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# **The Ghanaian Perceptions about Transnational Terrorism and Islam and their Implications for Christian-Muslim Community Coexistence**

The Case of the Madina Community

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## **ABSTRACT**

West Africa which used to be a quieter zone regarding terrorism is presently plagued with the activities of terrorist groups linked with Islam. Terrorism linked with Islam is creating challenges of Islamophobia (fear and hatred for Islam and Muslims) in multi-religious societies in the post 9/11 era. Islamophobia is based on the perception which links Muslims to terrorism. Ghana is a multi-religious society. Thus, the present study sought to find out the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and Islam/Muslims. Furthermore, the study also sought to find out the implications of such Ghanaian perceptions on Christian-Muslim coexistence.

This was a qualitative study, with data collected through face-to-face interviews. The respondents were Christians and Muslims selected from Madina, Accra. Intergroup theories such social identity, social perception, stereotyping, and the contact theory served as the theoretical framework for the study. This framework was further enhanced by discussions on Islamophobia.

The study found out that Christians and Muslims coexist relatively peacefully in Madina. Yet, Christians perceive Muslims as violent and potential terrorists and thus a suspect community when it comes to terrorism. The study further revealed that such negative perceptions about Muslims could lead to their social exclusion and the marginalization. This, the study found, could result in counter reactions from Muslims, with negative implications for peaceful community coexistence.

The significance of this study has been its contributions to the ongoing discussions about Islamophobia. The study has drawn attention to the fact that Islamophobia is not only a Western issue, but also an African issue. Furthermore, the study revealed that the challenges of Islamophobia may not only be seen in policies, but they may also be challenges at the community coexistence level.

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## Chapter One

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

The rise of transnational terrorism in Africa is a challenge to peace, security and development (Anim 2016:1). Terrorism in Africa has grown both in terms of the number of attacks and the number of countries affected (Beri 2017). This is particularly the case since the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 terrorist attacks (henceforth known as 9/11) in the US. Statistics have shown that terror attacks in Africa between the periods of 2009-2015 have increased by 200 percent and its associated fatalities have shot up to 750 percent for the same period (Beri 2017). The deadliest of these attacks have been carried out by *Boko Haram* in Nigeria, *Al-Qaeda* in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), *Al-Shabaab* in Somalia.

The activities of these terror groups have become transnational as they are spreading their activities to neighbouring countries. And indeed, there are concerns that they may even travel beyond their immediate border countries to carry out their activities in other countries. The growth, the immense presence and the deadly activities of terrorist groups in Africa are drawing scholarly attention to the phenomenon. Thus, there is a growing body of literature on terrorism in Africa (Botha 2007; Sosuh 2011; Abiboa 2013). Most of these literature focused on the causes, challenges, prevention, economic and political impacts of terrorism in Africa. Not much scholarly attention has been on the implications of transnational terrorism on Christian-Muslim relations in Africa. It is this scholarly gap that the present research seeks to fill. Thus, the present research seeks to study how Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism could affect Christian-Muslim relations in terms of community coexistence. This is in view of unraveling relevant insights about the possible threats of transnational terrorism on Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana. Such insights may be necessary for combating the effects of terrorism on Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana.

It must be noted that the terrorist groups in Africa may have remote or immediate political, economic, social and even ethnic causes for their terror activities. Nonetheless, they appear to find inspiration for mobilization in Islam. These terrorist activities have produced reactive responses (Heath and Tarus 2017; Nussbaum 2012). In Kenya, the government has adopted



counter-terrorism measures (Heath and Tarus 2017). These include arrests, torture, and in some cases alleged assassination of perceived terrorist suspects. At the same time, the church leaders in Kenya have called for more police protection for churches. In extreme cases, some church leaders express the desire to carry firearms to church so as to protect their members during church services (Heath and Tarus 2017).

Similarly, observing the trends of reactions to terrorist activities in Europe and America, Nussbaum (2012) indicates that the 9/11 attacks in the US have led to anti-Muslim responses. According to Nussbaum (2012) there has been a change in religious tolerance and understanding as far as Muslims are concerned. Thus, policies and political decisions appear anti-Islam. Anti-Islamic activities and agitations have also sprung up. A case in point is the killing of 77 people in twin attacks in Norway by Anders Behring Breivik (Nussbaum 2012:6). The point here is that there are reactions to the various terrorist activities being carried out, even, with violence and murder (Nussbaum 2012; Pratt and Woodlock 2016).

Ghana has always been multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. This is intensified by the present impacts of modernity and globalization. The Ghanaian society continues to witness the arrival of new and foreign cultures and religious traditions. The main religious traditions in Ghana are the African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam. Thus, Ghana is considered a multi-religious society. Moreover, Ghana is regarded as one of the most peaceful and stable democracies in West Africa. Thus, adherents of the different religious traditions (and indeed other religions) have coexisted and continue to coexist in a relatively peaceful atmosphere (Sarbah 2010). This is so, even in the case of Christianity and Islam. Christianity and Islam are missionary religions which attempt to evangelize to people and make converts into their respective religions. These mission activities of Christians and Muslims, often, juxtapose them as rivals for 'souls'. This at times brings about some forms of clashes and tension between the adherents of the two faiths (Rabiatu 2007). Acquah (2011:14) posits that the clashes between Christians and Muslims have been due to the 'offensive evangelization of some Christians and Muslims based on exclusivist interpretations of certain portions of their respective scriptures'. Yet, since these clashed have not resulted in large-scale violence, the Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana is seen as relatively peaceful (Sarbah 2010, Abdul-Hamid 2011). Sarbah (2010) and Acquah (2011) have indicated separately that it is the traditional Ghanaian

values that have held Christians and Muslims together in spite of low-level clashes and tension that occasionally erupt between them in different communities. To buttress this same point Wandusim (2015) notes that Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana is one of existential reality as they coexist in families, households, homes, communities and at workplaces.

However, Rabiātu (2007:139) commenting on the Christian-Muslim relations in sub-Saharan Africa in general states that ‘the rise of charismatic and evangelical Christianity and the call for Islamisation and application of the Shari’a in parts of Africa are in danger of creating tension and destroying the apparently peaceful co-existence between the two faith communities’. Thus, violent clashes between Christian and Muslim adherents as experienced in countries such as Nigeria, Sudan, Central African Republic, Kenya, and Tanzania among others may have implications for the Christian-Muslim coexistence in these countries. Accordingly, Acquah (2011) and Rabiātu (2007) argue that though Ghana continues to experience peaceful coexistence amidst its religious plurality, this peaceful relationship is being threatened by the emergence of religious extremism and fundamentalism.

As already indicated, domestic quarrels and tension have not in themselves posed serious threat to Ghana’s security so far. However, there are worries about the transnational religious extremism in the forms of terrorism in the West African sub-region posing threat to the peace of Ghana. For instance, the terrorist activities of *Ansar din* in Mali and *Boko Haram* in Nigeria are of great concern for Ghanaians, as there are expressions of fear in the mass media of the possible spill over of their activities into Ghana or the formation of similar groups locally. Anim (2016) discusses the level of Ghana’s vulnerability to the threats of domestic and transnational terrorism. His analysis suggests that ‘Ghana’s susceptibility to the menace of terrorism is real, and gradually building up’(Anim 2016:1).

It must be noted that Ghana is ranked as a country with no incidence of terrorist activities between 1968 and 2006 (Sosuh 2011:14). And this continues to be the case till now. However, since the beginning of the terrorist activities of *Boko Haram* in 2009, the Ghanaian society has been gripped with uncertainty about the possible implications of such terrorist activities in Ghana. This is most especially so, when *Boko Haram* is expanding its activities to its neighbouring countries such as Chad and Cameroon. The concerns of Ghanaians were heightened in 2015 when there were media reports of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria)

recruitment in Ghana (Oforo-Panin 2015). These reports indicate that two university students left Ghana to join ISIS (Anim 2015:7). This is coupled with terrorist attacks in Mali (November 2015), Burkina Faso (January 2016) and Cote d'Ivoire (March 2016). *Al Qaeda* in the Islamic Maghreb has claimed responsibility for all these three attacks. It is worthy of note that Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire share borders with Ghana to the north and to the west respectively. Thus, there are concerns that the terrorist attacks are getting closer to Ghana, and Ghana may be the next country to be attacked (Burchard 2016). Worse still, in early 2016 prophet T.B. Joshua, a Nigerian based prophet, prophesied that there will be terrorist attacks in Ghana carried out by a foreign terrorist group (Afenyi-Dadzie 2016). This prophecy led to near national panic. Apparently, these transnational terrorist groups, seem to pose threats to the national security in Ghana.

If the menace of transnational terrorism is real, then arguably, the Ghanaian public concerns about its threats to national security are apt. These transnational terrorist activities in West Africa have been largely linked to Islamic insurgency and fundamentalism. Could these terrorist activities in any way affect Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana? Could they, for instance, threaten the peaceful community coexistence between Christians and Muslims? In other words, can the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism threaten the values (Sarbah 2010; Acquah 2011) which hold Christians and Muslims together in Ghana? These questions are important because violent conflict between Christians and Muslims in Ghana could have far-reaching implications for national development. Owing to the extent to which these two religious traditions are involved in the wider processes of socio-cultural, economic development and the general democratic development in Ghana. Thus, understanding the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and its implications for Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana is crucial. Such an understanding can help religious leaders and policy makers and even individual citizens to know how to work towards Christian-Muslim coexistence in the face of transnational terrorism. Consequently, this research seeks to find out what the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism is; and their implications for Christian-Muslim coexistence in Ghana.

## 1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to find out the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and their implications for Christian-Muslim community coexistence. As a result the main research questions which guided the study include;

1. What are the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism linked to Islam in the West African sub-region?
2. What are the implications of such perceptions for Christians-Muslim coexistence in Ghana?

To answer these questions the study was steered by the following objectives:

1. To study the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and its links with Islam/Muslims in Ghana.
2. To find whether or not community coexistence affect perceptions about transnational terrorism in Ghana.
3. To examine the implications of the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and Islam/Muslims on community coexistence among Christians and Muslims in Madina, Ghana.

## 1.3. MADINA: THE STUDY CONTEXT IN BRIEF

Madina is a suburb of Accra, the capital city of Ghana. According to the historical records Madina was founded in 1959 under the leadership of Alhaji Seidu Kardo (Kropp 1997). Thus, Alhaji Seidu Kardo was believed to be the first traditional leader in Madina. According to Kropp (1997) Alhaji Seidu Kardo and others settled in the present location called Madina after they have been driven from their original place of settlement known as Shiashi. Shiashi is a nearby town to Madina, it is about five minutes drive to Madina. The name Madina is believed to be a corruption of the name Medina in Saudi Arabia, where the prophet Mohammad was buried (Kropp 1997). It is believed that the location was named Madina because the first settlers were driven from their earlier settlement in Shiashi, just like the prophet Mohammad (Kropp 1997). A school of thought has it that name Madina was adopted instead of Medina to make the name of

the settlement less Arabic and not exclusively (or obviously) a Muslim community (Kropp 1997).

The original settlers in Madina were Muslims from Northern Ghana and elsewhere (Berry 1969). Till present, Madina is a community with a high concentration of migrants from the Northern regions of Ghana (Zaami 2010). Many of the migrants from the Northern Ghana are Muslims. Madina has now developed into a mixed suburb in which people of different ethnic, language, religious, occupational, and educational backgrounds coexist. The main religious traditions in Madina include Islam, Christianity and the Traditional Religion. It is the predominant presence of both Christians and Muslims in the Madina community that makes it an ideal choice for this study.

Presently, Madina forms part of the La Nkwatanang-Madina Municipality. The present study did not come across any specific information regarding the current population of Madina. However, it is estimated that the population of Madina in 2008 was 91,999 (Agyei, Awuah and Oduro-Kwarteng 2011). The 2010 population census notes that the population of the La Nkwatanang-Madina municipality as a whole is 111,926 (Ghana Statistical Service 2014). From this population, 79.2% are Christians while 17.5% are Muslims (Ghana Statistical Service 2014). Madina is known for its commercial activities. Such commercial activities are in areas such as ‘financial institutions, hospitality, personal care and beauty, telecommunications, graphic design, food services and professional services among others’ (Ghana Statistical Service 2014:4). In fact, Madina hosts the biggest Market in the Municipality (Ghana Statistical Service 2014).

#### 1.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study has adopted a qualitative research method for the collection and analysis of data (Bryman 2012; Marshall and Rossman 2011). Data for the study was collected through interviews. I used semi-structured interview guide to conduct a face-to-face interviews. The informants for the study were selected from both the Christian and the Muslim members of the Madina community. I used both random and purposive methods of selecting informants for the study. In all, twelve people were interviewed. Two informants were interviewed at the pilot phase of the fieldwork and ten informants were interviewed during the main data collection

phase (Baptista *et al* 2010). I sought oral consents from the informants and they in turn gave oral consents to be interviewed. In the research field I doubled as both an insider and an outsider (Dwyer 2009). Detail discussions of the methodology, method of data collection and analysis and research quality issues are in chapter four.

## 1.5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework for this study was drawn mainly from discussions in intergroup relations. Thus, the study adopted theories from social psychology on social identity theory, Social perception and stereotyping, and intergroup contact theory. The study also used discussion on Islamophobia as part of the theoretical framework. The essence was to select literature from these broad theoretical areas and see how they may help us understand the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and its connections with Islam. Such an understanding of the Ghanaian perceptions about terrorism may help us know the implications of the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism linked to Islam for Christians-Muslim community coexistence in Ghana.

Concerning the literature review, the study has selected literature from three thematic areas. These include; terrorism and transnational terrorism in Africa, the interface between religion and terrorism, and Christian-Muslim relations in Africa/Ghana. These selected theories and the literature have helped the study to discuss and make meaning out of the empirical data collected from the field.

## 1.6. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

For orderly and easy comprehension, the study has been divided into seven chapters. Chapter one serves as the introduction to the entire work. This includes the general introduction, aim of the study, statement of problems, research question, research objectives, and research context methodology, structure of the thesis and the significance of the study.

Chapter two is about literature review. It explores relevant literature in the area of study. With an introduction, this chapter discusses literature on transnational terrorism in Africa, the interface between religion and terrorism, and Christian-Muslim relations in Africa/Ghana.

Chapter three presents the theoretical framework for the study. Theories about intergroup relations in social psychology have been adopted for the analysis of the field data collected. The theories used include social identity theory, social perception, and stereotyping and intergroup contact theory. In addition, discussions within Islamophobia have also been engaged. All these theoretical discussions helped the study to frame the discussions on the Ghanaian perceptions about terrorism and Islam into perspective. They also helped the study to discuss the implications such perceptions could have for Christian-Muslim coexistence.

Chapter four discusses the research methodology for the study. It draws attention to the method of data collection and how the researcher went about the collection of data in the field. This chapter looks specifically at how informants were selected and interviewed. Again, the chapter discusses how data was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Research quality issues such as validity, reliability, and the position of the researcher in the study have been discussed. Finally, the chapter discussed some research ethical considerations.

Chapter five presents the first part of the analysis. It discusses the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and their connections with Islam and the Ghanaian Muslims. Key issues discussed in this chapter includes; Ghana's vulnerability to terrorism, Ghanaian Muslims as potential terrorists, possibilities of the formation of local terrorist groups, and fear of terrorist attacks in public places in Ghana. The chapter sought to find out whether or not community coexistence between Christians and Muslims has affected the Ghanaian perceptions (stereotyping) about Muslims regarding terrorism.

Chapter six presents the second part of the analysis. It discusses the implications of the Ghanaian perceptions about terrorism for Christian-Muslim community coexistence. First of all, the chapter discussed how perceiving Muslims as 'suspect community' could influence the way Christians relate with Muslims in the community. These may include Christians distrusting Muslims; Christians distancing themselves from Muslims; and threats on Muslims. The chapter also presents the Muslim response to the consequences of these Christian actions against them.

These include possible Muslim radicalism as well as Muslims peaceful responses to the Christian perceptions. Finally, the chapter notes that Christians, Muslims and the government of Ghana are making efforts towards peaceful Christian-Muslim coexistence in Ghana.

Chapter seven which is the final chapter serves as a general conclusion for the study. It presents a brief summary of the study, the findings of the study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations for further studies in the area.

### 1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

As already indicated, Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana have implications for economic, political and social development. Thus, any tension or conflict between the adherents of the two faith communities could have adverse effects on national development. Similarly, transnational terrorism affects peace, security and development. As a result, the pursuit to find out how perceptions about transnational terrorism affect Christian-Muslim relations is not only of academic significance. It also has practical relevance, in that, in the globalized world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, societies are becoming highly multicultural and multi-religious. Thus, it is important to study Christian-Muslim relations in the face of transnational terrorism that threatens the world presently. As such, the significance of this research may not be limited to Ghana alone, but it will also be applicable to other societies where Muslims and Christians coexist. In this vein, the present research which seeks to study the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and its implications for Christian-Muslim relations could be significant in the following ways:

1. The findings of this research could serve as a tool for policy makers in their policy/decision making regarding transnational terrorism in Ghana.
2. This research will add to the repertoire of literature on transnational terrorism and Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana.
3. This research will share new light on the effects of transnational terrorism on local communities.



## Chapter Two

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

Transnational terrorism linked with religion, particularly Islam, is taking hold of the African continent. It must be noted that most African countries, especially, countries sub of the Sahara are multi-cultural and multi-religious societies. As such, terrorist activities linked to Islam could affect the coexistence in these multi-religious societies. Therefore, to understand the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and its implications for Christian-Muslim community coexistence, we need to understand the scholarly discussions within the broad area of the study. Thus, this literature review is categorized into three. The first category presents transnational terrorism in Africa. The second category discusses the interface between religion and terrorism (transnational terrorism). The final category engages the issues of Christian-Muslim relations in Africa with special focus on Ghana, the context of the study.

#### 2.2. TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM IN AFRICA

Terrorism 'is the premeditated use or the threat of use of extranormal violence or brutality by subnational groups to obtain a political, religious, or ideological objective through intimidation of a large audience, usually not directly involved with the decision making' (Enders and Sandler 2000:309). Similarly, Claridge (1998:66 in Garrison 2003:41) defines terrorism as 'systematic threat or use of violence, whether for or in opposition to established authority, with the intention of communicating a political message to a group larger than the victim group by generating fear and so altering the behavior of the larger group'. Therefore, terrorism is explained to mean 'violent acts against a civilian population by state and non-state actors irrespective of political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic and religious motives' (Botha 2007:3).

Terrorism could be either transnational or domestic. Domestic terrorism is the terrorist acts in which the events/targets, perpetrators, victims and the rationales are limited to a particular country (Sandler 2003). Sandler (2003:781) states that domestic terrorism 'is home grown and has consequences for only the host country, its institutions, people, property and policies'. On the

other hand, transnational terrorism involves more than one country and this is seen in terms of the victims, perpetrators, and institutions involved (Sandler 2003). According to Mickolu *et al* (2003:2 in Neumayer and Plumper 2009:16) to be regarded as transnational terrorism, ‘a terrorist act must “through the nationality or foreign ties of its perpetrators, its location, the nature of its institutional or human victims, or the mechanics of its resolution, its ramifications transcend national boundaries”’. Therefore, the events of 9/11 constituted transnational terrorism, while most of the activities of *Boko Haram* in Nigeria are examples of domestic terrorism. Botha (2007:10), a South African Terrorist expert, presents a cutting edge difference between domestic and transnational terrorism when he states:

In contrast to domestic terrorism where the signs are clearly visible, acts of transnational terrorism are often unexpected. The use of decentralized cell structures makes it almost impossible to detect and prevent the threat, especially, in countries that have not previously been targets of terrorism or in a country that does not consider terrorism as a viable threat.

From 2001 to the present, transnational terrorism has become one of the major security challenges African countries are dealing with (Sosuh 2011; Manni 2012; Heath and Tarus 2017). Neumayer and Plumper (2009) explain why terrorist activities are becoming increasingly transnational and having resonance in different contexts. Neumayer and Plumper (2009:9; see also Juergensmeyer 2000:5) indicated that ‘the generic end-goal (i.e. to gain political influence or control) unites groups, despite extreme differences in their ideologies’. Indeed, the terrorist groups’ goal of gaining political influence or even control has been identified with *Boko Haram* in Nigerian (West Africa), *Al-Shabaab* in Somalia (East Africa), and *Al-Qaeda* in the Maghreb (North Africa). Scholars observing the trend of activities of these terrorist groups in Africa speculate that there appear to be some forms of alliance between these three major terrorist groups (Agbiboa 2013). Thus, through such alliances, terrorist groups are becoming more transnational as they receive support from outside their home countries or regions. The support and sympathy terrorist groups receive stem from what Juergensmeyer (2000:12) calls ‘the culture of violence’. This culture of violence emerges from the perception that a community is under threat, under attack, being violated and or being oppressed (Juergensmeyer 2000:12). Whether these perceptions are right or wrong, real or imagined, the community members consider such perceptions as valid. Thus, such perceptions largely explain the emergence of similar terrorist

groups in different context and the supports they receive from both within their domestic borders and the international community. It is this perception of being oppressed (politically, culturally and economically or even religiously) that makes some pious Muslims around the globe to be are at war with the surrounding forces of the secular society (Juergensmeyer 2000:12).

### **2.2.1. African states' vulnerability to terrorism**

Regardless of the transnational nature of terrorism, there is always the dimension of domestic reality. Botha (2007:4) argues that 'the reason: the person or cell responsible is moved to action is by his or her own reality: a domestic reality'. For example, the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt in 1928 and Bin Ladin and his coalition, all started with domestic grievances (Botha 2007:4). One domestic conditions that promote terrorism in Africa is weak or failed states (Karadeli 2009). Failed/weak states provide not only the environment for domestic terrorist activities. They also open up states for transnational terrorist activities. Africa, particularly, sub-Saharan Africa has many weak and failed states (Karadeli 2009). Research has shown that weak states have proved to be a haven for transnational terrorists as they use such ungoverned states for training and launching of attacks. This has been seen in the case of Somalia (Botha 2007: 4).

In addition to many weak and failed states in Africa, many nations in Africa do not have what it takes; human and technological, to monitor and protect their borders (Sosuh 2011). This means that people could come into African states without proper security checks and monitoring. This makes many states in Africa vulnerable to transnational terrorism (Sosuh 2011). The situation is even worst in failed/weak states where there are challenges with governance. From such failed/weak states terrorists have used 'Africa as a theatre to carry out attacks against both domestic and international targets as well as to develop and maintain their operations' (Forest and Giroux 2011: not paginated).

Furthermore, intrastate conflicts make many African countries even more vulnerable to terrorism. Indeed, failed or weak states provide environment for intrastate conflicts. In addition, democratic transitions, particularly, electoral processes have resulted into intrastate conflict in many African countries (Cilliers and Schunemann 2013). Again, interethnic and interregional confrontations, local disputes in the areas of oil, land, chieftaincy and other socioeconomic and

politics have also led to intrastate conflicts in Africa. It is noted that terrorist networks have taken advantage of the intrastate conflicts in Africa to carry out domestic and international attacks (Forest and Giroux 2011). On the other hand, Forest and Giroux (2011: not paginated) indicate that ‘innovations in terrors, in weapons and attacks in one region of the world are monitored and emulated in other regions, including Africa’. Thus, some intrastate conflicts in Africa could be transforming into terrorists groups or may be adopting strategies similar to terrorist groups elsewhere. A typical example is Nigeria’s *Boko Haram* whose activities has transformed from being intrastate conflict to terrorist activities (Manni 2012).

Evidently, domestic terrorism must not be taken for granted as it could have spilled-over effects and could easily transform into transnational terrorism. As already noted, many African nations have challenges with border control, it will thus be easy for terrorism in one country to cross border to a neighbouring country. This has been the case with *Boko Haram* when the group moved to Chad and Cameroun (Manni 2012; Enchill 2014). Consequently, another dimension of Africa’s vulnerability to transnational terrorism is domestic terrorist groups’ transformation into transnational terror groups with transnational objectives. *Boko Haram* continues to indicate that they are not concerned only about domestic issues, but that they have a transnational agenda (Forest and Giroux 2011). Thus, the emergence of transnational terrorism stemmed from the terrorist groups’ or their leaders’ interest in extending their activities to foreign countries even though their main target may be their domestic influence (Neumayer and Plumper 2008:8). In addition, *Boko Haram*’s recent use of suicide bombers (a hallmark of *Al-Qaeda*) and the sophisticated and explosive devices have led some scholars to suggest that there may be some affiliations between *Boko Haram* and *Al-Qaeda* (Forest and Giroux 2011; Beri 2017; Agbiboa 2013). Thus, arguably we can observe some forms of transnational mergers and sharing of ideologies and strategies among terrorist groups in Africa.

