PAR STRATEGIES IN BOSTON’S CHINATOWN

Karmen Cheung
Theory of PAR
Fall 2015
Introduction - What is PAR?

At the heart of participatory action research (PAR) is the core ethic of producing knowledge in a co-creative manner that empowers and educates all parties involved. This entails deconstructing traditional power dynamics between the “researcher” and those “being researched.” The alternative research methodology outlined in PAR theory removes the divide between the two and transforms research into a collaborative process where all participants are legitimate producers of knowledge. The researcher’s role is to use their expert knowledge to empower their co-researchers with the tools necessary to develop solutions to their community’s most pressing problems. The researcher must be constantly reflective of his or her own actions, biases, and presumptions. Along with that, facilitating dialogue and collective reflection is central to all elements of the PAR process. Ultimately, the goal of PAR is to produce knowledge and actions that increases the community’s control over their own situations.

A core distinction between traditional social science research and PAR is its commitment to making research into an enabler of social change. Greenwood and Levin (2007) calls the strategy for implementing this change the “research strategy.” The research strategy consists of the techniques utilized for knowledge creation and the platforms constructed to collectively make sense and reflect on the knowledge created. The principle of reflection is central to PAR because it forces the co-researchers (both the outside expert and the community) to grapple with and openly challenge their biases, assumptions, and values. The power of PAR is the ability to do away with false pretentions of objectivity and instead embrace the undeniable fact that the researcher’s human nature is inseparable from the research. Ideal PAR honestly articulates the researcher’s thought processes when faced with situations that challenge their assumptions and force them to reevaluate things they took for granted. Compared
to the traditional outputs of social science research (e.g. the correlation between trees and mental health), the reflective practices inherent in PAR produces rich examples that can teach us so much more about how to create lasting social change in a complex, variable, and value-conflicted world.

The research strategies discussed in this paper will draw from the experiences of the Chinatown community in the master planning process of the 1990 Chinatown Community Plan (“Community Plan”) and the fight between T-NEMC and Chinatown over Parcel C\(^1\) in the early 1990s. The centrality of context to PAR requires that I spend some time discussing the history of Chinatown’s struggles and the obstacles they faced in establishing control over their own neighborhood. From there I will use the PAR framework to assess the research strategies utilized by the community.

**Boston’s Chinatown**

**History of Urban Renewal and Displacement in Chinatown**

During the urban renewal era of the 1950s and 1960s, the City of Boston completely ignored the needs of Boston’s Chinatown community in the name of “growth.” In 1967, the BRA conducted wholesale taking of homes in Chinatown under the rule of eminent domain to assemble the land needed for a new I-90 ramp and displaced over seven hundred Chinese residents. Nearly one-third of the land seized from Boston’s Chinatown was eventually transferred to Tufts-New England Medical Center (T-NEMC) and in 1978 the T-NEMC unveiled a new master plan that would, in the ensuing years, further displace Chinese residents.\(^2\) Urban renewal policies exacerbated the existing chronic shortage of housing and dispersed much of the neighborhood’s population to other parts of the city and outlying

---

\(^1\) A plot of land in Boston’s Chinatown bordered by Oak Street, Nassau Street, May Place, and Ash Street.
communities (e.g. Allston-Brighton, Quincy, Malden, etc.). This was the beginning of a tumultuous relationship between the City, Chinatown, and T-NEMC that has continued until today. Despite the scattering of the Chinese population many former residents continue to work, shop, socialize, and operate businesses in the neighborhood. While downtown and institutional expansion efforts have exerted a lot of pressure on Chinatown, the community has fought vigilantly to maintain some semblance of control.

In 1986, the Chinatown community and the T-NEMC clashed over the land that constitutes Parcel C in Chinatown. T-NEMC had proposed to build a $9 million, 850-car parking garage the site. This proposal was immediately voted down by the Chinatown Neighborhood Council (CNC), City Hall’s advisory group on Chinatown matters, and eventually rejected by the BRA. Several months after the garage proposal was rejected, in July of 1987 the Chinatown-South Cove Neighborhood Council (CNC) and the City, launched a community-driven master planning process. In 1990, the efforts of the Master Plan Committee culminated in the formal adoption of the Community Plan into Boston zoning law.

