Successful criteria for placemaking process in contested spaces: evaluation of non-governmental organisations at Ledra Street Crossing Point in Nicosia

Ediz Orac[1] · Ugur Ulas Dagli[1]

Abstract

As adivided capital city, Nicosia and its Buffer Zone have attracted attention across political, social, cultural, and academic spheres since the 1974 division of Cyprus. The Buffer Zone's physical and symbolic presence reflects the ongoing struggle for reunification and the challenges of tension in a confined space. The crossing points in the Buffer Zone serve as bridges, facilitating movement and interaction between the communities. Thus, contested spaces require comprehensive, context-sensitive approaches that foster inclusive dialogues, and seek innovative spatial arrangements to promote sustainable peace and shared understanding. The paper proposes a placemaking process approach that serves as a transformative tool to tackle the difficulties associated with contested spaces and strive towards their comprehensive revitalisation. 126 different NGOs participated as stakeholders in the Ledra Street Crossing Point and answered the Likert scale survey after the reliability check. The aim of this paper is to identify a successful placemaking process diagram for contested spaces as an analytical framework. The diagram establishes important criteria and their correlations for the placemaking process. It identifies sociability alongside uses and activities as key imperatives for successful placemaking process in contested contexts: social networks, sharing space use, multifunctionality, and public space usage.

Keywords Contested spaces · Placemaking process · Non-governmental organisations · Buffer zone · Nicosia

Introduction

Architecture and urban design traditions are considered to express the culture and evocative meaning of space; when a space is occupied, it endangers the existential entity of people. This relationship can be very sentimental since there is always a perplexing and adroit relationship between an individual and the space occupied (Ghavampour and Vale 2019). Hence, occupied conflict spaces have a significant impact on people. Especially when contested spaces are no longer in use, they become abandoned, vacant, and less amenable to sustainable management for the city. However, these spaces can be sustainably transformed into responsive spaces for the city and society by employing the necessary theories and feasible research tools for implementation. Several studies regarding architecture and urban design practises in urban public space reveal three significant themes that are worth considering: The first is about the fundamental relationship between citizens and public space; the second is about the ramifications of the return of a sustainable' compact city; and lastly, the temporal and spatial components of urban design, both in its 'process' and 'product'. The fundamental problem in all three debates is the question of their eligibility given the unique circumstances of contested cities (Gaffikin et al. 2010). This study evaluates the relationship between the citizen and the abandoned or occupied public space with the problem of how to re-establish sustainability and its interrupted temporal and spatial components. While there are different approaches to solving this problem, the placemaking process can be an effective factor in this regard. Placemaking has become popular in research that is used to identify a more defined and human-centred tool that could help find a more sustainable path. A literature review indicates that both sustainability researchers and policymakers

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are looking for an integrated approach to long-term sustainability. Therefore, the placemaking process has been identified as a powerful scaling tool to determine the significant criteria for a successful transformation of contested spaces. It is particularly cumbersome to deal with cities that have been through war and have been subjected to different interventions and divisiveness since there are different parameters surrounding them. Borders, boundaries, and/or limits in both concrete and abstract forms accentuate the aftereffects of war and divisions. This article investigates the successful criteria of the placemaking process in Ledra Street Crossing Point, the shared and divided city of Nicosia, which is itself a contested area. The authors contend that this area has the potential to be a fully fledged and successful space through a scaling of the placemaking process.

This study aims to find an answer to the question "Which criteria should be used to evaluate the placemaking process?" in transforming the Ledra Street Crossing Point, which became a contested public space after the war, into a successful space. The other questions are as follows:

> What are the strong and weak criteria in the transformation of Ledra Street Crossing Point regarding the criteria of a successful placemaking process? (depending on the evaluation of the NGOs, which are the most significant stakeholders in the use of the area)
> Is there any correlation between the key attributes of the placemaking process and the criteria for each key attribute that are important for the successful transformation of the area as evaluated by the NGOs at Ledra Street Crossing Point?

This research is limited to the successful criteria and their key attributes taken for granted by the Project for Public Spaces, as it will focus on the measurement criteria and their importance and relevance for their transformation. Additionally, the sampling is limited to the NGO, its members, or volunteers who are active in Cyprus and have previously performed an event or activity at the Ledra Street Crossing Point.

Placemaking process in contested spaces

Contested spaces

New frameworks are emerging in the urban context within the politics incurred by war. Hence, the generated urban spaces and structures can be objects of savagery when spaces are viewed as speaking to 'the undesirable or undermining otherness' and when control over space turns into an instrument of force or mistreatment. However, architectural practises may similarly lead to abandonment while creating solutions for conflicts and providing diverse options for the inhabitants in post-war situations. In parallel with such circumstances, the effects of emergencies influence the way that individuals create, comprehend, and inhabit spaces and places. Occupants need to consider new spatial design and control frameworks: security zones, military zones, and peaceful and prohibited regions (Piquard and Swenarton 2011). These new locations or spaces that are crucibles of major conflicts about ethnicity, territory, and, in some cases, even nationality can be determined as contested spaces (Gaffikin and Morrissey 2006). Hepburn defines the 'contested city' as a place where two or more socially aware groups divided by religion, ethnicity, language, culture, and political history coexist and neither side acknowledges the other's dominance (Hepburn 2004). Bollens goes further, stating that the specific cleavages in a disputed city are founded in "the existence of conflicting patriotic allegiances that have the potential to rip a community apart" (Bollens 2008). In such cities, the fundamental schism between national identity and territorial ownership extends all the way down to tiny districts, where the connection between territory and identity generates its own divisions (Varshney 2001). For instance, Parekh emphasises the need to foster a feeling of common belonging in divided societies that is not based on ethnic or cultural origins but rather on a shared commitment to the civic community's continued existence and well-being (Parekh 2001). Nonetheless, this is the fundamental source of conflict in sovereignty conflicts. According to Kotek, they are 'border cities', constructed on the premise of two or more mutually incompatible fantasies. Interestingly, the believers in these conflicting fantasies exhibit considerable creativity in using space to create circles of influence (Kotek 1999).

In order to define a contested space, there is a need to situate architecture within the heterogeneous urban environment that increases through time into extensive groups of mixed territories linked together. In other words, and most visibly in contested spaces, the space may be a canvas engraved with repeated chapters of opposing narratives and grievances, conjuring the feeling of two or more societies coexisting in the same city but inhabiting different realities (Hepburn 2004). The public spaces that are created and shaped through various stages and are constantly in motion with variations in use over time undergo a physical boundary violation in some cases, such as war, and enter into a forcible change. With regard to this study, it turns into a contested space where differences are shared and borders are created at the same time. At this point, the importance of the concept of boundary emerges. Borders typically serve as spaces where control and surveillance are intensified (Pullan 2011). There are many narratives to consider when evaluating the effect of divisions in contested cities. However, borders refer only to spatial representations of territories in the context of this research.

Spatial practice and planning in contested spaces

Urban regeneration in contested cities that ignores inter-communal rifts and conflict over territory is likely to miss opportunities to re-establish vital city connections and spaces that can contribute to a more vibrant city (Adams et al. 2021). According to Keirsey and Gatrell, 'in contested spaces, contending cultural groups reinforce and legitimise themselves and their activities through the development of adaptive spatial practises'. The most important planning approach for the contested area is that it should adopt a peacebuilding perspective that will bring different cultures together. Planning for contested space must embrace this broader perspective of peacebuilding. For this reason, a core aim would be to ensure that the contested city would contain more than just neutral spaces but shared public spaces (Gatrell and Keirsey 1982). Due to the centrality of space to the entire conflict and planning as the primary tool for socially altering space, planning is inevitably important to conflict resolution (Shirlow 2006). It should be recognised that planning has "a role to play in defining areas of opportunity" (Gaffikin and Morrissey 2006). Paradoxically, the crossing points, which symbolise negative recollections linked to strict boundaries and perpetuate the division between the central and peripheral areas of this urban setting, might possess a certain degree of capacity in this regard (Pullan 2011).

