

Jadar: A New Neocolonial Project—How Globonationalism and Ethnoelitism Manipulate Populations

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the complex dynamics of class and resource exploitation in Serbia, a nation situated on the economic periphery of the European Union (EU) and lacking NATO membership, which faces coercive pressures from hegemonic powers to exploit its lithium resources. The investigation focuses on the Jadar project as a case study representing modern neocolonialism, where international demands for lithium extraction intersect with significant risks to environmental integrity and the socio-economic well-being of local populations. The study argues that political manipulation and economic dependency mirror colonial governance, as powerful states leverage sanctions and trade agreements to enforce compliance, fostering a cycle of dependency that undermines Serbia's autonomy. Furthermore, the dominant narratives surrounding lithium as a sustainable resource obscure the ongoing economic exploitation, exacerbating socio-economic disenfranchisement among marginalized communities. As Serbia grapples with the dual pressures of global capitalism and its national identity, the implications of its resource policies challenge traditional notions of sovereignty and ethical engagement. By contextualizing resource extraction within the frameworks of globonationalism and ethnoelitism, this analysis reveals how economic gains touted by proponents are often misaligned with the environmental and social costs disproportionately borne by local communities. This paper advocates for a more equitable framework for resource management that amplifies local voices and contests prevailing cultural hegemonies, serving as a call to action for stakeholders to forge pathways toward sustainable development that respect and preserve cultural integrity and local rights amid globalization's exigencies.

Keywords

Lithium Extraction, Neocolonialism, Economic Exploitation, Sovereignty,

1. Introduction

The Jadar project is a significant case in the context of contemporary neocolonial dynamics, highlighting the complex interplay between global capitalism, local governance, and environmental sustainability (Nikolić Đaković, 2024; Slavković, 2024). Situated in Serbia, this initiative seeks to exploit lithium resources amid pressing demands for sustainable energy solutions. However, the socio-economic implications of such resource extraction reveal a troubling pattern of exploitation that disproportionately affects marginalized communities.

Beginning with the exploration of Serbia's strategic positioning within the European Union's economic framework, the Jadar project emerges against a backdrop of historical imbalances and geopolitical interests. As the demand for lithium grows—essential for batteries in electric vehicles and renewable energy technologies—Serbia finds itself at a crossroads, facing both opportunities and challenges. This project is not merely about resource extraction; it embodies broader themes of economic exploitation and environmental justice.

This paper aims to critically analyze the Jadar project through the lenses of globalism and ethnoelitism, exploring how powerful states manipulate political and economic structures to enforce compliance and foster dependency. By examining the local resistance to foreign multinational interests, this study elucidates the contradictions inherent in the narrative surrounding lithium as a sustainable resource.

The ongoing political discourse surrounding the project serves not only as a reflection of Serbia's national identity but also as a broader commentary on the ethical implications of resource management in a globalized world. In undertaking this examination, the paper will consider the implications of Serbia's engagement with international powers and corporations, particularly considering recent shifts in public sentiment and political accountability. Ultimately, it seeks to advocate for a more equitable framework for resource management that amplifies local voices and challenges dominant narratives, ensuring that the transition to a sustainable future does not compromise the rights and well-being of local communities.

2. Neocolonialism and Resource Exploitation: The Jadar Project's Impact on Serbia

This section delves into the complexities of the Jadar project, illustrating how it exemplifies contemporary neocolonial dynamics in Serbia. By examining the political, economic, and environmental implications of lithium extraction, I will explore the intersection of local governance and global capitalist interests. The ongoing debates and resistance surrounding the project reveal critical insights into

how powerful nations and corporations shape resource exploitation narratives, often at the expense of marginalized communities. Through this analysis, I aim to uncover the socio-political intricacies that define Serbia's struggle for autonomy amid external pressures.

