



# The Public Office : a symbiosis in urban area

**Woojin Chung**

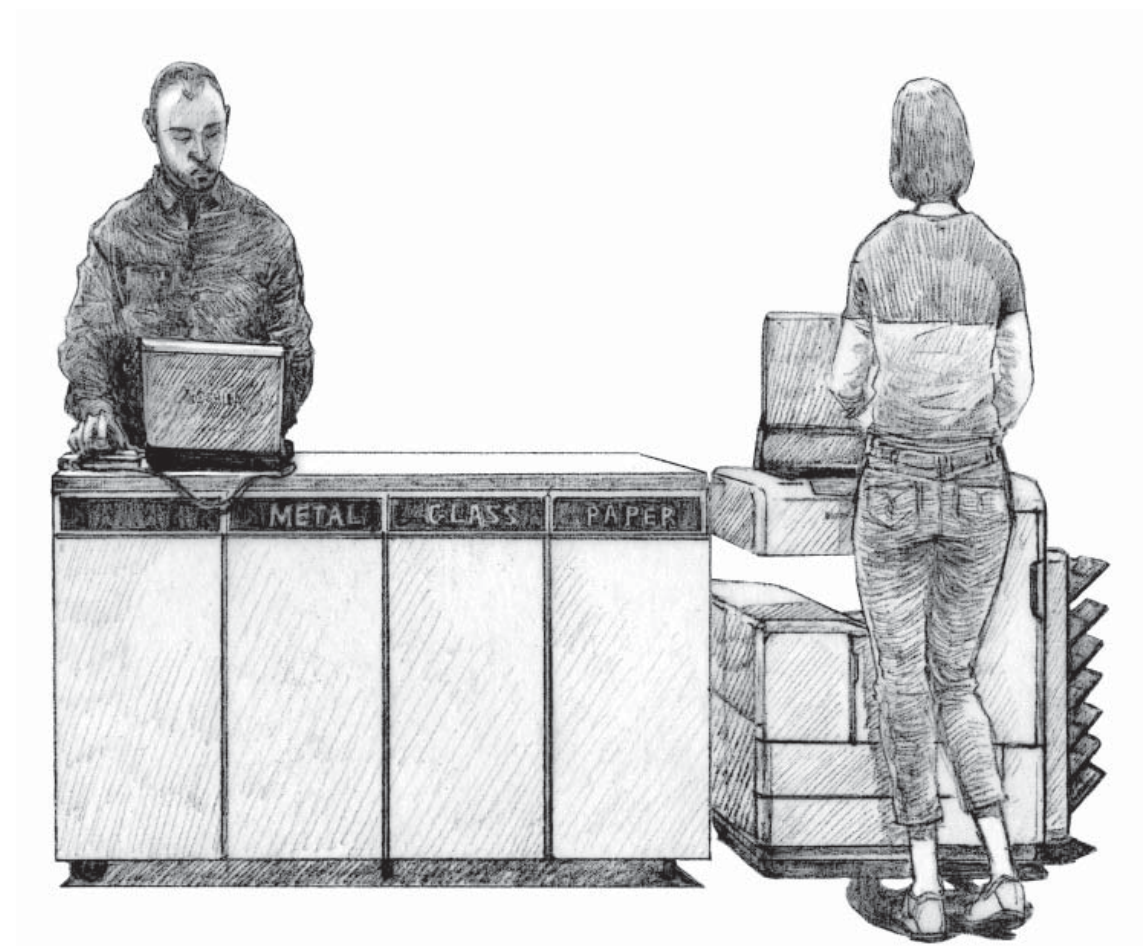
Degree project, Masters programme in design 120 hp  
School of Design and Crafts, University of Gothenburg

Tutor : Henning Eklund  
Examiner : Kristina Sahlqvist  
Opponent : Magnus Silfverhielm

## Abstract

### Opening the public office

The public office is a facility which is shared by people who want to have temporary workplace. This workplace is provided to give people chance to work individually or collectively for their purpose. The behavior, working, can be defined as more voluntary one in this case. Volunteered working life would relieve work-life balance argument by cooperation rather than competition between members in the society. In my proposal, buildings in urban area have their ground floor as public area where people can have both its indoor and outdoor environment. As an example of this proposal, the lobby in a office building is used as a public office by anybody who finds that place suitable for their workspace which already has infrastructure for work. This public office is combined with green area, so people in the office can have nature right beside them, which they cannot get in the conventional workspaces. The sharable workspace which takes some portion of the host building is managed and maintained by cooperation of the local government, the owner of the building and the office users with green area as a medium. This is what I call a symbiosis in urban area.



## Contents List

### Introduction

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 Furniture re-positioning 6
- 1.2 Working condition at workplace 7
- 1.3 Sustainability in workplace 8
- 1.4 Design in workplace 8

#### 2. Problem identification

- 2.1 What is work? 9
- 2.2 What is workplace? 10
- 2.3 Who are in there? What kind of problems do they have? 10
  - 2.3.1 Cultural value in workplace 10
  - 2.3.2 New trend in workplace 12
  - 2.3.3 Working condition in South Korea 13
- 2.4 How the problems are connected to physical environment in workplace 14
  - 2.4.1 Management and working environment 14
  - 2.4.2 Re-organization in workplace 15
  - 2.4.3 Workspace in South Korea 17

#### 3. Purpose and Goal

- 3.1 Competition 18
- 3.2 Balance 18
- 3.3 Compromise 19

#### 4. Method

- 4.1 Employment structure 20
- 4.2 Rise of public 23
- 4.3 Public space in urban area 23
- 4.4 Homeless life – worker’s life 24

#### 5. Suggestion

- 5.1 Opening The Public Office 26
- 5.2 Scenario brief 36
  - 5.2.1 User 36
  - 5.2.2 Time 36
  - 5.2.3 Location 36
  - 5.2.4 Facility 38
- 5.3 Scenario of use 44
  - 5.3.1 Finding workspace 44
  - 5.3.2 Accessing The Public Office 47
  - 5.3.3 Addressing the workstation 51

#### 6. Discussion

- 6.1 Service design 58
- 6.2 Changing society, changing myself 59
- 6.3 Picketing 60

#### Reference

62

The Public Office :  
a symbiosis in urban area

## Introduction

As noticed from the title, this thesis is about workplace. A very simple but strong wish to have a certain kind of workplace for myself from my own experiences leads me to start to work on this subject. How workplace should look like is a question which has started from the very beginning of the human history and will never end until the last moment of the world. Nevertheless, I happened to try to find a better solution for having ‘happiness’ in workplace which might be called work-life balance or democracy in employment contraction or true self identification through working life. But I don’t have any ultimate solution to deliver humankind ‘happiness’ in this writing. Only my ideas and ideals are presented with texts and drawings from my own experiences. My expectation with this work is to broaden my understanding about workplace and working life. I wrote this thesis staying in Gothenburg for one and a half year holding on my life at Seoul, South Korea. One and a half year is not long enough to understand this foreign society, but I had chance to find some differences between two societies. This work is strongly affected by what I found in the differences and I mentioned a lot about them in the writing. However, I couldn’t get precise and clear view about the way to make workplace more desirable from this comparison because they have their root in different soil. History, natural resources, population, religion, even weather, what affects human mind and body is different. Only what I could do is to get more idea from the observation. The better quality can I get from the observation, the more can I refine the understanding about workplace and working life. So, this subject is going to have muscles bigger and bones harder in the further work after.

In the beginning, I should figure out what kind of work this should be or could be. This is not a mathematical dissertation, so doesn’t have a perfect logic. Not Economics, either, so no statistical figures or tables. It could look like an artistic work but not a fine art. Design which has this ridiculous ambition to contain every fields which humankind has developed. Mixture of art, engineering and even marketing makes design thesis unknown genre. Everything could mean nothing. So, not to be trapped in its complexity, I grabbed the sleeve of the Master Degree dissertation format from HDK and tried to escape from this pitch black cave. What I could do in this cave was to speak aloud to get back any response from someone who is in front of me. I shouted my ideas and expected any response of their opinion. This is what I did with this writing.

The Public Office :  
a symbiosis in urban area

## 1. Background

### 1.1 Furniture re-positioning

In this thesis, urban structure, buildings and furniture are used as the ingredients to formulate ideas. Those materials are from what I've studied and worked. I took architectural design courses at bachelor and made furniture at work and now I am studying product design. The subject, workplace, originates in my hobby, furniture re-positioning in my room. ( Although many people do this instinctively, I took this as my hobby. Somebody calls it a kind of procrastination.) When a new or an important project is about to start, I always re-layout my workspace. Sometimes it takes more time than doing the main task. The way how I do this varies. ( see supplement A ) This activity gets me refreshment and gives me 'creative' feeling, hopefully, for better performance in working. This is the reason why I call this common habit my hobby.

More interesting aspect in this regard is that something unexpected happens when my personal taste is presented in public situation like at office or school, especially in situation which requires quite conservative attitude toward some authorities. It is an exciting challenge for me to manage my desire in 'social' circumstances. Its procedure could bring good stimulation among members as well as inconvenience or conflict among them. ( see figure 1.1) This can be connected with and expanded to the notion, Social Design.



Figure 1.1  
'Taking more desk against the wall',  
Brazil,1985

### 1.2 Working condition at workplace

My hobby also had effect on choosing my job. During military service, I applied to woodwork department to get some free wood panel for my secret furniture building like a small desk for reading a book or writing a letter on it. I've learned some woodwork techniques assisting a technician while working in the military radar base on the top of the mountain. Two and a half year later, back to city life, I got a job at a domestic furniture company and learned about industrialized furniture making process. But my hobby turned out to fail to get socialized in working life. When it comes to workplace, more important thing is the relationship between members in a team or between teams than individual preference or capability in design. In the furniture company where I have worked for just one year, my team used a small room which now became storage and moved into new office located right beside a traditional Korean palace, one of the world heritage. Natural environment in there was better than any other places in the city and the facility in the office was brand new. The building has even a gallery with design collections which are hardly found in South Korea. Despite all the exclamation from visitors and jealousy from other team members, the excellent facility with good air quality and beautiful view from window didn't affect how I felt in there and my achievement in working. At that time, honestly, I expected that individual creativity or teamwork synergy could work at company life. But it didn't at all in my team. Rather, I enjoyed my working life at the military base which is considered as the worst workplace with extremely hierarchical classification. The difference between the furniture company and the military service was its institutional culture and policy. In the furniture company, I used to arrive at office at 9a.m and left at 11p.m which was the time for me to catch the last subway home. In the military base, arrived at 8a.m and left at 6p.m which was thirty minutes before the time when food ration was over. The difference, 4 hours, in working time between two workplaces is roughly equivalent to the time of two and a half film watching or 100 pages book reading or daily quota for baby-sitting my 2 years old niece. 4 hours is just a number, but it means a lot when it accumulates every day and particularly does when physical and mental changes, of course, in negative way, are realized someday. Work efficiency might be lower in military base, but regular leisure after work time was guaranteed. The furniture company pursued high efficiency in work, but it was mainly depending on work time extension without extra pay. My boss used to ask her team members to come to office almost every Sunday. ( 5 work days system was adopted in 2006 in South Korea ) Even though this is my personal case and can not be generalized, it is quite easy

to hear of suffering from stress and excessive work time wasting one's life without satisfaction in working life.

### 1.3 Sustainability in workplace

I heard about 'Sustainable Development' for the first time when I was in an architecture class in 1998. It was 11 years after "Report of the World Commission on Environment and development" from UN, 1997. Before I start to have interest in this 'new' trend, I needed another 10 years. Moreover, it was not because of recognition about its original concept, environmental concern and social responsibility, but because of personal anxiety about how I can stay in my job, how I can keep my working life. This is my interpretation of sustainability in workplace. Actually everything could be considered in this subject. Food, art, transportation, daily stuff usage, etc. Including physical and mental environment in workplace can be evaluated by the criteria, sustainability. We are working in order to make our living sustainable, but it doesn't go as we expect in reality. When not only personal feeling but also, economical, social and ethical values get involved, the workplace becomes history of mankind. From slavery in Greece before Christ to modern Capitalism and Communism, or, Liberalism and Socialism is also a part of the face of workplace in terms of relationship among social classes or between employer and employee.

Nowadays work-life balance is relevant to the relationship. It is extremely difficult to have a right answer to the question how we can achieve the balance because of its complexity. Social system, politics, economy, locality, and even personal characteristic are involved in it. In addition to that, another reinforcement of 'new' trend like globalization and IT revolution makes it even more difficult to find the answer. For a long time, people have kept trying to find their own way to cope with it. It would be more realistic to try to find a way how to gather more money with less work in individual life dimension. And it is also 'real' that to have that kind of working life is not sustainable for majority of people. In this dilemma, what I'm trying to do is to move my concern from about me to about us because we cannot help relying on each other to survive whether it is exploitation or cooperation.

### 1.4 Design in workplace

I want to have my eyes on society. But, there is no professional analysis about it in this writing because this is not sociology thesis. Instead, I have objects which consist of society to observe and design with, e.g. Buildings, streets, furniture, electric equipment. These are expected to give me more understanding about society. It is true that the physical elements in workplace don't appear as

main actor or actress in working life. But, it is also true that they affect human behavior to some extent or, sometimes, significantly in a form of 'Mise en scène'. People have invented and developed tools, and used them in workplace. From earthenware to internet, the history of tool adheres to where we work. The more massive and more delicate at the same time with growing speed gets contemporary technology, the more baffling seems to get the working life dilemma. It is pointed out that the stage background and props aggravate this phenomenon. Cell phone keeps us working even in bed. Comfortable ergonomic chair makes us sit longer in front of desk. We can, of course, turn off the cell phone and leave the chair. But we don't, we can not. As I mentioned before, even hi-tech office facility surrounded by nature breathing world heritage can not bring us satisfaction, or rather, it present betrayal and overtime work to us. Under these circumstances, prestigious technology and tools are degraded to watch dog of employments. What kind of role is design supposed to play in the stage? Which role should design play to bring the balance in workplace?

The Public Office :  
a symbiosis in urban area

## 2. Problem identification

The question in this writing is this. How physical elements should be designed to support the psychosocial working environment, particularly for the work-life balance in Korean society? Before searching for the solution, there are several pre-questions to answer.

- What is work?
- What is workplace?
- Who are in there? And what kind of problem do they have?
- What does the problem have to do with physical environment in workplace?

