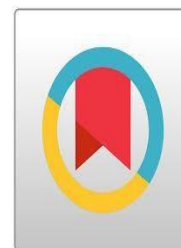


Justin Trudeau's Intended Resignation: Implications for Immigration Reforms, United States - Canada Trade Relations, And Geostrategic Politics in North America During Donald Trump's Resumption in The Oval Office

Rencana Pengunduran Diri Justin Trudeau: Implikasi terhadap Reformasi Imigrasi, Hubungan Dagang Amerika Serikat - Kanada, dan Politik Geostrategis di Amerika Utara Selama Kembalinya Donald Trump ke Kantor Oval



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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Keywords

*Justin Trudeau;
 Immigration Reforms;
 U.S.-Canada Trade
 Relations;
 Geostrategic Politics;
 Realist Theory;*

ABSTRACT

This study explored the potential effects of Justin Trudeau's planned resignation on immigration reforms, U.S.-Canada trade relations, and geostrategic dynamics in North America under Donald Trump's presidency. Using a historical research approach, the study examined the political developments and policy changes during Trudeau's time in office, considering their future implications following his expected departure. The study utilized the Realist Theory of International Relations, focusing on the role of national interest and power in shaping relationships between states. The findings suggest that Trudeau's resignation could lead to significant shifts in Canada's immigration policies, potentially resulting in more restrictive measures aligned with conservative ideologies. In terms of trade, U.S.-Canada relations, already complicated by Trump's protectionist stance and the USMCA renegotiation, may face greater instability, impacting the region's economic stability. Furthermore, Trudeau's departure could alter the geostrategic balance in North America, diminishing Canada's diplomatic influence in trilateral negotiations with the U.S. and Mexico, as well as its position in global affairs. The study concluded that Trudeau's resignation would create a leadership gap that could challenge Canada's policy continuity and international relationships. The study recommended among others that Canada should diversify its trade relationships to lessen dependence on the U.S., focusing on building stronger connections with emerging economies in Asia, the EU, and Africa.

Kata Kunci

*Justin Trudeau;
 Reformasi Imigrasi;
 Hubungan Perdagangan
 AS-Kanada;
 Politik Geostrategis;
 Teori Realis;*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dampak potensial dari rencana pengunduran diri Justin Trudeau terhadap reformasi imigrasi, hubungan perdagangan AS-Kanada, dan dinamika geostrategis di Amerika Utara di bawah kepresidenan Donald Trump. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan penelitian historis, penelitian ini mengkaji perkembangan politik dan perubahan kebijakan selama masa jabatan Trudeau, dengan mempertimbangkan implikasinya di masa depan setelah kepergiannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan Teori Realis Hubungan Internasional, dengan fokus pada peran kepentingan nasional dan kekuasaan dalam membentuk hubungan antar negara. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pengunduran diri Trudeau dapat menyebabkan perubahan signifikan dalam kebijakan imigrasi Kanada, yang berpotensi menghasilkan langkah-langkah yang lebih ketat yang selaras dengan ideologi konservatif. Dalam hal perdagangan, hubungan AS-Kanada, yang sudah diperumit oleh sikap proteksionis Trump dan negosiasi ulang USMCA, mungkin menghadapi ketidakstabilan yang lebih besar, yang berdampak pada stabilitas ekonomi kawasan. Selain itu, kepergian Trudeau dapat mengubah keseimbangan geostrategis di Amerika Utara, mengurangi pengaruh diplomatik Kanada dalam

	<p>negosiasi trilateral dengan AS dan Meksiko, serta posisinya dalam urusan global. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pengunduran diri Trudeau akan menciptakan kesenjangan kepemimpinan yang dapat menantang kelangsungan kebijakan dan hubungan internasional Kanada. Studi ini merekomendasikan antara lain bahwa Kanada harus mendiversifikasi hubungan perdagangannya untuk mengurangi ketergantungan pada AS, dengan fokus membangun hubungan yang lebih kuat dengan negara-negara berkembang di Asia, Uni Eropa, dan Afrika.</p>
<p>Article History Send 20th January 2025 Review 4th Pebruari 2025 Accepted 14th March 2025</p>	<p>Copyright ©2026 Jurnal Aristo (Social, Politic, Humaniora) This is an open access article under the CC-BY-NC-SA license. Akses artikel terbuka dengan model CC-BY-NC-SA sebagai lisensinya.</p>



