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**THE IMPACT OF POPULISM ON FOREIGN STUDENT ATTITUDES DURING THE  
COVID-19 CRISIS IN ESTONIA: A COMPARISON OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND  
THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS**

Bachelor's thesis

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## **Abstract**

At the end of 2019, the first COVID-19 case was discovered in China. By the beginning of the following year, as a result of its rapid expansion, the virus had spread to practically every country in the world, including Estonia. In the spring of 2020, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic. In addition to the fear and uncertainty caused by the virus's wide growth, the local conservative party in Estonia began to increase its influence among the public. By the May of 2020, the support for the Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE) accounted for almost 22% of the country's population. Quite remarkable is that in July 2021, support for this party was already around 25% (Kantar Emor, 2022).

The objective of this thesis was to find out whether and how significantly the rise in populism affected the attitudes of foreign students living in Estonia. As attitudes are largely shaped by the hospitality of the local residents, interaction with the locals, adaptation, discrimination, or general experience, the following empirical research was designed accordingly. To analyze the potential influences on students' attitudes, the author made a comparison with 10 international students living in the European Union member states and another 10 international students living outside of the European Union. In addition, the author also based her comparison on the years when foreign students started studying in Estonia. The thesis focused on the years 2018-2021, allowing the researcher to compare attitudes before and after the pandemic. This was significant in evaluating the extent to which the rise in populism during the COVID-19 crisis influenced international students' attitudes.

The research was carried out utilizing a qualitative approach, using 20 in-depth interviews. The findings of the thesis reveal that while increased populism during the Coronavirus Crisis in Estonia did not have any systematic effects on international students arriving from the member states of the European Union, it did influence the attitudes of students originally from countries outside of the EU. Surprisingly, there were also a considerable proportion of secondary issues such as language difficulties or deficiencies in the Estonian medical system, which had effects on both comparable target groups.

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## **Introduction**

Living in the era of rapid (technological) change has sparked a desire to see new ideas included in governmental decisions. Contrary to long-term promises, today's people expect politicians to provide immediate solutions. This issue is important since the time of a pandemic has shown a significant trend in the emergence of populist parties as well as the making of quick decisions that appeal to the voters. The thesis author claims that the rise in populism during the COVID-19 pandemic did not affect the students arriving in Estonia from the member states of the EU, but has influenced the attitudes of international students immigrating from the countries outside of the European Union. The growing number of international students in Estonia emphasizes the importance of researching these attitudes. Foreign students now contribute to both our educational system and the development of a more innovative work environment. The phenomena under research include therefore populism (as an independent variable) and foreign student attitudes (dependent variable). In addition, the geographical focus (Estonia) and time frame (COVID-19 crisis) have been established.

The hypotheses are supported by the fact that the Conservative People's Party of Estonia gained more popularity among the public in 2020. Since this right-wing party is known for its anti-immigration policies, it is probable that when its popularity internally grew, it had a direct impact on international students' attitudes. In this case, attitudes are affected by how foreigners interact with Estonians, how they perceive hospitality or prejudice, and how foreign students have adapted to life in Estonia.

The main motivation of the thesis is related to the fact that this type of analysis, seeking the potential link between the growth of populism during a crisis and the possible influences of students' attitudes has not been previously conducted in Estonia.

Since the central objective of the thesis is to find out, whether there has been an impact of populism on the international students' attitudes during the COVID-19 crisis in Estonia, the author has divided the structure into three main blocs. The first chapter is focusing on the definitions and the spread of populism in Estonia and other European countries. The second chapter will give an overview of populism and migration policy using a similar sequence. Lastly, the results of the research will be seen in the chapter on empirical analysis. This chapter, in turn, is divided into three subchapters which will focus on the students' initial expectations and realities, adaptation, influences of populism, and COVID-19. The findings will be concluded in the summary.

## **1. Definitions of populism**

Populism has played a variety of roles in contemporary politics. Yet, it is clear that populism must be given some sort of definition to comprehend and study it. Since it is such a vast and abstract concept, several authors have attempted to explain populism in ways that could help us to understand it better.

Even though the political scientists Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser believe, that the meaning of populism is considerably comprehensive, they find that its interpretation differs widely from a specific region (Kaltwasser, Mudde, 2017, 1-2). What is remarkable is that, in Latin America, it is normally associated with left-wing presidents, while in Europe it is mostly linked with right-wing parties who are also oftentimes xenophobic and against immigration. Interestingly, the United States appears to be a combination of the latter. This may also be one of the reasons why populism can create a lot of doubts and raise the question: what exactly is it then? Mudde and Kaltwasser say that the definition of populism comes mostly from the organizations or citizens themselves which is why we can not assign it a single meaning.

Political economists Abdul Noury and Gerard Roland recognize Mudde's definition of populism as a "thin-centered ideology" that divides society into two primary groups: the "corrupt elite" on one side and "the pure people" on the other (Noury, Roland, 2020, 423). Furthermore, it should be emphasized that the general will and voice of citizens is the factor that shapes politics. The writers focus on Kaltwasser and Mudde's perspective when they introduced the expression "identity politics" to open the matter even more profoundly. The term itself has been linked to radical right populism, which includes concerns like Euroscepticism, a lack of hospitality toward foreigners (or anyone who isn't one of "us"), and criticism of globalization. It is gained particular attention in Europe, where populists connect identity politics with promises to defend "the silent majority" from detrimental outcomes of immigration and grown European integration. So, since far-right populist parties have demonstrated examples of the aforementioned tactics, the public's mistrust of the elite is based on the fact that they choose to promote foreign interests such as described previously (globalization, the entry of ex-pats, and other examples).

## 1.1 Populism in Europe

Some researchers have discovered that when more right-wing parties enter parliament for the first time, voters become more ideologically polarized. In the following chapter, some scholarly research will be used to explain the characteristics of populism.