### 2.1 What is work?

The origin of 'Travail' which is equivalent to 'work' in English is 'tripalium' in Latin. Tripalium is three stakes where a horse is tethered to when people put horseshoes into the hooves of the horse. Later on, the meaning turned to torturing. Labor in English has been used to describe birth pangs after 16 century. ( The origin of work from 'the Working Life : the promise and betrayal of Modern work', Joanne B. Ciulla, 2001) 'il' in Korean means having others work or serve. The study about original meaning of the term, 'work' in many lan-

事 : il sa, originated in Chinese

guages suggests that work means something painful or something you want to avoid. There is 'leisure' on the opposite side of 'work'. Leisure means something desirable and something without any stress. Those two are not absolute notions, but relative ones. Enjoyable hobby could be transformed into a stressful task when it becomes profession, and you don't get stressed when you enjoy the task.

From economical aspect, work is defined as an exchange value generated from the contraction in employment. Money, time, physical and mental efforts are all components of work and when they are exchanged, work is done. With this economical conception excluded, work becomes more like hobby or leisure. Work type has been changing over time and place. Some occupations don't exist any more and new ones appear. It is hard to say certain type of work gives more effects on working life at that moment. To consider the majority of work type in our generation, the term, work, in this writing specifically means clerical working process or its similar form of productive activity including some type of working process of expertise which mainly consists of paperwork that has increased for information industry and logistics since industrialization, in short, knowledge work\*. ( Academic works are also included as a productive activity in this category. )

\* Knowledge work is a term coined by Peter Drucker in 1959. Manual work is the opposite.

## 2.2 What is workplace?

In theoretical view, every place where economical activities occur could be workplace. House, Office, Public building, Commercial building, cultural facility, transportation node, forest land, farm, etc. In the sense of major difficulty in work-life balance, with the definition of work above, office in urban area including the place where the work type can be performed in like study in a house, classroom, table in a cafeteria or bench in a railway station, etc. Automation, increasing education and IT development have pushed more workforces in front of desk. And the range of where the desk is placed in expands to everywhere, even on the beach on vacation. Still, cities are the main source of workforce in contemporary societies.

## 2.3 Who are in there? What kind of problems do they have?

They are employer, employee. ( and customer. ) The relationship between them is a scale to measure the balance in working life. In this thesis, the argument is based on knowledge worker and their lifestyle.

### 2.3.1 Cultural value in workplace

From the work history, employers and employees have under-

gone tough cohabitation. Strikes or occasional violent conflicts in workplace have existed in a similar form over the world, mainly for low payment or poor working condition, sometimes, with issue around racial or religious discrimination involved. Employers are apt to push employees, or wheedle them, to produce more benefit with the least cost while employees are apt to claim more wage with minimal amount of work. The conflict of these two interests is fundamental, which means it seems to be impossible to get rid of this obstacle in bringing harmonization into workplace. It is not difficult to find those examples of exploitation or work indolence, although, in a different appearance from the past. Joanne B. Ciulla seeks moral employers and voluntary employees concerning this issue in her book through observing American work history. ( from 'the Working Life : the promise and betrayal of Modern work', Joanne B. Ciulla, 2001) She points out that there have been many experiments to figure out this problem, 'Heartless employers and lazy employees' in the United States. Taylor's scientific management\* was one of the representative approaches to it. This simple but only efficiency oriented system was criticized and sabotaged by employees. Critics claim that Taylor's method doesn't consider about the difference between individuals and take them as machines. Although working condition doesn't consist of only time and workload, this method estimates the reward, the wage in this case, only by productivity. Under this system, people work harder but become dissatisfied with the work environment. Similarly, to focus on my case, the work environment in South Korea is criticized for its inhumanity.

Competitiveness or superiority is the value Korean people have in their organizations from elementary school to international corporations. Korean people praise so-called 'Miracle on the Han river', a catchphrase which describes rapid economic growth in South Korea following Korean War, 3 years warfare intervened by many foreign countries including USA, USSR and China. With economical, political and social affection by USA, Korea has become one of four Asian Tigers under military dictatorship. This rapid economic growth in a short period let South Korea escape from severe poverty over the nation after Korean War. However, Cultural frame in South Korea couldn't catch up with the absurdly rapid economic growth. ( Per capita income 36 times growth during 1970~2001) This gap yield unstable social system and serious conflicts between social classes. This social condition directly affects working life in the society. Traditionally hierarchical structure reinforced during military dictatorship has subsided over generations. Instead, elitism took the top of the pyramid of hierarchical structure, and they are supposed to be most competitive in business. In this system, there

\* Scientific management is a theory of management that analyzes and synthesizes workflow process, improving labor productivity, developed by Frederick Winslow Taylor in the 1880s and 1890s.

must be winner and loser, and the number of winner is very few and loser is all of the rest. Relativism, one of the characteristics of the society, destroyed any principles which would have made this game fair to all the members. South Korean economy is still upward, but the society has many internal conflicts. Young generation doesn't follow the old system, unconditional obedience of command from above, any more. In addition to this, there are more potentially harmful factors, the growing number of the long-educated and their unemployment, continuous unpaid overtime work, frequent turnover, lost faith in other social members, etc. The requirement for resetting the culture frame in business is growing in South Korea.

Every country, municipality and individual has their own condition for formulating the solution exerting themselves to improve their working situation. Despite many attempts to find a reliable agreement between employers and employees, overall it seems as hard as to find a meeting point with two parallel lines. In this matter, 'Saltsjöbaden agreement'\* in 1938 was a landmark. Sweden has developed slowly but persistently and the country established relatively stable society with a good welfare system. It can't be said that Swedish model is the ultimate solution for the work-life balancing. However, it is worth taking a close look at the way they have the meeting point between the two lines. In the description about the agreement in EFILWC\*, the so-called 'Saltsjöbaden spirit' is described as a willingness of cooperation, mutual respect and endeavor to arrive at peaceful solutions through compromise and a sense of responsibility. Although there must be a lot more factors to bring the reputation Sweden enjoys nowadays, these values seems to be preconditions for the work-life balance. It is hard to say that the values are something should be pursued or can be achieved in other societies. Nevertheless, to consider about how each country or society could affect each other in this globalization, we can be more active about comparison between them even though there is no perfect point for judgment. In this point of view, Swedish case suggests a serious reconsideration about Korean business culture and working condition.

( Interestingly, a Swedish research institute shed new light on the Taylor's system for improving their labor market. )

### 2.3.2 New trend in workplace

Relatively new trends, technology development ( specifically, IT revolution ), globalization have accelerated 'speed' in workplace. Easier and faster international transportation of people, goods and information creates overwhelming complexity not only in global network but also in each domestic society. The question, how and

why things are going on like this exceeded individual's capability to understand. The distance between products and contributors has gotten longer and employers who decide redundancy excuse themselves for the far away global market. And, consequently, globalized industrialization has been alarmed for its serious threatening to natural environment. The speed and its range of this new trend which some people are still celebrating and taking advantage of this should be adjusted in sustainable way. However, people don't seem to be going to stop the technology development because they are so used to the advantage which new technology has provided even though the technology didn't bring them as much as considered, rather, made them more busy, stressed and meaningless. They agree to have the development in a sustainable way which unfortunately doesn't gain that much interest from people. Employers want to get better position in the market and employees want to spend their money buying brand new stuffs from the market. They still seem to concern more about another meaning of 'interest'. ( In this point, Victor Papanek's proposals, 'going back to the old age' are rather intense but, provocative. )

We can find consumerism in the workplace as well as in the market. Employers squeeze employees to produce 'benefit' and throw them away when they are exhausted and employees just keep moving to a company which offers more salary. And the fast technology development only makes this vicious circle even faster. Arguments on environment or social morality don't make critical impact on their mind in this situation. How workplace should participate in those arguments is a underground question in this thesis.

### 2.3.3 Working condition in South Korea

Focusing on Korean society, Industrial structure based on conglomerates has been considered as advantageous strategy for economical growth in South Korea. Global corporations like Samsung, LG has succeeded to take considerable market share in IT business. On the other hand, small and medium size enterprises ( SMEs ) are relatively in the minority. It is hard to run a small company in large firm dominant business culture. Sometimes they suffer losses on unfair trades with conglomerates. It seems that soil for SMEs in the society is not fertile yet. Beside the national strategy in industry, it is suspicious that big power yearning trend might be originated from traditional collectivism or more recently from the Law of Nature, only the strongest can survive. Still, many of SMEs keep being established and disappeared. Since 1990s dot com boom, venture business has grown up but now many of them has gone into bankruptcy with empty offices left in luxurious buildings in town where those venture businesses were accumulated

\* Saltsjöbaden agreement was signed between the workers and employers confederation in 1938. It resolved several issues on the Swedish market and has played an important role on the development of Swedish welfare system.

\* European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

before. Korean government has invested in SMEs to support balanced growth in industrial structure. But it doesn't seem to be that efficient without fundamental, structural changes in social system. It might be logical to have this unbalance in pursuing only rapid growth. Compared to Japanese SMEs which are regarded as the practical base for their economic growth, Korean people have their own condition and background for development, although both countries have undergone collapse in their conventional values in rapid social development in modern history, suffering from excessive working time. It is hard to say that prosperous SMEs in Korean society would guarantee the work-life balance, but it would bring distribution in industrial structure and that would affect in working life significantly in Korean society. With the changes, market obsessive IT business in South Korea and lack of environmental concern would be redirected in more society oriented way.

## 2.4 How the problems are connected to physical environment in workplace

### 2.4.1 Management and working environment

A bowl gives the form of its contents, and there are many different type of bowl which suits the contents. Management in workplace has played a role of contents in a bowl. Tayloristic management, which is still prevalent in some organizations, gives a strict hierarchical structure in workplace. Employee's status or rank is expressed by the size of the space or its position in the room. In typical cubicle office individuality collapses and exchanged with a sensation of a piece of machine components. With artificial air circulation, no contact with outside, monotonous spatial experience in stacked offices in a mass concrete structure and surprisingly crowded commute, office workers suffer from severe stress and dissatisfaction. Since the early ages of industrialization, factory life in which workers has been monitored and strictly supervised only for time and cost efficiency by 'Big brother' has often observed. ( stage 1 ) Some employers take another approach to management for better working condition, originally by strong protests from employees. In some management strategy, less hierarchical system is emphasized with more flexible office furniture layout. Open plan, cellular offices, clustered area and other methods are mixed according to employer's intention. ( stage 2 ) Physical environment change is accompanied by new management methods like regular party or team building to lessen stress from work and improve efficiency. Some examples like Ethospace by Herman Miller, 1999 are considered positive on the progress of office furniture development. With information technology and telecom-

munication developed, alternative offices appear in various forms. "Your Office is Where You Are"( from a title of an article in Harvard Business Review published by Phillip Stone and Robert Luchetti, 1985 ) seems to come true. Tele-Work, Home-Office, Hoteling, Hot desk, Virtual office, etc. were devised and practiced in some workplaces. Despite some advantages from these solutions like commuting cost reduction and FREEDOM of employees, this relatively new trend failed to become main stream in workplace because of, basically, the lack of management, in addition to unreliability of telecommunication devices or its excessive reliability. ( imagine cellular phone ) ( stage 3 ) Many conventional aspects like having private space or face to face communication seems fundamental and mandatory in working procedure. Some employers take impressive strategy which lets their employees build their own workspace in the office building ( usually formal warehouse ) or provides entertainment for casual working environment. ( e.g. Google Mountain View HQ, California, USA ) However, all of these physical changes around workplace are formulated by management strategies by employers. No matter how satisfying the environment is, it won't be for employees when they are redundant. Employer doesn't concern about how they are faithful to their work. Even the hardest worker could lose his or her job in the globalized market oriented workplace. And it is also getting difficult for employers to have satisfied and faithful employees in spite of all the compensations.

### 2.4.2 Re-organization in workplace

Among the history of workplace development, some examples like Centraal Beheer office building in Apeldoorn, Holand by Herman Hertzberger, 1970~1973 are extraordinary for designer's proper application with consideration about cooperative value in office work management. But this was due to the company's decision which place human resources before the efficiency or economy, which we can rarely find among modern commercial organizations. This was just the milestone for the virtue of that employer which cannot be expected in general, either. There are other examples, which are more recent, for notable development in physical environment in workplace. So called, Virtual office, basically Tele-Work was once adopted and experimented in Chiat/Day HQ in New York City, USA. It was a challenge for combining information technology with non-hierarchical workplace. With the challenge concluded with a failure or a dreamer's unconsidered ambition, other implementations, which are considered as improved cases from previous lesson, like TBWA/Chiat/Day offices in Los Angeles, USA followed. These trials are on the journey to adjust the balance in working life not only for employees but also for em-



ployers, and they contain social value at the time. If our workplace is meant to be democratic, there must be mutual agreement on forming it in respectful way by involved social parties which are governmental organizations, the company and employees. And it seems that compromise, rather than competition is required for the agreement. ( stage 4 )