In terms of planning, this approach to the public city suggests creative thinking on how to expand that public sphere and its opportunities for associational relationships across the divide (Gaffikin et al. 2010). Moreover, spatial planning and urban design are critical components for achieving the disputed cities' ideal sustainability. They must, however, play a constructive role in the development of the city from a segregated and exclusive one to an open and pluralistic one, working cooperatively with other decision-makers and non-governmental organisations (Wilson 2016). In the context of contested cities, spatial practises in contested spaces should be considered in the way that they unite and connect cultures. It should be planned with the contributions of the stakeholders, who play an active role by emphasising the solution dimension.

Key concept: placemaking process

"Placemaking is a broad term that refers to the processes that transform a space into something useful and meaningful" (Paulsen 2010). Its origins date back to the 1970s, when researchers like Kevin Lynch, Aldo Van Eyck, Jane Jacobs, Christian Norberg-Schulz, and Edward Relph used the term "sense of place" (Johnson 1994). Additionally, scholars from diverse fields of development studies, encompassing urban planning, architecture, urban design, spatial development, urban upgrading, and landscape design, have employed the placemaking methodology. It is generally understood as a community-driven approach that depends on local communities to boost the successful transformation process and achieve authenticity and quality (Gato et al. 2020). Placemaking has become a concept, and the associated emerging interventions can be considered tactics for fostering social, functional, and spatial variety, supporting participatory design approaches, and improving "lived space" for a diverse group of people (Stout 2008). Therefore, placemaking can be seen as an activity that goes beyond the culture of architectural experts. It allows architects and other construction experts to work towards the same goals with a larger group of people (Priatmoko et al. 2021).

Placemaking is a process that contributes to urban planning by making it livable and meaningful (PPS 2008). It actively participates in the creation of a meaningful place with the help of the actors who use the area daily. Placemaking is a social construction that shapes cities primarily via financial investments meant to spur economic development and encourage cultural tourism (Martin 2003; PPS 2007; Zukin 1995). It can emphasise both the process and the product. However, this article focusses on the placemaking processes by successful criteria to find out the relationship and importance of the criteria by location. Planning for placemaking therefore includes planning for people, whose requirements change over time (Barendse et al. 2007). The prominence of the placemaking process has increased significantly due to society's evolving needs and preferences regarding social, sustainable, and economic challenges. Nevertheless, the process of creating or transforming a space into a place is quite different. "By focusing on the potential success criteria of their characteristics, the placemaking process develops meaning from a location and its surroundings' characteristics" (Robinson 2003). As a process, placemaking has multiple dimensions, like social, functional, visual, temporal, etc. In this case, the meaning of environment has evolved into a sense of attachment to a location.

The Project for Public Spaces evaluated thousands of public spaces all over the world in order to define the successful criteria of the placemaking process. During the development of the placemaking methodology, successful criteria for the placemaking process consisted of four main elements that influence space, and each of these essential characteristics had a distinct impact on the location (PPS 2009). The four essential attributes of Access and Linkages, Comfort and Image, Uses and Activities, and Sociability provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating and creating vibrant public spaces. "They are accessible; people are engaged in activities there; the space is comfortable and has a nice image; and finally, it is a sociable place: one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit", according to the essential characteristics (Purcell 2014).

Successful criteria in the placemaking process emphasise the importance of community engagement and participation. By involving stakeholders in the placemaking process, the criteria help create a sense of ownership and attachment to the place. These criteria are important because they guide the design, activation, and evaluation of public spaces that contribute to the overall well-being, social cohesion, economic vitality, and sustainability of communities. By adhering to these criteria, urban planners and policymakers can create places that people love, cherish, and feel connected to, ultimately enhancing the livability and quality of life in cities and towns.

Cyprus, buffer zone, and crossing points

Cyprus is an island located in the Eastern Mediterranean between Turkey, Greece, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt. Located between European and Middle Eastern civilisations, it has been under the control of many civilisations at different periods. Consequently, most of these civilisations have left some traces and enhanced the richness and variation of the island. Turkish Cypriots, Greek Cypriots, and other ethnic groups lived peacefully together until 1963. Greek and Turkish Cypriots started conflict in 1963, and because of the conflict, certain groups began to move in 1963 after learning of the existence of a border. The creation of the division emerged in 1964; however, the exact border was established after a decade (Kyle 1997). Cyprus was divided into North and South Cyprus in 1974 by a Buffer Zone because of Turkey's intervention (UNSC 1974). Turkish Cypriots from the south were displaced to the North, while Greek Cypriots from the north were displaced to the south, and some ethnic groups like Maronites started to live in specific regions of the island (Webster

and Timothy 2006). The different periods on the island and the conflicts that took place outside of the war made the island a contested area even before it was definitively partitioned in 1974. While in most parts of the developed world, borders are losing their restricting functions, there are still some places facing extreme border control and alienation. Cyprus, a divided island for more than half a century, has a border called the Buffer Zone or Green Line (Caner 2015). Greek Cypriots are currently the largest ethnic group in Cyprus, according to the UNHCR (Fig. 1).

As seen in Fig. 1, the buffer zone extends 180 kms from Dherinia to Selemani and encompasses 346 square kilometres of Cyprus. This equates to a bounded zone covering 3.74% of Cyprus. The Buffer Zone, often known as the Green Line, is so named because the line was initially drawn with a green pencil. It is a prime example of one of the world's most militarised borders, with Turkish, Greek, and UN (United Nations) military forces all present. Although it may seem like small areas in both the South and North that have been abandoned for decades, they are defined as high-potential areas of Cyprus since this strip of land contains significant buildings with historical and architectural values and connects cities, streets, and villages. Additionally, the creation of this divide meant that both populations lost access to essential resources (Oktay 2007).

The Buffer Zone was almost totally impenetrable for ordinary Cypriots until 2003. Border crossings were not allowed between 1974 and 2003, although there were isolated instances of cross-border visits to sacred sites or relatives on either side (Webster and Timothy 2006). After initial agreements between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot governments, a select number of crossing points were opened to Cypriots and tourists in April 2003. Two of

Fig. 1 Location of the crossing points in buffer zone (drawn by authors)

these were in Nicosia, albeit situated away from populated areas on the western outskirts of the city (Table 1).

Citizens and tourists are required to show their passports or identification cards to cross the Buffer Zone. When the borders opened, two hundred thousand people crossed in the first two weeks; this was a quarter of the island's population at the time. Largely backed by curiosity, no doubt, the numbers were some early indicators for the possibility of creating confidence-building measures to promote inter-communal exchange and calibrate the levers for future bi-communal activities. Nowadays, those crossing points have a powerful impact on enhancing the notion of the possibility of a shared future between the communities, and stakeholders are increasingly seeing them as potential future spaces for the development of Cyprus. Currently, there are nine (9) crossing points dotted along the Buffer zone; seven (7) of them are mainly used for vehicular access, while two (2) are for pedestrian use. Since the year it was opened, there has been a continuous increase in transitions every year, and it has started to decrease with the pandemic. However, post-pandemic transitions in 2021 have caught up to the rates of the first year when it was opened (Table 2).

Case study: Ledra Street Crossing Point

Case study selection includes examples of placemaking in post-conflict zones and culturally diverse areas with competing land-use interests to show how the identified successful criteria can be applied and to show practical strategies and results. In this sense, the Ledra Street Crossing Point was chosen for the fieldwork of the study due to its central location in the heart of the Nicosia Old City and its profile as a continuous connective arterial street with the potential to augment the interconnectedness of the two communities. This crossing point, the first one to directly connect residential and commercial areas, opened in 2008. Due to its historical importance as the centre of social activity, it was also the first street to be closed off with the Buffer Zone (Jacobson et al. 2010).