There has been a significant level of radicalization in today's democracies. We have seen throughout history, how for example Communists and Socialists had the support of the vast majority of the population while being clearly extreme (Bischof, Wagner, 2019, 888). In addition to the instances mentioned in the last century, there was also a remarkable success for National Socialists at the end of the nineteenth century. When discussing current cases, we can draw a comparison to the Alternative für Deutschland, which was elected to the German Bundestag roughly 5 years ago. When there has been an unexpected surge in the number of radicalized parties or actors in democratic structures, analysts and critics have frequently expressed worries about the overall public good. One of these scenarios occurred not long ago when a businessman with relatively extreme views won the 2016 presidential elections in the United States. Trump garnered public attention by having the bravery to speak out on issues that other politicians did not think were important. According to a survey of Dutch respondents conducted by Daniel Bischof and Markus Wagner, the entry of a far-right party into parliament in 2002 led to drastic ideological polarization across the political landscape (Bischof, Wagner, 2019, 900-901). They concluded that voters who supported right-wing parties shifted farther to the right, while voters who supported left-wing parties shifted further to the left.

In contrast, Abdul Noury and Gerard Roland, who has focused on studying identity politics and populism in Europe, have found that populist groups supporting nationalist and conservative ideas skyrocketed in popularity after the 2008 financial crisis (Noury, Roland, 2020, 431, 435). Economic reasons, such as unemployment and increased immigration, may have influenced the rise of populism and identity politics in Europe. The authors also concluded that right-wing populists have frequently taken advantage of economic hardship to promote their ideas, such as resistance to immigration. As a consequence, there could be a complicated relationship between the economic drivers of the rise in identity politics and the cultural pushback revealed by survey results.

Estonia, like other European countries, showed signs of polarization already before the COVID-19 outbreak, namely after the 2015 migrant crisis. In a brief, the migrant crisis was caused by a situation in which refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and neighboring countries were compelled to flee their homes due to war and climate issues. Europe happened to be the most preferred destination for them. The most unexpected impact of the migratory issue was that the European citizens began to demand much stricter borders (Maasikas, 2017). As a result, the EU found itself in a difficult situation: A Union that had traditionally prioritized globalization, tolerance, and open borders was confronted with fundamental inconsistencies. And, of course, the migrant crisis had instilled fear and apprehension among liberal world citizens. The public began to search for their "own" old, traditional identity and started, therefore, protests against the liberal elite. While countries like Hungary and Poland were considerably repulsive to the flow of immigrants, Estonia together with Latvia and Lithuania maintained the principle of solidarity within the EU (Makarychev, 2018, 750). However, what happened in Estonia after the migrant crisis was the differences in opinions between the Estonian majority and the Russophone minority.

The Conservative People's Party of Estonia also benefited significantly from the migrant crisis, as the refugee issue was the centerpiece of their parliamentary election campaign in 2019 (EKRE). EKRE's campaign against refugee quotas was a clear example of criticizing both European integration and the local elite. According to party members, the European Union had enforced regulations on Estonia that would ignore public opinion. The latter has also contributed to them condemning the Estonian government and claiming that ministers were clearly acting against the wishes of the people. (Petsinis, 2019, 222-223).

## **1.2 Populism during the Coronavirus Crisis**

As previously stated, populist parties frequently use times of crisis to stand out in society (Bobba, Hube, 2021). Many people would agree that the current pandemic has had a significant impact on the economy, health, and social areas. The following chapter will demonstrate how can the populists exploit a crisis situation. The thesis author will eventually construct a parallel using Austria as an example.

Political scientists Manuela Caiani and Paolo Graziano have noted that populists tend to benefit from three types of crises, which are divided as follows: (1) political crisis, (2) economic crisis, and (3) cultural crisis (Caiani, Graziano, 2019, 1147-1149). When focusing on the political side, the authors have discovered that mainstream parties have started to lose its importance and get replaced by challenger parties. One factor is thought to be their effort in implementing economic changes, which has typically assured their increased popularity among voters. Another reason is related to the general view of the European party system. More precisely, Caiani and Graziano reflect the ideas of Luigi Guiso who said that the perspective of rebuilding the European party system has created room for new factions that are ready to operate over less organized political fragmentations, like economic precariousness and immigration. “Globalisation and post-industrialization have led to a decline in class voting and partisan identification, increased political alienation among certain segments of the population, and reduced trust in the political elite (Caiani, Graziano, 2019, 1148),” the authors concluded to supplement their statement.

Another view is that economic recessions help populist parties to grow and prevail (Ciani, Graziano, 2019, 1148). Manuela Caiani and Paolo Graziano have even specified that political dissatisfaction with representative institutions is exacerbated by economic crises. Sympathizing with Sara Hobolt and James Tilley, the authors have besides mentioned that the economic crisis has transformed the outlook of European political competitiveness. The instances can be linked to the sanctioning of mainstream parties and the issue of immigration in the context of the European sovereign debt crisis.

The last category of populist parties' crisis-related justifications is tied to cultural aspects (Ciani, Graziano, 2019, 1149). When discussing the latter, a parallel to the "silent revolution" is frequently made since it considers the development of populist parties to be a response to a diverse variety of rapid cultural changes that have weakened Western nations' beliefs and traditions. Such a perspective is shown to have already produced the aforementioned concerns, with populists criticizing immigration, expressing significant skepticism toward regional and international governance, supporting authoritarian ideals, and ideologically positioning themselves on the left or right. Moreover, anti-immigrant attitudes have been linked to support for radical right populists in several different analyzes. Several studies have additionally found a link between the cultural crisis and risk caused by immigration, which has also involved negative attitudes toward migrants.

To give a notion of the above-mentioned descriptions, the author of the thesis will provide an overview of populist activities throughout the Coronavirus Crisis. The current pandemic has led to a situation where people around the world have started to lose trust in the local government (Eberl, Greussing, Huber, 2021, 273). Instead, they would strongly believe in a conspiracy that the COVID-19 was either a military experiment, a virus carried by 5G signals, or a classified operation to decrease the already overpopulated Earth. Jakob-Moritz Eberl, Robert A. Huber, and Esther Greussing argue that those beliefs are strongly based on populism. The authors have found that there are mainly three qualities that may answer why do people fall for different misconceptions: anti-elitism, people-centrism, and Manichean outlook (Eberl, Greussing, Huber, 2021, 273-274).

The first describes the idea where citizens oppose and even criticize the people who are in the political or societal elites (Eberl, Greussing, Huber, 2021, 273-274). The second feature is closely connected with the latter since the citizens find that the elite is betraying them. Eventually, the people in power are considered to be the ones who only see the world in black and white without any exception of different colors – this view is called the Manichean outlook. In addition to the foregoing, populists' mistrust of the elite is directed not only at political structures but also at scientific institutions. The people working in these establishments are often seen as a technocratic elite that is against virtuous and honest people. When we look at this topic in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, it has been evident that populists have been extremely hesitant when it comes to wearing face masks or vaccination. It is difficult to find solutions to these kinds of issues when scientific knowledge is tightly connected with policy decisions as we witness today. Moreover, because there may be some unpredictability or a lack of control, the situation becomes even more difficult to follow.