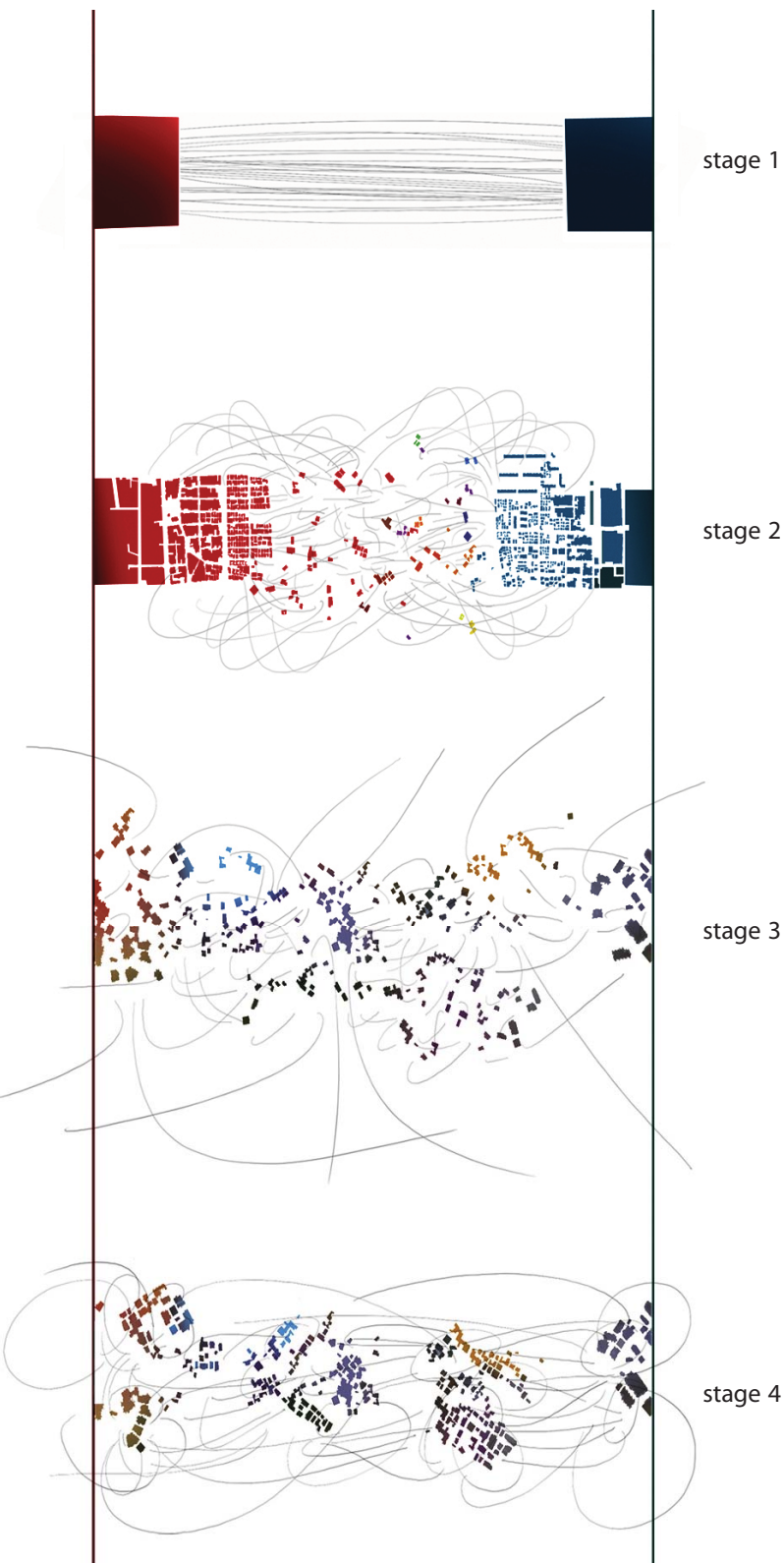


Figure 2.1  
 Work and Life diagram : this magnet like diagram illustrates types of work-life relationship. Basically this is a symbolized illustration imitating satellite view of city. Big mass of organization collapse into small particles which still have work-life struggling attached as small shattered magnets do. It seems that work and life are to rely on each other, cohabit.  
 Each society has its ongoing stage for the status of work-life balance. This diagram doesn't show specific situation in any society. However, the first stage indicate mass productive industry with distinctive workplace from home, and, through the second stage, chaotic mingle of workspace over the area is one with IT development and unstable social settlement of it.

### 2.4.3 Workspace in South Korea

Recently introduced western style workspace in South Korea remains as Tayloristic one mainly for hierarchical centered business culture. Some companies provide extra activities like outdoor sports for team building or eating out with team members. But for the company which has the hierarchy for their dominant associative culture, those are basically purposed for the reinforcement of hierarchy in workplace because even in the extra activities they have another training by doing their assigned tasks for their position in the organization. Conventional cubicle system is the basic office furniture in offices. Managers have enclosed space which expresses their status. Even parking lot follows the same structure. Higher ranks have priority in insufficient size of parking lot. Some smaller organizations tend to be less strict in that matter. Still, many of them have their employees stay in work until the employer allows their men to dismiss. Officially, working time in South Korea is on the top among OECD members in 2007. It means people spend more time at work than their home. In the furniture market, home office collection can be found in combination of a computer desk and a office chair finished in soft material. But flexible working type such as home officing, hot desking, or flexible working time is rarely found. In some types of industry like architecture planning firms or music studios, hoteling is occasionally used to have workers from different organizations in a workspace for temporary collaboration. In 1990s, when venture business was boomed, small offices are provided to applicants under some conditions by local government. But the office capacity of its number and size was not sufficient so that only few of applicants could rent the small storage like offices. Now, dot come bubble was gone and real estate in city area keep rising. Consequently it gets more difficult to have offices in urban area, especially for SMEs. With IT development, public or semi public facilities like airport, conference building or in the subway started to provide internet connection with PC stand or desk. Some people use the service for business or casual use. However, rigid working condition in general workplaces limits the usage of those public services. Seemingly for the short period of rapid economic and social development, Korean workplace has mixed feature of the ones mentioned above in the Work and Life diagram ( see figure 2.1)

The Public Office :  
a symbiosis in urban area

### 3. Purpose and Goal

How to keep technology and social responsibility in physical environment? What kind of workplace let people have productive working life not pushing them into the Jungle Law?

#### 3.1 Competition

Economic activities form markets. And the more employer focus on competitiveness in the market, the lesser ground to stand employees seem to have being taken as subordinate to customers. The phrase, 'The customer is God' or 'The customer is always right' is not true although we tend to consider the quotation as one of agreed social values. The result of this appears embarrassingly on the occasion that an employee is scolded in front of customers by his/her manager for making some mistakes with the customer. This has not been considered wrong in Japanese culture, and Korean culture to some extent. At least in Korean society, the competitiveness is one of most dominant value or virtue that people long to have its better position for their successful life. And this belief is widespread over the workplace, as well.

#### 3.2 Balance

Among many anecdotes which describe the differences between heaven and hell, a long spoon projects clear images of them. In the hell, hungry people holding a spoon which has a long handle try to have supper. Their arms are strapped to the spoons both above and below elbows, so they cannot bend their arms and starve. In the heaven, people in the same condition enjoy the meal by stretching their arms to others' mouth. From the view of religious ethics, there will be no one to disagree with pursuing those cooperation. However, in our workplace, there are many. Some people justify that with 'Jungle Law'. But even in the wild we can find the cooperative relationship between different species. ( see figure 3.1 ) Although the interpretation from features of nature is not thoroughly valid, it provides somewhat similarity to human society. Competition and cooperation are contradictory concepts but cannot be considered separately just like the growth and distribution in economy. Hence, balancing comes between them. Since Korean War, Korean people have exerted their all effort to recover and grow, at all cost. Consequently they traded the balance for growing speed. There are indications that alarm the imbalance has exceeded critical point. Gap between social classes, violence rate and political, corporate corruption are significantly growing.

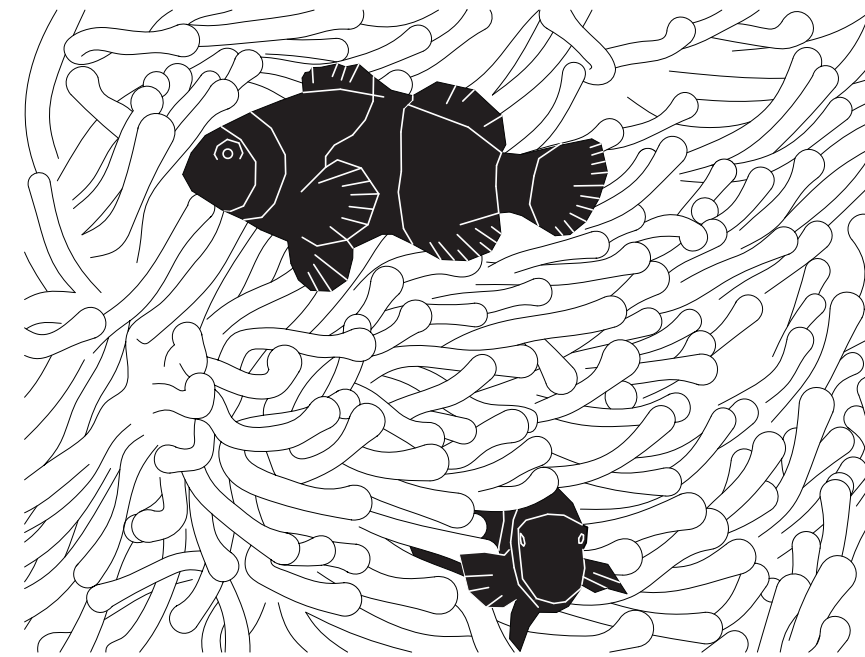


Figure 3.1  
Clown fish and sea anemones

To have the point of the scale back near to even position, the hand of distribution and cooperation need to be weighed more. The suggestion is not easily accepted because this would diminish the power of the privileged class. As long as they are not willing to agree with it, it seems very hard to have the even position. The attempt to bring back the balance can be found around the globe. UN has been trying to arrange negotiation for international conflict, NGOs are rolling out campaigns to prevent crimes against humanity and Habitat is building houses for homeless. Some designers held exhibition with recycled products. Nevertheless, desired change doesn't come to us that easily. U.S automobiles started to lessen their products' engine displacement with three oil crises, not because they recognized their responsibility for natural resources but because they should have survived in the market. Some companies which advocate sustainable development nowadays advertise their 'philosophy' in a comparative advantage level in the market. It seems that we are gaining the balance in the result, regardless of their intention. However, they can hardly avoid being accused of their hypocrisy.

#### 3.3 Compromise

Back to Sweden, Swedish model including other Scandinavian countries' seems to play a role of the weight on the other side to hold the scale point on the middle. Principlism, strong ethics, agreement through discussion ( Strong self-assertion is generally prohibited though ) are widespread over the society even after industrialization. This makes Sweden distinctive from other European societies. However, they also face to social need for change because of

immigrants problem, long absence in work and difficulty in dealing with global market, etc. Compromise, one of their old, still existing, cultural characteristics, supports the optimistic view on their future. Swedish characteristics might have survived for relatively late industrialization compared to other European countries. Interestingly, in Korean culture, compromise is regarded as something to be avoided because it could mean surrender in competition or moral decay like 'compromise with injustice'. It might be because that people have experienced so many injustices since Korean War and they admire an iron will which never compromise with all the injustice. The person who has the iron will is supposed to have competitiveness and power to keep it in the society. But most of people don't have the iron will and the competitiveness. So they just compromise with reality, rather than stand against it which is more competitive than them. Every aspect between Sweden and South Korea has different background. But the fact wouldn't justify the problem in Korean workplace. The goal, more like wish, in this writing is to adopt cooperative value and respect among social members counting on natural environment in workspace design, from Swedish model to Korean.

The Public Office :  
a symbiosis in urban area

## 4. Method

Concerning about the company's philosophy, social and regional contexts, alternative offices have challenged to create democratic and collaborative workplace. Even if there were a few successes of them, those design solutions cannot be guaranteed to work in other contexts. However, every alternative office is a product or by-product from struggling to meet the needs of both employer and employee who barely yield. The needs are mutual, not independent from each other. And this fact appears in workspace often in the form of stress, overtime work, an implicit blame toward the other and turnover. Several alternative office solutions like hoteling are attempts to have geological independency of workspace. They cannot be successful unless the worker's responsibility for the task is made sure to the employer. And the responsibility matters for both employer and employee. Where can we find the mutual responsibility?

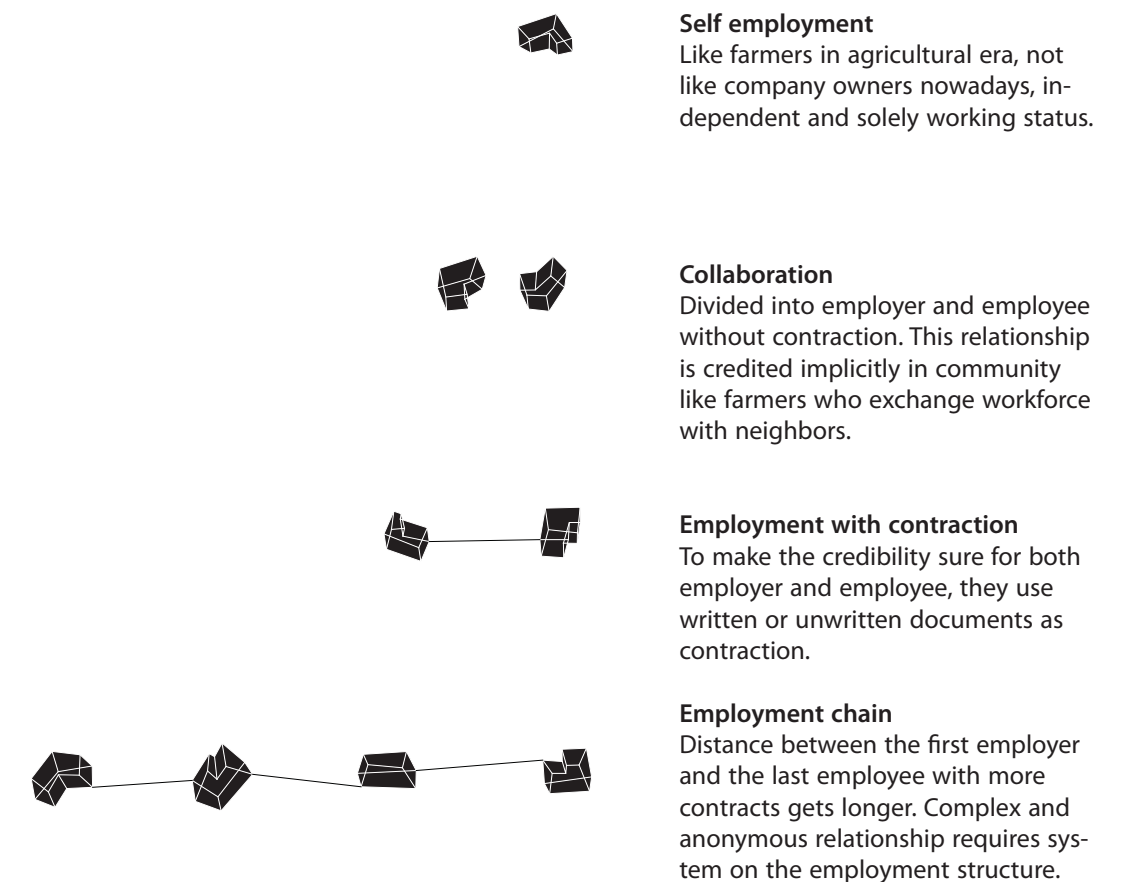
### 4.1 Employment structure

From the history of workplace, it can be said that it is not a good

idea for employees to entrust employers with work environment. Because it is the same as having the wolf guard the sheep. But employers should be assured that they have right for the management of their workplace including planning workspaces and workforces, otherwise, it would be very hard to run the organization. It is not about whether their management strategies satisfy their employees. Good salary and good working condition could resolve the workplace argument. But the problem is that in most case people don't have them. Rather, it is about what kind of relationship between employers and employees they have in the workplace. Here the role playing gets some attention. The one who is an employer and an employee at the same time wouldn't have any problem for the workplace management, like a farmer in old agricultural industry ( if we can call it industry ) Self employment does still exist nowadays but in much more complicated way. Even one person-company has their customers as temporary employers. And there are many chains of the contractions between associations, which makes the employment structure complex. In the structure, to be simplified, hierarchy and heterarchy coexist. ( see figure 4.1, 4.2 ) To have work-life balance for individual workers, the structure also should be balanced because the structure indicates the relationship between members in the employment.