Despite formal zoning of Parcel C as residential in the Community Plan, in 1993, T-NEMC submitted another proposal to acquire the land for an 8-story, 455-car garage. This time around CNC and BRA approved the plans. In response the community waged an 18-month battle to block the garage proposal. Chinatown was able to successfully block the garage development and in 2002 the parcel was used for mixed-income housing that provided 251 affordable housing units for Chinatown residents as well as office space for various Chinatown community organizations. This mobilization against the

---

3 According to Boston Redevelopment Authority surveys, only one-fifth of its users (customers and service clients) and workers live in the neighborhood.
garage development on Parcel C represented the broadest mobilization effort around the neighborhood’s many land issues.\textsuperscript{6}

**Boston Chinatown’s Political Economy**

As a small immigrant neighborhood of color, Chinatown has very limited political power. In the 1990s, over one-third of its residents were noncitizens and of the remaining population that could vote, there was a disproportionately low voter participation rate compared with white and wealthier neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{7} An organizer in the neighborhood for 20 years says that “the Chinese-speaking sector feels like they are nobody.”\textsuperscript{8} Liu posits that “immigrants typically arrive with a view of themselves as guests in the United States, without title, rights, or power to change circumstances here. This low-esteem, reinforced by mainstream society’s attitudes towards immigrants, constraints participation in civic culture.”\textsuperscript{9} From my own experience of growing up in New York City’s Chinatown, I would agree with Liu’s characterization of immigrant Chinese communities. The community that I knew was unsure of its political power and hesitant to voice their opinions. The reasons for this include language barriers, unfamiliarity with the American political system, citizenship status (or lack thereof), and skepticism that their voices would be heard, just to name a few.

While they felt excluded from participating in Boston’s official political system, the Chinatown community itself was not unorganized. They created their own local institutions to provide for themselves what the City of Boston did not. Liu conducted a survey in 1997 and found 75 noncommercial entities for the 25 block area of Chinatown. This included 17 service providers, 20 ethnic

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.
traditional organizations, five “action organizations,”\textsuperscript{10} and four umbrella coalitions, with the remaining third fulfilling religions, educational, social and cultural purposes.\textsuperscript{11} The dense social structures in Chinatown has allowed them to be highly organized, but language and cultural barriers continued to isolate the community from outside resources. Making Chinatown an information-poor and resource scarce community that faces high initial cost in information gathering and resource investment to organize.\textsuperscript{12}

Chinatown political power is further diluted by the constant influx of new immigrants from varying geographic areas that have led to lower inherent levels of solidarity and presents an additional obstacle to mobilization. The original workers who settled here and established the first families were overwhelmingly from the Toisan area. Since then immigrant law reform and changes in international relations have allowed more immigrants from other part of China and from Hong Kong.\textsuperscript{13} Over time mobilization efforts sprang from different quarters of the community; protest politics from the action organizations, lobbying from the service agencies, and deal making from the business leaders. The churn in the neighborhood undermines collective memory of its history. As such, any mobilization effort must constantly working at maintaining shared solidarity among changing population and community ties require continual rebuilding and recognition. The differing backgrounds of the newer immigrants weaken the meaning of cultural symbols that built solidary.

Chinatown is facing a set of challenges that prevent it from achieving political power: (1) lack of civic culture, (2) isolation from outside resources, and (3) internal divisions. Overcoming these obstacles and developing political clout is crucial to achieving greater community control. The history of urban

\textsuperscript{10} Liu defines them as organizations that directly and openly challenged the methods and legitimacy of traditional organizations.


\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
renewal in Chinatown has demonstrated that despite the density of local community organizations in Chinatown, they are inadequate for addressing the variety of issues that the Chinatown community was facing: high poverty rates, chronic shortage of affordable housing and open space, and significant air pollution and pedestrian safety concerns due to the constant automobile traffic from the highways built through the neighborhood. Boston City Hall’s history of repeatedly breaking its promises has taught the Chinatown community that it cannot remain isolated from politics. Current model of urban growth in Boston was not addressing their community’s needs so they must become more proactive in steering growth in another direction.

**Chinatown Community Plan**

The community-driven master planning process provided the Chinatown community with a unique opportunity to clearly articulate their concerns with current urban growth trends and propose an alternative future for their community. Through the process of authoring a collective community master plan, this was also an opportunity for the community to establish itself as legitimate researchers worthy of being the City’s collaborators in designing solutions to the community’s problems. While the Community Plan did set a precedence of community involvement, the resulting process was a superficial one that failed to take full advantage of this opportunity to legitimize local knowledge and empower resident. Using PAR as a framework I will attempt to deconstruct the master planning process and discuss how applying the methodologies and principles of PAR would have allowed the master process to more effectively address Chinatown’s obstacles to achieving greater community control.

