Hunt, S. (2014) **Negotiating Sexual Rights in the UK: Christian Constituencies and Contested Moralities**, in *Globalised Religion and Sexuality: Policies, Voices and Contexts*, H. Shipley (ed.), Leiden: Brill.

Policies and resultant legislation instigated by consecutive governments aimed at protecting the rights of sexual minorities (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered (LGBT)) in the context of U.K., as in other liberal democracies, have increasingly impacted the wider rights agenda and intersected with constructs of diversity, citizenship and social inclusion. Over the last two decades such advancements have included property and parental rights; legislation covering employment discrimination; gender reassignment; and the wider remit of the Equality Acts(2006 and 2010) aimed at enhancing equality and tackling discrimination against individuals with designated “protected characteristics” incorporating sex and sexual orientation in addition to the social categories of race, gender,gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, disability, religion and belief.

In the late 1980s Nugent and Gramick described the subject of homosexuality as akin to a fishhook caught in the gullet of the broad Christian Church that it could neither fully swallow or spit out (Nugent and Gramick 1989, 29–42). By the early twenty-first century the advancement of rights of sexual minorities ensured that the hook had dug deeper, raising questions of how Christian faith communities should respond in the environment of an increasingly secular culture and the extent to which the state, through legislation, could impinge upon religious conviction in opposing such rights.

This chapter connects with the relevant “progressive” policies in the U.K. and excavates the contrasting and contesting response by Christian constituencies – mainstream denominations, LGBT caucuses in the churches and outside, and conservative Christians who oppose such policies. Each constituency sounds a voice which is religious-moral and theological in nature while employing discourses of specific rights, equality and citizenship to justify their positions as they are increasingly drawn into the politico-public arena.