Figure 4.1

Employment diagram :



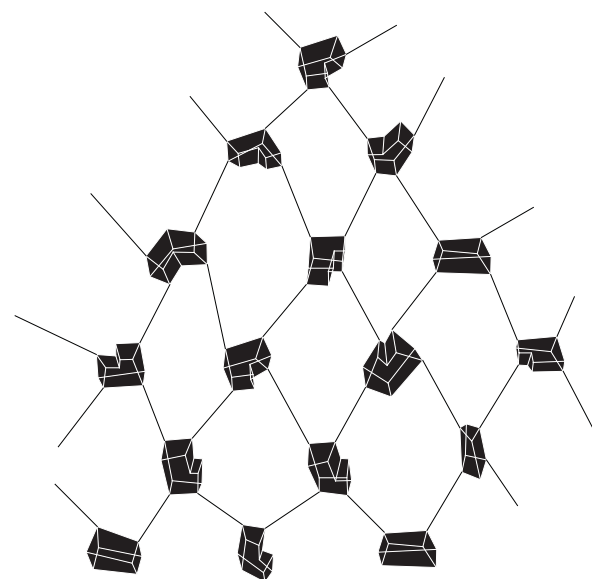
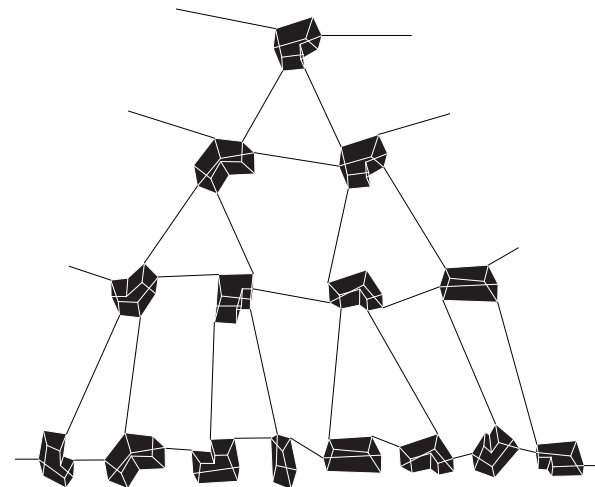
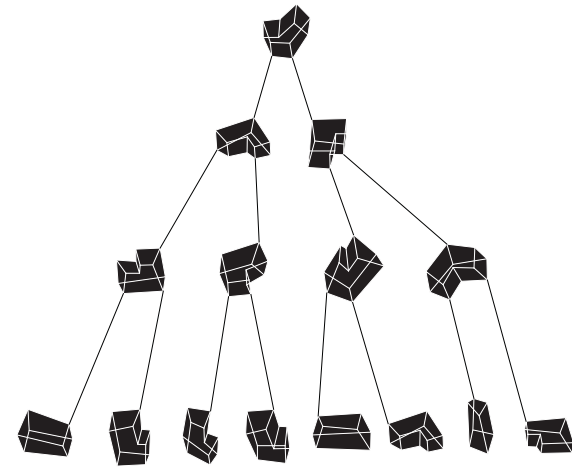


Figure 4.2  
System in employment chain :

( top )  
**Hierarchical structure**  
Control, supervision, loyalty required relationship can be found in this type.

( middle )  
**Semi-hierarchical structure**  
It is possible to mutually check others against one sided execution. Still this has difference on rank among members.

( bottom )  
**Heterarchical structure**  
Equal relationship among members with highly requiring responsibility and respect for each other.

## 4.2 Rise of public

In the employment structure, every member wants more control over the working conditions with less intervention from others. But there is no way to achieve that goal without taking other's control, and this is the origin of conflicts produced in workplace. To figure it out, there must be some compromise among the members by giving away some portion of their desires. This can be achieved by keeping each other in check, and this is prominent in heterarchical structure. This principle can be used to explain how public space forms. A shared space doesn't belong to anyone or any single authority. It is supposed to be under mutual control requiring responsibility for each member who occupies a part of the space. Not like private space, public space can exist only on the basis of agreement that anybody can use it and everybody should take care of it. If the agreement is ignored, there comes sanctions which could be penalty or extra budget of the local government. It seems that the argument in workplace would better move its stage into public space.

## 4.3 Public space in urban area

Transportation node like airport, railway station or bus stop on the street is considered as the typical example of public space where people enter and use freely. But some of the public spaces have regulations or implicit rules people are supposed to follow. This semi-public space includes café, train, cinema, shopping center, etc. Generally, public space is dedicated to the community. Some school doesn't have a fence so that its schoolyard is shared by local community. In some residential area, pocket parks are shared by neighbors and visitors. Commercial buildings have already used their halls, tables and other specialized facilities in the building for the public in order to attract potential customers. People take it granted to have business meeting, work with their laptop, or just read a book in there. Recently more places start to have coin internet access in the corner for people who use the space with or without payment. It seems that the potential public workspace spreads more and more over urban area. However, the boundary between public and private space is ambiguous and this causes some arguments. For instance, big office buildings in South Korea ( imagine Samsung HQ in Seoul downtown ) have the toilet in its lobby area as a kind of public space, but people on the street don't go there to use the toilet without restraint. It wouldn't be any problem to use the toilet in the lobby if it was cultural or commercial facility like conference center or department store. But there are very few people or nobody who want to use the toilet in the lobby regardless all the explicit security control. A dirty clothed beggar

who doesn't try to bag but just wants to use the toilet in the office building would be rejected even if the beggar claimed its urgency. Security of the building should be concerned, nonetheless, the beggar has the right to use the toilet. If the security is top priority, schoolyards should be protected by high walls and collective residential area must have CCTV cameras all over the place with entrance code of the gate. ( Many houses have those security equipment, actually ) Actually it is not only about security. Even if the beggar was proved not an industrial spy, the security guard wouldn't let him/her enter the building. The distinction between public space and private one involves social discrimination. It is more about credibility between social members, politics and national character. It can be said that the way they determine public space reflects their social value. And, in this thesis, the shared space is used for workplace because of its tension among the occupants.

#### 4.4 Homeless life – worker's life

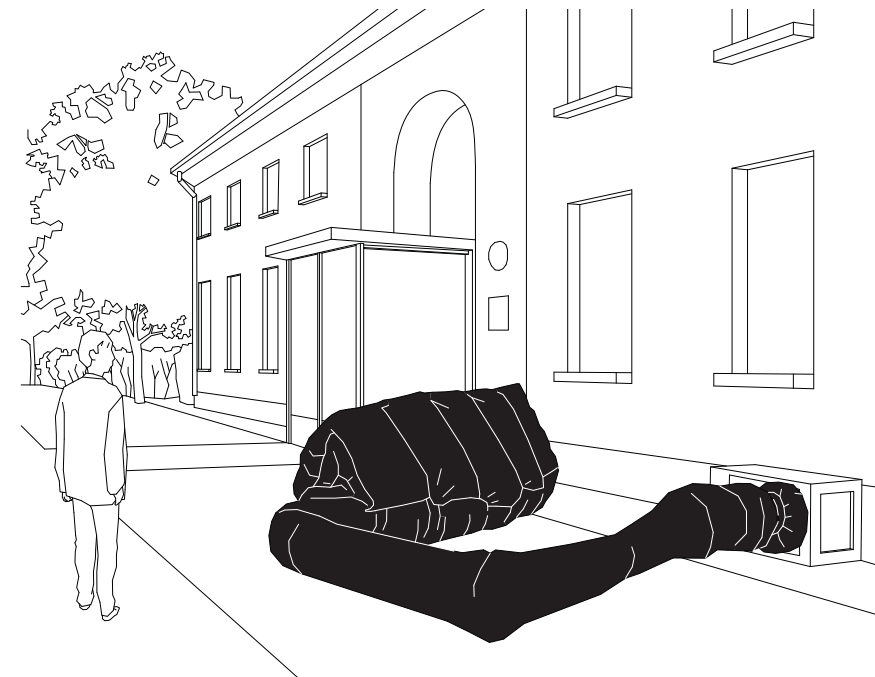


Figure 4.3  
Inflatable tent 'Parasite'  
by Micheal Rakowitz, 1998

The image ( see figure 4.3 ) shows an idea to 'borrow' warm air from the ventilation fan of a building for homeless. This inflatable tent named PARASITE is an installation art which is intended to provoke social debate by suggesting survival tool design solution in urban area for homeless people. If some people really want to have this for their alternative house, probably they should collect considerably large amount of plastic bottles and aluminum tins to afford this 'product'. Even when they get this for free or at a cost, it doesn't seem that the owner of the building would allow the homeless people get together with the lousy big balloons right beside the building. And it would be the same in public space. In

some cities, shelters where homeless people can lodge temporarily are provided. But the number of those facilities is limited and some of them have poor condition. So, homeless people should go out to find alternative place like rail way station, bus terminal, or subway station which are sometimes closed in the night time and push out the unwelcomers. They should live on compassion of the society being treated as parasites.

Some homeless people resist to go to shelter even they have chance to. Instead, they make encampments with 'recycled' stuffs gathered from the street. For an example, 45 men and women had coaches, television sets connected to a street lamp and even a two-basin sink under West 66th Street in New York. They have organized a small community to survive in the city for three years until the police bulldozed their makeshift village in 1997. In the government or civic organization providing shelter, homeless people should trade their desperate need for a space to stay over night with any other needs in crowded, insecure environment. Compared to shelters, their encampment provided them 'where to go' which is abandoned or unused by city. Once they find the place where they can be more free, they don't need to go back to the facility. In the small community, they have less population and less intervention by supervisors who consider them dangerous or as a loser. They don't have any regulations and threat from anonymous other homeless. Moreover, they can bring whatever they need from the street and construct their own shelter. Autonomy seems one of the key points for the homeless community to last. It is also assumed that Individual independence and responsibility for themselves are preserved with a kind of bond of sympathy within the community. Definitely homeless community is not normal or desirable type of organization. But these fragile looking small societies would have last longer if the police didn't sweep them out.

The homeless case suggests some points for balancing in workplace. Autonomy without one-sided control would play a role of driving force to form a community which has mutual respect for members by certain associative culture which is, in the homeless case, bond of sympathy. And the condition which the members in the community have in common including the size of population and their social status makes the culture easily spread over the members. The policy of the local government should not be superficial. Rather, it should take responsibility as one of social organization keeping its neutral position. Interestingly, all of these points have something in common with Swedish model.

Metaphorically, in the next chapter of this writing, homeless people would find their position in public space and grow as a com-

munity in consultation between all the social parties concerned, instead being accused of public property abuse.

The Public Office :  
a symbiosis in urban area

## 5. Suggestion

Besides 'Jungle law', parasite concept could explain the argument in workplace. In Korean business structure, employees have been subordinated to employers. It has been the same for small companies to bigger ones. The parasitic relationship between them is harmful for smaller and weaker ones not like in the nature. ( Normally, the bigger ones are hosts in the nature. ) To have it back to more 'natural' status, the position of parasite should be assigned to small and weak organizations. And big and strong ones should be on the position of host. Being a host means to have someone take something out of you regardless of your will. Strong organizations have power to resist being the host while weak ones don't. This is the reason why human society has the reverse parasitic relationship. Only if both members of the association derive benefits from each other, it becomes a symbiotic relationship. And this suggestion is for the symbiotic relationship in workplace.

### 5.1 Opening The Public Office

'Let them in!' is the idea. Someone who has been excluded is invited. Employees are invited in making decision on the company management. Small size companies can access the pool of industry more easily. The beggar can freely use the toilet in the lobby in Samsung HQ. This proposal emphasizes on the cooperation value related to workplace, by involving elements which have not been counted on each other. The elements are natural environment inside artificial construction and private property which can be shared with others. In The Public Office, as one example of the concept, anyone who wants to have a temporary workplace can take a portion of the lobby in an office building which is the building owner's private property. And there is a big tree right in the middle of the lobby which provides contact to natural environment and brings it to the area. These elements are meant to interact in the workspace. A diagram ( see figure 5.1~3 ) describes how The Public Office is created. This proposal assumes the main shift of social climate in South Korea. This plan would be nothing more than a protest in the front yard of a major company building without it.



Figure 5.1

#### Private to public

A big private in the middle with a lot of small privates around devotes a void to natural environment. And this natural environment comes along with other small privates into the big one to make the whole realm turn into public. Consequently, The big private provides a shelter with a ceiling and a big open space for business meeting for small ones and the small ones reward the big one nutrients with their rent. Broadly, urban area preserves green and SMEs flourish along with big companies' brand value improvement.

Figure 5.2

**Transplantation**

In this diagram, approximately 25% of volume of an office building is replaced by a void which has a tree inside. And the ground level is open to the public. The lobby area is used mainly as a meeting place. This area used to be occupied by commercial facilities like bank, cafeteria, or hair shop, etc. These another type of workplaces are not included in this plan.

Actual process of constructing a building is different from the diagram, but the intention to have a tree in the middle of the building is for reflection of environmental concern, just as a bigger scale of Frank Lloyd Wright's Water Fall which has a bypass beam around a tree.

