

Review for Urban Plazas design approach

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ABSTRACT

Urban plazas play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of urban environments and promoting social interactions. This review aims to provide an overview of urban plaza design approaches, with a focus on spatial configuration and its impact on human behavior. The review begins by exploring the concept of urban plazas and their significance in the urban fabric. It discusses plazas' multifaceted functions, such as providing gathering spaces, facilitating pedestrian movement, and encouraging community engagement. Plazas are also emphasized for their role in enhancing urban vitality, creating a sense of place, and fostering social cohesion. Furthermore, the review emphasizes the significance of human-centered design approaches for urban plazas. It investigates the impact of user preferences, comfort, and sensory experiences on plaza design. The integration of green spaces, seating arrangements, lighting, and other elements that contribute to a pleasant and inviting environment for users is discussed. Additionally, the review analyzes case studies of successful urban plaza designs from different cities around the world. Finally, the review concludes with a synthesis of key findings for future urban plaza design approaches, as well as a call for additional research and empirical studies to validate and refine existing design approaches and to investigate emerging trends in urban plaza design. Overall, this review contributes to the understanding of design approaches for urban plazas, providing insights and guidance for urban planners, architects, and designers involved in creating vibrant and inclusive public spaces in urban environments.

Keywords: Urban plazas; Type of Urban Plazas; Plaza design approach.

1-Introduction

Urban plazas are a vital component of urban landscapes, functioning as lively gathering places that promote social interactions, unite people, and enhance the general livability of metropolitan areas. The design strategy used in the construction of urban plazas shapes them in many ways, including practicality, aesthetic appeal, and community-building potential (1).

This introduction provides an overview of the design method for urban plazas, as well as a focus on the main goals, concepts, and concerns that guide the work. It provides context for understanding the complexities of urban plaza architecture and its role in the development of well-functioning public spaces(2).

Urban plazas hold immense significance in urban planning and design. They function as gathering places for people from various backgrounds, facilitating social interactions and community engagement. Plazas contribute to a city's vitality and vibrancy by providing spaces

for recreation, cultural events, and public gatherings. They also help to improve pedestrian connectivity and promote walkability in urban areas.

The design approach for urban plazas is a multidimensional process that involves a careful balance of functionality, aesthetics, accessibility, and sustainability. Urban plazas can become thriving public spaces that enhance the social fabric and livability of cities by considering the significance of plazas, identifying objectives, incorporating contextual analysis, and emphasizing user-centered design.

1-1-Research Aim

The research aim for urban plaza design approaches is to contribute to the development of evidence-based design strategies that enhance the quality, functionality, and sustainability of urban plazas, ultimately creating inclusive and thriving public spaces within urban environments.

1-2-Research Methodology

The study employed a qualitative approach, which included a review of the literature, as well as an examination of a real-world example.

2- Literature review

2-1-Definitions of Urban Plazas

It is significant that we call them plazas or piazzas. The English word for location is insufficient. The word "place" is derived from the Latin word "platea," which refers to an open space or widened road, as opposed to the Spanish "plaza" and the Italian "piazza." The term is both too common and too diverse in its definition to define what we want in a central urban core(3).

In 1981, **Kevin Lynch** stated, "The plaza is intended as an activity center, at the heart of any dense urban area." It will be shown that areas bordered by high-density structures and in close proximity to roadways have amenities designed to attract large groups of people and encourage meetings. Planting may or may not be prominent, with the Italian plaza being the most common model. This method has proven to be effective in several North American cities where the population density on the street is high enough(2).

A plaza is a mostly hard-surfaced outdoor public space that is devoid of cars. Its primary function is to provide a place for people to stroll, sit, eat, and watch the world go by. It is not a passageway like a sidewalk. Despite the presence of trees, flowers, or ground cover, the predominant ground surface is hard(4).

One of the most important aspects of city planning is the Urban Plaza. Urban plazas are microcosms of city life, offering entertainment, marketplaces, and public ceremonies, as well as a place to gather, relax, and observe. They have been transformed by popular demand, new ideas, topography, and architectural trends. A square or Platz, piazza or plaza, or place can be applied to any point in the urban fabric, from a traffic intersection to a park(5).

2-2-Types of Urban Plazas

There are many approaches to categorizing plaza types in many ways: their size, use, relationship to the street, style, predominant function, architectural form, proportions, enclosure, and location, as shown in Figure 1

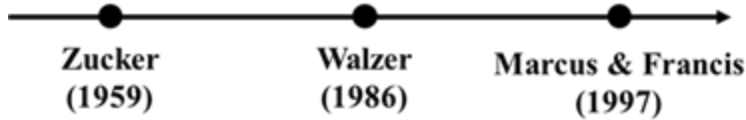


Figure 1 classifications timeline for type of urban plazas0, Source: Author

Zucker (1959) classified Urban Plazas into four types based on all categories: Type one (closed): where the space is self-contained, Type two (dominated): where space is formed around a center, Type three (grouped): where spatial units are combined to form larger compositions, and Type Four (amorphous): where space is unlimited(6).

While Sitte (1986) distinguished between two types of plazas according to their dimensional proportions: the deep type and the wide type. Whether a plaza is deep or wide usually becomes apparent when the observer stands opposite the major building that dominates the whole layout(7).” Sitte`s two types fall into Zucker`s category of the dominated plaza.