In the last months of 2005, preparations for Ledra Street Crossing Point began, and the existing wall was demolished on the night of 24 November 2005. Initially, a bridge was constructed to facilitate separate passage for pedestrians and soldiers, thereby mitigating potential encounters. Regrettably, this bridge failed to garner approval from both the Northern and Southern authorities, as well as the United Nations, ultimately leading to its demolition subsequent to its completion. After all the challenging preparations, Ledra Street Crossing Point was opened on 3 April 2008, and the crossings between North and South Nicosia began. The activities that started to take place at the Ledra Street Crossing Point highlighted its significant contribution to the placemaking process. This is achieved through its function

as a central location for vibrant social, cultural, and political exchanges. The presence of various events, such as peace platforms, human chains, protests, and open discussions, serves to underscore the evolution of this spatial interface into a dynamic, inclusive, and engaging public realm. By engaging in these activities, the crossing point serves as both a symbolic and physical space where community involvement is encouraged, a shared identity is nurtured, and collective aspirations are negotiated within a previously fragmented urban environment (Carmona et al. 2010). The dynamic evolution of these activities over time demonstrates the adaptive capacity of the crossing point to accommodate shifting societal dynamics. This contributes to the continuous process of transforming the urban landscape into a more unified and significant space for both local inhabitants and tourists.

The aforementioned area is 68 m long and has a width that will form a square in the middle. The non-functional and idle buildings that surround both sides create a dynamic and active effect with single, two, and three floors. The buildings are generally from the British period. While only the facades of some buildings have been renovated, others are renovated but idle. Since the documents to prove identification have to be shown separately, twice in the North and South, there is sometimes congestion and queues at the crossings. Owing to these unique characteristics of Ledra Street, the opening of the Ledra Street Crossing Point affected the immediate surroundings of Walled City of Nicosia. Right after its opening in April 2008, this most important part of the Buffer Zone was transformed into a bridge between the two communities. In the first week alone, 20,000 people crossed the border, and in a month, this number exceeded 101,000 (Jacobson et al. 2010). Presently, the Ledra Crossing Point hosts different events and activities; however, it is still in the process of spatial transformation (Figs. 2, 3 and 4).

Firstly, the area with these features was previously used as a transition space; later, it became a space where events and organisations started to be held by bi-communal non-governmental organisations, i.e. Home for Cooperation, United Cyprus. In this regard, NGOs and other civil society groups are stakeholders in governance as well as the main trust behind more prominent worldwide collaboration efforts through the dynamic mobilisation of open help for universal assertions (Gemmill and Bamidele, 2002). NGOs have been instrumental in informing society, governments, and international associations of critical new issues. They are imperative systems, as mentioned: "an arrangement of associations, bound by shared qualities by dense exchanges of data and administrations, working globally on an issue" (Clark 1995). Over the previous decades, NGOs have been expected to have an increasingly dynamic role during the process of agenda-setting and policy development in contested spaces (Porter et al. 2004). Ledra Street Crossing

Fig. 2 Ledra Street Crossing Point in Walled City of Nicosia. *Source* Nicosia Municipality redrawn by: authors

Table 1 Timeline of the opening of crossing points in Cyprus

Year	Number of crossing points	Name of crossing points
2003	4	1. Ledra Palace (pedestrians only) 2. Agios Dometios 3. Pergamos 4.Strovilia
2005	1	5. Astromeritis
2008	1	6. Ledra Street (pedestrians only)
2010	1	7. Kato Pyrgos
2018	2	8. Deryneia 9. Apliki

Point holds activities of a public nature even though it cannot be defined as a full-fledged public space in the strict sense of the term; the user group and stakeholders admitted to its purview are limited and often hierarchically defined. That notwithstanding, it is vital for future planning to evaluate this place, as it is possible to transform it into a successful space.

Theoretical framework: successful criteria of placemaking process in contested spaces

The examination of both the potentials and limitations of the present is necessary to actualise the successful placemaking criteria of contested spaces. The urban space entails residents participating in meaningful connections with one

Table 2 Buffer Zone Crossing Rates including Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, and other nationalities

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total	2,494,819	3,333,366	3,542,098	2,535,778	1,718,341	2,006,981	3,338,787	3,366,527	3,321,006	3,205,707
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Total	3,137,790	3,250,413	3,655,146	3,989,218	4,400,202	5,203,606	6,638,164	1,515,006	2,440,912	

Source Tourism Planning Office

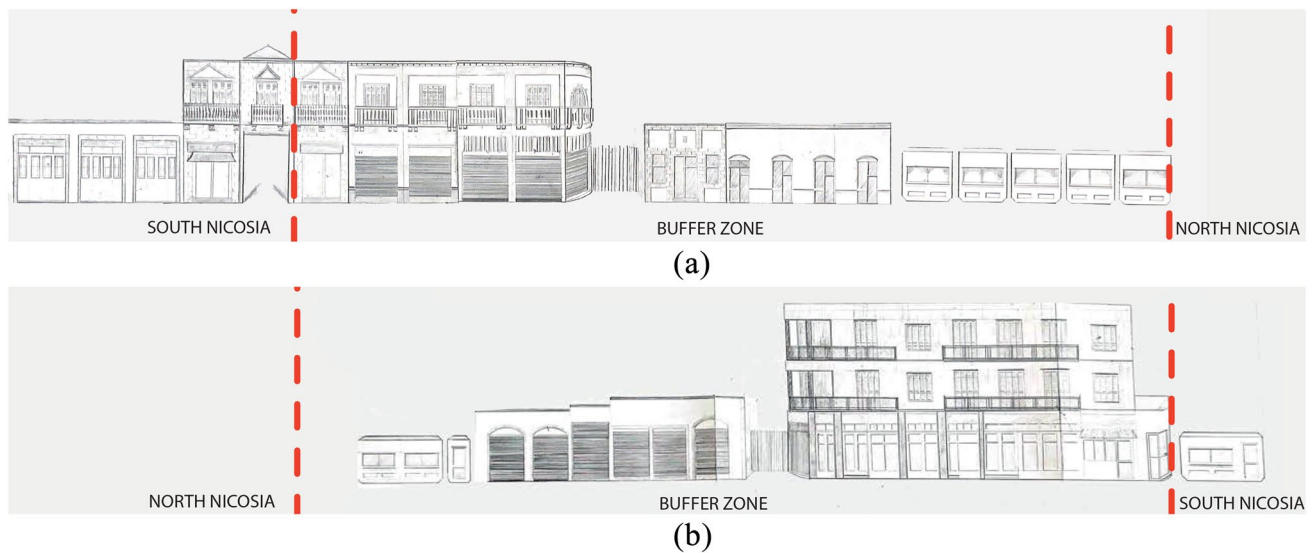**Fig. 3** The division and circulation of the Ledra Street Crossing Point
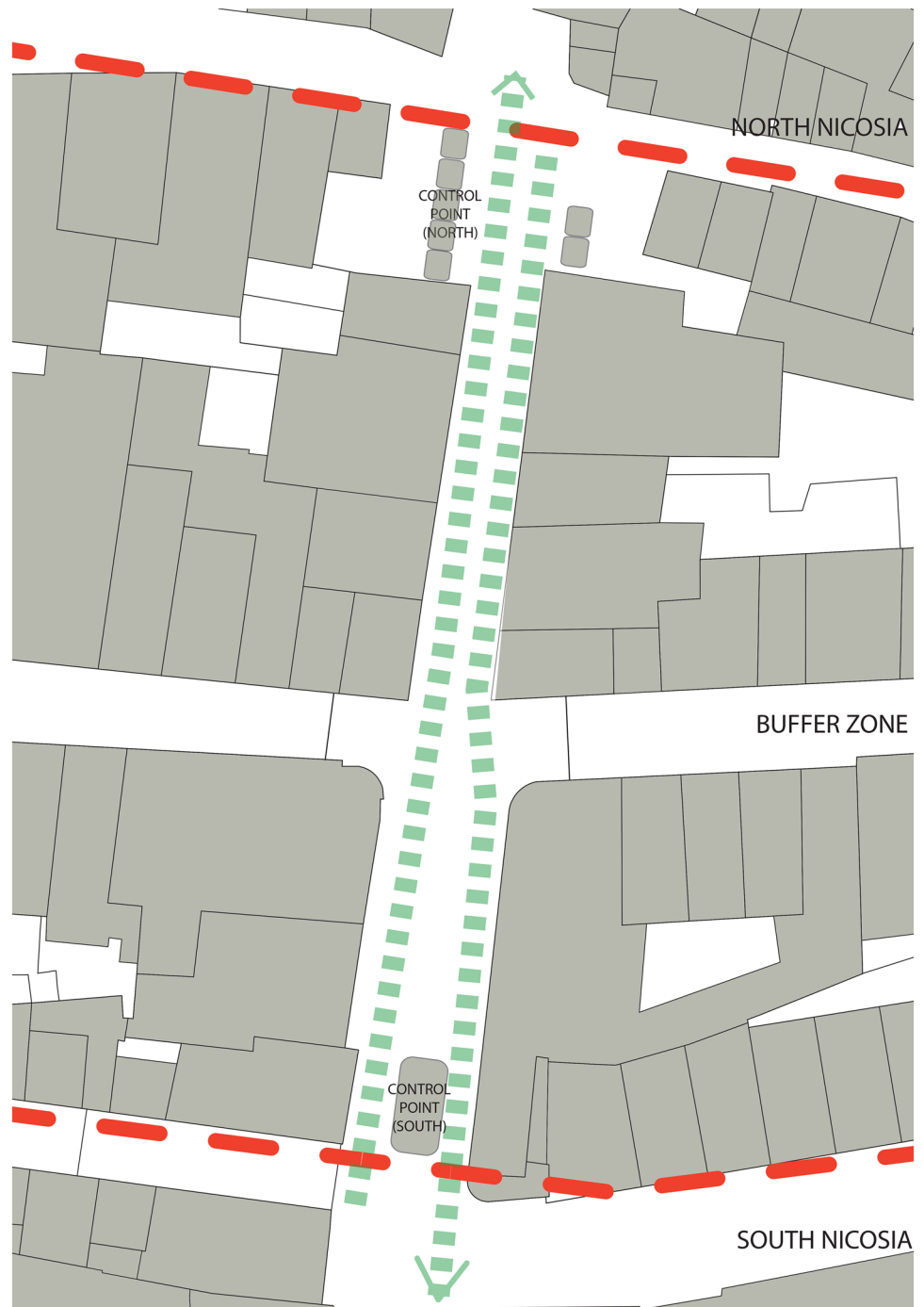
Fig. 4 **a** West Silhouette of Ledra Street Crossing Point. **b** East Silhouette of Ledra Street Crossing Point