Another critical factor that presently predisposes Africa to terrorism and particularly, transnational terrorism is the Africans’ increasing access to internet. For Weimann (2006), a country’s vulnerability to terrorism goes beyond physical borders. There is now a new challenge of terrorist organizations immense use of the internet: mass media, social media, email, chat rooms, websites, e-learning for terrorists. This continues and immense use of the internet by terrorist groups means that transnational terrorism will be the most security challenge facing not

only Africa but the global community presently. Torty (2009) noted, for instance, how the Danish cartoon controversy led to local conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Torty's (2009) argument is that the Danish cartoon controversy inspired a transnational conflict in Nigeria due to improved access to broadcast media and mobile telephone communication in Nigeria. This means that the increasing access and use of Information Technology (IT) predisposes many countries to transnational terrorism. This is because terrorist groups could easily get access to Africans through the internet. Similarly, Africans who support the visions of terrorist groups could also contact them with ease.

Religion is another internal factor makes African countries susceptible to transnational terrorism. Religion is a mobilization factor that extends beyond national borders. In a way, religion broadens the potential support base for terrorist groups. Terrorist groups often capitalize on the emotional aspect of religion to garner support, sympathizers and potential recruits (Juergensmeyer 2000). Consequently, Botha (2007:4) expressed the view about Africa's vulnerability to transnational terrorism that, 'Religion in combination with poor socio-economic conditions, marginalization etc., in addition to political ideology is traditionally the most important motivations and justification for the resort to violence'.

Some other factors that make Africa vulnerable to terrorism are Africans' hospitable culture, the growing identification with Jihadists in a perceived war against Islam and insufficient or lack of education on what the public should look out for and report the security official (Botha 2007:11-12; Sosuh 2011; Anim 2015).

The external factors that make states vulnerable to terrorism include geographic position, alliances and the question of identity (Botha 2007: 6). Only few conflicts will remain domestic as it is difficult often to compartmentalize domestic and transnational conflicts. This is particularly so when many conflicts are fought around identity issues of religion and ideology, and state alliances become obvious in terms of the support governments /parties receive during conflict times. For example, in the aftermath of the 9/11, states support for the US's global war on terror has influenced the motivation of terrorist groups or organizations (Botha 2007:6). Religion and globalization (in terms of both migration and internet use) are the main vehicles that transport domestic terrorism into transnational terrorism (Juergensmeyer 2000; Botha 2007).

### 2.2.2. African Nationals Involvement in Transnational Terrorism

According to Botha (2007), Africa's involvement in transnational terrorism can be looked at from two angles. The involvement of African nationals in acts of transnational terrorism; and the level of threat within Africa in which African nationals under the influence of external elements or on their own, commit acts of terrorism on African soil (Botha 2007:2).

A classical example of African nationals' involvement in transnational terrorism is Egypt's domestic militants and extremists. Egyptian government's counter terrorism strategy against its domestic militants and extremists appear successful, however, the approach had its own residual effects on the world. Botha (2007) noted that the consequence of the Egyptian government's legislation was the establishment of transnational terror organizations by the Egyptian terrorists. Due to the legislation against them, the leaders, sympathizers and supporters fled Egypt to other countries where they reorganized themselves into a transnational organisation. Thus, in this vein, 'Egypt indirectly exported extremism into the rest of the world' (Botha 2007:7). For example, the banned Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt created their agencies throughout the middle-East such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries and also influenced other similar organizations with their policies (Botha 2007:7). Evidently, the group became a transnational terrorism organization with a transnational focus and targets. From these countries they united and staged bigger attacks on the US (Botha 2007:7). Ayman al-Zawahri was one of the Egyptians who influenced the formation of transnational terrorism. Ayman al-Zawahri was the leader of the al-Jihad in Egypt and he was also the intellectual and ideological leader of the International Front for Jihad against Jews and crusaders. It is believed that it is from this alliance formed in 1998 that *Al-Qaeda* originated (Botha 2007:7). Thus, the Egyptian extremists' fight against their domestic reality; state corruption and the government's un-Islamic nature, has revolved into a global Jihad where US (the 'Great Satan') is the target (Botha 2007:7).

Another example is the Salfist Group for Preaching and Combat in Algeria. This group openly aligned with *Al-Qaeda*. Thus, the group became a threat not only in Algeria but to the whole region. Furthermore, Africans (Moroccans and Egyptians) were involved in the March 2004 train bombings in Madrid. Again, two Africans were identified in the attempted bombings in London on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2005. They included Muktar Said Ibrahim, originally from Eritrea who attempted to detonate a bomb on a double-decker bus and Yasim Hassan Omar, an Ethiopian who staged a

failed attack on the Underground system's Northern Line (Botha 2007:8). These two individuals behind the attempted bombings in London have shifted the involvement of African involvement in transnational attacks from the Northern African to the Eastern Africa.

In terms of *Al-Qaeda* recruitment, Algeria is believed to be the third biggest contributor after Saudi Arabia and Yemen. It noted that about 2800 Algerians have been trained in *Al-Qaeda* camps in Afghanistan (Botha 2007:10). In addition, the Egyptians are the third largest contributor to the overall foreign fighters in Iraq (Botha 2007:10). These various examples of Africans' engagement in terror acts outside of their home countries draw attention to the Africans' involvement in transnational terrorism.

### **2.2.3. Africa as Target of Transnational Terrorism**

In discussing Africa as a target for transnational terrorism, scholars are beginning to include Eastern, Southern and Central Africa, alongside North Africa. It must be noted that West Africa is also becoming a region of focus regarding transnational terrorist issues because of the presence of *Boko Haram*, and recent attacks in Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire (Burchard 2016). Some transnational terrorist attacks on the African soil included the US Embassy bombings in Dar es-Salem (Tanzania) and Nairobi (Kenya) on 7 August 1998 and the Mombassa bombings in 2002 (Botha 2007:2). Aside these attacks, the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) thwarted the bombings of the US Embassy in Kampala, Uganda in 1998 (Botha 2007:10). Even before these attacks, in 1976, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was felt in East Africa. Palestinian terrorists hijacked a commercial Air France plane carrying 247 passengers and took them to Entebbe, Uganda. Four years after this hijacking event, the Jewish owned Norfolk hotel in Nairobi was bombed in retaliation for allowing Israeli troops refueled in Nairobi during the Entebbe raid by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation which led to 15 deaths and 80 injuries (Forest and Giroux 2011). This event, together with the Dar es-Salem, Nairobi and the Mombassa bombings points to Africa's place in transnational terrorism.

Thus, regardless of African countries' position on international issues, they could become a battlefield for transnational terrorists. By inference, African countries are as vulnerable to transnational terrorism just as any other country in the world. And the fact that the 1976

Palestinian terrorist attacks took place without any provocation from Africans makes transnational terrorism very difficult to predict and prevent.

Botha (2007:12) makes a cogent point about transnational terrorism that: ‘The threat of transnational terrorism is therefore no longer limited to the export of African nationals to transnational terror operations. The continent, traditionally plagued by domestic terrorism will also increasingly be confronted with transnational acts of terrorism’ (Botha 2007:12). An example of a domestic violence transformed into transnational terrorism is seen in the activities of *Boko Haram*. *Boko Haram*’s alliance with *Al-Qaeda* and *Al-Shabaab* is evident in the sophistication of their operations and the use of suicide bombings (Manni 2001; Forest 2012). Another example is the terrorist attacks on the Westgate Shopping Mall in Kenya in 2013. Investigations into this terrorist attack revealed that one of the attackers was Somalia boy raised in Norway. Indeed, terrorist attacks on the African soil by non-Africans, the alliance between the various terrorist groups in Africa and the evidences from the Westgate Shopping Mall in Kenya; are making terrorism in Africa transnational.

### 2.3. THE INTERFACE BETWEEN RELIGION AND TERRORISM

Defining what precisely religion is, is such a tedious task. Different scholars view the subject of religion from different perspectives. Paul Tillick (1963 in Edwards 1979:7) defines religion as ‘the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary, and a concern that in itself provides the answer to the question of the meaning of our existence’. This definition is significant for the discussion of the interface between religion and terrorism. For the religious terrorists, they exist to fight for and on behalf of God (Juergensmeyer 2000). That is, the religious terrorists have been grasped by the ultimate concern; to fight holy wars. Thus, religion provides meaning for their existence and their terrorist activities.

The link between religion and terrorism dates as far back as 2000 years when the Jewish resistance group rose up against the Romans in Judea (Garrison 2003:44). Increasingly, religion appears to be providing the ideology, motivation and organizational structure for the perpetrators of terrorism (Juergensmeyer 2000). This is in reference to the crusades, the jihads, the religious



wars in Europe (Appleby 2000; Juergensmeyer 2000, Nussbaum 2012). There are different opinions as to why religion appears to have ties with terrorism. Juergensmeyer (2000:6) notes that ‘some observers try to explain away religion's recent ties to violence as an aberration, a result of political ideology, or the characteristic of a mutant form of religion...’. However, Juergensmeyer, himself, looks at the religion and terrorism nexus from a different perspective. He posits that the connection between religion and terrorism may be found at ‘the deepest levels of religious imagination’ (Juergensmeyer 2000:7). That is, violence, wars and death have always been part of the very heart of religion as can be seen from religious histories and scriptures. Yet, ordinarily religion is not violent and at the same time it is also not innocent of or insulated from the violent accusations leveled against it. This is because when religion has coalesced with peculiar political, economic, social and even cultural circumstances, it ‘becomes fused with violent expressions of social aspirations, personal pride, and movements for political change’ (Juergensmeyer 2000:10). Heather (2014:36) has described religious terrorism as ‘typically characterized by such acts of unrestrained, irrational and indiscriminate violence, thus, offering few if any policy option for counterterrorism measures’.

Indeed, the nexus between religion and violence (conflict) has been noted as an age old phenomenon (Appleby 2000; Juergensmeyer 2000). However, religion’s association with terrorism, particularly, transnational terrorism has been highlighted after the 9/11 terror events in the US. As at 1980, the US State Department Roster of international terrorist groups hardly named a religious group. However, by 1998 when thirty most dangerous groups were listed by the US Secretary of State, religious groups formed more than half of them and the list continue to increase up to the present (Juergensmeyer 2000:6-7). Juergensmeyer (2000:5) notes that the tremble and fear people experience when acts of terror are committed turn into anger when they realize the connections between the terror and religion. This is because people expect religion to be a source of peace and tranquility and not destruction.

The continued connection between religion and terrorism has led Neumayer and Plumper (2009) to identify three overlapping ‘modern waves of terrorism’; the anti-colonial/ethno-nationalist, the radical left and religious terrorism. The anti-colonial and ethno-nationalist groups ‘wanted national independence from colonial occupiers or secession for their ethnic group, and they were often successful’(Neumayer and Plumper 2009:9). The radical left groups ‘wanted to overthrow

capitalism, which failed spectacularly' (Neumayer and Plumper 2009:9). The third wave which the world is currently experiencing is the religious terrorism. It is observed that Islam dominates the wave of religious terrorism. This is particularly the case in the post 9/11 transnational religious terrorism (Neumayer and Plumper 2009). The Islamic terror groups 'want to force governments in Islamic countries to adopt policies in line with their own radical interpretation of Islam' (Neumayer and Plumper 2009:9). Often, and like all other terrorist groups, religious terrorists' target is to achieve change in policies, particularly, political change in their home country or within the wider region (Neumayer and Plumper 2009:8). This means that religious terrorists' rationales for carrying out terror activities are not only transcendental but also political, ethnic, and economic among others. Yet, in some cases, religious terrorism appeared distinct from other forms of terrorism. This distinctive nature of religious terrorism is noted by Juergensmeyer (2000:10) when he explains that;

Religion does make a difference. Some of these differences are readily apparent- the transcendent moralism with which such acts are justified, for instance, and the ritual intensity with which they are committed. Other differences are more profound and go to the very heart of religion. The familiar religious images of struggle and transformation-concepts of cosmic war-have been employed in this-worldly social struggles. When these cosmic battles are conceived as occurring on the human plane, they result in real acts of violence.

Aside religion serving as a mobilization factors to terrorist groups, Juergensmeyer gives further explanation as to why religion is often linked with terrorism. Juergensmeyer (2000:11) states the following about the act of terrorism;

It also requires an enormous amount of moral presumption for the perpetrators of these acts to justify the destruction of property on a massive scale or to condone a brutal attack on another life, especially the life of someone one scarcely knows and against whom one bears no personal enmity. And it requires a great deal of internal conviction, social acknowledgment, and the stamp of approval from a legitimizing ideology or authority one respects.

Accordingly, religion 'provides' the 'stamp of approval' for terrorism through its scriptures, beliefs, and teachings among others. It must be noted that, what religious terrorists consider as legitimating authority of religion is not regarded as such by other members of the religion. Therefore, it is common to hear after the occurrence of terrorist acts linked to religion that some members of the religion will say the perpetrators are not true believers or true members of the

religion (Appleby 2000). This means that religion is ambivalent. How the individual or a group interprets its teachings and beliefs could lead to religion becoming a legitimating force for violence.

#### 2.4. CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN AFRICA

The general picture of Christian-Muslim relations in Africa is that of coexistence and confrontation. Islam and Christianity form part of the major religions in many African countries alongside the traditional African religion. In Kenya, for instance, there are visible signs of coexistence and tolerance between Christians and Muslims. Significant in this regard is the teaching of both Christian and Islamic education from primary school level to the secondary school level. In addition, Kenyans have demonstrated religious freedom, in that, public debates are organised between Christians and Muslims. Again, the *halal* meat has been embraced by many hotels in Kenya. Furthermore, Kenyan leaders have maintained the pre-independence *Khadi* courts and have enshrined them in the post independence constitution. The *Khadi* courts are subordinate civil courts that deal with cases pertaining to Muslim parties regarding marriage, divorce and inheritance (Alio 2015:117).

These evidences of tolerance are against the fact that Kenya is a Christian majority country (Alio 2015). This notwithstanding, there are still challenges that face Christian and Muslim relations in Kenya. The most basic challenge which is experienced in many other African countries as well is, the tension caused by the missionary activities by the adherents of the two religions. Also, there some unaddressed historical grievances that make Muslims feel neglected, abused and even marginalized by the Kenyan governments (Alio 2015). Such feelings at times result into Christian-Muslim tension. Again, Kenya has experienced series of terror attacks in which the perpetrators are linked to Muslims. Alio (2015:124) makes the case that;

Since 1998, series of terror attacks have taken place in Kenya. The leading attacks were: the twin attacks on US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es salam in 1998, followed by Kikambala bombing in 2002, the Westgate mall shooting in 2013, Lamu attacks in 2014 and Mandera and Garissa attacks in 2015. These attacks, in addition to several sporadic attacks in different places between 2010 and 2015, have claimed more than 400 of innocent lives and other hundreds of injured peoples.

Muslim officials in Kenya have denied any form of association with these attacks. Yet, their linkage to Muslims have created a sense of suspicion and Islamophobic reactions among Kenyan citizens (Alio 2015). Thus, the general Muslim community often experiences stigmatization and negative reactions from the public due to the violence associated with them.

The Nigerian case presents quite an interesting picture. Unlike Kenya, Nigeria population is evenly distributed, 90 million Christians and 90 million Muslims (Paden 2015). The northern states are predominantly Muslims and the southeast and south-south states are predominantly Christians. The nature of Christian-Muslim distribution in terms of the population and the physical location make their relations more competitive than coexistence. This is seen in the Nigerian politics. Political parties have Christian or Muslim colourations. Thus, in a way, victory for a political party A in an election is seen as victory for Christians and defeat for Muslims and vice versa. This competitiveness coupled with historical grievances has led to tension and violence between Christians and Muslims. This could partly explain the emergence of *Boko Haram* (Paden 2015).

Tanzania also presents somewhat similar trends in Christian-Muslim relations. It is indicated that the periods immediately after independence, Tanzanians were united along national lines (Poncian 2015). Thus, Tanzanians saw themselves as one regardless of religious or tribal differences. However, it is noted that in recent times, that sense of unity is getting eroded. Tanzanians are now viewing and assessing national issues based on their religious affiliations. For instance, when representatives of the government are appointed into political offices, people ask about their religious affiliations rather than whether they are qualified and efficient to hold such public offices. Thus, national politics is now coloured with Christianity and Islam.

Other areas of tension between Christians and Muslims in Tanzania include who butchers the cow. Should Muslims butcher the cow for all Tanzanians or should there be Christian butchers for Christians and Muslim butchers for Muslims? As simplistic as the cow butcher issue may appear to outsiders, it continues to be a tension prone topic which even led to the death of one Pastor and caused injuries to many people (Poncian 2015). There are general arguments among both Christians and Muslims over marginalization and discrimination. The government is often accused by the members of the two religious traditions as favouring one religious tradition over the other at different times.

It is important to note Poncian's (2015) conclusion that the pocket of sporadic violence and tension that erupt between Christians and Muslims are not sufficient threats to the peace and unity in Tanzania. This is because, as Poncian (2015:62) explains 'the confrontations are generally not motivated by religion, but by the political manipulations of religious diversity as well as perceptions of the way the state treat followers of different religions across the socio-economic and political opportunities'. This conclusion seems a bit problematic. This is because as I have noted earlier, Juergensmeyer (2000:10) argues that when religion has coalesced with peculiar political, economic, social and cultural circumstances, it becomes fused with violent expression. Such violent expression could pose threat to Christian-Muslim relations and eventually to national peace. What follows is the closer look at the nature of Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana, the national context of the study.

#### **2.4.1. Christian-Muslim Relations in Ghana**

This literature review has found that limited scholarly work has been done in the area of Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana. Thus, the area remains largely a fertile area for scholarly work. Nonetheless, the few scholars who have worked on Christian –Muslim relations or coexistence in Ghana have a consensus on the fact that Christian-Muslim relation in Ghana is generally peaceful. Sarbah (2010) wrote his doctoral thesis on 'A Critical Study of Christian-Muslim Relations in the Central Region of Ghana: With Special Reference to Traditional Akan Values'. Akans are the largest ethnic group in Ghana with several sub-ethnic groups. The main language of the Akans is *Twi*. Sarbah argues that the type of Christianity and Islam that exist in Ghana have been influenced and shaped by the traditional (religious) values.

Thus, Christianity and Islam found in Ghana are contextual religions. This traditional shaping of Christianity and Islam in Ghana further influenced their relations with each other. Focusing on the Akan traditional values, Sarbah argues that the dynamics of Akan religious imagination as found in the belief in the supreme deity, the universality of divine truth and religion, the heart of culture as a source of unity, are sources of influence on the two Abrahamic faiths in Ghana. Other sources of influence include; the dynamics of social ties such as kingship system, descent system and the Akan community as evident in basic concept of society and traditional morality. In reference to the concept of society, Sarbah points at the Akan's view of community, values of

human life and common humanity, the traditional approach to reconciliation and peaceful coexistence.

Affine relationships (in other words ‘kin relations’) are not only seen in intra-religious marriages but also interreligious marriages. In Ghana, and particularly among Akans, Sarbah (2010:265) notes that ‘there is hardly any marriage ... that does not bring Muslims and Christians in affine relationship. This relationship enables Muslims and Christian to live comfortably together, either in compound houses often built by their grandparents or in the same vicinity’. Thus, people are obligated by tradition to live and relate with one another at the personal and family levels regardless of their religious affiliations.

Muslims and Christians are united in Ghana by the notion of common ancestry and blood connectivity. These bonds are considered sacred and are revered by the people of Ghana. Therefore, even though the individuals belong to different religious groups they will not ordinarily want to engage in any act that will be injurious to those bonds (Sarbah 2010:265). Linked to the common ancestry and blood connectivity among the Akans is the notion of the universal human family; where all humans are seen as members of this universal family regardless of their religious affiliation. For the communal harmony and continuous survival of the universal family all members must work together in pursuance of collective goals and interest (Sarbah 2010:265). This is where the ‘traditional religious consciousness which is fundamentally indifferent to polemics but open unreservedly to dialogue and communal cooperation’ become salient and useful (Sarbah 2010:265).

Wandusin (2015) in his article ‘Christian-Muslim Relations in Ghana: The Role of the Youth’ corroborated with other scholars (Sarbah 2010; Abdul-Hamid 2011) that there is relative peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Ghana, thus, their interventions have not produced violent conflicts as experienced in other African countries. Ghana is largely divided into predominantly Christian South and predominantly Muslim North. According to the 2010 population and Housing Census the population of Ghana is about 24 million with 71.2% Christians and 17.6% Muslims (Ghana Statistical Services 2012). According to Wandusin (2015), the kind of relations between Christians and Muslims in Ghana is determined by the general inter-relations between the adherents of the two faiths in the fields of politics, economics, social and education. Indeed, Wandusin observed that the interrelations between these two faiths in

these fields can be conceptualized as a dialogue of life. This is because the adherents of these two faiths interact with one another daily. Wandusin indicated further that the relation between Christians and Muslims in Ghana is ‘one of existential reality’ (Wadusin 2015:226). Citing an example from Northern Ghana, he states: ‘one could find households inhabited by Muslims and Christians either as blood relations or as tenants or as married couples’ (Wandusin 2015: 226). Thus, individuals could have cousins, nephews, niece, uncles and aunts being Muslims and vice versa.

This dialogue of life goes beyond the family to the work places, schools and the communities in general as the adherents of the two faiths share in one another’s joy - festivals, marriage ceremonies, successes and sorrows- funerals failures, and disasters among others. In most-independent Africa, African leaders have called for cooperation between the adherents of these two faiths in the various fields of national endeavours towards the development of independent Africa. It must be noted that these efforts did not completely rule out conflict between the two faiths as there continue to be tension and rivalry between them. In some countries such as Nigeria and Sudan among others as already noted, these tension and rivalry have produced serious conflict between Christians and Muslims (Rabiatu 2007).

In spite of this dialogue of life, there are often community clashes between Christians and Muslims in Ghana. This at times stems from the evangelistic activities of some Christian. At times, there are reports about Christians being pelted by Muslims when they take their evangelistic activities to Muslim dominated communities (Rabiatu 2007). Even Christian-Muslim coexistence in schools at times also results into tension. In 2015, for instance, some Muslims students went on demonstration to register their plight in Christian mission schools. Their plights include being forced to attend Christian services in school and their girls being asked to take off their *hijabs* in school (Wandusin 2015:227). Thus, the demonstrators demanded for freedom of worship in Christian mission schools.

In spite of the intermittent tension between Christians and Muslims Wandusin (2015; see also Abdul-Hamid 2011) notes that Ghana’s case is exemplary in relations to other African countries. The main thrust of Wandusin’s article is that for the Christian-Muslim peaceful coexistence to continue and even improve, the youths of Ghana have a role to play. For him, the youths must be

involved in inter-religious relations. Thus, special recognition and consideration must be given to the youths on matters pertaining to inter-religious relations (dialogue).

Wandusin's view in this regard is essential and worth paying attention to. This is because of the present upsurge in religious extremist activities in which the youths are the main vehicles for carrying out their missions. Wandusin (2015:228) aptly noted that religious extremist groups do not 'view young people as an afterthought'. Therefore, for the youth of Ghana to contribute positively to inter-religious relations, they must be given special recognition in that regard. To buttress the importance of the youth in inter-religious relations, Wandusin (2015:228) state; 'young people tend to have a different perspective on issues and given the existential nature of Muslim-Christian encounters in Ghana, young people may tend to consider building friendship and relationship with people they meet in schools, and work places among others without necessarily being hindered by their religious background'. The future belongs to the youth, therefore, the sort of relation they build between themselves regarding inter-religious relations will determine the future of Christian-Muslim relations and the general peace of Ghana.

The various literature presented here on the Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana are quite rich and informative. They give the general picture of how Ghanaians, particularly, Christians and Muslims interrelate and coexist in the country. However, these various forms of literature have not opened up to explore the effects that transnational, international or even global issues could have on Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana. Thus, they seem to have glossed over the impacts of globalization in terms of migration, media (television, radio, and print media), technology (internet, mobile phones etc.) on local Ghanaian cultures. The important questions one needs to ask are; is the Ghanaian sense of identity and belonging such as family, community, undergoing transformation in the face of globalization? Are Ghanaians broadening their sense of family, community, identity, and belonging with the increasing use of mobile phone, internet, television, radio and migration? Are Christians and Muslims in Ghana identifying with their global faith community? What could be the cumulative effects of these on the Christian-Muslim community coexistence, and the general Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana?



## 2.5. CONCLUSION

From this literature review, it is evident that transnational terrorism is increasingly becoming one of the major security challenges facing the African continent. West Africa which used to be safer zone regarding issues of transnational terrorism is now plagued with the menace of transnational terrorism. West African societies, we have noted, are multi-religious. Though Christians and Muslims try to coexist in peace, tension and conflict persists among them. Such tension and conflict presents cracks in the relations between Christians and Muslims and open up the society for other forms of conflict and violence. Since transnational terrorism in West Africa is often linked to Islam, it could open up the cracks further in the relations between Christians and Muslims. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework within which the discussion of the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and its implication for Christian-Muslim coexistence will be analysed.

## **Chapter Three**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

This study focuses on the community coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Madina, Accra Ghana. The study seeks to interrogate the Ghanaians' lived experiences and interpretations which form part of their perceptions about transnational terrorism and their implications for Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana. The study adopts multiple theories to understand the Ghanaian perceptions about terrorism and Christian-Muslim coexistence in Ghana. Thus, the study adopts as its theoretical framework, theoretical discussions in social psychology on intergroup relations. The theories engaged include; social identity theory, social perception, stereotyping, intergroup contact theory and Islamophobia. This chapter thus presents brief discussions of these theories and they serve as the theoretical framework for the study. It is hoped that these theories help illuminate the discussion on the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and their implications for Christian-Muslim community coexistence.