Marcus & Francis (1997) assigned rankings to the plazas based on a variety of factors, including size, use, proximity to the street, style, main function, architectural form, location, and more(3) The research adopted by Marcus & Francis (1997) classification is based on a mix of form and use, and relationship to the street. There are six main categories, which added to them as a result of my studies about plazas (Street Plaza, Corporate foyer, Urban oasis, Transit foyer, Sunken Plaza, and Grand public place), as shown in Figure 2, and

Table 1

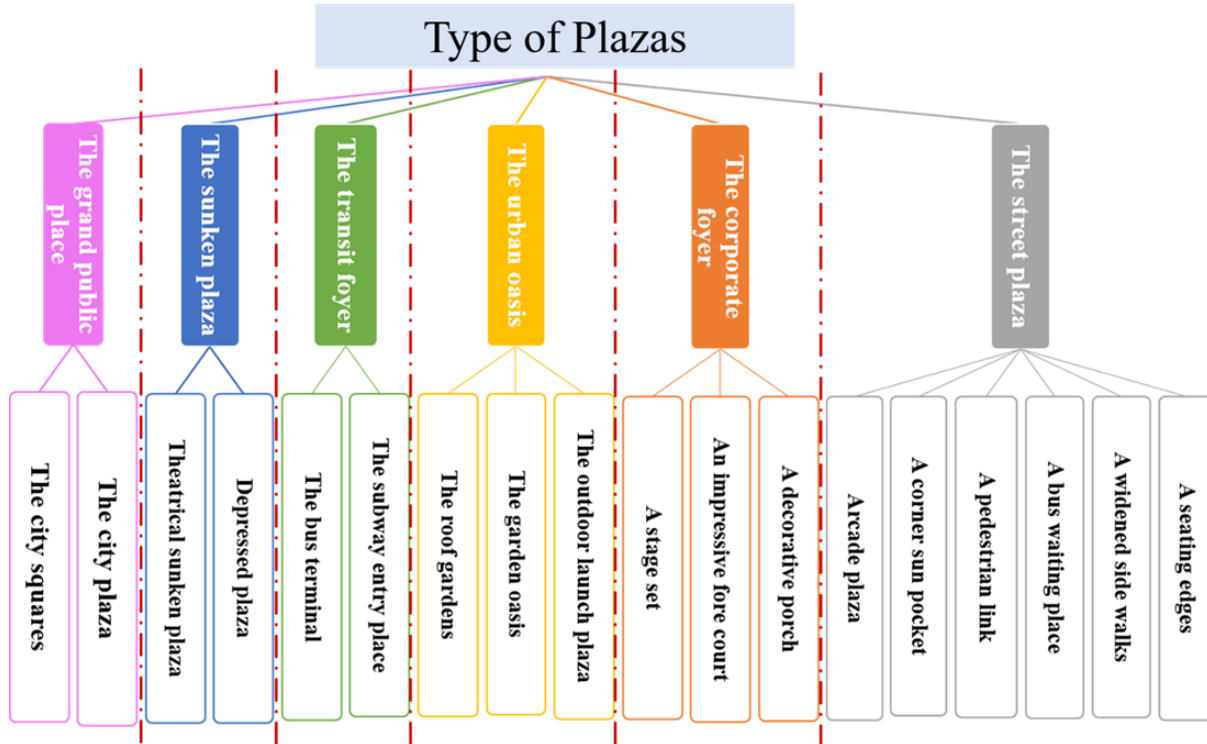
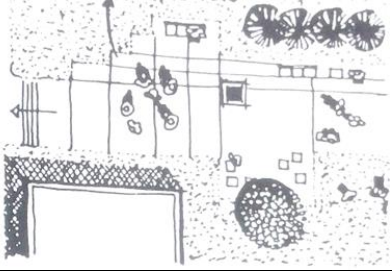
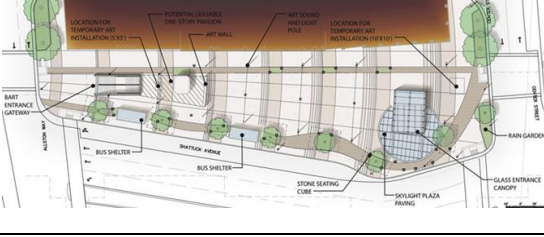
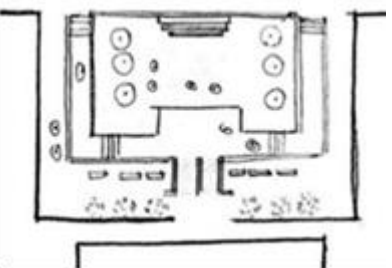
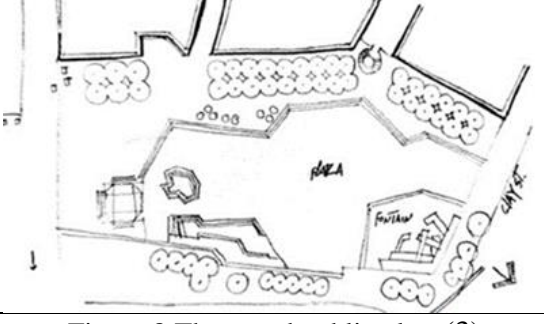


Figure 2 Types of Plazas[2], Source: Author

Table 1 Definitions and Types of Plazas

Type	Definition	Sketch
The street plaza	A street plaza is a small portion of public open space immediately adjacent to the sidewalk and closely connected to the street. It is sometimes a widening of the sidewalk proper or an extension of it under an arcade. Such spaces are generally used for brief periods of sitting, waiting, and watching(3), as shown in Figure 3, and can be categorized into: A seating edge, A widened sidewalk, A bus waiting place, A pedestrian link, A corner sun pocket, and Arcade Plaza	<p>Figure 3 Sketch for the street plaza (3)</p>
The corporate foyer	It is part of a complex of high-rise buildings. Its main mission is to provide a stylish entrance and image for its company. They are usually privately owned but publicly available. It is sometimes secured after working hours (3), as shown in Figure 4, and can be categorized into: A decorative porch, An impressive forecourt, and A stage set.	