Now, when focusing more precisely on Austria, the author of the thesis will present the findings of two researchers. Patrick Mellacher has found that COVID-19 deaths (per capita) have some significant connections with support for the Austrian right-wing party (Freedom Party of Austria) while Daniel Thiele provides evidence on how strong a link has been between the pandemic, populist behavior, and social media (Hafez, Heinisch, Miklin, 2019). FPÖ was founded already 66 years ago but started to gain incredible attention in 1986 when, under the leadership of Jörg Haider, it became one of the most successful far-right populist parties in Europe. The party was especially concentrated on identity politics and criticizing immigration.

When concluding his findings, Mellacher first referred to pandemic populism as a political position since it has strongly underlined skepticism of the danger posed by the virus and demonstrated ignorance toward additional restrictions (Mellacher, 2021, 25-26). A connection can be drawn to the aforementioned situations, in which populists have stood out for their unwillingness to promote vaccination or support measures that would protect our health in an infectious period. This political position has been labeled as populist because many people have decided to support such ideas. On the other hand, such behaviors could significantly increase negative impacts on the majority of the population. The author found that the support for the Freedom Party of Austria and public health results are related. The author showed the results of the 2019 national elections as an example of how grown support for FPÖ led to an increase in fatalities after the change of policy. Furthermore, it was concluded that in regions where the FPÖ was stronger, the case fatality rate was also greater.

Daniel Thiele has researched the growth in populist behaviors in Austria from a social media perspective. More precisely, there have been various protests around this country since the beginning of the pandemic and this in turn has led to the increased populist user comments on Facebook of Austrian mass media (Thiele, 2021, 185). Thiele analyzed a dataset of 25,121 posts and 1,4 million user comments posted on Facebook between January 2020 and May 2021 (Thiele, 2021, 189, 192). The results indicate that the government measures taken to combat the pandemic have triggered populist user comments and this effect grew over time (Thiele, 2021, 193). This topic appeared to irritate the Facebook audience, who voiced their displeasure by writing a growing number of populist user comments. The research supports the well-known view that times of crisis are fertile ground for populism.

### **1.3 The rise of populism in Estonia during the COVID-19 pandemic**

We have already seen how populists might take advantage of crises in prior chapters. With this in mind, the author will demonstrate how during the COVID-19 crisis, one conservative right-wing party in Estonia significantly increased its support among citizens.

Kantar Emor, an Estonian marketing research firm, has provided crucial information regarding political party support ratings over the years. We may conclude from the statistics of the last four years that support for the Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE) has increased considerably (Kantar Emor, 2022). Furthermore, EKRE was also a member of the government coalition alongside the Estonian Center Party and the Pro Patria Union from April 2019 to January 2021. The second government of then-Prime Minister Jüri Ratas came to an end when he chose to resign in the light of various bribery charges inside the coalition (Palgi, 2021).

When we look at the support for EKRE in greater detail, the most significant changes may be seen based on July 2021 (Kantar Emor, 2022). In September of 2020, the party's popularity dipped to its lowest point, but it quickly rebounded. When their support was just 13 percent of the population at the time, it had risen to 25 percent by July of the following year. EKRE's support has fluctuated between 14 percent and 20 percent during the months in between. As a result, we may conclude that the growing popularity and support among citizens have allowed this party to form a greater room to disseminate its ideology and influence among the locals. According to the conservative motto of the party, they value people above everything else, preferring them above themselves and politics in general (EKRE). In the content of the party's agenda, they also emphasized the key principles, which include promoting "traditional Estonian values" over large-scale immigration.

Furthermore, Dr. Liisa Talving, a research fellow in Comparative Politics at the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies, presented a study on the Freedom House page indicating that Estonia's National Democratic Governance rating dropped from 6.00 to 5.75 in 2021 (Talving, 2021). She has drawn comparisons between the EKRE and its efforts as a coalition member, which also harmed Estonia's response to COVID-19. This includes using crisis legislation for political purposes and prioritizing social causes over public health concerns.

According to Dr. Ulrike M. Vieten's article, the so-called pandemic populism has gained popularity solely as a result of concerns for public health, social welfare, and politics (Vieten, 2020, 11).

Many governments that were unable to deal with the issues surrounding the COVID-19 crisis have witnessed how this situation has allowed radical ideologies to flourish. It has also been suggested that since the months of lockdown forced people to rely primarily on internet resources, this may have swayed their views toward radicalism. Vieten noted that, as a result of the latter, people may have been more vulnerable to disinformation spread by extreme-right individuals or parties. To exemplify such behavior, the author said that there have been two large protests in Germany thus far, both related to individuals being tired of isolation and wanting to "return to normal life."

Protests were held in Estonia as well, much like they were in Germany. Although the number of participants in these two countries was vastly different (Germany had over 38,000 demonstrators, while Estonia had around 4000), the basic goal remained the same (Vieten, 2020, 11). The first protest against COVID-19 measures in Estonia occurred in the autumn of 2021, with the goal of ending mandatory COVID-19 vaccination, as well as digital COVID certificates (BNS, NN, 2021). Despite the fact that the movement's major objective was vaccination, participants were holding signs such as "no to dictatorship" and "stop the Prime Minister of Estonia," which can be related to anti-elitism. However, it is vital to note that these protests cannot be properly classified as far-right populism (Vieten, 2020, 11). Nonetheless, the organizers' and participants' activities were deemed anti-elitist since they continued to support the beliefs of extreme nationalists and the right-wing populist party in Estonia.

## **2. Populism and Migration Policy**

### **2.1 European Union migration policy**

The European Union and its member states have always respected the agreed-upon choices based on their visions. Given the EU stated commitment to work together within the union, members' goal is to make concerted efforts to build a more efficient and secure immigration plan (Council of the European Union, 2022). In 2015, when a large number of individuals immigrated from third countries to Europe, the crisis had overwhelming effects on nearly all of the member states. Due to the lack of formal policies, many European countries found the aspect of providing jobs and accommodation for immigrants a major challenge. Following the devastation caused by the migration crisis in 2015, the European Union has decreased the acceptance of illegal immigration to the EU by more than 90%. Furthermore, they have established a set of rules to regulate legal migrant flows, which adjust standards for asylum seekers, students, as well as highly qualified professionals.