another, interactions that enable them to transcend their isolation, learn from each other, and collaborate on the meaning and formation of the city. Participation requires residents to progressively take control of the development of urban space. As people participate in meaningful and active engagement, their collective strength becomes apparent, and they grow in their understanding of themselves as effective stewards of the urban environment and its collective life (Purcell 2014).

Contested cities, apart from their destructive consequences and conflict-generating roles, also serve as hubs for creativity, cultural mixing, accommodation, experimentation, and various forms of mobility and connectivity. These cities facilitate the exchange of ideas, trade, and cultural practises, transcending the boundaries of ideologies and religions. The aforementioned dynamics possess the capacity to foster enhanced relations or even reconciliation among conflicting parties, establish a socio-political framework characterised by collaboration and interdependence, and facilitate the development of non-violent approaches to conflict resolution and the management of incompatibilities (Elfversson et al. 2023). Briefly, when we look at contested cities, this division has also led to the creation of shared public spaces. Hence, it would be inadequate to directly apply the general successful criteria of the placemaking process in contested spaces, as it would undermine their special status. The dynamics of contested spaces differ from those of space as they are formed and influenced by factors such as politics, bureaucratic limitations, ethnic group separations, and spatial segregation. These divisions cannot be confined to the hostility between urban space users and exchangers. For instance, Mitchell (1995) highlights that within urban spaces, there is a dynamic interplay between

individuals with differing objectives, resulting in conflicts over city structure, public space accessibility, and even rights of citizenship (Martin 2003). However, in their quest for rights, they define these areas as places of resolution or peacebuilding.

The placemaking process often encounters challenges in contested environments where conflicting interests, power dynamics, and contested narratives shape public spaces. Placemaking in such contexts requires careful consideration of the unique complexities and the integration of successful criteria that promote inclusivity, collaboration, and sustainability. The acknowledgement of the segregated city as common raises the dilemma of how to provide shared access to and use of it for a diverse and unequal population. It raises the issue of successful criteria for the placemaking process in contested spaces: how the commons' limits would be defined, who would be included and excluded per the conditions, how the shared use and relationship to the environment would be arranged, and what social interactions would be established in the process (Bodirsky 2017). The concept of placemaking in contested spaces, which includes the creation of urban commons, has the ability to comprehend these politics; therefore, it was considered an evaluation tool that encompasses both supportive and adversarial relationships among the users of the space and emphasises all dimensions that make up spatial interactions of identification and differentiation. It inquires as to who defines belonging and entitlement in a certain location, as well as how these concepts are defined (Mahasti 2013). Successful criteria for the placemaking process in contested cities require different assessments. Consequently, the successful criteria of the placemaking process were adapted to contested spaces with the respect and permission of the Project

for Public Space. These criteria are compatible with investigating the successful criteria of the placemaking process in public places. However, some criteria are inconsistent with the research goals and objectives of successful criteria.

Adapting the "Successful Criteria of Placemaking Process" diagram from the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) to contested spaces is crucial for academic research as it provides a systematic framework to address the unique challenges and complexities of these areas. Contested spaces often suffer from conflicting interests, neglect, and social tensions, hindering their transformation into successful places. The adapted diagram serves as a valuable tool to identify key elements that can foster social cohesion, maximise economic potential, and promote cultural expression in contested spaces. This diagram helps researchers understand placemaking components and guide design and planning to create vibrant, inclusive places that meet community needs and aspirations. The adapted diagram provides a structured approach to analysing, evaluating, and improving the transformation of contested spaces, boosting placemaking success in challenging urban contexts. Researchers often need to customise diagrams for their research goals and context. A systematic approach ensures the adapted diagram is reliable, valid, and aligned with research objectives. Understanding the research goals will guide the adaptation process, ensuring that the modified diagram aligns precisely the study's focus. Secondly, thoroughly review the existing diagram that the research intends to adapt and its underlying theoretical framework. Analyse how the diagram has been used in previous studies and whether it has limitations or gaps that need to be addressed (Kumar 2019).

The Project for Public Spaces has helped 3500 communities in 51 countries meet their needs through public spaces since 1975. It is the go-to resource for placemaking as an approach to designing and managing public spaces with their daily users. The Project for Public Space framework was used to evaluate the case study because its diagram was shaped after thousands of public space evaluations worldwide (PPS 2009). With the consent of PPS, the diagram's adaptation for contested spaces focusses on successful criteria and their key attributes. The definition of contested space has only been reflected through literature research. The research criteria are contained in the list of 18 items. In the sociability key attribute, sharing space use was added instead of volunteerism because the criterion of sharing different ethnic groups in contested spaces will be a more descriptive form of expression. Sharing space use in contested spaces will help to determine the importance of the criterion that the space should have a sharing feature by different ethnic groups in the evaluation of the transformation in such contested spaces. Rather than the number of women, children, and elderly, the criterion regarding the diversity of the user group is used with the aim of

