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The rapid urbanization of Mount Bjelašnica: From Olympic Games to neoliberal investments

In the early 2000s, Mount Bjelašnica, one of the four Olympic mountains around the city of Sarajevo, experienced rapid urbanization. In an attempt to create a modern mountain resort, but without a general design vision and with substantial criticism from residents, new hotels and other accommodation were built. This article offers insight into the development of the mountain resort at Babin Do on Mount Bjelašnica, comparing it with the development of similar mountain resorts in France. Case studies are the mountain villages of Flaine and Les Arcs, both created in the 1960s by prominent architects as a part of the government program Plan Neige; however, they have largely been changed and extended since then. The findings show certain similarities in the urban plan-

ning and architecture at Babin Do with the case studies examined in France, even over a period of sixty years. Although certain buildings in Babin Do create a positive mountain resort ambience, the absence of a regulatory plan that has caused overcrowding with accommodation, and the lack of common public space along with poor all-year activities show that this mountain resort cannot be considered a successful development. Further damage to nature should be minimized, and development should have been more considered and sustainable.

Keywords: mountain resorts, urbanization, Olympic Games, Sarajevo, Plan Neige, France

1 Introduction

The scope of urban planning extends beyond the development of cities. Rural areas (including mountain landscapes) that are being urbanized should follow guidelines similar to those applied in city planning. According to Ultramari et al. (2023) “the intellectual beauty of planning is that it implies active transformation and suggests the exact implementation of what was originally intended.” The problem with the development of the mountain plateau Babin Do on Mount Bjelašnica is the lack of a defined concept supported through an urban plan guiding how this area should be further developed. The transformation of Babin Do into a “modern” ski resort started in the early 2000s and has intensified in the last five years. Despite strong public concern and indignation about the deforestation of the mountain during the past twenty years, the municipal authorities of Trnovo, who are responsible for Babin Do, did not offer any plan or proposal for its sustainable urbanization and tourism development. Now, more than ever, it is important to think about sustainable development on several dimensions. Thinking about the urban future, Poljak Istenić and Gulin Zrnić (2022) mention three levels of urban sustainability: economic, environmental, and social. These categories are equally important for the development of rural areas, including mountains. In particular, the environmental segment should be taken into consideration because any construction activity in mountain areas like Babin Do is an intrusion into the natural environment and should be done carefully. According to Goodland (1995), for some people the environment represents a major obstacle to human progress. Therefore, its destruction is less important than the profit gained through construction. This is particularly visible in neoliberal investments focusing on the financial gain of a few individuals, which is also present in the development of the ski resort at Babin Do.

This article discusses neoliberal investments on Mount Bjelašnica and presents the problems of unplanned urban development of Babin Do. The research investigates the traditional architecture and tourism development on Mount Bjelašnica, and it then focuses on the legacy of the Winter Olympics. To understand the development of ski resorts, the authors refer to Delorm’s classification of ski resorts, focusing on two examples from France that were developed as part of Plan Neige in the 1960s. These two case studies (Les Arcs and Flaine) are analysed and compared with Babin Do, examining various aspects of their spatial and architectural characteristics. Finally, the development of Babin Do in the last twenty years is presented and discussed in detail.

2 Research approach, materials, and methods

This article is based on a staged investigation of the topic through its manifestation in space and comparative analyses of certain spatial and urban features on Mount Bjelašnica and the mountains in the scope of Plan Neige in France. The genesis of French ski resorts, in particular Flaine and Les Arc, is taken as a starting point for the comparison. A discussion of the village typologies (and their architecture) on Mount Bjelašnica helps in understanding certain aspects of the origin, development, form, and spatial utilization of Babin Do.

Through analysis and valorization, the text examines the transformation of the social and spatial structure of these mountain resorts in detail, presenting this in separate tables. The methods of analysis include descriptive statistics, trend analysis, and spatial analysis, and the valorization method discusses neoliberal influences, social values, and cultural values as a reflection of changes in space. These methods make it possible to identify patterns and factors that influence processes in urban settlement structures, including transitional processes, state policies, spatial policies, economic factors, and social changes. The valorization method makes it possible to assess the various effects of these changes on urban space and society as a whole, and to identify values that were lost or created through urban changes. Ultimately, the analysis helps create a comprehensive picture of all the processes involved in urbanizing a mountain resort, the associated changes, and their effects as a basis for future development.

3 Mount Bjelašnica: background

Mount Bjelašnica stands in the central part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, about 25 km southwest of the capital city of Sarajevo. Mount Bjelašnica is part of the Dinaric Alps. It is neighboured by Mount Igman to the north, which practically abuts Mount Bjelašnica, and Mount Treskavica and Mount Visočica (both to the south). The mountain is covered with snow from November to May, and sometimes also in the summer. This is the origin of its name because the word *bijela* means ‘white’. The beauty of the mountain is enhanced by the harshness of its climate, which is the result of the geographical position of Mount Bjelašnica in the Dinaric mountains, its geological composition, and its elevation. The highest part of the Dinaric mountains are influenced by two contrasting climates: Mediterranean and continental.

