

# Cubicle Shelter: New Spaces for the Tokyo Homeless

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## Abstract

This paper explores the intersection of new urban spaces and new modalities of ‘homelessness’ in Japanese cities. We argue that the recent social phenomenon of “net café refugees” (*netto kafe nanmin* – people who substitute ‘manga cafes’ for their domestic residence) is conditioned by new forms of leisure, information technology, social manners, and the long-term contraction of the Japanese domestic economy. The utility of leisure spaces in Tokyo has shifted in parallel with changes in the work habits and professional expectations among the Japanese poor and lower middle class. White-collar workers substitute karaoke’s and saunas for living rooms, and they use capsule hotels in place of regular bedrooms. Many students and the chronic unemployed spend virtually all their time in gaming cafes and 24- hour’s convenience stores. This study investigates the co-evolution of the “hidden homeless” and Tokyo Internet and comic book spaces called “manga cafés.” Why are more Japanese people ‘living’ in manga net café’s? What can this tell us about changes in the Japanese urban fabric and social landscape? This work will try to investigate assumptions about distinction between public and private, what the role of “hidden homeless” in the process of changes of public space for private use and the dynamic of changes certain space under social changes.

Keywords: manga café, public space, private space, Internet, Tokyo, temporary homeless, *nanmin*

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## **Foreword**

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## Introduction

For long time urban scientists assumed physical and social dynamics of public space play a central role in the development of public culture. City streets, parks, squares, and other discrete spaces were seen as symbols of collective prosperity and possibility, expressions of progress and endeavor by municipal guidance, sites of public exchange and building of civic; culture, and spaces of political deliberation and reform. Increasing urbanization and the new social challenges brought with it has modified the role of public space. Generally speaking, since the end of nineteenth century under the influence of essential economic, political and cultural changes the city becomes a basis for a new stage of modernization where urban population grows, internal migration within the city rises, and new forms of social and cultural interaction between space and people emerge. The notion of public space is recognized as a place that is not private, offering public access to its facilities, without commercial basis; a place where people meet each other without regard to their social status or role in society. In the Japanese context in particular the binary of public and private is transgressed or blurred from so called “outside” and “inside” viewpoints. “Inside” viewpoint means individuals use public space (or so-called public space) for private needs. And “outside” viewpoint includes state interference in so-called private spaces, in terms of organization or domestic activities.

Though there are continuous changes and transformations in how public and private places are categorized, as values which they possess, depending on their contexts, the distinction of public/personal space can hardly be recognized because one space can become a part of another. The value of a public place can lie outside of its physical borders and there can be an emotional value of space that connects status of the space with its inhabitants. Thus, people influence the position of the space; in terms of Japanese manga café, “new host service” (people living there) leads to a discussion of whether that space should be labeled as public or private.

If we look at Japan past few decades, the existence of new public places as spaces of social and cultural interaction has explained process of self-identification. People associated themselves with the place and forms of social relations are transformed. In such circumstances the traditional understanding of the dichotomy between public and private is becoming blurred, the new waves of urban renewal and the bubble economy brought with them different phenomena specific to Japanese society. This work investigates the situation of net café refugee or so called “hidden

homeless” (NNN document, NTV first presented publicly this term) in an attempt to confront new challenges in the study of urban space, specifically that of the Japanese manga café. Understanding how people start to live in manga cafes raises the question of the features of manga net café as social place. Should it be assigned as public space with private use or as pseudo-public or as a private new Internet oasis for abandoned citizens? The introduction of concepts of public and private in Japan within the problem of temporary homeless brings attention to the question of processes of utility and usage of urban public spaces as conditions of a social reality of daily life.

### 1.1. Research problem and relevance

Nowadays we live in the era of globalized cities that are becoming so-called mega-slums and products of super-fast economic and ethnic migration like Orangi Township in Karachi, Dharavi slum in Mumbai or Hong Kong’s Kowloon in the 50-70’s. But the locality of certain spaces still does matters. The object of this research is a type of Japanese urban place known as manga internet café. With the recent phenomena of people starting to live there it becomes necessary to comprehend what kind of transformation this particular type of space experiences. Since 2007 there have been constant mentions in the Japanese media and in internet blogs about the problem of *nanmin* (“refugees” in Japanese), their reasons for not having proper home, and their preference for manga-kissa as a place to live for a while. The presence of privacy in cafes consisting of cubicle rooms while at the same time having public areas inside demonstrates complexity of defining boundaries between public and private. According to Yuasa Makoto (Yuasa, interview for Moyai, 2007) and Hiroaki Mizushima (Mizushima, 2007), social poverty and constant competition with world economic standards challenges Japanese society to make such a phenomena as “net café refugee” into a permanent reality. It is interesting to note a degree to which these guests have affected manga cafés because neither owner nor customers can estimate it is a public or a private place. Thus, this paper aims to find out where the distinction between private and public lies in terms of the status of the manga café. What type of space it could it be related to considering the phenomena of *nanmin*, and what is the dynamic of transformation for public place for private use?

So, the purpose of the study is to investigate whether manga net café can be called public space with people living there, or does it so-called pseudo-public place (Mitchell, 1995) represent a new type of shelter for the city's homeless? With regards to the occurrence of *nanmin* in manga cafés what will be the role of the space for their future? And how important will be the boundary between public private spaces?

Based on analysis of Japanese urban public space, utility of the space involves a variety of disciplines such as human geography and cultural human geography. The rise of urban subcultures develops the theme of manga cafés in terms of recent social changes including how public places can be seen transformed into more private zones (Gottdiener, 1997:205). It can be important to study because the field of the topic contains an opportunity to observe the integration of some groups of people into particular layers of public areas, find out the reasons and patterns of their emergence and also helps to define the status of the place. The so-called “hidden homeless” are literally people without a fixed address who appear to be ordinary people (Yoshida, 2010). As Maruyama marks: “Unlike some other countries, “homeless” refers only to people who are actually sleeping rough and doesn't include people who have inadequate, temporary or unsafe housing, such as shelters, institutions and cheap hostels”( Maruyama, 2004:1). However, in many cases, some of them are employed on a daily basis but can't afford to rent a room or apartment. Japanese media and some researchers have called these people, mainly “freeters” (Japanese word *furita* means freelancers or unemployed), “lost generation” or “lost youths” for whom absence of loyalty to traditional Japanese employment leads to an imbalance between home and work (Smith, 2010). Having open public access to all facilities of a café while at the same time having the chance for privacy in a cubicle and to hide themselves (assumption about *nanmin*) from public makes the discussion about public and private intriguing. Perhaps the sense of belonging and home shapes this new type of the space? As the place of leisure with various services together with the phenomena of net café refugee manga-kissa is assumed to become a new oasis for those people left behind in traditional Japanese society, but the arguable aspect of this topic- being whether it is as new unplanned home or temporary public shelter? Can space shape people's pace of life and grow to more or less a new type of “net hostel” for actual people's needs? Or does this new arisen class of “hidden homeless” tend to influence cultural and social life and as further consequence of their internal migration around public places change the space from public place to private?

## 1.2. Theories and concepts of the paper

Public and private are both fundamental concepts in social science. Although interpretations of these ideas have modified over time, they have always existed in opposition to one another. Private space is conceptualized as a local place where social reproduction emerges from direct control by outside forces (e.g. the state). Public space is where space belongs to the community but is regulated by dominant social norms (Drummond, 2000).