The focus of all PAR inquiry must be based on what participants consider to be the most pressing problems facing the community and master planning is essentially an exercise of problem-setting. As a PAR research strategy, the spatially-based community master planning was a particularly appropriate problem-setting exercise since one of Chinatown’s goals was to combat institutional
encroachment. It helped them defining their vision in a spatial form and addressed the inadequacies of political boundaries to reflect the reality of local community life. In fact Chinatown overlaps with five zoning districts and there is vast discrepancies between what the community defines as its boundaries and the various political and legal boundaries defined by state and city agencies.\footnote{The Chinatown Coalition. (1994). The Chinatown Community Assessment Report.} While the influence of Chinatown spans far beyond the physical boundaries, a clearly articulated physical space helps the community set some of the parameters that define the conversation.

Once the problem has been collectively defined, the next step was to for the community and the City to collectively decide on an appropriate set of research methods to collect data that would describe the community’s challenges. However, at this point the BRA decided that they would retain outside consultants to conduct surveys on housing conditions, business and employer characteristics, land uses, and user characteristics.\footnote{Chinatown Community Plan, 1990.} This was first in-depth study of the neighborhood ever conducted and was represented an opportunity in the master planning process that could have built local research capacities. Because the findings from these surveys will serve as a foundation for how the city perceives and characterizes Chinatown going forward, to exclude the community from the design and implementation of the surveys severely undermines the community’s control over its future. While the study simply confirmed many of the issues that residents already knew, intimate knowledge of local context could have helped to ensure that the surveys captured the types of data most relevant to the community’s needs.

In a co-creative research process, the results of the surveys would then be brought to the larger community and other relevant stakeholders so that they can work together to make sense of all the survey findings and translating them into concrete goals or strategies. However, the community “outreach” efforts were conducted in isolation from the surveys. While a few community leaders were
given decision-making power as members of the Master Plan Committee, the vast majority of residents and community members were relegated to more traditional passive roles. The Master Plan Committee, formed by the CNC, hosted focus group discussions, workshops, and small group sessions to develop community consensus on goals and objectives of the community. However, the format and outputs of these meetings seemed to follow traditional community participation models where a few experts were ultimately interpreting the community’s comments and left residents out of the ultimate product design. Greater involvement of the community in devising strategy, collecting data, and decision-making would have worked to build a more robust culture in civic participation. Increasing community responsibility and ownership of the final product can help dispel feelings of simply being “visitors.”

Chinatown’s political power is severely thwarted by internal divisions and the meetings held by the Master Plan Committee also represented an opportunity to utilize PAR principles of reflective practices to bridge divisions in the community. However, with power concentrated in the Master Plan Committee it was easy to prioritize efficiency and gloss over differences within the community. Resolving internal divisions will be crucial building the community solidarity that is needed for successful neighborhood mobilization in Chinatown. Without intentional efforts devoted to facilitating dialogue between business interests and labor interests, between Toisan immigrants and Hong Kong immigrants, or between new and old community organizations, the community cannot achieve true solidarity. For example, the conflicting interests of its political elites and the broader community was evident in the CNC decision to approve the most T-NEMC garage proposal in 1993, only three years after the comprehensive collective community visioning process that supposedly happened during the Community Plan.

Going forward, building local research capacity and establishing legitimacy of local knowledge will continue to be an uphill challenge for Chinatown. There is a strong belief that Chinatown residents, due to their low-income, low-education, and lack of English language skills, are unable to develop the
skills needed to mobilize and launch campaigns.\textsuperscript{16} Instead there is a strong reliance on volunteers and community leaders from outside the neighborhood. However, in PAR the goal is to enable all individuals to meaningfully participate in determining the future of their neighborhood. Without this core principle, it is easy to allow the few willing and talented community leaders domineer the community planning process. Currently, the dominance of community organizations and their leaders in mobilization efforts has become a common theme in Chinatown. An immigrant worker pointed out that, “many prefer to avoid being leaders themselves because they are then most at risk. When residents are reluctant to speak out, they feel the need for leadership to do so and look towards those willing few. The leadership of its grassroots mobilization, organizational infrastructure, and for the most part businesses and political elites, resides outside Chinatown.”\textsuperscript{17} Not only does this thwart efforts to democratize decision-making and research, but this overreliance on a few individuals also makes for a very weak mobilization base. Devolving power and devoting resources to enable more community members to be co-researchers will ultimately strengthen the neighborhood’s ability to mobilize quickly and effectively.