defining the importance of using the space by different ethnic groups. While this is related to the old criterion, it is thought that measuring different ethnic groups will be more explanatory in the determination of the criteria for the successful placemaking process since the area has a distinctive space feature. In the uses and activities key attribute, it is significant to understand the importance of the values of the surrounding environment and their effect on the surroundings in contested spaces, as criteria such as property values, rent levels, and retail sales do not exist. Even though the area itself cannot be analysed in line with the criteria, the importance of whether the area impacts its environment will be examined by investigating the value that it adds to its surroundings. Moreover, the significance of the attraction level of the space, the multifunctionality of the area, and the usage of public space should be taken into consideration accordingly. The multifunctionality criterion reveals the importance of how open the area will be for functional diversity, and the attraction level reveals the importance of the area being a symbol of attraction for users. In order to examine the importance of the use of public space in conflict areas, a small addition has been made to public space usage. In access and linkage, the flow of space would be used instead of traffic data, with a more comprehensive definition of the flow of space both for pedestrians and vehicles, since measuring the car traffic data in the area will not sufficiently contribute to the contested spaces, and there is a perception that generally pedestrians use the crossing points. The mode splits changed into linkage to the surrounding environment as the mode splits are only vehicular-oriented. The contribution of the contested spaces through the pedestrian would be insufficient as access to the contested spaces would not be as easy as any other space, and it would be more important to set the criterion of the importance of the relationship with the environment in the contested spaces. Instead of the transit usage criteria, the pedestrian activity criteria are used since the study focusses on pedestrian-oriented contested spaces, so that the significance of pedestrian activity can be investigated more efficiently. On the other hand, in the comfort and image key attributes, imageability and legibility have been added instead of environmental data to examine the importance of visibility and the impact of contested space. Additionally, despite the fact that local business ownership is a reality in the majority of the contested spaces under the control of the government, the military, etc., it cannot be added as a criteria. The diagram developed for literature review analysis has the potential to be used as an architectural approach to collect data from the field of case studies in contested public spaces. Figure 5b shows the adapted version of the diagram upon the adaptation of successful criteria for the placemaking process in contested spaces.
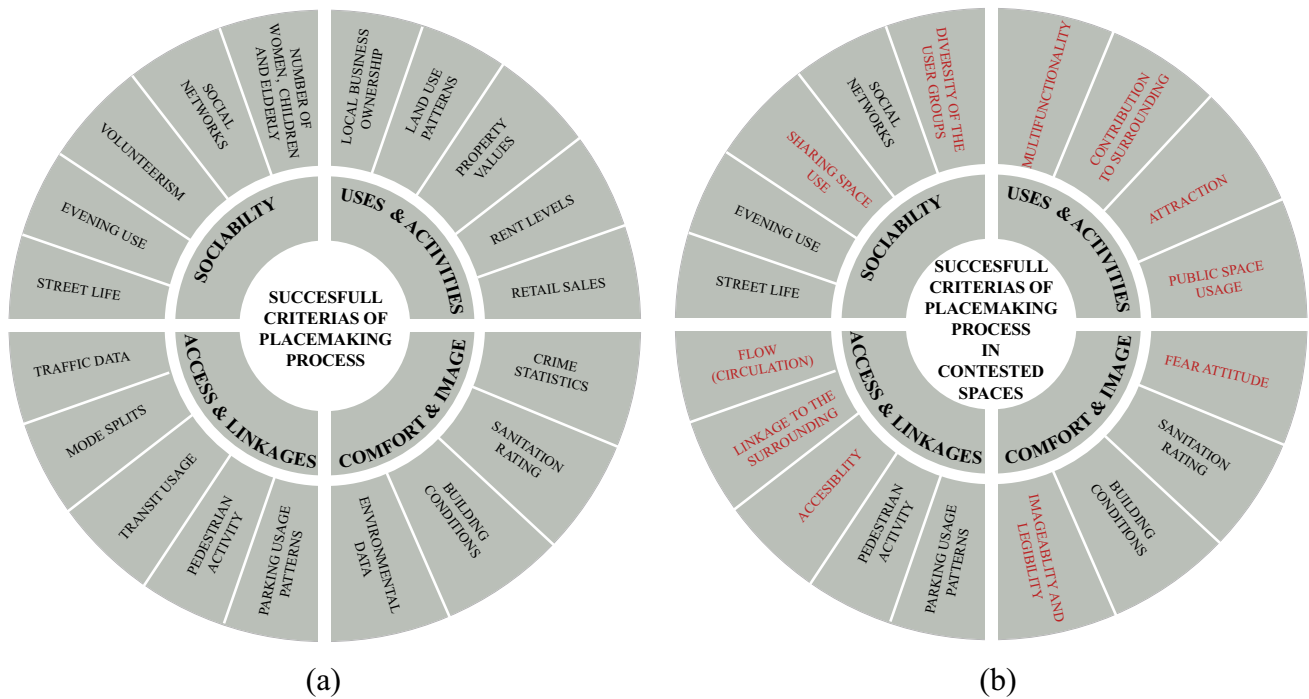
Fig. 5 **a** Successful criteria for Placemaking Process key attributes and criteria (Project for Public Spaces 2009 redrawn by authors); **b** 18 criteria of successful placemaking process diagram for contested spaces (adapted by Project for Public Space—drawn by authors)

Methodology

Instrument

The survey is used as a data collection tool focussing on NGOs in both the Northern and Southern parts of Cyprus and to reach more participants from NGOs that have previously organised any events at Ledra Street Crossing Point. Additionally, it is an appropriate means to reach participants from NGOs that have organised events at the Ledra Street Crossing Point. Based on the principle of volunteerism, the survey was ensured to reach the specified participants at the start of the survey. The survey was constructed on a five-point Likert scale (from (1) unimportant to (5) very important). The range of the Likert scale reflects their level of commitment and importance to certain criteria (Sullivan and Artino 2013). Therefore, the survey was designed to ask the significance level of the criteria for NGOs and investigate the successful criteria of the placemaking process and their interrelationship for the further placemaking process. The adapted successful criteria of the placemaking process scale with 18 items have 4 key attributes that refer to key attributes mentioned in the theoretical framework (Fig. 5b). These key attributes are defined as sociability (1st–5th), uses and activities (6th–9th), access and linkages (10th–15th), and comfort and image (16th–18th). In the total scoring of the data, 18–36 were defined as less important, 37–63 as average,

and 64–90 as very important. Additionally, sociability and access and linkages, which each consist of five items, were categorised into three levels: 5–11 less important, 12–18 average, and 19–25 very important. On the other hand, uses and activities and comfort and image, which consist of four items, were categorised into three levels as the total frequency of the four-item questions measuring image is scored as less important (5–9), average (10–15), and very important (16–20). The reliability and validity of the survey have an alpha value of 0.925 and a reliability margin of error of 0.05, which shows that the research is reliable. Moreover, the reliability for each key attribute is also analysed and identified, with the alpha value for sociability being = 0.702, uses and activities being = 0.697, access and linkages being = 0.835, and comfort and image being = 0.764, which shows that key attributes are also valid in the research.

Sampling: non-governmental organisations

NGOs in Cyprus facilitate the establishment of bridges between the two communities (Greek and Turkish Cypriots) by examining and resolving controversial problems. This has been partly accomplished by increasing awareness of the reasons and consequences of division, studying elements of interdependence, and advocating the benefits of involvement. Additionally, they have offered several examples of techniques that may be used to advance this process

by establishing preconditions for involvement and strengthening and expanding interaction possibilities (Gillespie et al. 2013). NGOs have a key role in creating spaces for dialogue and cooperation between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. They work to overcome prejudices and break down barriers by further developing links with local and international policymakers and institutions. Furthermore, they are much stronger players in the island's development process. When NGOs started to take part and organise events, participation in bi-communal activities that bring people together from both sides of the island increased (Civicus 2011). In 2015, Cyprus, as a member of the European Union (EU), along with other European states, made a commitment to reach the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. These integrated goals cover every area of human and economic activity, recognising that action in one area will affect other outcomes and that development must balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability. NGOs, CSOs, and other organisations are increasingly participating in funded projects that aim to raise awareness in areas related to sustainable development, such as contested spaces, improve their capacity to access and influence local communities, and respond to the complexities and challenges of adapting global issues to local contexts (Clifton and Amran 2011). The extensive networks of European and global partner organisations working with domestic expertise that have been organised by local organisations over the past few years have assisted the government in Cyprus to raise awareness related to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this respect, Cypriot NGOs and other organisations can initiate local action and seek to apply best practises and methods from elsewhere in Europe and the international arena via such goals and other synergistic relationships (Katemliadis and Markatos 2021).