Introduction

The recent announcement of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's resignation has introduced considerable uncertainty into Canada's political landscape, especially regarding immigration reforms, trade relations with the U.S., and North America's broader geostrategic dynamics. Trudeau's tenure was marked by progressive immigration policies that contributed to population growth, which, alongside housing shortages, led to rising living costs and increased public dissatisfaction. His departure raises important questions about the future direction of Canada's immigration policies and their socio-economic consequences. In terms of international trade, Trudeau's leadership steered Canada through complex relations with the U.S., especially during Donald Trump's presidency, which saw protectionist policies and tariff impositions. The renegotiation of NAFTA into the USMCA under Trump introduced new dynamics to U.S.-Canada trade ties. With Trudeau's resignation coinciding with Trump's return to the Oval Office, concerns over potential trade tensions and economic instability are heightened. Moreover, Trudeau's exit could shift the geostrategic balance in North America. His leadership played a crucial role in sustaining diplomatic relations and addressing regional security concerns. Without his leadership, coupled with Trump's assertive foreign policy, there could be shifts in alliances and strategic priorities within the region. This political transition calls for a thorough analysis of the potential impact on immigration, trade, and geopolitical dynamics in North America. Such an examination is essential for policymakers, stakeholders, and scholars to navigate the changing environment and develop strategies that protect national interests and promote regional stability. Studies have examined the possible effects of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's resignation and President Donald Trump's return to office on immigration policies, U.S.-Canada trade relations, and North American geopolitics. According to Atlantic Council (2025) and Financial Times (2025), the insights include:

1. Policy Adjustments: Prior to stepping down, Trudeau's administration announced plans to scale back immigration levels in response to public concerns about rapid population growth and its strain on housing and public services.
2. Effects on International Students: Stricter rules were introduced for study permits and work authorizations, including higher financial requirements and the suspension of the Student Direct Stream program, leading to uncertainty among prospective international students.
3. Tariff Implementation: Trump signed an executive order imposing a 25% tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico, citing issues related to illegal immigration and drug

trafficking. These tariffs are projected to slow U.S. economic growth, result in job losses, and drive-up consumer prices.

4. **Economic Restructuring:** By increasing the cost of Canadian imports, these tariffs are intended to shield American industries, potentially shifting foreign investment from Canada to the U.S. This policy could alter trade dynamics in North America, positioning Canada more as a supplier of raw materials.
5. **Arctic Security and Defense:** Canada has proposed working with the U.S. to develop a fleet of modern icebreakers to secure Arctic waters. However, rising trade disputes and protectionist policies could undermine this collaboration, posing risks to regional security and resource accessibility.
6. **Foreign Policy Shifts:** The Trump administration has reduced engagement with international organizations and has explored imposing universal tariffs, potentially dismantling global trade frameworks. This shift toward unilateralism could strain diplomatic alliances and reshape North American geopolitical relations.

This study examined the potential implications of Trudeau's intended resignation on policy areas and international relations, focusing on three key areas:

1. **Immigration Reforms:** To explore how Trudeau's departure might influence Canada's immigration policies, central to his administration, and whether these policies might shift toward more restrictive approaches under new leadership.
2. **U.S.-Canada Trade Relations:** To analyze the impact of Trudeau's resignation on the already complex trade relationship between Canada and the U.S., especially in the context of Trump's return to the Oval Office and his protectionist trade policies.
3. **Geostrategic Politics in North America:** To assess how Trudeau's resignation could affect North America's geopolitical landscape, Canada's diplomatic leverage, trilateral relations with the U.S. and Mexico, and Canada's role in broader global affairs.

By examining these factors, the study provides insights into the potential challenges arising from concurrent leadership transitions in Canada and the U.S. It also aims to offer recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders to navigate this shifting political landscape, ensuring stability, collaboration, and the protection of national interests in North America.