In 2016, the two major institutions of the EU agreed to create a manual to ease the circumstances of residence of third-country nationals who migrated to a country seeking opportunities for studying or other educational projects (Council of the European Union, 2022). Another breakthrough occurred in 2015 when European Union and African leaders convened in Malta for a meeting. It was determined at the Valletta Summit on Migration that students would have more flexibility when traveling between Europe and Africa when increasing the number of scholarships available under the Erasmus+ initiative.

Extending what has been said previously, Albana Shehaj, Adrian J. Shin, and Ronald Inglehart have dedicated their research to finding a potential link between immigration and right-wing populist parties in Western Europe. The authors concluded that whenever there are bigger differences between immigrants and locals regarding economy and culture, then it also enables right-wing populist parties to stand out and gain greater support among the public (Inglehart, Shehaj, Shin, 2021, 289). However, the evidence for this claim has proven to be weak, since locals frequently believe that even in a situation of considerable immigration, there will be more immigrants. This causes voters to experience unduly high levels of worry and anxiety. We can draw a parallel here with the United Kingdom, where the populist UK Independence Party gained support after 2010 by focusing solely on voter impressions rather than the actual percentage of Muslims in the country.

## **2.2 Migration policy during the Coronavirus Crisis**

In 2021, World Health Organization published a report focusing on migrants in times of COVID-19. The main conclusions suggest that countries did not support the full closure of the borders (World Health Organization, 2021, 10). Instead, there were more instances of enabling people to enter, rather than restricting them to cross the borders. Furthermore, multiple exceptions were made to the entry ban even for countries that had chosen to impose entry restrictions. The United States, Italy, and Bulgaria were among the countries providing the most exceptions so that for example the students and people working in the health care sector could enter the country.

In the case of the residents who were already at their destination, it was then analyzed how some countries managed to make changes in their adaptation policies (World Health Organization, 2021, 13). The most common actions made by the governments included extending the residence permits and visas and suspending any forced returns. Greece, Croatia, Portugal, and Poland were some of the countries that automatically extended the validity for needed documents. However, there were again some exceptions that varied according to the country. For example, France decided to automatically extend residence permits but not short-term visas. Interestingly, some countries used the exact opposite tactics.

The time of a global pandemic has also tested the countries' willingness to modify the law in terms of healthcare coverage (World Health Organization, 2021, 17). When discussing the latter, two main tendencies were found according to the policies in different countries: some countries find it important to give everyone the same kind of access to health care, while others tend to leave it to individuals which forces them to pay additional money. For example, Turkey and Belgium are one of those states that provide a free approach to health care for everyone. Countries like Lithuania, Finland, Cyprus, and Estonia are also known for their practices of giving free COVID-19 related health services.

## **2.3 Migration policy in Estonia**

In prior chapters of the thesis, the author proved that populism was on the rise throughout the Coronavirus outbreak. Furthermore, on March 17, 2021, Conservative People's Party of Estonia, which was in a government with the Estonian Center Party and the Pro Patria Union during Jüri Ratas' second cabinet, introduced legislation to amend the Aliens Act, the Higher Education Act, and the Study Grants and Student Loans Act (Riigikogu, 2021, 2-3). If this law had been adopted, it would have made it considerably more difficult for international students to adjust to life in Estonia. For example, one of the amendments to the Aliens Act has declared: "if an international student has a temporary residence permit for the purpose of studying and has not completed or interrupted studies to the extent required to obtain a residence permit for the purpose of studying, his or her temporary residence permit will expire 30 days after failing to complete studies to the extent required to obtain a residence permit (Riigikogu, 2021, 2)." The proposals in the Higher Education Act stated that a fee for the entire curriculum is charged to a foreign student, except a citizen of a Member State of the European Union, a Member State of the European Economic Area, the Swiss Confederation, or the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Here, we can notice a clear distinction and benefit imbalance between international students arriving from a European Union member state and international students arriving from outside the European Union. If accepted by the Parliament, these ideas, according to the thesis's author, would have had a possible negative impact on the attitudes of international students who arrived in Estonia. Even though EKRE was behind such proposals and gained more public support during the pandemic, probably, foreigners' attitudes were still influenced.

## **2.4 Hypotheses**

Based on the above-mentioned, the author of the thesis has proposed two hypotheses:

1. The rise of populism during the COVID-19 crisis did not affect the attitudes of international students who arrived in Estonia from the European Union.
2. The rise of populism during the COVID-19 crisis influenced the attitudes of international students who arrived in Estonia from outside of the European Union.

### **3. Methodology**

The data collection method used for this thesis was qualitative analysis which was made in a form of twenty in-depth interviews. This approach enabled the author to ask open questions and get therefore most direct answers from the students according to their experiences. Furthermore, since the interviews were recorded through video calls, they were significantly more time-efficient and compact. The qualitative technique has the advantage of delivering more specific information than other research methodologies because it allows the interviewer to ask indicative questions.

The participants of the interviews were found using the social media platform Facebook and chosen based on their home countries. More specifically, the plan consisted of 10 international students arriving from European Union countries and another 10 international students outside of the European Union. Additionally, they were also selected based on the year they started their studies in Estonia. As a result, the author looked at the proportion of international students who arrived in Estonia between 2018-2019 and 2020-2021. This allowed us to examine the impact of populism on the attitudes of international students before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviewees included 13 female and 7 male students, all in the 19-27 age group. Among the respondents were students from 15 different nations. The students who came from the countries closest to Estonia geographically were from Finland and Latvia, while those from the farthest away were from the United States and Mexico. Some students had immigrated to Estonia from third countries like Pakistan, Nigeria, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Iran, while others came from the European Union member states of France, Germany, and the Netherlands. The respondents were entirely enthusiastic about their experiences.

The interview questionnaire (presented in Appendix 1) contained 31 questions about the students' expectations and realities of life in Estonia, as well as the effects of COVID-19. Half of the respondents were primarily from the University of Tartu and the Estonian University of Life Sciences (10 students from the University of Tartu and 2 students from the Estonian University of Life Sciences, respectively), with 6 students from Tallinn University and 2 from Tallinn University of Technology.