As Madanipour points out that “distinction between public and private is everywhere around us, from our daily routines of living and passing through different shades of private and public spaces, to patterns of behavior which we perform in accordance with the character of these spaces” (Madanipour, 2003:47). Low and Smith write that “public” has a vague definition but it “traditionally differentiated from private space in terms of the rules of accesses, the source and nature of control over entry to a space, individual and collective behavior sanctioned in specific spaces and rules of use” (Low and Smith, 2006:4). When this study talks about private it is according to Madanipour’s research about personal space that private space is individual part of social space which people apply to operate for their “exclusive use” (Madanipour, 2003:68). It is considered to be the physical home (physical shelter) which has significance as a place for rest, safety and privacy. Wacks also defines private though several implications: “seclusion, solitude or private affairs” (Wacks, 1993). His suggestion also confirms the long-standing viewpoint that if the place is not public it is private.

Concepts of public and private are marked as “important” concepts in the organization of public life in Western societies (Benn and Gaus, 1983, p. 25). The public place and personal space are important subjects in human and cultural geography which aims to research human and surrounding environment with social and cultural patterns of observation. However, there is an academic discussion about borders between public and private in the western tradition, as MacDowell (1999, p. 149) considers distinction of public and private “in the social relation” (ibid.), to specific moments and places. The thing is that the distinction between private and public are seen from perspective of one’s “inner self” and “outside the world”. The concept of inner self emerges from so called view of “first person” and “third person” on the world. And the viewpoint of those people and outside space are always constructed on their interaction, so the privacy of that or this place is assigned to a result of social process in the place (Madanipour, 2003).

The concept of public and private traditionally (tradition in conceptualizing public and private) follows the definition of “public sphere” established by Habermas (Habermas and Lenox, 1974:52) but this distinction is also used as a conceptual framework in social and cultural processes regarding public space. So some principles of human and cultural geography explaining human relations in specific places or the organization of certain spaces within interaction and communication can lead to analysis of the role and features of studied space. This theory of cultural geography distinguishes space and people in space, relations of their activities and relations between place and people. There are also new branches of human and cultural geography which this research can use, such as “new cultural geography”, turns a critical eye on ideas about identification of space and public (Goheen, 1998). Also Zukin alerts us to the necessity to reestablish assumptions about public place which “require transcending private interests” (Zukin, 1995). Public place has been emptied of its social meaning and the distinction between public and private becomes blurry. And considering that in all post-industrial cities public space is more compressed and private space is rapidly expanded, the definition and the role of the public and private are more fluid.

This study looks specifically at the social transformation of Japanese manga net café as assumed public place in Tokyo. Since Japanese manga net café cannot be called as public place as for example parks, avenues or streets the discussion about it will focus on determination around “public-private” distinction or can public place obtain features of private space. In order to develop this idea it is necessary to mention the concept of *muen* and *raku* regardless Japanese space. Amino Yoshihiko (1987) defines three principles of urban public space: *kugai*, *muen* and *raku* – local historical ideas from Japanese medieval period (Hanada, 2011:612). *Kugai* literally means public realm and refers to public sphere. *Muen* is a key principle of definition of *kugai* and refers to “property of something being unconnected or unbound” (ibid: 613). There are no needs to have ownership and it let space have freedom from any social communication. Based on the concept of *muen* the place is kind of the place of no relation, “outside the order of things” (Chaplin, 2010). It refers not only to sacred places but public places as markets, posts, riverbanks. As for *raku* it includes idea ‘a desire place’ – social public space where relations between people and people and space are intermitted. Thus, to analyze the role and status of the Japanese space- manga café mentioned concepts could be used to define the position of the public

place. Analysis of manga-kissa suggests the idea that it has obtained the elements of *raku* principle when people and place are dependent on each other but at the same time there are certain relations that do not define the role of the place for people: home, shelter or temporary leisure space. As Yoshihiko writes there are difference between *kugai* and modern public place, which is based on aspects of urbanization, settlements. Also he opposed that public in the West regards also to “private ownership of property”, but *kugai* is in relation of “opposition or autonomy from the state authority”. In terms of studied space this concept could be used as presentation of the strategy for public autonomy (Hanada, 2011).

Apart from it the term “third place” offered by Oldenburg is appeared to be able to describe “manga-kissa” as possible other place – such as not home or workplace which nominally are “first” and “second” places. Oldenburg asserts that those “third places” are important not only because of alternative meetings for people but also social and cultural interaction occur in those places with various activities (Oldenburg, 1997). Being as home and workplace (some “refugees” still have temporary 1-2 days jobs which usually require only access to Internet) at the same time Japanese manga net café is not appropriate “third place” in Oldenburg’s terms, however, it is still alternative space for escape. He presents “third place” as a neutral public space for communication and socialization outside of work and home. The features of those places contain “inclusiveness, lack of class boundaries, and relatively high amount of freedom” (ibid.). Based on this idea the purpose of manga café and its existence for people who choose to live there is relatively similar to the place where they may find security, freedom from family (or society) pressure. But the phenomena of that situation with manga café and *nanmin* that it plays the role of so-called “first place”. Ordinary customers of manga net café manage to find the alternative for leisure time there- surfing Internet and reading comic books, but hidden homeless from time to time can perceive it as all these three places: home, workplace, entertainment space. In this case space and people as the one module are important to examine boundaries in terms of public and private.

Finally, using public –private set from two subjects consider differentiation of the public from the private from the point of view of access and pressure over space, patterns of human behavior (Smith and Low, 2006). Blomley compares private place as private property while public is recognized as space opened to public (Blomley, 2004). The privacy of home is under control and presented as personal unlike a public place which is noticed as free control and

socially opened (Sibley, 1995). But the awareness of the control a public property and having responsibility about it unites public and private interests. From this perspective there is no obvious distinction between public and private. But the study does not cover only idea about public or private place but also address to people in that place and how they change space or its environment. Malone writes in various points in time and a place some social groups, such as elderly, young people, or women have been removed from a public place and subjected to political and moral condemnation (Malone, 2002). Each member of these groups belongs to the personal context and has memories about things sending them to particular public place. This study also describes manga café “citizens” who has their own stories and reasons to be there. The arrangement of a public place takes various measurements from the point of view of safety, occupation, entertainment (Greed, 1994).

Meanwhile, a modern development of the cities and challenges of urbanization creates the situation when so-called quasi-public places are emerged (ibid.). They are public places but privately owned, build, managed and “protected from outside conditions” (Carr, 1992). One of their main features is commercialization and commodification.

Based on definitions of public and other types of places here is the typology of various places and assign focused research object –Japanese manga café:

Table 1. Typology of places

Public	Quasi-public	Private	Personal	“Mixed mobile place”
Physical environment, social location with open access (parks, streets, playgrounds and etc.)	Subcategory of public place. Open for public but with private ownership (community centers, youth clubs, school yards and etc.)	Self-controlled space owned by residents where privacy is interpersonal boundary-control process (Madanipour, 2003)	Subcategory of private place. Intimate zone with subjective dimension that surround each person (Hall, 1969)	So-called public place for private use (can be home, can be recreation space on public). Boundary of the space: one place is part of another place (assuming-Japanese manga café)

So, the paper can assume and make a hypothesis that structure of Japanese manga café contains as features of public place either features of private place and playing the function of the leisure space and temporary shelter for some people it obtains aspects of “space-in-use” and the same time planned controlled place (Lefebvre, 1991). And the fact of the emergence of hidden homeless inside of the place shapes the new type of the net area with “extra host service”.