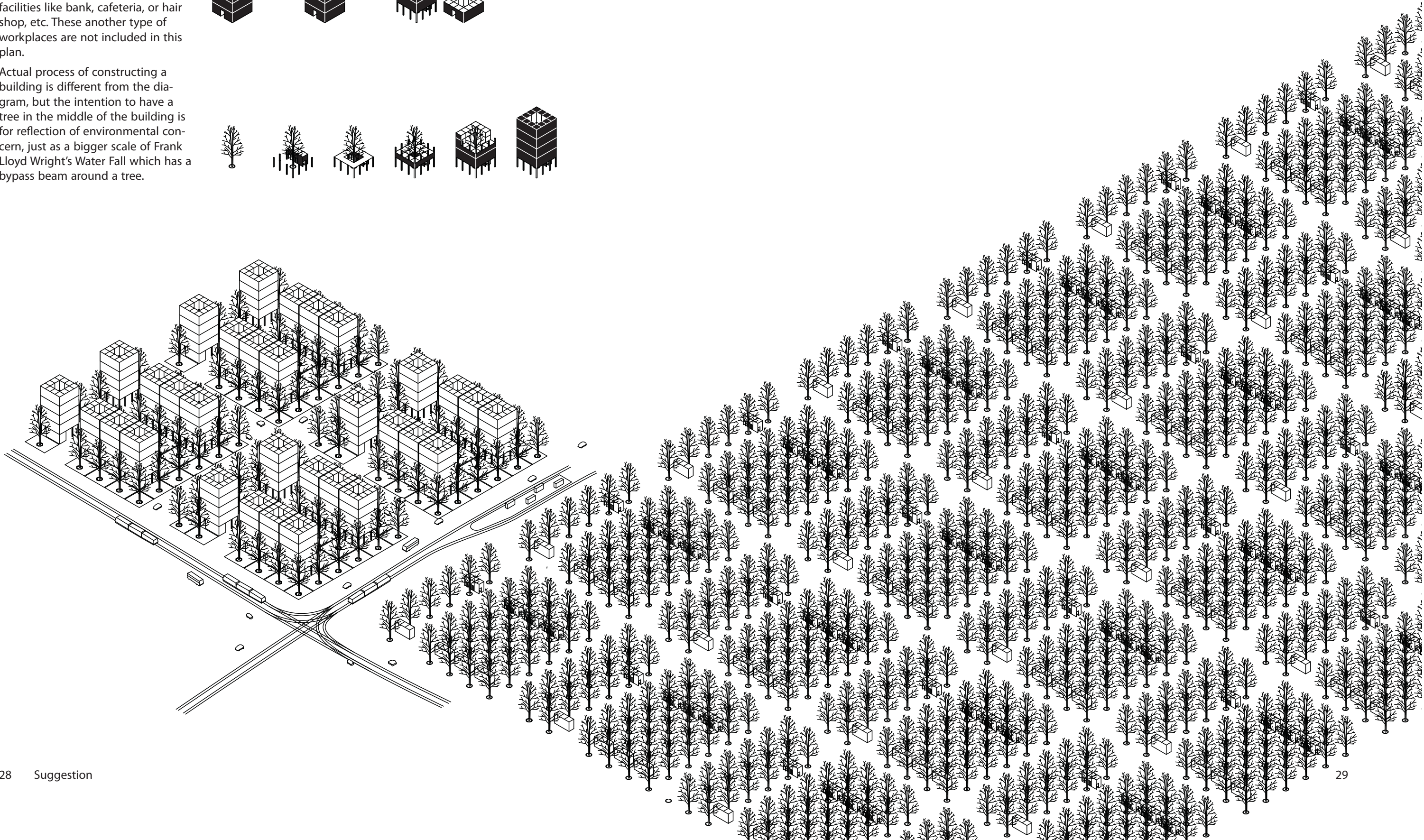
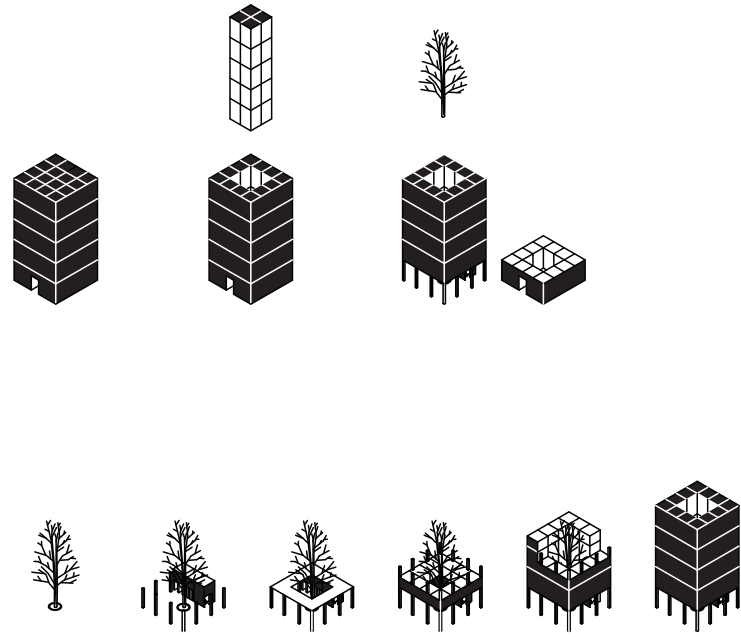


Figure 5.3  
 Compartments of The Public Office

**1. Host building**

The organization which owns this building can compensate for loss of its physical asset by improved spacial condition for its employees besides the environmental contribution to the urban area.

**2. Tree**

Any typical trees in the climate of the location can be used. *Prunus serrulata* (cherry tree) and *Acer palmatum* (Maple) are common in the site of which climate is the temperate monsoon, distinctive four seasons, 1°C~2°C on January, 24°C~26°C on August, and 1,100~1,300mm precipitation.

( see figure 5.7 )

**3. Workstation**

**Layout A (left)**

The way to use the lobby in an office building is various. This is one with rental system adapted. Individual workstation provides private, personal workspace and the center area is for public use.

**Layout B (middle)**

Just like supermarket trolley, people get each table when they enter this area and mingle under the tree. They find where they like to sit down and get to work. The table should be easy to carry and useful for work at the same time. And protection against stealing should be also considered.

**Layout C (right)**

A table fixed on the ground doesn't seem to be stolen. This waiting room bench resembling rigid layout can be little more flexible by giving them rotating function to have possibility for team work. ( or just chatting with colleagues )

B and C are short term hot desking, while A is long term.

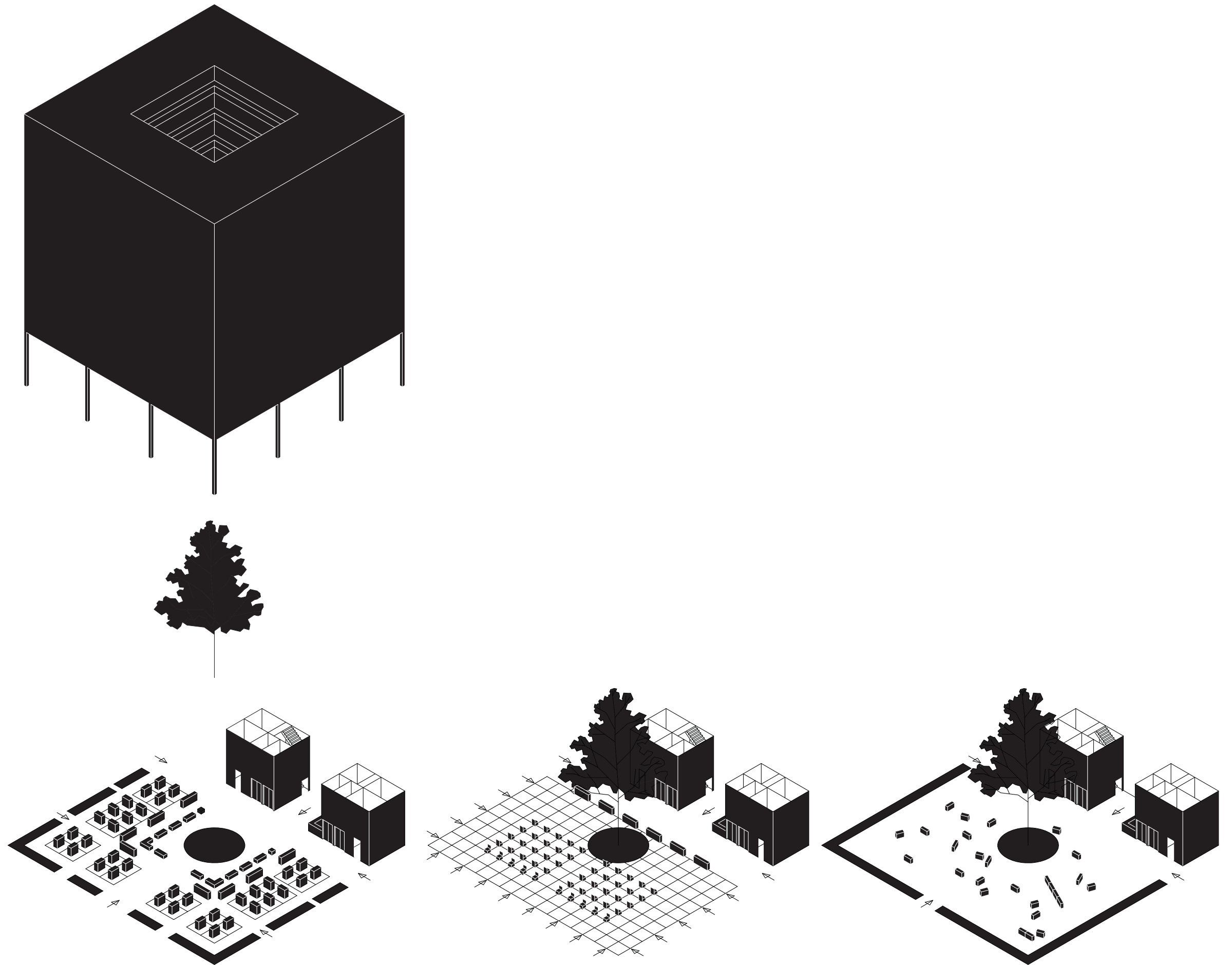




Figure 5.4  
Workstation design points

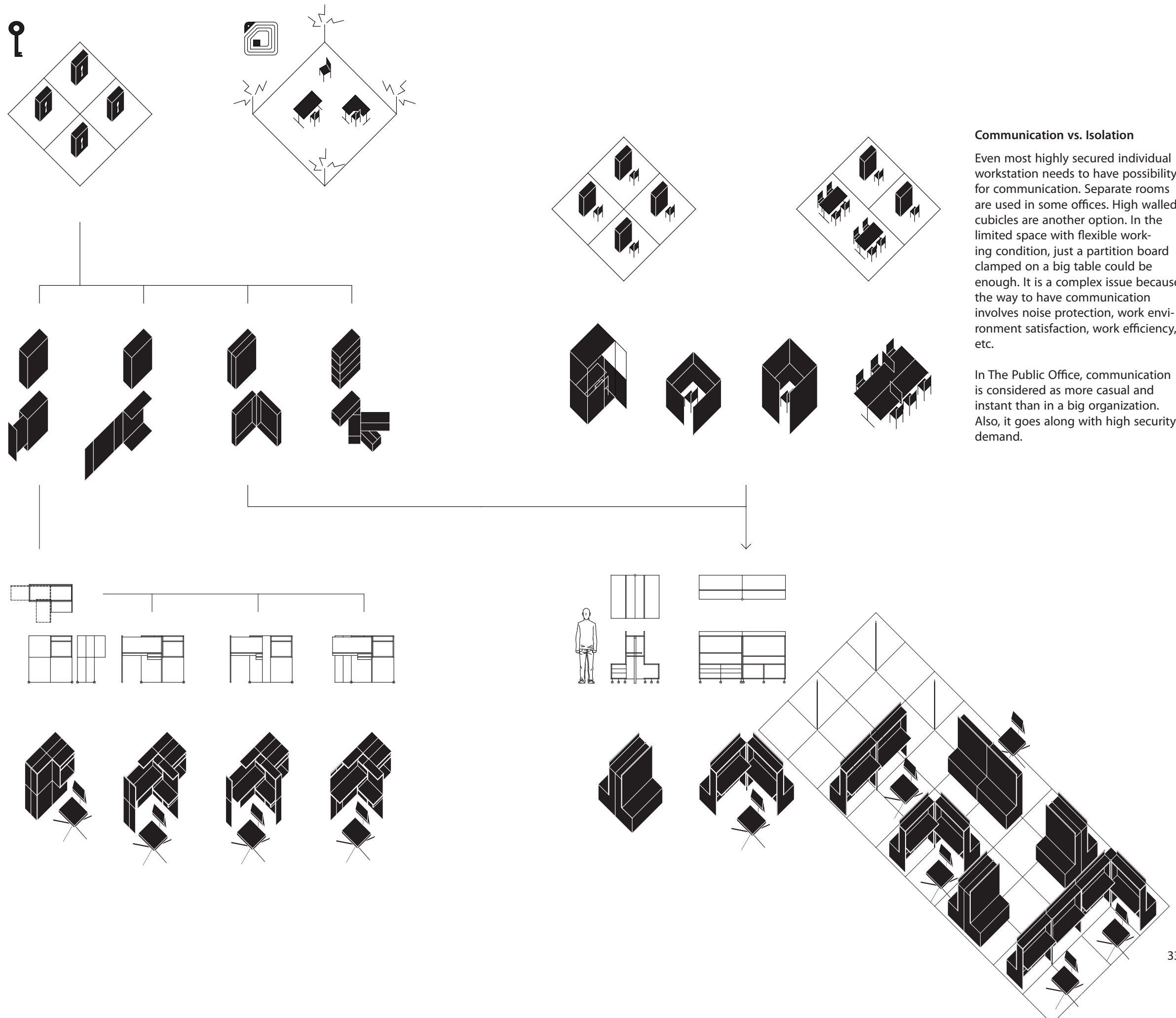
**Security**

Because the workstation is in public space which is 24 hours open with anonymous people, Security is on the top of priority in this workspace. Like traveler's bag, the workstation could have key lock device. It might be a skeleton key or RFID.

If RFID solution is excluded, manual type of solution with higher security and less interruption should be found. In the image, there are several options for the solution. The first one is a drawer type of workstation and third one is a door type. Several minutes when they are absent from the workstation could be long enough for having their belongings lost. So the locking system should be either convenient or supported by additional methods like CCTV or natural supervision.

**Compactness**

Valuables in workspace would be a laptop computer, documents, stationery, books, clothes and so on. The workstation should contain them safely and users want to have them within easy reach. This contradictory situation requires some compromise. The workstation could be compact as much as possible containing essential contents like a desktop, a book shelf, several drawers and a memo board. Extra capacity could be made up with some shared storage. (Service desk could take some of the capacity.)



**Communication vs. Isolation**

Even most highly secured individual workstation needs to have possibility for communication. Separate rooms are used in some offices. High walled cubicles are another option. In the limited space with flexible working condition, just a partition board clamped on a big table could be enough. It is a complex issue because the way to have communication involves noise protection, work environment satisfaction, work efficiency, etc.

In The Public Office, communication is considered as more casual and instant than in a big organization. Also, it goes along with high security demand.