#### **3.2. SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY**

The social identity theory was proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979 (McLeod 2008; Hogg 2000; Hornsey 2008; Islam 2014). An important part of social identity is the formation of in-group and out-group. An in-group is the group that the perceiver belongs or is a member of. The out-group is the group that the perceiver is not a member of. For instance, in a Christian-Muslim relation, Christians will perceive Christianity as their in-group and they will perceive Islam as their out-group. The social identity theory proposes that group membership (in-group or out-group) has three cognitive processes; social categorization, social identification and social comparison. Social categorization involves classifying people into groups such Christians and Muslims, old and young, men and women, among others so as to understand their behaviours and the social environments. Consequently, people's behaviours are defined based on the norms of the group they belong to. Social identification suggests that people adopt the identity of the

group they belong to or identify with. Therefore, a Christian, for instance, will follow the norms of Christianity and a Muslim will follow that of Islam. People's identity and self-esteem thus become bound up with the group in which they are members. Social comparison suggests that when people categorize and identify with a group, they tend to compare their group with other groups. For them to enhance and maintain their self-esteem derived from the group, their group must compare favourably with the other groups. The result of competing identities is hostility, rivalry and competition. Group membership is often associated with the appearance of prejudice and discrimination related to such perceived group membership (Hogg 2000; Hornsey 2008).

The social identity theory indicates that the individual's self concept consist of two components; personal and social identity. Generally, Tajfel argues that 'human interaction ranges on a spectrum from being purely interpersonal on the one hand to purely intergroup on the other' (Hornsey 2008:206). At a purely interpersonal level people relate entirely as individuals with no awareness of social categories (Hornsey 2008:206). Stangor (2009) argues that in reality when we know people well at the individual level, we tend to ignore their group membership and respond to them as individuals. A purely intergroup interaction is one in which people relate entirely as representatives of their groups and where one's idiosyncratic individualizing qualities are overwhelmed by the salience of one's group membership (Hornsey 2008:206). Moving from the interpersonal to the intergroup end of the spectrum results in shifts in how people see themselves and others. This enhances the salience of us and them. The salience of 'we' and 'them' changes how people see each other. This further enhances people's perceptions about out-groups (differences) and in-groups (similarities). The concept of the self as espoused by the social identity theory 'might even extend to an individual's feeling for trials, tribulation, or triumphs which he or she perceives as being experienced by groups he or she might feel that they belong' (Hornsey 2008:206).

### 3.3. SOCIAL PERCEPTION

Social perception is about how people combine various information to form impressions about others (Parkinson 2007). How people perceive groups or individual members of the group is dependent of context and motivation of the perceiver (Bavel, Xiao and Hackel 2013). Social

perception can be 'built upon years of exposure to cultural stereotypes and personal experiences' (Bavel, Xiao and Hackel 2013:113). The salient of social identity is the foundation for social perception. Thus, categorizing oneself as a member of a group and perceiving others who do not belong to the group one belongs, generally influence perception formations. The human attempt to divide social relations into 'us' and 'them', may not necessarily be based on any negative, conflicting or competitive assumptions. It is simply because humans value social identity. In that, even groups that are formed based on a flipped coin quickly form social units with identities (Bavel, Xiao and Hackel 2013). According to Bavel, Xiao and Hackel (2013:113) 'when a given self-categorization becomes salient, one may in turn be more likely to see others in light of their membership vis-à-vis this salient category'. Therefore, how one self-categorizes himself/herself as a member of a group may influence the formation of his or her perceptions, evaluations and behaviours (Bavel, Xiao and Hackel 2013).

Ferguson and Bargh (2003:33) argue that, 'when a person perceives a member of a social group such as an elderly person, information about that group is instantly activated including attitudes, exemplars (i.e. members of individual group members) and social stereotypes (beliefs and expectancies about the group; eg elderly people are slow and forgetful)'. It is shown that the perception of behaviors themselves also leads to the activation of social knowledge (Ferguson and Bargh 2003:33). Thus, it is suggested that the perception of any social stimulus will inevitably activate in memory a diverse array of related knowledge. The knowledge that is automatically activated during perception can influence people's judgments because it can guide the categorization of judgement- relevant stimuli (Ferguson and Bargh 2003:33). There are many categories into which a person or event can be placed, however; the ultimate classification of a stimuli will depend on the relevant accessibility of the relevant categories (Ferguson and Bargh 2002:33). For instance, 'a particular category may become accessible because of the recent perception of an event ...then captured as a subsequently encountered stimulus even if the only relation between the perceived event and the subsequent stimulus is a semantic one' (Ferguson and Bargh 2003:34). A category remains active even if the stimulus is no longer present; hence can influence the categorization of the other. And because every categorization carries with it a unique set of social stereotypes, attributes and knowledge, all of this associated knowledge also remain accessible and likely to be used in the interpretation of other people's behavior (Ferguson and Bargh 2003:34).

### 3.4. STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes ‘are the traits that come to mind quickly when we think about the groups’ or the ‘the knowledge structures that serve as mental “pictures” of the group in question’ (Stangor 2009:2). In other words, stereotypes are the impressions people have about groups (McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears 2002). They are often based on perceptual available cues which are used to categorize people based on the group they belong to. In this regard, stereotypes are key in how people think, organize and process information about others (Allport 1954 in Devine and Sharp 2009:61). Stereotypes help clarify and make sense of the reality. To achieve this, a stereotype has three guiding principles (Devine and Sharp 2009:61; McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears 2002:2). These principles state that; stereotypes are aids to explanation; that is, they help the perceiver in making sense out of the situation. Secondly, they are shared group beliefs. They are formed in line with the accepted views or norms of the social groups that the perceiver belongs to. In addition, stereotypes are energy-saving devices; this means they are formed to reduce effort on the part of the perceiver in dealing with the overwhelmingly complex social reality (Devine and Sharp 2009; McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears 2002:2). The challenge of stereotypes as an energy saving device is, it leads the perceiver to focus on only an aspect of a group or of individual group members. This means that, the perceiver ignores other aspects. The result is the formation of rigid, biased perception that influence the kind of stereotypes the perceiver may have about the group. That is, there may be individuals within the groups that the stereotype may not adequately reflect (Devine and Sharp 2009; Stangor 2009).

Yet, stereotypes may not always be inaccurate. To a certain extent, stereotypes reflect the group in question because there is often correlation between perception and reality (Stangor 2009; Jussim 1991). But the challenge of stereotypes has do with over-generalization. However, it is argued that stereotypes have self-fulfilling prophecies (McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears 2002). This means that stereotypes may affect how a group relates to or treats another. Stereotypes may influence the group holding the stereotype about others. Similarly, stereotypes may cause a change in the behavior of the stereotyped group (McGarty, Yzerbyt and Spears 2002). For instance, Christians stereotyping Muslims as violence may lead to hostile treatment of Muslims by Christians. Conversely, such hostile treatment may lead to violent response from Muslims, which may appear as a confirmation of the violent stereotype about Muslims.

### 3.5. ISLAMOPHOBIA IN THE AGE OF TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM

Most scholarly works on Islamophobia are carried out from the Western perspective, that is American and the European perspectives. However, it is important to engage the discussion of Islamophobia in this study's framework. This is because, one main effect of transnational terrorism, particularly, after the 9/11, is Islamophobia. Islamophobia results from the fact that transnational terrorism is increasingly linked to Islamic fundamentalism. Therefore, to understand people's perception about transnational terrorism, even in Africa, it is necessary to frame the discussion within Islamophobia. Pratt and Woodlock (2015) note that 9/11 did not only claim thousands of lives in a horrendous manner, but also break down the few existing barriers to hate-speech against Islam and Muslims. Thus, within this context Islamophobia emerges to describe and explain negativity towards Islam and Muslims, which is not just about philosophical differences or simple dislike (Pratt and Woodlock 2015). Allen (2010a in Pratt and Woodlock 2015:3) defines Islamophobia as 'an ideological position current in Western societies that negatively positions Islam and Muslims as the Other - as a problem to 'us' - which takes different forms and produces various effects'.

For some people the word Islamophobia 'is bandied to mute genuine, well-founded criticism about the religion' (Pratt and Woodlock 2015:2). By inference, the perception of fear of Islam and Muslims and its corresponding stereotypes may accurately reflect people's reactions to the global events of terror involving Islam and or Muslims. Thus, Pratt and Woodlock (2015:4) indicate that 'it is the perception of threat that give cogency to the phobia part of the Islamophobia'. The most problematic issue about Islamophobia is 'its essentializing and universalizing quality, which casts Islam itself and all Muslims as real or potential enemies' (Shryock 2013 :161 in Pratt and Woodlock 2015:9). Indeed, to extend the fear of Islamic extremism to all Muslims will be over-exaggeration and misguided. However, to argue that Islamophobia is unfounded (Nussbaum 2012) and unjustified (Alshammari 2013) is problematic. As Allen (2010 in Pratt and Woodlock 2015:4) argues, '... Islamophobia does not need to rest on an entirely imagined perilous 'Other', but is formed from an amalgam of accurate perceptions as well as stereotypes, exaggerations and misrepresentations'.

It is possible to fear and hate terrorists and their violence without necessarily extending it to the whole of Islam and Muslims (Pratt and Woodlock 2015). However, the more people extend or generalize the fear of terror to all Muslims the more pervasive and global the phobia becomes. This in turn breeds extremism towards Muslims on a global scale. Perhaps, it is from this perspective that Pratt (2015:40) states that ‘to the perception of the radical Other the response given is one of the like, or correlative, radicalization’. This reactionary response to the fear of Islam and Muslims is noted in the work of Martha Nussbaum (2012) *The New Religious Intolerance: Overcoming the Politics of Fears in an Anxious Age*. Nussbaum (Nussbaum 2012) notes that religious violence and particularly, the linkage between contemporary terrorism and Islam has caused misguided fear that provokes intolerance (prejudice and hatred). Due to this misguided fear as Nussbaum claims, Muslims in the US have come under attacks, discrimination and hatred particularly after the 9/11 events. It is this same misguided fear that lies benign the Swiss ban on the building of minarets, the call to ban kebab shops in Italy and the Norwegian massacre carried out by Anders Behring Breivik.

It is worthy of note that discriminations against Muslims is not limited to countries which have experienced violence associated with Islamic terrorism. Even countries such as Finland which has not been plagued with terrorism, Nussbaum (2012) noted discrimination against Muslims. This could be regarded as transnational effects of religious violence (terrorism). Discrimination against Muslims is evident in the intolerance exhibited towards their religious symbols such as the Mosque, *hijab* and the *minerate*. This is due to the association of Islamic fundamentalism with the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks and some other subsequent terror attacks. Nussbaum (2012) considers the fear associated with religious violence ‘misguided’ because it does not correspond with the realities on the ground. Thus, for her Islamophobia is unfounded as such she regards it as the politics of fear (Nussbaum 2012).

Stereotyping Muslims in view of terrorism arises from the fact that people input general religious motivations for terrorist acts to the entire group. Ponin *et al* (2006 in Johnson 2011:54) identified two distinct perceptions about terrorism; the rational perception and the irrational perception. In the rational perception, terrorist are considered as rational warriors who are fighting for a specific cause with specific goals in mind. On the other hand, the irrational perception holds that terrorists are irrational fanatics battling for revenge, symbolic immortality and the promise of a

paradise in the afterlife (Johnson 2011). Research has found that the rationality perception has the tendency to decrease the universalisation of terrorist acts to the entire group (Johnson 2011:55). Thus, terrorist should be seen as individuals who have taken a rational, long-deliberated decision rather than perceiving the entire religion as promoting violence in all its believers (Johnson 2011:55).

Johnson (2011:50) makes the point that, associating Islam with terrorism and hence the global Islamophobia is as a result of perceiving Islam as a monolithic bloc, static, and unresponsive to change. Thus, Johnson (2011:50) argues that;

The perception of groups as monolithic entities results in increased endorsement of stereotypes, increased justification of social inequalities, accentuation of perceived difference between groups and perhaps most importantly, assigning group based responsibility for actions taken by individual group members (in this case Muslims) ’.

Perceiving the out-group as homogenous ‘is closely related to a cognitive bias in which individuals attribute a group’s negative actions to stable, dispositional factors rather than to situational features of environment, defined as the ultimate attribution error’ (Pettigrew 1979 in Johnson 2011:55). Thus, ‘one could attribute a group’s terrorism to a stable tendency towards violence instead of attribute violent acts to a situation in which the perpetrators felt that terrorism was the only solution’ (Johnson 2011:55).

### 3.6. INTERGROUP CONTACT THEORY

The intergroup contact theory was first proposed by Allport in 1954 (Everett 2013). The theory assumes that when people spend time together for a period of time they get to know one another. This leads to reduction in hostility, prejudice and stereotype (Isike 2017). The understanding is that; ‘Theoretically, every superficial contact we make with an out-group member could by the ‘law of frequency’ strengthen the adverse associations that we have’ (Allport 1954:264 in Dixon *et al* 2005:699). Pettigrew and Tropp (2006 in Everett 2013) corroborated this point by adding that ‘even unstructured contact reduces prejudice’. The point being made is that ‘left to develop in isolation one’s assumptions about others tend to become inflexible and self-referential. Contact between groups may act as a motor of change by encouraging a dynamic and reflexive process of (re) evaluation’ (Dixon *et al* 2005:707).



Contact reduces negative effects such as anxiety/threat and induces positive affect such as empathy (Tausch and Hewstone 2010 in Everett 2013). However, this is not always the case as contact sometimes perpetuates antipathy instead of empathy towards the out-group, thus promoting hostility and exclusion (Isike 2017). This indicates that, contact does not always lead to ‘self-other merging’. In addition contact can also accentuate unequal status between in-group and out-group rather bridge status differences (Nalder 2002 in Isike 2017). Pettigrew (1998 in Everett 2013) explained how contact can reduce prejudice. This includes; learning about the out-group, changing behavior, generating affective ties and in-group reappraisal. Thus, contact works through cognitive (learning about the out-group and re-appraising how one thinks about one’s own in-group), behavioural (changing one’s behavior to open oneself to potential positive contact experiences) and affective means (generating affective ties and friendships and reducing negative emotions).

The intergroup contact theory prescribes optimal contact strategies. Allport (Pettigrew 1998; Dixon *et al* 2005; Everett 2013) suggested that group contact under certain conditions will help reduce prejudice and intergroup conflict and thus promote social harmony. The theory outlined four conditions for optimal intergroup contact; equal status within the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation and authority support (Pettigrew 1998:66). According to this theory a positive intergroup contact effect occurs only in situations where these four conditions are present (Pettigrew 1998:66; Everett 2013). By equal status both groups (parties) expect and perceive equal status in the situation such as in cross-group friendship. This means there should not be an unequal hierarchical relationship between members of the contact situation (Everett 2013). Secondly, for the contact between groups to be able to effectively reduce prejudice, group members must be involved in active goal –oriented activities. That is, they must work towards achieving common goals. And common goals lead to intergroup cooperation rather competition. In addition to these, contact should have the support of authority, law and custom. Thus, ‘there should not be a social or institutional authority that explicitly or implicitly sanctions contact, and there should be authorities that support positive contact’ (Everett 2013: Not paginated).

Dixon *et al* (2005:698) notes that these strategies are contextual prerequisite for promoting attitudinal or perceptual change. Everett (2013) explains that Allport’s four conditions should be seen as facilitating conditions rather than essential conditions. Thus, even when Allport’s four

conditions are not present, 'levels of contact and prejudice have a negative correlation with an effect size comparable to those of the relationship between condom use and sexually transmitted HIV and the relationship between passive smoking and the incidence of lung cancer at work (Al-Ramiah and Hewstone 2011 in Everett 2013). The contact theory has been used to assess attitude towards gay men, disabled persons and black neighbours in white communities.

It is an undeniable fact that a group A members cannot have contact with all Group B members and vice versa. Individuals can only have contact with one or few out-group members. Therefore, how can such contact affect the relations between the members of of the in-group and the out-group? Wright *et al* (1997:) introduced the extended contact effect (hypothesis). Close relationship between in-group and out-group members in the forms of friendship and interpersonal intimacy is key in the extended contact process. Pettigrew proposed a three stage model to take place over time to optimize success in contact situation.

This three stage model include the following; the decategorization stage, the generalization stage and re-categorization stage. Decategorization: this is the stage where the individual participants' identities should be emphasized to reduce anxiety and promote interpersonal liking (Everett 2013). Generalization: at this stage the individual's social categories should be made salient to achieve generalization of positive effect to the out-group as a whole. Re-categorization: during this stage the individual's group identities are replaced with a more super ordinate group, thus changing group identities from 'us vs them' to 'we' (Everett 2013). Wright *et al* (1997) refer to the re-categorization stage as including other in the self or self-other merging. The challenge with the contact theory is changing attitude does not necessarily correspond with a change in ideological beliefs. It is also difficult getting prejudiced individuals into the contact situation in the first place (Everett 2013).

### 3.7. CONCLUSION

This framework has selected some discussions on intergroup relations in social psychology to enhance the analysis of the empirical data collected. It has also included discussions about

Islamophobia. Thus, the theoretical discussions include the social identity theory, social perception, stereotyping, the contact theory and Islamophobia. I chose the social identity theory because the study is about Christians and Muslims, their coexistence and their perceptions about terrorism. Also, social perception is relevant for the discussion of both the Christian and Muslim perceptions about terrorism and its links with Islam. Both stereotyping and Islamophobia are important for the discussion of the challenges that transnational terrorism presents for Muslims in general and in the study context. The study context is a community where Christians and Muslims coexist. Therefore, I chose the contact theory to help me find out if coexistence influences the informants' perceptions about terrorism and Islam/Muslims. It is hoped that these theoretical discussions will help illuminate our understanding of the Ghanaian perceptions of transnational terrorism and the implications of such perceptions for Christian-Muslim community coexistence.

## **Chapter Four**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

Qualitative research is often accused of subjectivity and it also faces the challenge of replication. As such, it is important for the qualitative researcher to state clearly how he or she went about the data collection and analysis. Therefore, this chapter outline in detail how primary data was collected in the research field. Thus, it serves as the researcher's 'audit trail' in the research field (Hammersley 2011:29). The chapter elaborates how the researcher entered the field, selected respondents, conducted interviews through to her exit from the field and the analysis after the fieldwork.

#### **4.2. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

This study adopts a qualitative research method for the collection and analysis of data. As a qualitative research, the emphasis has been on the description of the Ghanaian perception about transnational terrorism and the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Ghana in general and specifically in the selected community. Thus, the main goal is not to show statistics; yet, there may be some numerical illustrations in the discussions. (Bryman 2008:22).

##### **4.2.1. Method of Data Collection**

As a qualitative research, data was collected through individual interviews. Specifically, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data from the respondents. This was employed because of the flexibility it accords the researcher (Bryman 2012:477). With this method, I had a set of questions which I explored with respondents. However, I was able to ask probing questions. This allowed me to elicit more views and experiences from the informants' perspectives about transnational terrorism and Christian-Muslim coexistence in the study area. Such views and perspectives would not have been captured if structured interviews were conducted. My choice of interviews is based on the fact that I wish to probe the views and

experiences of the informants on the Ghanaian perception about transnational terrorism and Christian-Muslim coexistence in the research area. The choice of semi-structured interviews is in line with Bryman's (2012:399) position that interacting with participants allows researchers to 'view events and the social world through the eyes of the people that they study'.

#### **4.2.2. Selecting the Research Site**

According to Neuman (1997:350) 'a site is the context in which events or activities occur, a socially defined territory with shifting boundaries'. In line with this understanding, this study chose Madina, a suburb of Accra, the capital city of Ghana as its research site. Some relevant factors that influenced the choice of Madina as the research site include its suitability, accessibility and the expected rich data to be gathered in the community (Neuman 1997:351). Madina is one of the towns in the capital city known for its Christian and Muslim coexistence. Christians and Muslims live as families, neighbours, co-tenants, co-workers, friends, local football team players and service providers and their clients/customers. The *mu'addhin* (the person who calls Muslims to prayer) wakes Christians up just as it wakes the Muslims up. Christian vigils keep as many people as possible up in their environment including Muslims. Thus, Christian-Muslim interaction is a daily reality. It is this daily reality experienced in diverse forms that made Madina a suitable site for this research. Madina, therefore, mirrored 'sites that present a web of social relations, a variety of activities and diverse events over time provide richer, more interesting data' (Neuman 1997:351).

#### **4.2.3. Gaining Access to the Site**

In the research community, I contacted the youth leader who served as my gatekeeper. The position of the youth leader is both non-partisan and non-religious. It is a position within the traditional set-up that is concerned with the wellbeing and organization of the youth in the community. During festivals, funerals, marriages, disasters, communal labours; the youth leader leads the youth to render the necessary supports and assistance to the community or the individuals involve. According to Neuman (1997:351) 'a gatekeeper is someone with the formal or informal authority to control access to a site'. As a youth leader in the community my

gatekeeper has an informal authority to control my access to the field and the informants. I first explained my research interest and the purpose of the research to my gatekeeper. I initially asked him to help me access a church and a mosque premises to conduct my interviews which he did. However, as it will be explained later, I later changed the strategy to talk to respondents in their private homes. Again, my gatekeeper contributed immensely by leading me to the homes I have selected.

The use of gatekeepers comes with benefits and challenges. His presence made access quite easy since he is known in the community. It would have been difficult entering people's homes alone unannounced. Again, perhaps people may not have received me the way they did, if the gatekeeper had not been with me. In terms of challenges, the gatekeeper could influence the field data in different ways. First of all, the fact that the informants know that the gatekeeper knows that they were selected could influence their responses. Whether these informants like the gatekeeper or not could also influence their responses. Perhaps even those who refused to be part of the study may have done so due to the presence of the gatekeeper. Conscious of the challenges the gatekeeper could pose to the study, I insisted on selecting the homes, from which to select the informants myself. Upon accessing the homes, I again selected the respondents myself; and on the interview days, I went back to the informants without the gatekeeper.

#### **4.2.4. Accessing Informants**

Neuman (1997) explains that a researcher is expected to form and negotiate social relations with each new informant until access is gained and trust is developed for the collection of information. In order to access my respondents, I presented myself as a Ghanaian, by mentioning my name, and a student doing field research. Where necessary, I introduced myself in one of the Ghanaian languages, I mostly spoke the *Twi* language (that is, the language of the Akan ethnic group in Ghana) which is the most popular and widely used in the city. The rationale for these preliminary introductions was to build rapport with the respondents. I further explained my research interest to them and how they qualify to participate in the research. The purpose was to build trust and crave their interest to participate in my research. I then asked for their consent to be interviewed. I also assured my informants that the data to be collected will be used for

academic purposes only (Bryman 2012). When people consented to be interviewed, we scheduled time for the interviews.

On the appointed interview days, I returned to the selected homes alone without my gatekeeper. The reason for conducting the interviews alone without the gatekeeper was to ensure confidentiality of the information collected during the interviews and to protect the informants from harm. Some people, for many reasons, did not keep the appointment. In all, we entered more than twenty houses, booked about fifteen interview appointments, but in the end, I interviewed ten people. That is, five Muslim respondents (three men and two women) and five Christian respondents (three men and two women). The field experience revealed that men were more willing to be interviewed than women and it was even more difficult to get Muslim women to be involved in the research, perhaps, this was a cultural issue. In addition, it was observed that Muslim men regarded the interviews as a platform to voice out their views, positions and experiences on the issues of transnational terrorism and its purported links with Islam.

The informants were purposefully sampled from the randomly selected homes in the research community. This was to enable the field data elicit the necessary responses and experiences in order to address the main research questions under investigation. That is, what the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and Islam are, and what their implications are for community coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Madina.

#### **4.2.5 Interview guide and pilot interviews**

As already indicated, this study adopted semi-structure interviews for the data collection. Therefore, I went to the research field with a semi-structured interview guide (this is included in the appendix). The questions were framed in a way as to probe the informants' views, experiences, and knowledge about transnational terrorism and its links with Islam and Muslims. The rationale was to see how community coexistence between Christians and Muslims affects people's perceptions about terrorism and Ghanaian Muslims. Thus, some of the questions on the interview guide included the following; How do you view Muslims you interact with in the light of terrorism? Do you think all Muslims are potential terrorists? / Do you think people perceive all Muslims as potential terrorists? In your opinion is transnational terrorism causing mistrust

between Christians and Muslims in Ghana? What is your experience here in the Madina community? As a guide, the interviews were not restricted to the questions on the interview guide. Other related issues that came up in the course of the interviews were taken up and probed further.

