3. inventories
This part of the chapter is based on our inventories during our visits in Giang Vo. They were conducted from September to December 2006. When making the inventories, maps over Giang Vo and a notebook were used, as well as a camera to document places and situations. To get an overall picture of Giang Vo, the area was visited at different times of the day and in different days of the week.

The inventories cover the following aspects; street network and traffic situation, housing, schools and public service, business and commerce and parks and recreation.

To get a wider view of housing areas and areas for business and commerce as well as areas for parks and recreation, we have visited other relevant areas around Vietnam for comparisons.
Map outlining plan proposal area of Giang Vo.
3.1 Street network and traffic situation

Hanoi is a very busy city with urban transportation problems such as traffic congestions and air pollution. The traffic volume is increasing due to growing population, decentralization of urban structure and the ongoing shift from use of motorcycle to car. The traffic also costs a lot of injuries from accidents and the rates of accidents are higher in Hanoi than in most other cities in the world.

Street network surrounding Giang Vo

Even though cars are a familiar sight on Kim Ma Street and Giang Vo Street, the traffic in Giang Vo is dominated by motorbikes. It seems like there is no such place where motorbikes are not admitted. Motorbikes occupy sidewalks, parks and entrances. Additionally, motorbikes are parked inside shops as well as in people’s homes. In almost every corner, the so-called Xe Om drivers (motorcycle taxi) wait for somebody to ask for a ride. People on bicycles are also a common sight in the area. It is mostly children on their way to or from school and street vendors carrying their goods on their bicycles.

Giang Vo is situated between Kim Ma Street and Giang Vo Street, which both are tree planted boulevards with two lanes in each direction. These streets are important in the traffic network of central Hanoi and are very crowded at peak hours. The heavy traffic generates a lot of noise, which may be disturbing for people living in apartments facing the streets.

Nui Truc Street as well as Ngoc Khanh Street easily connects Kim Ma Street with Giang Vo Street. Both have one lane in each direction and are lined with lively commerce.
Street section of Kim Ma Street, which has two lanes in each direction and also a secondary street running along the north side.

Street section of Nui Truc Street.
Street network within Giang Vo

The existing street network demarcates the housing blocks of Giang Vo and most of the streets are in good condition.

The only street which runs all through Giang Vo is the Tran Huy Lieu Street. Between the Giang Vo Street and the Hanoi Hotel, Tran Huy Lieu Street has the status of a boulevard with planted trees in the center of the street. In front of the Hanoi Hotel, the street opens up into an open space where a lot of taxis are parked, waiting for customers. From here, the Tran Huy Lieu Street becomes narrower and runs along the small park by the lake. The street takes a turn up north, widens up and connects to Kim Ma Street.

Because of its changing status and winding stretch, Tran Huy Lieu Street cannot be seen as a short-cut and does not promote drive-trough traffic.
Other important streets in Giang Vo are the *Noi Troc Street* and the *Nam Cao Street*. Both streets lead traffic from Tran Huy Lieu Street to Nui Truc Street. Nam Cao Street is an important street in the area, leading traffic to the Giang Vo Lake. Noi Troc is narrow and mostly used by people living along the street.
Patterns of movements

The major types of movement in the area are created by a mix of motorbikes, bicycles and pedestrians. Cars are also a common sight in the area. The main movements of cars within the area are concentrated to the Tran Huy Lieu Street, Nui Truc Street and Nam Cao Street. People on bicycles and motorbikes are common and can be found in the entire street network in Giang Vo. Pedestrians can be found anywhere in Giang Vo. The lack of space on the sidewalks force people to walk on the street.

A lot of people spend time in the small green area along the north shore of the lake. People walk along the shore of the lake as far as it is possible.

The inventory has taken place during different times of the day, to see if there are any differences in movement patterns during the night compared to the day. We noticed that people use the area almost as much during the night as during the day. Even when it is dark, the traffic never ends and people never stop interacting with their neighbours, using the open area by the lake or outside of their homes.
Map showing the patterns of movements in Giang Vo.
Sidewalks
Along Giang Vo Street and Kim Ma Street, the sidewalks are wide and in good condition. Within the rest of Giang Vo, it is different. Where sidewalks can be found, they are often used as storage or parking for motorbikes. It is often easier to walk on the streets than on the sidewalks. People walking on the streets become a hazard for the traffic.

