

Wagley's informants could recall a case of a woman who had taken the male role or who preferred sex with another female.

Gregor added a muddled account of conceptions of homosexuality as (1) inconceivable, (2) situational, and (3) forgotten for the Mehinaku of the Xingu River. Soares de Souza asserted the Tupinamba were "addicted to sodomy and do not consider it a shame. . . . In the bush some offer themselves to all who want them." In the upper Amazon, Tessmann found that "while there are no homosexuals with masculine tendencies, there are some with extreme effeminacy. My informants knew of two such instances. One of them wears woman's clothing. . . . [The other] wears man's clothing, but likes to do all the work that is generally done by women. He asked one member of our expedition to address him with a woman's name and not with his masculine name. He lives with a settler and prostitutes himself as the passive partner to the settler's workers. He pays his lovers. He never practices active sexual intercourse." A more extended description of widespread homosexual play and of fairly-enduring but "open" relationships is provided by Sorenson: "Young men sit around enticingly sedate and formal in all their finery, or form troupes of panpipe-playing dancers." Occasional sex is regarded as expectable behavior among friends; one is marked as nonfriendly—enemy—if he does not join, especially in the youth 'age group' (roughly 15–35). Homosexual activity was limited neither to within an "age group" nor to unmarried men. Moreover, inter-village homosexuality was encouraged and some "best friends" relationships developed. That the "best friend" is more likely later to marry a sister of his "best friend" is implied in Sorenson's report.

Some of the denials that homosexual behavior among "my people" is "really homosexuality" say more about the observer than the observed. In other cases, denials of what can be observed come from natives. In such cases, it is

difficult to know whether the concern that imputations of accepting homosexuality will stigmatize their tribe are the result of Western acculturation or more venerable cultural concerns.

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Stephen O. Murray

AMAZONS, AMERICAN INDIAN

A distinct gender role for masculine females was accepted in many American Indian tribes of North and South America. This role often included a marriage between such a female and a woman. Though sometimes mistakenly referred to by anthropologists as "female berdaches," this term historically was applied only to males and does not account for the special character of the amazon role. Even though the Indians did not live in separate all-female societies, the earliest historic references to such masculine females referred to them as "amazons" rather than as "berdaches," and the Portuguese explorers