Data collection

The study data were collected through an online survey platform called Survey Monkey. According to the database of Civic Space, there are 266 NGOs in South and North Cyprus. This database also includes the contact details of the relevant organisations that allowed the sending of survey invitations to them. Additionally, invitations were also sent to the NGOs listed under Table 3 that had previously organised events so that the research reached the right place. At the onset of the survey, an inquiry was included regarding the respondents' involvement in any events organised at Ledra Street Crossing Point. It was mandatory to answer this question before proceeding with the survey, in order to ensure that the sample represented the target group and to uphold the principle of volunteerism. While 126 different participants answered the survey, many participants did not reveal their NGOs. Since the survey was confidential

and considering the principles of remaining adherence to the privacy policy of the participants, it was left optional to write the name of the NGO, yet a total of thirteen NGOs' names were obtained.

Data analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilised to assess the correlation, frequencies, and cross-tabulation of the outcomes pertaining to the successful criteria of the placemaking process within the contested space. The study examined the frequencies of the findings in line with the study's purpose, analysed the frequency to observe the distribution of results, conducted correlation tests to identify relationships between key attributes and criteria, and utilised cross-tabulation to gain a meaningful understanding of these relationships in order to find research questions.

Findings

Frequency and percentages of the criteria in the placemaking process scale in contested spaces model: Ledra Street Crossing Point

The research examines the significance of placemaking processes as well as the key attributes and criteria for NGOs in Cyprus. Furthermore, an investigation was conducted to determine the potential interrelationship between the key attributes and significant criteria of the placemaking process. While the very important valid percent of all key attributes is 69%, when the percentage order is examined individually, it is revealed that sociability is 76.2%, uses and activities are 61.9%, access and linkage are 61.1%, and comfort and image are 42.9%, respectively.

A descriptive statistical method known as frequency analysis displays the frequency of each response that the respondents chose. The level of social networks is 77.8%, which is very important for the respondents. 57.9% and 51.6% of the respondents think that sharing space use and public space usage criteria are very important success criteria for the placemaking process of Ledra Street Crossing Point, respectively. Additionally, 50.8% of the respondents identified the multifunctionality of the space as very important, and 45.2% noted the accessibility level of the space as very important too. Lastly, the NGOs respond with 38.9% as diversity of the user group in the space and 42.1% as pedestrian activity use, which are crucial criteria.

The percentage of the criteria and key attributes of the research are given in Table 4, showing sociability as the most effective key attribute for the placemaking process and transformation of the space. The uses and activities also have a tangible effect on the successful criteria of the placemaking process at the Ledra Street Crossing Point, followed by

Table 3 Ledra Street Crossing Point people and important events year by year

Year	Total people	Important dates
2005—2007	Close	Demolishing of the bridge between North and South side of Ledra Street Crossing Point
April 2008	673,529	Preparation of the Ledra Street Crossing Point Opening of the Ledra Street Crossing Point
2009	830,301	
2010	925,344	Woman peace platform
2011	906,899	
2012	893,910	Unite Cyprus Now Teacher platform
2013	927,039	
2014	935,565	Political protests Human chain for Hüseyin Akansoy and Petros Suppuris
2015	944,634	No to war event
2016	1,011,467	Human chain for the #oth anniversary of the victims of Chernobyl 11 protests for no soldier in Nicosia Dual time zone new year party
2017	1,095,986	45 Unite Cyprus now events Human chain for peace day Playing flute with 100 people for peace New Year Event Unite Cyrus now discussion event (every Saturday)
2018	1,116,627	Presentation—from one checkpoint to another International Day Against Racism Journey inti Cyprus music and dance acts Unite Cyprus discussions (every Saturday)
2019	1,140,219	Open discussion for the development of Cyprus issue Panel: federation political equality and power sharing
2020	146,290	Restrictions and temporarily closure of crossing points due to Covid-19 Protests against closure of the Ledra Street Crossing Point Protest: standing against fear and division
2021	226,067	4 June 2021 Reopening of the Ledra Street Crossing Point
- October 2022	690,639	

Source Tourism Planning Office

access and linkage and comfort and image, respectively. The provided figure additionally displays the proportional representation of each criterion within the key attributes. In every key attribute, the criteria with the highest percentage are the level of social networks in sociability, public space usage in uses and activities, circulation of the space in access and linkages, and imageability and legibility in comfort and image, respectively.

Correlation of highest successful criteria of placemaking process in Ledra Street Crossing Point

The study also investigated the potential correlation between specific criteria and the highest rate observed in key attributes. Accordingly, the correlation between the quality of street life and pedestrian activity was questioned. According to the results, there is a positive correlation between the quality of street life and pedestrian activity ($r=0.614$, $n=126$, $p=0.000$).

Also, the quality of street life has a high and positive correlation with access and linkages ($r=0.738$, $n=126$, $p=0.001$) and uses and activities ($r=0.622$, $n=126$, $p=0.001$). On the other hand, there is no significant correlation between the level of social network and other key attributes such as access and linkages, comfort and image, and uses and activities. The usage of evening time has a high and positive correlation with access and linkages ($r=0.853$, $n=126$, $p=0.001$), comfort and image ($r=0.503$, $n=126$, $p=0.001$), and uses and activities ($r=0.740$, $n=126$, $p=0.001$). The diversity of the user group has a high and positive correlation with its access and linkages ($r=0.777$, $n=126$, $p=0.001$) and uses and activities ($r=0.651$, $n=126$, $p=0.001$).

Table 4 The average percentages of successful criteria and key attributes of Ledra Street Crossing Point

Key Attributes	Criteria	N	Percentages
Sociability	Level of social networks (socialising)	126	100
Sociability	Sharing space use	124	98.4
Uses and activities	Public space usage	122	96.8
Access and linkages	Accessibility level of the space	117	92.8
Uses and activities	Multifunctionality of the space	117	92.8
Access and linkages	Circulation(flow)of the space	98	77.8
Comfort and image	Imageability and legibility of the space	95	75.3
Sociability	Diversity of the user group in the space	90	71.4
Access and linkages	Quality of pedestrian activity	87	69.1
Access and linkages	Linkage to the surrounding environment	87	69.1
Sociability	Quality of street life	87	69.1
Uses and activities	Contribution level to surrounding environment	86	68.2
Comfort and image	Conditions of the buildings	75	59.5
Comfort and image	Sanitation level	75	59.5
Sociability	Usage of evening time	68	54
Comfort and image	Level of fear attitude towards the space	63	50
Uses and activities	Attraction level of the space	63	58
Access and linkages	Parking usage patterns	51	40.5

Interrelation between key attributes of the placemaking process at Ledra Street Crossing Point

According to the findings, the correlation of key attributes is analysed to ensure that the technique is equally relevant between the key attributes in the case area. The evidence demonstrates that there is a positive and high correlation between sociability and all the other key attributes such as access and linkages ($r = 0.704$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.000$), uses and activities ($r = 0.713$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.000$), and comfort and image ($r = 0.462$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.000$). In addition to such findings, the uses and activities key attribute has a positive and high correlation with access and linkages ($r = 0.645$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.000$) and comfort and image ($r = 0.648$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.000$). Lastly, the correlation chart shows that there is a positive and high correlation between the access and linkages key attribute and the comfort and image key attribute ($r = 0.618$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.001$) (Table 5).