Historically, Mount Bjelašnica had around ten villages and a population of 2,500, mainly making a living from agriculture and animal husbandry. Among these villages is Lukomir (Fig-



Figure 1: Lukomir, a traditional village on Mount Bjelašnica (photo: Alma Hudović Kljuno).

ure 1), on the southern slope of the mountain at an elevation of 1,495 m. This is the highest-elevation village in Bosnia and Herzegovina (and the only one above 1,300 m; Bobetić, 2012). The village is known for its unique and well-preserved traditional architecture, which reflects its context, and it is well positioned on the mountain plateau. In her research on the architecture of stone houses in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in the Dinaric karst and Upper Herzegovina mountain region, Astrida Bugarski states that stone houses gradually replaced wooden houses at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, when this influence spread from the Adriatic hinterland toward the mountain regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bugarski, 1997). In the villages of northern Herzegovina, which are partially also located on the southern slopes of Mount Bjelašnica, “the stone house was fully adapted to the natural environment and the way of life and business of the local population” (Bugarski, 1991). Hence, the compact design of typical houses in Lukomir is based on local traditions and materials used to create a simple and utilitarian layout while providing necessary functionality. The main body of the house is made of stone to blend with the natural surroundings, and it also provides a sturdy and durable structure. The roof is traditionally covered in wooden shakes in a characteristic design with a very sharp pitch to allow snow to slide off. The house typically has small windows. This helps retain heat during the winter and protects against strong winds. The houses follow the topography of the terrain, blend-

ing in harmoniously with their natural surroundings. These characteristics highlight the unique architectural style of the traditional houses in Lukomir. The houses reflect the cultural heritage of the local community, serve as a testament to the history of the area, and are valued for their preservation of the traditional mountain architecture of Bosnia. However, it is important to note that individual houses may vary in their design and features because they have been adapted and modified over time.

Although there were significant spatial and developmental changes on Mount Bjelašnica in the second half of twentieth century during the communist period, the Austro-Hungarians were the first to recognize the potential that the mountain offers. In their study of alternative forms of tourism on Mount Bjelašnica, Opačić and Banda (2018) state that Mount “Bjelašnica is a representative example of a mountain tourism destination that has passed through several stages of tourism development.” Table 1 chronologically presents the development of tourism activities and necessary spatial and architectural infrastructure. In 1893, the Austro-Hungarian authorities in Bosnia created a hunting reserve on parts of Mount Bjelašnica and Mount Igman. Due to the harsh and variable weather conditions, in the following year the first meteorological observatory was built at the very top of Mount Bjelašnica (2,067 m), and the peak is locally known as *Opservatorij* ‘Observatory’ (Babić, 2022). This was the first modern masonry

Table 1: Development of tourism on Mount Bjelašnica (source: Opačić & Banda, 2018).

Period	Characteristics
1878–1918 (Austria-Hungary)	– Construction of hiking facilities
	– Publication of mountain guides
	– Start of recreational tourism
1918–1945 (interwar period)	– Many field trips
	– First alpine feats
	– Bjelašnica Days skiing competitions
1945–1978 (World War II to selection for Winter Olympics)	– Development of winter recreation
	– First skis introduced to the villages in 1957
	– Ski courses start in 1957/1958
	– Development of winter and summer recreation
1978–1992 (1984 Winter Olympics to breakup of Yugoslavia)	– Large number of tourists in lodges
	– Large-scale winter ski tourism
	– Extended season with lower summer prices
1996–2000 (postwar reconstruction)	– International ski competitions
	– Reconstruction of facilities
	– Winter tourism still prevailing
Since 2000 (modern period)	– Winter tourism and recreation
	– Efforts to develop summer tourism
	– Problems with unplanned construction
	– Lack of a tourism development strategy

structure built on the mountain. Prior to this, only hiking routes were mapped and marked.

In 1923, the Slavija sports club built a mountain lodge on the north side of Mount Bjelašnica near the spring below Gradina at an elevation of 1,345 m. The facility had fifteen beds and was primarily intended for skiers and mountaineers (Babić, 2022). This building was the first facility to accommodate tourists on Mount Bjelašnica, and it heralded further architectural development on the mountain. Over the next few decades, similar structures were built. Some of them are still standing and are used for their original purpose, but with certain extensions or changes to the material.

Although the Second World War (1941–1945) saw the destruction of all facilities on Mount Bjelašnica used by mountaineers, nature lovers, and hunters, including the weather observatory on the very top, the subsequent communist period recognized Mount Bjelašnica as a popular winter sports destination. The mountain gained prominence primarily for its ski slopes, and with this the spatial and architectural development of the mountain started. The main event that trig-

gered the rapid urbanization of the mountain was the Winter Olympics. The 1984 Winter Olympics were held from 8 to 19 February in Sarajevo, then part of Yugoslavia. These were the first Winter Olympics held in a communist country and the second Olympic Games in a communist country after the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow (Vuic, 2015).

Sarajevo was selected as the host of the 1984 Winter Olympics in May 1978. This triggered an architectural and urban renaissance for the city as part of preparations for this very important event. Groundwork cleared room for the construction of a variety of facilities and amenities as part of the necessary Olympic infrastructure. This included hotels and sports facilities as well as other necessary structures. Mount Bjelašnica hosted men's Alpine skiing competitions, for which two hotels were built, the Hotel Smuk and the Hotel Famos (Figure 2). Apart from the two hotels, Mount Bjelašnica had an observatory building on its very peak and several smaller mountain lodges for hikers and skiers. The city grew rapidly, and infrastructure on the surrounding mountains expanded. The development of infrastructure and the hosting of the Winter Olympics significantly influenced the growth of tourism and architecture.



Figure 2: The Hotel Famos, Slobodan Jovandić and Duška Jovandić, 1982/1983 (source: Nalo, 2015).

