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3 days ago

7 min read

LGBTIQ+ Refugees Exist and B Challenging the Binary Western Thought: Seekers, Religion, and Sexual Orient Gender Identity.

Some years ago, I was invited to lecture about the early findings of research focusing on Latin American LGBTIQ+ refugees fleeing to the US and the role religion plays in their journeys. The audience was a group of enthusiastic undergrads from my university in the US. As I started, bewilderment spread across their faces. One of them raised her hand and said, "I didn't imagine that the problem of LGBTIQ+ refugees was so big in the US." I did I think that in Western, democratic, Christian countries, LGBTIQ+ people are persecuted and need to flee. I thought that was a problem of Latin America. I decided to stop my presentation and make two needed clarifications. First, individuals who seek asylum based on their sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) are not necessarily from countries where non-normative sexual identities are criminalized, territories in which Islam is the mainstream religion, or places with no democratic governments. They also flee from many countries with progressive legislation on LGBTIQ+ rights, established democracies with Jewish, Buddhist, or Hinduist traditions. (This without mentioning the migration/scape from more dangerous to more "friendly" or "safe" democratic, and Christian countries.) Secondly, many LGBTIQ+ individuals who seek asylum or refuge are themselves believers, profess a religion, and are