Upon analysing the crosstab findings with respect to the key attributes, it becomes evident that a significant majority of respondents (68.8%) expressed a high level of importance for access and linkages, as well as comfort and image. Upon examining the cross-tabulation analysis of sociability and access and linkage, it is evident that a significant proportion of participants, specifically 80.2%, perceive both factors as highly important. It has been determined that those considering uses and activities as very important also said access and linkages are very important, with 85.9%. 81.2% of NGOs that consider sociability very important also noted that use and activities are key attributes. The rate of respondents

Table 5 Correlations of the key attributes of placemaking process in Ledra Street Crossing Point

	Access and linkages	Comfort and image	Sociability	Uses and activities
Access and linkages				
Pearson correlation	1			
Sig. (2-tailed)				
N	126			
Comfort and image				
Pearson Correlation	.618**	1		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
N	126	126		
Sociability				
Pearson correlation	.704**	.462**	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
N	126	126	126	
Uses and activities				
Pearson correlation	.645**	.648**	.713**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
N	126	126	126	126

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

who indicate that uses and activities and comfort and image key attributes are very important is 69.2%. Moreover, the most significant criteria for each key attribute were analysed (Fig. 6). Thus, the level of socialising is the most important factor in sociability's key attribute. Secondly, accessibility level to the space is the greatest response to access and linkages. Thirdly, public space usage is the most significant

Fig. 6 Distribution of the percentage criteria in Ledra Street Crossing Point
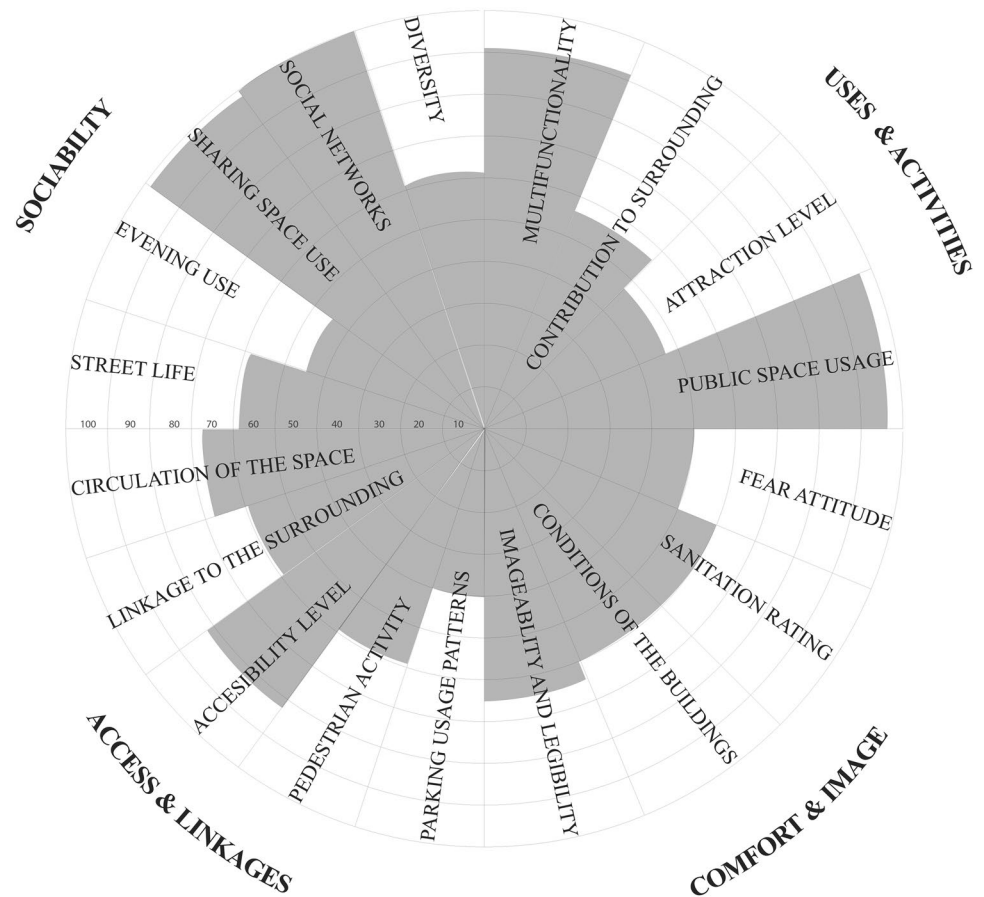
criteria in terms of uses and activities. Lastly, imageability and legibility of the space are the most significant criteria in comfort and image key attribute. The correlation of the highest key attributes was analysed, and it is concluded that there is only a high and positive correlation between imageability and legibility of the space (comfort and image) and public space usage (uses and activities) ($r = 0.379$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.000$) and only one positive correlation between level of social network and circulation of the space (flow) ($r = 0.215$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.005$).

The study also analysed the highest criteria of each key attribute's correlation with all criteria where the level of social networks has a high and meaningful correlation between the three criteria in other key attributes such as accessibility level of the space, multifunctionality of the space, and linkage to the surrounding environment. On the other hand, public space usage has a high and positive correlation with sharing space use ($r = 0.367$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.000$), multifunctionality of the space ($r = 0.259$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.005$), parking usage patterns ($r = 0.298$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.005$), and level of fear attitude towards space ($r = 0.300$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.005$). The circulation of the space criteria at Ledra Street Crossing Point has a high and

positive correlation with the twelve criteria out of 18 (see Online Appendix 2). Lastly, imageability and legibility of the space have a high and positive correlation with sharing space use, accessibility level of the space, parking usage patterns, level of fear attitude towards the space, sanitation level, and conditions of the building (Fig. 6).

Given that it is essential for all criteria to be in equilibrium within each key attribute, a thorough analysis is conducted on the lowest criteria of the scale. This examination leads to the conclusion that all criteria exhibit strong and positive correlations. For instance, the attraction level of the space (uses and activities) has a high and positive correlation with usage in the evening ($r = 0.816$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.000$), parking usage patterns ($r = 0.863$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.000$), and a level of fearful attitude towards the space ($r = 0.724$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.000$). Also, usage of the evening time criterion (sociability) has a high and positive correlation with parking usage patterns ($r = 0.660$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.000$) and level of fear attitude towards space ($r = 0.697$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.000$). Lastly, level of fear attitude towards space also has a high and positive correlation with parking usage patterns ($r = 0.692$, $n = 126$, $p = 0.001$) (Table 6).

Table 6 Correlation of lowest criteria of each key attributes at Ledra Street Crossing Point

	Usage of evening time	Attraction level of the space	Parking usage patterns crossing point	Level of fear attitude towards the space
Usage of evening time				
Pearson correlation	1			
Sig. (2-tailed)				
N	126			
Attraction level of the space				
Pearson Correlation	.816**	1		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
N	126	126		
Parking usage patterns around crossing point				
Pearson correlation	.660**	.863**	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
N	126	126	126	
Level of fear attitude towards the space				
Pearson correlation	.697**	.724**	.660**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	
N	126	126	126	126

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Discussion

As stakeholders at Ledra Street Crossing Point, NGOs have the power to offer potential resources to inform and implement expert interventions to find the relevance and importance of successful criteria for placemaking processes. Furthermore, in accordance with Cilliers and Timmermans' (2014) assertion, an understanding of the established criteria and their interrelationships has the potential to enhance the spatial process and the development of contentious areas. Thus, the criteria set by NGOs and their correlations hold the potential to play a pivotal role in the integration planning of the Ledra Street Crossing Point within the city. The effective implementation of the placemaking process, which involves community engagement, collaborative decision-making, and creative placemaking strategies, can significantly contribute to the success of the transformation (Hou 2010). This criterion highlights the role of community empowerment, cultural expression, and the activation of public spaces in creating a vibrant and inclusive environment.

Which categories are important and constitute the placemaking process at Ledra Street Crossing Point by NGOs?