Before commencing the main interviews, I conducted two pilot interviews. Pilot interviews are pre-testing of interview questions in the field of research before the actual interviews. De Vaus (1993:54 in Baptista *et al* 2010:73) warns: 'Do not take the risk. Pilot test first'. For Baptista *et al* (2010:73). 'This position suggests that a considerable advantage of conducting a pilot study is anticipating the debilities of the research project, namely by controlling the adequacy of protocols, methods and instruments'. In addition Baptista *et al* (2010:73) emphasis that 'pilot studies hold the potential of minimizing problems associated with cold, unreflecting immersion in the field'. Based on this understanding my rationale for these pilot interviews was to test my interview questions, for instance, to find out how clear my questions were. Furthermore, it was aimed at assessing the possible responses and reactions from my respondents. In addition, it was aimed as an interviewing training for me towards the main interviews.

A Christian and a Muslim were engaged during the pilot phase of the fieldwork. My experiences from the pilot interviews led me to rephrase some of my questions for the main interviews. This became necessary because I realized that some questions were not clear to the respondents. In addition, some questions also appeared a bit sensitive and were quite difficult to put across to the respondents. For instance, it was difficult to question Muslims on the connections between Islam, violence and terrorism.

Therefore, based on the pilot experiences, I adopted a strategy of explaining to the respondents, especially, the Muslim respondents that some of my questions may be a bit sensitive, but they are meant for purely academic purposes. I repeated such statements during the main interviews anytime I wanted to ask questions I perceive as a bit sensitive. This made the informants comfortable to actively participate in the interviews. Such statements proved to be remarkably important that, they often evoked positive responses from the informants. One Muslim informant responded to my statement by saying 'Don't worry, I understand this is a student work and I have been a student before'. This came to me as a great relief and a morale booster. The full



details of the pilot interviews were not used in the study, however, some of the discussions that were considered relevant have been added to the data from the main interviews. The reasons for not using the full interviews from the pilot interviews are; the respondents were not able to answer some of the questions clearly as some of the questions were not clearly stated; and also, because such questions were changed during the main interviews.

#### **4.2.6 Selecting the interview location**

My initial plan was to station myself in a selected church premises and a mosque from where I may select my respondents. Thus, I will be near these places of worship on Fridays and Sundays to selected Muslim and Christian respondents respectively. However, after the two pilot interviews I changed the strategy for selecting my informants. I chose rather to walk through the community with my gatekeeper and randomly select homes from which to select my informants. The homes were randomly selected yet with the purpose of selecting Christian and Muslims respondents. The change of strategy for selecting my informants was facilitated by an afterthought I had on the field. Mbiti (1989) noted that ‘Africans are notoriously religious’ and indeed, they attach so much importance, reverence and sacrality to everything religious. As a result, Ghanaians have high regards for their sacred places of worship. Therefore, conducting interviews around such sacred places could influence the responses of the informants. In other words, the informants may not be able to freely express their feelings, experiences, anxieties, anger and fears about the issues under discussion. Again, the pilot interviews gave me an idea about the possible duration of each interview, that is, about forty-five minutes to one hour. And since my aim was not to conduct group interviews, but rather individual interviews, it was difficult to keep respondents waiting for hours as they have to be interviewed in turns. Also, because this field work was to last for one month, conducting the interviews on religious premises was unsuitable since people show up at these religious services on weekly basis (Sundays and Fridays for Christians and Muslims respectively). Therefore, with the help of my gatekeeper, I approached informants in their homes.

This strategy of approaching informants in their homes had some advantages and challenges. The advantages include, firstly, the informants expressed themselves freely from the comfort of their

homes. Secondly, it gave me the opportunity to see how people coexist in this community generally as neighbours and members of households. In addition, it allowed the study to access a wide range of individuals in the study community and thus different perspectives were captured.

On the other hand, the initial challenges associated with this strategy were; it was time consuming, and tiring. This was because some selected homes were empty at the time of our visit and different homes had to be selected. In some houses people were not willing to be part of the research; again we have to select different homes. In houses where residents showed willingness, I presented myself to them, explained the rationale for the research and officially ask their willingness to be interviewed. When they consented, we scheduled an appointment at a later date. From each house I selected one respondent. Another challenge regarding conducting the interviews in the private homes of the informants was there were some disruptions. In one of the interviews, the informant was at home alone with his five year old son and the little boy kept coming to talk to the father which often disrupted the informant's flow of thought and thus his answers.

#### **4.2.7. The Role of the Researcher in the Study**

In a qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument for the production of field data (Neuman 1997:354). This means that the role or position the research assumes is critical for the data collected. For Neuman (1997:354) 'this puts pressure on the researcher to be alert and sensitive to what happens in the field and to be disciplined about recording data'. In the research field I played multiple roles. First of all, I doubled as both an insider and an outsider (Dwyer 2009). To a certain extent, I adopted an insider position. This is because aside being a Ghanaian Christian, I once lived in this community, between 2010 and 2012. Thus, generally, I share in the socio-cultural and linguistic realities of my respondents. This insider status earned me access, rapport and trust from my respondents (Breen 2007:163).

The challenge with insider position however, is that, it could make me overlook some important issues and ideas if I were too familiar with them (Patton 2002). For this reason, I also assumed the position of an outsider. In other words, I adopted an attitude of strangeness which means 'questioning and noticing ordinary details or looking at the ordinary through the eyes of a

stranger' (Neuman 1997:354). I adopted this outsider position first and foremost because I am a researcher. My outsider position was further enhanced by the fact that my respondents did not know me and neither did I know them. Thus, I viewed the responses of my informants as an outsider. Moreover, as a researcher, I believe, I was viewed by my informants as an outsider.

The strength of occupying these two positions as a researcher is that I was able to understand the perspectives of my informants as an insider and at the same time I was able to step out of the context to critically reflect and do introspection on the field data (Dwyer 2009:57; Neuman 1997:355). Thus, the choice of both positions enhanced my access to data material (information) and at the same time be critical about the data collected. It must be noted that the nature and scope of this research have made the choice of occupying these two positions as a researcher inevitable; indeed, the choice is a matter of necessity. The challenge however is that it could be difficult to constantly oscillate from being an insider to being an outsider.

Beyond the insider and outsider positions, as a researcher, the roles played by my gender, religion and age were significant. In Ghana, as already mentioned in chapter one, there are three main religions; African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam. Among these Christianity and Islam are the most popular. By appearance one can easily know your religious identity, through one's dressing, the use of the veil, and even facial make-up among others. Therefore, in the study community my Christian religious identity was quite conspicuous and this could have affected the data collection process and the final data collected. First of all, my religious identity could enhance my access to informants in the field or otherwise. It will be easy to approach Christian informants than Muslim informants as the Christian informants will consider me an in-group member and the Muslim respondents may consider me an out-group member. This is where the use of the gatekeeper was significant. Secondly, in terms of the responses given, Christian informants could have glossed over certain information with the understanding that as a Ghanaian Christian I may be privy to such information. The field experience revealed that some Christian respondents appeared more open and gave straightforward answers because they were talking to an in-group member (a fellow Christian) about out-group members (Muslims). On the other hand, the Muslim informants sought not only to answer my questions but also educate me on what they considered important in Islam that I may not know. During the interviews, some Muslim informants tried to educate me on what the Qur'an teaches about

peace, *jihad* and the historical relations which existed between Muslims and Christians during the time of the Prophet. In return, I adopted the position Neuman (1997:359) called the ‘friendly but naïve learner’. Thus, I presented myself as one who is interested in learning about the religion of my informants without showing any indications towards evaluating the religion (Neuman 1997).

The significance of all these relations negotiated in the field of study was that they shape the information gathered. Thus, if a Muslim researcher had gone to do the same study in the same community, the data collected might be slightly different. This may not necessarily mean that the quality of the data collected is in doubt, rather, it is the nature of qualitative study in which the role of the researcher influences the process of data collection and the data collected.

In addition, my position as a young female researcher influenced my access to the research site and the data collected. As a female, I may appear less harmful; therefore, I was able to go to people’s private homes for interviews. Similarly, as a young female, interviewing older people felt like parents explaining or educating their daughter on their perception about transnational terrorism and its links with Islam. Yet, when I interviewed young people about my age, it was a free flow conversation as they regarded me as their comrade. All these positions I assumed in the field in one way or another influenced the data collected.

#### **4.2.8. The Process of Data Collection**

##### **4.2.8.1. Interviewing**

As already indicated this study adopted interviews for the collection of primary data. Interviews involve communication between the interviewer (the moderator) and the interviewees (the informants). Usually the interviewer asks questions and listens attentively and the interviewees respond by answering the questions based on their experiences, feeling, and reasoning among others. In this study, I used semi-structured interview guide to interview one respondent at a time. With the semi-structured interview guide, we were able to discuss the issues under consideration in in-depth. The issues discussed in the interviews ranged from the Ghanaian perception of transnational terrorism in the West African sub-region to Christian-Muslim

community coexistence in the study area. In addition, the implications of the perceptions about transnational terrorism, especially its linkage with Islam, on Christian-Muslim coexistence in the community were also discussed in the interviews. The interviews were conducted at the homes of the respondents and English was the main language of the interviews. There were times, however, some respondents mixed the English with the *Twi* language. Two of the interviews were conducted in the *Twi* language and were later translated into English by me.

#### **4.2.8.2. Recording Field Data**

During the field work, I used two methods for documenting information. First of all, I used a digital audio-recorder to record my interviews with the permission of my respondents. All the informants agreed for their responses to be recorded. The use of a recorder was significant because apart from storing and preserving the information, it did also not disrupt or delay the interviews. In a face-to-face interview, the researcher needs to listen carefully, capture body language and facial expressions of the respondents. These will enable him to ask follow up questions. However, copious note taking does not allow the researcher to give full attention to these details. Thus, audio-recording helped me focus more on the discussions during the interviews. Most importantly, recording the interviews preserved what the interviewees have said and how they have said it (Bryman 2012:482). Again, it was easy to play back the recordings to ensure that the informants' views are correctly represented. Also, field notebook was used to note down main issues during the interviews; this complemented the recorded information.

#### **4.2.8.3. Data Transcription**

At the end of the field work, the recorded information was transcribed. Transcription is the process of transforming the oral data into a written data. Transcription of the data from the field was one of the most difficult and tedious task in the study process. In order to ensure that the exact words and views of the informants were presented, I wrote down all the interview communication (Bryman 2012). I presented the original words of the informants in Italics to indicate their exact words. I then cleansed the written data by editing out repetitions, pauses,

laughter, sighing, ‘uhm’, ‘mmm’ (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). This was to ensure that the views of the informants are readable and there are no disruptions in their expressions. In some instances, however, I included some emotional expressions and non-verbal expressions such shaking of head, laughter among others in brackets where such expressions have significance or add meaning to the statements of the respondents. I introduced commas and end marks in the expressions of the informant so that the transcribed data will follow the standards of writing and make the data more understandable to the readers who were not present at the interviews. Again, I filled in some gaps in oral expressions as I converted oral expressions into written language. These are clearly shown in non-italicized words in brackets in between the exact words of the informants. More so, at times, I changed inappropriate use of grammar to make the quote readable and understandable to my readers, for example, I changed ‘is’ to ‘are’ or ‘is’ to ‘was’ so as to correct the grammar or achieve subject verb agreement. In addition, I inserted ellipses to show where I omitted long narrations from the quotes or to show that the quote is extracted from a longer speech. And in the main analysis, at times I used my understanding of the informants’ arguments in my own words.

The transcribed data was used together with the information in the field notebook to present, discuss and analyze the issues under study. These methods of data-keeping adopted in this study enhanced accurate presentation of the views of the respondents.

#### **4.2.8.4. Data Presentation**

Raw data obtained from the field can only support meaningful analysis if it is translated into useful information for the purpose of understanding the issue(s) under study (Marshall and Rossman 2011:209). Thus, data presentation includes the attempt to draw meaningful patterns out of the raw data collected. This is often done by summarizing, categorizing and or ordering the data to support meaningful analysis (Saunders *et al* 2009:482). For Patton, ‘This involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivial amounts from the significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal’(Patton 2002:432). In this study, data presentation followed after the transcription of the field data. The transcribed data have been ordered, summarized and categorized into

emerging themes. This has been done with the main research question and the stated objectives in mind. The data has been clearly written, indicating with italics the exact words of the respondents. In addition, I made efforts to cleanse the data. That is, after the data is presented, I read through it thoroughly in order to check for errors, contradictions, omissions and inconsistencies.

#### **4.2.8.5. Data Analysis**

Data analysis involves discussing my findings with the aim of answering the main research question and also to achieve the stated objectives of the study. To do this, I first coded the transcribed data. The essence of coding is to reduce the size of the data into a manageable size (Neuman 1997). Therefore, I went through the transcribed data, identified core ideas in various views expressed and I noted these ideas as themes at where they are found in the data. These were done with the research question in mind. At the end of the first round of coding, themes such as ‘the Ghanaian Muslims’, Ghana’s vulnerability, perception of violence, and peace strategy, among others started to emerge.

Secondly, I went through the data again now with more focus on the initial themes that emerged. Since the study engaged both Christians and Muslims, I sought to find out what the positions of these two groups are on the themes raised. Do the respondents from these two groups represent contrasting views or similar views on these themes? Do respondents from the same group have different views on a theme? Thus, I re-categorize the themes into sub-themes and general themes. The themes that emerged were used to organize the data based on similarity and differences in the views presented by the informants. Thus, the data was categorized along such themes. After the coding, meaningful patterns began to appear in the data. The overall analysis was done around these patterns alongside existing literature and theories.

The theories used for the analysis were adopted from social psychology on intergroup relations. These theories include; the social perception and stereotype, social identity and intergroup contact theory. These theories helped in analyzing the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and Islam/Muslims. They also helped in discussing the implications of such

perceptions on Christian-Muslim community coexistence in Madina. These discussions have brought to the fore how my study reflects existing knowledge and also brings out new contribution(s) to the broad area of the study.

#### 4.3. RELIABILITY

Reliability implies the repeatable and consistency of the result given the same instrument of measurement (Bryman 2008:31). This means the degree to which the data collection techniques produce consistent results (Saunders *et al* 2009:156). It must be noted that this is not easy in a qualitative study which adopt semi-structured interviews as its main data collection tool (Bryman 2012:405). This is particularly so because, the researcher, the main instrument for the collection, description and interpretation of the data acts based on his/her predilection (Bryman 2012:392-3). However, attempts have been made to improve reliability by clearly outlining the process of data collection and analysis. In addition, I tried as much as possible to interpret the views of the respondents without changing or twisting their true views expressed during the interviews.

#### 4.4. VALIDITY

Validity means ability of the result to correspond accurately to the concept being researched (Bryman 2012). In other words, it is the ability of the result to accurately tease out or identify what the researcher sets out to study (Bryman 2012:389-390). To achieve validity, the study adopted semi-structured interviews to collect the needed data. This has allowed me to ask relevant questions which were not on the question guide, dropped questions that were deemed irrelevant as well as sought clarifications where necessary. Furthermore, I interviewed community members who have much experience and knowledge about Christian-Muslim coexistence in the light of transnational terrorism. With the use of recorders, proper records of the actual words of the respondents have been kept for reference and verification. During the interviews I often summarized my understanding of the views expressed by respondents to the respondents. This was to ensure that my understanding reflected the views of the respondents. At the end of some of the interviews, respondent validation was ensured by playing the recorded information to some of the informants who had some free time and had agreed for the tape to be



played to them. This was a benefit derived from interviewing people in their private homes and at their free time. In all, three people agreed to this validity measure. The aim was to ensure the informants' acceptance of the responses given (Bryman 2012:391). At the end, the informants consented to the recorded interviews. These validity measures have helped to achieve thorough, accurate and critical discussion of the issues being engaged in the thesis.

#### 4.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are critical and essential elements of research. This is particularly so in a qualitative research which explores respondents' views on issues. The main ethical concerns in qualitative research are about respect for and not causing harm to the respondents (Marshall and Rossman 2011:47; Bryman 2008:113). As a measure, I explained my objective for the data collection to my respondents. In addition, I asked for their willingness to be interviewed and assured them of their right to withdraw at any stage they feel uncomfortable. Furthermore, I assured them anonymity, as a result, the respondents' names were not used in the study. They were rather identified by numbers such as Muslim Informant 1, Muslim Informant 2, and Christian Informant 3 among others. Assuring the anonymity gave the respondents the confidence to express their knowledge on issues without any fear.

## **Chapter Five**

### **THE GHANAIAAN PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM AND THE GHANAIAAN MUSLIMS**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and its links with Islam. The chapter starts by discussing briefly the nature of Christian-Muslim coexistence in Madina. This is followed by the discussion of the Christian perceptions about Muslims in the research community in light of transnational terrorism. In addition, Muslim perceptions about terrorism and its links with Islam and Muslims have been discussed. Other perceptual issues discussed include the concept of the Ghanaian Muslims, Ghana's vulnerability to terrorism, the Ghanaian Muslims as potential terrorists and the possibilities of the formation of domestic terrorist groups in Ghana. These discussions have been carried out within the framework of Social identity, Islamophobia and intergroup contact theory. The focus is to find out how Christian-Muslim community coexistence influences the Ghanaian perceptions (stereotyping) about Muslims regarding terrorism.

#### **5.2. CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM COEXISTENCE IN MADINA**

In Madina, as in the nation at large, Christian-Muslim coexistence is a daily reality (Abdul-Hamid 2011). Christians and Muslims interrelate and work together in different areas of life. Most of the respondents indicate that Christians and Muslims and of course, people from other faiths relate cordially in the community more as Ghanaians. They acknowledge that there are Christians and Muslims in the Madina community, but these religious identities do not negatively influence their interactions. Indeed, a walk through the Madina community shows visible evidences of this coexistence.

The community hosts several mosques (both private and public) and churches, located within close proximities. Friday worship activities at the Mosque and the Sunday church services are carried out through the public address systems of these religious groups. Hence the worship activities of both the churches and the Mosque are heard by the people living within their immediate environs. And indeed, some informants note that, unconsciously and indirectly,

Christians participate in Muslim worship and vice versa, as they hear from their homes the sermons and songs from these worship services. The effects of hearing the activities of these worship services are that, to a certain extent, people get to know the kind of messages the various religious leaders give to their members. This could enhance trust between Christians and Muslims in the community, that is, if the messages are neutral and not stereotyping. On the other hand, the practice could also cause tensions between the members of these two religious traditions if the messages are pejorative.

There is also the direct participation in which some Christians consult with Muslim spiritual leaders (such as Imams and Sheiks). Indeed, Muslim informant 2 who is a Muslim spiritual leader indicated during an interview with me that some of his clients are Christians. And in a similar vein, it is a public knowledge that some Muslims attend Christian church services, especially, church services that are geared towards healing and deliverance. A Christian Informant 5 made point that, at times, some Muslim children follow their friends, Christian children to their church services. Though the reverse has not been noted in the field, the study assumes that it is possible some Christian children may also follow their friends, Muslim children to the mosque or even *Makaranta* (an exclusive Arabic evening school for Muslim children). The situation in which Muslim children attend Christian church services and vice versa illustrates early childhood exposure to interfaith relations and coexistence. Such children would likely grow up to have positive thoughts and image of each other's faith.

One common statement that rippled through almost all the interviews has been, 'I have a Christian friend' or 'I have a Muslim friend'. Most of the respondents mentioned the names of their friends from the other religion to emphasize the fact that, truly they have friendship with people from the other religion. A Christian informant 4 for instance, notes that, '*I have a friend called Memuna, I go to their house and sometimes we even eat together*'. Furthermore, some informants reiterate the fact that during Christian holidays such as Christmas and Easter, Muslims send greetings and well wishes to their neighbours and friends who are Christians. Also, there are often general meals and gifts sharing in the community during such festivities. Similarly, Islamic holidays such as *Eid Al-Fitr* and *Eid Al-Adha* are celebrated in the same manner as the Christian holidays.

Various household in the community display Christian-Muslim coexistence. Some households contain both Christians and Muslims. During the interviews, some informants point at the apartment doors of their co-tenants by saying ‘*that tenant is a Christian and the other a Muslim and we live together in peace*’. It is common in Ghana to see homes being occupied by both Christians and Muslims. Even some families have some members as Christians and others as Muslims (Wandusim 2015). That is, the husband could be a Muslim, the wife a Christian and the children would often be Muslims yet at times Christians. Most often, children whose fathers are Muslims and their mothers are Christians end up being Muslims because of the patriarchal nature of many ethnic groups in Ghana. There is hardly any family without at least a long distance relation who is married to a Muslim or a Christian. As Sarbah (2010) noted, almost every marriage brings Christians and Muslims together in an affine relations. Thus, Christians and Muslims become bonded by blood through marriages. Wandusim (2015) narrated that during his ordination to priesthood, the church auditorium was so filled with many of his Muslim relations that, the Reverend Minister jokingly asked whether the ordination was taking place in the Mosque. Similarly, a Christian Informant 5 narrates her own family experience about Christian-Muslim marriage when she states;

*My auntie is married to a Muslim man. Initially my family resisted the marriage proposal, but she insisted on marrying the man. Now they have been married for some years and they have been living in peace. They have two children who are Muslims but my auntie is still a Christian.*

In some marriages, a Christian woman married into a Muslim family converts to Islam. Thus, the nuclear family becomes a purely Muslim family. However, even such a Muslim family still has to relate with Christian relatives of the woman’s family. This has been the experience of the Muslim Informant 1 as he indicates that;

*I am a Muslim and am married to a Christian woman, she is now converted to Islam and our children are Muslims. I come from a pure Muslim family, but my wife’s family is about 80 percent Christians and 20 percent Muslims and we all relate very well.*

Most of the examples of interfaith marriages mentioned by the respondents indicated a particular trend. A trend in which Christian women are married to Muslim men, but not Muslim women married to Christian men. Indeed, this practice seems very common in the country in general. This is to the extent that, some women have formed an association of Christian women in Muslim marriages. Concerning this association Turkson (2007:2) noted;

The Association of Christian Women married to Muslims is very strong in the Upper Western part of the country. The aim of this association is to support Christian women to maintain their Christian faith in an Islamic environment, to maintain good relations between their husbands' families and their paternal families, and to advise young Christian girls who want to marry Muslims.

However, it must be noted that not everyone is happy about marriages between Christians and Muslims. This is noted from the response of the Christian informant 5 when she made reference to her auntie's marriage to a Muslim man that '*Initially my family resisted the marriage proposal*'. This means that not everyone approves of Christian-Muslim marriages in the community and in the country at large. Such people may have their own reasons for this disapproval. To get a specific response on this issue, I asked a male Christian informant 2, who is already married to a Christian: would you have married a Muslim woman? His answer was an emphatic no. I probed further by asking why, and he gave a brief answer '*because they [Muslims] are violent*'. The issue of violence will be taken up later in the discussion. But, it suffices to note now that not everyone appreciates Christian-Muslim inter-marriages.

The various working environments in the community are also sights for Christian-Muslim relations. In both the formal corporate sector and the informal work sector, Christians and Muslims and indeed people of other faiths work together towards the progress and success of their enterprises. Many respondents in this study mentioned that they share working environment with Christians and Muslims. This is captured in the words of Muslim Informant 4 as she notes that;

*In my workplace, people from different religious background form part of the team of workers, our work is in the area of emergency service and it's about teamwork. We don't discriminate anyone based on religion; our clients are Christians, Muslims and people from any other religious traditions. We work and render services to our clients without thinking about religious affiliations.*

The educational environment is also another area where Christian-Muslim coexistence is seen and experienced. Most basic, secondary and even vocational schools in the community accommodate pupil and students from both faiths. First of all, in Ghana, there are public, private and mission (Christian and Muslim) schools. Public schools and private schools are open to all and sundry. Similarly, mission schools are open to all, however, all pupils and students must abide by the rules and regulations of the schools. This is regardless of whether these regulations are religious or not. Parents decide based on several factors which schools their wards attend.

Therefore, for Muslim parents, for instance, to allow their children to go to Christian schools in and outside of the community, it presupposes that such parents do not consider Christian-Muslim coexistence for their children a threat in any way. Perhaps, the quality of education and the moral training given in the chosen educational institutes at times blurs parents' sensitivity to religious differences. However, this is not always the case. At times Muslims students in Christian mission schools resist and even demonstrate against school authorities for making church service attendance in the school all-inclusive and mandatory (Azumah 2015).

Christian-Muslim coexistence in the Madina community arguably is a matter of necessity for city survival. This is because almost all community members are migrants from other parts of the country and even from outside the country (Nigerians, Togolese, etc) who came to settle there. Thus, in my view people need to coexist whether they like their neighbours or not. Thus, lots of compromises are made towards peace and tranquility in the community. Therefore, there has not been a record of any significant outburst of violence between Christian and Muslims in the community. The community members have apparently adopted behaviours needed for peaceful coexistence. Thus, they gloss over issues which will otherwise result in tension. For instance, in response to whether the community members discuss the issues of terrorism, a Christian Informant 5 had this to say;

*Generally, I discuss terrorism with my friend. But I do not discuss it with my Muslim friends. I hardly talk about terrorism incidence with them. This is because I do not feel comfortable discussing it with them. I feel I may say something that may offend them. Those of us who live with Muslims, we are always careful about what we say. They interpret our language and choice of words. If you want to live peacefully with them, then you have to be careful.*

### **5.2.1. Tension in Coexistence**

In spite of the relatively peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in the community, there are moments of tension, rivalry, negative perceptions and even stereotyping among Christians and Muslims in Madina and in Ghana as a whole. Tension between Christians and Muslims in Madina are often based on community experiences, national and transnational occurrences. Thus, local and global events inform the community members' perceptions on transnational terrorism and Islam. Even though none of the respondents recall any serious clash

between Muslims and Christians in the community, they note that, national occurrences of Christian-Muslim tension resonate in the community. This is often witnessed in the utterances of people regarding their position on the issue(s) at hand. Many of the informants made references to three main issues they consider recent. These issues include the tension in the country about the use of *Hijab* by Muslim girls in government secondary schools; the case of Muslim students being forced to attend church services in Christian mission schools; and the two Guantanamo Bay detainees (these two detainees were linked to Al-Qaeda) received by the Ghana government into the country. These issues brought about tension between Christians and Muslims in the country as a whole and it rippled through the Madina community.