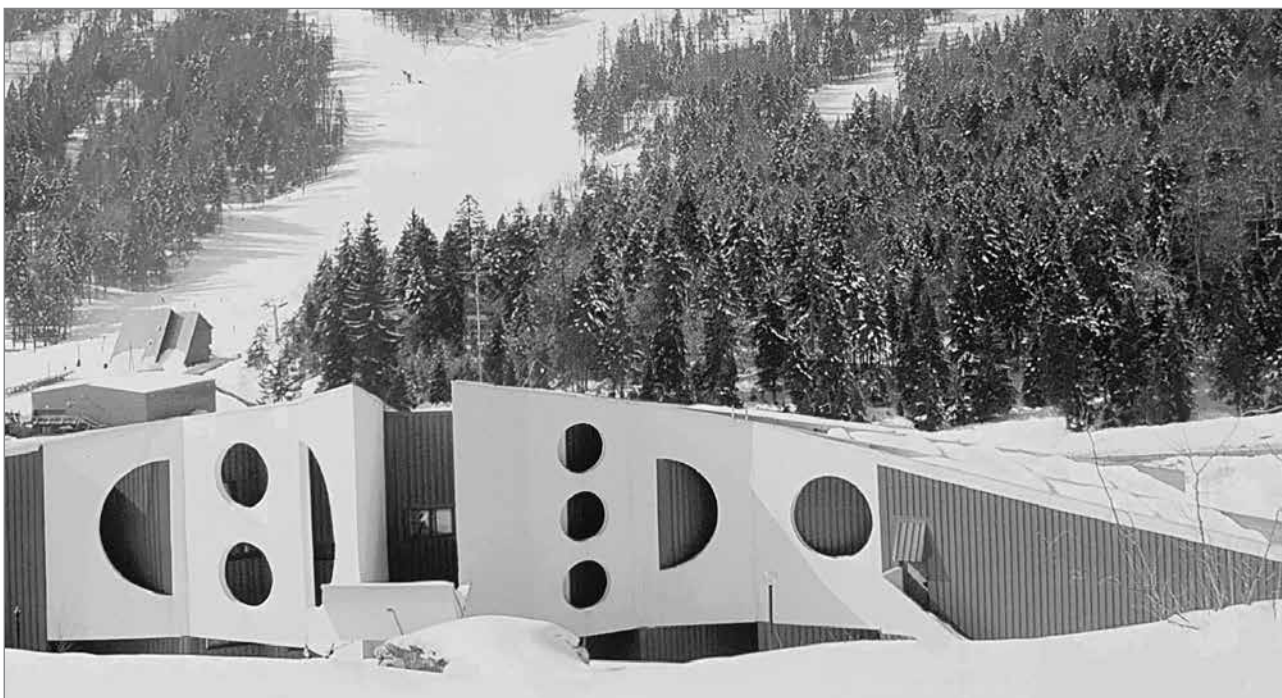


Figure 3: Press Center (source: ANUBiH, 2002).

In addition to the two hotels, the mountain gained a press centre (a large brutalist building clad in composite panels in a distinct blue colour), a restaurant at Babin Do, and a restaurant at the very top of the mountain (Figure 3). Although the Winter Olympics helped place Mount Bjelašnica on the winter sports map, the major development of the mountain, which is still ongoing, started in the post-communist period under the influence of neoliberal capital and private investors.

This article focuses on the failure to reestablish the positive impacts that the Winter Olympics had on the mountain's spatial organization and its use as a launchpad for Mount Bjelašnica's future socioeconomic and urban development. Other issues include Sarajevo's unclear status as the capital of a nation that is relatively new to the neoliberal capitalist stage, which has resulted in various misuses in the mountain's spatial planning, and the lack of a legal framework (Hadžialić, 2002).



Figure 4: France's La Plagne ski resort (source: Koumanov B., 2011).

4 Genesis, spatial development, and new narrative(s)

The development and creation of ski resorts date back to the early twentieth century, when skiing as a sport was in its infancy and the concept of mass tourism did not even exist. Delorme (2014) has defined the stages of development of ski resorts based on their evolution and characteristics. Although there is no universally agreed-upon categorization, the following classification is commonly used:

First-generation ski resorts (pre-World War II) emerged in the early twentieth century, when skiing gained popularity as a recreational activity. They were often located in mountainous regions with suitable snow conditions and began attracting visitors seeking winter sports. Examples include St. Moritz in Switzerland and Chamonix in France.

Second-generation ski resorts (post-World War II) saw the ski industry experience significant growth and modernization. Second generation resorts were characterized by improved ski infrastructure, including ski lifts, groomed slopes, and expanded accommodation options. Examples include St. Anton in Austria and Cortina d'Ampezzo in Italy.

Third-generation ski resorts (1960s–1970s) witnessed a surge in popularity and development. They often featured purpose-built ski villages with a strong focus on ski-in / ski-out access, extensive lift systems, and a wide range of amenities and après-ski activities. Examples include Val d'Isère in France and Aspen in the United States.

Fourth-generation ski resorts (1980s–1990s) highlighted the concept of destination skiing. They placed greater emphasis on non-skiing activities, such as shopping, dining, and entertainment. These resorts often incorporated extensive snowmaking systems to ensure consistent snow coverage. Examples include Whistler Blackcomb in Canada and Vail in the United States.