In the long run, the dominance of community organizations reflects the need for community leaders to continually reflect upon and evaluate the privileges that come with their positions of power. While community organizations are an integral part of Chinatown, they must not be mistaken as representative of the diverse interest and opinions of the Chinatown community. Because community organizations have become so effective in make their voices heard, this has actually displaced the resident voice and precluded them from contributing more meaningfully in community mobilization efforts.\textsuperscript{18} The tensions between residents and community organizations would become evident in the controversies around a 1994 Tufts University Medical School expansion plan. Many of the organizations that led the master planning process and the Parcel C campaign did not engage even though many


\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
residents were enraged. Despite the increasing role of residents and ordinary community members, the community organizational structure has yet to work out their accountability to the people.\footnote{19}

The master planning process has great potential to address many of the community’s obstacles to political mobilization discussed earlier. Firstly, this could have promoted civic participation by demonstrating to residents the power of their voice and input. Secondly, the Community Plan can be a platform to force the different interests and loyalties to come together and articulate a single shared vision for Chinatown. However, the Chinatown Community Plan failed to address either of the aforementioned obstacles. While the Community Plan created a precedence of community-driven master plans, it only created a façade of community participation. Community input and participation remained superficial and concentrated in a few community leaders. Furthermore, the zoning rules outlined in the Community Plan provided the community with limited protection. Developers can always petition for entitlements that allow it to deviate from the zoning guidelines in the Community Plan and since the 1990 many developers have successfully gained entitlements to do so. The 1993 Parcel C campaign illustrates how easily T-NEMC was able to obtain approvals for a garage development that conflicted directly with what was stated in the Community Plan. When enforcement relies on the same mechanisms of power that razed through Chinatown to build highways, the new zoning laws provide Chinatown with little protection. Unsurprisingly, the master planning process was unable to inspire residents to believe that they have real power in determining their community’s future. The CNC’s approval of the T-NEMC garage proposal also demonstrated how community divisions continued to be unresolved after all the meetings held to create a community consensus.

\section*{The Parcel C Campaign}

In response to BRA approval of the 1993 T-NEMC garage proposal, community activists and resident formed the Coalition to Protect Parcel C for Chinatown (“Coalition”) to defeat the proposal at

\footnote{19 \emph{Ibid.}}
Parcel C. The Coalition developed strategies to attack the proposal from multiple fronts, one of which was to take whatever legal action necessary to stop or delay the proposal. In the remainder of this paper I will focus on the contributions of Zenobia Lai, a lawyer involved with the legal strategy of Parcel C, and how her work provides a rich example of using law as a PAR strategy.

The legal world is often seen as a one dominated by lawyers and judges, using esoteric language that is rarely accessible to the layperson. The inaccessibility of law to the layperson makes the legal system a black box, especially for immigrant communities with limited education and English-speaking skills. As a result, the law has often been used as a tool to against communities and unfairly tilts power in favor of those with the resources to manipulate the law to their advantage. This was why the Coalition’s initial reception to pursuing a legal strategy and using lawyers was met with resistance. Many of them had prior negative experiences with lawyers who “hijacked the community’s struggle for their own professional gain.” However, the legal strategy utilized by Lai illustrates how law can be used in PAR as a tool which returns power to the people. Lai characterizes this as “community lawyering” and lays out its core value as “building tools for subordinated people to negotiate with the dominant society, making room for them to sit at the negotiation table, facilitating their say in decisions that affect their lives, and encouraging them to capitalize on their talents and assets.”

Traditional usage of legal strategy in community organizing commonly take the form of class-action lawsuits where communities are only consulted for evidence to be used in court. People’s testimonies are used as a weapon and lawyers are seen as the sole experts in devising the legal strategy. Oftentimes when faced with anything in the realm of law, communities often falsely jump to the conclusion that they should hand over control to a lawyer. But in the context of PAR, the community should not surrender responsibility so easily. Only the community itself can decide what its goals are and

---


21 Ibid.
lawyers are only there to help them achieve those goals. When law is used as a PAR strategy, the focus on community empowerment realigns the lawyer’s goals. It is no longer just about winning the legal case but is also focused on “returning power to the community by supplementing their skills with the tools of legal information, so that they know how and when to wield the knowledge, to protect their life, liberty, and property.” Their role is to translate the law and work with communities to co-create legal strategies.