Indeed, the peaceful coexistence in Madina has not blurred the people's sense of social identity. The community members are still conscious of the fact that they belong to different religions, and more so, rival religions. This became evident when questions about Islam and terrorism were raised during the interviews. Prior to the questions on Islam and terrorism, questions bordering on community coexistence were asked, and in response informants described how peaceful they coexist in the community. However, when questions relating to Islam and terrorism were raised, one could perceive changes in facial expressions, body language and even in the responses.

The various observable changes could be interpreted to mean that when issues of terrorism were raised, the informants became conscious of their religious differences. This is albeit, their earlier indications that they live together in peace to the extent of almost not noticing or ignoring their religious differences. That is, a sense of 'Us' and 'Them' began to be noticed in the responses given by the informants. Thus, responses to questions began to change into how 'we' perceive 'them' and how 'they' perceive 'us'. The implications are that, at the family, friendship, daily community interactions and even at the school levels, community members relate purely at the individual or interpersonal level with no sense of social categories (Hornsey 2008:206). Yet, when issues of terrorism were introduced, religious identity became salient and responses shifted from interpersonal assessment to intergroup assessment.

This means that the distinctive qualities that individuals exhibit through friendship, family relations, neighbourliness and sharing the same work environment became overwhelmed by the salience of one being a Christian or a Muslim (group membership) (Hornsey 2008:206). This is

seen in the change of the respondents' use of 'we' to Muslims, we Muslims, our Muslim brothers, Ghanaian Muslims and Christians among others. This is in line with Tajfel and Turner's (1979) suggestion that when people begin to view themselves in terms of group membership, that is, as in-group or out-group, their perceptions and judgment follow from categorization, identification and comparison. This means that people are classified, identified and differentiated based on the group they belong to.

Why has terrorism invoked the people's sense of social identity? Extremist groups such as ISIS (Islamic states of Iraq and Syria), *Boko Haram*, *Al-Shabaab*, *Al-Qaeda*, and *Taliban* among other operate their terror activities in the name of Islam. Therefore, the fear and hatred people have for these terrorist groups can be extended to Islam and Muslims in general. Thus, the Christian respondents to some extent perceive Muslims in the Madina community as part of the larger Muslim group. Therefore, Christian respondents began to differentiate themselves from the Muslims. At the same time, Muslim respondents also began to compare what they assume Christians and non-Muslims in general think about them regarding terrorism with what they know by virtue of being Muslims.

Pratt and Woodlock (2016:10) commented on the connections between Islamic terrorism and the fear of Muslims as thus;

...it is equally the case that popular pejorative portrayals of Islam, feeding off the dramatic behaviours of extremists and accompanying angst about Islamic terrorism, have contributed to a rise in what amounts, virtually, to a visceral fear of Islam and the political aspirations of a homogenized, monolithic Muslim *ummah*.

The perception upon which people exhibit fear towards Muslims in the wake of the present wave of transnational terrorism is that all Muslims are the same globally. Many people regard Islam as 'monolithic and static rather than diverse and dynamic' religion (Pratt 2016:2). This implies the assumption that Muslims form one group and hold the same views and position on issues. Johnson (2015:50) argues that;

The perception of groups as monolithic entities results in increased endorsement of stereotypes, increased justification of social inequalities, accentuation of perceived difference between groups and perhaps most importantly, assigning group based responsibility for actions taken by individual group members (in this case Muslims)'.

Johnson's argument is in line with the social identity theory's proposition that, when people begin to view themselves and others as in-group and out-group, differentiation, prejudice and



discrimination set in. As people differentiate between themselves and others, they start to associate actions taken by individuals and groups to the group as a whole. And in-group members ensure that their group compares favorably with the out-group. This enhances their self-esteem.

It is worthy of note that, none of the informants have lived in the research community for less than two years. In fact, some informants have indicated that they have lived in the community all their lives. This means that all the informants have had appreciable years of contact with their neighbours. It is based on these years of coexistence that the study assesses the perceptions of the informants about transnational terrorism within the context of community coexistence between Christians and Muslims.

### 5.3. PERCEPTION ABOUT TERRORISM AND ISLAM/MUSLIMS

Regarding terrorism and Islam, Christians regards themselves as an in-group while they perceive Muslims as an out-group. Therefore, the informants' perceptions about terrorism and Islam must be viewed from these perspectives. For clarity in the presentation of their perceptions, the discussion has been divided into two broad sections. One section engaged the Christians views on the issue while the other engaged the Muslims' perspectives.

#### 5.3.1. Christian Perceptions about Terrorism and Islam/Muslims

The Christian informants have expressed different views about terrorism and Islam. These views range from not associating Islam with terrorism, associating Islam with terrorism to the argument that Islam provides a stamp of approval for terrorism. In the following section, I provide a detailed discussion of these views.

##### 5.3.1.1. To Associate or not to Associate Islam with Terrorism

Pratt (2016) and Johnson (2015) indicate that people tend to view Islam and thus Muslims as a monolithic category. This is evident in the narratives of some informants. Some perceive

Muslims as a monolithic entity, therefore, the misdeeds of individuals or some groups are imputed to the whole group. For example, in response to a question about the links between Islam and terrorism, a Christian Informant 4 notes that; *'I feel people are right when they associate Islam/Muslims with violence and terrorism because Muslims are actually engaging in terrorism'*. This means that in the views of this respondent, regardless of the number, background and location of those Muslims who engage in terrorism and violence, it is 'appropriate' to associate terrorism with the whole of Islam and all Muslims. Christian informant 5 makes the point even more succinctly when she states; *'we have every reason to associate terrorism with Islam and Muslims because most of the transnational terrorist groups have Islam attached to them somehow'*.

This kind of view stems from the formation of perception as explained by Ferguson and Bargh (2003). Ferguson and Bargh (2003:34) state; *'a particular category may become accessible because of the recent perception of an event ...then captured as a subsequently encountered stimulus even if the only relation between the perceived event and the subsequent stimulus is a semantic one'*. Accordingly, due to the association of series of recent terrorist attacks with Islam, the term terrorism has become coterminous with Islam in the minds of people. Therefore, many people like some of my informants, associate terrorism with Islam. This explains why even Breivik's attack in Norway was initially thought of as a terror act carried out by Islamic fundamentalists (Pratt and Woodlock 2016).

Another respondent, a Christian Informant 2 states about associating terrorism with Islam as;

*Let us deal with individuals as individuals; Boko Haram as Boko Haram. Let us not attack their identity as Muslims, because when we do that, we may be attacking groups not individuals. On the other hand, it is also important that we know the identity of people to be able relate to and deal with them. Because the identity we give people may have a long history, which may still apply to the current generation.*

The views of Christian informant 2 seem to occupy two different positions which seem to show some level of contact effect. On the one hand, he states that *'let us deal with individuals as individuals; Boko Haram as Boko Haram'*. This presupposes that he is not in favour of generalizing terrorism to the whole religion, Islam. He appears convinced that *Boko Haram* does not represent Islam and that there are Muslims who are not members of or do not support *Boko Haram*.

Even though this statement appears as an attempt to de-categorize Muslims into ‘Muslims who are terrorists and Muslims who are not terrorists’, the following statement he made reveals more about his intentions. He said as a follow up that; ‘*Let us not attack their identity as Muslims, because when we do that, we may be attacking groups not individuals*’. Apparently, this informant is concerned about how to avoid backlash from the Muslim community. This view suggests that by associating terrorism with the whole of Islam, one may be incurring the anger of more Muslims. Arguably, Christian informant 2 is seeking peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians in the community. On the other hand, the same Christian informant 2 suggests that knowing the identity of a group of people helps in better understanding of their intentions and actions. That is, to know for instance, that *Boko Haram* is an Islamic group will help put them in the right perspective to be understood.

The fact that Christian informant 2 did not link the whole of Islam to terrorism suggest perhaps that, he did not want to argue that the religion of his friends, relations and even neighbours is associated with terrorism. Thus, even though he did not categorically make the point, we could infer that he is influenced by some level of contact. Notwithstanding this influence, he admits that some form of identity must be given to *Boko Haram* that, it is an Islamic group. Arguably, referring to a group as an Islamic group does not mean that it represents all Muslims or that all Muslims are part of it.

Christian informant 6 rather made the point clearer by indicating that, ‘*let us not put them [Muslims] in the same bracket and condemn them because Muslims in this community try to be nice, they try to prove that they are not bad people and they also try to explain that their religion is not about terrorism*’. This informant has demonstrated that his close contact with Muslims in the community has influenced this opinion about the Muslims in the community. Thus, he sought to indicate that there is the possibility that Muslims in the community could be different from others elsewhere. This confirms Pettigrew and Tropp’s (2006 in Everett 2013:Not paginated) position that ‘even unstructured contact reduces prejudice’. But female Christian informant 4 has a different view on the issue. She states;

*For me terrorism has nothing to do with religion. Terrorism is about some criminals manipulating religion to achieve their criminal agenda, so religion is simply a cover up. ... Even though most terrorist groups come from an Islamic background, have Islamic name and Islamic scriptures, I strongly believe that religion is just a cover up for their agenda.*

This response coming from a Christian informant means that she does not in any way link religion or Islam to terrorism. This informant did not link her response to her experiences of knowing Muslims or living in the same community with Muslims. However, it can be argued that her response is an attempt to deconstruct terrorism and Islam. Her position seems to bring new perspective to viewing the menace of transnational terrorism. And this is in opposition to the global Islamophobia that some people including some of my other informants adopt when dealing with transnational terrorism. Perhaps this informant is unconsciously being influenced by her daily experiences with Muslims in the community. Her response seems to give credit to Allport's (1954:264 in Dixon *et al* 2005:699) view that 'every superficial contact we make with an out-group member could by the 'law of frequency' strengthen the adverse associations that we have'. Indicatively, the daily interactions with Muslims could explain why Christian informant 4 states that terrorism is not about Islamic religious identity and rather, it is some individuals who are using this religious identity to achieve their parochial interest.

However, to argue that '*... terrorism has nothing to do with religion*' is problematic. This is because, the connection between religion and terrorism is at 'the deepest levels of religious imagination' (Juergensmeyer 2000:7). That is, the relationship between religion and terrorism goes beyond religion being a cover-up. Why are religious people engaging in violence as evident in history and scriptures? There must be something about religion that pushes believers to engage in violence. However, it must not be ignored that religious people also engage in peace-building (Appleby 2000).

### **5.3.1.2. Islam as a Stamp of Approval for Terrorism**

Again, a different dimension of Ghanaian perceptions about terrorism was presented by Christian Informant 1. This informant states; '*The use of religion by these terrorists, especially, the use of Allah is to draw supports and justify what they are doing. So religion is more of a mobilization strategy*'. The view that terrorists use religion to justify, draw support and mobilize recruits is well documented (Appleby 2000; Juergensmeyer 2000). For Juergensmeyer (2000:11) terrorists need 'the stamp of approval from a legitimizing ideology or authority one respects' and this is what religion offers.

A related view expressed in connection with why religion and in this case Islam is used by some terrorists was made by Christian informant 3. This informant states, *'to indoctrinate people to hate and kill, there is the need for a strong basis. This is why they use religion'*. The point being made here is that to indoctrinate people to support and engage in terrorism one needs a very cogent and convincing reason and religion comes in handy. This explains why many terrorist groups claim they are fighting in the name of God or they are fighting a holy war (Juergensmeyer 2000). This view also coalesces with Juergensmeyer's (2000) view about the act of terrorism. Juergensmeyer (2000:11) explains that to destroy properties on a massive scale and take the lives of people one hardly knows and bears no grudges with;

... requires an enormous amount of moral presumption for the perpetrators of these acts to justify the destruction ... And it requires a great deal of internal conviction, social acknowledgment, and the stamp of approval from a legitimizing ideology or authority one respects.

Obviously, some terrorist groups find 'the stamp of approval' from religious beliefs, teachings, and scriptures among others. Very key in this regard is the use of the concept of the cosmic war; the fight between good and evil (Juergensmeyer 2000). Thus, religion becomes a powerful tool in the hand of the terrorists as many religious people would want to fight for their religion, their God and to fight against evil. In relation to this, some Christian respondents share the view that as long as Islam provides 'the stamp of approval', even some Ghanaian Muslims are most likely to engage in terrorism. In this regard, Christian informant 2 had this to say about the Muslims in Ghana; *'if a terror act is to be carried out in the name of their [Muslims] religion or to protect their religion, then many of them will engage in terrorism'*. Similarly, commenting on the news that a Ghanaian Muslim student had gone to join ISIS, Christian Informant 1 states, *'The reason for which I think a Ghanaian will want to go and join ISIS will be because ISIS claims to be acting on behalf of God'*.

Apparently, coexistence with Muslims has given these Christian informants the sort of perceptions they have about Muslims and their religion. Relating to Muslims in the community at different levels, these Christian informants have come to know Muslims differently. Few of the Christian informants as we have seen indicated that Ghanaian Muslims should not be categorized with other Muslims because they have demonstrated to be different. Yet, many of the Christian informants only know how passionate Muslims are about their religion. Plausibly, the

passion the Ghanaian Muslims have to protect their religion may be due to the fact that they are in the minority in the country and thus do not want to be overshadowed or relegated to the background. Regardless of their reasons, Christian observers interpret such a passion as Muslims being ready to do anything, including terrorism, to protect and defend their religion. The implication of these views presented by these two Christian informants is that contact may not always change people's perceptions about others. Rather, people may tend to form or even perpetuate certain negative perceptions about the out-group based on interacting, relating, and knowing some members of the out-group. This dimension of contact will be discussed in details when we look at the issue of violence perception about Muslims.

It is worthy of note that, the fact that a religion is used to provide a 'stamp of approval' does not necessarily mean that the religion sanctions terrorism. Terrorists have interpreted or perhaps misinterpreted religious scriptures, teachings and beliefs to suit their activities. This is why different opinions and positions exist among Muslims on Islamic terrorists. While some Muslims consider these terrorists as not Muslims at all, others consider them as fundamentalists who rigidly hold onto fundamental teachings of Islam (Appleby 2000). Pratt (2006) argues that even within Islamic fundamentalism there are variations and these variations include the passive, assertive and the impositional fundamentalism. Pratt (2006:39-40) explains;

Passive fundamentalism tends to 'mind its own business' so far as the rest of society is concerned; assertive fundamentalism perhaps somewhat less so. But it is of the essence of impositional fundamentalism to impose its views and demand its programmatic vision be implemented.

It is the impositional fundamentalists that often engage in a revolution and terrorism in order to bring about their perspective of change (Pratt 2006). Pratt's analysis of fundamentalism here is very important. In that, it is not all fundamentalists who engage in terrorism; and this means that, generalizing terrorism to all Muslims and Islam is out of place.

From the ongoing discussion, we can see that many of the Christians informants have a consensus on the fact that, terrorism, especially, as it manifests in post 9/11 transnational terrorism should be linked with Islam. Thus, they argue that it is appropriate to link terrorism with Islam. These are informants who asserted that they have good Muslim friends and some have family relations who are Muslims. These Christians and Muslims in Madina state they share meals, working environment, educational facilities, living environment, and even the

community together. Yet, they do not see anything wrong with associating terrorism with their friends' religion. They did not make any distinction between Islam as practiced in Ghana and in the community with Islam practiced elsewhere. For them, global events of terrorism have provided sufficient information they need to form their perceptions about Islam. The information provided by the global events seems to override local contextual issues. That is, the global association of terrorism with Islam seems to override the cordial relations which exist between Christians and Muslims in the research community. Even Christian informant 4 who presents a varied view from other Christian respondents did not base her views on her knowledge and experiences of living with Muslims in the community. She is of the opinion that though most terrorist groups bear Islamic names, make references to Islamic scriptures and at times claim to act in the name of Islam, these are simply cover-ups for their criminal activities.

### **5.3.2. Muslims' Perception about the link between Terrorism and Islam**

Muslims are aware that generally, non-Muslims associate Islam with terrorism. As a result, Muslim respondents tried to disengage Islam from terrorism. They argue that terrorism should be looked at from economic, political and even socio-cultural perspectives instead of concluding that it is about Islam. Muslim Informant 1 presented his views about the connection between Islam and terrorism in this way;

*The fact is that, I am a Muslim and I understand some of these issues. For example, in Northern part of Nigerian where Boko Haram is, it is a predominantly Muslim region, so when something is happening to anyone from that part of the country they will mention the name of God in the language he or she is familiar with. This does not mean that whatever that person is doing is sanctioned by the religion. The problems may be economic. But people often misunderstand this and associate everything Allah is mentioned in with Islam.*

From this narrative, Muslim informant 1 seems to suggest first of all that not everything Muslims do is sanctioned by Islam. Secondly, he seems to suggest that even *Boko Haram* members may not be Muslims, even though they may be making references to Allah. It is understandable to argue that there may be other reasons other than religion for the activities of *Boko Haram*. Yet, to note that *Boko Haram* members could be non-Muslims is challenging. This is against the background that, *Boko Haram* claims to be fighting to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria (Manni 2012; Anca and Odukoya 2016). In addition, because of the passion Muslims have for

their religion as we have noted earlier, they may not allow non-Muslims to act in the name of their religion.

Muslim informant 2 also indicated that, ‘... *But I know people have the perception that all Muslims are capable of terrorist act, this is wrong...*’ Similarly, Muslim informant 4 rather presented the issue in a very simple statement, *Deal with the issues and not the religious group of the perpetrators*’. Yet, again, Muslim Informant 2 lamented about the practice in Ghana and indeed globally, in which an individual or group’s behavior is generalized to all Muslims while the same does not apply to Christians. He states;

*My observation is that when an individual who bears an Islamic name does something, often negative, the media and the people in general will say Muslims have done it. But if the culprit were to bear a Christian name you will never hear them say Christians have done that. It is wrong to associate a wrong done by an individual or a group with the religion they identify with and say that this is a Muslim character.*

These Muslim respondents generally expressed worry about why Muslims are often categorized especially when an individual or some group of Muslims act wrongly. A sense of rivalry and competition was noted in the response of Muslim informant 2 when he asked why people and the media do not associate a wrong act committed by an individual Christian to all Christians or even Christianity, but Muslims and Islam are often associated with the wrong acts committed by individuals or a group of Muslims. This informant perceives that unfair and un-equal status or treatment is given to Muslims. Pettigrew (1998) argues that for a contact situation to produce a positive effect there must be an equal status, perceived by both parties involved in the contact situation. Therefore, if Muslims feel stereotyped, ‘Othered’ and treated as if Christians are better, then the contact situation cannot achieve positive effects.

Furthermore, some of the Muslim informants relate that often Muslims are killed in terrorist attacks and at time even mosques become targets of these terrorist. Globally, it is indicated that Muslims form the highest number of terrorist victims (Global Terrorist Index 2015). In this regard, some Muslim informants asked the rhetorical question; if these terrorists are true Muslims, why then are they killing Muslims? It is without doubt that Muslims are killed in terrorist attacks just as Christians are killed. However, there are instances where it is obvious that the attacks are specifically directed towards Christians. For instance, a series of terrorist attacks in Kenya after the Westgate terrorist attacks in 2013 show that the attacks were directed towards



Christians (Gordon and Tarus 2017). This is because evidences from the Westgate, Mpeketoni, Mandera and the Garrisa University attacks that suggest that terrorist deliberately isolate Muslims from the Christian before carrying out the attacks (Gordon and Tarus 2017). Also in different countries, churches have been attacked. More so, in Nigeria, *Boko Haram* leaders often emphasized that they are fighting for justice and Islamization of Nigeria (Çancı and Odukoya 2016).

Generally, Muslim informants tried to emphasis that it wrong to link Islam and Muslims in general with terrorist activities of some group of Muslims. For them, the perception that some Christian informants expressed about the connections between Islam and terrorism are wrong and must be changed. For the Muslim informants the fact that some terrorist groups are making references to Islam, Allah, and the Qur'an among others do not justify generalizing terrorism to all Muslims. Furthermore, in the opinions of the Muslim informants not all Muslims are terrorists and not all Muslims will become terrorists.

#### 5.4. THE GHANAIAN MUSLIM

A common expression that came up in the research field was 'the Ghanaian Muslim'. This expression was used by both Christian respondents and Muslim respondents. And it was a form of categorization that sought to classify, identify and differentiate Muslims in Ghana from other Ghanaians, especially, Christians on the one hand. And on the other hand, it sought to indicate that Muslims in Ghana are in a way distinct from those in the Arab/Islamic countries. Or even within the African continent, it implies that, Muslims in Ghana are different from those in Kenya, Mali, and even those in neighbouring Nigeria. Muslim informant 3 states during an interview that; *'when we discuss terrorism, especially when terror attacks occur in different countries, you will hear our Christian friends say "Ghanaian Muslims are better"'*.

The expression 'the Ghanaian Muslims' makes more meaning when looked at within the views of universality and particularity within Islam as noted by Pratt (2016). Pratt (2016:38) states that; 'Despite the notion of identifying with a universalized reality (the one Muslim community, or *ummah* ), for the most part Muslims construe their Islamic identity in respect to the particularities of race, culture, location and up-bringing-much like any other religious person'. In Islamic

ideological understanding, Muslims all over the world form one worldwide Islamic community called *the ummah*. Thus, the Islamic nations form one big ‘notional socio-geographic and religious entity - *dar al-Islam* - to which minority Muslim communities elsewhere are associated to form a single overarching religious community’ (Pratt 2016:36-7). The notion of the *ummah* was expected to reflect the oneness of God (the doctrine of the *Tawhid*).

However, the reality is that Muslims found themselves in different geographical locations and under different socio-cultural and political orientations. This means that, to some extent Muslims see themselves differently. Therefore, there exists a reality of plurality within the Islamic notion of oneness. Yet, many of my informants do not seem to have knowledge about the universality and particularity issues raised by Pratt. Even the coinage of the expression the Ghanaian Muslim has not prevented people from associating Muslims in Ghana with terrorism; acts committed by some group of Muslims. Muslim informant 3 notes that, people in the community often associate the wearing of long beard with *Al-Qaeda*, even if the individual is a Ghanaian Muslim. Similarly, Muslim informant 2 shared his experience in which his co-staff (a Christian teacher) always jokingly refers to him as a teacher of an *Al-Qaeda* religion because he teaches Islamic Religious Studies (this informant related this experience with laughter). Apparently, the latent agenda behind identifying *Al-Qaeda* with Islam is the identification of Islam and Muslims with terrorism. The understanding, perhaps, is that Muslims, per their belief in Islam, are a group of people, regardless of their geographical location.

Indeed, the Ghanaian Muslims cannot claim to be absolutely independent of and disconnected from other Muslims elsewhere. It is worth noting that the Ghanaian Muslims have connections with the globalized *ummah*. The annual Hajj pilgrimage to *Mecca*, which Ghanaian Muslims actively participate in, highlights the unity of the Islamic faith, regardless of the nationality of the pilgrims or where the individuals reside (Ahmad 2006). Other forms of connections with the *ummah* is seen in the creation of transnational communities through ‘Ghana’s diplomatic relations with some Islamic states such as Egypt and Libya from North Africa, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran from the Middle East’ (Dumbe 2009:vi). Dumbe (2009:vi) argues that; ‘While the representative of these Muslim states (embassies) [and their NGOs] promoted the interests of Ghanaian Muslims on education, health, agriculture, Islamic centers and women empowerment, they in effect introduced their ideological interest in Muslim

religious space in Ghana'. Accordingly, through the annual Hajj and the formation of transnational communities, Muslims from different nations including Ghana, feel connected to the *ummah* (Dumbe 2009; Ahmad 2006).

Therefore, the Ghanaian Muslims' positions and reactions to global issues are influenced by their relations with the Islamic states and their sense of connections to the *ummah*. It is from this perspective, perhaps, that though many Muslim respondents condemned terrorism as not sanctioned by Islam, they regard terrorists as people fighting for their (terrorists) rights. The Muslim respondents appear to explain and justify why 'their fellow Muslims' elsewhere engage in terror acts. They argue that these are people oppressed, suppressed, and denied their rights; therefore, they are fighting for their rights. This is in contrast with the view expressed by some Christian respondents that terrorist acts are criminal acts.