By defining the space, enclosing it within distinction between public and private, social changes take an essential role reflecting the relation between space and people (Madanipour, 2003). That is why this research also has to look upon the anthropological aspect- people in the space. So, another theoretical approach for answering the main research question will be cultural (socio-cultural) anthropology focusing on the specific patterns of humans behavior in social groups with influence of belonging culture and sense of belonging (Callaghan, 1992). Through interviews with members of manga café the case of public/private space is aimed to be explored: the status of the space and the impact of people for the space. This study discusses challenge of the existence of the public place in terms of social phenomenon in Japan of people living in manga cafés. The bulk of cultural anthropological approaches helps to observe and interpret the main tendencies of human’s impact on the changes of the space, what the relations between people and space, how local culture (in this case Japanese culture) reflects socio-cultural situation with temporary homeless and how human’s factor (social status, cultural difference, economic background) influences the process of localization in the space. The interest of socio-cultural anthropology is based on the understanding of human beings or their behavior; in terms of the context of social and cultural condition he or she lives (Berger, 1978). Using anthropological methods such as participant observation and interviews to analyze the situation with space is explained by their fundamental idea that specific cultural reality (in this case Japan) helps to think about human’s intentions concerning their social roles, structure and relations to place where they live or belong (ibid, 2011).

To discuss this Japanese social phenomenon with “hidden homeless” with the assumption about transformation of the public place the study will use the theory of cultural particularism established by Franz Boas. This approach develops a notion about culture itself without embedding it in the general world cultural map, looking at particular culture specifically with

ethnographic singularities. As Boas argues that some phenomenon or tendency in culture depends on “local context” (Lewis, 2001) and staying or moving of people always influence the place where they are. In short, anthropological approaches concerning Japanese society forms some comprehension how environment around (like manga café for *nanmin*) can be changed or remains as unplanned or fixed space. During the analysis this approach can show how big the role of so-called those “wired homeless” (people who live in manga café united by space, time and activity) for the status of the place, and are they able to define these places as their new oasises for settlement and survive. The anthropology of this study is people in the space and their relation to binary of place (public or private) because man mostly defines the space. Also Japanese culture as relevant aspect of anthropological study is determined by Japanese people, their habits and activities in intended places. Mitchell marks that the vision on the place is normally evident in people’s words in that place (Mitchell, 1995). As for the public-private subject according to Hannah Arendt, “the distinction between public and private equals the distinction between things that should be shown and things should be hidden”. Thus, Japanese manga café and its phenomenon of people living there can be interpreted based on the ideas of local culture (studied), space and people relations, and the dichotomy between public and private.

### 1.3. Studies on public/private place and homelessness in Japan

There are several studies related to the topic of public place and private space, their distinction and Japanese urban space that are useful for this paper.

One the significant book about public place is “The hidden dimension: Man’s use of space in public and private” by Edward T.Hall who was talking about concept of proxemics (Hall, 1966:55) which describes relations between environment (public space as well) and human. Apart from his introduction about perception of the space, its usage by men and how person influences all types of the space such as visual space, thermal space, informal space and etc, the author looks in terms of proxemics on Japanese public space. Proxemics means here the way of nonverbal communication which determines people and space relations. Hall claims that “habit of leading the individual to a spot where he can discover something for himself” (ibid: 143), which can be refer to Japanese understanding of the public space when it obtains some features of private place and personal space (private zones in opened karaoke or net rooms in Internet café). He divided space on four categories: public, intimate, social and personal. And the

criterion for space is personal distance. Privacy is defined as “boundary-control process” (ibid: 155).

One of the main concepts of public and private places is developed by Hannah Arendt. She defines public with two meanings: it is something which “can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possibility” because in private realm things are hidden but in public are shown (Arendt, 1998:73). Another meaning assigns to a place as a space with “human existence” and “in-between space” which is natural world around (ibid: 54). At the same time American sociologist R. Sennet points out that public space in modern times has been transformed crucially in terms of urbanization. “The Fall of Public man” puts public space to the end because increase of personal contact in the Western world, being expressed in offices’ structure, the areas and other public places, actually speaks about reduction of people’s desire to communicate with each other (Sennet,1993). So it highlights the emerging imbalance between public and private, in terms of it space renders not enough influence on its interpretation of decrease and “falling of the public man and triumph of individualism in the modern city” (ibid). However, Ethington emphasizes that public place does not lose their function- expression of public opinion, “value of collective demonstration” and less chance for it to turn into part of individual place( Ethington,1994).

Meanwhile urban geographers try to recognize public place through city changes and carry out private space under comparison with it. As Sack says that public place loses their vitality and arrangement of private place occurs with emerged public interest (Sack, 1992). Sack and also Herbert highlight that the significant opposition between public and private is surveillance which can be extended in private place and be threat for public place (Herbert, 1997). Moreover, Don Mitchell considers the end of public place (in America) where even homeless people are not legitimized to stay (Mitchell, 1995:11). Thus, regarding to Japanese manga café it is fair to speculate about problem of utility of the space as the result of urban changes, social pressure and dynamic of migration from and into the place. From other hand, Madanipour has concluded that “...public-private distinction has been a key organizing principle, shaping the physical space of the cities and social life of the citizens” (Madanipour. 2003:47). In his book “Public and private spaces of the city” he claims that with all the concepts of “inner self” and “outer space” privacy is formed by social exchange and relations, which is possibly to express on public. Private space is only a layer of individuality, part of personal place which can be part of public place

(Madanipour, 2003:37). But he accents that definition of “public” usually depends on its context where “private is personal and public is impersonal or interpersonal” (ibid: 113).

Also Carr indicates the meaning of public referring to social, united, integration when “people coming from different segments of the society to learn about each other in public places” (Carr, 1992). Following the definition of public place elaborated by him it has to obtain the wide “recreation space” as a part of public sphere (ibid). However, the commercial side of manga cafe makes to consider this place not completely public.

Fink says that “spatial distribution” has essential affect on people’ interaction and their role for place (Fink, 1996:5). Latene and Liu argue that people change or rebuild their physical space for mental and emotional comfort not for interaction (Latene and Liu, 1996). Using this statement after observation studied phenomenon of “hidden homeless” in Japanese manga café demonstrates that people are not tended to interact between each other, preferred to not be disturbed by others and be at their cubicle spaces alone in front of PC. The role of the place becomes neutral for definition of status of those people but elaborates the meaning of elements of privacy in public place.

There are two visions on public place referring to Lefebvre: representational space and representations of space (Lefebvre, 1991). “Representational space” means space-in-use, appropriated place and “representation of space” – fixed controlled space. Their status of being “public” is maintained through binary of the visions by those who control and those who choose to be there. So, if to use this scheme, the manga café can be assigned to “public” character from staff and owners’ of cafés views.

Regardless studies about space in Japan there are some works about urban environment and urban spaces in Japanese cities in terms of such problematic field. The introduction of the new western sociological schools was considered to be an important means of contributing to the development of Japanese sociology. Yoshimi Shunya and Yoshimi discuss space in urban context as an “outcome of social relationships”, because the contemporary reproduction of the capitalist system itself is shaping capitalistic production and reproduction of space (Yoshimi, 1992: 136–7). Japanese urban scientists tended to focus their studies on sociological aspects of political economy (Yoshimi, 1992: 138). The publication ‘The changes in Tokyo’s urban space’ by Machimura (Machimura, 1986) explores more about urban social movements, urban forms and positively thinks about alternative ways of life in urban space. Urban geographer Andre

Sorensen works with city planning in Japan focusing on last decade's urban development in big Japanese cities which lead this research to investigate the urban connection to look at manga café with its origin and history (Sorensen, 2002). Chaplin discussing public place in Japanese context notifies that in process of place-making the space is always a series of different relations; social, spatial, cultural even though it could not be visible (Chaplin, 2010).

Summing up the previous research review it can be fruitful to demonstrate with this work that Japanese society is an example of the emergence of new types of public shelters with private use for different categories of people. The hypothesis of the research includes the idea that manga café can be recognized as public place with elements of private space within the social phenomenon of people settling down there for a while. As the new oasis for some abandoned by society and system citizens turn to create different forms of social, cultural, spatial relations.