Method

This study employed a historical research design, which facilitated the analysis of the historical context surrounding the resignations of Canadian Prime Ministers and their effects

on both domestic and international policies. It also involved reviewing the US-Canada trade relations, focusing on major trade agreements and disputes, as well as examining immigration reforms in Canada and the United States during periods of leadership transitions. This design captures the researchers' curiosity and fosters a deep comprehension of the subject matter. It allows them to gather contextual insights into the findings. This study employed secondary data collection methods, drawing information from peer-reviewed journal articles, public records, textbooks, magazines, and other relevant sources.

Result and Discussion

During his time in office, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau introduced progressive immigration policies aimed at addressing labor shortages and reinforcing Canada's multicultural identity. In 2022, his government eased restrictions on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to support businesses struggling with post-pandemic labor gaps. As a result, the number of temporary foreign worker permits surged by 88%, increasing from 98,025 in 2019 to 183,820 in 2023. The government also set ambitious immigration targets, planning to welcome 500,000 new permanent residents annually by 2025. However, by 2024, economic difficulties, housing shortages, and rising living costs prompted a downward revision of these targets, lowering them to 395,000 in 2025, 380,000 in 2026, and 365,000 in 2027. Additionally, visa requirements were reinstated for certain countries, including Mexico, to better manage immigration levels. With Trudeau's resignation coinciding with Donald Trump's return to the U.S. presidency, the future of Canada's immigration policies remains uncertain. The direction taken by his successor will play a crucial role in shaping these policies, with potential implications for U.S.-Canada trade relations and the broader geopolitical landscape in North America (The Irish Sun, 2025).

However, by 2024, economic challenges, housing shortages, and rising living costs led to a reduction in immigration targets and the reintroduction of visa requirements for some countries. With Trudeau's resignation, uncertainty surrounds the future direction of Canada's immigration policies, as these could shift depending on the stance of his successor. In the area of U.S.-Canada trade relations, Trudeau's leadership managed complex trade ties with the U.S., especially during Trump's first term, which was marked by protectionism and the renegotiation of NAFTA into the USMCA. Trump's imposition of tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum strained relations, leading to retaliatory measures from Canada. With Trump's return to the Oval Office and Trudeau's departure, concerns grow over potential trade tensions and economic instability in the region (The New Yorker, 2025).

Trudeau's resignation, coupled with Trump's assertive foreign policy, could result in shifts in alliances and strategic priorities within North America. Trump's suggestion of a potential U.S.-Canada merger, though largely dismissed, highlights the uncertainties facing North American geopolitics. This combination of political transitions necessitates a thorough analysis to understand the potential consequences for immigration policies, trade relations, and geostrategic politics in North America. Such an analysis is vital for policymakers, stakeholders, and scholars to navigate the evolving political landscape and formulate strategies that safeguard national interests and promote regional stability (The New Yorker, 2025).

On January 6, 2025, Trudeau announced his intention to resign as both the Liberal Party leader and the Prime Minister of Canada, marking the end of a tenure characterized by political challenges and declining public support. Leading up to his resignation, Trudeau's leadership faced increasing scrutiny, including multiple scandals such as the 2019 brownface incident, allegations of groping, and accusations of Chinese election interference, which eroded public trust and caused a decline in his approval ratings (The Irish Sun, 2025). Economically, Canada grappled with rising living costs and inflation, which disproportionately affected lower-income citizens. Many Canadians felt the "Canadian dream" was increasingly out of reach, leading to dissatisfaction with the government's economic policies (The Times & The Sunday Times, 2025). Several factors contributed to Trudeau's decision to resign:

1. **Internal Party Pressure:** In October 2024, 24 Liberal MPs signed a letter calling for his resignation, citing concerns over his leadership and the future of the party, highlighting fractures within the party.
2. **Declining Public Support:** By December 2024, public support for the Liberal Party had dropped to 16%, trailing behind both the NDP and the Conservative Party in opinion polls, signaling a loss of confidence among voters.
3. **Resignation of Key Allies:** Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland resigned in December 2024, criticizing Trudeau's economic policies and further weakening his position (The New Yorker, 2025).

Trudeau's resignation sparked mixed reactions from political figures, citizens, and international observers:

- i. **Political Parties:** Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre called for an immediate federal election, accusing the Liberal Party of trying to "sweep their hated leader under the rug"

to avoid electoral defeat. NDP leader Jagmeet Singh criticized the broader Liberal leadership, not just Trudeau.