The average interview lasted for about 30 minutes, depending on the individual. Students who spoke for more than half an hour showed a great deal of enthusiasm for the subject and widened their views even further.

## **4. Empirical analysis**

### **4.1 Initial expectations, adaptation, and influences of populism**

The respondents were asked what made them think of coming to Estonia to study and/or work. Students from European Union member states who began studying in Estonia between the years 2018 and 2019 had very varied perspectives. The following were the main reasons why students decided to study in Estonia: the desirable specialization was not available in their home country, they had relatives or acquaintances in Estonia, they valued the high ranking of Estonian universities, the students got offered a scholarship, or they had previous experience in Estonia as an Erasmus student.

However, students from European Union member states who arrived between 2020 and 2021 expressed the following viewpoints: a desire to experience a different environment, an interest in having a diverse curriculum, and a motivation for studying in an Estonian university after having previously participated in the Erasmus program.

Coming to Estonia to study for third-country nationals had a fairly clear and similar reason. International students from outside the European Union who arrived both between the years 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 found that Estonia is constantly developing in information technology, making room for new generations, and supporting innovative ideas. It was also mentioned that the cost of living in Estonia was not outrageously high, which would support the students' academic environment. Two people described their decision to move to Estonia as a "coincidence," meaning they did not intend to come here but eventually determined to do so due to receiving a great training offer or having previous experience in local programs.

The following questions focused on the aspect of knowing how did their initial visions and expectation about living in Estonia look like, including the local society and the people. After that, the students were asked if the living conditions and general political atmosphere in Estonia had met their expectations. Some European students who arrived in 2018-2019 said they had no special expectations since Estonia is a member of the EU and hence appears to be quite similar to their own nation. The responses of international students who arrived in 2020-2021 were similar to those of the previous years. They did say, however, that the spread of COVID-19 had made them more cautious about entering the country. Nevertheless, there were no signs of major cultural

shocks or unpredictability when it came to their contentment with the initial expectations. It was all mostly because European countries largely share similar values and there are no signs of a cultural space that has yet to be discovered.

When analyzing the responses of third-country nationals, an interesting discovery was revealed. One student, who had come from outside of Europe, stated that he expected to see more tensions between Estonian and Russian-speaking residents. It was primarily tied to this student's previous interest in learning about the history of this region. Even though the reality turned out to be different in a sense of conflict, the aspect of identity for Estonian-Russians remains perceptible. This respondent added, that “these people may still feel today that they are not fully part of or integrated into the Estonian society.”

Several students from the third countries thought Estonia is still largely influenced by post-Soviet times. The more surprised they were when they arrived and realized that the expectations of a poorer quality of life had been proven to be completely wrong. Furthermore, the responses of third-country residents were fascinating in that 7 out of 10 respondents expected the locals to be reserved and distant when engaging with foreigners. The latter was primarily due to Estonia's geographic location. More than half of these interviewees admitted that the reality matched their initial impressions in terms of the local society and people. Even though the students discovered Estonians require more time to form long-lasting friendships with foreigners, they all agreed that the locals had shown to be incredibly welcoming. The answers of students from non-EU countries to this topic were similar, whether they started studying in Estonia before or after the COVID-19 crisis.

The next set of questions further developed this topic and had the goal of knowing did the students feel welcome when arriving in Estonia or did they sense any kind of attitudes towards them in society or the political climate. Another linked question wanted to observe the potential changes during the time. The question was formulated in a way that could answer whether the students had noticed a change in attitudes towards them during their time in Estonia. Nine out of ten respondents from EU member states said they did not encounter any unpleasant views toward them when arriving in Estonia. However, one of them mentioned that he experienced a few minor incidents when settling into the dormitory, including misunderstandings with the manager due to language

barriers. In this context, the international students' experiences and attitudes toward them over time have been restricted to only linguistic differences.

Third-country nationals have had a considerably different experience when it comes to the attitudes of the locals, which in turn has influenced their attitudes towards living in Estonia. 5 international students from Nigeria and Pakistan acknowledged that arriving in Estonia instantly drew the notice of the locals, due to their different skin colors. For the same reason, they have experienced both indirect and direct discrimination during their time in Estonia. Aside from the unwanted attention on the streets, two Pakistani and one Nigerian student said they were not even served in the markets. Although the reasons for this reaction are unclear, they believe it was again caused by their different skin color and the difficulty in understanding the local language. There was also an experience of a male Pakistani who got verbally discriminated against by a member of the Conservative People's Party of Estonia. He was yelled at on the street and urged to return to his home country. The same person has also been the victim of physical discrimination, having been hit by the anti-immigrant group known as the Soldiers of Odin. What was even worse was that he did not receive the response or assistance from the police he had hoped for. The thesis author asked him, could such an experience be a potential reason why he would like to live somewhere other than Estonia, and does he think that the issue of discrimination should receive more attention at the government level. His response was clear: "yes, I think this issue should definitely receive more attention at the government level in Estonia since it was directly related to my place of origin." He went on to say that coming to Estonia had been a dream of his for a long time and that he had imagined achieving here his career ambitions. However, such an incident has considerably changed his mind about living in Estonia, and he has even contemplated changing his academic environment to somewhere else outside of the country.

The 5 other students arriving from Ukraine, Iran, and the United States did not witness any direct case of discrimination. On the contrary, the locals were rather excited to learn about their culture. However, there was one indirect case of a Ukrainian girl whose friendship with the local was ruined only because of her origins. It can be therefore concluded that the wider spread of populism (and potential anti-immigration behavior among the public regarding the increased support for EKRE) in Estonia did not directly affect the attitudes of foreign students who arrived from the member states of the European Union. At the same time, all 5 international third-country students

arriving in Estonia in the years 2020 and 2021 have witnessed either direct or indirect discrimination which was closely related to their place of origin. This can also be reflected in the theoretical part of the thesis where EKRE's proposals in the Higher Education Act could have charged a fee for the curriculum only from the students outside of the EU.

Lastly, it was profoundly analyzed which experience the interviewees had in interacting with the locals and do they consider themselves well-adapted to living in Estonia. Even though all respondents said that they are adapted, there are still some secondary issues they constantly need to deal with. This includes having difficulties in finding Estonian friends, interacting with the authorities in a way that there would not be any issues regarding the language, and getting help and prescriptions from the doctors. Students coming from the other European countries related their adaptation again with the aspect of being part of a similar cultural space.