Lai’s commitment to community control was tested during the Parcel C campaign when the legal committee had to decide between two legal strategies: (1) to join a class-action filed by the Conservation Law foundation, or (2) to disrupt the garage development through the state environmental review mechanism.\(^{22}\) Cognizant that “it is the community that ultimately bears both the benefits and costs of any legal strategy,” Lai chose to help the community understand their options rather than telling them what to do.\(^{23}\) Ultimately after carefully weighing the pros and cons, the community made the decision to pursue an environmental review process because they wanted remain a fully player in the legal process.

Respecting the community’s decision, the legal committee filed written comments demanding that T-NEMC conduct a full environmental review of the impacts of the garage development and worked with community members to develop compelling testimonies for the upcoming public hearing that would decide on whether T-NEMC’s environmental notification form was sufficient to bypass further environmental review. The legal team familiarized themselves with complicated environmental law and presented to the community the basic ideas underlying environmental law. Lai focused her efforts on helping the community connect legal concepts with examples from their daily lives. On August 31, 1993,\(^{22}\)

\(^{22}\) As part of its building proposal, NEMC was required under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (“MEPA”) to file an environmental notification form (“ENF”) with the state’s Secretary of Environmental Affairs.

the Coalition presented over twenty oral testimonies in opposition to the proposed garage and none of them came from lawyers. At the end of the three hour hearing, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs agreed that NEMC needed to undergo a full environmental impact review. This successfully accomplished the Coalition’s goal of delaying the development. The success of the environmental review petition in the Parcel C campaign demonstrates the potency of using law as a tool that actually encourages communities to capitalize on their knowledge and assets. Lai coached residents on the rules of the law and helped them frame their experiences in the context of environmental law. The first hand testimony of community members was extremely compelling because their comments were not only rooted concrete examples from their daily lives but also responsive to specific environmental standards.

Lai’s community lawyering work in the Parcel C campaign also provides a rich example of how to be a reflective researcher. In PAR, a researcher must be continually reflecting on the presumptions, biases, and power dynamics that exist between the researcher and the community. The Parcel C example demonstrates how in addition to checking your own biases, an effective researcher must be aware of the community’s presumptions and biases about the researcher. Lai was aware of how her profession, race, gender, and age affected how the community interacted with her. She didn’t assume that her Chinese heritage and language skills will automatically gain the trust of the Chinatown community. Instead she worked to build trust by respectfully participating in all aspects of the Parcel C fight. In addition to serving on the Legal Committee, she attended meetings that she didn’t have a say in, and only offered opinions when asked. She also recognized how as a young, female, Asian American attorney she would need to work against the presumption that consummate lawyers were older, white men. She was repeatedly mistaken as an interpreter, student, secretary, or youth helper. Some clients even demanded that Lai serve only as an interpreter because they believed she was not qualified to represent them as an attorney. To combat these biases, she made sure to assert her voice in discussions
and delivered regular legal services, in addition to working on the Parcel C campaign. Being aware of how the community perceives the researcher and actively addressing any presumptions that they may have is important to creating a healthy working relationship of mutual trust and respect.

In her writing about the motivations and thought processes behind her work, Lai is producing research that not only demonstrates the effectiveness of community lawyering work but also allows the reader to understand how she was able to be an effective community lawyer. Her motivations, attitudes, and relationship with the community members were just as important as her competency in using law as a tool for social change. She revealed insights into her interactions with community members and their perceptions of her that would have hindered her work if left unaddressed. Any sort of research that deals with people must require that the researcher address the biases and assumptions that all parties bring to the table. They are a part of all human interaction and a research setting is not immune to those influences.

Through Lai’s legal strategy she was able to empower residents to feel like they were able to make a difference. The community was involved in the entire process and were not only helping Lai devise the legal strategy but were also empowered to serve as their own spokesperson. The lasting effects of the state environmental review win lies not in the actual ruling itself, but in the empowered experiences of those involved.

**Conclusion**

In response to the repeated encroachment of institutions into Chinatown, the community was forced to react and mobilize to protect what they saw as rightfully theirs. During the master planning process and the Parcel C campaign, Chinatown had the opportunity to experiment with a variety of new strategies, some of which enabled greater community control. Through the course of this paper, I used
PAR as a lens to evaluate these experiences and tried to demonstrate how using PAR in Chinatown could lead to deeper social change through democratizing the process of research and problem-solving.