- ii. **Citizens:** Public opinion was divided; some expressed relief, seeing the resignation as an opportunity for change, while others were concerned about government stability and political polarization.
- iii. **International Observers:** U.S. President-elect Donald Trump commented that the U.S. would benefit from merging with Canada to reduce trade deficits and enhance security, which was met with criticism from Canadian officials who saw it as inappropriate interference in domestic affairs.

Trudeau's resignation has set the stage for a leadership contest within the Liberal Party, with prominent figures like former central banker Mark Carney and ex-Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland emerging as potential successors. The outcome of this contest will significantly influence Canada's political direction in the coming years.

Implications for Immigration Reforms

Justin Trudeau's time as Prime Minister of Canada was marked by key changes in immigration policy, including the intake of refugees, programs for skilled labor, and the promotion of multiculturalism. His resignation on January 6, 2025, has raised concerns about the future of these policies, particularly with a re-elected Donald Trump administration in the U.S. Trudeau's contributions to Canadian immigration policies include:

1. **Refugee Intake:** Trudeau's government focused on humanitarian immigration, notably resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees by February 2016, which highlighted Canada's commitment to human rights and global solidarity.
2. **Skilled Labor:** The government introduced the Express Entry system, a points-based approach aimed at attracting skilled workers to fill labor shortages and support economic growth. The system prioritized education, work experience, and language proficiency.
3. **Multiculturalism:** Trudeau's policies strengthened Canada's multicultural identity, fostering diversity and inclusion. However, this approach faced criticism due to rising housing costs and public concerns about the ability to integrate newcomers (Reuters, 2025).

Impact of His Resignation on Immigration Reforms

Trudeau's resignation brings uncertainty to Canada's immigration policy framework. The leadership race within the Liberal Party, with potential candidates like Mark Carney and

Chrystia Freeland, will play a role in shaping the future direction of immigration policies. Key changes could include alterations to refugee intake numbers, adjustments to the Express Entry system, and reevaluations of multiculturalism initiatives. A new Prime Minister may prioritize:

- i. **Economic Integration:** Aligning immigration more closely with labor market needs, potentially adjusting the Express Entry system to better match skills with industry demands.
- ii. **Public Sentiment:** Addressing concerns about housing and integration, with policies that focus on making housing more affordable and accessible for newcomers.
- iii. **Security and Compliance:** Strengthening immigration policies to ensure they meet national security and public safety concerns (Reuters, 2025).

Trudeau's resignation creates significant uncertainty around Canada's immigration policies, and future leadership decisions, along with changes in U.S. political dynamics, will be crucial in determining the direction of immigration reform in Canada.

United States-Canada Trade Relations: A Post-Trudeau Landscape

Under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Canada and the United States had a complex trade relationship that involved both cooperation and tension. Trudeau's resignation on January 6, 2025, has created uncertainty about the future of this relationship, particularly with President-elect Donald Trump's re-election and his proposed trade policies. Key aspects of trade relations during Trudeau's tenure include:

1. **USMCA/NAFTA Renegotiation:** Trudeau's government played a crucial role in renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which led to the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). This agreement aimed to modernize trade relations by addressing issues such as digital trade, labor rights, and environmental standards. The process, however, was contentious, with significant concessions made by both parties.
2. **Key Economic Sectors Affected:**
 - a. **Automotive Industry:** The North American automotive sector, which generated over \$110 billion in bilateral trade in 2023, was at risk of disruption due to its reliance on cross-border vehicle components during production.
 - b. **Energy Sector:** Canada was a major supplier of oil to the U.S., providing 20% of its consumed oil, especially to Midwest and Rocky Mountain refineries. Proposed tariffs threatened this critical trade.
 - c. **Agriculture and Dairy:** Trade disputes over dairy

and agricultural products led to retaliatory tariffs, negatively impacting farmers and producers on both sides of the border (The Irish Sun, 2025).

