



**THE CENTRE FOR  
SOCIAL COHESION**

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**Government should ignore flawed “campus radicalism exaggerated” report  
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**A Cambridge University study of young Muslim attitudes, published yesterday, says that government fears of Islamic radicalism on UK campuses are exaggerated. However, the [report](#) – based on interviews with only 26 students - is inaccurate and unrepresentative. Instead, the government needs to continue to strengthen its counter-radicalisation efforts.**

The report's author, Dr June Edmunds, interviewed 26 students from three universities, the London School of Economics, University of Cambridge and University of Bradford, and organised a focus group of only ten students at the University of Bradford.

Edmunds approached Islamic Society (ISOC) members to recruit interviewees. By her admission, ISOC members were over-represented. A 2008 Centre for Social Cohesion (CSC) and YouGov poll of over 600 Muslim students, [Islam on Campus](#), found that ISOC members are not representative of Muslim students. ISOC members make up only 25% of Britain's 90,000 Muslim students.

Edmunds also interviewed five representatives from four Muslim youth organisations, amongst which were the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS) and the Young Muslims UK (YMUK). As the CSC has previously [stressed](#), FOSIS is unrepresentative of Muslim students and its leaders are influenced heavily by a narrow form of political Islam inspired by South Asian and Egyptian Islamist parties, such as Jamaat-e-Islami and the Muslim Brotherhood. YMUK works closely with the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), and both are heavily inspired by Jamaat-e-Islami.

Edmunds' report was paid for by the government-funded Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), who contributed £78,690.32 to the study. With this money, Edmunds interviewed only 41 people in total – a fifth of whom were interviewed by e-mail.

Edmunds' finding that fears of campus extremism have been exaggerated contradicts previous research into radicalism on UK campuses. The 2008 CSC/YouGov poll uncovered significant minority support on UK campuses for Islamist proposals:

- ❖ 40% of Muslim students polled support the introduction of Sharia into British law for Muslims
- ❖ 28% said killing in the name of religion could be justified if the religion was under attack and 4% supported killing in order to promote and preserve that religion
- ❖ 33% were supportive of a worldwide Islamic Caliphate based on Sharia law
- ❖ 6% said that converts from Islam should be punished “in accordance with Sharia law”

Radical groups and individuals have openly preached hatred and violence on UK campuses since the 1990's. Islamist groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir UK – which seeks to establish a global Islamic state – continue to target young individuals vulnerable to Islamist rhetoric.

Edmunds' report invites complacency on behalf of Britain's universities and security services. The 2002 murder of journalist Daniel Pearl and the 2003 Tel-Aviv suicide bombing – both attacks committed by young British-born men heavily influenced by extreme Islamist ideology on campus – are a reminder of how inaccurate and dangerous such complacency can be.

Hannah Stuart, co-author of the CSC's report *Islam on Campus*, says:

“The government needs to support the majority of Muslim students who reject intolerance and violence in the name of their faith and support Britain’s secular and democratic society. At the same time, the government is right to be concerned about extremism on campus and needs to take direct action to diminish extreme Islamist influence on UK campuses.”

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**The Centre for Social Cohesion is an independent think tank**

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