



# SENSE OF PLACE IN NARVA: DO YOU FEEL AT HOME IN NARVA?

ЧУВСТВО МЕСТА В НАРВЕ:  
ЧУВСТВУЕТЕ ЛИ ВЫ СЕБЯ В  
НАРВЕ КАК ДОМА?

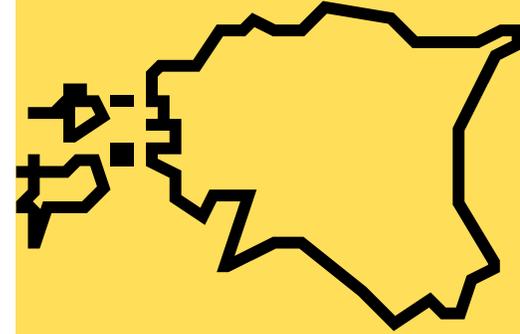
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# SUMMARY

This report provides selected highlights from a web-hosted survey that took place between November 2018–January 2019. The Russian-language survey focused on understanding the sense of place among residents in Narva, Estonia. Narva is the largest city in Ida-Viru County (*Ida-Virumaa*) and third largest city in the Republic of Estonia (*Eesti Vabariik*). The City of Narva is consistently discussed in international media, research, and policy because of its borderland location, proximity to the Russian Federation, history, geopolitics, and demographic composition (e.g., large Russian-speaking population); however, Narva residents themselves are rarely central to these analyses and narratives. This lack of centrality hides local Narva insights and hinders a richer comprehensive understanding of this important city and community.

The purpose of this report is to highlight a selection of survey findings with an emphasis on sense of place. This report gauges how Narva residents themselves feel and understand their city. The web-hosted survey was conducted via *Qualtrics* survey software and respondents were solicited through snowball sampling, both of which are consistent with the author's previous research (see References) and were partly done for comparison overtime, among other reasons. As such, this report builds upon the doctoral work of the author and aims to contribute to local (Narva, Ida-Viru County), national (Estonia), and broader regional (European Union) planning, policy, and conversations about Narva as a city of geographic complexity and importance. **Based on the survey responses, Narva residents have a strong sense of place. Residents have a strong pride of place, place attachment, and place identity.** This strong sense of place illustrates that Narva residents feel strongly and positively about their city and community, that likely may or should inform policy, planning, and research.



All images are the author's.

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# SENSE OF PLACE

Sense of place (SOP) is an interdisciplinary and multidimensional construct that broadly refers to how people feel, think, affiliate, belong, and identify towards or with place. SOP is widely used in environmental psychology, human geography, urban planning, and other fields to understand people–place relationships and human–environment interactions. SOP can impact human health, human wellbeing, and place–based conflicts. SOP can also inform understandings, identities, and behaviors. For the purpose of this study, specific dimensions of SOP were targeted in order to build upon the author's doctoral research (see References) and contribute to growing bodies of knowledge related to both SOP and Narva. In order to understand SOP among Narva residents, questions were constructed in order to reflect or assess the different, yet overlapping dimensions of SOP. The findings represented in this brief report stem from the questions below. Note not all survey questions are included in this report.

*Чувствуете ли вы привязанность к Нарве?*

Do you feel attached (or affection) for Narva?

*Считаете ли вы, что Нарва уникальный город/уезд?*

Do you think Narva is a unique city/region?

*Гордитесь ли вы тем, что живете в Нарве?*

Are you proud to live in Narva?

*Оцените степень важности для вас следующих регионов (1-совершенно неважно; 2-неважно; 3-важно до некоторой степени; 4-важно; 5-очень важно): Город,, Регион/Уезд, Эстония, Россия, Европейский Союз, Мир, Другое место*

Rate the importance of the following regions for you (1-not very important; 2-not important; 3-important to some extent; 2-important; 1-very important): city (Narva), Region/County (Ida-Viru), Estonia, Russia, European Union, World, Other Place



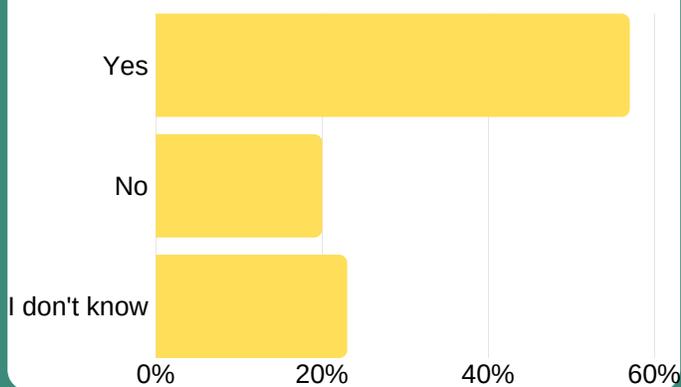
# FINDINGS

## DEMOGRAPHICS:

Survey respondents (n=105) included a diverse range of Narva residents. Respondents included more females (66.7%) than males (31.4%) and adult residents 18-69 years of age. Participants also included a variety of professions including architects, teachers, consultants, and students, among others. Respondents also included Estonian (73.3%), Russian (10.5%), and non-citizens (15.2%). While more demographic attributes were solicited, only a selection of those are included for the purpose of this report.