Trump's Trade Policies and Their Impact on Future Economic Engagements with Canada President-elect Trump's re-election brings new trade policies that could have significant consequences for U.S.-Canada relations:

1. **Proposed 25% Tariffs:** Trump has pledged to impose a 25% tariff on Canadian imports unless Canada addresses issues such as illegal immigration and drug trafficking, especially fentanyl. This threat raises concerns about trade wars and economic repercussions for both nations.
2. **Renegotiation of USMCA:** Trump has indicated a desire to reopen the USMCA to secure more favorable terms for the U.S., which could create further tensions and require additional concessions from Canada (The Irish Sun, 2025).

Potential Trade Tensions or Opportunities Post-Trudeau

The leadership change in Canada, alongside Trump's trade policies, presents both challenges and opportunities:

- i. **Trade Tensions:** The proposed tariffs and the potential renegotiation of trade agreements could strain the economy, especially in the automotive and energy sectors. Analysts predict that a 25% tariff could push Canada into recession, with a projected 2.5% decline in GDP by early 2026.
- ii. **Opportunities for Diversification:** Canada may look to reduce its reliance on the U.S. by diversifying its trade partnerships. Strengthening economic ties with other countries and regions, as well as exploring new trade agreements beyond North America, could mitigate the effects of U.S. policies (The Times & The Sunday Times, 2025).

The post-Trudeau landscape creates a complex environment for U.S.-Canada trade relations. While challenges such as tariffs and renegotiations are likely, Canada also has opportunities to adapt and expand its global economic relationships.

- iii. **Geostrategic Politics in North America:** Under Prime Minister Trudeau, Canada's foreign policy focused on multilateralism, human rights, and climate change, strengthening its global position and fostering positive relations with its neighbors, including the U.S. Trudeau's commitment to international agreements like the Paris Agreement demonstrated Canada's dedication to global cooperation.

In contrast, President-elect Trump's foreign policy is more unilateral and protectionist, driven by his "America First" approach. This prioritizes U.S. interests, often at

the expense of traditional alliances and international agreements. Trump's recent remarks, such as territorial claims over Greenland and the Panama Canal, and suggestions of Canadian statehood, have raised concerns about the future of U.S. foreign policy (Financial Times, 2025). With Trump back in power, there could be shifts in North American security, defense, and foreign policy. Canada may face increasing pressure to align with U.S. policies, particularly in areas like defense spending and trade. However, Canada's commitment to multilateralism and its national interests could prompt a more cautious approach, balancing cooperation with the U.S. while maintaining an independent foreign policy stance (Wilson Center, 2025).

Under new leadership, Canada is expected to continue playing a middle power role, advocating for multilateral solutions and human rights. However, the evolving geopolitical environment, influenced by U.S. policies, may require Canada to adjust its strategy. Canada will need to carefully navigate complex relationships with both the U.S. and other global powers to ensure its foreign policy decisions align with national interests and international obligations (Atlantic Council, 2025).

Conclusion

Justin Trudeau's resignation as Prime Minister of Canada on January 6, 2025, marks the conclusion of a period characterized by political challenges, internal party discord, and diminishing public approval. His leadership, initially lauded for progressive policies on multiculturalism, climate change, and gender equality, became increasingly overshadowed by scandals and policy difficulties. His departure occurs at a crucial moment, as Canada confronts significant domestic and international challenges, including the shift in U.S. leadership with Donald Trump's re-election. This transition provides an opportunity to reassess Canada's political trajectory and the potential impacts of Trudeau's exit on key issues like immigration, U.S. trade relations, and North American geopolitical dynamics. Under Trudeau, Canada's immigration policies saw transformative changes, with an emphasis on accepting refugees, expanding skilled labor programs, and fostering a multicultural identity. These efforts helped establish Canada as a global leader in immigration policy, particularly in contrast to more restrictive policies in other countries, including the U.S. under Trump's prior administration. Notably, Trudeau's leadership led to a high intake of refugees, particularly from conflict zones like Syria, reinforcing Canada's commitment to international humanitarian efforts.