#### 1.4. **Outline of the paper**

This paper will be organized into the following sections. Section 1 one will cover the main research question, purpose of study and theoretical framework of the thesis. Section 2 will outline the methodology of the work explaining the types of chosen methods and sources of data, process of selection and collection materials, and analysis of data, issues of sources validity, also ethical considerations. Section 3 will describe the main content of the data and sources with following analysis and interpretation. Conclusion of the thesis will be in Section 4.

## 2. **Methods and selection of source materials**

### 2.1. **Research design**

This is a qualitative study implying different types of resources from description of the context (Creswell, 2007:113) as surrounded environment to social phenomenon and ethnographic observation. Working (description) with context includes gathering data over certain period of time, making interpretations about “emerging findings” (ibid: 15), “design study as participatory...” (ibid: 56), drawing a steadiness of research from theories, data sources and “contextualize the findings to the specific setting and participants” (ibid: 57). Yin describes research design as action plan for moving from here to there, and between here and there is a set of the whole process of collecting and analyzing data (Yin, 1984). So the research addresses two

elements: perception of the space-Japanese manga café and the role of people in the space-“hidden homeless” in manga café. Because of my interest to social phenomenon of Japanese living in manga net café and how they influence on the binary of public and private of the place it was chosen a qualitative method.

The methodology of the paper consists of the main approaches according applied theories: method of participant observation, interviews, ethnographic method, and visual method as additional method for narrative part of description of the studied space. In order to analyze manga café it was necessary to conduct interviews with staff and guests of those places, moreover interaction for some period with the target group of research (people who live there) aims for ethnographic observation and interpretation of the main topic. Ethnography and participatory methods are valuable for research because they emphasis the views of participants rather than by researcher.

Also photography was used as additional tool to illustrate studied space and make some construction for the research (Creswell, 2007, p.45-49). Despite on studying reality with the occurrence the phenomenon of “hidden homeless” in manga café research also can emphasize on such factors as “participants’ perspectives, their meanings, their views”; and “holistic view of social phenomena” (ibid.) as additional guide to conducting qualitative research on each stage.

Overall, all interpretations are made on basis of the analysis of data from several media sources to interviews of owners and guests of café, considering the context of the topic, assumed hypothesis and theories interpretations can be formulated within the problem of the research.

## 2.2. Sources of data

During the research work various sources of data are observed and viewed such as academic monographs, academic journals about Japan “Focus Japan”, “Japanese studies”, academic articles issued by Osaka University, online blogs about urban studies and anthropology. That type of data is necessary for study to make preliminary sub-conclusions and draw analytic part of the text. Although Creswell marks that “up-close information” collected by talking with people and actually observing their behavior in a “natural context”, is an essential part of qualitative study (Creswell, 2007), but background of relevant theme to the topic which journals and monographers provide can be good fundament for core of research. Also this paper uses

statistics reports by Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare about homeless people or marginalized in Japanese cities which helps to collect some sociological data about people's economic conditions. It can be useful to take into account because speaking about hidden homeless' reality some statistic facts are used for comparison of the whole situation of Japanese abandoned people.

### 2.3. Interviews

“Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experience. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Interviews maybe useful as follow up to certain respondents to questionnaires, e.g., to further investigate their responses” (McNamara, 1999).

As mentioned above, one of the main methods of this study was interviewing which had the place at the fieldwork in Tokyo in cooperation with Waseda University from 11<sup>th</sup> January to 17<sup>th</sup> February. Five interviews were conducted personally; three interviews were conducted by email with questionnaire list. Generally it was challenging and more difficult as expected to obtain interviews in different Tokyo locations. Regarding the delicate theme of this thesis around the manga café and living people there owners and service staff were not eager all the time to give some information about the place and their customers. Apart from it there was hard to negotiate to use camera in the space because during the process of visiting and studying these places it was asked how public manga café are? Can it be called public places with different rules about private zones inside café (net rooms) or complete private places with public access to café facilities? However, the selection of interviewees was not random, but based on the following selection categories:

- different locations of the manga café around Tokyo such a Shibuya, Shinjuku, Ikebukuro, Ueno and Nerima;
- information assumed to be collected from staff members, general managers or owners;
- targeted group of “hidden homeless”- net café refugee;
- any organizations or municipals related to social issues about public place and homeless (or marginalized part of the society).

Informal conversational type of interview had been used in order to remain as free and natural as possible to the interviewees' preferences; having prepared questions but obtains the idea of interviewing “go with a flow”. As for guests who live in manga net café, only few people

agreed to be interviewed in person in short format. All interviews initially were formulated in English with following interpretation in Japanese. My college and friend Yuki Nagatomo was helping in translation questions from English to Japanese. Mostly I had been made notes while interviewing respondents, only two short format interviews were recorded with tape recorder.

In addition, there was one short format interview with non-profit organization Moyai members of which were very helpful to provide some key facts about particular case with manga internet café and people settling there. Hence, this method was used and provided necessary information about recent situation concerning the topic of the study. Interviews as the chosen method helps to analyze the role, place and meaning of manga café for Japanese reality and people living there in terms of *nanmin* phenomenon. The interview questions are presented in the appendix at the end of the paper.

#### 2.4. Analysis of data

The first part of data was reviewed before the fieldwork begun. There was some statistics on web pages provided by Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and some non-profit organizations about social problems in Japan, and read available in English materials about urban studies in terms of human geography, structure of public places in Japanese cities, social issues of Japanese society (marginalization, homelessness, poverty). All those materials address to further exploring of collected data and help to develop the research context.

Regarding to the fieldwork including interviewing and ethnography of the study analysis of gathered data is based on the method of framework analysis developed by Ritchie and Spencer (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). In order to analyze interviewing data according to them it should involve several key stages: “familiarization, identifying a thematic framework, mapping and interpretation” (ibid: 112). Based on Ritchie and Spencer explanation familiarization includes working with tapes, transcripts and notes; thematic framework identifies by writing memos, ideas coming from the text which forms descriptive part; then process of sorting and mapping with quotes and thematic content which finally can have interpretations. One of the main approaches to analyze interviews is “meaning of condensation” when statements of interviews are made into shorter formulations (Kvale, 1996). Interpretations are on the base of this approach emphasizing meaningful and compressed ideas.

Regarding the interviews they were all reviewed and transcribed from the notes and some audio-records taken at the time that the interviews took place. Interviews were analyzed focusing on the sub questions of the main research problem that directly affected the progress of the work. The rich information provided by informants forms key points to understand the whole phenomenon of manga café, “hidden complex” in a context of public-private distinction of Japanese manga net café. Normally interviewing was based in manga café with service members or owners with whom it was necessary to get a contact in advance via telephone.

There are two main methodological approaches had been used: observation and interpretation in order to mapping the scene of the spatial layouts and people in the space. Interpretations are set up after reviewing and mapping the main data collection. Before conducting interviews the participant observation includes researcher to be in manga café, spend her time, observing and living (1-2 days) as so-called “net citizen” of that café. Observation with written and visual notes helps to develop several issues of this paper: inside structure of typical manga café, interaction between space and people in context of public-private dichotomy, process of settle in manga-kissa and consequences of living there for public status of the cafes (Collier, 1986). Interviews and several daily communications with the staff of manga cafes while the process of participant observation are important for research because it reveals what tendencies, characteristics, differences of studied topic can emerge. The type of data like interviews is employed for qualitative narrative of research to find out the main points of work. Interpretation of interviews is also prerequisite in order to create the general view of focus area within the described environment and people there.

Despite on different limitations of the study process observation and interpretation of research results aims to explore in some case subjective nature but based on analyzed collected and observed information of the relation of manga café as public (or private) place and phenomenon of temporary homeless there.