Figure 5.5

**A collection of the workstations**

A certain amount of workstations form workspace for the public. People on the street notice it with its sign on the building column or around the entrance.



## 5.2 Scenario brief

The Public Office is the composite of green area, meeting place, workstations and service area. (see figure 5.11 ) It has rental system for workstation distribution. The local government branch runs the system through its website and local office. Similar to house accommodation system, users has limited period for the use of the workstation under the contract with the local government which has another contract with the owner of the building for allocating the lobby area to be used as public space. Monthly rent goes to 'the host' through the contract.

### 5.2.1 User

Mainly individuals but possibly groups who need workplace use this office. The user could be owners of one person-company, employees of any association which has some flexible management strategy on their work site or students who want alternative workplace besides home and school. They don't have to be users of the host facility, an office building in this case. Since they use the lobby as their business meeting place and occupy the workstations for months, the public office is not like a waiting room in railway station where people stay for several hours. Still, the meeting place is available for the public and the users of the host building.

### 5.2.2 Time

24 open, secured by guards in the reception. Users can arrange their own work time, like home without bugging spouse or children. ( In this case, someone who possibly bug them is not their boss or family, but 'the others'. )

### 5.2.3 Location

In this thesis, a region in South Korea is virtually used as an example for The Public Office concept. The area has been planned for an administrative city since 2005. ( but the plan was held off because of political dispute ) The purpose of this city plan was to have balance in national development by spreading population out of the capital city, Seoul. Administrative sectors of the governmental facility in Seoul were supposed to move into this new city from 2012. According to the city plan, the new urban area would be thoroughly recreated. Ring shaped central area with 52% of green space of whole city, mainly in the center area, and all the facilities are allocated along the ring which is the main transportation route. The Public Office could be part of the office district in this plan, especially considering the purpose of the city plan try to bring about in social development in South Korea. ( see figure 5.6 )

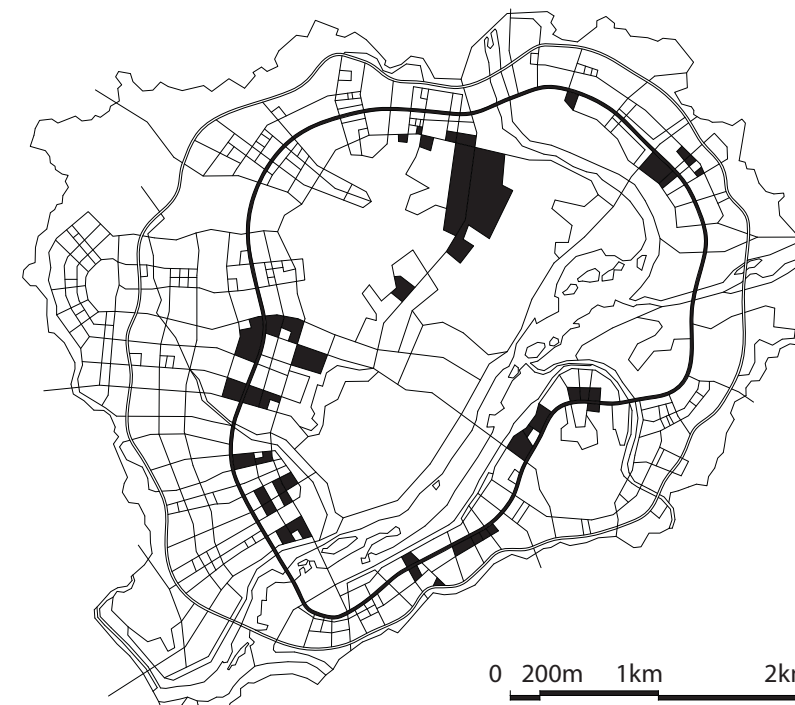
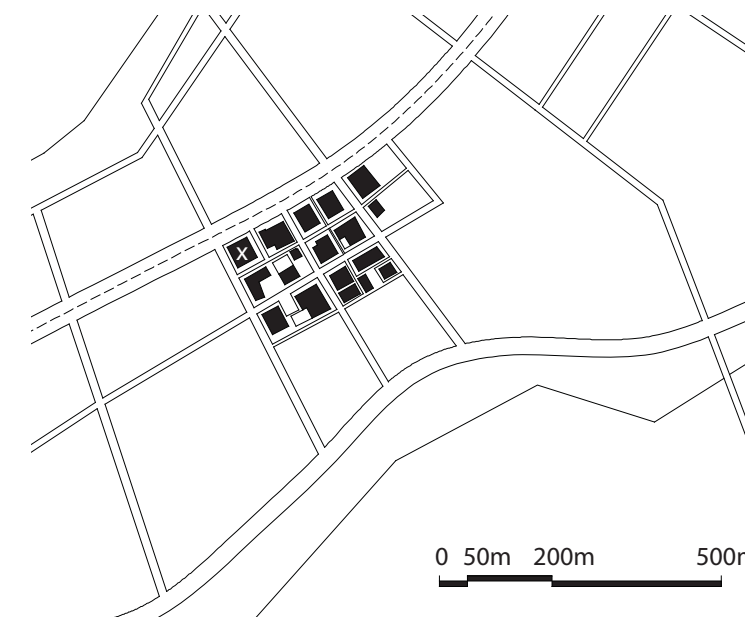


Figure 5.6

**New Administrative City Plan**  
( by the assigned agency )

- 120km south from Seoul connected by national highways and Railroad
- 72.91km<sup>2</sup> Area (223.54km<sup>2</sup> Peripheral)
- 500,000 population
- 52% Green space
- 22% Residential
- 14% Public facilities
- 6% Cultural & education
- 3% Commercial & office
- 2% Administration
- 1% Industrial

Marked parts on the map is transportation ring and high density region where The Public Office concept might be adopted to.



**Site ( virtual )**

'x' marked site would be for The Public Office. It is located on the intersection of the main transportation route (hidden line) and a pedestrian path in office district.

### 5.2.4 Facility

Individual workstations are arranged under the ceiling of the lobby with glass wall and green yard which separate them from outside of the office building. Into the center of the lobby, service facility for working area, meeting place with benches or cushioned stools, reception and green area with a tree are placed layer by layer. The plants are maintained by sewage system in the office building as well as functioned in a symbolic and psychological or psychiatric way. Service area for the office building including elevator shaft, stair case and rest room is grouped in the other side of working area with moving path in between. ( see figure 5.11 )

In this proposal, several furniture design specification is suggested along the architectural layout with the assumption of location. ( see figure 5.8~10 )



Figure 5.7  
Maple tree

Maple is one of the typical trees in this climate. They grow to 10~40 metres in height. Some of them are shrubs less than 10 metres tall with a number of small trunks originating at ground level. Most species are deciduous and shade tolerant when young.



Figure 5.8  
Workstation

A pair of rotational shells which have a desk for each side gives users flexibility on their taste of working position, as well as provides selective privacy exposure level by adjusting the angle of the shells along neighbors. Basically, the idea is to conceal worktop in user's absence. Even the chair is protected inside from being used and stolen by others. And the combination of desk, chair and storage is considered to allow extension of work behavior type, for instance, a small size meeting, happens right next to the individual workspace visually hidden and acoustically insulated by the shell itself and some aids like wearing earplugs or headphones.

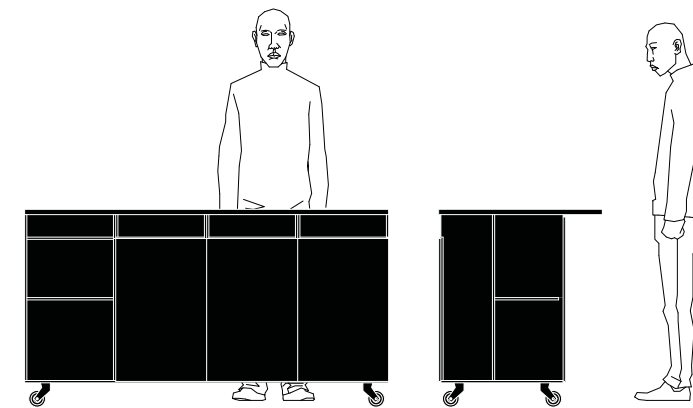


Figure 5.9  
Support desk / trash bin

This has sharing storages for documents and trash bins accompanied by office devices like copier or printer taking a role of backup facility placed between a group of individual workstations and the meeting place around the tree. The worktop is also used for laptop power connect or other temporary use.

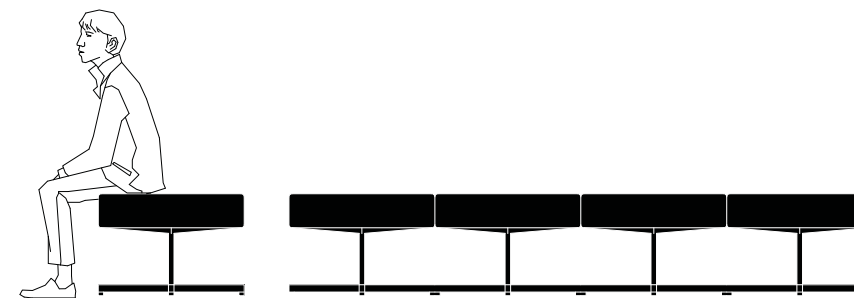


Figure 5.10  
Stool in the meeting place

Cafe table for two persons use could fit in this case. Stool without any desk restrict its occupancy times. On the other hand, large stools laid in a row allow bigger flexibility for the number of group member or for the purpose of use in the meeting place.

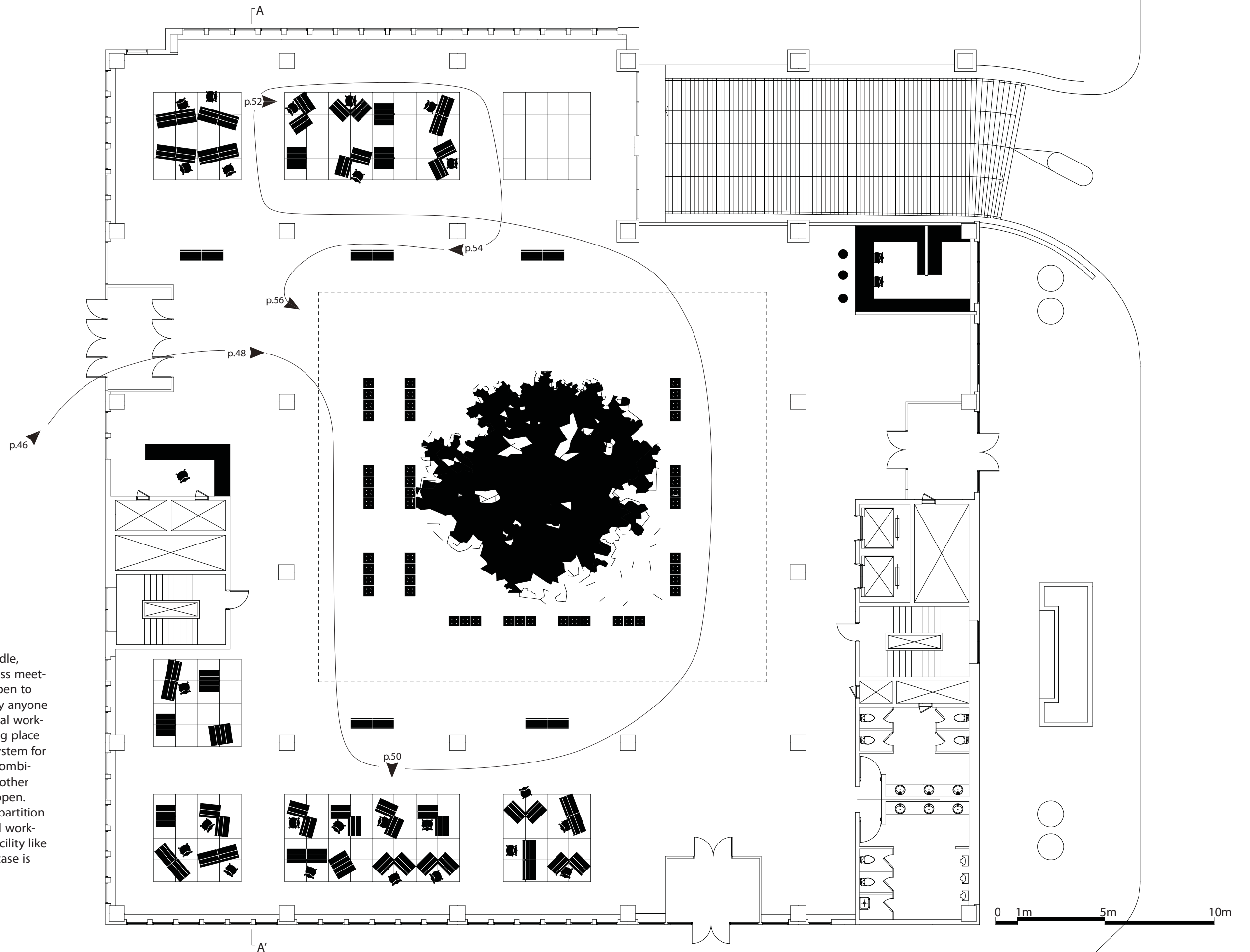


Figure 5.11  
**The Public Office**

With a maple tree in the middle, seats are arranged for business meeting in center area which is open to the top. This area is shared by anyone who use this facility. Individual workstations surround the meeting place under the ceiling. Modular system for workstation allows various combination of them and forms another meeting place which is less open. Support desks play a role of partition between the open space and workstations. The host building facility like rest room, elevator and staircase is available for the 'parasite'.

Figure 5.12

**Symbiosis**

Two 'parasites' are transplanted inside the atrium of a 'host' building. Ventilation system for the atrium provides the parasites with a good nutrition which is filtered air under a plenty of sunlight in the vast space.

The users of The Public Office have 'luxurious' business meeting place with their own workstations. And a tree in the middle of the atrium plays a pivot role of the union with its centrifugal force of the Nature.



### 5.3 Scenario of use

To make the concept clearer, it might help to move the way of explanation from the diagrams to situational illustration. The features in next illustrations are based on the materials from the scenario brief, although they are specified more by imagination not by practical products or any real figures.