The use of the expression Ghanaian Muslim(s) follows Pettigrew's decategorization stage in his proposed three stage model to take place over time to optimize success in contact situation (Everett 2013). Decategorization involves highlighting the individual participants' identities so as to reduce anxiety and promote interpersonal liking (Everett 2013). The individual's social categories should be made salient to achieve generalization of positive effect to the out-group as a whole. From the community coexistence Christian informants have close contacts with some Muslim community members. They have come to know that their Muslim friends are good people. Referring to the Muslims, he had contact with in the community, Christian informant 6 states; *They have proven to be different, they don't isolate themselves, they don't hate people because they belong to a different religion.* Thus, from their few Muslim friends, neighbors and family relations, the informants have adopted this expression 'the Ghanaian Muslim' which encompasses all Muslims in Ghana or of Ghanaian nationality.

It is important to note that they did not use the expression 'the Madina Muslims'. It means that anytime the informants used the expression the Ghanaian Muslim(s), they have distinguished Muslims of Ghanaian nationality from the ideological Islamic *Ummah* or the homogenous Islam. That is, decategorizing the Ghanaian Muslims from the global Islam. I have argued in chapter two that the effect of 'Islamic transnational terrorism' is the global Islamophobia experienced by Muslims all over the world. And Islamophobia is on the global scale due to the perceive

homogeneity of Islam (Johnson 2015). Therefore, it can be argued that it is to excuse Muslims in Ghana from the fear, anxiety, and hatred that go with Islamophobia, that the respondents use the expression ‘the Ghanaian Muslim(s)’.

However, this decategorization did not result into complete ‘self-other’ merging (Isike 2017). A complete ‘self-other’ merging would have resulted in an expression like ‘we Ghanaians’ and not Ghanaian Muslims. This is because the use of Ghanaian Muslims still indicates a sense of ‘othering’ in which Christians are different from Muslims. This experience in the research community reflects Isike’s (2017) position that contact does not always lead to ‘self-other merging’.

#### 5.5. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT GHANA'S VULNERABILITY TO TERRORISM

The Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and its association with Islam/Muslims centers around their views on how vulnerable Ghana is to terrorist attacks. Generally Ghanaians seem to perceive the threat of terrorism as very real to Ghana (Anim 2015). The media in Ghana consistently talk about the possibilities of terror attacks in Ghana. In 2015 the media reported the Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) in Ghana, Alphonse Adu-Amankwah, to have said that Ghana has satisfied some of the preconditions for terrorist attacks. These preconditions the ACP noted included Ghana’s porous borders as evidenced by the wild scale smuggling; existing ethnic and communal conflicts, widespread poverty and high rates of unemployment (GNA 2015).

Indeed, several scholars (Botha 2007; Sosuh 2011; Anim 2015) share the views of the ACP. These scholars (Botha 2007; Sosuh 2011; Anim 2015) have further added among other things, that Africans’ hospitable culture and insufficient or lack of education on what the public should look out for and report to the security officials are some other factors that make the continent vulnerable to terrorist attacks. In addition, Botha (2007) states that another area of Africa’s vulnerability hinges on the growing identification with Jihadists in a perceived war against Islam. Thus, the war against terrorists/terrorism is seen as a war against Islam and Muslims; and conversely, terrorist acts are interpreted as fights in the name of and in defense of Islam. The views expressed by the informants in this study reflect the feeling that Ghana is vulnerable to terrorist attacks. All the respondents indicate in the affirmative that Ghana is vulnerable. In

specific, some respondents share the views of the ACP Adu-Amankwah and scholars such as Botha (2007), Sosuh (2011) and Anim (2015). Muslim Informant 1 responds to Ghana's vulnerability by stating that;

*Ghana is vulnerable to terrorism due to the fact that our neighbouring countries are not safe - Burkina Faso, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and even Nigeria. Ghana's borders are not very well protected; people come in and go out without proper security checks...*

What all these views suggest is that, Ghana is vulnerable to transnational terrorist attack. And that is, because Ghana is close to countries which have or are experiencing terrorism. Therefore, there is the fear of spill-over effects into Ghana. Many informants expressed concerns about security at Ghana's borders. A Christian informant 4 makes the point even more direct when she states that '...our major threat will be our closest neighbours in conflict, Nigeria'. Thus, for this informant, Nigeria poses the greatest threat to Ghana in term of terrorist attacks. This is due to the activities of *Boko Haram* and their constant indication that they have a transnational agenda (Manni 2012). In a related response, Christian informant 1 in stating his reasons for Ghana's vulnerability indicates;

*...This is because Ghana is relatively stable in the West African sub-region and we pride ourselves in it. But I believe there may be people who will want to draw us into chaos by exporting their instability to Ghana. Look globally most of the places attacked are peaceful and unrelated to the tension – like churches among others.*

The argument that terrorist groups attack places unrelated (or perhaps not directly related) to their fight makes meaning when one practically looks at the places attacked by terrorists globally. For instance, terrorists attack school children, churches, air travelers, foreign embassies, and people at the shopping mall among others. Indicatively, these are categories of victims who may not be directly related to the cause of the terrorists. This does not mean that terrorism is an irrational act (Garrison 2003). What terrorists usually sought to do with such category of people is to use them to convey message(s) to the people concerned (Juergensmeyer 2000). So 'the targets are chosen because they will have a desired impact, such as destruction of infrastructure, significant loss of life and /or disruption of a society' (Garrison 2003:42). Thus, terrorists may attack Ghana as a way to convey a message to the leaders of Ghana or even leaders of different countries. This is in line with Garrison's (2003:43) view about terrorism that

‘the objective can be to force a government to negotiate or to seek revenge for a governmental action’.

This sort of understanding is reflected in the explanation given by female Muslim informant 5 and Christian informant 2 as to why Ghana is vulnerable. Female Muslim Informant 5 states; ‘*Ghana is involved in peace keeping, peace negotiation, and mediations in the sub-region, this is where I think Ghana is becoming exposed to and vulnerable to terrorism from outside*’. The response of Christian Informant 2 throw more light on why Ghana’s involvement in peace keeping, peace negotiation, and conflict mediations predisposes Ghana to terrorist attacks as indicated by Muslim Informant 5. He states;

*...This is because in mediation, the agents of mediation sometimes appear to support one of the conflicting parties and this could have negative consequences and I think Ghana will be playing more mediating roles in the sub-region as long as conflicts persist in the sub-region.*

Indeed, some political leaders of Ghana shared the concerns and the fears of Ghanaians as noted by Muslim informant 5 and Christian informant 2 concerning Ghana’s mediation roles in the sub-region. In 2015, the interior Minister, Mark Woyongo, indicated that ‘there are fears Ghana could be a target as the country chairs the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) bloc and its president John Mahama [the then president of Ghana] has been courting international support to fight the *Boko Haram* menace’ (Joy News 2015). Thus, Ghana’s efforts at bringing peace in turbulent countries in the sub-region could provoke terrorists to attack Ghana.

#### 5.6. THE POSSIBILITY OF THE FORMATION OF DOMESTIC TERRORIST GROUP IN GHANA

I have noted that the informants have the perceptions that Ghana is vulnerable to terror attacks. In addition to this, there is also the perception among some informants that some Ghanaian Muslims are potential terrorists. Based on these perceptions, the study probed the informants’ perception about the possibility for the formation of domestic terrorist groups in Ghana. That is, the study interrogates the informants’ views on the possibility of Ghanaians forming a group like *Boko Haram*. Many of the informants did not imagine this happening in Ghana.

For Christian informant 2, *'it will be difficult to have a domestic terrorist group in Ghana that will be effective'*. This is because Muslims in Ghana are not as homogenous as in other African countries (Çancı and Odukoya 2016). Many of the people who form part of the Islamic religion in Ghana belong to different ethnic groups. Some of these ethnic groups have rivalry between them and indeed at times their rivalry tension results into conflict. Thus, for some Ghanaian Muslims their sense of ethnicity is more accentuated than that of their religious identity. Perhaps, this explains why Ghana experiences more tension in the northern part of the country where the population is predominantly Muslims. The point is that, if Muslims are subdivided by ethnicity and there are quite a number of ethnic groups that populate Islam in Ghana, then, it will be difficult for them to have a united front for terrorism. Similarly, Muslim informant 1 says that, *'The Ghanaian per se to engage in terrorist acts in Ghana, I don't think so'*. He explains that, in Ghana Muslims and Christians live together, work together, school together, eat together, and sleep together, therefore, a Ghanaian cannot be a terrorist in Ghana.

However, there were some informants who see the possibility of the formation of domestic terrorist groups in Ghana. For such informants if the religious, economic and political situation in Ghana deteriorates to unbearable level, terrorist group like *Boko Haram* can emerge in Ghana. Some informants have also argued that perhaps there is already some local network of terrorists working in the country. They based their suspicion on the story of the Ghanaian university students who went and joined ISIS. They raised questions concerning how these students plan their travel, how they got their travel documents among others and concluded there must be some network of people in Ghana assisting such individuals. Christian informant 3 comments on the case of the students who joined ISIS that, *That is why the media reportage captured the case as 'ISIS recruitment in Ghana'*. For Christian informant 4, the transnational terror attacks that are likely to occur in Ghana will be a network of both local and foreign terrorists. For her, this is because, foreign terrorist may not be able to penetrate the Ghanaian borders, and therefore, they will incite local people to attack and claim responsibility for the attacks.

Muslim Informant 3 again expresses the view that Ghanaians should not take it for granted that Ghana is a peaceful country, therefore its citizens cannot become terrorists. He states accordingly that, *'let us not forget that people can be brainwashed, especially the unemployed youth'*.

Furthermore, Muslim Informant 3 adds his views to the possibility of Ghanaians becoming terrorists. He notes that;

*Sometimes we discuss among ourselves as Muslim youth about Boko Haram. And when you listen to the views of some of my friends, [you will know that] they are in support of the activities of Boko Haram. If Boko Haram should get access to such people, Ghana will not be safe. Indeed, we have some Muslims who are extremists such people are fertile ground for terrorists to penetrate into Ghana.*

This view expressed by the Muslim informant 3 first of all implies that even some Muslims perceive some of their Muslim colleagues as potential terrorists. Secondly, this informant's view that some of his friends may have supports for *Boko Haram* gives evidence to Botha's (2007) observation that there is a growing identification with Jihadist groups in the perceived war against Islam. Thus, to a very large extent, religion becomes a very crucial factor (both internal and external) in making African countries vulnerable to transnational terrorism, and indeed to domestic terrorism. This is because religion is a mobilization factor that extends beyond national borders. Evidently, religion broadens the potential support base for terrorist groups. Thus, Botha (2007) is of the view that terrorist groups often capitalize on the emotional aspect of religion to garner support, sympathizers and potential recruits. Muslim informant 3 reiterated that as long as Islam is attached to such terrorist groups, people will desire to join them.

Indeed, the Muslim youths who appear to support Boko Haram as noted by the Muslim informant 3, are not just fertile ground for the penetration of transnational terrorism in Ghana. Such youths may equally be potential domestic terrorists. They may not wait for *Boko Haram* to access them as the respondent noted, on the contrary, they may contact *Boko Haram* for inspiration, training, instruction and support. With the increasing use of the internet and information technology (IT) such contacts and communications can easily take place. As Weimann (2006) noted a country's vulnerability to terrorism is no longer so much about porous borders as the threat now goes beyond physical borders.

For Weimann (2006) there is now a new challenge of terrorist organizations' immense use of the internet: mass media, social media, email, chat rooms, websites, e-learning for terrorists. This is the newest security challenge facing not only Africa but the global community presently. The opinion of Muslim informant 3 corroborates Weimann's (2006) view regarding the use of the internet by terrorist groups. Muslim informant 3 made the point that with the use of the internet,



it is possible some terrorist groups have a base in Ghana from which they may seek to spread their ideology unknown to the National Security.

#### 5.7. THE FEAR OF TERROR ATTACKS IN GHANA

Usually, the perception of vulnerability as all informants affirmed and is equally affirmed by the media and the political leaders in Ghana should have produced an equivalent phobia for terrorist attacks in Ghana. That is, if Ghana has satisfied many of the conditions necessary for terrorist attacks as already noted, then Ghanaian should consider the possibilities of terror attacks in Ghana any time. Thus, there should be a ubiquitous fear in the Ghanaian populace. One of the reasons for the use of terror by the terrorists is to instill fear in the people (Jeurgensmeyer 2000; Renard 2016). The fear associated with terrorism is as transnational as the terrorism itself.

The fear of terrorism travels even farther than the terrorist acts themselves, as it is spread through the various media houses' choice of words, pictures and video coverage. The presence of the fear of terrorism almost everywhere makes people feel the ubiquitous presence of terrorism. In 2013, as the media reports the Westgate Shopping Mall terrorist attacks in Kenya, the nation of Ghana and indeed Ghanaians all over the world, were gripped with fear and sorrow as a picture of a prominent Ghanaian lecturer, poet and a former diplomat, Professor Kofi Awoonor, showed up as one of the victims who died in the attack. Professor Kofi Awoonor was in Kenya 'attending the Storymoja Hay literary festival, a celebration of pan-African writing and storytelling' (Hirsch 2013). This was not a terrorist attack in Ghana, yet it left Ghanaians with painful memories of fear and the horrors of transnational terrorism. Usually, the transnational nature of the victims makes the fear and the attention transnational terrorism receive a global one. In addition, 2015 witnessed a series of terrorist attacks globally and the Africa continent experienced quite a number of them. Nigeria alone experienced three terrorist attacks, and other attacks took place in Cameroon, Kenya, and Egypt (Alpert 2015). Due to these series of attacks, many media reports in Ghana throughout 2015 centered on terrorism and Ghana's vulnerability. Thus, there were signs of fear and uncertainty in the country.

However, the heightened fear associated with terrorism seems to have slowly dissipated during the time of this research. Many informants, almost univocally indicate that, they do not fear that

there is a terror attack looming to happen in Ghana. Thus, many informants do not really consider transnational terror attacks as so eminent and therefore they are not paranoid about attending national gatherings and public places. This is because Ghana has never experienced terrorist attacks as many of the informants explained. Should a country experience terror attacks before considering terrorist eminent? It is quite dangerous for a country to think that because it has never experienced terror attacks, therefore, a terrorist attack is not eminent (Botha 2007). This of course is not the position of the national intelligence (Anim 2015). Nevertheless, one informant indicates that some sections of Ghanaians may be concerned and watch-out for strange behaviours in crowded public places. Christian informant 2 makes the point that;

*I think the educated Ghanaians are concerned about crowded public places. For the ordinary Ghanaians even though they listen and watch happenings around the globe in the news they have the feelings that such things could not happen in Ghana.*

For this informant, it is the educated elites that bear the load of concern about the possibilities of terrorist attacks when they are in public places. In his view, the information and knowledge about how transnational terrorists operate and Ghana's vulnerability are possessed by the educated people. This is because they listen to local and international news and are able to interpret transnational issues largely. For the majority of Ghanaians, they may not be aware of these interconnections, for instance, how terrorist activities in Nigeria could spill-over or be transported into Ghana.

Some informants explained that though they know Ghana is vulnerable yet they are not so afraid to the extent of avoiding public places. This is in line with Renard's (2016) view that there are reasons for believing that terrorism is contagious, however, such a view must be held with caution as it can spread more anxiety among citizens and serve the purposes of terrorists. Therefore, the position adopted by the respondents that they and Ghanaians in general are not paranoid about terrorism taking place in Ghana is understandable. Ghanaians do not want the fear of terrorist attacks to derail them from their daily activities and to deny them of their peace. Renard (2016) expresses the view that to instill fear in the people is one of the aims of terrorists; therefore, the existence of fear among the targeted population is a victory for terrorist groups. Thus, to defeat terrorism, there is the need to defeat fear (Renard 2016). Thus, Ghanaians are confronting terrorism not only with security intelligence, but also dealing with the residual effects of fear that terrorism leaves in its trails.

The Ghanaian attitude towards the fear of terrorism plausibly reflects some amount of trust for the Ghanaian Muslims. This means that Christian informants do not consider the Ghanaian Muslims as actual terrorists looking for where to carry out their attacks. Thus, the Christian perception about Ghanaian Muslims regarding terrorism is still at the potential level. This may be because Christians have coexisted long enough with Muslims without experiencing any terrorist attacks. However, as we have already noted, Christian informants indicate that some Ghanaian Muslims could become terrorists.

#### 5.8. IS YOUR MUSLIM NEIGHBOR A POTENTIAL TERRORIST?

Related to the possibility of transnational terrorist groups influencing and even indoctrinating sections of the Ghanaian populace as some informants have already hinted, I asked the Christian informants ‘is your neighbor, a Ghanaian Muslim a potential terrorist?’ Equivalently, I asked the Muslim respondents ‘Do you think non-Muslims in this community and the country at large consider Ghanaian Muslims (and those of you in this community) potential terrorists?’ As we noted in chapter three, one of the key assumptions behind Islamophobia is that generally all Muslims are responsible for transnational terrorism since after 9/11. The second key assumption is that all Muslims are guilty through association (Alshammari 2013). That is, the mere fact that people form part of the Islamic religion means that they are guilty for the sins of other Muslims. As a result of these assumptions, ‘Muslims started to be suspected as either terrorists or sympathetic to terrorism and terrorists, and were distrusted’ (Abdullah 2015:52). These two presumptuous grounds for the fear and hostility towards Muslims are problematic. This is because it lumps all Muslims together without due regards for individual, geographical and theological differences. It is not just about the Arab Muslims, but all Muslims over the world. This assumption, perhaps, intentionally glossed over or did not pay attention to the Muslim voices which condemned and continue to condemn terrorism (Heath and Tarus 2017; Rabasa *et al* 2004).

The responses given by the informants on whether or not Ghanaian Muslims are potential terrorists were varied. Muslim informant 2 appears to speak broadly for the Ghanaian Muslims when he notes that;

*Not all Muslims will ever involve themselves in terrorism, I am sure of that...The Holy Qur'an states that you cannot even take a life an animal without due regard - you cannot take the life of your colleague for the sake of the religion. People use Jihad as an excuse for violence but this is a wrong interpretation of Jihad.*

What this response probably implies is that some Muslims in Ghana can get involved in terrorism. But of course not all Muslims will become terrorists. This is a general view held by many Muslims to indicate that Muslims do not hold the same view or position on terrorism. In Kenya this view is expressed in the cliché 'Not every Muslim is a terrorist, but every terrorist is a Muslim' (Gordon and Tarus 2017). Muslim Informant 5 presented a related and yet a varied opinion on the issue. She expressed doubt about the possibility of a Ghanaian engaging in terrorist attacks in Ghana. She states '*...But for a Ghanaian to engage in terror attacks in Ghana, I don't think so*'. This informant is not denying the possibility of a Ghanaian becoming a terrorist, but for such a person to engage in his terror escapades in Ghana is difficult for her to imagine. Perhaps, these informants have said these with the knowledge of the Ghanaian university students who were alleged to have gone to fight alongside ISIS in Syria (Kwawukume 2015). As such, they have no reason to doubt the possibility of Ghanaians becoming terrorists. Muslim informant 3 uses his personal relations with Christians as a basis for his response. Thus, based on his experiences with Christians, he does not think that non-Muslims consider Ghanaian Muslims as potential terrorists. He states; '*...most of my friends are Christians and the way they relate with me does not indicate that they consider me a potential terrorist*'. This view expressed by Muslim informant 3 raises one critical question. Can one know other people's perception about him/her through the way they relate with him/her? To some extent, this is possible; and to another extent it is not possible. This is because people can genuinely relate with people and others can also relate with people in pretense.

As argued earlier, people in the Madina community adopt peace strategies necessary for peaceful coexistence. As we noted from Christian informant 5, because community members want to live in peace, they are mindful of the way they relate with one another. This implies that non-Muslims may not exhibit their stereotyping of Muslims before Muslims. Thus, they may not relate with Muslims in the community as terrorists or potential terrorists even if they have such perception about them. In this vein, Christian informant 6 states that '*I do not see my Muslim friends as potential terrorists...even if a Ghanaian considers his neighbor a potential terrorist he will not be open about it*'.

On the other hand, the Muslim informant 3 was quick to indicate about his Christian friends that;

*But normally what they [his Christian friends] say is that we [Muslims] are violent and our understanding of issues is complex. This is based on the attitude of some of our Muslim brothers and sisters. In potentiality, when you are considered violent, it means you can graduate to become a terrorist [he said this with laughter].*

This further view expressed by Muslim informant 3 suggests that he is not totally oblivious of the possibility of people considering Muslims in the community and Ghana at large, as potential terrorists. Regardless of the good relations that he indicated exist between him and his Christian friends. This is an indication that people could harbour negative stereotypes about Muslims, even though they relate peacefully with them. Accordingly, he presumes that inferring from the violence stereotype attached to Muslims in Ghana, it is possible some Ghanaians may consider some Muslims as potential terrorists. This informant's view was not far from the general Christian perception. Most Christian respondents have premised their responses to the issue on their perception that Muslims are violent. Thus, their views were very close to Muslim informant 3's submission that, '*when are you considered violent, it means you can graduate to become a terrorist*'. For instance, Christian Informant 2 expresses the view that;

*Having lived among them [Muslims] all my life, I think many of them are potential terrorists but not all of them. This is because I know how passionate and how protective they are of their religion, therefore if a terror act is to be carried out in the name of their religion or to protect their religion, then, many of them will engage in terrorism.*

Similarly, Christian informant 1 asserts that; '*Yes, Muslims have over the years exhibited violent tendencies even in this local community. So for me, it is difficult to trust them wholly, even though we have not experienced terrorism in Ghana*'. These two Christian informants appear quite categorical about the fact that Ghanaian Muslims can become terrorists. This conclusion is based on two reasons; the Muslims tendency to use violence and their strong passion for Islam. With the expression 'the Ghanaian Muslims', it is noted that informants distinguished Muslims in the community and Ghana at large from those elsewhere. Yet at the same time, contrasting perceptions exist among some informants that 'the Ghanaian Muslims' can get radicalized. Some informants have argued that a good, normal and moderate Muslim can become a radical Muslim. It is just a matter of watching, listening, and reading radical Islamic material. Even some of the Muslim informants believe that if some Ghanaian Muslims are exposed to radical teachings they can become radical. It is in line with this thinking that Muslim Informant 3 warns that '*let us not*

*forget that people can be brainwashed especially the unemployed youth*'. In addition, Christian informant 2 argues that as long as it pertains to their religion, many Muslims in Ghana will be willing to engage in terrorism. This view was further corroborated by the response from Christian informant 1 that, the reason some Ghanaian Muslims will join terrorist groups will be because the group claims to be acting in the name of God or on behalf of God.

## 5.9. PERCEPTION OF VIOLENCE ABOUT THE GHANAIAN MUSLIMS

One common stereotype against Muslims in the research community and indeed in the country as a whole is that, Muslims are violent. For scholars (Alshammar 2013; Pratt and Woodlock 2016) who have conducted research into Islamophobia, the perception of violence and intolerance about Muslims has been spread and perpetuated by the Western media, especially after 9/11. However, the violence perception Ghanaians have about Ghanaian Muslims, as many informants have indicated, predates the events of 9/11. That is, for some informants Muslims in Ghana have been exhibiting violent behaviours even before 9/11. Yet, they agree that the events of 9/11 and other subsequent events of transnational terrorism linked with Islam have accentuated such a perception. Thus, the Ghanaian perception that Muslims are violent is largely due to particular local occurrences in Ghana. As I noted already, Christian informant 1 expresses the perception that owing to the violence exhibited by Muslims in the community he cannot wholly trust them as far as terrorism is concerned. For this informant, Muslims in the community exhibit violence even over intra-religious issues.

Similarly, some informants have pointed out that their violent perceptions about Muslims are based on the frequent tension and conflict that take place in the Northern part of Ghana. I indicated earlier that the population in the Northern part of Ghana is predominantly Muslims. This means that this informant's views are not just shaped by media reportage about transnational events, rather, they are shaped by his personal experiences and observations in the local Ghanaian communities. In addition, for this informant to say that he cannot wholly trust Muslims means that possibly people live and interact with Muslims in the community with suspicion. In an environment where people coexist with suspicion, contact cannot change their perceptions rather; contact may lead to hostility and exclusion (Isike 2017). Suspicion about the

other can be a barrier to intimate contact as a result contact may only be casual. Casual contact cannot produce any significant positive effect, especially when people's minds are preconditioned by suspicion. More so, people who are suspicious of others may not want to have contact with such people. They may also not be open to learn about others' as a result, they continue to hold on to their suspicion about them.

Again, we can examine the statement by Christian informant 2 that '*Having lived among them [Muslims] all my life...*' This means that his opinions and perceptions about Muslims are based largely on his interactions and observations in the local community. The views of some other Christian informants and Muslim informants also suggest that this violence perception is of public knowledge and the Muslims themselves are aware of it. Many of the Muslim informants acknowledge this perception. Muslim informants did not also clearly argue that this perception is a misrepresentation of who Ghanaian Muslims are. This means that in a way, this violence perception could, to some extent, tell us something about the behavior of Muslims in Ghana. As we noted, Muslim informant 3 rather attempted to explain why this perception exists among Ghanaians about Muslims. For him, this perception exists due to the attitude of some Ghanaian Muslims.