<p>The urban oasis</p>	<p>The urban oasis is a type of plaza that is more heavily planted, has a garden or park image, and is partially secluded from the street. Its location and design deliberately set this place apart from the noise and activity of the city(3), as shown in Figure 5, and can be categorized into: The outdoor launch plaza, The garden oasis, and The roof gardens.</p>	<p>Figure 4 Corporate foyer (3)</p> 
<p>The transit foyer</p>	<p>The transit foyer is a plaza-type space created for easy access in and out of heavily used public transit terminals. Although the detailing may not encourage any activity but pass through, the captive audience of transit users sometimes draws street entertainers, vendors, and people watchers (3), The subway entry place, and The bus terminal.</p>	<p>Figure 5 sketch for an urban oasis(3)</p> 
<p>The sunken plaza</p>	<p>The sunken plaza is an open space below street level that is mostly paved. There are two types of sunken plazas(3), as shown in Figure 7, there are two types: Depressed Plaza, and Theatrical sunken plaza.</p>	<p>Figure 6 Layout the Bart Plaza in California(3)</p> 
<p>The grand public place</p>	<p>The grand public place comes closest to our image of the old-world town square or piazza. When located near a diversity of land uses (office, retail, warehouse, transit), it tends to attract users from a greater distance and with a greater variety (by age, gender, and ethnicity) than other plazas (3), as shown in Figure 8, and can be categorized into: The city plaza, and the city squares.</p>	<p>Figure 7 The sunken plaza(3)</p> 
		<p>Figure 8 The grand public place(3)</p>

2-3-Plaza-design approach

Through several studies, the research has reached the approach taken to deal with urban plazas and how to design them.

Marcus & Francis (1997) made a detailed checklist with many elements that could help in the process of designing the plazas, such as size, visual complexity, uses and activities, microclimate, boundaries, subspaces, circulation, seating, planting, level changes, public art, fountains, sculpture, paving, food, programs, vendors, information and signs, and maintained and amenities (3).

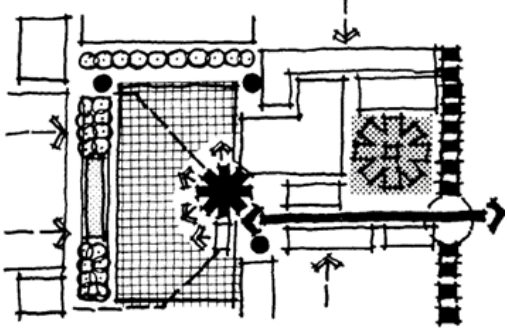

UN habitat has developed a criterion for plaza design under specific qualities, regarding use and user, accessibility, amenities and furniture, comfort and safety, and green environment (For more details see UN habitat 2020 report (8). Each category represents several sub-indicators to assess the quality of any urban plaza. These criteria are considered a holistic view of designing urban plazas, as shown in Figure 9

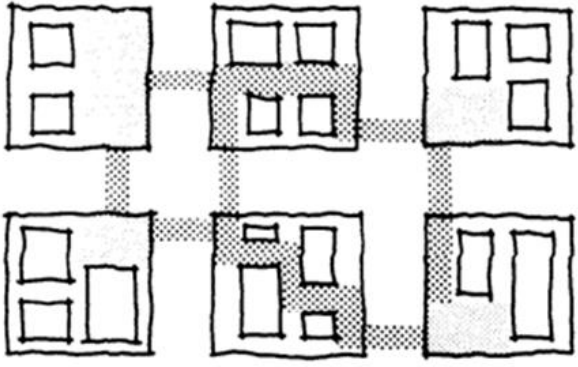
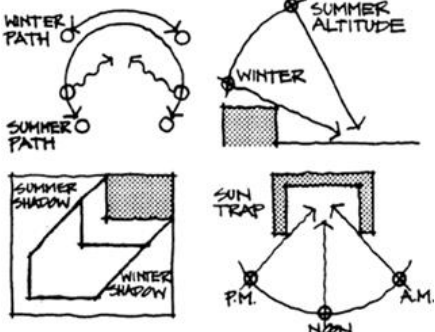


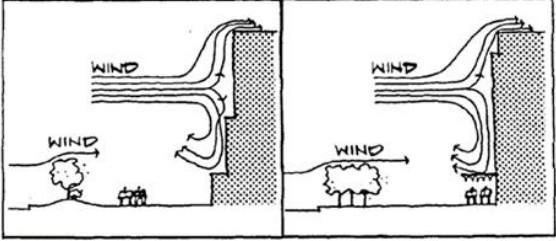
Figure 9 UN habitat dimensions and indicator, source:(9)

