CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

5.1. Discussion of the Key elements and issues of the study

The results from this survey research portrays that respondents took numerous factors into account when forming opinions about the appropriateness of public square. Survey results show that respondents preferred not use the square, lack of amenities, lost meaning, or because of foreign labour crowds who dominates the square. More respondents considered the square is used by outsiders for their communication, rather than an act as a space for expression and communication for local community. The data suggest that there is a need for more community involvement and input on revitalizing the square by the reasons why the square is underutilized by most of the local residents.

Most of the people find, the square’s function as a community meeting place is not recognized in its physical and socio-cultural factors, one of the reasons is the space is dominated by outsiders rather than local community. As a result, the square is being turned into an ‘errand-machine’ A lack of a well-functioning, well-maintained center, according to them, there is nothing they can be proud of or recognized other than the national flag. That, in turn, can create conditions for segregation, social depletion, physical desecration etc. However, the Square has lost its historical and cultural aspects.

In the first time period of Republican Square, the physical setting as its monuments, surrounding buildings, activities and social life were recognized and valued as the “commons” of the community. However, the beginning of 2000 starts with smash hit of multicultural ideas and ideologies. Due to the rapid political and social transformation, the society was changing rapidly, freedom from political arena, technology and science and had accelerated development in travel, communication and finance. These changes had altered the way in which society experience the space, activities and to the physical attribution of the square and eventually caused a huge impact in declining and abandoning the square.
The response to the questionnaires and physical spatial analysis indicate that there are not many changes in the physical setting and they still have a vivid image of the surrounding environment as a collective memory. However it can be observed that, the reconstruction of collective memory happened due to the changing roles of the square with missing significant activities and elements and according to the respondents, there is nothing they can be proud of or recognized other than the national flag. As a result, the square is being turned into a space without meaning, which, in turn, creates conditions for segregation, social depletion, physical desecration.

5.2 Collective Memory & Its Role in Urban Public Life – in responding to the case study

The literature review on collective memory has shown that the discipline is concerned with the interactions and relationships between shared memory of people and their experience with the urban public sphere. The emphasis has been on how collective memory and shared past history are affected by the public space in positive and negative way. The impact of collective memory could cause decline and lead to a loss of values and identities of public spaces. On the other hand if the squares designed with respect to people’s collective memory, the square can be a facilitator and a mediator, naturally bringing different people together, thus creating a sense of security, urbanity and social cohesion. As Elizabat Loftus pointed out that memory is a constructive and reconstructive phenomenon. If you feed misinformation about an experience a person had before,
or if he had a bad experience about a place he admired before, it might leads to alter his person about that place in accordance to his understanding (Loftus, 2012).

The study depicts that most of the people mentioned that they are more attached with the old fountain, surrounding buildings, national flag etc.; obviously these could be the significant elements of the Republican Square and were always remembered by people. But only those elements that have a distinguished form were definitely linked to a specific location – either they are unique or they belong to a family of elements that furnish a certain place. The case study portrays that collective amnesia happened because of neglecting or removing memorable elements and feeding and obtaining false information about the space. For example; a lot of people feel that the “space” is more appropriate for protest and political demonstration, but most of them never involved in such activities in the space. That means the alteration of their perception about square occurred through other means, perhaps the media, other people’s experience and stories.

The symbolism which creates collective memory is an essential component in maintaining the peaceful coexistence of the global and the local. However, all of the local issues that discussed in the case study have implications that extend beyond Male’. Male’ is, but one example of what is happening to the squares of today’s cities, where considering that this has become a collective phenomenon. Therefore, If a square want to successful with full of people, the quality of the square must be enhanced with collective experience of the people, which revitalizing the square means influencing the image of the city within the collective memory of the inhabitants.