The violent behavior exhibited by Muslims in Ghana in general may be due to the fact that they are in the minority. The 2010 population census in Ghana revealed that the Muslims population is about 17% and the Christian population is about 71% (Ghana Statistical Service 2012). Thus, perhaps, Muslims in Ghana feel they need to fight to get recognition. But it appears that, majority and minority power relations do not fully explain the violent behavior exhibited by Muslims. This is because even, in Nigeria, where the Muslim population is about 50% of the total population, still, Muslims engage in violence and even terrorist activities (Manni 2012). Again, fighting for recognition and violence may not always be the same thing. However, this majority and minority explanation given by this informant may not be completely out of place. Juergensmeyer (2000:12) argues that the culture of violence emerges from the perception that a community is under threat, under attack, being violated and or being oppressed. Thus, '...an act of violence can fulfill political ends and have a direct impact on public policy' (Juergensmeyer 2000:122). Thus, violence could be used to assert a group's position on issues and to earn the needed recognition especially when they are in the majority.

Violence is a key trait of terrorism (Oleson and Richardson 2007). As we have noted in chapter three, terrorism is the use of violence or the threat to use violence (Botha 2007: Oleson and Richardson 2007:40). Thus, scholars argue that ‘the tendency towards aggressiveness and violence leads people to “become terrorists in order to join terrorist groups and commit acts of terrorism”’ (Oleson and Richardson 2007:43). If aggressiveness and violence are some of the qualities that terrorists possess, then the perception that Muslims are violent leads to the assessment by Christian informants that some Ghanaian Muslims are potential terrorists.

However, and arguably, some conditions in the Ghanaian society in general and the Madina community in particular, have made coexistence possible in spite of the violent perception about Muslims. Sarbah (2010) has argued that peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Ghana is largely due to their relations by blood, marriages, and common ancestry. Thus, though Muslims may feel they are in the minority per their religious identity, they still form part of the larger community through blood, marriage and common ancestry. Furthermore, Sarbah (2010:265) states that even though the individual Ghanaians belong to different religious groups they will not ordinarily want to engage in any act that will be injurious to the bonds of blood, marriage and common ancestry. In the Madina community in particular, Christians and Muslims have formed other sense of belonging through neighborliness, friendship in the community, and working in the same environment. Thus, the sense of being a minority Muslim is sublimated into being a member of the community and work force among others. In other words, other forms of identity are created which are not based on religion.

It is worthy of note that, almost all Christian respondents indicate that Muslims are violent. Thus, in spite of living together for years, none of the Christian informants was able to firmly state in defense of the Muslims that at least their Muslim friends, relations or neighbors are not violent. This means that they have not identified any out-group positive exemplar as far as their violence perception about Muslims is concerned (Wright *et al* (1997). Rather, they make the general statement that Muslims are violent. Therefore, it looks as though contact between Christians and Muslims in the community rather perpetuates antipathy instead of empathy (Isike 2017). This is perhaps because contact rather confirms people’s violent stereotypes about Muslims in the study community.



## 5.10. CONCLUSION

From the discussion on community coexistence, it is noted that Christians and Muslims relate at different levels; as friends, family members, co-workers, co-tenants, house owners and tenants among others. This means that the effect that contact may have in the office may be different from community friendship. Similarly, the effect that contact may have on family relations may differ from that of Christians and Muslims living together as a family. More also, we can argue that there is no equal status among Muslims and Christians in the community. Yet, equal status is one of the key prerequisites for attitudinal or perception change (Dixon *et al* 2005:698). Though the community did not have former hierarchical structure, people have come to the community with their own sense of superiority. This sense of superiority stems from; culture, language, ethnicity, religion, affluence and professional status. These could be barriers to positive contact effect.

Furthermore, the perception about the violent nature of Muslims, and the suspicion that some Muslims are potential terrorists may not allow people to open up and learn about Muslims. There cannot be a perception change without learning about the out-group. As Everret (2013) states, it is difficult for prejudiced people to have contact with the out-group. Thus, people could live in the same community, work environment, house and yet not have any positive contact effect (Østreng 2000).

Generally, I have argued that Christians and Muslims in Madina and Ghana as a whole live in relative peace. I have also discussed the varied perceptions Christians and Muslims have about Islam and terrorism, Ghana's vulnerability to terrorism, fear of terrorism in Ghana, Ghanaian Muslims as potential terrorists, and violent perception about the Ghanaian Muslims and the possibilities of the emergence of domestic terrorist groups in Ghana. It appears that contact effect on perception about Muslims in relations to terrorism among the informants is very varied. The perception of informants especially Christians about the violent nature of Ghanaian Muslims do not show any positive contact effect. Furthermore, I have noted that Christian respondents have different perceptions about whether to associate Islam and Muslims with terrorism. Similarly, they have different perceptions on the Ghanaian Muslims' potentialities towards terrorism. The variations in perceptions are probably due to the different levels of contact in the community.

The next chapter discusses the implications of the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and Ghanaian Muslims on Christian-Muslim coexistence in Ghana.

## Chapter Six

### **THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GHANAIA PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM ON CHRISTIAN–MUSLIM COEXISTENCE IN GHANA**

#### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

The spate of Islamic terrorism around the globe has become a worrying trend. This is not only because of its direct destructions, but also for the residual effects it leaves on Muslims, and their relations with others, particularly, in multicultural and multi-religious societies. This chapter seeks to discuss the implications of Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and the Ghanaian Muslims for Christian-Muslim coexistence. First of all, the chapter discusses the possible behaviours and attitudes Christians in the research community may exhibit towards Muslims based on the perceptions they have about them. Secondly, the chapter looks at the Ghanaian Muslim response to the Christian perceptions about Muslims and terrorism. Finally, the chapter concludes that the Ghanaian perceptions about terrorism could have adverse implications for Christian-Muslim community coexistence in Ghana.

#### **6.2. IMPLICATIONS OF THE GHANAIA CHRISTIAN PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TERRORISM AND MUSLIMS FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM COEXISTENCE**

In chapter five, I have discussed that coexistence between Christians and Muslims does not completely change Christians' negative perceptions and stereotyping about Muslims in Madina. Indeed, other empirical studies have supported the argument that contact does not always lead to positive change in perception or stereotyping. For instance, a study conducted in South Africa about Nigerian immigrants has revealed that contact between South Africans and immigrant Nigerians produced paradoxical effects (Isike 2017). In that, in some cases it 'fostered concord, while in others, it resulted in hostility and prejudice'(Isike 2017:3225).

Similarly, a research conducted on Norwegian multiethnic-crewed ships indicated that people can maintain their stereotypical attitudes even in contact situations. Thus, 'togetherness does not

necessarily generate friendships across national, ethnic and cultural boundaries' (Ostreng 2000:1). The negative perceptions held by Christians in the Madina community against Muslims are evident in stereotyping Muslims as violent and potential terrorists and even associating their religion, Islam with terrorism. Such stereotypes about Muslims could have negative implications for Christians and Muslims in the community. This is because when stereotypes held over time they become the norm, and from a normative position, stereotypes influence people's actions, behaviours and attitudes (Moshman 2007).

Indeed, even seemingly innocent and harmless stereotypes could have devastating implications for the groups involved, as they may begin to guide people's actions. A classical example is the experiences that lead to the Rwandan genocide. Harmless and fluid stereotyping of the Hutus and the Tutsis based on ancestry, physique and socioeconomic status was the foundation for the Rwandan genocide (Moshman 2007). Thus, normal identity categories over time became fixed and rigid stereotypes that influenced the relations between the Hutus and the Tutsis. The Hutus and the Tutsis were a group of people who shared the same language and religion and even intermarried, yet, found themselves in a situation of genocide. This means that stereotypes could overrule coexistence and the societal bonds that hold people together in a society.

What therefore are the implications of the Christian perceptions about transnational terrorism and Muslims on Christian-Muslim community coexistence? What possible actions, attitudes and behavior are likely to result from the Christian perceptions about Muslims? How are Muslims responding to this perception and stereotyping against them? And how will these affect Christian-Muslim coexistence in the community

### **6.2.1. The Ghanaian Muslims as a 'Suspect community'**

The implications of the stereotypes Christians have about Muslims in the community is Muslims may be considered as 'suspect community' (Cherney and Murphy 2015). A suspect community in this regard means a community of people who are potential terrorists or are supporters of terrorism. Perceiving Muslims as a suspect community could have negative consequences for Christian-Muslim community coexistence in Madina. Such negative consequences may include tension and even conflict between Muslims and Christians in the community. As a suspect

community, Christians may relate with their Muslim neighbours with suspicion. As they may be uncertain of what their Muslim neighbours' actions could be. This suspicion could be further heightened by the general sense of Ghana's vulnerability to transnational terrorism linked with Islam and the belief that there could be terrorist networks in Ghana recruiting members. Even in the broader sense Christian Informant 2 made the observations that *They [Muslims] even become the first suspect when they happen to be at a crime scene.*

Indeed, it is not only Christians that are suspicious of Muslims. This sense of suspicion seems to be shared by some members of the Muslim community itself. We noted some Muslim informants' perception that some Muslims in the community may be in support of terrorists in the West African sub-region, particularly, *Boko Haram*. These Muslim informants have come to form this perception about some members of their own religious community owing to the position some Muslims take on issues of terrorism as evident their utterances. Globally, it is this sense of perceiving Muslims as a suspect community that has resulted into Islamophobia hate speeches and hate crimes (Nuusbaum 2012; Cherney and Murphy 2015).

### **6.2.2. Christians Distrust of Muslims**

In relating to a suspect community, one major challenge could be the issue of trust. With the perceptions and stereotypes that Christians have about Muslims in the research community, Muslims may be distrusted. According to Kenworthy (2013:328) distrust emerges from 'negative belief or expectancy about others' intentions or behavior, fear (anxiety) and protection from uncertainty'. The distrust that Ghanaian Christians may have for their Muslim neighbours may not only be because of their religion, Islam. It may also not just be because of some radical Muslims elsewhere who are engaging in killing and abducting people and destroying properties.

The fundamental issue in the Christian distrust for Muslims in Ghana is the perception that the Ghanaian Muslims are themselves violent. As it is noted in chapter five, this violence stereotyping is aggravated by the fact that violence is a key factor in terrorism. Therefore, the perception some Christians expressed that some Ghanaian Muslims are potential terrorists indicates that there may be a gradual building of distrust among Christians and Muslims in the community. As Christian informant 1 said, '*...So for me, it is difficult to trust them [Muslims] wholly, even though we have not experienced terrorism in Ghana*'. This means that the Christian

informants, may no longer consider as absolute, Sarbah's (2010) argument that though individual Ghanaians belong to different religious traditions, they may not want to engage in acts that will be injurious to the bonds of blood, marriage and common ancestry. Distrust therefore, could become a barrier to community cohesion and a source of tension. There are signals of distrust between Christians and Muslims in Ghana. It must be emphasized that this distrust is not very pronounced, yet, its existence cannot be denied. This distrust is seen in the fact that little local community issues often become a national confrontation between Muslim and Christian leaders in the country.

Indeed, many of the Christian-Muslim tensions in Ghana as alluded to by informants could be attributed to distrust. One such confrontation and tension resulted from the use of the veil by Muslim girls in public school. This confrontation about the use of veil may have some transnational influence of the reactions to Islamophobia as experienced in certain countries in Europe and America (See Nuusbaum 2012). As this issue became a public debate, it transformed into Christian-Muslim confrontation and rhetoric. It is worthy of note that Muslim girls have always taken the veil to public schools without any reactions from Christians (Khalifah 2016). However, Christians are becoming concerned about whether or not Muslim girls should wear the veil in public schools. It appears that Christians in Ghana are beginning to analyze the behaviours of Muslims within the understanding of Islamophobia and its associated distrust.

Another issue that brought about Christian-Muslim confrontation in recent times is the refusal and the subsequent demonstration by some Muslims students in Christian mission schools against attending church services in school. As I discussed in the previous chapter, both Christian and Muslim mission schools are open to all provided the students will abide by the rules of the school. While the public discussed the behaviours of these Muslim students, the public seems to be divided on two opinions. There were those who regard Muslim students attending church services at schools as a form of proselytizing them. And there were those who regard the practice as a form of exposing Muslims to the Christian faith just for the purposes of knowledge. Those who believe in the latter argue that educating the Muslims to know about Christianity is necessary for the Christian-Muslim coexistence in the country (Azumah 2015).

It is important to point out that those who hold the proselytizing view on the issue did not provide any statistics in that regard. Thus, there are no indications that Muslims convert to

Christianity because they attended Christian mission schools and attended church services at school. This is in spite of the fact that such practices existed in Ghana prior to the country's independence in 1957 (Azumah 2015; Opoku, Manu and Wiafe 2015). As already noted, issues of Islamophobia seem to be rendering Christians and Muslims very suspicious of each other. Thus, Christian leaders may try to confront every perceived aggression and radicalism from the Muslim sector in the country. In a similar vein, the Muslim leaders knowing the kind of perceptions Christians have about them may interpret the Christian position of the veil use in public schools and the Muslim students' church service attendance as a way of suppressing the religious identity of Muslims in the country. Indeed, the consequences of Christians perceptions about Muslims regarding terrorism could be very gravious for the way Christians treat or relate with Muslims in Ghana. Thus, it may put strains on the relations between Christians and Muslims and could have negative effects on their coexistence.

There may be the challenge of trust for Christians because they perceive Muslims as terrorists (potential or real) or sympathetic to terrorism or terrorists (Abdullah 2015). Such distrust against Muslims may continue even when the Muslim communities and their leaders have condemned the terror attacks (Heath and Tarus 2017; Lado 2013). Nevertheless, I have also noted in the course of the discussions that some Ghanaian Muslims also have demonstrated through their utterances support for terrorist acts carried out by Islamic groups. And indeed, it was pointed out that some Ghanaian students travelled to Syria to join ISIS (Ofori-Panin 2015). Therefore, the distrust Christians may have against the Ghanaian Muslims may not be unfounded.

### **6.2.3. Threats of Co-Radicalism**

The general implication of the perceptions and stereotypes expressed by Christian informants about Islam and Muslims in Ghana regarding transnational terrorism is, Muslims are a source of threat to peace and communal life. In intergroup relations there are two forms of threats; the realistic threat and the symbolic threat (Stephan 2009). Realistic threat is 'the type of threat which results from the perceptions held by the in-group, that the out-group "poses a risk to their safety, economy, politics, health or well-being"' (Griffin 2014:6). On the other hand, symbolic threat results from the perceptions that the values, morals, standards, beliefs may be under threat (Griffin 2014). Beyond the challenges these two forms of threat pose to groups, they also serve

as threats to members of the groups at the individual levels. According to Sephan, Ybarra and Morrison (2009: 44) realistic individual threat ‘concerns actual physical or material harm to an individual group member such as pain, torture, or death, as well as economic loss, deprivation of valued resources, and threats to health and personal security’. While, individual symbolic threat involves ‘loss of face or honor and the undermining of an individual’s self-identity or self-esteem’ (Sephan, Ybarra and Morrison 2009: 44).

The perceive threat that Christians in the research community may have about Muslims may be arguably justifiable. This is because as I discussed in chapter five, terrorist activities in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly, Kenya and Nigeria seems to largely target the Christian population (Agbiboa 2013; Alio 2015). This perceived threat that Christians may have, could encapsulated both the realistic and the symbolic threats. In terms of the realistic group threat the activities of both *Boko Haram* and *Al-Shabaab* have posed risks to the safety and well-being of Christians. This is evident in these Islamic terrorist groups attacking churches, Christian communities, deliberately separating Muslims from Christians in public places before killing Christians (CBC 2014).

On the other hand, the symbolic group threat is seen in the attempt by these Islamic terrorist groups to establish an Islamic state in their countries of operation. Such ambitions pose threats to Christian values, morals, standards, and beliefs. Since Islamic values, standards and beliefs will be imposed on Christians should the terrorists succeed in establishing the Islamic states. In fact, *Boko Haram* has been reported to adopt the strategies of abducting Christian girls and indoctrinating them with Islamic teachings (Mazumdar 2015).

Usually when people perceive threat their reactions include fear, anxiety, and hostility (Pratt 2016). The manifestation of this threat, ‘can be as much visceral as cognitive; it skews rational reflection and apprehension’ (Pratt 2016:33). Indeed, the perception of threat could lead people to threaten their perceived enemies. This is what Pratt (2016:40) calls ‘the extremism of reactive co-radicalization’. Thus, Pratt (2016:40) states that ‘...such reactionary extremism can often display the hallmarks of a mirror-imaging of that which is being reacted against: to the perception of a radicalized Other the response given is one of a like, or correlative, radicalization’. In other words, the perception about the possibilities of Islamic radicalism or the



perception that Muslims support terrorism and terrorists could produce an equivalent Christian radicalism which may not be healthy for coexistence (Lado 2013).

The perceived threat that Christians have about Muslims in the community could lead to physical attacks on the Muslims by the Christians. In Kenya, after series of terrorist acts by *Al-Shabaab*, Kenyan Christians have unleashed their anger on the Muslim community and especially on the Somalis. This included Muslims in Kenya being insulted, stigmatized and being removed from public transports (Mwakimako 2010). This is due to the association of terrorism, in this case, *Al-Shabaab*'s terrorist activities with Muslims. Thus, the perceptions that link the Ghanaian Muslims to transnational terrorism endanger Christian-Muslim peaceful community coexistence. Muslim informant 4 perceives the implications of the perceptions Christians have about Muslims in the community and indicates that;

*Having a wrong perception about Muslims regarding terrorism is a potential threat to how people relate with Muslims. Personally, I think that if you have wrong perception about me and you see me as a threat, would you come closer to me? This is a law of nature – humans do not go where their lives are under threat.*

This informant seems to understand that the kind of perceptions Christians have about Muslims could influence the way they relate with Muslims. Furthermore, this Muslim informant 4 appears to suggest that the perception, (indeed, she regards it as 'wrong perception'), that Christians have about Muslims will alter the cordial relations that existed between them over the years. This explains why she notes that the perception of Christians about Muslims is '*a potential treat to how people relate with Muslims*'. It could be argued that physical attacks, insults and stigmatization may be part of the alteration to the way Christians relate with Muslims in the community. Yet, this informant looks beyond attacks on Muslims to the situation whereby Christians would disassociate themselves from Muslims in the community.

#### **6.2.4. Possibilities of Christians distancing themselves from Muslims in the community**

If Christians continue to have negative perceptions about Muslims in the community and in the neighborhood, they may alienate, disassociate and distance themselves from Muslims. First of all, individual Christians may not want to associate with Muslims. This means that Christians may not want to be friends with Muslims. Some Christians may also vehemently oppose

marriages between Christians and Muslims. In addition, some Christians may not want to live in the same houses with Muslims. In the extreme cases, some Christians may not want to live in the same community with Muslims. Thus, they may want to socially and physically distance themselves from Muslims. Muslim informant 4 quite succinctly summarized this issue of disassociation when she states that '*This is a law of nature – humans do not go where their lives are under threat*'.

In line with this understanding, it is believed, for instance that *Al-Shabaab* attacks in which Muslims were deliberately spared and Christians killed in the Mandera region in Kenya led to over 2000 teachers and health worker (predominantly Christians) vacating the region (BBC 2015). If Christians in Madina distance themselves from Muslims, the implications will be that there will not be contact between them at the community level. I have noted in the theoretical framework that every superficial contact regardless of how unstructured it may be has the potential of reducing stereotype. Pratt (2015) argues that ignorance is the bane of Islamophobia. Thus, contact between Christians and Muslims by of 'law of frequency' predisposes Christians to some level of knowledge about Muslims (Allport 1954:264 in Dixon *et al* 2005:699; see also Pettigrew and Tropp 2006 in Everett 2013).

Therefore, if Christians distance themselves from Muslims in the community, then there may be limited chances for Christians to change their perceptions about Muslims. For it is 'contact between groups (that) may act as a motor of change by encouraging a dynamic and reflexive process of (re) evaluation'; however, when Christians and Muslims live in isolation of each other, their perceptions about each other may 'tend to become inflexible and self-referential' (Dixon *et al* 2005:707). Thus, isolation will increase Christian ignorance and heightened negative perceptions about Muslims.

The kind of distancing Muslim informant 4 mentioned may not just be about distancing in terms of community coexistence. It may extend further to marginalization in the areas of employment and education of Muslims in Ghana. That is, Muslims may be denied educational and employment opportunities. It is important to recall that the divide and rule policy adopted by the colonial authorities in Ghana has rendered the Muslim part of the country severely underdeveloped (Wrangham 2013). In Ghana, the Muslims predominantly occupy the northern

part of the country while the southern part is predominantly Christian. Thus, many Muslims move from the North to the South in search of employment and educational opportunities. It is indicated in chapter two that Ghana is a Christian majority country (about 71% Christians and 17% Muslims). This implies that strategic positions in the economy, politics, and indeed all the sectors that border on development are mainly in the hands of Christians. Therefore, if Christians marginalize Muslims in terms of education and employment opportunities, this could have dire consequences for the Muslim community. The immediate effects may be poverty and lack of development among the Muslim community. Such discriminations and their consequential effects of poverty and lack of development will bring about frustration, anger, feeling of powerlessness, and even resentment towards Christians by the Muslim community.

In discussing the possibilities of marginalizing Muslims in respect to employment opportunities Christian Informant 4 makes the point that;

*In competition with other non-Muslims such as seeking for employment opportunity, I feel they [Muslims] may feel they will not be the favourites. And that put extra burden on them to work harder to prove their worth just because of the negative perceptions associated with their religious identity. The Muslims are aware of these perceptions about them.*

The point this Christian informant is making is that, there may not be any discrimination against Muslims in terms of employment. However, a Muslim job seeker may assume that he or she may be discriminated and disqualified based on the negative perceptions Christians have about his or her religious identity. That is, whether such discriminations are underway against Muslims or not, the perceptions that Christians have about Muslims may already be having psychological effects on the Muslim community. The implication of such a possible mind-set from the Muslim community is that Muslims may perceive unequal access to employment.

The case of the Muslim experiences in the UK (United Kingdom) gives meaning to the marginalization of Muslims in terms of employment opportunities. Valfort (2015) has shown that Islamophobia and particularly, violent perceptions about Muslims is contributing to the Muslim youths' inability to secure jobs in the UK. The general perception is that Muslims may exhibit violence at the work place if offered an opportunity. Also in Finland, Nuusbaum (2012) notes that Muslim women face even more discrimination in terms of employment due to the visibility of their religious identity through their use of the veil or the headscarf.

Indeed, the implications of the perceptions Christian informants expressed about Muslims in Ghana could go beyond discrimination in terms of employment. Such implications could include discrimination in the areas of education, health, and residential locations among others. In fact, the long term implication for the Muslim community will be social exclusion. Social exclusion is a situation in which Muslims will be unable to participate effectively in political, economic, social and cultural life of the country (Berafe 2017).

### **6.3. CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM PEACEFUL COMMUNITY COEXISTENCE: FRAGILE PEACE?**

Generally, scholars (Sarbah 2010, Acquah 2011, Rabiātu 2007, Abdul-Hamid 2011) have unanimously argued that the relation and coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Ghana is peaceful. Indeed, Abdul-Hamid (2011) for instance, argued that Christian-Muslim relation in Ghana is a model for world dialogue and peace. However, this study has revealed that Christians coexist with Muslims in a community and yet, they have violent perceptions as well as terrorist stereotyping about Muslims. Perhaps, Muslims also have their own perceptions about Christians. With these perceptions and stereotypes, can it be argued that the peaceful community coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Ghana is a fragile one?

The Ghanaian Muslims bear the burden of the violent perceptions and terrorist stereotyping. Therefore, their responses to the perceptions and their implication on how Christians relate with Muslims are critical for peaceful coexistence and the general Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana. Such perceptions as Christian informants expressed, about their neighbors, friends, or family relations put heavy psychological and emotional burdens on the Ghanaian Muslims. For instance, the continuous attempt to link Islam with terrorism leaves an unbearable psychological effect on the Ghanaian Muslims who may not share in the ideology of the Islamic terrorists. Muslim Informant 3 says;

*I feel ashamed and embarrassed as a Muslim, because if you hear that some people are out there in the name of your religion, engaging in violence and killing [he said shaking his head in disapproval]. Even the way the media reports it is disheartening 'an Islamic group Boko Haram'.*

Thus, the Ghanaian Muslims have to respond to the perceptions that their religion is ‘*Al-Qaeda* religion’ (Muslim informant 2), that is, a violent religion that promotes or inspire terrorism. There are different ways in which Muslims in the community could respond to the perceptions Christians have about them.