### **2.5. Source validity and criticism of sources**

The sources validity is the core of the qualitative study and interviews in this case must be maximally adequate and reliable. Due to specification of the topic and the fact that usually members of manga cafes and the staff do not face researchers or other academic people the quality of interviewing data is quite useful. Despite on the lack of scientific resources about

special case with recent “net-citizens” of net café refugee newspaper or magazine articles around the topic corroborate some reality concerning the space and the people there while observation and interviewing in the place. Thus, mixture of deskwork with books, articles and written academic resources combining with participant and ethnographic observation, interviews forms this paper hopefully with some strength of covering of the main topic.

Meanwhile, it is important to look on all the data critically and analyze the reasons of some limitation of the study. First of all, the gaining possibility for interviewing in central areas of Tokyo such as Shibiya and Shinjuku were harder and less accessible than in further areas as Ueno, Ikebukuro or Nerima. The presence of entertainment zones (Kabukicho or Shinjuku-nichome) in those locations determined the status of manga cafes which is higher and more expensive (Appendix.1 interviews) than in farther areas, so they were not that interested and less opened for conducting interviews. Secondly, the same difficulty was with interviewing of customers for whose this kind of process was sometimes needed to get permission from the staff. Third, the language obstacle was one of the obvious delimitation but I had a Japanese translator with fluent English so the answers in Japanese translated into English were comprehensive. Finally, the initial purpose was using visual anthropology methods- photography, but so called visual access was very hard to obtain, especially with capture of guests. Usually it was not allowed to take photos of people and their interaction with the space, only was permitted to photograph manga café itself and environment around. This finding brought this research to another focus- the question about public and private sides of the studied place. Employing visual method is explained by specific of the topic of research which aims to explore the type (structure, organization, role, functions and etc.) of certain public/semipublic/private space in Tokyo such as manga café. Visual description as assumed will address to additional evidences to discuss whether magna café public place or private, or it has double status; also what the role inhabitants/customers of those café play for determination of space. After finishing fieldwork this research does not put using photography as the main method but as additional way to look upon the hypotheses (manga café is public place for private use and features of private space) of paper regarding manga Internet café (public/private binary, public place/private use, new host service/private cubicle shelters).

Although mentioned obstacles above have quite limited the focus of the study, in general the collection of all fieldwork data was gathered with assurance and care. Perhaps, this particular

study may seem to be quite an ambitious project that extrapolates many challenges, related to its feasibility. But the researcher tries and will try her outmost to overcome the difficulties and to conduct fruitful research and to report about its findings.

## 2.6. Ethical considerations

This master thesis of Lund University will follow the main regulations according to the Swedish Research Council including all ethical principles regarding to data collections and interviews. All research projects is designed with following awareness of interviewers about questions and answers which will be used in this paper. Also all participants were told that thesis will be published on Lund University website and confirmed with their participation there. Since some of photographs will be presented in paper as additional tool for research project it was also permitted and negotiated with places where photographs were taken for using it in paper. All restrictions established by visited public places were strictly followed and decision of participants to be anonymous is fully respected.

## 3. Presentation of data and analysis

### 3.1. Japanese manga café: background

As mentioned before the focused public place in this paper is Japanese type of manga Net café. The history of manga café as the place of mini library of manga comics is long but phenomenon of *nanmin* (people who live in manga café) has emerged quite recently. The most popular brands of manga café in Tokyo are “GeraGera”, “Manboo” café, “Grand Cyber” café and etc.

According to the owner of one of the manga net café ( *manga-kissa* in Japanese) in Nerima area of Tokyo city since the Japanese economics had started to get down and there was the class of people who stayed in cafes longer than one week, those previous manga café were tended to be changed. Beginning with the status of new technology leisure service places (reading manga comics mostly, Internet or gaming) and temporal spaces to spend time and get quick access to Internet manga net café became shelters for Japanese temporary homeless. So-called “new host service” which started to allow people live there has given another role to those places – ordinary Japanese manga café is transforming into unintended zones to settle ( “Homeless workers in Japan”, documentary, 2009). That is why the English version of name

*nanmin* had obtained the version of the word *refugee*. According to one of the first report made in 2007 by Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare the amount of customers uses manga café only for enjoying manga comics or cheap Internet service is rapidly decreasing instead of those customers for whom cubicle spaces are first of all “home roof”. So the question is within this social and economic pressure on the society, poverty, housing difficulties in big Japanese cities manga café as public or semipublic place has implied new features- public privacy for those who begin to settle (for while normally) in net cafés. Can it be called public, quasi-public or private place? This tendency of misbalance of private and public can be observed in whole Asia like McDonalds in China and Hong Kong where people who stay per night in McDonalds very often are called *McRefugees* (Mizushima, 2007).

JCCA (the Japan Café Complex Association) was giving report manga and Internet café, 235 companies operates the sales companies and almost 2000 shops all over the country (JCCA, 2007). According to JCCA the emergence of such “extra functions” in manga café or permission to live there decreased level of trust among regular guests but at the same demonstrated the option for potential “hidden homeless”. Governmental reports for 2005 year, as Yuasa mentioned in his interview, reviewed around 19,000 people under 40 years live on the streets so homeless people, and this amount includes “net café refugee” who live in manga-kissa (Yuasa, 2007), but he thinks later this number rapidly grows and because of their “conspiracy” exact amount is not clear. However, JCCA as MHLW assume that gap between ordinary citizens and “net-citizens” (freeters, gamers, unemployed and etc.) is growing and manga net café gain as negative as positive reputation (JCCA report, 2007).

### 3.2. Organization of manga café (locations of Tokyo)

In order to draw the image and status of Japanese manga Internet café (漫画喫茶 *manga-kissa*) where recently people can choose to live it is important to give a description with interpretation how that place organizes and what services it offers. Preliminary typical manga café can be divided on two zones: area with public access and area with net rooms. Usually *manga-kissa* is located upstairs of multistoried buildings and normally has title of the café written on Japanese. During the searching of different locations initially was hard to find some cafes because of absence of proper English abbreviations.

The entering zone includes reception desk and separate table for filling the application to stay in café. People have to pay for staying (or living) in manga café with Internet access. Public space in café consists of library of manga comics, reading area with tables and chairs and several PC. According to researcher's observation vending machine with free beverages and food snacks are located close to reading area. Food menu normally consist of Japanese snacks and instant meal (noodles or rise); prices vary from 200yen to 500yen. For guests also beverages are free and unlimited to refill. Those zones are located close to reception desk (Appendix 2, picture 7).

So if manga cafe is considered to be called as public place the presence of these sites demonstrates that there is a public access to it with available using of some services. Service and facilities are also the evidence of the quality and status of the place. Free beverages, internet, manga books, magazines and newspapers, board games are available when its already paid for staying hours in manga café. Thus, business orientation constructs new type of the place which has being changed also with phenomenon of "hidden homeless".

There are some images which have ontological value and its rich description creates a "thick" module of knowledge where "knowledge" replacements with "information". Picture one (Appendix.2, picture 1) shows a general view of the manga café in Nerima area which is divided on several sections. This area contains from net rooms 2m on 2m or so called cabins. These net rooms do not have space between each other so it is basically put into a row. Each cabin has number. Another image demonstrates so called public zone at manga library in café where guest can use PC, Internet or read manga (Appendix 2, picture 3). There are usually 4-5 seats in main area at the manga library because people prefer stay near the shelves or in net cabins. The reading seat is organized minimalistic: small desk with walls, personal computer with microphone and headphones and chair.

There is another zone of manga café which provokes to define Japanese manga-kissa as "quasi-public" place. As Carr describes quasi-public places are characterized by sets of rules and certain order in that place despite on technically open access for public (ibid, 1992). Depends on the size of certain manga café there are from 30 to 50 net rooms or so called "squashed cubicle space". Cafes have several types of these net booths: single rooms and double rooms. Inside of them there are PC, TV and *zashiki* (tatami matted) or reclining seat- all of that equipment fits in 1mx2m size of room (Appendix 2, picture 4). Cubicles are arranged as dark spots in tight smoky corridors of café which gives the atmosphere of privacy from personal observation. The physical

dimension of that room as a certain personal place even though it is not allowed to lock when guest leaves reflects the idea of personal place (table 1.)