Fifth-generation ski resorts (2000s–present) focus on sustainability, environmental consciousness, and improved guest experiences. They strive to offer a diverse range of activities beyond skiing, such as snowshoeing, snowboarding parks, spa facilities, and cultural events. These resorts often prioritize environmentally friendly practices and promote year-round tourism. Examples include Park City Mountain Resort in the United States and Zermatt in Switzerland.

Babin Do, according to the classification provided above, is a trans-generational development that belongs to the third and fourth (and possibly fifth) generation of ski resorts with its

beginnings in the late 1960s but not truly developed until the 2000s. As mentioned at the beginning of the text, this article compares Babin Do and other similar facilities in Europe. In the 1960s, France's government developed new ski centres as part of Plan Neige, a program to promote the development of winter sports infrastructure in mountainous regions of France. The program was implemented to support the growth of ski resorts, improve accessibility, and boost tourism in these areas. The French government provided financial incentives, subsidies, and infrastructure investments to facilitate the construction of ski resorts and related facilities. The program sought to enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of French ski resorts at the domestic and international levels. Places such as Flaine, Tignes, Les Arcs, and Val Thorens were part of the development and, in addition to developing new ski slopes and expanding old ones, the focus was on accommodation and other tourism facilities. This included hotels, lodges, chalets, and other accommodation options close to the slopes. This was followed by other supporting infrastructure such as restaurants, commercial spaces, and entertainment venues.

The architecture that was introduced to the slopes was often monumental and out of this world, with very strong futuristic elements of sharp angles and quasi-industrial characteristics that visually contradict the context. As Skinner (2021) suggests, "the Sixties generation of high-altitude, ski-in and ski-out towns were unashamedly modern and mass-market." Prominent urbanists, architects, and designers of the time were involved in creating these towns, following urban and architectural doctrines (most of them were students of or collaborators with Le Corbusier) and not making connections or taking references from the surrounding vernacular architecture in terms of forms, materials, construction methods, and so on. The spirit of modernism still influences contemporary architectural forms, and the buildings constructed in the early 2000s still follow the fundamentals of monumentality, creating a strong visual presence and dominating the valley(s).

Regardless of the terrain configuration or other natural features of the context, developments such as Isola 2000, La Grange (next to Val d'Isère), or La Plagne (Figure 4) create a different and relatively unique urban layout, featuring one common characteristic: all of them have gigantic multistorey residential buildings with no connection to the existing context, creating a rough transition between the surroundings and the mass of the building volume. These huge apartment buildings, which are mostly occupied during the ski season, could equally be positioned elsewhere in Europe or even in dense Chinese residential areas. Referring to this, Snégarov (2015) writes about criticism of these large accommodation facilities, coming from the common folk: "increasingly virulent criticism from those who see in these ski factories the replica of the suburbs of the big cities."

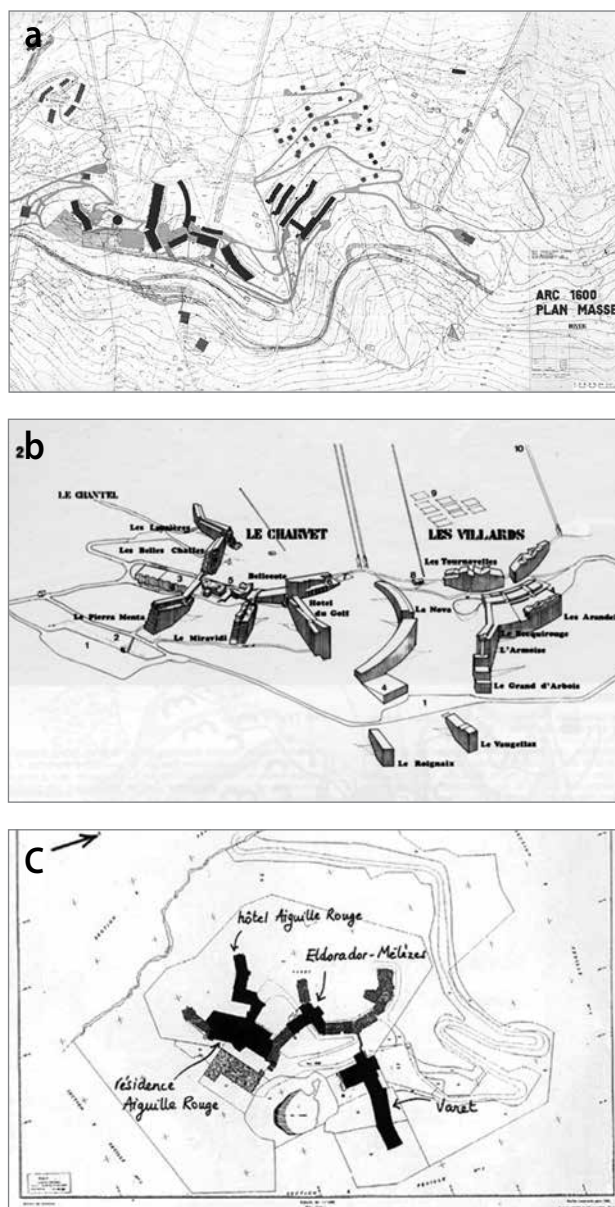


Figure 5: Urban plans of Les Arcs: a) Arc 1600, b) Arc 1800, c) Arc 2000 (source: Hidden Architecture, 2005).