### **6.3.1. Possible Radicalization in the Muslim Community**

The consequence of perceiving the Muslim community as suspect community and its possible influence of how Christians relate with Muslims as discussed above is a catalyst for tension, violence and extremism. If the discrimination, physical attacks, social exclusion and marginalization are perceived to be real by the Muslim community, they may breed Muslim radicalism. That is, a situation in which Muslims, particularly, the youth may find meaning and reassurance in violent extremist ideologies as the only way to address their grievances (ACSS 2015). It is argued that radicalism ‘leverages feelings of isolation from society and uses indoctrination to fill this void and create a sense of new belonging’ (ACSS 2015 not paginated). Thus, if Muslims feel isolated and disconnected from the community, they may find a connection and a sense of belonging with terrorist groups. The various terrorist groups know the importance of connectedness and take advantage over vulnerable people who desire to belong and have an identity (Oleson and Richardson 2007:44).

Discriminations and unequal economic opportunities would deepen the already economic and developmental gaps between Christians and Muslims in Ghana. And it can render the Ghanaian Muslims a fertile ground for terrorist recruitment as there may be growing identification with Jihadist groups as a backlash from Muslims. It is noted that many Tunisians who left to join ISIS were graduates who could not secure employment (ACSS 2015). Thus, such individuals became susceptible to extremism in order to address their powerlessness, frustration and lack of self-worth (ACSS 2015). Therefore, identification with Jihadist groups could be one of the crucial ways in which the Ghanaian Muslims may deal with the injustices they may perceive. This is because Jihadist groups often promise justice and equality for Muslims. This means that terrorism can become a ‘valid means’ of fighting marginalization and economic inequalities (Oleson and Richardson 2007:45). Thus, Muslims in Ghana may have social and economic reason to justify their resort to terrorism. As such, terrorism can become what Martha Crenshaw

(1990:7 in Oleso and Richardson 2007:45) describes as a “political strategy” that reflects a process of logical decisions’. In this regard, Christian informant 2 made a cogent point that; *Ghana will continue to live in peace as long as Muslims do not feel marginalized, abused, denied their rights. But the peaceful coexistence will not continue if they [Muslims] feel marginalized.*

It is important to note that, so far, the Ghanaian Muslims have not adopted a radical response to the perceptions and the stereotyping Christians have about them. Their responses have been relatively peaceful. One major way in which the Ghanaian Muslims attempt to respond to the stereotype which generalizes terrorism carried out by some radical Muslims to all Muslims is to explain that all Muslims are not terrorists and that Islam is a religion of peace. Muslim informant 4 says that, *Sometimes Muslims have to argue in order to explain to people that Islam should not be associated with terrorism.* This is confirmed by Christian informant 6, when he states that the Ghanaian Muslims and especially their leaders are always explaining that Islam is about peace. This means that Muslims have adopted non-violent communication as a way of responding to the Christian perceptions and stereotypes. The Muslims argument that Islam is a religion of peace is geared towards denouncing any association Christians make between Islam and terrorism and violence. Such arguments are also meant to correct the violent perceptions that Christians have about Muslims, particularly, the Ghanaian Muslims.

### **6.3.2. Muslims consider Christians as ignorant of Islam**

Perhaps, the attempt Muslims are making in the community to explain their religion and whom they are is hinged on their perceptions that Christians are ignorant about them and their religion. Many of the Muslim informants indicate in response to the association Christians make between terrorism, Islam and Muslims that, such perceptions are based on ignorance. This is in line with Pratt’s (2016:31) argument that ‘perceptions of Islam are often dominated by misrepresentation and distorted image which arises largely from misunderstanding and ignorance’. Muslim informant 1 states that; *But the fact is that when you hear people associate Islam with terrorism, you will realize that they are not well informed about the religion.* Similarly, Muslim informant 6 explains further the issues of ignorance by saying that;

*But when you take time to understand Islam you will realize that even Jihad (fighting in the cause of Allah) does not necessarily mean that you should take the life of another*

*person. Even when you feed the starving, it is a Jihad. That is, doing good is also Jihad such as caring for the sick.*

The point being made by these two Muslim informants is that with the right knowledge about Islam, Christians will not have the negative perceptions they have about Islam and Muslims. Thus, exposing Christians to the right knowledge about Islam is the best response and indeed the cure for the negative perceptions and stereotyping they have about Islam. Thus, as noted above Muslims in the Madina community and in Ghana as a whole are always making the efforts to explain that Islam is not about terrorism rather Islam is about peace. Therefore, many Muslim informants saw the present study as an avenue to communicate the authentic knowledge about Islam. This they hope may contribute in correcting the negative perceptions Christians have about Muslims.

### **6.3.3. The Ghanaian Muslims' Dis-identification**

Another approach the Ghanaian Muslims have adopted in response to Christian stereotyping is to dis-identify themselves from Islamic terrorist groups. Almost all the Muslim informants have emphasized three key issues about terrorism and its association with Islam. They argued that Islam is not about terrorism, not all Muslims are terrorists and not everything associated with Allah is sanctioned by Islam. Some Muslim informants have further argued that terrorism in sub-Saharan African countries such as Kenya, Nigeria and Mali are based on domestic circumstances (Botha 2007). Thus, these terrorists are using Islam to address political, economic and socio-cultural grievances. Therefore, their terrorist activities should not be used as a basis for the formation of perceptions and stereotyping about the Ghanaian Muslims. It is in relation to the differentiation between the circumstances of Muslims in Ghana and those elsewhere that the Muslim informants refer to themselves as the Ghanaian Muslims.

Furthermore, Muslim informants indicate that the victims of terrorist attacks are not only Christians or non-Muslims as Muslims are often victims as well (Lado 2013). Terrorist groups usually attack a mass of people to achieve a high number of victims (Botha 2007). They attack schools, hospitals, markets, shopping malls, airports, among others and these are highly multicultural and multi-religious places in societies (Juergensmeyer 2000). Thus, Muslims end up being victims by terrorism carried out by their own 'fellow brothers'. Indeed, Muslims being

victims of terrorist attacks is one of the reasons some informants gave to support their claim that those who carry out terrorism in the name of Islam are not really acting for Islam. For these informants, this explains why even mosques are attacked sometimes. However, I have noted earlier that in certain cases terrorists have deliberately separated Muslims from Christians before attacking the Christians (see BBC 2015). That is, even though Muslims are also often victims of terrorist attacks, there are times they are spared because they are Muslims.

#### **6.3.4. Muslim Responses to being perceived as a Suspect Community**

Apparently, Muslims know that they are perceived as a suspect community and again, they know that this perception has consequences for their coexistence with Christians. Therefore, Christian informants have made the observation that Muslims in the community try to relate with people in such a way as to change the negative perceptions about them. Christian Informant 3 made the observation that; *Muslims in this community try to behave in a way to prove that they are not what people perceive them to be.* This informant indicates how some Muslims try to get involved in most communal activities to show that they are nice people and that they are not what people perceive them to be. He states for instance that, as young men in this community sometimes go out to drink, some Muslim youths also come along and sit on the same table with them. But while others take beer, they take Fanta just to show that they are also sociable and they could socialize with non-Muslims. Christian informant 3 further adds that also during funerals, Muslim young men come around to help in the organization and the arrangements of the funerals. All these are meant to convey the message that Muslims are just like any other person in the community, they are not different as non-Muslims may think.

Indeed, during the data collection for this study, I perceived this attempt by Muslims to disprove Christian perceptions about them. Many Muslim informants laughed or smiled when the issues of violent perceptions about them were raised. This may not be because the questions were funny, but it could be interpreted to mean that these informants tried to exhibit the opposite traits of violence. Thus, they may be communicating to me through their laughter and smiles that they may all not be violent as the Christian perceptions about them may seem to indicate. This interpretation should be juxtaposed with the earlier indication in the Method chapter that many of



the Muslim informants consider this research as an avenue to address the general perceptions about terrorism and its links with Islam and Muslims.

Generally, positive community behavior seems to be the approach Muslims have adopted to counteract negative perceptions and stereotypes about them. In Kenya, Muslims have adopted such behaviours to demonstrate to Christians that not all Muslims support terrorism. In 2015, it was believed that Kenyan Muslims shielded Christians when some *Al-Shabaab* militants ambushed and attacked the bus they were travelling on. Muslims on the bus refused to separate from their fellow Christians as *Al-Shabaab* members instructed (BBC 2015). It is noted earlier that one strategy *Al-Shabaab* militants use during attacks is the deliberate separation of Muslims from the Christians and freeing Muslims before carrying out their terror activities. Such bold and daring act by these Kenyan Muslims demonstrated that the ordinary Kenyan Muslim is not in support of the terrorist acts by the *Al-Shabaab* militants. Such a sense of belonging shown by these Kenyan Muslims has the potential of rebuilding trust between Christians and Muslims. Such an act could also change the Christian perceptions that all Muslims support terrorism or are potential terrorists.

The peaceful approach Muslims have adopted in response to the Christian perceptions and stereotypes about them is significant for community peace. If these approaches should persist in the face of Christian stereotyping, it may gradually change the perceptions and stereotypes Christians have about Muslims. As Christians may regain trust for Muslims in the community and open up for effective contact effects. As contact cannot have full effect on half-hearted relations and friendships.

However, it is not only the Muslim responses that are sustaining the community peace. In spite of the negative perceptions and stereotyping Christians have about Muslims, they also try to relate with Muslims in such a way as to avoid clashes. Christian informants have indicated that because they live together in the same community they are mindful of their choice of words and utterances. Some Christian informants stated that they do not discuss terrorism with their Muslim friends as they fear such discussion may lead to violence. Christian informant 6 states that *Christians do not tell Muslims to their face that they are potential terrorists*. Even though Christians may be suspicious about Muslims in the community this has not absolutely impeded their friendship and coexistence. Christian informant 6 suggests that; *As we continue to live*

*together lets show them [Muslims] love, it is better than hating them.* This means that some Christians are willing love Muslims, even if they have negative perceptions about them. Nonetheless, it must be admitted that coexistence with suspicion is not a source of durable peace. Thus, actions must be taken to change Christian perceptions about Muslims regarding transnational terrorism. Yet, in the interim, Christians and Muslims in Madina are making efforts to coexist in peace.

Both Christian and Muslim informants have pointed to the contributions of political leaders and the government of Ghana towards peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians in Ghana. Such governmental contributions include the equal involvement of Christians and Muslims in governing the state. For instance, the government of Ghana instituted that National Peace Council comprising of the representatives of all the major religions and some civil servants to ensure national peace (Kotia 2013, Awinador-Kanyirige 2014). There is always the attempt to have equal representation of Christians and Muslims in government. That is, in terms of the selection of state ministers, and even the presidential candidates. The practice in the past has been for political parties to select a Christian president with a Muslim vice president (Alidu and Awaisu 2014). Again, various governments since independence have attempted an equitable distribution of developmental projects regarding education and health among others (GNA 2006). Above all these, there is hardly any political speech in Ghana that does not end with the statement ‘Ghanaians are one people with a common destiny’. The significance of this statement lies in the fact that it gives all Ghanaians one national identity and shields other identities based on religion, tribe, language and socioeconomic status.

Indeed, one of the greatest resources Ghanaians have, and of course, many sub-Saharan African societies have to deal with Islamophobia in the face of transnational terrorism is the community coexistence of Christians and Muslims. Arguably, coexistence in these societies may not be structured in a way as to fulfill Allport’s four optimal conditions for positive contact effects. However, I strongly believe that, proximity and contact that Christians and Muslims experience in coexistence could have much effects on their perceptions about each other. That is, if Christians and Muslims are willing to lay aside their preconceived ideas and perceptions about each other and relate in the community at the interpersonal. This means knowing, perceiving and relating to individuals as individuals; thus, decategorizing individuals from their group identity.

When this is done, the violent behaviours of individuals as well as individuals' potentialities towards terrorism will not be imputed to the whole group. As such Christians may come to know that Muslims are good people. In the same vein, Muslims may also come to that Christians are good. This is, in spite of the fact that, some Christians and or Muslims exhibit violent behaviours at times. This could reduce negative perceptions and stereotyping and promote interpersonal liking.

Even more crucial about Christian-Muslim coexistence as a resource for dealing with Islamophobia in Ghana is the common ancestry, the bonds of marriage and the blood ties. Unlike Europe where majority of Muslims are immigrants or migrants, majority of Muslims in Ghana are Ghanaians and natives of their various societies. The sense of belonging as nationals, natives of the various societies and members of families could be utilized to change the negative perceptions and stereotyping about Muslims in the community.

#### 6.4. CONCLUSION

The foregoing discussion has looked at the implications of Christian perceptions and stereotyping about Muslims in relation to transnational terrorism. I have argued that the type of perceptions and stereotyping Christians have about Muslims implies that Christians perceive Muslims as a suspect community. Perceiving Muslims as suspect community could influence the way Christians relate with Muslims in the community. These may include Christians distrusting Muslims; Christians distancing themselves from Muslims; threats on Muslims. The Muslim response to the consequences of these Christian actions against them may be Muslim radicalism. However, Muslim responses so far have been peaceful. Such peaceful responses include Muslims regarding Christians as ignorant and thus they need to be educated. Also, the Ghanaian Muslims respond to Christian perceptions by dis-identifying themselves from radical Muslims. Even more important for coexistence, Muslims in Ghana are responding by demonstrating that they are good people. This is seen in their behaviours and the manner in which they relate with Christians in the community. Indeed, Christians, Muslims and even the government of Ghana are making efforts towards peaceful community coexistence between Christians and Muslims.

## Chapter Seven

### GENERAL CONCLUSION

#### 7.1. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research has been to examine the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and their implications for Christian-Muslim community coexistence. The study indicates that in post 9/11 era, Muslims in multicultural and multi-religious societies are facing challenges of Islamophobia (Nuusbaum 2012; Pratt and Woodlock 2015; Alshammari 2013). This is seen in the hate speeches and crimes and even policies against Muslims, particularly, in Europe and in America. These Islamophobia reactions and attitudes are due to the association non-Muslims make between terrorism and Islam. Thus, Ghana being a religiously pluralistic society, this study sought to find out the Ghanaian perceptions about terrorism, Islam and Muslims. Therefore, the main questions which guided the study include; (1) What are the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism linked to Islam in the West African sub-region? (2) What are the implications of such perceptions on Christians-Muslim coexistence in Ghana? To answer these questions, the study was guided by three objectives. These objectives include; (1) To study the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and Islam/Muslims in Ghana. (2) To find whether community coexistence affect perceptions about transnational terrorism in Ghana. (3) To examine the implications of the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and Islam/Muslims on community coexistence among Christians and Muslims in Madina, Ghana.

The study argues that Christian-Muslim interaction in Ghana is a daily reality. This is confirmed by the informants in the Madina community where the study was carried out. In Madina, Christians and Muslims interact as friends, families, neighbours, co-workers and school mates among others in quite a peaceful environment. However, this peaceful coexistence, it is argued, did not eliminate intermittent tension between Christians and Muslims in the community. One main cause of tension to Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana in general is the missionary nature of both religions. It is argued that mission and evangelization by Muslims and Christians juxtapose them as rivals. This is because they compete for membership. However, in general, Christian-Muslim coexistence in Ghana is regarded as relatively peaceful.

The study adopted qualitative research method of data collection and analysis. It discussed how I entered the field as a researcher, selected respondents, conducted interviews, recorded and transcribed the field data. The data collected was analyzed to find out the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and its links with Islam. Furthermore, it was also to find out the implications of such perceptions on Christians-Muslims coexistence in Ghana. This analysis was done alongside the use of literature review and theories. The study adopted multiple theories to understand the issues of transnational terrorism and Christian-Muslim coexistence in Ghana. Thus, the study adopted theoretical discussions from social psychology on intergroup relations. Some of the theories engaged include; social identity theory, Social perception, stereotyping and the Intergroup contact theory. In addition, discussions on Islamophobia were also included in the theoretical framework. These theories helped in the discussion of the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism and the Ghanaian Muslims.

Furthermore, literature was drawn from terrorism in Africa, the interface between religion and terrorism and Christians-Muslim relations in Africa, with special focus on Ghana. It is evident from scholarly discussions that transnational terrorism is increasingly becoming one of the major security challenges facing the African continent. West Africa which used to be safer zone regarding issues of transnational terrorism is now plagued with the menace of transnational terrorism (Botha 2007). West African societies, I have noted, are multi-religious. The general picture of Christian-Muslim relations in West Africa, and indeed, sub-Saharan African is both coexistence and tension. Thus, Christians and Muslims try to coexist in peace, yet tension and conflict persists among them. Such tension and conflict make the relations between Christians and Muslims vulnerable to other forms of conflict and violence, such as terrorism.

## 7.2. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study are outline according to the main research questions. The first question is; *What are the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism linked to Islam in the West African sub-region?*

From the data collected, the study has found out that varied perceptions exist among Christians and Muslims in Ghana about transnational terrorism linked to Islam. Generally, Christian

informants have argued that though terrorism may not be sanctioned by Islam, yet, they have reasons to link terrorism with Islam. They argued that terrorism, particularly after 9/11 has been linked to Islam in many ways. For instance, many of these terrorist groups identify themselves as Muslims, they indicate they are fighting in the name of Islam, they make references to Islamic scriptures and above all the names of the terrorist organizations appear Islamic. Thus, based on these perceived connections terrorism has with Islam, some Christian informants have the perceptions that terrorism is linked to Islam. However, some Christians have different perceptions about the links between Islam and terrorism. They express the perception that terrorism is a criminal act. Therefore, terrorists' use of religion is an abuse of religion geared towards marshalling support for their criminal activities.

On the other hand, Muslim informants oppose every perception that links Islam to terrorism. They expressed the perception that Islam is not about terrorism and Islam does not sanction terrorist acts. Furthermore, Muslim informants argue that because Muslims are also often victims of terrorism, the perception that terrorist are fighting for Islam is not accurate. The Muslim informants express the perception that terrorist groups may not be fighting for Islam and they may not even be Muslims. This is regardless of the fact that these terrorist groups claim to operate their activities in the name of Islam.

The various perceptions expressed by both Christian and Muslim informants have influenced their perceptions about other related issues. Such related issues include; Ghana's vulnerability to terrorism, fear of terrorism in Ghana, Ghanaian Muslims as potential terrorists, and violent perception about the Ghanaian Muslims and the possibilities of the emergence of domestic terrorist groups in Ghana.

It appears that contact effects on Christians and Muslims in the research area are varied. This is in regards to their perceptions about the connections between terrorism and Islam. The perceptions of informants especially Christians about the violent behaviour of the Ghanaian Muslims does not show any positive contact effects. Rather, the study has discovered that contact between Christians and Muslims in the research community perpetuate the violent perceptions about Muslims. Thus, there is a stereotyping of Muslims as violent in the research community.

Furthermore, the study has found out that Christian respondents have different perceptions about whether to associate Islam and Muslims with terrorism. While some Christian informants associate terrorism with Islam and Muslims others do not. Similarly, Christian informants have different perceptions about the Ghanaian Muslims' potentialities towards terrorism. The variations in perceptions are probably due to the different levels of contact in the community. That is, the effects of contact between friends may be different from that of co-workers or even neighbours whose interactions do not go beyond sharing greetings. Yet, the study found that the use of the expression the Ghanaian Muslims, even by Christian informants may suggest that Christian informants perceive Muslims in Ghana to be different from other Muslims elsewhere who engage in terrorism. More so, Christian informants did not point out categorically that their Muslim friends, neighbours, relatives are potential terrorists. As a result, informants did not express any fears about public crowded places. This is in spite of the fact that they expressed general perceptions that some Muslims in Ghana could be potential terrorists. To some extent, these could be seen as the positive effects of contact experienced through Christian-Muslim coexistence.

The second research question is; *What are the implications of such perceptions on Christians-Muslim coexistence in Ghana?*

The study revealed that the type of perceptions and stereotyping Christians have about Muslims could have several implications for Christian-Muslim coexistence. First of all, the study indicates that the perceptions Christians expressed by Muslims means that Christians perceive Muslims as a suspect community. Perceiving Muslims as suspect community could influence the way Christians relate with Muslims in the community. These may include Christians distrusting Muslims; Christians distancing themselves from Muslims; threats on Muslims. The Muslim response to the consequences of these Christian actions against them may be Muslim radicalism. However, Muslim responses so far have been peaceful. Such peaceful responses include Muslims regarding Christians as ignorant and as such they need to be educated. Also, the Ghanaian Muslims respond to Christian perceptions by dis-identifying themselves from radical Muslims. More importantly, Muslims in Ghana are responding to Christian perceptions about them by demonstrating that they are good people. This is seen in the way Muslims relate with

Christians in the community. Indeed, Christians, Muslims and even the government of Ghana are making efforts towards peaceful community coexistence between Christians and Muslims.

### 7.3. LIMITATIONS

One main limitation of this study has been its inability to engage any offsprings (individuals who are products of Christian-Muslim intermarriages) from Christian-Muslim intermarriages. Individuals whose parents are both Christians and Muslims at the same time in my view epitomize Christian-Muslim coexistence. In that, they have direct experiences and impacts of Christian-Muslim coexistence. Their experiences of Christian-Muslim coexistence may be different from the experiences from Christian-Muslim friends, neighbours, co-workers or even extended family members who may not live together as a household. These other forms of Christian-Muslim coexistence may depend on few minutes or hours of interactions. But individuals born into Christian-Muslim inter-marriages may have permanent, daily interactions and experiences of this coexistence. Thus, the perceptions of such individuals about transnational terrorism and its links with Muslims could be of immense contribution to our knowledge about the Ghanaian perceptions about transnational terrorism.

### 7.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study has indicated that the Ghanaian perceptions which link terrorism with Muslims, particularly, Ghanaian Muslims is capable of destroying the traditional values that hold all people together in Ghana. Stereotyping Muslims as violent and the perceptions that some Muslims may be potential terrorists could stand in the way of peaceful communal life. Thus, even if Muslims and Christians continue to live in the same community such perceptions may not allow them to have the needed intimacy required for positive contact effects. As the study has revealed about the inhabitants of Madina, in their outward daily interactions, one perceives peace. However, their perceptions about each other may not necessarily support this peace. Therefore, the peaceful community coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Madina could be regarded as fragile. Thus, concerted efforts by Christians and Muslims both at the individual and institutional levels as well as by government are needed to concretise the peaceful



community coexistence between Christians and Muslims in the community and the nation as a whole.

The perceptions that Christian informants expressed about the Ghanaian Muslims which connect them to terrorism, draw attention to the fact that generally there is a sense of Islamophobia in the research community. This sense of Islamophobia may not be as acute as it exists in Europe and America so as to result in public hate speeches and anti-Muslim policies. However, at the community level, and indeed, at the level of perception, informants, particularly Christian informants have expressed Islamophobia. This point to the fact that Islamophobia in the light of transnational terrorism is not only a Western issue; it is also a challenge in African.

#### 7.5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study based on its findings makes recommendations for further research. This study recommends that further study be conduct on more specific levels of contact between Christians and Muslims in Ghana. For instance, a future research could be conducted on *how contact effects of Christian-Muslim coexistence at the family level influences perceptions about terrorism and Islam*. Such as a study may reveal a more nuance effects that family bonds may have on the Ghanaian perceptions about terrorism and Muslims. Similarly, the same study could be done comparatively, for instance between co-workers and family members to see how different forms of contact may influence perceptions about terrorism and Muslims in Ghana.

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## Appendix

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

Topic: **The Ghanaian Perceptions about Transnational Terrorism and Islam and its Implications for Christian-Muslim Community Coexistence: The case of the Madina Community**

1. How long have you been living in this community
2. Do you work in this community?
3. How do people in this community relate with one another – work, school, hospitals, friendship, neighborliness, ceremonies, daily life?
4. How do family relations and Christian-Muslim interactions work in Ghana? What is your family's experience in this regard?
5. What is your personal impression about transnational terrorism in the West African sub-region?
6. What do you think is the community/Ghanaian impression/perception about transnational terrorism?
7. What do you feel when you hear about terrorist attacks?
8. How vulnerable do you think Ghana is to terrorist attacks?
9. How do you feel when you are in public places in relation to terrorist attack?
10. Have you started taking any precautionary measures?
11. Is terrorism something you personally talk about /discuss with friends? It is a discussion in the community and in the country as a whole?
12. Some associate Muslims with terrorism, what is your opinion on that?
13. Some associate terrorism with Islam, do you agree? Why?
14. Is that perception from the circumstances you encounter?
15. How does such a perception impact your life as a Muslim?
16. Why do people have such a perception about Muslims?
17. To what extent do you think Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana has changed over the past 5/10 years?
18. Has there been any event in Ghana in the past ten years that strain Christian-Muslim relation?
19. How do you view Muslims you interact with in the light of terrorism?
20. In your opinion, how do Ghanaians in general view Muslims in the light of the transnational terrorism taking place globally and specifically in West Africa?
21. Do you think all Muslims are potential terrorists? / Do you think people perceive all Muslims as potential terrorists?
22. What effects do you think such perceptions could have on Christian –Muslim relations in Ghana?

23. In your opinion is transnational terrorism causing mistrust between Christians and Muslims in Ghana? What is your experience here in the Madina community?
24. To what extent do you think the adherents of Christianity and Islam could continue to coexist in peace in the face of transnational terrorism?
25. What should these adherents do to avoid tension and violence?
26. What are your feelings about the reactions of Ghanaians towards Gitmo 2?
27. In your view, do you think this could spark tension in Christian –Muslim relations in Ghana?