



THE RELIGION AND DIVERSITY PROJECT/RELIGION ET DIVERSITÉ



**Kim Knott**

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**Biography**

Kim Knott is Professor of Religious and Secular Studies at Lancaster University. From 2005-11 she was Director of the 'Diasporas, Migration and Identities' Programme ([www.diasporas.ac.uk](http://www.diasporas.ac.uk)) funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. In the final year, she held an AHRC Impact Fellowship in which she worked on a popular book and website, *Moving People, Changing Places*, and on activities to maximize the public benefit of the Programme and change how people think about migration and cultural difference.

She worked at the University of Leeds from 1982 to 2012, and her first job was as postdoctoral researcher on a project on media portrayals of religion and their reception. She recently completed a similar, comparative project as part of the UK's AHRC/ESRC 'Religion and Society' Programme, and is currently co-authoring a book, *Media Portrayals of Religion and the Secular: Representation and Change* (with Elizabeth Poole and Teemu Taira, Ashgate forthcoming 2013). With Lori Beaman, she was awarded an ESRC International Partnerships and Networking grant, on 'Religion, Discourse and Diversity', to bring Canadian, British and other international scholars together to examine and compare media coverage of religion in their respective countries and to engage with media professionals.

She will begin a Global Uncertainties Leadership Fellowship in February 2013, organizing events and reviewing research for academics and non-academics interested in 'The role of ideology, belief and commitment in motivations, justifications and catalysts for action in the face of uncertainty'. With a co-researcher, Dr Matthew Francis, she will undertake new

research on ideological commitment, boundary making and sacralization in the expression of radical views and threats of violence.

Principal investigator on many projects, her research has been funded by government, public and voluntary bodies, as well as the Arts and Humanities and Economic and Social Research Councils, and several charitable trusts.

In earlier years she was Head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, and Head of Humanities at the University of Leeds. She was President of the British Association for the Study of Religions, and completed two terms as General Secretary of the European Association for the Study of Religions. She is a Fellow of the RSA.

### **Research Statement**

**Diasporas, migration and identities:** As director of this research programme across the Arts and Humanities in the UK, I was responsible for creating a coherent programme, overseeing the commissioning process, the monitoring of the Programme's forty-nine projects and networks, and the running of academic and stakeholder events in relation to these themes. The role also involved collaboration with the cultural sector, media, government, and community bodies, and working with other European centres and funding agencies. *Diasporas, Migration and Identities: Final Director's Report* is available on [www.diasporas.ac.uk](http://www.diasporas.ac.uk). In 2010, I co-edited a programme book (with Seán McLoughlin), *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities* (Zed), and in 2011 produced the website [www.movingpeoplechangingplaces.org](http://www.movingpeoplechangingplaces.org) and a related book to bring the findings of the programme to new non-academic audiences. I have worked in this field since my doctoral studies (on Hindu migrants in Britain and their religious practices and organisations), and have written on religion, ethnicity, migration and identity. Until the end of 2011 I directed the Community Religions Project at the University of Leeds and supervised student research projects on the 'Religious Mapping of Leeds' and on local religious communities and identities. She wrote *Hinduism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 1998/2000) – which won the SHAP Book Prize for religion and education.

**Space, religion and the secular:** Since 2005 I have worked on issues of religion, place and space and situated my research in the geography (as well as sociology) of religions. The first stage of the research focused on developing a spatial methodology for the study of religions and resulted in a book, *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis* (Equinox, 2005). The second stage involved applying this methodology to the location of religion in secular locations, including the left hand, public sector organisations, urban landscapes, everyday ritual and academic disciplines, and to the relationship between the religious, secular and postsecular. I directed an exploratory research project on 'Locating religion in the fabric of the secular' in which we used the spatial methodology to examine religious and secular beliefs and values in an English medical centre and a high school.

**Religion and media:** (see biography)