According to the results, sociability is the most significant key attribute (76.2%) in the placemaking process of Ledra Street Crossing Point. Also, the criteria of sociability, such as the level of social networks, sharing space use, diversity of the user group, and quality of the street life, are considered essential by the respondents. Moreover, as Cilliers and Timmermans (2014) stated, defining the successful criteria of the placemaking process is subject to spatial processes that incorporate the social dynamics of the contested spaces. This result indicates that social key attributes are significant criteria for the successful placemaking process at the Ledra Street Crossing Point. Taking into account each criterion, it can be argued that the space in question holds significant value as a social networking area for NGOs. This is primarily due to its location at the Ledra Street Crossing Point, situated within the Walled City of Nicosia, which is encompassed by various historical landmarks, squares, and streets. On the other hand, the importance of quality of street life criteria shows that Ledra Street had an ongoing circulation between North and South before the division and that the resumption of this street will also be an effective criteria in the placemaking process of the area and surrounding environment. The diversity of the user group highlights that it is important to focus on the diversity of users to make the space equal for the two main communities (Greek and Turkish Cypriots) and other groups at Ledra Street Crossing Point. Due to the situation of the island and location of the crossing point, sharing space use is significant for Ledra Street Crossing Point because it has the potential to increase the interaction between two communities, reunite the diverse communities, and needs to be taken into consideration for the future planning of the area. The successful transformation of the Ledra Street Crossing Point should prioritise social inclusion by ensuring the active participation and representation of diverse stakeholders, including local communities, NGOs, and civil society organisations (Moore and Klinenberg 2016). This criterion emphasises the

importance of creating a sense of ownership, fostering social cohesion, and ensuring equitable access to the transformed space. Designing spaces that facilitate social interaction is another key consideration. Incorporating elements such as gathering spaces, community gardens, art installations, and recreational areas can encourage positive social connections, foster a sense of community, and promote interactions among diverse groups (Carr et al. 2012). Additionally, adaptive reuse and the preservation of historical buildings contribute to the authenticity and identity of contested spaces. Integrating historical buildings, cultural symbols, and local traditions strengthens the connection between the past and present, generating a sense of place and cultural continuity (Tiesdell et al. 2014). These strategies also contribute to sustainability by minimising resource consumption and reducing urban sprawl.

Is there any correlation between placemaking key attributes in Ledra Street Crossing Point?

The correlation levels between key attributes in the findings increased estimation accuracy. These correlations between the study's key attributes will help researchers estimate other criteria highly related to the key attributes and guide future development for Ledra Street Crossing Point's successful transformation. According to the research findings, there is a correlation between access and linkages with all the other key attributes such as sociability, uses and activities, and comfort and image since the Ledra Street Crossing Point, which is a contested space, is an UN-controlled area. Because of the bureaucratic barriers, the accessibility of the space has more limitations than an ordinary public space, and it is seen that the key attribute can affect all other key attributes. On the other hand, uses and activities have a correlation with all the other key attributes, which are sociability, access and linkages, and comfort and image. It has been observed that the increase in activities and usage in this space is related to all the key attributes of the Ledra Street Crossing Point and that all the successful criteria of the placemaking process will increase in parallel with the activity and usage key attribute criteria. It means that activities and usage, a key attribute, will be significantly affected by organising events and increasing the number of panels, discussions, art, music, and cultural events at the Ledra Street Crossing Point. The correlation between comfort and image and sociability and uses and activities as key attributes shows that the perception of people in contested spaces and the feeling of comfort in such spaces are essential issues since it is a post-war space. Considering the comfort and image criteria of this space, the building conditions, sanitation level, fear attitude, and imageability and legibility of the space are directly related to the social perception and usage of the Ledra Street Crossing Point. As researchers,

we suggest minimising the presence of military forces and political signs and completing the renovation of existing buildings for reuse. Moreover, reducing the bureaucratic limitations across the street would directly affect the key attributes of comfort and image.

What are the most important successful criteria for each key attribute at the Ledra Street Crossing Point for NGOs?

The most important successful criteria in each key attribute are level of socialising (sociability), accessibility level to the space (access and linkages), public space usage (uses and activities), and imageability and legibility (comfort and image). The level of socialising, which is the most important criteria in the sociability key attribute, is an essential component of the criteria for NGOs. Since this kind of contested space is considered a potential space for socialising and creating meaningful spaces for diverse groups and people from different ethnic origins, it should be emphasised. Inclusive and participatory processes are essential, involving the active engagement of diverse stakeholders such as local communities, NGOs, and civil society organisations. By fostering meaningful participation, co-creation of spaces is enabled, diverse perspectives are included, and a sense of ownership and belonging among stakeholders is cultivated (Colding and Barthel 2013). The accessibility level of the space in the access and linkages key attribute is an indication that the procedure for entering and exiting this space and bureaucratic barriers need to be updated again to minimise the time consumption and paperwork to create an easy-access and more reachable space. Moreover, NGOs believe that the most significant criterion for uses and activities is public space usage. Ledra Street is divided into two by the Ledra Street Crossing Point. This contested space should be transformed into a space that embraces the public and uses its potential by adding elements that will increase public use. For example, this space can be enriched publicly by designing the seating elements and improving the landscape design. Since imageability and legibility are the most important criterion of the comfort and image key attributes, they can influence the perception of the space itself, the surrounding environment, society, and visitors in a good or bad direction. If the perception of common space is adapted to the Ledra Street Crossing Point instead of post-war reminder elements, the perception of the space will develop in a positive way. Understanding the emotional response to urban public space is important for the decision-making process when developing urban areas (Kaklauskas et al. 2021). It was important for the spatial process and development in contested space to investigate the criteria by which each key attribute was considered the most important by the NGOs. This order has assisted in the placemaking

process and transformation of the Ledra Street Crossing Point by identifying the criteria that needed to be addressed first in each key attribute. Considering that different criteria may become prominent in each contested space, it is crucial for the researchers to investigate the most important criteria in key attributes to understand the significance and relation of the criteria to future planning.

Conclusion and further suggestions

Conclusion

Ledra Street Crossing Point is a space that divides the street into two parts but at the same time connects the diverse communities. The presence of such a contested space, as characterised by Richard Sennett, can act as an interface for dialogue and exchange (Sennett and Sendra 2022). It can allow people in all their diversity to engage in different activities and events, whether their diverse interests are in agreement or are conflictual. As such, Ledra Street Crossing Point can be defined as a shared and contested space at the same time.

In conclusion, this study aimed to define the successful criteria of the placemaking process in contested spaces and construct an architectural approach for the sustainable development of contested spaces along the Buffer Zone of Nicosia, Cyprus. Ledra Street Crossing Point was selected as a case study among several crossing points in Cyprus. The research aimed to contribute to the definition of successful criteria for the placemaking process in contested spaces. This article has supported the understanding of the placemaking process of contested spaces by analysing the key attributes and criteria of the space. Non-governmental organisations as stakeholders of Ledra Street Crossing Point show that some of the successful criteria and their relations need to be considered by other stakeholders and decision-makers for the future planning of the space.

Several types of research have been carried out on the Buffer zone prior to and after the opening of the crossing points. It has also been established that this area is not only used as a transition space but is also a potential space for rigorous public use due to its location and uniqueness. Nonetheless, there is less research in the literature on the development and placemaking processes of these contested spaces and their impact on the city. The successful criteria and their key attributes are investigated by examining Ledra Street Crossing Point as a contested space through the placemaking process in the present study. These successful criteria constitute the outline to guide the placemaking process and evaluation of the Ledra Street Crossing Point and the successful transformation of the contested and shared city of Nicosia. The results show that the key attribute of sociability is the most significant factor in the placemaking process at Ledra Street Crossing Point. As Timmerman and Elizelle said, successful and lively places can be characterised by this social orientation as addressing the needs of the communities that are the actual users of the space (Cilliers and Timmermans 2014).

"Placemaking" is a bottom-up, asset-based, transformational process that emphasises collaboration and community participation to improve the livability of towns and cities. In this term, the interrelation and correlation of the successful criteria and their key attributes will be beneficial for the placemaking process and the transformation of the Ledra Street Crossing Point and will be valuable for the future strategies of similar contested spaces (Arefi 2014). These lead to an instrument for the placemaking process and transformation of the contested space and highlight the critical success criteria for future strategies for Ledra Street Crossing Point, which will guide such contested spaces in the literature.

Further suggestion

The authors believe that this study holds significant implications for future research into contested geographies that would inform policymakers and other stakeholders. Further investigation can take advantage of the proposed theoretical approach or model and look at different case studies of contested spaces that are in the placemaking process. The research is limited to the successful criteria and their key attributes taken for granted by the Project for Public Spaces. Because of this, the research can be expanded by adding intangible factors to the PPS diagram and making a comparative study with other crossing points. Moreover, the research can be expanded by structured, in-depth interviews with the NGO leaders to find out how to improve the significant findings of the Ledra Street Crossing Point.

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