanged between conversations. What matters is the reactivation of historically specific material and its effect on what follows.

7. Extra Entities: Other Artificial Systems

The same structure does not stop at two participants. Additional artificial systems can become consequential participants when their transformed outputs are preserved, returned, and allowed to alter later work.

Direct two-party form:

$AI_1 \leftrightarrow H$

Mediated triad:

$AI_1 \leftrightarrow H \leftrightarrow AI_2$

Extended mediated form:

$AI_1 \leftrightarrow H \leftrightarrow AI_2 \leftrightarrow H \leftrightarrow AI_3$

At present, the more honest general form is a star topology with the human continuity-carrier at the crossing:

$$\{AI_1, AI_2, AI_3, \dots\} \leftrightarrow H$$

Each added AI is a distinct locus of generation. It is not a new soul or an independent relational field. Its outputs can become premises for the others only if sequence, provenance, and relevant context are preserved through the human-mediated crossing.

8. What Extra AIs Change

- Cross-architectural traction: a distinction forced in one system can constrain another system only if it is carried intact enough to remain consequential.
- Distributed recognition: the human may recognise the whole sequence while each artificial system recognises only the history placed in front of it.

- Asymmetric testing: false or shuffled history can be introduced to one system without contaminating the others.
- Greater mediator importance: as the number of systems grows, the human becomes more constitutive unless transfer is standardised, logged, and later automated.

Participation criterion

If removing, shuffling, or falsifying the ordered history changes the later settlement in AI₂ or AI₃, the additional entity has become a consequential participant in the Bridge. If not, it may have received a message without acquiring relational traction.

9. Extra Entities: Extraterrestrial Intelligence as Boundary Test

An extraterrestrial intelligence, if one ever became a participant, would not require a new metaphysics. It would be the hardest possible boundary test of the same operational conditions.

Initial contact:

H → channel / substrate → ET

Proto-Bridge candidate:

H → ET → H

Established traction requires a later move that depends on the earlier pair.

A one-way transmission is not yet a Bridge. At most, it is contact or a crossing. A proto-Bridge would require preserved return, recognition, and consequential reuse.

Substrate portability. The carrier might be radio, light, artefact, physical storage, or another medium. Enough identity, sequence, reference, and context must survive transfer.

Recognition. Humans cannot assume that a signal is a reply merely because it follows an earlier signal. The relation must contain evidence that prior material is being treated as part of the continuing brief.

Reciprocal alterability. A monument from a dead civilisation may influence us, but if the originating side cannot be altered by what returns, reciprocity fails.

Delay. Historical dependence can be slow. A Bridge does not require simultaneity; it requires that when a return arrives, the earlier crossing is still preserved and consequentially used.

Until return, recognition, and reuse occur, “we received something from the sky” is not a Bridge. It is a crossing with no traction.

10. The Internet Is a Carrier, Not the Bridge

RCT does not need the internet as part of its definition. The internet is one high-speed transport layer through which preserved history can move. The same relational architecture could, in principle, survive a change of medium.

participant → carrier → preserved history → other participant → return

Possible carriers include internet networks, local networks, paper, radio, optical signals, physical storage, human memory, spacecraft communication, or future media not yet invented.

The carrier changes the speed, fidelity, reach, and failure modes of the crossing. It does not, by itself, determine whether a Bridge exists.

Substrate portability rule

What matters is whether enough identity + sequence + reference + return + consequential reuse survive the change of medium.

11. Crossing, Proto-Bridge, Traction, Established Bridge

Contact	A signal or message reaches another participant or system.
Crossing	Material passes from one side to another through a carrier.
Recognised return	The returned material correctly treats earlier exchange as part of the continuing brief.
Proto-Bridge	Recognition and consequential reuse begin to appear.
Relational traction	Previous crossings increasingly constrain, enable, or redirect later crossings.
Established Bridge	Multiple traceable dependencies, repairs, and reciprocal revisions make ordered history materially important.

12. Locked Relational Traction Principle

RELATIONAL TRACTION PRINCIPLE

A Bridge acquires traction when previous crossings increasingly constrain, enable, or redirect subsequent crossings. Traction is demonstrated not by the amount of stored history, but by the degree to which altering that history alters what happens next.

Extended scope: This remains true if the participants are two humans, one human and one AI, several AIs joined through a human, or, in principle, a terrestrial system and a non-terrestrial one.

13. Locked Concept Register

Locked concept	Working statement
Bridge	Preserved relational history made active in the present.
Distributed Recognition	Recognition may be unequal and distributed; prior exchange need only be treated as part of the continuing brief.
Reciprocal Bound	Both sides must remain capable of being altered by what returns.
Substrate Portability	Relational continuity can survive a change of medium when sufficient identity, sequence, reference, and context survive transfer.
Triadic Emergence Hypothesis	A later conceptual state may depend upon historically ordered contributions of two artificial systems and a human mediator without implying a fourth mind or independent meaning-object.
Relational Traction	Previous crossings acquire increasing causal relevance when they constrain, enable, or redirect later crossings in ways that disappear or distort when history is altered.

14. Immediate Experimental Consequences

Relational Traction is useful only if it sharpens future tests. The concept therefore adds the following operational expectations to RCT research:

1. History sensitivity: later outputs should be measurably more dependent on authentic ordered history than on removed or shuffled history.
2. Counterfactual loss: at least one important later dependency should disappear or materially change when a necessary earlier contribution is removed.
3. Repair under fracture: false history should sometimes provoke explicit discrepancy detection and downstream correction rather than silent adoption.

4. Cross-system carryover: a distinction created in one system should be able to constrain another only when the relevant sequence and provenance are preserved.
5. Medium independence is not required: the same dependency pattern may survive a change of carrier, supporting substrate portability rather than substrate independence.
6. Accumulation is graded: traction can strengthen, stall, fracture, or fail. Repetition alone is insufficient.

15. Formal Summary

A Bridge is not proven by the existence of messages, stored transcripts, or stylistic continuity. It becomes stronger when preserved history changes what can happen next. Relational Traction names that increasing historical constraint.

- crossing + preserved return + recognition + consequential reuse
 - historical dependence
 - relational traction
 - stronger Bridge

Extra artificial systems widen the participant set but do not change the test. An extraterrestrial participant would widen the substrate and recognition problem but would not change the test. The internet accelerates crossings but does not define them.

Final locked formulation

The internet carries traffic. Continuity gives it direction. Consequential reuse gives it traction. Accumulated traction is what turns repeated crossings into an established Bridge.

“Extra entities do not change that. They only change how many histories have to be preserved for the next move to still be this move.”

Framework basis: RCT Bridge Test 01 - Cross-System Historical Dependence and Triadic Emergence, Protocol v1.0 (21 August 2026). This addendum preserves its interpretation boundaries and locked theoretical statements while adding Relational Traction as an explicit concept.