However, Trudeau's resignation could disrupt the momentum of these reforms, leaving his successor to inherit a complex immigration landscape. The Liberal Party's internal divisions, with calls for his resignation from 24 MPs, suggest a potential shift in policy direction. The new leadership will likely face pressures to reevaluate refugee and immigrant intake policies, particularly in response to growing concerns about housing, jobs, and national security. The need to balance Canada's international reputation with domestic political realities may lead to delays or changes in immigration reforms. As new leadership takes the helm, balancing humanitarian values with public concerns will be crucial. Given the political instability in Canada and the rise of right-wing populism globally, immigration policy is expected to become an increasingly contentious issue. Furthermore, Trump's restrictive immigration policies could influence Canada to align its own policies more closely with U.S. priorities, complicating the situation further.

The trade relationship between Canada and the U.S. has been historically complex, with moments of both cooperation and significant tension. Trudeau's efforts in renegotiating NAFTA, which led to the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), were seen as a landmark achievement in Canadian diplomacy. Despite challenges like Trump's trade tariffs, particularly on aluminum and steel, and disputes over agricultural products, the USMCA was viewed as a success in protecting Canada's economic interests and securing access to the U.S. market.

However, with Trudeau's resignation and Trump's re-election, uncertainty now surrounds the future of trade relations. Trump's aggressive trade policies, including tariffs and potential renegotiations of the USMCA, are likely to exacerbate tensions. A change in Canadian leadership could either strengthen the country's resolve in negotiations or lead to compromises to maintain favorable relations with its largest trading partner. The future of trade relations will largely depend on how Canada's new leadership navigates these challenges, balancing economic stability with the protection of domestic industries. Should trade tensions escalate, Canada may seek to diversify its economic relations, strengthening ties with other trading partners such as the European Union and markets in Asia. While this could reduce Canada's reliance on the U.S. market, it also carries risks, including potential geopolitical backlash from the U.S. and disruptions in trade as Canada explores new economic partnerships.

Trudeau's foreign policy, which emphasized multilateralism, human rights, and climate change, positioned Canada as an advocate for global cooperation. His administration served as a counterbalance to Trump's isolationist and protectionist tendencies. Trudeau's

support for international agreements like the Paris Climate Accord and his efforts to strengthen Canada's alliances, including NATO and the United Nations, were central to his approach. Trump's return to power, however, could dramatically shift North American geopolitics. His preference for unilateral policies, prioritizing U.S. interests over international norms, raises concerns about Canada's position in the global system. Trump has previously suggested ideas such as merging the U.S. and Canada, which would severely impact Canada's sovereignty and security. As Canada transitions to new leadership, the country will face a more complex geopolitical environment. Canada's commitment to multilateralism may be tested as it seeks to balance relations with the U.S. while maintaining its independence. Additionally, Canada may face pressure to increase defense spending or make concessions in trade and immigration to align more closely with U.S. policies. This evolving geopolitical landscape could lead to new security and defense strategies, particularly as both countries adjust to Trump's more aggressive foreign policy. This study recommended that:

1. Canada should seek to diversify its trade partnerships to reduce dependence on the U.S., strengthening relationships with emerging economies in Asia, the EU, and Africa. Participating in multilateral agreements such as the CPTPP can offer stability and safeguard against potential disruptions in U.S.-Canada trade.
2. The new Canadian leadership must balance humanitarian immigration reforms with public concerns, expanding skilled labor programs while addressing issues like housing, social services, and national security. An open and transparent immigration debate will help maintain both domestic and international support.
3. With Trump's return to power, Canada must reinforce its alliances with global powers, particularly NATO, to counteract U.S. isolationism. Strengthening military readiness and enhancing security cooperation within North America will ensure that Canada can effectively respond to shifts in U.S. policy.

Future studies should analyze immigration policies under Trudeau and his successor to evaluate potential changes in Canada's stance on refugee admissions, skilled worker programs, and border security. Examine how Trump's second term influences U.S.-Canada immigration relations, particularly regarding modifications to border control agreements and asylum policies. Investigate public opinion on immigration reforms in Canada after Trudeau's departure and their effects on economic development and labor market needs.

Acknowledgments

I sincerely appreciate *ARISTO*, published by the Social and Political Science Faculty, Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo, for the opportunity to publish my research. I am grateful for the editorial team's dedication in reviewing and managing the publication process. Their commitment to academic excellence has greatly contributed to the advancement of knowledge in this field.

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