The occurrence of such areas in café which can be considered as public place also suggests the idea being manga café as “third place” (Oldenburg, 1997). Third place which is not workplace, neither home, but it is a space for recreation, leisure or simple networking and interaction. As the owner of several manga café answered in interviews on the question: “Is your manga café changed when people start to live there?”- “it has been changed, the whole atmosphere and sort of status of the place. When people start to live here after while they found out another guests with the same situation which united them and makes them interact closely...”

To sum up the general image of typical Japanese manga café it is significant to emphasize that such places have some specifics of public and private space at the same time. Following the observation of different manga cafés in Tokyo and interview with members and staff of cafes it is presented as quite ordinary public place where customer can have privacy in net cabins for internet or reading comics. But having the extra function of host service which *nanmin* use as an opportunity to settle down there allows researcher to think about turning this place into private location where public features (access, control, norms of behavior and etc.) are same fair as for private. So the idea of binary of public and private defines Japanese manga café and social phenomenon of net café refugee elaborates the status and position of those spaces.

### 3.3. Categories of the guests in manga café

In compliance of interviews with owners and staff of manga cafes there are several approximate categories of guests:

- Tourists/travelers/backpackers;
- missing the last train and overnight one night usually, salarimen whose job is far away from their home so they prefer to stay at Internet café, mostly in the central areas where their work is
- hidden (temporary) homeless people, who live there for a while (from 1 month up to 2-3 years).

The manager of manga café “GeraGera” was saying interview:

“Usually there are 25-30% of people are occasional customers: tourists, travelers, some foreign backpackers. They stay at manga café per night or 2-3 nights first of all because of low rent price. Also we have many benefits for them: free internet, drinks, and comics and available place all over 24 hours”.

At the same time another manager of manga café in Ueno area marked that “there are two types of customers: 12 hours guests and 24hours guess. 12hours people are all who stay short time including tourists, missing last train men, salarimen and 24hours are so called homeless”. One of the current social activists representing non-profit organization “Moyai”, Makoto Yuasa underlines sometimes Japanese men who choose to overnight in manga café (often in karaoke or sauna) can turn into group of “invisible homeless” if they lose their jobs or gain some family pressure (Yuasa, 2007). Also he mentions that Japanese clerks were the first to find manga net cafes as budget option to hotels with corporative dinks fund by suffered from economic crisis companies. According to interviewers among manga café staff people who stay for night or just use café services are usually young; the group of net café refugee vary on age, but 90% of café dwellers are males. Alisa Freedman draws attention to the “homeless student” phenomena rather more as individual experience in Japanese society than larger social problem (Freedman, 2011:392). Freedman puts marks on current definition of “homelessness” in Japan as a way to seek a place in inexpensive public accommodations such as Internet café or manga net café. According to her observations the most dominant type of "average" homeless in these places is male and over 35-50 years old, many with a long history of insecure housing, and cannot afford to rent even the cheapest apartment, which is more than the cost per month to rent an internet booth daily(ibid, 2011:395). Describing the problem of net café refugee Yuasa highlights not only problem of poverty and crisis of Japanese economy but also question of self-responsibility (Yuasa, interview, 2007). However, another Japanese author Hiroaki Mizushima in his book “Net café refugee and Nippon poverty” argues that one of the crucial reasons of appearing in manga café “*nanmin*” (net cafe refugee) is governmental ineffective policies with attempts to create a competitive society (Mizushima, 2007). He asserts that if people in Japanese society lose their connections with family, friends environment or work they do not have chance to be back to similar places. They prefer to be “hidden” escaping from homeless on the streets to internet shelters in manga café (ibid: 15).

Nevertheless all guests affect the status of manga net café, which means the reputation from outside and inside views. Certainly, the influence on the role of those places is not equal. Ordinary guests and tourists still present the majority of the contingent of manga cafes while net café homeless' population adds different meaning for the place. As Japanese media says it is not "permanent home" but still a shelter (Japan times, 2007, August 29). Depending on current demands with economic challenges socio-public role of "new oasis" is covered by its constrained response.

### 3.4. Net café refugee (*nanmin*): Phenomenon of "hidden homeless"

Under the impact of emergence of hidden homeless phenomenon the main question about Japanese manga café and its definition around public-private discussion has appeared. Rose believes that a place can be considered as the dominant element of self-definition and marks a sense of belonging in the world (Rose, 1995:56). Thus it is important through analyze of this phenomenon to try to investigate what impact has the presence of these contingent of people in Japanese manga-kissa and how it modified the status of the space. According to Kvale, every theory or concept produces a particular interpretation of data and subject matter (Kvale1996). This paper is not aimed to work with reasons to bring "net citizens" to live in café but as social phenomenon for Japanese society but it has effect on changing the position of the place in general tracing to binary of public and private.

According to Japanese media and interviewing manga café owners the term of "net café refugee" is emerged in 2007 and used by Shohei Kawasaki in his material "Shinsho Gentosha" about first Japanese have begun to stay more than three weeks in café (Kawasaki, 2007). However, this title "hidden homeless" or "invisible homeless" that is occurred in media, non-profit organizations, and documentaries about this situation reflects the socio-anthropological tendency in Japanese society: people do not have fixed addresses, mainly unemployed and unmarried who occasionally have chosen manga café as the place to live. Net café refugees do not call themselves homeless. After interviews review with some of living guests more than half of all participants did not recognize themselves as homeless. There are some answers on the question about their status in Japanese society and manga café:

“I don’t perceive myself as homeless. I live here 3 months and look for a job. It’s my temporary place”, - 25years old guest of manga café in Ikebukuro;

“It is cheap to sleep here and all is included. I feel all right. I’m not homeless because I don’t live on the street”, - 34years old man in manga café in Nerima;

“You can call me freeter, like Japanese free worker. Rent in Tokyo is too expensive so I cannot afford it. But it doesn’t mean I’m homeless. I have a roof, food, shower, Internet and some friends”, 28years customer of net café in Shinjuku;

“This net café is like my home. But I believe it’s not on main base. I will find job later and move to my own place. Manga café is like a hostel but cheaper and you get more privacy”, 37years old guest in manga café in Ueno.

Based on the last interviewer there are some people for whom privacy of manga café is the same as would be in their home. They compare manga café with hostels which shows relative similarity of manga café with it because of presence of privacy. The condition that they can have the net cabin only for themselves (without public sharing) is enough to call it something personal as temporary home. But if manga café can be compared with hostel there are some differences in status, access and conditions of being there. For example, those cubicles in manga café cannot be locked; half of net cabins do not have rooms and initially, as was mentioned, manga café was not supposed to be a place to settle down.

Yuasa and some representatives of Moyai Independent Life Support Center (non-profit organization working with homeless) emphasize that *nanmin* homeless and contemplate their big influence on changing of the role of those manga café over Tokyo. “These people are basically homeless, even though they are not sleeping rough. If you surveyed everyone with no permanent home, the figure would run into the tens of thousands.” (Yuasa, 2007). However Freedman argues in her article about young Japanese generation who is not willing to return home often that net café refugee doesn’t fit the definition of the homeless- people who live on the streets (Freedman, 2011:390). Its familiar with and some people see it differently from our rather simplistic, one dimensional view point and acknowledge it as a socioeconomic issue caused not only by the long recession but also the direct result of structural reform implemented by the government since the Hashimoto administration in the late 90's that created so many working poor in Japan including the “hidden homeless” (ibid: 2011). The subject has been reported in NNN document series by Nihon TV in 2007, sparking national debate and sensation which lead

to the subject being raised and debated in Japanese parliament by several ministries (NNN series documentary, 28 January, 2007). The manager of manga café in Shinjuku area said: “The phenomenon is generally seen in the same scope as the growing problem of working poor in Japan”. According to MHLW survey from 2007 more than 6000 people who prefer to choose manga net café to live lost their jobs and have housing insecurity (report by MHLW, June 2007). In addition, the age distribution was divided on two main groups: 50s (25%) and 30s (29%). Tsuyoshi Ihaba, a representative of Moyai Independent Life Support Center said in interview to Japanese media that earlier homeless people including the percentage of “hidden” homeless in manga café were day laborers, construction workers; nowadays situation became complicated because among them more young people with different kind of jobs background (Read, 2004).