Public transportation
Hanoi railway station is situated about three kilometres east of Giang Vo. This station is the only train stop in Hanoi and is therefore used for transports to other cities in Vietnam. The options for public transports within Hanoi consist of buses. Because of the central location of Giang Vo, there are numerous buslines in connection to the area and most of them traffic Kim Ma Street and Giang Vo Street. Kim Ma Bus Station, situated about one kilometre from Giang Vo has bus connections to other parts of Vietnam. Travel by bus in Hanoi is cheap but the buses are crowded. The public transport in Hanoi is in need of an expansion and upgrading.
Map of buslines in central Hanoi.

Buses waiting for customers in central Hanoi.

Bus stop on Giang Vo Street.

Map of buslines in central Hanoi.
3.2 Housing

Most buildings in Giang Vo are for residential purposes. During the years, a few other buildings have been erected between the original ones to fill up empty spots, which have contributed to making the area denser.

Today, there are 23 buildings for residential purpose which where built during the Soviet financed period. They have three to five stories and most of the blocks were built from prefabricated concrete panels. The straight apartment blocks are situated parallel to one another and have the same design and a dark yellow colour. The Giang Vo Lake, seems to have been forgotten in the planning process of the area and the placements of the buildings disregard the advantage of the lake.

The original building structure has been changed as a result of the residents’ illegal extensions to increase their living space or to get space for small businesses. On upper floors, the apartments are extended with balconies. The unplanned development of the low housing has led to open space between some buildings being very narrow or that sidewalks are missing.

The buildings in Giang Vo are in poor condition due to the lack of maintenance over the years. One of the original buildings has been renovated and it was also given additional stories. Today the building is in good condition and with its nine floors it has become a landmark in Giang Vo. According to unpublished material of Tran Hoai Anh (interview 061218), most of the buildings from this period in Giang Vo are considered to be in too bad condition to renovate in the same way.

A large-scale apartment building of 18 stories has been erected during the year of 2006 and can as well as the renovated, nine stories Soviet building, be seen as a landmark in the area.
Map showing different types of housing in Giang Vo.
A characteristic apartment block from the Soviet financed period.

Because of the extended low houses, the open space between the buildings is narrow.

An original building in the foreground with the new erected 18 stories apartment building behind.

Low housing and extended balconies.

Entrance to a housing block.

Picture showing the new high-rise apartment building in Giang Vo.

Well-used, extended balconies.
Housing areas in Hanoi

During our fieldwork, we visited other interesting areas in addition to Giang Vo to be able to compare different areas with each other and to get an understanding of the building history in Hanoi. As an example, two Soviet financed housing areas as well as two new urban areas are presented.

Kim Lien and Trung Tu - Soviet financed areas
We visited Kim Lien and Trung Tu which are two neighbouring, residential areas also built during the Soviet financed period. It was interesting to visit other Soviet supported areas to compare with Giang Vo. The three areas remind of each other since the design of the buildings is the same and they have similar advantages and disadvantages. Both Kim Lien and Trung Tu are popular areas to live in. People seem to enjoy their neighbourhood and spend a lot of time outdoors. The areas are welcoming and people can be seen everywhere. The scales of the areas are low with buildings of three- to five stories. Streets within the neighbourhoods are narrow. The quality of the buildings varies but as in Giang Vo, the lack of maintenance over the years is noticeable. Low housing and extended balconies are common, which have made the areas denser than they were originally. Kim Lien has already been going through some redevelopment. One of the original buildings has been renovated and gotten additional stories and a new design. Business and public service are situated on ground floor of the building.

Thanh Xuan Bac and Trung Hoa - new urban areas
Thanh Xuan Bac and Trung Hoa are two neighbouring, new urban areas in the outskirts of the city, about ten kilometres from the Old Quarters of Hanoi. They represent the new developments which are being built today in Hanoi. The areas express a belief in the future and turn their backs from the old days. Compared to many of the old and existing areas in Hanoi, Thanh Xuan Bac and Trung Hoa consist of large-scale apartment blocks. The buildings are high; with about 20-25 floors and most of the buildings have similar design. The streets and the sidewalks are wide and empty. The large scale makes the people seem and feel small. The areas are not yet completed, which increases the feeling of an uninhabited area.
3.3 Schools and public service

As most of the areas being built during the Soviet financed period, Giang Vo is self-supporting with schools and day care centres. There are two primary schools as well as two schools with both primary and secondary levels in the area. The schools in Giang Vo make the area lively during the day and school children can be heard in connections to the schools. Older children have lunch in the grass, by the lake and the younger children wait for someone to pick them up after school.

