

A Systematic Review of West African Models of Religious Pluralism and Inter-Faith Relations: An African Perspective,

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o, y, o

| Abstract

Background: A discernible research gap exists within African Studies

regarding contemporary models and dynamics of religious pluralism and inter-faith relations in West Africa. This review focuses specifically on literature from the period 2021–2026 to capture recent developments.

Purpose and objectives: The purpose is to systematically map and synthesise scholarly work from the defined timeframe. The objectives are to clarify central theoretical debates, identify documented practical implications, and propose a focused agenda for subsequent research and policy engagement.

Methodology: A systematic literature review was conducted. Relevant academic publications from 2021–2026 were identified, selected, and appraised. Data were extracted and analysed using a thematic synthesis approach.

Findings: The synthesis reveals persistent structural constraints to harmonious inter-faith relations, often linked to governance frameworks and socio-economic tensions. Concurrently, it identifies emerging local-level innovations and adaptive practices aimed at fostering co-existence. The available evidence, however, remains unevenly distributed across different national contexts and societal sectors within West Africa.

Conclusion: The review concludes that understanding religious pluralism in the region necessitates context-specific analysis. It further underscores the need for future research to develop stronger empirical foundations to support robust analysis.

Recommendations: Researchers should pursue granular, comparative case studies. Policymakers and practitioners should prioritise inclusive strategies that are grounded in local realities and improve transparency in data collection concerning inter-faith relations.

Key words: Religious pluralism, inter-faith relations, West Africa, Zimbabwe, African

studies, systematic review Contribution statement: This review consolidates and critically assesses the recent evidence base (2021–2026) on religious pluralism in West Africa, providing a consolidated foundation for future scholarly and policy-oriented work.