One of the question of interview with staff of manga café: who are these people who live there and the owner of net café in Nerima area answered: “ 45% of guests who live in our café more than 6 months are males aged 30-55 years old without stable jobs or incomes, and half of those people have mental diseases. So they barely interact with each other”. On the same question the manager of manga café in Shibuya district replied: “Normally young males live one year or more. They are approximately 25-40 years with some one-day jobs or freelancers. Some of them just gamble and surf internet 24 hours. Young people after while create a networking and communicate with each other because they have similar problems and situation”. So, it can be considered that their possible interaction can influence changes of manga café.

Mizushima argues that people who settle in net booths are mostly introverts and want to be isolated and they give “dim, silent and depressive” image to the space (Mizushima, 2007). Certainly, the owners and staff of manga cafes argue with the negative imagination about their places considering more positive changes for the space referring to growing level of high technology (use of wireless internet), traditional Japanese interest of manga, and fairly cheap business orientation- overall makes it available for mass of potential customers. Apart from it the one more change regarding manga-kissa situation and its customers had been occurred: from 2008 it is allowed to register manga café as your home address by Municipal of the city (TV Asahi, August 2008). Residential registration, as Yuasa considers, became the logic consequence that manga café is accepted even by government as alternative (temporary) places to live (Yuasa, 2009).

Based on interviews taken for this research all customers of manga café in different areas answered that they don't consider manga net café as the public place, it is more "sort of a short-term home". Net café refugee feel safe and convenient indoors of manga café which corroborates the argument that "hidden homeless" phenomenon has emerged as some new element or "extra" feature which describes differently the role of café. If earlier it was the place for surfing Internet and read manga comics, currently including all these services it obtained traces of housing.

"Manga café was established as the chain of cafes approximately 10-12 years ago. It's the place where customers can have a rest with surfing Internet and comics. Later people with different problems start to stay longer than one week. So basically they can live here", said the general manager of manga café in Ueno.

Based on this response pre-existing aim of café is always to host guests with different needs and it was always commercialized. When people began to live in cafes owners allowed doing it adopting their service for it (such as setting showers, putting diverse food menu). As for commercial side new lifestyle of café dwellers make to grow manga cafe incomes and now owners do not want to lose that percentage of clients.

"It is good if we can help those people without home. Some of them have mental problems and really lost. But as long as they pay regularly for staying it is safe to have them in our cafes", - the owner of manga café in Ikebukuro was answering. So the situation with net café refugee is also profitable for cafes and its ownership which means that it plays steady role as new commodity for those places. Thus, it may be seen that hidden homeless is not major but some percentage of being among constant residents of manga café and partly adjust another reality. Can be manga-kissa called a kind of mixed place- new shelter on public with private use?

### 3.5. Japanese manga café: public or private?

As described in introduction Japanese manga café (or also called *netto nanmin* café) has unique position questioning about its place of being call place or private place. Sennett was writing: "while man made himself in public, he realized his nature in the private realm, above all in his experiences within the family" (Sennett, quoted in Mitchell, 1995:116). Interviews and observation during the fieldwork demonstrates that manga cafes operate as more as places with privacy where dominant feature acts the rule to preserve the privacy with public access. In terms of urbanization and developing big cities manga café is the public place which turn to be also

some quasi-public place with private and personal service. Carr calls modern public places as quasi-public spaces because of their “strong emphasize on economic and symbolic roles” (Carr, 1992). If we look on Japanese manga café it is a place with values of commodity, privately owned and has symbol of internet leisure space for traditional Japanese pastime- reading manga comics.

Lefebvre talks about public and private dichotomy marking that public place is distinguished by visible dividing between work and home, it is productive space when private place is reproductive (Lefebvre, 1991). Regarding Japanese manga café there cannot be used the western concept of public. Referring to Iverson who talks about complexity of being “public” with notion of it as idea around ownership and people (Iverson, 1998). Public is what is not home simply saying, but politically and socially opened, “what constitutes public is very different across societies, places and times” (Smith and Low, 2006). The creator of documentary “Public Blue” A.Haarman claims that “the concept of the public did not exist” in big Japanese cities with their ideas of *soto* and *uchi*, where *uchi* - idea of “inner inclusion” while *soto* reflects “outer exclusion” (Haarman, 2007). Based on interviews and participant observation Japanese manga café obtains more “inner” features than “outer” with people who stay or live there. By contrasting what is public against what is private manga café is rather more quasi-public place with privacy in terms of “the rules of access, nature of control over the space, norms of individual and group behavior and uses” (Smith and Low, 2006). Mentioned it already the concept of *kugai* as public sphere puts in opposition “private ownership prerequisite for public” (Hanada, 2011). Ownership and publicity are “entirely separate issues” which reflect the organization of manga café which is run by businessmen with his rights and standards. However, private ownership doesn’t deny the status of being not public place. In this case hotels and manga café play similar roles – to host customers, but conditions, norms and rules are still differed. As Madanipour and Carr claim that modern forms of public places in cities are changed and private ownership is the matter of control (Madanipour, 2003).

“It is not allowed to take photos of staff and members of café. It can scare them somehow and they won’t back to our café again”, -that was the response from the owner of manga café in Shinjuku area. It can show that private control in those places is considered and presented as the condition of security and safety of current guess. According to Smith and Low public places are

not strictly controlled but there are always measures for surveillance of public (Smith and Low, 2006). Minoru Matsutani called his article about manga café “Privacy and net cafes: a tale of two cities” where he refers privacy as one of the main characteristic of Japanese internet café. In context of new rules around Osaka manga café where doors of net rooms are changed from wooden to glass material Japan Complex Café Association representative defended this decision: “There is no concrete standard as to what makes private individual rooms too private” (Matsutani, 2012:4). In order to develop the safety of manga-kissa privacy (before people start to live there) became a reason to be excluded from being “too private”.

Carr discusses public place as a physical form and a certain process of interaction between space and people which establishes some environment (Carr, 1992). That idea is also apt for *netto café nanmin* with its emergence of spontaneous communication and networking among members, relations between staff and guests and inside order in which customers exist. Normally, from his perspective public places are malls, plazas or playgrounds with public advantages and benefits such walking alleys, benches, water features and etc (ibid). Studied manga café is not that type of space but common features of public places have.

However, one of the main arguments of this research is an influence of social appearance such as existence of hidden homeless in Internet cafes on changes of that place. Back to Lefebvre he was saying that public place is defined by people “who are aware of their representation there” (Lefebvre, 1991). In Japanese manga café there is an opposite situation. Based on interviews with staff and guests of cafes there is an impression that majority of people who live there doesn't have stable purposes about future, their appearing in manga café is more necessity than *personal choice*.

“It's the place for now. But I don't know where to go later”, - there were three similar answers from several customers who live for than one month in manga café.

“Usually they stay all the time in café. Sometimes talk with us. They don't have really plans for future. Just live today”, - the owner of Nerima manga-kissa answered on the question about people about hidden homeless.