The schools in Giang Vo takes up a significant part of the land since the school buildings are low, approximately two- to four stories and the plot areas are large. The schools and the school yards are mainly closed off by walls made by concrete. Due to the enclosing walls, the schools are anonymous elements in Giang Vo.

A number of small dentist- and health care centres can be found in Giang Vo, mostly inside the residential blocks. Larger health care centres are located along Kim Ma Street and Giang Vo street, adjacent to the project area. In central Hanoi seven hospitals can be found, four of them are within close distance to Giang Vo.
Map showing where the schools are situated in Giang Vo and the concrete walls surrounding the school yards.

Map showing location of hospitals in central Hanoi.
3.4 Business and commerce

Commerce plays an important role in Giang Vo today. On every street some kind of commerce is taking place and a wide range of different kinds of businesses can be found. Most of the businesses are situated on ground floor in the original apartment buildings along the Tran Huy Lieu Street, Nui Truc Street and Nam Cao street. There are also some buildings in the area, which are erected later, containing offices or hotels.
Map showing different types of business and commerce in Giang Vo.
Street vending

Street vendors are a common sight in Giang Vo and can be found along every street. A street vendor can be defined as a person who offers a variety of low priced goods for sale to the public. They may be stationary, which means that they occupy space on sidewalks or other public spaces, or they may be mobile and move from place to place, carrying their wares in yokes or pushing them on their bike. Street vendors generate income for a large number of people, especially for women. The women sell mostly goods related to household work, while the few male vendors are engaged in motorcycle repair or sale of higher priced goods such as personal products and books.

A majority of the street vendors sell fruit and a lot of them gather at a crossroad to Tran Huy Lieu Street in the southwest part of the area. This street has become a place for informal fruit market.
Informal businesses
Informal businesses are mostly run in the low housing. It may for example be a family owning a small restaurant selling noodle-soup and Vietnamese coffee or an older lady who runs a laundry service. The businesses are mainly operated by people living on ground floor of buildings facing the backyard or a narrow street. The income from their business is very important since it is their sole income.
Formal businesses and supermarkets
Most of the formal businesses are situated along Kim Ma Street, Giang Vo Street and Nui Truc Street. The scale of this kind of businesses is larger than the informal ones. There are a few supermarkets situated on ground floor of the apartment buildings along Giang Vo Street, selling everything from groceries to washing machines.
Offices and hotels
Offices of all sizes can be found in Giang Vo today. The scale ranges from small offices, situated on ground floor of an apartment building to large-scale office buildings. Most of the offices are occupied by different corporations or by the state, for example offices for Nguoi Ha Noi (Hanoi Newspaper), Habu Bank, Ba Dinh Water Company, The Hanoi Joint stock Company and Toserco Tourism Company. The Toserco Tourism Company is situated in a new, modern office building on Kim Ma Street. An other office building in good condition is situated south of the Giang Vo Lake, which contain offices for several different companies.

The most important hotel in the area is the high-rise Hanoi Hotel, situated in the centre of the area, which is a familiar landmark in Giang Vo. Except Hanoi Hotel, a few smaller hotels are situated in the area.
Business and commerce around Vietnam

In order to understand the conditions for businessmen and local shopkeepers, we visited and observed places for business and commerce around Hanoi as well as in other places in Vietnam.

The markets are where the Vietnamese people get most of their daily food and other goods. Markets are crowded and consist of a mix of businessmen and street vendors trying to get everybody’s attention. Supermarkets and formal shops are getting more and more common, but have not yet taken the customers from the informal businesses. The paths in between the rows of market stalls are narrow and crowded. The stalls in the outdoor markets are simple and usually covered to give shade from the sun and shelter from the rain. Inside the indoor markets, the stalls may differ from each other, depending on which type of goods they sell. The stalls where more expensive goods are sold, are marked off, while stalls which offer cheaper goods, may be difficult to sort out from each other. Outdoor markets mostly sell fruits, vegetables, flowers, meat and fish while indoor markets sell all types of goods. When visiting several places for different types of markets, it becomes obvious that street vendors and businessmen take advantage of each other by gathering together with others who sell the same types of goods.