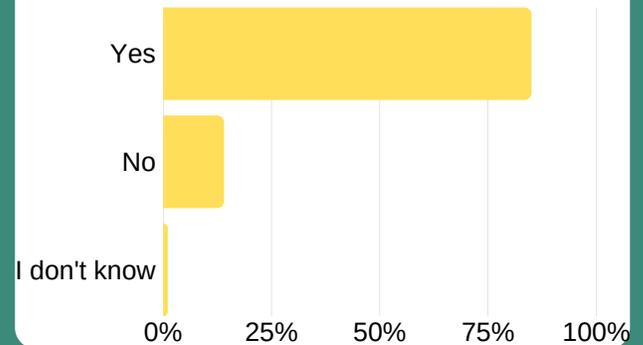
## PRIDE OF PLACE:

When asked whether or not residents are proud of Narva, 57% of respondents said yes. Pride of place illustrates that residents are proud of their city and community.



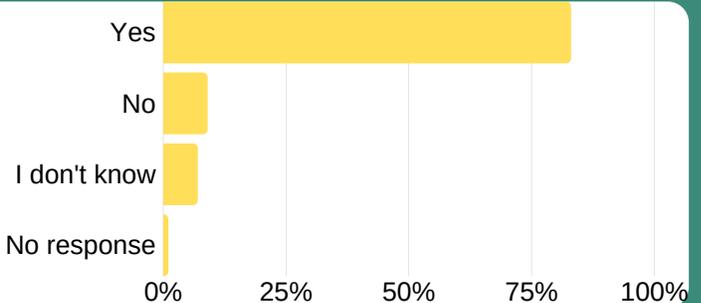
## PLACE UNIQUENESS:

When asked whether or not Narva is unique, 85% of respondents said yes. Place uniqueness reflects residents' feelings, perceptions, and pride of their city's and community's localness.



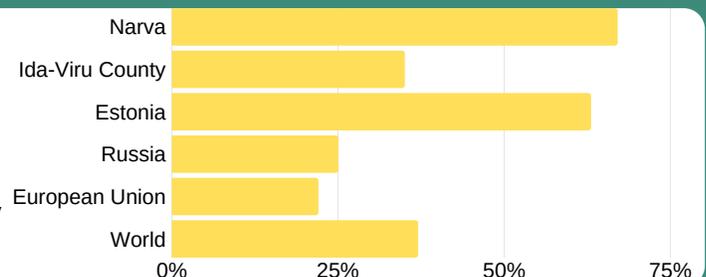
## PLACE ATTACHMENT:

When asked whether or not residents feel attached to Narva, 83% of respondents said yes. Place attachment illustrates residents' connections, fealty, and sense of belonging to their city and community. Place attachment also illustrates a strong sense of place among respondents.



## PLACE IDENTITY:

When asked to assess the importance of various places to residents' identities, Narva (67%) and Estonia (63%) were both considered very important. Place identity illustrates people-place connections and may inform feelings, beliefs, values, or behaviors.



# DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, **survey respondents have a strong sense of place. Respondents illustrate a strong pride of place, sense of local uniqueness, place attachment, and place identity, particularly at local (Narva) and national (Estonia) geographic scales.** The findings mirror those of the author's previous sense of place research in Narva (see References), that **illustrate a strong sense of localness and place identity among Narva's Russian-speaking residents.**

Such findings run counter to media coverage and wider policy discussions, particularly international (outside of Estonia), that depict Narva as a potential site of conflict or as a unstable borderland community open to Russian state interventions, including potential military incursions or overtures. While the report findings only reveal limited descriptive information stemming from local survey respondents, the findings complicate this larger narrative that is often overly focused on domestic or international military intervention, security measures, or state stability. Such narratives often focus on siloed perspectives and fields of study, that are ultimately limited in depicting place and place-based communities. Such narratives can also have negative impacts on local communities and how they feel or engage with their governments, institutions, or neighbors. While local insights are often included in such coverage (media, policy, or scholarly), they are fragmented, piecemeal, or anecdotal. Additionally, the project and its forthcoming publications will be able to contribute more to this broader policy-relevant conversation. This report and project illustrates that more local insights can contribute to wider understandings of Narva and its residents. The findings of this report also illustrate the potential richness of including local community insights and voices, specifically those associated with sense of place, in order to better and more comprehensively inform local, national, and international research, media, planning, or policy.

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