4.1 Case studies: Flaine and Les Arcs

Akin to the examples mentioned above, but containing substantial architectural and historical value and character, are the mountain resorts of Flaine and Les Arcs, both constructed in the 1960s as part of Plan Neige. Flaine was designed by the Bauhaus architect Marcel Breuer. The resort is designed in the true brutalist style, respecting the main principles of Bauhaus, placing focus on creating functional buildings that fulfil their purpose efficiently and effectively, in which the design elements are meant to serve a practical purpose rather than being merely ornamental. The resort famously also includes sculptures by

Table 2a: Content and architecture of Les Arcs, 1967.

Content	
Facilities	More than ten hotels, many buildings with rental options, bars and restaurants, groceries, ski rentals/services, ski lifts, tennis courts
Function	All seasons: spa, biking, and hiking
	Winter: skiing and snowboarding
Spatial planning	Summer: tennis, golf, archery, and various activities for children and adults
	Three elevation locations with 200 m between each: Arc 1600 (at 1,600 m), Arch 1800, and Arch 2000. Based on the idea of complete comfort, the concept of the station intégrée ‘resort town’ (Stacher, 2020) was to be perfected, starting with direct access from accommodation to the slopes and a wide range of public facilities.
Architecture	
Style	Brutalist in approach, the atypical design features a strong connection with alpine architecture with an abundance of wooden cladding. Emphasis is placed on a cascading form (Figure 8).
Materials	Visible materials are mostly timber and stone cladding in combination with concrete.
Height	The structures vary between three stories for chalets and commercial structures to accommodation facilities twelve to thirteen stories high.
Ambience	Even though the resort has three separate areas at different elevations, the building forms, their volumes, mostly natural cladding, and sloped roofs contribute to creating the ambience of a mountain resort. In this arrangement of buildings naturally following the terrain morphology, it is also not clear if there is a central part of the resort that can be used for various seasonal activities.

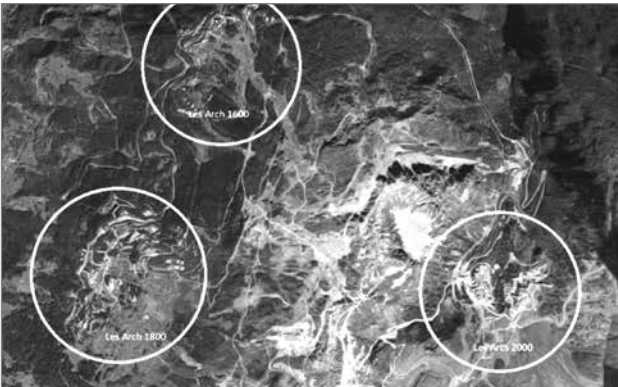


Figure 6: Gradual development: Arc 1600 (1967–1975), Arc 1800 (1974–1989), and Arc 2000 (1978–1989; source: Google Maps, 2023a).



Figure 7: Following the configuration of the terrain: Flaine (1960–1976; source: Google Maps, 2023b).



Figure 8: Les Arcs, 1967 (source: Hidden Architecture, 2005).

Table 2b: Content and architecture of Flaine, 1968.

Content	
Facilities	Seven hotels, many buildings with rental options, bars and restaurants, supermarkets and groceries, ski rental/service shops, ski lifts, tennis courts, golf club, and a chapel
Function	All seasons: spa, biking, hiking, and bowling
	Winter: skiing, snowboarding, adapted skiing for disabled people
	Summer: tennis, golf, climbing, paragliding, potholing, canyoning, fishing, hot air balloon rides, and various activities for children and adults
Spatial planning	"Built on three edges in front of a long limestone cliff wall that shapes the structure and morphology of the terrain, blending in with the colour of the rocks 'so the terrain does not need to be protected because the buildings almost optically disappear due to the mimesis principle,' Breuer argued. He set an architectural counterpoint to the dominant geometry of the vertical limestone rocks through horizontal concrete bars, whose diamond-shaped facets brought variety and life to the long fronts of the concrete facades. 'The entire composition is integrated into the magnificent and wild landscape of Flaine, which it partners and humanises'" (Stacher, 2020).
Architecture	
Style	Marcel Breuer's buildings are in the Brutalist style (Figure 9). The others follow contemporary design expression with no or very little connection to traditional mountain structures.
Materials	The buildings are made of reinforced concrete with exposed concrete visible. Other buildings are mostly clad with stone and timber.
Height	Building heights are between three and eleven stories. The chapel and the commercial building are one story high.
Ambience	Due to the typology of the buildings, their height, form, and mostly flat roofs, and the materials visible on facades, this place looks more like a suburb than a mountain resort. Flaine does offer a lot of activities even in the summer; however, the place is mostly seasonally occupied. The layout of the resort does not seem to follow any patterns of mountain villages. There is no recognizable central part or square for main activities. It consists of three separately functioning areas with groups of multifunctional buildings, parking lots, and greenery.



Figure 9: Flaine, 1968 (source: Chadwick, 2016).

Table 2c: Content and architecture of Babin Do, 1982–present.