2.1. Neocolonial Ambitions: The Jadar Project as a Modern Land Grab

The anticipated visit of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to Belgrade stands as a significant political event, arguably comparable only to Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit in January 2019 (Slavković, 2024: p. 8). Central to this meeting is the contentious "Jadar" project, which aims to establish a strategic partnership between Serbia and the European Union regarding sustainable raw materials, battery supply chains, and electric vehicles (p. 8). For Serbian authorities, the advancement of the "Jadar" project, spearheaded by Rio Tinto, represents a crucial opportunity to bolster the national economy. However, this initiative has ignited fierce opposition among various stakeholders, who view it as a detrimental threat to ecological integrity, democratic values, and the rule of law. The ruling coalition, led by the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), appears reluctant to champion the project publicly, likely due to consistent polling indicating a lack of public support (p. 10). Despite having purportedly suspended the project prior to the 2022 elections, discussions surrounding it have resurged, underscoring the complexities of political maneuvering in light of public sentiment. Notably, Biljana Đorđević, co-chair of the Green-Left Front, emphasized how the government has attempted to deflect responsibility for the project's initiation onto previous administrations while navigating legal frameworks established by prior agreements (Slavković, 2024). This situation has been further complicated by a recent Constitutional Court ruling, which deemed earlier regulations regarding the Jadar Valley's spatial planning unconstitutional, thereby entangling current leaders in a web of legal obligations tied to private investments. The collaboration suggested by Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, who proposed that the project become a joint endeavour of past and present authorities, reflects the intricate dynamics of governance and public accountability in Serbia's ongoing development discourse.

The ongoing political tug-of-war surrounding the "Jadar" project epitomizes the complexities of public consent and perception management within Serbia's socio-political landscape (Nikolović Đaković, 2024: p. 11). The ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) accuses the opposition of facilitating Rio Tinto's entry into the country, creating a narrative that attempts to shift blame while simultaneously reinforcing their legitimacy (Slavković, 2024: p. 10). This strategic confusion serves to demobilize dissenting voices by fostering a dual narrative (Moyo, 2009). For some constituents, the message suggests a continuity of governance favouring foreign multinational interests, prompting critical questions about national priorities—specifically, why the government allocates resources to projects like the Expo rather than investing in local, sustainable initiatives. Conversely, another segment of the population may perceive a distinction between the current

administration and its predecessors, with the SNS framing itself as a reluctant executor of necessary actions influenced by external pressures (Ferguson, 2006; Swyngedouw, 2004). This “catch-all” political approach, facilitated by the party’s control over media narratives, aims to manipulate public sentiment to cultivate a veneer of consensus around the controversial project. The interplay of these conflicting narratives underscores the intricate dynamics of consent production, where the public’s understanding is shaped as much by political rhetoric as by the realities of economic development and environmental stewardship. As the debate continues, the efficacy of these narratives in fostering public support or resistance will undoubtedly play a crucial role in determining the future of the “Jadar” initiative and its implications for Serbian society.

Marinka Tepić’s call for new parliamentary elections concerning public support for lithium extraction reflects a complex interplay of political strategy and public sentiment in Serbia (Nikolić Đaković, 2024: p. 11). Her position, emerging from a party that previously boycotted elections due to perceived electoral unfairness, raises critical questions about the motives behind such a demand. The timing and context of any potential elections are pivotal; historically, the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) has demonstrated a pattern of calling elections that align with its strategic interests, often ensuring that the political landscape remains favorable to its incumbency. This has led to skepticism regarding the legitimacy of any proposed elections, particularly if they are framed around a singular issue like lithium extraction. The suggestion of a referendum, rather than parliamentary elections, further complicates the discourse. While a referendum could ostensibly gauge public sentiment more directly, it also poses risks of manipulation and may not adequately capture the broader implications of such a controversial project, especially given the historical context of electoral abuses in Serbia.

Moreover, Tepić’s demand for elections reflects an acknowledgment of past miscalculations by the opposition, particularly their decision to abstain from the electoral process in June (Slavković, 2024: p. 9). If new elections were to occur without significant improvements in electoral conditions, it would likely undermine the credibility of the opposition’s calls for democratic participation. This inconsistency raises important questions about the opposition’s strategic coherence and their capacity to effectively mobilize public support against the SNS. As the government continues to back the Jadar project with considerable resources, the likelihood of the opposition successfully leveraging public discontent into a political advantage remains uncertain. Ultimately, the dynamics surrounding potential new elections or referenda highlight the intricate relationship between political maneuvering, public opinion, and the contentious issue of lithium extraction in Serbia, illustrating the challenges faced by opposition parties in a highly polarized political environment.