The guidelines were prepared by Larry Diamond Landscape Architects in consultation with Planning and Social Planning (1992) and divided as shown in Table 2 (10)

Table 2 The guidelines for design plaza approach, Source: (10)

Title	Definition	Sketch
Context	<p>Use and concept: a plaza requires a program of use and a strong concept. Therefore, careful thought should be given to a plaza's principal functions and its relationship with the adjacent public realm, activities, and architecture, as shown in Figure 10</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 10 use and concept of the plaza</p>
	<p>Visibility and Views: Good visibility can be achieved by the following: arranging any walls and planting to not screen or block off the plaza from the street, and locating the plaza at or as close as possible to street level, preferably no more than 1.0 m above or below street level, as shown in Figure 11</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 11 Good Street-to-Plaza Visibility Should Announce the Plaza's Internal Attractions</p>

	<p>Linkages: A plaza should be linked to other surrounding open spaces, as well as interior spaces such as lobbies, to create a dynamic pedestrian network. Such links will make the plaza more useful and provide a more dynamic, coherent urban environment, as shown in Figure 12</p>	
<p>Figure 12 Plaza Linkages Should Be Created to Achieve a Coherent Pedestrian Network</p>		
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Safety</p>	<p>Design: A plaza will be unsuccessful if it is not well used because of a perception of unsafe Ness. The design of a plaza should provide for safety. Regard should be given to principles of designing for safety such as defensible space, clear sightlines, good lighting, and provision of alternate "escape" paths.</p>	
	<p>Accessibility: A plaza should provide easy and direct access, particularly for the elderly, disabled, and young children. Ramp slopes should not exceed 8.3 percent and handrails should be incorporated.</p>	
	<p>Defensible Space: A plaza should afford good visual surveillance opportunities both from within the space and along the edges. People need to feel secure and will usually avoid dark hidden corners and vacant places.</p>	
	<p>Lighting and Public Features: Good nighttime generalized lighting is important to enhance the safety of a plaza, particularly if it functions as a shortcut or as a through route for pedestrians. Appropriately located and designed lighting may also discourage loitering.</p>	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Environment</p>	<p>Sunlight: Sun paths, sun altitudes, and shadow patterns in the plaza should be examined for all seasons, particularly spring and autumn. Sunlight is particularly valued at lunchtime in commercial business areas, as shown in Figure 13</p>	
	<p>Figure 13 Plazas Should Consider Sunlight Factors</p>	

User Attractions	<p>Wind: Wind reduction can be achieved by the following measures: avoid large, open, unprotected areas; avoid wind funnels: narrow openings between buildings with easterly or northwest alignment; and utilize planting, low walls, and canopies for wind deflection, as shown in Figure 14</p>	
		<p>Figure 14 Plaza Users Should Be Protected from Harsh Winds with Planting and Canopies</p>
	<p>Noise: High levels of traffic, industrial and other ambient noises detract from the enjoyment of a plaza. Noise can be partially mitigated by detracting attention from the noise source through the introduction of such elements as fountains or waterfalls.</p>	
	<p>Weather Protection: plazas should be designed with some overhead weather protection. Such protection should be provided at waiting points and along major pedestrian routes. Protection can be achieved with the following devices: canopies; awnings; shelters; and glazed trellises.</p>	
	<p>Seating: Good seating is important to plaza users. Without it, fewer people will stop to use the space. There are four major points to remember when planning seating: Plentiful Seating, Choice of Sitting Location, Variety of Seating Types, and Comfortable Seating.</p>	
	<p>Amenities: A plaza that is furnished with a variety of amenity features encourages general public usage and creates a sense of liveliness and excitement.</p>	

2-4- Examples of some of the plazas

Some successful examples of plazas are presented and analyzed briefly based on the design plaza approaches.

2-4-1- Crocker Plaza, San Francisco

The type of this plaza (the street plaza, **A widened sidewalk**). Crocker Plaza's physical layout appears to be quite straightforward; from a distance, it is not even immediately clear that it is a plaza, instead appearing to be just a widened sidewalk with a BART station entrance. In essence, it is an octagonal hole in the ground; visitors exit the subway from below, cross a tiny sunken plaza, and then exit up some steps to the street. At the lower level, two stepped-up platforms repeat the octagonal shape. The lower plaza's pit is surrounded by an iron fence and a series of granite step ledges that are used as seating at street level(3), as shown in Figure 15

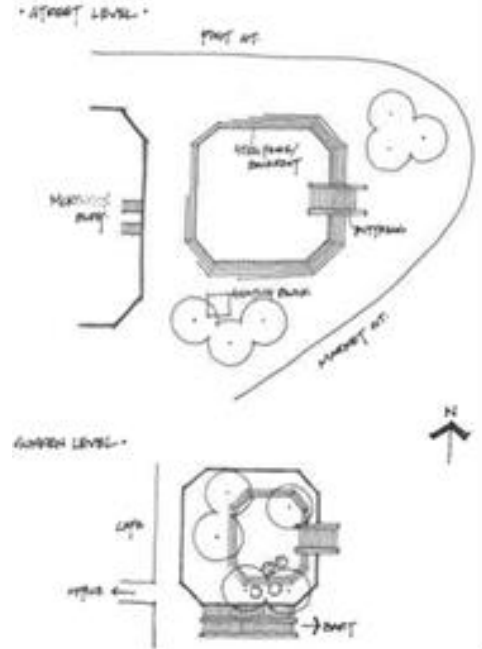


Figure 15 Site plan of Crocker Plaza, Upper, and Lower levels, Source:(3)