Content	
Facilities	Four operational hotels, several restaurants and bars, one grocery shop, ski rental, ski cottages, ski lifts, hiking trails, tennis courts, numerous buildings (mostly rental units and seasonally occupied)
Function	All seasons: spa, biking, and hiking
	Winter: skiing and snowboarding
	Summer: tennis and paragliding
Spatial planning	There is no clear spatial plan on how to develop Babin Do. The buildings are mostly positioned along the main road in a north–south direction with extensions towards the southwest and east. Most buildings along the main road have a view of the ski slope, but no direct access to it. The buildings in the southwest part of the valley partly have ski-in / ski-out possibilities.
Architecture	
Style	Various design approaches due to the engagement of multiple authors demonstrate the diversity of forms and architectural manifestations as a reflection of the modern neoliberal philosophy (Figure 10).
Materials	Buildings are mostly constructed with reinforced concrete and concrete blocks with insulation. The external appearance varies from regular insulated facades to wooden or stone cladding.
Height	Building heights range from three stories for row houses up to eight stories for some hotels and other buildings.
Ambience	The buildings in Babin Do are mostly linear, set along the main road with a southwest extension along the service road. The architectural language of the existing buildings, their form and heights, as well as the materials partly create the ambience of a mountain village. Some buildings have sloped roofs and use natural cladding materials whereas others could be located anywhere else. The group of buildings on the southwest extension creates a small square as an extension to the natural plateau of Babin Do, which serves as a central space for the main outdoor activities.



Figure 10: Babin Do, 2023 (photo: Alma Hudović Kljuno).

Picasso, Dubuffet, and Vasarely. The urban and architectural design as well as the construction of Les Arcs (Figure 5) was led by Charlotte Perriand, who collaborated with Le Corbusier. Seen with scepticism and often criticized back then, but nowadays observed with nostalgic emotions and granted the high architectural value of brutalist architecture, both examples display a serious and thoughtful approach to the urban and architectural design of mountainous, rural areas (Figures 6 and 7). The two examples from France are compared with Babin Do, analysing various aspects of urban and architectural design (Tables 2a, 2b, and 2c).

5 Mount Bjelašnica in detail: traditional vs contemporary, deficiency in content

Before Sarajevo was awarded the 1984 Winter Olympics, tourism and with it the necessary infrastructure (facilities and amenities) were in their infancy. As Petranović (1990) suggests, in the rapid period of postwar economic development (in the former Yugoslavia), Sarajevo was fairly undeveloped and lagged behind the national average. The tourist potential of the city, with surrounding Mount Trebević, Mount Jahorina, Mount Bjelašnica, and Mount Igman with proximity to the city, was realized and Sarajevo became a good contestant for the Winter Olympics. Increased urbanization of the city before hosting the Winter Olympics consisted of the construction of major sports and cultural facilities in the town as well as in its surroundings. As Zagora and Šamić (2021) state, “Socialist-era architectural production in Sarajevo embodied high social and cultural values, and deserves special consideration. The marriage between modernism and Yugoslav socialism in the form of a Non-Aligned architectural brand successfully celebrated the ideals of ‘brotherhood and unity’ and ‘self-management’, while simultaneously reconciling its internal ethnic diversity in a universal language.” The city was faced with constructing 163 major projects because there was only one ice hall in town, a number of possible trails for the ski facilities on the mountains, and one functioning lift on Mount Jahorina. As Bojanić and Ifko (2019) concluded, “in the world of winter sports, without exaggeration, Sarajevo was a nonentity.” To host the games, in addition to construction of the necessary facilities such as bobsled, luge runs, ski jumps, speed skating, and so on, Sarajevo needed ski resorts but also the supporting infrastructure, such as 160 km of roads, sewer lines, power lines, telephone lines, parking lots, ski lifts, bathrooms, locker rooms, restaurants, a new airport and railway station, two Olympic villages, a press village, nine new hotels, and five refurbished hotels (Vuic, 2015).



Figure 11: Communist-era mountain hospitality: the Hotel Vučko, Zlatko Ugljen, 1983 (source: Niebyl, 2021).



Figure 12: Communist-era mountain hospitality: the Hotel Igman, Ahmed Džuvic, 1983 (source: Džuvic, 2023).

Unlike great examples of contemporary Yugoslav architecture, with an emphasis on traditional and cultural characteristics combined, such as the Hotel Vučko on Mount Jahorina and the Hotel Igman on Mount Igman, Bjelašnica was not as fortunate, and it had the aforementioned Famos (Figure 2) and Smuk hotels built for the Winter Olympics. The design by the architect Zlatko Ugljen displayed in the Hotel Vučko (Figure 11) is a compelling architectural unity of the exterior and the interior celebrated in the use of a detailed wooden envelope of decorative minutiae, and beam and truss connections openly displayed as a part of the interior. Ugljen, in an interview for the journal *Oris* (Roš & Rusan, 2001), said that he was trying to avoid a sterile (hotel) atmosphere and “created an environment which agrees with the locality. I insist on the sensations produced by the primary sculpture and reproduce them from within using the secondary sculpture, such as the roof or ceiling structures, light wells, niches, multilevel structures, the fireplace, and so on.” Equally successful is the example of the Hotel Igman (Figure 12) designed by Ahmed Džuvic, who created a skilful play of opposition of roof and walls, all sloping, and clad in wood. The steep roof slopes and the central axes resemble the traditional building style as well as the division between the ground floor and the upper floors. The design silhouette



Figure 13: The first accommodation built at Babin Do, Izet Arslanagić, 2005 (photo: Alma Hudović Kljuno).



Figure 14: Eclectic architecture at Babin Do (photo: Alma Hudović Kljuno).

is somehow fragmented but manages to link to the contours of the mountain, creating an interesting and cozy atmosphere in the interior as well.

The Hotel Vučko and the Hotel Igman are celebrated for their architectural style and approach, integrating vernacular characteristics with contemporary design influences resulting in a modern hotel design. This design strategy aimed to create a sense of place and a connection to the surrounding environment and cultural heritage. It is unfortunate that the pres-

ent-day construction, in particular on Mount Bjelašnica, is a far cry from past times and often excludes the positive impact of old traditions. Numerous recent buildings are completely detached from the native influences of the surrounding context.