2.2. The Illusion of Sustainability: Unpacking the Lithium Narrative

The discourse surrounding the lithium extraction project and the involvement of

multinational corporations like Rio Tinto underscores a profound crisis of trust within Serbian society, particularly regarding the government's ability to regulate and oversee such powerful entities. President Vučić's conditional stance on the project, contingent upon obtaining environmental guarantees, reflects a broader strategy to align domestic initiatives with European Union standards. However, this alignment is perceived as insufficient by the public, primarily because Serbia is not an EU member, which raises questions about the applicability and enforcement of these purported guarantees (p. 10). The skepticism is further exacerbated by a historical context in which the government has demonstrated a troubling inability to effectively monitor large-scale industrial operations, leading to fears of potential environmental degradation.

Moreover, the expectation that European institutions can instill confidence where local authorities have failed is indicative of a larger trend of shifting responsibility from domestic governance to external entities. This transition not only highlights the inadequacies of national oversight but also points to a larger power dynamic where citizens are left vulnerable to the whims of multinational corporations, which may prioritize profit over ecological integrity. The acknowledgment from German officials regarding the necessity of rigorous state monitoring of these projects reveals an awareness of the systemic shortcomings in regulatory frameworks. This situation is further complicated by the political elite's potential vested interests in facilitating arrangements that favour corporate stakeholders at the expense of public welfare. The prospect of selective accountability, where opposition voices might be disproportionately targeted while corporate malfeasance goes unchecked, raises critical ethical concerns about governance and justice in Serbia. As such, the intersection of environmental policy, corporate governance, and political accountability remains a contentious and complex issue that demands careful scrutiny and public engagement.

Further, the "Jadar" project exemplifies the intricate balance between environmental sustainability and economic imperatives that characterize contemporary geopolitical dynamics. As Europe seeks to bolster its critical mineral supply chains in the face of increasing competition from China, the urgency to develop domestic resources like lithium becomes paramount. This scenario challenges the romanticized vision of a united Europe prioritizing environmental concerns over industrial growth. Instead, it reveals a pragmatic shift wherein economic interests often supersede ecological considerations, raising ethical questions about the sacrifices made in the name of progress. The Serbian government's engagement with multinational corporations under the auspices of European regulations illustrates a broader trend of states negotiating their sovereignty in favour of foreign investment, often at the expense of local ecological integrity and public trust. Consequently, the project serves as a litmus test for the EU's commitment to genuine environmental stewardship and its ability to harmonize economic growth with sustainable practices. As citizens grapple with the implications of such initiatives, the need for transparent governance and robust regulatory frameworks becomes increasingly critical to ensure that the benefits of natural resource extraction do

not come at an irreparable cost to the environment and local communities.

This perspective highlights the inherent contradictions in the narrative surrounding renewable energy and the transition to electric vehicles, particularly in the “Jadar” project context. While lithium extraction is often framed as a crucial step toward achieving a sustainable future, it is essential to recognize that this endeavour is merely a fragment of the larger climate change puzzle. The notion that lithium can serve as a panacea for decarbonization oversimplifies the complexities involved in transitioning to a low-carbon economy. The reality is that the demand for lithium will continue to escalate, particularly as global reliance on electric vehicles increases. Yet, its extraction’s environmental and social ramifications are often sidelined in favour of economic imperatives.

Furthermore, the dichotomy between regions that can afford the luxury of clean air and water and those that cannot exacerbate existing inequalities and fosters a sense of environmental injustice. This scenario reflects a broader trend wherein affluent nations and communities may prioritize environmental standards while imposing the burdens of resource extraction on less advantaged areas, perpetuating a cycle of exploitation. As such, it becomes imperative for policymakers and stakeholders to adopt a more holistic approach to environmental governance—one that not only addresses the immediate needs of energy transition but also considers the long-term implications for all communities involved (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). Without a commitment to equitable and inclusive environmental policies, the transition to renewable energy sources risks reinforcing existing disparities rather than fostering a sustainable future for all. The challenge lies in reconciling the urgency of the transition with the necessity of ensuring that all communities benefit equitably from such initiatives. Policymakers must navigate the complex landscape of global demand for lithium while also addressing the local realities faced by communities in regions like Jadar, where extraction activities may threaten local ecosystems and the health and well-being of residents. This reconciliation requires a multi-faceted strategy that includes comprehensive environmental impact assessments, community engagement, and transparent decision-making processes prioritizing the voices of those directly affected by mining operations.