- Plaza Context

At one of the busiest traffic and pedestrian intersections in the heart of San Francisco, Crocker Plaza serves as a sort of meeting place for the South of Market, the retail district, and the financial district. It consists of a primary sunken plaza at street level and a secondary sunken plaza that serves as the entrance to the Montgomery Street BART station. This somewhat triangular site is oriented toward the activity on the adjacent sidewalks. A variety of retail stores, eateries, and financial services are located on the street level of nearby buildings(3), as shown in Figure 16

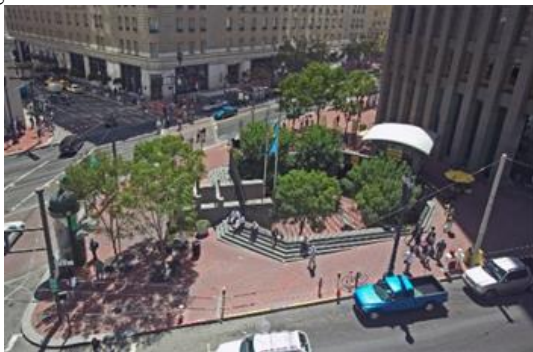


Figure 16 Crocker Plaza, Source:(11)

The presence of diverse use areas, plentiful seating with various directions, the connecting tree canopy between the upper and lower court, vendors and artists encouraged by the presence of the audience, the external focus of the upper court on the parade of traffic, the informal nature of the seating steps allowing the court not to appear empty when not in use, all this increases the safety factor in the Plaza. This plaza feels more open because it is exposed to

the sun for a large portion of the day and offers expansive views down the "Urban Canyon" street corridors, as shown in Figure 17

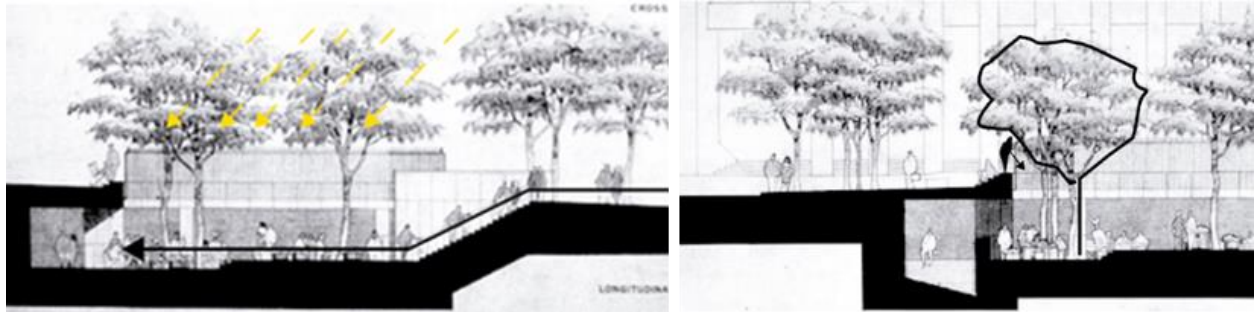


Figure 17 Sunny Location of Crocker Plaza, Source:(11)

- User Attractions

The lower plaza serves primarily as a passageway to the transit facilities below. It is a secluded, dark, and isolated place to sit or stay for a while. The number of users never exceeds four or five, not even during the lunch rush(3), as shown in Figure 18

The main plaza is heavily used during the lunch period, with between 90 and 150 people sitting there at any given time. The stair seating area facing the intersection of Montgomery and Market streets is the most frequently used space. The most popular user activities are eating, reading, and people-watching. Every day, food trucks, shops, and performers can be seen on the sidewalk(3), as shown in Figure 19

One of San Francisco's most popular plazas is Crocker Plaza, which benefits from being in a prominent spot, being sunny during lunchtime, having food available, having a variety of seating areas, and having a constant stream of passing vehicles and pedestrians(3)



Figure 18 lower plaza, Source:(11)



Figure 19 Seating activities in Upper Plaza, Source:(11)

2-4-2- Giannini Plaza, San Francisco

Giannini Plaza is part of the Bank of America complex in San Francisco's financial district. The building's plaza, which surrounds it, is where the Bank of America Tower rises. At

the intersection of Kearney and California streets, there is the main plaza area, and Kearney and Pine streets have smaller secondary plaza corridors. On the east side of the bank tower, a secondary plaza cannot be seen from the street and is located there. The ground-level structures on the neighboring streets are occupied by a variety of stores, cafes, and financial institutions.

- Plaza Context

The plaza complex consists of four subareas of varying size and character(3), as shown in Figure 20 Area A is supposed to be the main entrance, but regrettably, it is located on the north rather than the south side of the structure, as shown in Figure 21 Sub-area B, the tiniest and most private area of the plaza, is situated right next to this large area, as shown in Figure 22 A stairway leading to an enclosed mini-mall separates this secluded space from Subarea C. Giannini Plaza's final and sunniest section, Sub-area D, is found on the south and west sides of the bank tower.