The master planning process behind the Community Plan in 1990 created a legitimate platform through which citizens could be empowered to participate in dictating the future of their community. Unfortunately, the results failed to live up to its promises. The Community Plan offered the community little protection against the gentrifying forces that will displace many more Chinese residents from the area. Furthermore, during the planning process a vast majority of the Chinatown community members were relegated to more passive roles rather than active co-researchers. In contrast, the legal strategy utilized in the Parcel C campaign was a huge success not only because it successfully thwarted the garage development proposal, but also because residents were actively involved in strategizing and advocating for their own needs. Lai, the community lawyer involved with the legal strategy, was intentional using her expertise to collaborate with and empowering the Chinatown community.

The continual reneging of promises from prior victories demonstrates the unreliability of the city’s promises to communities with limited resources and political power. In times of economic growth, the city may amenable to making lots of promises and concessions, but in a recessionary and more conservative environment, unless the community can continue to vigilantly remind and pressure the city to honor its commitments, progress from past victories can be easily erased and forgotten. Therefore, PAR researchers must remember that lasting change does not just lie in changing policy or other external factors, but must also come from building the community’s capacity to make their voices heard.

Appendix – Additional Research Techniques and Strategies

While I was unable to incorporate the following findings from the Parcel C campaign into my essay, I would like include, as an appendix, a few of the interesting techniques used by the Coalition.

Research Technique: Community Referendum
The Coalition decided to put the concept of democracy to the test and issued a community driven-referendum. While it had no real legal implications, the significance of this was multi-fold. First, in addition to Chinatown residents all Asian Americans in Massachusetts were permitted to vote. This reflects how the geographic boundaries of Chinatown do not define the stakeholders. Many Chinese Americans that live in Quincy or Allston-Brighton came to Chinatown for groceries, ESL classes, employment agencies, the community health center, and vocational training classes. Even if they no longer can afford to live in Chinatown, the referendum recognized them as legitimate stakeholders. Secondly, in a majority immigrant community, an unofficial referendum hosted by the community will allow non-citizens to have a voice. Thirdly, this vote would challenge CNC, Boston City Hall’s appointed advisory group composed of business interests,24 as the sole voice of Chinatown. On September 12 and 13, 1993, over 1,700 members of the Chinatown community voted on the garage proposal and by an enormous margin of 1,692 to 42, the community rejected the hospital’s garage.

**Research Technique: Community-Driven Traffic Study**

As part of the struggle for Parcel C, the community and affiliated researchers also conducted traffic counts to illustrate the current environmental and pedestrian safety hazards present in the community. They recruited Chinatown youth to manually count and chart traffic at key intersections most likely to be affected by the T-NEMC garage and found that the T-NEMC transportation study inaccurately predicted the rush hour time in the community. They counted only half, and in some instances, one-third of the actual automobile trips at the four major intersections most affected by the proposed garage, and totally omitted the traffic impact of the impending construction of the Central

---

Artery/Tunnel Project. This simple exercise of counting cast serious doubts on validity of T-NEMC’s report and highlights the importance of a community’s ability to collect data to debunk and challenge T-NEMC more “scientifically rigorous” study. The traffic studies confirmed the resident’s lived experiences. The success of the traffic study led the community to conduct more studies involving (1) video traffic monitoring and (2) a health survey of residents.

**Research Strategy: Building Coalition**

The Parcel C campaign also set a new precedence of developing an external support network. The neighborhood organizations developed relations with other groups who had become involved in redevelopment controversies with the BRA. With lines of communication now open, these communities were able to give each other technical assistance and moral support. These alliances helped them realize that were not alone in their struggles and were able to derive support form one another’s victories. This is one of ways that Chinatown can work to build networks and address its current isolation from external resources. While many of these relationships were very ephemeral and were lasted only during the course of the Parcel C campaign, this cooperation illustrates to Chinatown the importance and feasibility of building outside relationships. Further alliance building can be achieved through more facilitated dialogue between the community members to illustrate commonalities across neighborhoods on a more human-level, as opposed to the current organization-driven model.

---

26 Allston-Brighton was facing expansion of Boston College football stadium; West Roxbury was fighting against a Home Depot facility; and an inner city cross-neighborhood alliance was working against a proposed asphalt plant in Roxbury.