The assertion made by President Vučić regarding Serbia’s commitment to supplying lithium to Germany rather than China encapsulates the intricate interplay of geopolitical interests and national strategy in the context of the “Jadar” project. This declaration not only signals Serbia’s alignment with European economic ambitions but also reflects a broader attempt to leverage its resources in a manner that asserts its agency on the international stage (Harvey, 2003). The notion that Serbia can dictate terms in its dealings with major powers like Germany suggests a calculated maneuver to enhance its negotiating position, particularly in light of the anticipated shifts in the German political landscape following the upcoming elections in 2025.

However, such posturing raises critical questions about the sustainability of this

strategy, especially when weighed against the backdrop of varying expectations from different geopolitical actors. The potential for Serbian lithium to be viewed as a commodity in a competitive global market underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of the implications inherent in resource extraction agreements. The presence of the Serbian diaspora in Germany may indeed serve as a catalyst for reevaluating bilateral relations, yet it is essential for Serbian policymakers to recognize that the interests at play are not solely defined by national pride or economic gain. Instead, the discourse surrounding the “Jadar” project must also engage with the environmental, social, and ethical dimensions of resource extraction, ensuring that Serbia’s geopolitical maneuvers do not come at the expense of its ecological sustainability or the welfare of its citizens. Ultimately, the challenge lies in navigating these complex dynamics while firmly advocating for national interests informed by a commitment to sustainable development and social equity.

2.3. Public Trust under Siege: Governance, Corruption, and the Jadar Fallout

The “Jadar” project, particularly in the wake of the Kosovo situation, has indeed emerged as a significant instrument for the ruling political party, the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), to consolidate its power and maintain its grip on governance. The framing of the project as a potential economic boon for Serbia, in partnership with multinational corporations like Rio Tinto, is strategically positioned to create a narrative of progress and development amid ongoing political turbulence. This narrative is critical, especially in light of mounting public dissatisfaction stemming from issues of governance, corruption, and social inequality.

The juxtaposition of the “Jadar” project with the earlier political discourse surrounding Kosovo illustrates a pattern whereby the government seeks to leverage resource extraction and economic promises as a means of diverting attention from more pressing domestic concerns. The expectation that the project could facilitate the establishment of the Community of Serbian Municipalities in Kosovo further complicates this dynamic, as it intertwines economic aspirations with nationalistic rhetoric. This duality raises important questions about accountability and transparency in governance, particularly regarding who truly benefits from such projects and at what cost to local communities and the environment.

Citizens are rightfully concerned about the implications of such initiatives, especially when they perceive a disconnect between governmental promises and tangible outcomes. A recent public opinion poll conducted by NSPM revealed that 55.5% of respondents oppose Rio Tinto’s plan to open a lithium mine in the Jadar Valley, reflecting widespread skepticism about the project’s potential benefits (HCIIM, 2024). Furthermore, when asked if they would support the mine if guarantees were provided by Germany and the EU regarding environmental standards, 52.1% of respondents indicated they would not support it, underscoring deep-seated concerns regarding environmental protections related to the project.

It is essential for the electorate to critically assess the power dynamics at play, recognizing that while the ruling party may present the “Jadar” project as a pathway to prosperity, it also represents a potential consolidation of power that could further entrench existing inequalities. Thus, the “Jadar” project serves not only as an economic venture but also as a litmus test for the SNS’s ability to navigate the complexities of public sentiment, governance, and sustainable development in a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape.

The impending session of the Serbian Parliament, ostensibly centered around the Svesrpski Sabor and the associated Declaration, raises significant questions about the prioritization of national interests and the role of resource governance in contemporary political discourse. While the agenda may suggest a focus on cultural and national identity, it is critical to recognize the underlying implications of resource management, particularly in relation to lithium extraction. The recent postponement of the parliamentary session, allegedly due to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s visit to Belgrade on July 19, 2024, further underscores the complexities of political timing and the influence of international relations on domestic policy discussions.

