

# Public and Self-Perceptions of Gender Queerness in MENA Communities

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## INTRODUCTION

There is a notable **lack of literature** concerning **genderqueer individuals** within Middle Eastern and North African (**MENA**) **communities**. This underrepresentation is exacerbated by **strong cultural pressure** to adhere to heteronormative, gender-stratified roles that leave **little freedom for alternative self-expression** and stifle queer voices.

## METHODS

- **Conducted surveys** examining individuals' experiences with queerness and gender roles within their cultural community.
- **Held interviews** to gain a more comprehensive perspective on interviewee's perception of their gender within their community and broader American spaces.
- **Analyzed existing literature** to review pre-existing trends in gender roles within MENA communities.

Diasporic communities often put **intense pressure** on young adults to marry and start families, which leaves little room to explore gender outside **heteronormative expectations**.

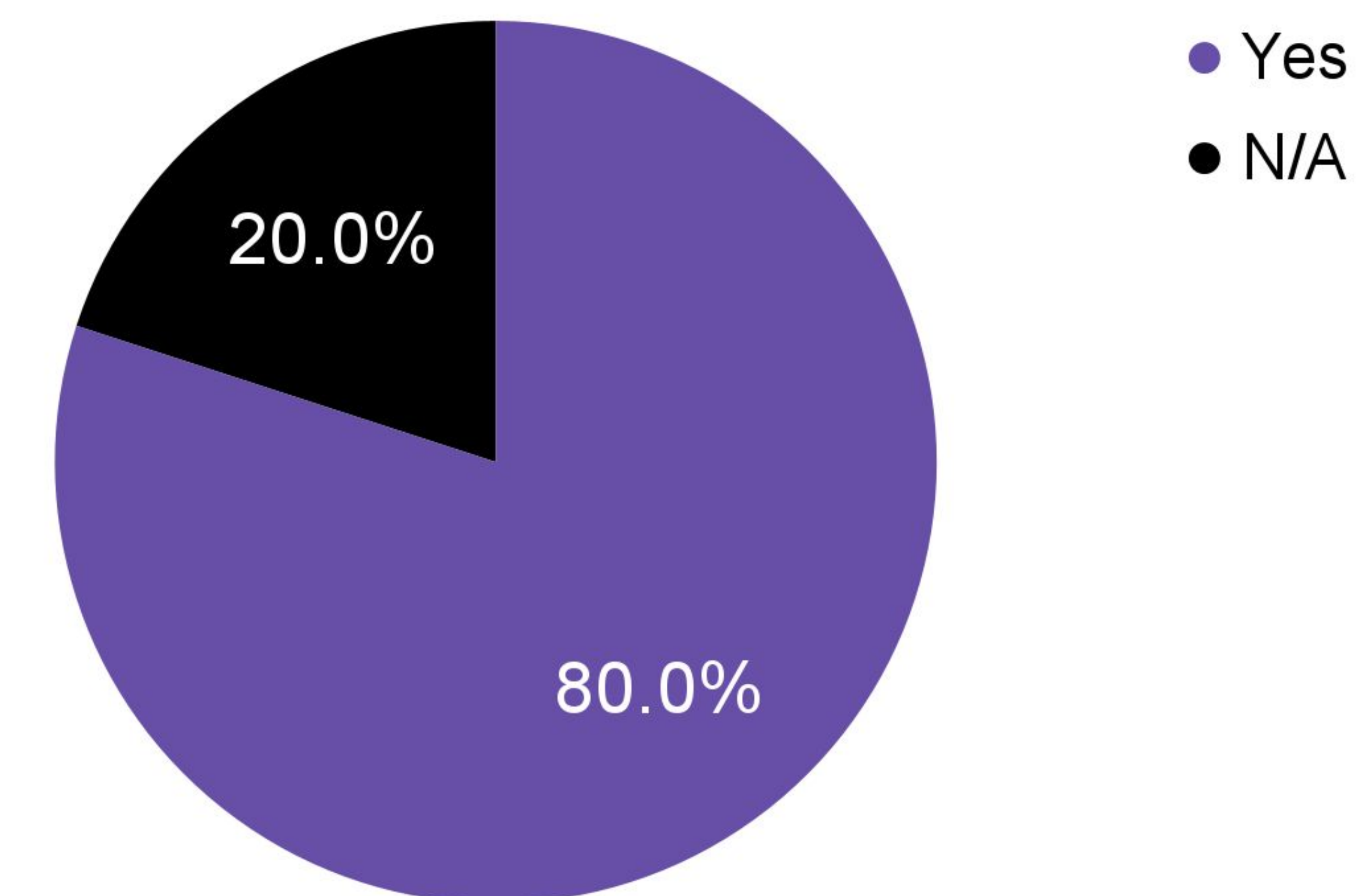


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## RESULTS

- **Highly rigid gender roles leave many feeling uncomfortable** with their place in this binary, regardless of cultural background.
- Several people noted that they **did not feel included** in most mainstream queer spaces
- **42.9%** of respondents described feeling **pressure from their community** and/or wider society to **conform** to a certain gender role.
- All POC individuals who responded noted **having negative experiences** as a result of their racial heritage

Do you believe your perception of your gender identity is different than your White-passing peers'?



Some survey respondents stated that **White individuals were more in touch with their gender identity** and **did not have to be as hyper-aware** of how to act and behave (compared to non-white counterparts).