Yuasa also was underlining in this interview for Moyai Independent Life Support Center that for last five years people who live in net cafes are lost and floating with the easiest options

to survive (Yuasa, 2008). So, people with absence of awareness, self-identification and control over the current situation (more floating) characterize places as personal and private.

Finally, some sites of “third place” can be recognized in Japanese manga café. Oldenburg’s notion of third place consists of aspects to have opportunities being highly free, don not feel physical and social boundaries, elaborate inclusivity (Oldenburg, 1997). From this perspective capacity of Japanese manga café be more tended to private boundaries with comfort, safety, freedom of not being on public if they don’t want and at the same time have the chance to interact in café creates an image of “third place” with so called new host services. Being cubicle shelter for one category of customers reflecting all featured of private place, the same time offering daily cyberspace for others with public access builds up the uniqueness of such place as Japanese *manga-kissa*.

### **Conclusion**

Economic changes, technological progress, urbanization and globalization all of it have modified the speed and scale of activities and the relations between public and private. Public and private spaces both developed and integrated into urban life to accommodate transformations. Specific case was studied in this paper –Japanese manga café. Due to the main research question about the type of manga café- being public or private place- the paper discussed the structure, organization and the role of that space. Based on typology of different spaces (Madanipour, 2003 and Carr, 1992) and their definition of public and private, Japanese manga café can be assigned to both places but existing features of the studied space depict different connotation for it. Considering Japanese context of the place and environment around the main phenomenon of manga café is recent social tendency that people start to occupy the space.

As observation of media and interviews has demonstrated Japanese manga café had initially fragments of privacy because several net cabins inside of café existed but their amount was much less than nowadays (Smith, 2010). If in 2005 there were only 2000 people are fixed living in manga cafes, in 2007 this amount was increased up to 5000 people (MHLW, 2007). Also private ownership and commercialization of the space can define it as kind of private place. However, according to new types of public places which called as quasi-public spaces manga café can be referred to them. “Public places serve a variety of purposes, all of which appear to create some distinction and interpersonal exchange”, - Madanipour describes public place of the

cities. But the phenomenon of hidden homeless puts the boundary between public and private of manga café. From one hand, this case of net café refugee shapes the new form of living –mobile mixed place which they can change from time to time and even register as own home. From other hand, “hidden homeless” are reminded that manga café is still place for ordinary customers who come to for internet and manga comics, so they are not allowed to stay for a long time (or several cafes do not host net café refugee). Nevertheless, Japanese *nanmin* people turned place into type of private temporary shelter, but manga café is still used by other guests (who are majority) as regular public net café with comics and wireless.

In investigating process this paper has shown that Japanese manga café has some dynamic of the transformation of the status which includes an attainment the specifics of cubicle space for Tokyo hidden homeless. Manga café can also be called “third place” from Oldenburg’s definition because it has the function of alternative leisure space with elements of social, cultural and spatial interaction (Oldenburg, 1991). However, combining different sides of various types of place Japanese manga café under essential influence of phenomenon of hidden homeless contains special image as being public place for private use as new commercial oasis for “wired homeless”, the example of how one place can be a part of another one.

Possibility to transform totally into personal private space limited by rules of access and control, strong Japanese presence of sense of belonging to the space and modern challenges of “home” concept can be set up as potential questions for future studies.

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## Appendix. 1.

### Questions for manga café staff and owners:

When was that manga café opened?

いつこの漫画喫茶はオープンしましたか？

How is the manga café organized?

どのようなシステムで運営されていますか？

What the percentage of people who live in manga café among all the guests?

すべての客のなかで、どのくらいの人がここに住んでいますか？

According to staff there are several categories of customers in manga café. What the categories of customers/guests who stay in manga café?

スタッフによると、漫画喫茶には客層があるそうです。どのような客層の人がいますか？

How “temporal homeless” normally behave in café? What do they do?

‘一時的に家の無い人’はどのように店の中で行動していますか？何をしていますか？

Is your manga café changed within people start to live there?

あなたの店は、ここに住んでいる人によってかわりましたか？

Questions were asked people who live in manga cafes:

漫画喫茶に住む人に対する質問:

For how long (days, months, years) have you been lived in manga café?

どのくらいの期間（日、月、年）ここにすんでいますか？

How do you spend your time or what is your job?

どのように時間を過ごしていますか？仕事はなんですか？

Why did you choose manga café to live for some period?

なぜ漫画喫茶に住もうと思ったのですか？

How do you usually spend time at manga-kissa?

漫画喫茶ではどのように時間を過ごしていますか？

Do you consider yourself as homeless?

自身をホームレスであると思えますか？

Do you percept the manga café as public space or temporal house/home?

漫画喫茶はあなたにとって、公共の場ですか？それとも一時的な家ですか？

**Appendix 2. Photographs “Descent into utility”**

Picture 1. (public zone of net rooms)



Picture 2. (Customer)



Picture 3. (Public area with manga shelves)



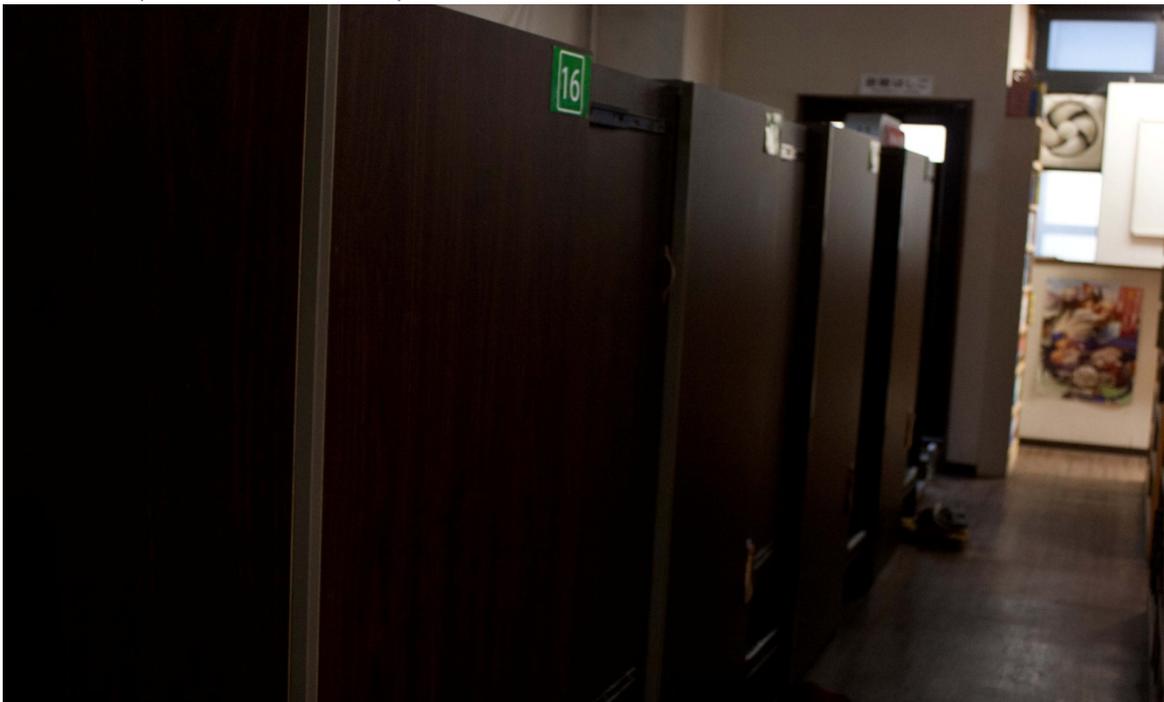
Picture 4. (Net booth)



Picture 5. (Entrance to a cubicle)



Picture 6. (Hall with net rooms)



Picture 7. (Reception and drink/food zone)



Picture 8. (Lockers)



Picture 9. (Reception)



Picture 10. (Public and private parts of manga cafe)

