

## Review of Dr. Eric Rodriguez's Works in the Works Talk

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On September 20<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Eric Rodriguez offered a highly energetic talk entitled *The LGBTQ Muslim Experience Study – How We Got Here and Where We're Going*. At the beginning part of his talk, Dr. Rodriguez focused on recounting his incredible journey as a gay man, graduate student, and scholar, who has dedicated more than 25 years to the research on identity conflict and integration in sexual and gender minority people of faith.

By highlighting his personal experience with religious organizations hosted by leaders from LGBTQ communities, and his intellectual interactions with researchers who were interested in examining the complex interplay between psychology and religious identity, Dr. Rodriguez's talk transitioned into a detailed explanation of 4 major goals that his study strived to achieve; to amplify the voices of both sexual and gender minority Muslims, to acknowledge the intersectional challenges and stressors that LGBTQ Muslims encounter as a multiple minority group, to highlight LGBTQ+ Muslims' relational and cultural resilience tools, and to introduce transformative intersectional psychology frameworks for future research and clinical practice.

Throughout his presentation, Dr. Rodriguez emphasized the notions of identity and intersectionality, and how these two concepts guided his research activities. As an established social psychologist, Dr. Rodriguez examined how gender, sexual, and religious identities intersected to affect the way people talked about and understood their multilayered experiences as religious sexual minority. Dr. Rodriguez talked about some of the challenges he and his collaborator faced when collecting data from the local Muslim population due to the political and cultural oppressions in some countries. But through determination and perseverance, they managed to collect enough data for completing this project.

Dr. Rodriguez's talk was based on his first book entitled *The LGBTQ Muslim Experience Study*. Dr. Rodriguez's talk was thought-provoking, engaging, and it was truly an eye-opening experience for me to learn about the intricate connection among one's sexual identity, religious affiliations, and cultural backgrounds. More importantly, Dr. Rodriguez made me think, deeply and critically, about how psychological analysis can be employed to examine the process where these cultural factors meet, negotiate, and contest.

Congratulations to Dr. Rodriguez's new book, and his lifelong commitment to research is inspiring!