It was more different for the third-country nationals, who said that they had hard times settling in during the first months of living in Estonia. It was mostly related to the differences in culture and language and the fact that the Estonians seemed to be more reserved than other foreigners. Even though the latter was one of the reasons why third-country nationals found it difficult to relate themselves to others, attending Estonian culture-related events or workshops had considerable positive effects on getting to understand the local mindset and starting conversations with the local people. Overall, the international students arriving from the countries outside of the EU said that after the first months of dealing with the above-mentioned struggles, they quickly found themselves being well-adapted to living in Estonia.

#### **4.2 The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on international students**

In the following chapter, the author will analyze the ways the COVID-19 crisis affected international students in Estonia. Here we can once again see how the difference in the years played a significant role in the students' views. Having this in mind, the questions were divided in a way that would separately focus on the students who arrived in Estonia in the years 2018-2019 and 2020-2021. The international students arriving in 2020 and 2021 were asked (1) did the COVID-19 complicate the process of their arrival in Estonia, (2) have COVID-19 restrictions in Estonia cognitively affected their learning or the quality of education, working, or social interaction, and

(3) whether and how significantly has the coronavirus affected their adaptation in Estonia. Based on the last two years, the respondents were also asked did they feel that the restrictions regarding the COVID-19 crisis have significantly changed their attitudes towards living in Estonia or the local people.

#### **4.2.1 The impact on international students arriving in the years 2020 and 2021**

When analyzing the responses of the third-country nationals who arrived in Estonia in 2020 or 2021, the general views turned out to be quite similar. Four out of five students claimed the arrival process was complicated since they had to pay for the PCR test and quarantine accommodations. What made the issue even more disturbing was the fact that no one actually checked whether or not they were in quarantine. One of the responders was quite disappointed by the authorities' actions since she believed she had wasted her money. One of the interviewees also described her experience at the Tallinn airport, where local personnel refused to give her the chance to take a PCR test because she was a non-EU citizen.

However, for students immigrating from the member states of the European Union, the arrival process was way more comfortable. While four respondents did not have any negative experience they would remember, one girl arriving in 2021 told that COVID-19 was the actual reason why she did not start her studies already earlier and therefore had to take a gap year. After all, once she arrived in Estonia, she did not witness any inconveniences. Rather she said that everything regarding the COVID-19 crisis in Estonia was pretty well-organized.

When analyzing the aspect of learning or the quality of education, working, or social interaction, both students arriving from the EU member states and third countries said, that COVID-19 restrictions in Estonia only affected them regarding their university studies and working since almost all of the time they had to spend time in front of their computer, watching online classes or taking part of Zoom meetings. One of the respondents arriving from a third country in 2021 told that “remote studying does not give you the same effect as being in the university since it considerably decreases the motivation.” All ten students who immigrated to Estonia in 2020 and 2021 agreed that returning to in-class lectures was a refreshing change. The answers once again reflected similar trends when asking about the COVID-19 restrictions' effects on working or social

interaction. The restrictions had little effect on their interactions with friends or acquaintances, according to eight out of ten students. They could still meet up with their friends outside, albeit in smaller groups. Two of the third-country nationals stated that COVID-19's influence on the necessary social network was minimal, as they consider themselves introverts who saw this time as an opportunity to focus on themselves.

A surprising trend was found when asking whether and how significantly the coronavirus affected their adaptation in Estonia. Eight out of ten students arriving in 2020 and 2021 said it took them roughly a month to get adjusted to living in Estonia. The process took approximately half a year for two international students. One of them, who was born in a third country, explained that because it was her first time abroad and she had to deal with the added stress of PCR tests, COVID-19 certificates, and quarantine accommodations, the adaptation took a little longer. Generally, all 10 interviewees believe they are well-adapted by now and do not believe the COVID-19 will affect that again.

Lastly, the respondents were asked did they feel that the restrictions regarding the COVID-19 crisis have significantly changed their attitudes towards living in Estonia or the local people. Here the answers of students from third countries and EU member states are split into two. All five students arriving in 2020 and 2021 from the member states of the European Union found that Estonia has handled the issue surrounding the Coronavirus Crisis extremely well. They complimented the country's decision-making transparency and added that on many occasions the restrictions might have been even stricter. As a result, their attitudes towards living in Estonia or the local people were unaffected by the COVID-19 limitations or political decisions. The fact that their attitudes did not change was partly due to the reason their home countries' rules during the virus pandemic were much stricter.

Though, the views of third-country nationals were completely different. Only one student out of five did not witness any changes in attitudes. Another four responded that they felt Estonian society had divided in two during the Coronavirus Crisis, resulting in increased tensions. Seeing how many people gathered in Tallinn's Freedom Square to protest against the use of face masks and vaccinations shocked them. They never imagined that such a small country as Estonia could have such extraordinary internal conflicts, with people on one side supporting the government's policies and on the other opposing them completely. Furthermore, they did not believe that such protests

were primarily led by a political party that had previously served in government. Such thoughts were shared by third-country students both arriving in Estonia in 2018-2019 and 2020-2021. As mentioned above, two people from Pakistan and one person from Nigeria were on different occasions even left unserved in grocery stores. Additionally, one of them has had both verbal and physical experiences of discrimination, first with a member of the Conservative People's Party of Estonia and another with the anti-immigrant group operating in Estonia.

As a result, seven out of ten international students arriving from countries outside of the European Union told that they would not imagine themselves residing in Estonia in 5 years just because of the divided society, uncertainty in the political climate, and how they have been treated here. It can therefore be concluded that the attitudes of the third-country nationals were affected because of the rise in populism during the COVID-19 crisis.

#### **4.2.2 The impact on international students arriving in the years 2018 and 2019**

The international students arriving in Estonia in the years 2018 and 2019 were asked, (1) whether there were any unpredictables or obstacles in the year they arrived in Estonia, (2) have COVID-19 restrictions in Estonia cognitively affected their working or social interaction, and (3) do they feel they have adapted to living in Estonia.

The responses to the first question differed significantly between citizens of third-country countries and citizens of EU member states. Four out of five European Union nationals claimed there were no obstacles in the year they arrived in Estonia. The fact that they all held the EU ID card was one of the key reasons behind this. Nonetheless, one German girl stated that she faced two major challenges: frustration from officials due to language barriers and finding an English-speaking doctor in Estonia. She went on to say that at the beginning of her studies since she could not find a family doctor who could understand her, she had to go to a private doctor to communicate in English and acquire the prescriptions she needed. Understandably, when visiting the private clinics, she had to pay additional money, even though she had health insurance.