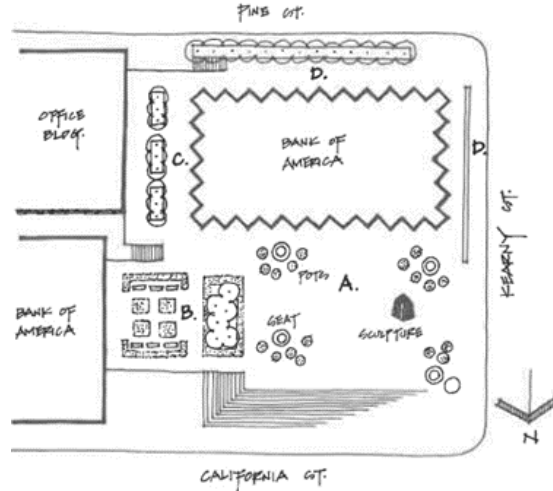


Figure 20 Site plan of Giannini Plaza, San Francisco, Source: (3)



Figure 21 Area A in Plaza, Source:(12)



Figure 22 Area B in Plaza, Source:(13)

A hedge-like planter wall encloses the area and eliminates visual access to and from the main plaza and street. The hedgerow surrounds several wooden benches and planter seat walls, creating a sun-bathed and wind-protected microclimate during the peak hours of use.

A stairway leading to an enclosed mini-mall separates this secluded space from Subarea C, which serves as a seating area and walkway connecting the north and south plazas. This linear space receives a good deal of lunch-hour sun but is completely hidden from the street between the walls of the newer Bank of America Tower and its older adjacent predecessor(3).

- User Attractions

The people who frequent Subareas B, C, and D are similar to those who frequent other downtown plazas during lunchtime: they eat, read, sunbathe, nap, talk, and observe people.

Three men for every two women. In terms of safety concerns, Subarea B's visual isolation does not prevent women from using it. Two-thirds of users typically arrive alone, while one-third do so in groups of two or more. The majority of users are white-collar office workers. In Subarea D, construction workers frequently gather along the street. In contrast to Whyte's claim that a space must have a view of the street to be successful, Subareas B and C's visual inaccessibility does not appear to prevent their use. Despite being somewhat hidden, both of these areas have decent seating and get plenty of sun. They show that some urban users prefer to be cut off from the action on the streets and that female users are not always discouraged by visual isolation (3).

2-4-3- Berkeley BART Plaza: Transit Foyer Subway Entrance Place

The type of this plaza (the transit foyer, **The subway entry place**). The plaza is essentially a widened sidewalk, one block long, with a major entry and exit from the central Berkeley BART station at either end. One long block is bounded by stores and a bank building; the other is Shattuck Avenue, the main downtown street of Berkeley, as shown in Figure 23



Figure 23 Berkeley Bart Plaza, Source:(14)

- Plaza Context

At the north end of the plaza, a round building of glass and steel marks the main escalator entrance to the BART station. Several mobile food kiosks that serve shoppers and commuters punctuate a modestly sized plaza area outside the station entrance. On the west side of this area, the Great Western Savings Bank's arcade provides a sense of protection from the main pedestrian flows.

South of the main BART entrance is a rectangular sitting area, with low brick walls providing a sense of definition and protection from pedestrian movement on either side. There are several seats with their backs to the outside that serve as taxi waiting areas on the Shattuck Avenue side of this area. The plaza's southernmost edge is marked by a significant bus stop and an interchange, as shown in Figure 24

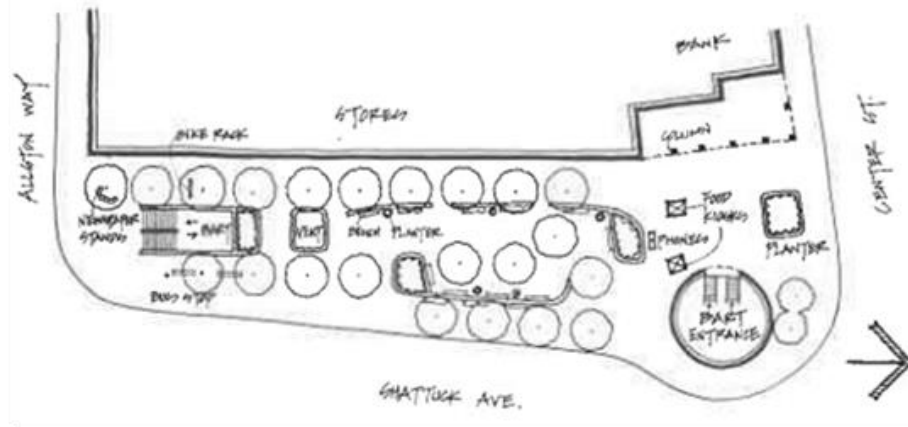


Figure 24 Site plan of Berkeley Bart Plaza, Source:(3)

- User Attractions

The main uses of this plaza can be divided into two groups: those that were planned intentionally and those that came about naturally over time. The designed uses comprise the following:

1. Pedestrian traffic entering and leaving the two BART entrances People using the rapid transit system and commuters are served by food kiosks, trash cans, phone kiosks, and newspaper stands.
2. People are waiting for buses on Center Street and Shattuck Avenue.
3. Pedestrians moving along the sidewalk beside the shops This need is well designed, as a low wall deflects this flow from passing through the sitting plaza
4. Sitting, eating lunch, socializing, and the like.

2-5- Examples of the plaza in the Egyptian context:

There are many Egyptian squares that play many roles in shaping the identity of the place. For Example, El-Tahrir Complex Plaza and El-Fath Complex Plaza.