5.1 Urbanization of Babin Do in the twenty-first century

Intensified development of Babin Do has been taking place in the last few years, with what seems like the uncontrolled

erection of lone buildings that mostly suggest their own individuality and sit out of context in every way. The first buildings that were introduced to the mountain were two sets of row houses built at the beginning of the new millennium by the large pharmaceutical company Bosnalijek and designed by Izet Arslanović (Figure 13). The two parallel rows, although inconveniently long, are built to respect the traditional alpine design approach. The position of the rows follows the configuration of the terrain on the entry side, and the houses consist of an entrance with a steep sloping roof that on the other side continues further down, creating and covering additional levels that roll down with the terrain. The applied wooden cladding is an attempt to imitate traditional alpine buildings.

Babin Do, analysed as a (new) settlement, unfortunately has no defined spatial narrative, and the lack of a specific or even systematic style in the new architecture is also a subject to be questioned. Unlike the given examples in the scope of Plan Neige, which applied a strong architectural doctrine, new architectural realization and design at Babin Do are essentially without context and find visual identity and foothold in a variety of inadequate templates with postmodernist influences, very far from the examples of the golden age of local mountain architecture. Far from any avant-garde, fashionable architecture that emerges without context and rationale is becoming the new norm. This norm is multiplied in various locations around the undefined urban footprint of the mountain, almost unconsciously, and is subject to many changes in its vertical and horizontal volume. The architectural expression of Babin Do is very questionable because it is not integrated into the context, and it is almost always advertised by investors as high-quality and innovative with all the modern conveniences of the twenty-first century. This appropriation of architecture, as well as a new *modus operandi*, is most often associated with the general state of lack of culture and education of society, which evaluates this kind of architecture as modern, unconventional, and expensive (Figure 14).

The spatial development of the mountain resort goes in the wrong direction, leading to abortive or unthought-of results. This happens due to the lack of a defined regulatory plan, which in turn provides opportunity and space for manipulation. In 2016, the Trnovo municipal council requested an urban planning project be created for Babin Do (Odluka, 2016), but it has never been implemented (Figure 15). As an outcome of lack of action, the current state of the space is the result of non-planned and/or non-rational urban policies and spatial planning; that is, numerous alterations and adjustments of regulatory plans to satisfy the policies and wishes of individual investments. Arcuset (2009) gives an example of under-equipped tourism, and a turning point of a medium-sized resort in the Alps in the 2000s (similar in size to Babin Do), for which

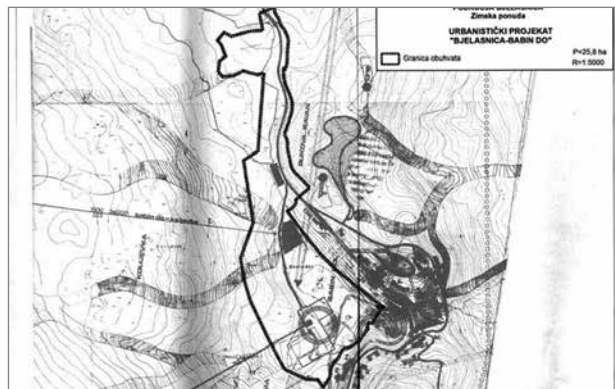


Figure 15: Regulatory plan for Babin Do that has never been implemented (source: Odluka, 2016)

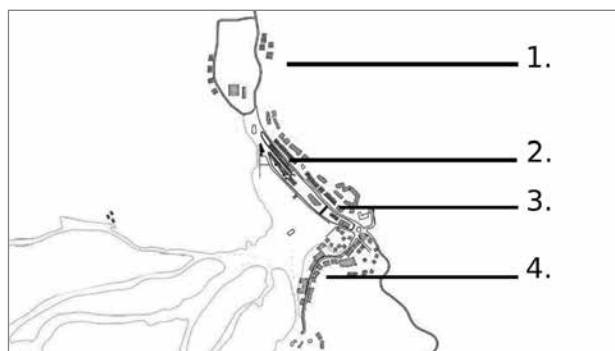


Figure 16: Phased development at Babin Do: 1) currently under construction; 2) 2004–2009; 3) 2009–2018; 4) 2018–2021 (illustration: Leila Krivošić Dizdarević).

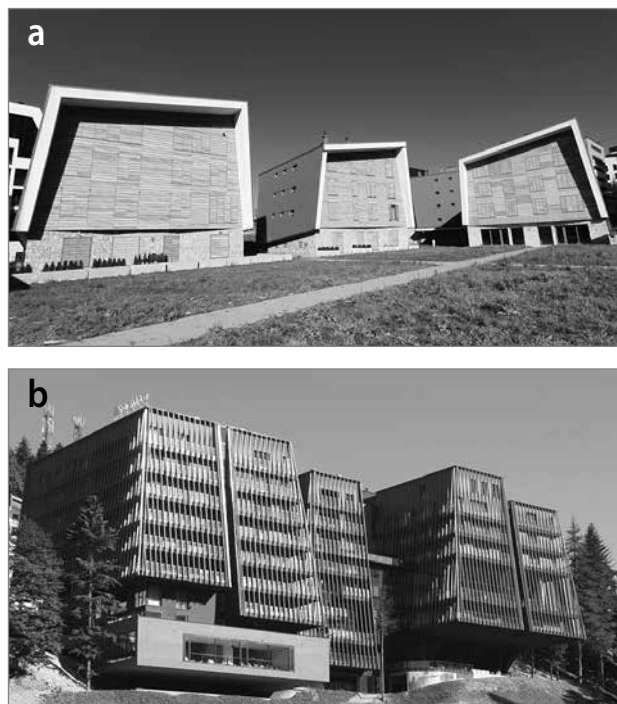


Figure 17: Contemporary vernacular qualities: a) Srebrna Lisica self-catering apartment complex, Studio Non-Stop, 2019; b) the Hotel Nomad, Vedad Kasumagić and Feđa Hadžibegović, 2022 (photos: Alma Hudović Kljuno).