The analysis revealed that students from third countries had significantly more obstacles when arriving in Estonia than students from EU member states. More precisely, all 5 respondents from

the third countries had encountered some kind of unpredictabilities. All witnessed that the process of getting a temporary residence permit was extremely slow and hindered their access to public services. One of the respondents from Ukraine said: “by the time I arrived in Estonia, my visa documents were still not ready, so for almost two months I could also not obtain my scholarship.” Aside from the latter, there was another instance where local officials refused to speak in English when explaining the details of documents that were to be signed.

Answers to the second question about COVID-19 restrictions affecting students’ working or social interaction were the same from all respondents. They all agreed that the restrictions regarding the COVID-19 crisis have affected working and their interactions with the others. Seven out of ten interviewees said that the quality of online meetings and classes was considerably lower than in-person. They also felt more isolated and even depressed since they could not spend that much time with their friends. One of the responses stated that he had even received a letter from his university advising him to return to his native country due to the virus's rapid spread. On the other hand, the students were aware of the difficult circumstances and that the limits were in place to ensure our safety.

Furthermore, the students were asked if the COVID-19 restrictions had had an impact on their attitudes toward living in Estonia or the people who live there. The responses of interviewees from both third countries and EU member states were entirely different, similar to the students arriving in Estonia between 2020 and 2021. COVID-19's restrictions had no effect on the attitudes of the five EU students who arrived in Estonia in 2018 or 2019. However, 2 students who were originally from countries outside of the EU discovered that their attitudes had changed.

Lastly, it was found in the analysis that by now, all of the international students have adapted to living in Estonia. There were no exceptions discovered both regarding the years of arrival or students’ place of origin.

### 4.3 Concluding visuals illustrating the findings of international students' expectations, reality, and the impact of COVID-19

Table 1. Students' expectations about living in Estonia, including the local society and the people

	<b>Students from the EU member states</b>	<b>Students from the third countries</b>
<b>Expectations</b>	5 students expected Estonians to be reserved	4 students expected Estonians to be reserved
	2 students expected Estonia to still carry significant influences of the Soviet Union	3 students expected Estonia to still carry significant influences of the Soviet Union
	3 students did not have any expectations	3 students saw Estonia as a country, which is developing in information technology

*Source: Compiled by the author*

The main findings regarding the international students' expectations about living in Estonia (including the local society and the people) have been visualized in Table 1. Since the conducted results shown in the table have been the same both for the students arriving in 2018-2019 and 2020-2021, there was no distinction made between the years. It can be seen that while 3 foreign students from member states of the European Union did not have any expectations about living in Estonia, 5 students thought Estonians to be reserved or distant towards foreigners. Interestingly, 2 out of 10 of respondents from the same target group expected Estonia to have significant post-Soviet influences.

Students from third countries shared the same expectations regarding the modesty of Estonians. More precisely, 4 out of 10 students from outside of the European Union expected Estonians to be reserved. Moreover, similarly to the students from the EU, 3 foreign students thought Estonia still carries remarkable influences from the Soviet Union. Lastly, 3 students expected to experience Estonia as a rapidly rising IT country known for its residents' innovative ideas.

Table 2. The reality about living in Estonia, including the local society and the people

	<b>Students from the EU member states</b>	<b>Students from the third countries</b>
<b>Reality</b>	2 students found that Estonia does not carry visible influences of the Soviet Union	All 10 students said that the locals had shown to be incredibly welcoming
	5 students found Estonians to be reserved and distant	4 students found Estonians to be reserved and distant
	3 students did not make comparisons between expectations and reality	the expectations of the 3 students corresponded to reality, which saw Estonia developing in information technology

*Source: Compiled by the author*

However, Table 2 reveals if the reality of the international students' thoughts on living in Estonia (including the local society and the people) have met their initial visions and expectations. Once again, there were no distinctions made between the years since the target group remained the same as in Table 1. Table 2 shows that the students from the European Union member states who thought Estonians to be reserved were also not mistaken in terms of reality. Though, these 2 students who expected to see Estonia still carrying influences from the Soviet Union had to admit that their expectations turned out to be wrong. Also, as 3 other people from the EU did not have any expectations about living in Estonia, they were also unable to compare them with the reality.

When it comes to the responses of the third country nationals, all 10 international students agreed that the local people have shown to be incredibly welcoming and hospitable. However, still 4 interviewees found Estonians to be reserved – this showed that the reality met their expectations. The same happened with the respondents from outside of the EU, who expected to see Estonia incredibly developed in information technology. 3 of these students claimed that the reality was exactly how they had expected it to be.

Table 3. The impact of COVID-19 restrictions in Estonia on international students' attitudes

	<b>Students from the EU member states</b>	<b>Students from the third countries</b>
<b>Students arriving in Estonia between 2018-2019</b>	Attitudes were unaffected for all 5 students	Attitudes were affected for 2 students
<b>Students arriving in Estonia between 2020-2021</b>	Attitudes were unaffected for all 5 students	Attitudes were affected for 4 students

*Source: Compiled by the author*

Lastly, it was analyzed how have the COVID-19 restrictions in Estonia affected the attitudes of the international students. The results in Table 3 have been divided in a way that would show us which year and from which region did the foreign students arrive in Estonia. According to the findings, it is clear that the attitudes of the 10 students immigrating from the member states of the European Union were unaffected both before and during the COVID-19 crisis. Though, as concluded in the previous chapters and seen in Table 3, the attitudes of the students arriving in Estonia from the third countries were influenced. Specifically, there were 2 (out of 5) international students who arrived in Estonia in 2018 and 2019 whose attitudes were affected by the COVID-19 restrictions in Estonia. Yet, the number of students who felt affected by the restrictions had grown from 2 to 4 by 2020 and 2021. What is also remarkable here is the fact that all 5 third-country nationals who arrived in Estonia in 2020 and 2021 had felt some sort of discrimination, either verbal or even physical. Altogether, there have been 7 international students from countries outside of the EU, who had encountered discrimination in Estonia. As seen previously, such situations have consequently come to the point where these students do not see themselves living in Estonia in 5 years.