2-5-1-El-Tahrir Complex Plaza (15):

Plaza: El-Tahrir Complex Plaza.

-Location: El-Tahrir Square - Cairo

-Area: 10990.1 m²

-Type of plaza: Based on the theoretical studies, El-Tahrir Complex Plaza is a kind of corporate foyer plaza, A **decorative porch**, they also offer many different activities, as shown in **Figure 25**



Figure 25 El-Tahrir Complex Plaza_source:
google earth

It is located in the center of the city in the Cairo Governorate. It is situated in the Cairo Governorate's city center. It is considered to have a special character because it is located in front of a significant administrative building (El-Tahrir Complex), in the middle of Khedivial Cairo, its proximity to the Egyptian Museum, and its proximity to the American University, which gives it excellent tourist importance, and therefore, users change, as shown in **Figure 26**



Figure 26 The most critical landmarks surrounding the plaza_Source: (1)

- Plaza Context

The plaza is located in Cairo Governorate's downtown area. Because it is located in front of an important administrative building (El-Tahrir Complex), it is an administrative plaza with a rather irregular architectural shape, adjacent to El-Tahrir Square, in the heart of Khedive Cairo, near the Egyptian Museum, and the old American University. It is surrounded by a network of main streets making it easy to reach. The plaza combines softscape (grass, tree, and palm) and hardscapes (seats, pathways, lighting units, fences, and signs).

The plaza is split by the main walkway into two zones: 1. North eastern triangular-shaped zone, adjacent to Tahrir roundabout and Al-Qasr al Aini street. This zone is predominately green split by three parallel minor walkways; 2. The second zone is closer to El-Tahrir complex building, with more hardscape, a central circle, and radial walkways.

The plaza is surrounded by Fences that prevent pedestrians from passing through it, except few entrances, which leads to an increase in the movement of pedestrians outside the plaza. All the green spaces in the plaza are surrounded by low fences, to discourage pedestrians from using them. There are some benches in the plaza, that allow the plaza to be used as seating areas. Due to its proximity to the Omar Makram Mosque and the American University, few pedestrians use the plaza during the day, especially near the two metro exits inside the plaza, yet the number of users dropped at night due to security considerations, as shown in **Figure 28**

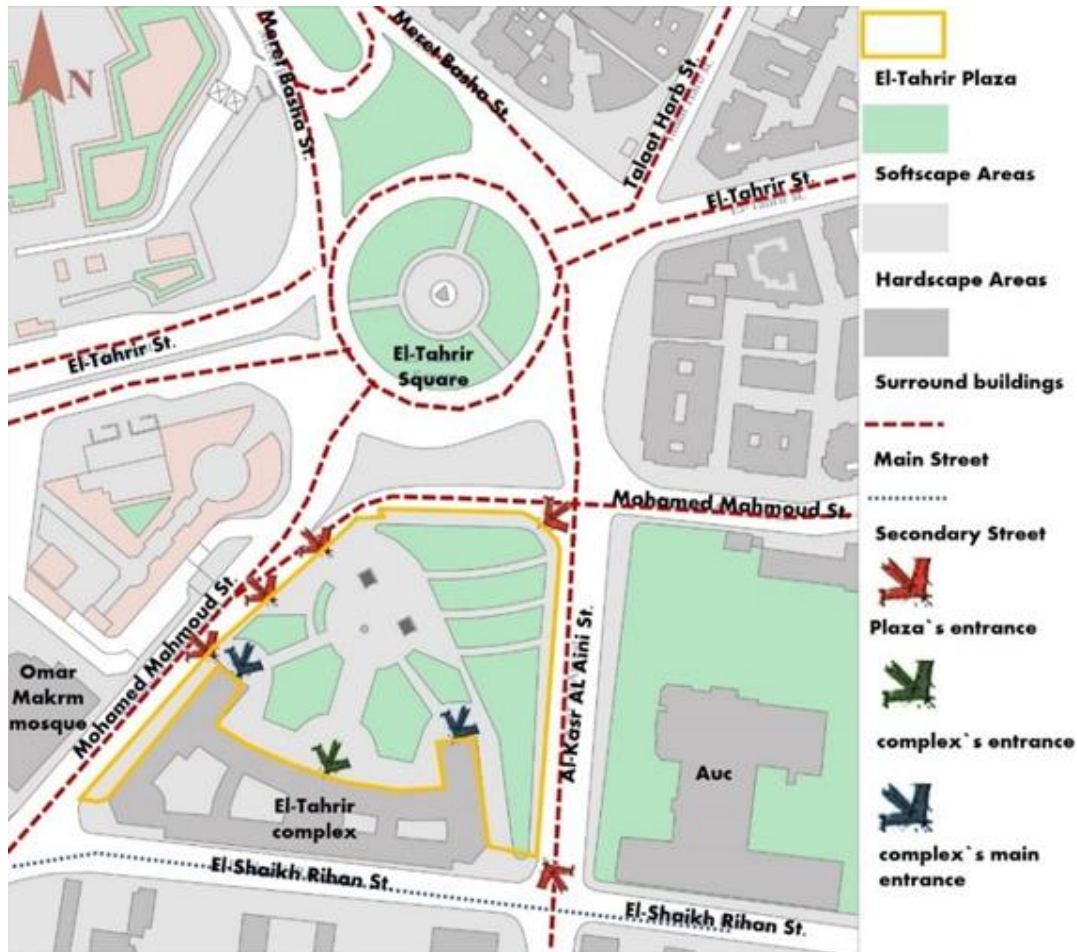


Figure 27 Spatial Configuration of El-Tahrir Complex Plaza_Source (1)