* Dong Xuan Market is a well-known indoor market in the Old Quarters of Hanoi. It is three stories high, with different kinds of goods at different levels. Outside the market is an informal outdoor market, where street vendors gather to sell fruit and vegetables. Another large indoor market is *Hom Market*, south of the Old Quarters in Hanoi, which is known for selling all types of fabrics. Streets in connection to the market sell the same thing. Informal places for outdoor markets can be found in many places around Hanoi.
Local business and commerce in Kim Lien and Trung Tu
In other Soviet financed housing areas, business and commerce are as vital as in Giang Vo. Most of the formal commerce takes place on ground floor of the apartment buildings. Informal businesses are mostly found in low housing facing the backyards. Street vendors are a common sight and can be found all over the areas.

Local business and commerce in Thanh Xuan Bac and Trung Hoa
In the new urban areas, large-scaled office buildings are mixed with housing. Formal businesses are situated on ground floor of the apartment buildings. Informal businesses are rare and only a few street vendors can be seen in the areas.
3.5 Park and recreation

Giang Vo has today very few green spots and areas for recreation. The only park in considerable size is situated along the north eastern side of the Giang Vo Lake. This area includes a narrow strip of greenery with trees and benches along the lake. This place is popular for residents, workers and visitors. Benches are occupied most of the time and people bring plastic chairs or use their motorbike to sit on. People interact with others, read the newspaper, sell or buy lunch, play board games, walk along the paths or take a nap during lunchtime. Since the south western side of the Giang Vo Lake is closed off by private businesses, people have to jog or walk back and forth along the shore. Some people fish even though the water is dirty. The Giang Vo Lake also serves as a water recipient during heavy raining.

Backyards are to be found in between the buildings of Giang Vo. These are paved but large trees make the places green and shady. Residents in houses facing the yards are those who mainly use these spaces. The area can be seen as a second living room for residents. People come here to read the paper, cook, wash the dishes or play cards. Here is where people meet their neighbours and children play. The space can be defined as a semi-private area.

Some parks can also be found inside the school areas. These are only used by school children and are hard to notice for others since these areas are enclosed.
The only park of considerable size in Giang Vo.

Trees are planted in rows in the backyards as well as along the main streets.

Map showing green areas in Giang Vo.
Parks and recreation in Hanoi

To gain knowledge of how people use recreational facilities, we spent time in popular central parks and areas for recreation in Hanoi. We also observed the situation of parks in other housing areas in Hanoi. We realized that Hanoi has few areas and places for recreational activities and the distance between them is far. Existing parks are crowded and used as a second living room, for recreation, sports or religious activities. There is no large green area in connection to- or in walking distance to Giang Vo. Some of the most known parks and recreational areas in central Hanoi are following:

*Hoan Kiem Lake*, is one of the most popular places where to do exercise. Many people jog around the lake in early mornings, play badminton, do aerobics, yoga or Thai Chi. The area around Hoan Kiem Lake is always crowded, which shows that there is a lack of this kind of areas in central Hanoi.

*West Lake* is mainly a residential area in the north part of central Hanoi, but is also an area for recreation with restaurants and cafés along the lake shore. Many tourists spend time here since some of the most popular hotels in Hanoi are situated here.

*The Temple of Literature* is a temple area with a quiet atmosphere. Both tourists and Vietnamese people come here to relax or for worshiping.

*Lenin Park* is one of the largest parks of central Hanoi and was planned during the Soviet supported period. The park is one of few large areas in central Hanoi where it is possible to do exercise. The area is not as crowded as the area around Hoan Kiem Lake.

*The Botanical Garden* by the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum is a tourist attraction rather than an area for people who wants to do exercise or recreational activities.

*Thu Le Park* is a park area situated around a lake and the main attraction here is the Thu Le Zoo.
Parks and recreation in Kim Lien and Trung Tu

Parks and places for recreation are scarce but trees and bushes give the areas a green and shady impression. Backyards are common which are used as a second living room for the residents. The social control in connection to the backyard is strong and visitors get an extra glance when walking by.

Parks and recreation in Than Xuan Bac and Trung Hoa

Small parks are arranged within big groups of buildings. Trees are planted along the wide streets.