The connection between the Svesrpski Sabor and legislative actions, such as the controversial amendment to the Law on Geological Research that undermines local community consent, illustrates how nationalism can be weaponized to obscure more pressing economic issues, including the exploitation of natural resources (Slavković, 2024: p. 11). This raises pertinent questions about the authenticity of the proclaimed nationalistic sentiment—if the government truly valued resource nationalism, one might expect a more protective stance towards local communities and their rights in the face of resource extraction initiatives. Instead, the focus appears to pivot towards consolidating power within informal structures that circumvent established democratic processes, thereby eroding accountability.

Moreover, the anticipated discussions on lithium extraction, alongside concerns regarding future indebtedness, highlight a critical tension between the narrative of Serbia as an “economic tiger” and the lived realities of its citizens. As the government seeks to craft a narrative of prosperity and growth, it simultaneously risks exacerbating existing inequalities and fostering a sense of disenfranchisement among those who are directly impacted by resource extraction. Therefore, the forthcoming parliamentary session must address the symbolic aspects of national identity and critically engage with the socio-economic ramifications of resource governance, ensuring that the voices of local communities are not marginalized in the pursuit of nationalistic rhetoric. Ultimately, the challenge lies in reconciling national aspirations with the imperative of sustainable and equitable resource management, fostering a political climate that prioritizes all citizens’ well-being.

The ongoing discourse surrounding the lithium extraction project at Jadar highlights the intricate dynamics of neocolonialism and cultural hegemony that persist in contemporary global interactions. The Serbian populace, particularly

marginalized communities directly affected by such projects, often finds itself at the mercy of a political elite that prioritizes economic interests over the rights and needs of its citizens. The framing of Serbs in Western academic literature as “oriental” or “other” serves to reinforce a hierarchy that privileges the predominantly white citizens of the European Union, perpetuating racial and ethnic discrimination in the name of economic progress. This situation exemplifies the global nationalism of a new global elite, who position themselves as arbiters of development while disregarding the voices and experiences of those they deem subordinate.

The protests against the Jadar project reveal the complexities of this struggle. Various political actors utilize the discontent of local communities to further their agendas, often reducing the discourse to an anti-European sentiment. This approach not only simplifies the multifaceted issues at play but also risks alienating those genuinely affected by the project. Instead of fostering a collaborative dialogue that addresses the legitimate concerns of local populations, it perpetuates a narrative that reinforces existing power imbalances.

Moreover, the insistence on including local communities in decision-making processes is not merely a bureaucratic requirement but a moral imperative. Ignoring the local populace’s input not only undermines their autonomy but also perpetuates a form of neocolonialism, where external interests exploit resources while neglecting the cultural and social ramifications of such actions. The demand for a more equitable approach to resource management must emphasize the importance of recognizing and valuing the contributions of all citizens, challenging the dominant cultural narratives that often marginalize voices from the Global South (Slavković, 2024: p. 11).

In this context, the Serbian government must navigate a delicate balance between international pressures and domestic realities, ensuring that its resource policies do not perpetuate the inequalities they seek to alleviate. The dialogue surrounding the Jadar project must evolve to address the economic implications and the broader social justice issues intertwined with race, class, and identity, thereby fostering a more inclusive and equitable framework for development that resists the allure of cultural hegemony and neocolonial exploitation.

2.4. Reclaiming Agency: Local Voices against Corporate Exploitation

The current landscape of opposition politics in Serbia, particularly following the contentious elections of 2022, underscores the necessity for strategically reevaluating coalition dynamics and collaborative efforts among opposition parties. The fracturing of the “Srbija protiv nasilja” coalition serves as a poignant reminder that unity must be prioritized over individual political gain if the opposition is to reclaim its footing (p. 11). A fragmented opposition not only diminishes its electoral strength but also undermines its ability to advocate for the needs and rights of the populace effectively. This circumstance presents an opportunity for the opposition to engage in introspection regarding its coordination modalities,

emphasizing the importance of fostering a collective identity that transcends individual ambitions.

In this context, it is crucial for opposition members to cultivate a sense of shared purpose, encouraging constituents to invest their time and energy into a unified struggle for democratic values and social justice. Addressing the inevitable demoralization from political setbacks requires resilience and a commitment to grassroots mobilization. The opposition must recognize that successful collaboration can manifest in various forms, challenging the prevailing notion that a singular electoral list is the only viable pathway to challenge the current regime. Historical precedents from other political contexts illustrate that diverse coalitions can yield significant political change; thus, advocating for a pluralistic approach to opposition strategy is essential. By embracing innovative modes of cooperation and prioritizing the collective over the individual, the opposition can reinvigorate its base and present a formidable challenge to the ruling powers in Serbia.