User Attractions

The Plaza is surrounded by fences that do not allow pedestrians to pass except through the presence of some entrances, which leads to an increase in the movement of pedestrians outside the plaza, and all the green spaces in the plaza are surrounded by low-rise fences. It is possible to allow pedestrians to enter the green spaces, as shown in **Figure 28**

The land is the foundation that provides a stage for the various daily occurrences in which the various activities take place. Observation of the area shows that all of the pedestrian pathways contain marble, granite, and interlock, according to the observation of the area. Street vendors use a few of these pathways in the afternoon. It is also used in some recreational activities, as shown in **Figure 29**



Figure 28 Outer and inner fences_Source (1)



Figure 29 Show flooring finishing materials and activities_Source (1)

The plaza is full of light posts. The lighting poles must affect the users at night to clarify the movement paths. In the area around the light, there aren't any more numbers, though. Observation revealed that this was caused by a few political and security factors. It was also noted that there were some lights on the facades to increase the aesthetic aspect at night, as shown in **Figure 30**

There are suitable seats or seating areas in the plaza, which allows the plaza to be used as seating areas. Users meet each other during the day, especially due to two metro exits inside the plaza and the plaza's proximity to the Omar Makram Mosque and American University. The number of users is reduced at night due to security considerations, as shown in **Figure 31**



Figure 30 Some lighting poles in El-Tahrir Complex Plaza _Source (1)



Figure 31 Seats in El-Tahrir Complex Plaza _Source (1)

The movement of pedestrians in the plaza is a group activity as movement is carried out from the surrounding areas and streets to the El-Tahrir Complex building. Also, move from Muhammad Mahmoud Street, where there is the Omar Makram Mosque, passing through the plaza to El-Qasr Al-Ain Street, where the American University building is located, as shown in **Figure 32** .

Pedestrians can use the plaza when walking with dogs, as shown in **Figure 33**.

Many marble benches inside El-Tahrir Complex Plaza allow many people to sit, rest, talk to each other, or wait. Some users also use the sidewalks around the green areas to sit on them, as shown in **Figure 34**.

All age groups enjoy the activities inside the plaza, and these activities are: The children played with the ball inside the plaza in daylight only, and some young people moved inside the plaza with moving shoes, as shown in **Figure 35 & Figure 36**.

Some street vendors offer hot drinks to the plaza users in daylight only, as shown in **Figure 37**.



Figure 32 Show the pedestrian movement I El-Tahrir Complex Plaza_Source (1)



Figure 33Walk his dog_Source (1)



Figure 34 Seating activity and user grouping_Source (1)



Figure 35Children play football_Source (1)



Figure 36Moving activity in El-Tahrir Complex Plaza_Source (1)



Figure 37street vendors for drink_Source (1)

The attractive places are the metro exits, where the increased movement of users enter and exit the metro station, as shown in **Figure 38**. The areas designated for sitting, where they rest, and sometimes for gathering, speaking, and sleeping, as shown in **Figure 39**, the entrance to the El-Tahrir Complex, as shown in **Figure 40**, and the presence of the American University near the plaza, as shown in **Figure 41**.



Figure 38Metro exits__Source (1)



Figure 39Sitting Areas_Source (1)



Figure 40 El-Tahrir Complex_Source (1)



Figure 41 American University in Cairo_Source (1)

4- Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the design approach for urban plazas plays a crucial role in creating vibrant and inclusive public spaces that enhance the quality of urban life. Through careful consideration of factors such as plaza context, vitality, pedestrian-friendliness, sense of place, safety, and accessibility, urban plazas can become multifunctional and engaging destinations within cities.

Furthermore, the vitality and activation of urban plazas can be enhanced through thoughtful design strategies. By incorporating elements such as public art, performance spaces, and local markets, plazas can become vibrant hubs of cultural and economic activity.

Pedestrian-friendliness is another key aspect that should be considered in the design approach. Prioritizing convenient access, clear circulation patterns, and pedestrian-oriented infrastructure promotes walkability and active transportation.

Safety and accessibility are paramount in urban plaza design. Adequate lighting, clear sightlines, and inclusive infrastructure ensure public safety, while universal design principles guarantee that plazas are accessible to people of all abilities and backgrounds.

In summary, a well-executed design approach for urban plazas considers social interaction, vitality, pedestrian-friendliness, sustainability, sense of place, safety, and accessibility. By incorporating these factors, urban plazas can become dynamic, inclusive, and beloved spaces that enrich the urban experience and contribute to the overall livability of cities.

The study covered the significance of achieving interaction between user behavior and public plazas as well as the effects of that interaction on the efficacy of activities taking place there. The research led to a set of recommendations for the development of public plazas as follows:

1. Understanding human needs and behavior patterns is the key to a successful plaza design.
2. Plaza designers should not only focus on the plaza's boundaries, they should aim to integrate it with its surroundings.
3. Designers should adopt an evidence-based design approach that relies on tested analytical techniques such as space syntax while designing plazas and other open spaces.
4. Focusing more on the practical as well as the aesthetic qualities of the landscape components so they can serve as an effective tool for drawing people to the plazas.

- **Conflict of Interest**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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