## Conclusion

This thesis aimed to find out how significantly the rise in populism during the COVID-19 crisis affected the attitudes of international students living in Estonia. According to the latter, the author of the thesis proposed two main hypotheses:

1. The rise of populism during the COVID-19 crisis did not affect the attitudes of international students who arrived in Estonia from the European Union.
2. The rise of populism during the COVID-19 crisis influenced the attitudes of international students who arrived in Estonia from outside of the European Union.

As a result of the qualitative analyses made in a form of 20 in-depth interviews, both of the proposed hypotheses proved to be accurate. The findings suggested that while the international students arriving from member states of the European Union found Estonia to be similar to their home countries due to the cultural space and common values, the third-country nationals had a hard time settling in. Moreover, 5 out of 10 students immigrating from countries outside of the EU have witnessed either mild or substantial discrimination. On top of that, such experiences occurred in the years 2020 and 2021, when the right-wing Conservative People's Party of Estonia had considerably increased its support among the public. This gives an input to the conclusion that the rise in populism during the COVID-19 crisis in Estonia has indeed affected the attitudes of the international students arriving from third countries. The author found similar parallels as well in the theory, where EKRE's proposals in the Higher Education Act would have set a fee to a foreign student for the entire curriculum, besides for citizens of a Member State of the European Union, a Member State of the European Economic Area, the Swiss Confederation or the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (Riigikogu, 2021, 4).

The thesis's findings will considerably raise local people's awareness of the adjustment difficulties and discrimination experienced by international students from third countries living in Estonia. The results indicate that unpleasant experiences of the students originally from outside the European Union have an impact on their attitudes toward residing and studying in Estonia. It was also concluded that such cases may be a reason why some respondents would wish to study somewhere other than Estonia. Furthermore, seven out of ten international students from third countries do not see themselves living in Estonia in five years. This indicates that if the issue of discrimination against third-country nationals is not being addressed in society, Estonia may lose

a significant amount of foreign labor. Estonia, being a relatively small country in comparison to other European Union member states, is quite reliant on a foreign workforce, and since the foreigners enrich the working environment in local businesses with diverse and innovative ideas while also paying taxes, the country's economic success may be eventually affected.

In addition to the findings related to the proposed hypotheses, there were also many secondary concerns, such as language barriers, difficulties in interacting with the locals, or flaws in the Estonian medical system, that had an impact on both comparable target groups. The key implication suggests that Estonia should provide more possibilities for international students to learn the language, which would help them better navigate daily activities and communicate with locals.

Even though the author of this thesis has found a potential link between the rise in populism in Estonia and the attitudes of foreign students immigrating from the countries outside of the EU, further research with a larger number of the target group would be needed to analyze even more profound influences on populist parties' ability to take advantage of a crisis as studied in the present thesis.

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## Appendix 1

### Interview questionnaire

1. How old are you and what is your nationality?
2. From which country of residence did you arrive in Estonia?
3. Which year did you start your studies in Estonia?
4. What are/were you studying? In which Estonian higher education institution did (or are) you get(ting) your education?
5. Please tell me what made you think of coming to Estonia to study and/or work.
6. How did your initial vision and expectations for living in Estonia look like? What was your vision of the local society and people?
7. What do you think - has living in Estonia met your initial expectations? Has the local people and general political atmosphere been what you envisioned?
8. Did you feel welcome when you arrived in Estonia or did you sense any kind of attitudes towards you in society or in the political climate?
9. Have you noticed a change in attitudes towards you during your time in Estonia (both at the societal and political levels)?
10. How do you feel – has the general political landscape in Estonia seemed friendly and tolerant to you as a foreigner?
11. How smooth was your communication with Estonian authorities in obtaining the necessary documents? In your experience, have Estonian officials been kind and helpful?
12. Those, who arrived in Estonia in 2020 or 2021: Did the COVID-19 complicate the process of your arrival in Estonia? Please explain the reason you still decided to proceed with the process.
13. Those, who arrived in Estonia in 2020 või 2021: How do you feel according to your experience - have COVID-19 restrictions in Estonia cognitively affected learning or the quality of education, working or social interaction?
14. Those, who arrived in Estonia in 2020 või 2021: Whether and how significantly has the coronavirus affected your adaptation in Estonia (i.e the emergence of necessary social network)?

15. Those, who arrived in Estonia in 2018 või 2019: Were there any unpredictables or obstacles in the year you arrived in Estonia? Please explain the reason you still decided to proceed with the process.
16. Those, who arrived in Estonia in 2018 või 2019: How do you feel according to your experience - have COVID-19 restrictions in Estonia cognitively affected working or social interaction?
17. Those, who arrived in Estonia in 2018 või 2019: Do you feel that you have adapted to living in Estonia? What ways do you think could simplify adaptation in Estonia?
18. Based on the last two years, have you felt that the restrictions regarding the COVID-19 crisis have significantly changed your attitude towards living in Estonia or the local people?
19. Describe your relations with the local people. Do you have Estonian friends, colleagues, or acquaintances with whom you keep in constant contact?
20. What is your opinion – the locals are hospitable or rather repulsive? Please explain your answer.
21. Describe your experience with any government sector (this includes relations with the people who work in the areas like health, education, or security).
22. How satisfied are you with your current job or place of residence?
23. How well do you see yourself fitting into the work culture in Estonia? Have you felt any type of negative comments or discrimination in your workplace, either verbal or even physical?
24. Have you felt any verbal or physical discrimination against you outside of your workplace?
25. If they have experienced discrimination: Could such an experience be a potential reason why you would like to live somewhere other than Estonia? (2) Do you feel that such experience may have had a direct connection with your place of origin? (3) Do you think that the issue of discrimination should receive more attention at the government level?
26. Based on the Estonian social and political climate, do you see yourself residing in Estonia in 5 years? Please explain.
27. How well do you know about Estonia? Have you attended any Estonian culture-related events or workshops?
28. On a scale from 1 to 10, how interested are you in studying the Estonian language? Please explain your answer.

29. What kind of suggestions do you have to politicians/authorities in order to make Estonia a more attractive place for international students or foreigners in general?
30. Would you recommend friends or acquaintances in your home country to study and/or work in Estonia? Why?
31. What you would say in general about living in Estonia to summarize the topic?

Mina, Elis Laanisto, (49912090811) annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihtlitsentsi) enda loodud teose

“The impact of populism on foreign student attitudes during the COVID-19 crisis in Estonia: a comparison of the European Union and third-country nationals,”

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