The recent remarks by Ana Brnabić (p. 11), which equate criticism of President Vučić with threats of violence, underscore a disturbing trend in Serbia's political discourse, where dissent is increasingly criminalized and marginalized. This tactic not only serves to stifle legitimate critique but also engenders a climate of fear that fosters auto censorship among citizens and political opponents alike. By framing dissent as a manifestation of extremism, the ruling ethnoelite seeks to delegitimize any opposition, systematically silencing voices that challenge the status quo. This evolution of the government's narrative—from initially excluding extremists from political discourse to now embracing them—reflects a strategic shift aimed at consolidating power and furthering an authoritarian agenda.

These developments resonate with patterns observed in other authoritarian regimes, where the state employs demonization and repression to justify the marginalization of dissenters. By portraying opposition figures as threats to national stability, the government rationalizes its repressive measures while positioning itself as a victim of both external and internal adversaries. This dynamic reveals the ruling ethnoelite's deeper aspirations to secure a place within the global elite amid the processes of globalization. In this context, the regime appears to be gradually adopting globonationalism—a new identity framework that emphasizes class power over traditional notions of nationalism or ethnonationalism. This shift reflects an effort to align itself with global capitalist interests, as the ruling elite seeks to establish legitimacy and recognition on the international stage, often at the expense of democratic principles and the voices of its citizenry. The implications of this transition warrant critical examination, as it signifies a redefinition of identity that prioritizes class stratification over collective national or ethnic identities, reshaping the political landscape in Serbia and challenging the foundations of its democratic discourse.

3. Conclusion

The examination of lithium extraction in Serbia, particularly through the lens of

the Jadar project, elucidates a critical nexus of globonationalism, ethnoelitism, and neocolonialism that warrants urgent scholarly scrutiny. The prevailing narrative that positions lithium as a sustainable resource obscures the underlying mechanisms of economic exploitation that perpetuate socio-economic disenfranchisement among local communities. As Serbia contends with the dual pressures of global capitalism and its own national identity, the ramifications of its policy choices resonate beyond its borders, challenging established paradigms of sovereignty and ethical engagement within the global arena.

The potential for economic gain, often championed by proponents of resource extraction, must be critically assessed against the socio-environmental costs disproportionately borne by marginalized groups. The exploitation of these communities—whose voices are frequently marginalized in discussions of sustainability—highlights a troubling continuity of historical power dynamics, wherein the benefits of resource control are inequitably distributed, thereby reinforcing existing class dynamics and social inequities. This situation raises profound questions regarding the legitimacy of development strategies that prioritize profit over the rights and identities of local populations and exacerbate the environmental degradation linked with such initiatives.

As Serbia finds itself at a pivotal crossroads, the imperative to assert its autonomy in the face of global pressures becomes increasingly salient. The looming specter of potential external intervention evokes historical precedents of geopolitical conflicts framed as efforts toward stabilization and democracy. Such scenarios compel a rigorous examination of the moral implications inherent in political decisions made within an interconnected global framework, where the stakes of environmental justice are intertwined with struggles for self-determination and the preservation of cultural integrity.

This analysis serves as a clarion call for scholars, policymakers, and activists to develop a more equitable and just framework for resource extraction—one that acknowledges and addresses the intersection of environmental sustainability with social justice. By amplifying the voices of those most affected and contesting the cultural hegemony that seeks to silence dissent, stakeholders can work toward a more inclusive and responsible approach to global resource management. The transition to a greener future must not come at the expense of marginalized communities or the integrity of their racial and ethnic identities.

In this emerging framework of globonationalism, characterized by a stark bifurcation between rich and poor nations, a new form of ethnoelitism is emerging, seeking membership in the global elite at any cost—including the sale and exploitation of the remaining resources that once defined national identity. Furthermore, this new ethnoelite must earn the trust of the hegemonic elite, as racial and ethnic differences persist even among these dominant groups. Ultimately, class dynamics emerge as the foremost determinant, followed by race and ethnicity; thus, the identities that have historically shaped societal structures remain ever-present, underscoring the complexity of navigating this new socio-

political landscape.

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Conflicts of Interest

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