

ABSTRACT

Since the attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001, Muslim communities around the globe have become the subject of extensive scrutiny and academic research. Muslims have also widely been ostracised as publics grow increasingly suspicious of the Islamic communities in their midst'. South Africa does not have the largest Muslim population in Africa, but the religious and general freedoms protected by the Constitution make it an ideal destination for Muslims seeking an escape from the misery and turmoil of their own countries. Johannesburg is the port of entry, and often the final destination, for such sojourners. Researchers have shied away from studying the numerically minor Muslim community in South Africa; very little is known about the views and opinions of this community with regards to the events which have been shaking world politics of late. This study investigates the opinions of Muslims in Johannesburg, the hub of Islamic diversity in South Africa, regarding their views on the Middle East and the wider Islamic world. The relationship between various socio-economic and demographic factors, and Muslim opinions is investigated simultaneously. Further to this, the study investigates whether media and information sources play a role in the perceptions held by this community. Lastly, the present investigation considers its value for the South African Government on a domestic and foreign policy basis.