Suppose a young couple with one child. They have jobs for each for a living, a web designer and an accountant. The family type, not the professions though, could be regarded as an archetype for this proposal. Dual income life style has become common since the age of nuclear family. And birthrate in South Korea decreased during the period. They live in a small apartment in the region, the new administrative city. They are living urbanized life style with electric appliances at home like fridge, laundry machine, LCD TV, laptop computer. Shopping through internet, eating out more than cooking at home, periodical holiday and so on. They get stressed by time management taking care of their child and overtime work. They always long for more free time for their own but don't have any plan to change their jobs or move to rural area concerning about better sources of education for their kid and social status. The wife, a freelance web designer, is trying to find a temporary workspace for her new project with a coworker. Her husband is working for a big company as an accountant and the company building has The Public Office in its lobby. She might find her workspace there or go for other place which her coworker prefers. Or, she might choose the place where she could pick their child up more easily from a day-care center.

#### 5.3.1 Finding workspace

They are trying to find a vacant place on the website which provides the workstation rental service. A list of available places with location and price information is continually updated on the webpage. They might find more details like photos of the building interior. They can apply for several places which they are interested and the offer from the rental service office is suggested to the person who have waited for the place for the longest time. The lent is paid monthly through bank. On the other hand, The meeting place in The Public Office doesn't need to be booked in advance. Anybody can go there and take the stools and meet their business partner or friends freely, just like any other meeting place. But in this case, the atmosphere is supposed to be different from commercial district in the city.



Figure 5.13  
A nuclear family



Figure 5.14  
**Internet**  
Information technology became embedded in modern daily life. They also take some part of this proposal in many different levels. Finding available workstations is one of them.

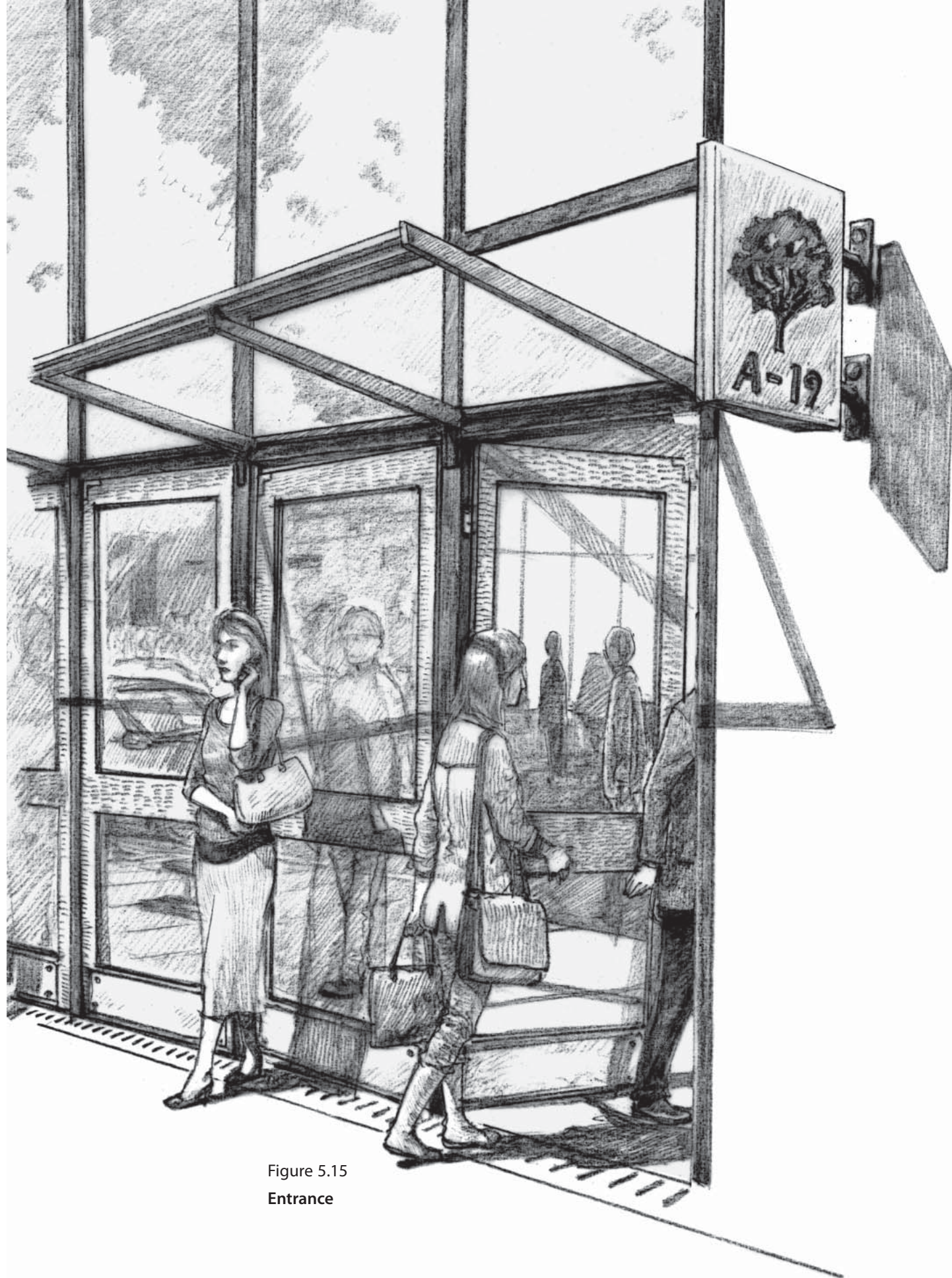


Figure 5.15  
Entrance

### 5.3.2 Accessing The Public Office

When they get the workspace in The Public Office. The address is notified on the specification of the contract. For instance, A-19 is the number of The Public Office and used for the sign installed to the host building.

The sign has a maple tree with the number underneath. The tenants can find their workplace with the sign on the street. It is the same way to find a place on the local map. The building location is informed on the map in the webpage when they log in there.

The sign is also for the public who don't have a contraction with the rental service. Like post office or police station, the facility is open for the public. Whoever need a place for a meeting can find anyone most appropriate for their own situation.

Figure 5.16

#### Sign

Beside Information technology, relatively old fashioned communication method like this is still radical, surely forever.

To capture eyesight, the sign has the most characteristic feature in this proposal. the maple tree.

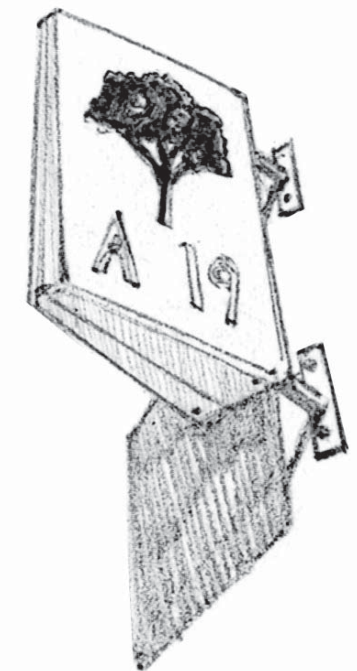






Figure 5.17  
Atrium

Light wall divides the lobby into two parts. Individual work area and the meeting place. The boundary of light moves along the time and weather change. The tree leaves turn into red and yellow in autumn and fall in winter. People can feel outdoor environment inside the building only when they stay at the place which is otherwise used as just a passage to other floors.



Figure 5.18  
An array of workstations

### 5.3.3 Addressing the workstation

Each workstation is identified with a certain number and they are used as post address. For example,

Lisa W.  
desk 12, TPO A-19  
415 27 NAC, South Korea

In this way, the workstation belongs to one contractor at one time. If one user has more than one workstation which is a big postbox itself, she/he takes all addresses. This case would be for a small group of users. They could take as many desks as they find in the building to run their small company. It is also for management of The Public Office. Authority for administration or maintenance can communicate with users indirectly with this mailing system as well as directly by face to face.

Figure 5.19

#### Labeling

The old fashioned sign system could be repeated in this case, although any other way to allocate workstation would be available.





Figure 5.20

**Aisle**

Bypass along the edges of the lobby to avoid interruption is included in the floor plan which has layers outwards from the center point, the tree. ( see figure 5.11 )

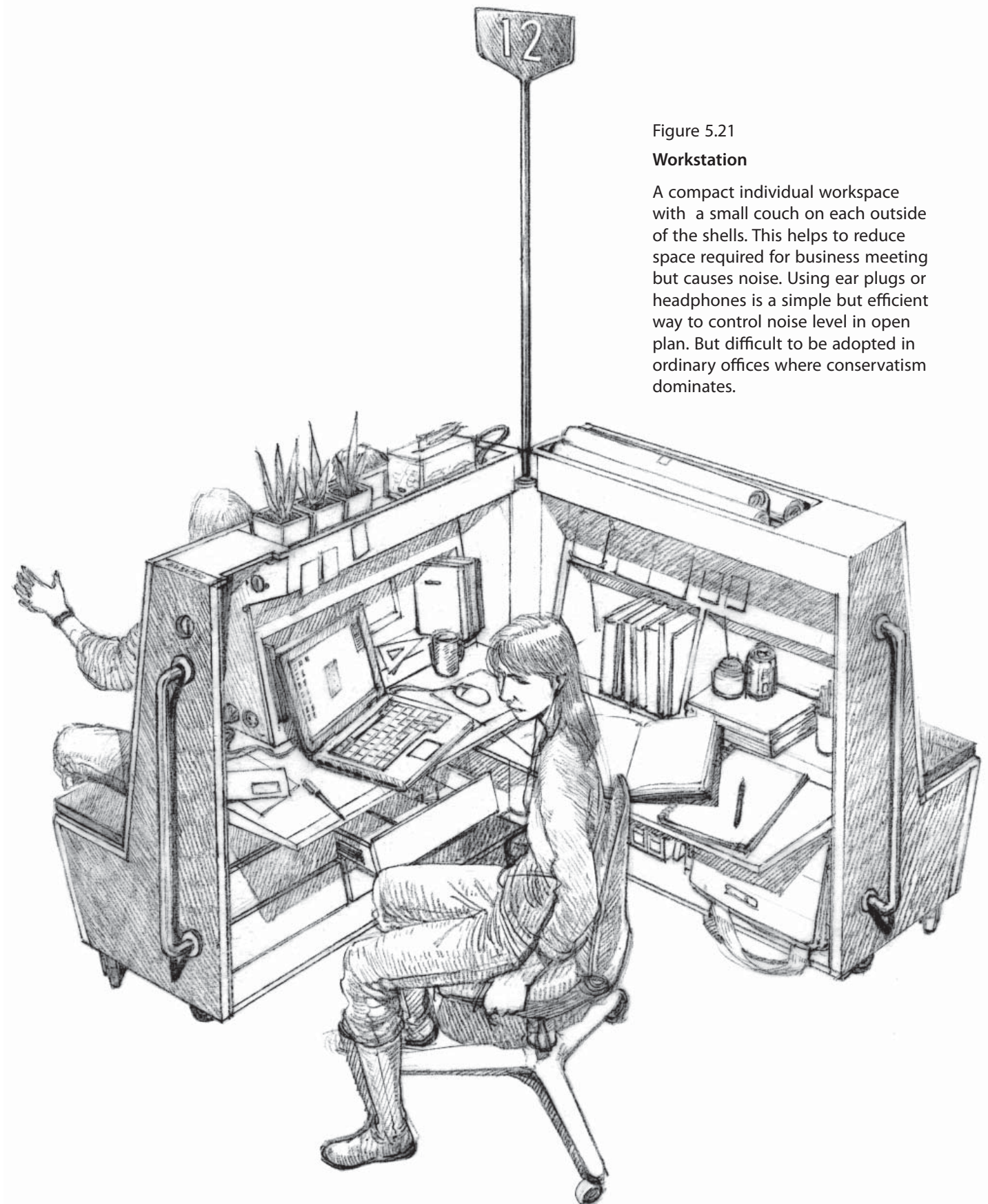


Figure 5.21

**Workstation**

A compact individual workspace with a small couch on each outside of the shells. This helps to reduce space required for business meeting but causes noise. Using ear plugs or headphones is a simple but efficient way to control noise level in open plan. But difficult to be adopted in ordinary offices where conservatism dominates.

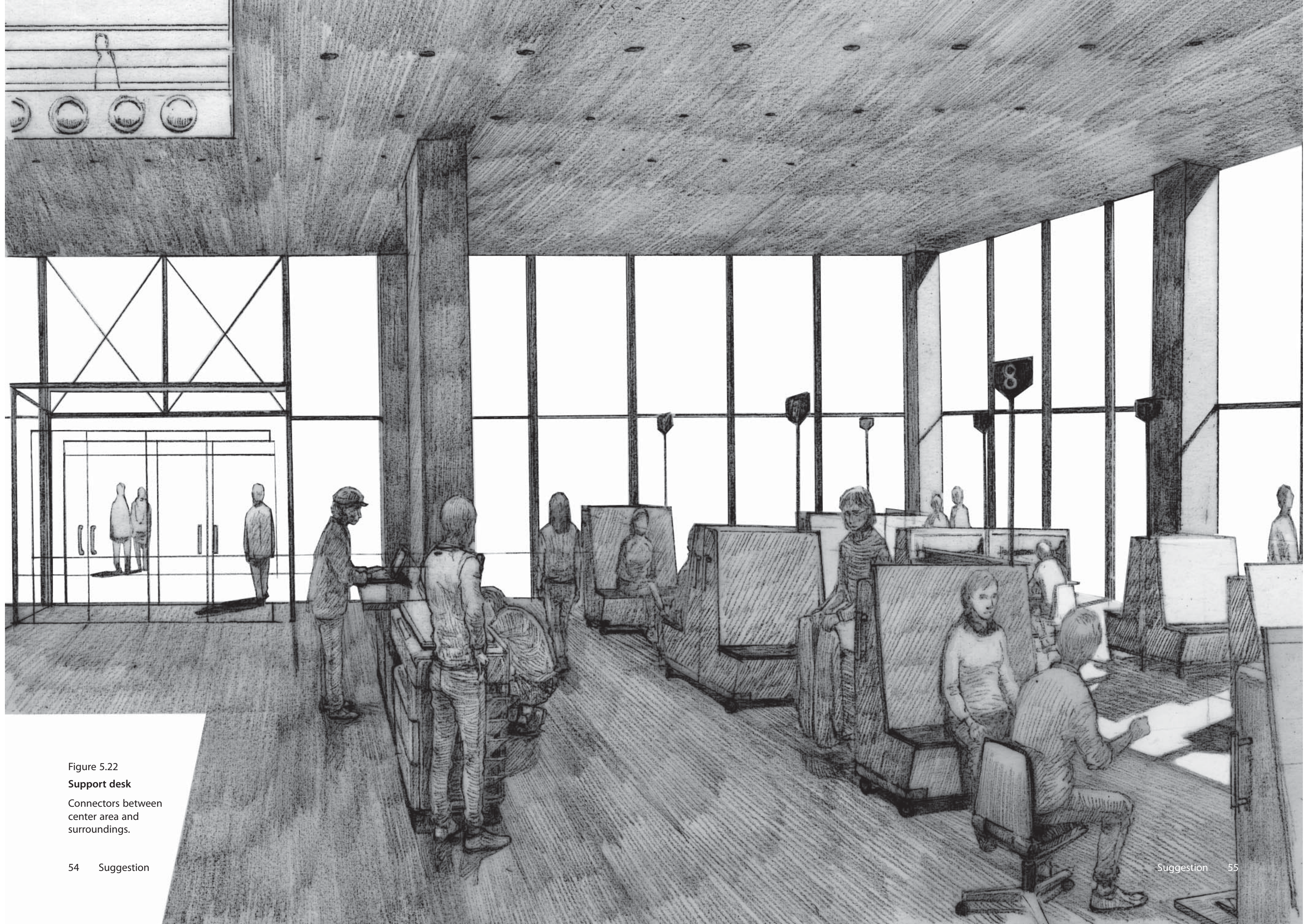


Figure 5.22  
**Support desk**  
Connectors between  
center area and  
surroundings.