the local authorities chose to adopt “a model of profitability based on the proportionality relationship between the stock of accommodation and ski lift capacity” (Francois & Marcepoil, 2008) and started a vast program to address the issue.

Figure 16 shows the gradual construction of the buildings in Babin Do from the early 2000s up to now. Chaotic development, with very little advance planning, can be confirmed by analysing the linear development of the resort. The developments are all oriented toward the main axis point and have gradually filled both sides of the road, in a north–south direction. The buildings on the very north of the site, which are somehow dislocated from the main part of the resort, are a very recent (from 2021 or later) development still under construction, for which a large part of the land was deforested.

There has not been much growth of additional supporting infrastructure in terms of other content aside from the development of accommodation typologies, the majority of which are privately owned. The mountain features four operational hotels. However, the fifth hotel, built in 1983 and still in its original state, remains closed due to neglect. In addition to this, there are several restaurants and bars, a single grocery store, ski cottages, ski lifts, hiking paths, and tennis courts. The emphasis is on the winter occupancy of the space, and the year-round activities are sparse, with two tennis courts and the possibility of paragliding and hiking (although the latter unfortunately has not been developed enough despite the large potential). Concerts and other large gatherings are infrequent, are based solely on individuals’ will and effort, and are not part of the organized resort content development. As Clarimont and Vlès (2008) emphasize, only a change in decision-making practices will make it possible to promote a specific development effectively through the establishment of appropriate mechanisms.

To conclude, it is important to emphasize that some of the architecture that has sprung up in recent years has sought to and succeeded in preserving the environment and promoting architectural harmony with the place. Efforts have been made to blend modern architecture with traditional design elements and integrate buildings into the natural landscape effectively while creating a fresh and modern look. Buildings that mimic the vernacular qualities of the nearby village dwellings seem to blend in with the setting, providing the best ambience. Such buildings are not grand in volume but are grand in their design using natural, locally sourced materials such as stone and wooden panels as well as morphologically following historical patterns (Figure 17).

6 Discussion

Based on the analysis and comparison between the given examples in France and on Mount Bjelašnica, the main findings of this research show that spatial development at Babin Do has been spontaneous and without a general concept due to the lack of a defined and adopted regulatory plan. The communist-era development and spatial planning with a focus on an egalitarian approach is in complete contrast to the modern trends, which, unfortunately, focus on individual needs and plans heavily influenced by neoliberal capital. It is this approach to the development of the mountain resort that has shaped the resort itself. The lack of content and other facilities, except for the basic ski slopes and a lot of privately owned accommodation, is the result of this. Grand developments in the scope of Plan Neige in France might have resulted in brutalist architectural ensembles, but they have successfully capped the needs and wants of a lucrative resort with a carefully planned and designed spatial layout.

The local authority and tourism office of Sarajevo Canton should play a more active role in adding a variety of content and creating a year-round mountain experience. Going back to Delorme’s classifications of ski resort development, Babin Do (although classified somewhere between level three and level four) should be focusing on the qualities of level-five development. In the spirit of the twenty-first century, this would include sustainable environmental solutions, conscious development of further projects, and upgrading existing features to improve the guest experience and the spatial qualities of the place. Emphasis should be placed on diversity in what is offered, regardless of the season, which will result in different spatial planning of the mountain. As Paquot (2009) suggests, diversity in built typologies will improve the public space, which is partly present at Babin Do in terms of architecture, but not in terms of urban planning. According to Zepf (2004), spatial planning should be addressed at all three territorial levels of development for the organization of urban space: macro-, meso-, and micro-territory. Unfortunately, Babin Do has not fully benefited from any of these, except the macro development that has been left as a communist legacy.

7 Conclusion

The ski resorts, as we know them, are now more than sixty years old, and it is safe to say that they are experiencing problems concerning their spatial (and architectural) development. The 1970s and 1980s developments were focused on public developments and ski-in / ski-out facilities and skiing infrastructure, whereas the more recent developments are focused

on a variety of entertainment and consumer needs, which as a result will need spatial adaptation to meet changing practices. The development of Babin Do on Mount Bjelašnica does not respond to any of the issues regarding spatial (or any other) planning. The adverse spatial situation and the problems that Mount Bjelašnica is facing at the moment were created in developing the ski resort without parameters and guidelines regarding the ski resort's trajectory, which would include necessary and accompanying infrastructure. Without an adopted development plan, all activities taking place at Babin Do can be subject to the misbehaviour and decisions of a few individuals whose primary goal is financial gain. The idea of creating an economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable resort is non-existent for the authorities of the municipality of Trnovo. Currently, the focus is still on the construction of a large number of self-catering apartment buildings without supporting infrastructure and without a long-term vision and concept of how the ski resort at Babin Do should operate and sustain itself in the future.

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