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# No Human Right to Sodomy: Christian Conservative Opposition to SOGI Human Rights

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# The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy

2017 Conference of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center

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For the archive of the conference, see [http://ecommons.udayton.edu/human\\_rights/2017/](http://ecommons.udayton.edu/human_rights/2017/)

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**Research Panel:** Contesting Disability and LGBTQI Rights

**Presenter:** Cynthia Burack, Ohio State University

**Title:** No Human Right to Sodomy: Christian Conservative Opposition to SOGI Human Rights

**Abstract:**

The American Christian conservative movement is the most consistent and persistent adversary of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) civil rights in the US. In recent years, the Christian right has responded to changes in attitudes to same-sex sexuality in the US by relocating some of their attention and operations to issues and arenas of contest outside the US that hold more promise for implacable antagonism to rights and recognition for LGBTQ people. In some parts of the world, these US-based anti-LGBTQ actors have become recognized as “experts” on gender and sexual minorities and the dire consequences the existence of LGBTQ people poses. Thus, the Christian right constructs and disseminates faith-based perspectives on human rights to oppose the codification and enactment of human rights protections for gender and sexual minorities.

International Christian conservative activism against LGBT people, same-sex sexuality, and non-normative gender identity has required the formation of alliances and the constant development of new rhetorics and practices. When it comes to Christian conservative rhetoric and activism against SOGI human rights and the US government’s affirmation of those rights, the movement increasingly has found itself in the position of enacting a kind of cultural relativism that has unanticipated but possibly unavoidable implications and side effects.

In this paper, I outline key rhetorical and strategic elements of US Christian right opposition to SOGI human rights advocacy, focusing specifically on opposition to US government support for SOGI human rights and what Christian conservative elites regard as the promise of the Trump administration to end support for these human rights.

**About the presenter:**

Cynthia Burack is a professor of women’s, gender and sexuality studies at Ohio State University. Her most recent book is *Tough Love: Sexuality, Compassion, and the Christian Right* (2014, SUNY Press Queer Politics and Cultures series), which she co-edited with Jyl J. Josephson. Her current research focuses on US government interventions and advocacy on behalf of LGBTQ human rights abroad and US-based opposition to this advocacy.