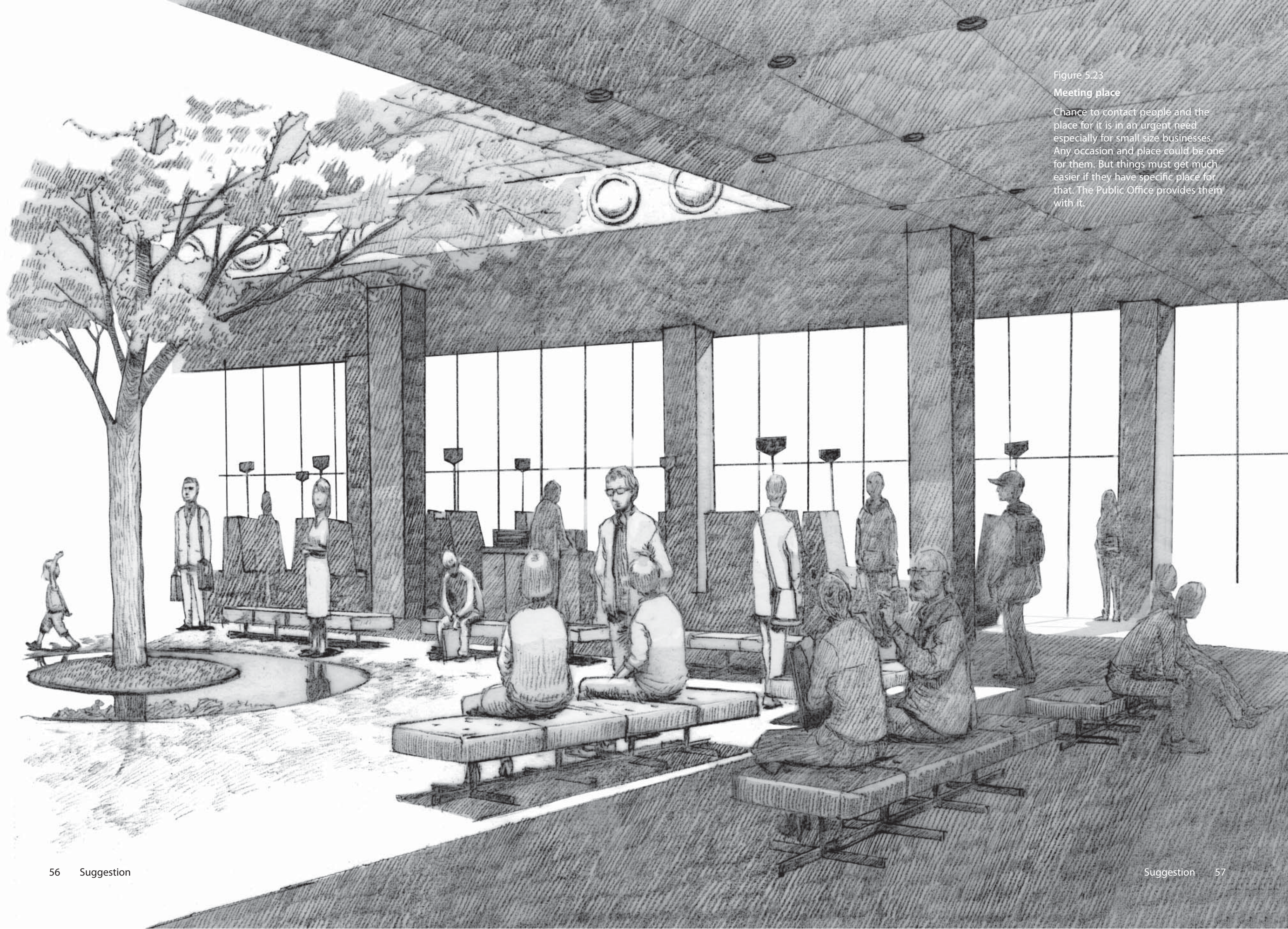


Figure 5.23

**Meeting place**

Chance to contact people and the place for it is in an urgent need especially for small size businesses. Any occasion and place could be one for them. But things must get much easier if they have specific place for that. The Public Office provides them with it.

The Public Office :  
a symbiosis in urban area

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 Service design

Building, furniture, product, system and information technology are ingredients of the plan which is not for selling in the market nor has any real client. The plan is modeled by my idea with diagrams for better communication. Diagrams don't have further details on the design even in the suggestion section. It has no concrete specification like dimension, material, manufacturing method. Rather, any kind of space and furniture could be used if they fit in the concept. Everything you can see in the suggestion part is imaginary. They play a role of actors and actresses in my short story which tells about how to weave them in a certain way. This certain way is what I wanted to talk about. The service design, ambitiously called, social design.

Another perspective about this plan is a doubt about office furniture design. We can not expect much from designing new office furniture. Its physical design factors like form, color, material don't guarantee employees' satisfaction in their working life. Maybe that is the reason why office furniture has not changed that much while IT revolution critically changed our working life style. My concept takes an alternative office plan like hoteling as the strategy rather than concentrating on furniture design. Systematical change in workplace is what I am pursuing through this thesis, hoping social change followed or advanced. The specified workspace in the suggestion is designed for little more democracy and collaborative value which have been prevented by social obstacles in South Korean. Listening to Music with earplugs at workplace, for instance, is regarded as inappropriate or impolite behavior because employees are expected to keep their ears open to their boss who has authority to invade employees' workspace without excuse which would have been done eagerly to person of the higher rank. Lower rank employees in the company should restrict even their posture according to what their boss who is usually older than them expect. The problem is that traditional social value like respect for seniors, loyalty for monarch and filial for parents couldn't find its right place in contemporary Korean society and suppression and hypocrisy stole the place. This might be one of the social obstacles. Working life is an innocent victim to it.

In case the furniture I suggest in this thesis was produced, they should be public facilities like telephone booths or street lamp. They might be categorized into public design despite some differences from ordinary street furniture. The workstation design is far

from luxurious finishing or fancy touch for attracting buyers just like German public bicycle, aesthetic feature of which is deliberately removed to avoid being stolen. But the value of the service I suggest should be respected as much as the value of the public bicycle.

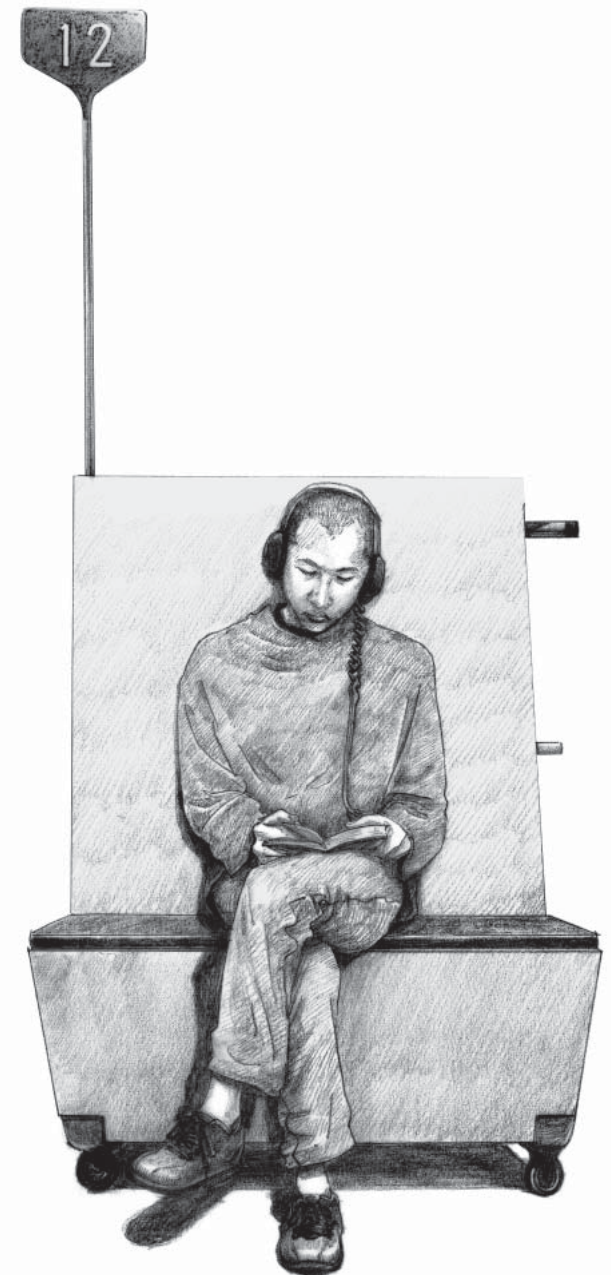
### 6.2 Changing society, changing myself

Students are so ambitious that they are trying to save the world with their Master degree work. You might have heard this sarcasm. But it is quite hard to say what kind of subject or work quality might be appropriate for Master degree, especially design related. Some people believe that shaping lines of a car head lamp or arranging patterns on textiles are unqualified for a Master degree work. They insist big issues like global warming or world poverty should be figured out with their advanced academic discourses. But there is a question how well twenties or early thirties can understand the global issue, how they can be sure about their solution for it. Actually working on beautiful pattern or drawing stylish lines could be a big job for students even if they have been through a certain amount of educational training. 2 years Master course is not enough for a student to have any design skills or knowledge to change the society. Nevertheless, I insist the social change with this thesis. Obviously this is an asinine idea. But if asked for the reason, it is from criticism about reality. It might be just from half baked humanity, or arrogant mind-set, perhaps a mixture of all. Disappointingly, but naturally, regardless of my intention or my Master degree work society changes. The main factor for the social change is not me, nor any other individual. I might affect it to a very tiny extent because a big force forms by accumulation of those little ones. In the case of modern Korean society, outer factors have played a bigger role than inner ones for the radical social change. Even though two leaders from North and South declared the end of Korean War on October, 2007, the military forces are still aimed to each side. Our politics, economy and even culture are so much dependent on the other big countries and distorted under their influences. Social change is just a dream for a student in this situation. Maybe they dream it more because of that reason and they might consider their Master degree as the record of the dream. It might not matter whether the dream comes true or not, but it does whether the dream is sound or not. If there was any possibility to justify the idea, pursuing social change, its soundness should be strong as much as the corruption of the society. What I can do with all of the writing, diagrams and illustrations is to arrange my thoughts and project them to reality which keep changing itself and take back the reflection of them through ob-

serving and experiencing.

### 6.3 Picketing

This thesis work is another way to protest about bad working condition. Symbiosis, as a metaphor, was used to describe the demanding value in workplace which has been dominated by unfair or corrupted business culture. Difficulty in work-life balancing is not only from its own dilemma but also strongly affected by the structure of the organization, general values in the society as I mentioned above. I took bypass approaching to this subject instead of picketing on the street. The imaginary plan, partially based on the fact though, is composed of ideas which suggest alternative office environment taking some part of the premises of a big company like Samsung or LG which they won't give up. The tree is included in the suggestion to bring in an element which transcends argument around financial benefit and gain more power of persuasion about the idea, a kind of trade off. This could be called a mild demonstration about the employment which has been one-sided. And the association with employers, employees and government in my proposal resembles Swedish model. I compared Korean situation with Swedish one in this thesis wishing we also could have our own Saltsjöbaden agreement some day.



## Reference

### Bibliography

**Design for the real world** - Human Ecology and Social Change, 1991, Victor Papanek, Thames and Hudson

**Scandinavian Design**, 2005, Taschen

**In the Bubble** - Designing in a Complex World, 2006, John Thackara, The MIT Press

**Offices at work** - Uncommon Workspace Strategies that Add Value and Improve Performance, 2004, Franklin Becker, Jossey-Bass

**The Working Life** - The promise and Betrayal of Modern Work, 2001, Joanne B. Ciulla, Three Rivers Press

**Workspheres** - Design and Contemporary Work styles, 2001, Paola Antonelli, the Museum of Modern Art

**The Chair** - Rethinking Culture, Body, and Design, 1998, Galen Cranz, W W Norton & Co Inc

**Design** - A Very Short Introduction, 2005, John Heskett, Oxford

**Swedish working life**- searching for a new regime, 2004, Casten von Otter, National Institute for Working Llife

### Webpage

<Hermanmiller research documents>

**When Work and Life Balance, Everyone Wins**

**Taking on Workplace Change**

**Telecommuting**

**Evolutionary Psychology and Workplace Design - Doing What Comes Naturally**

<http://www.hermanmiller.com/CDA/SSA/IP/0,1776,a10-c362,00.html>

**Origins of the Office**

<http://www.carusostjohn.com/artscouncil/history/origins/index.html>

**How Virtual Offices Work**

<http://communication.howstuffworks.com/sirtual-office.htm>

**Swedish welfare**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swedish\\_welfare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swedish_welfare)

**Office**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Office>

### Other form

**The Construction Plan of Multi-functional Administrative City in the Rep. of Korea**, 2007, Multifunctional Administrative City Construction Agency ( Presentation file presented by Young-Hwan Jin, Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements at the 5th Capital Alliance Meeting in Canberra, January 22, 2007 )

**paraSITE**, 1998, Michael Fakowitz ( artistic work for the homeless )

**Working Space**, 2006, Woojin Chung ( author's degreework at IDAS )



