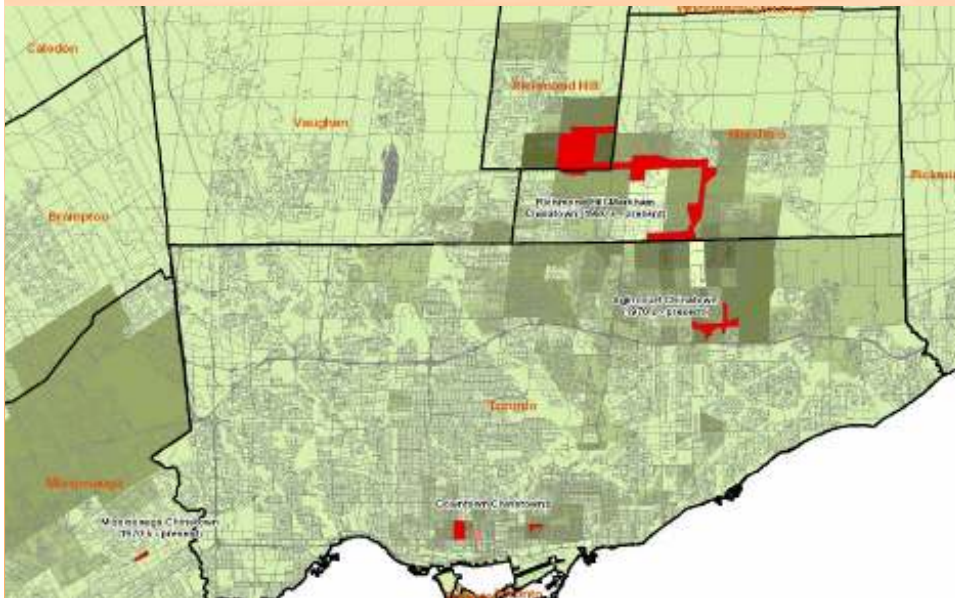


# **Consuming Chinatown**

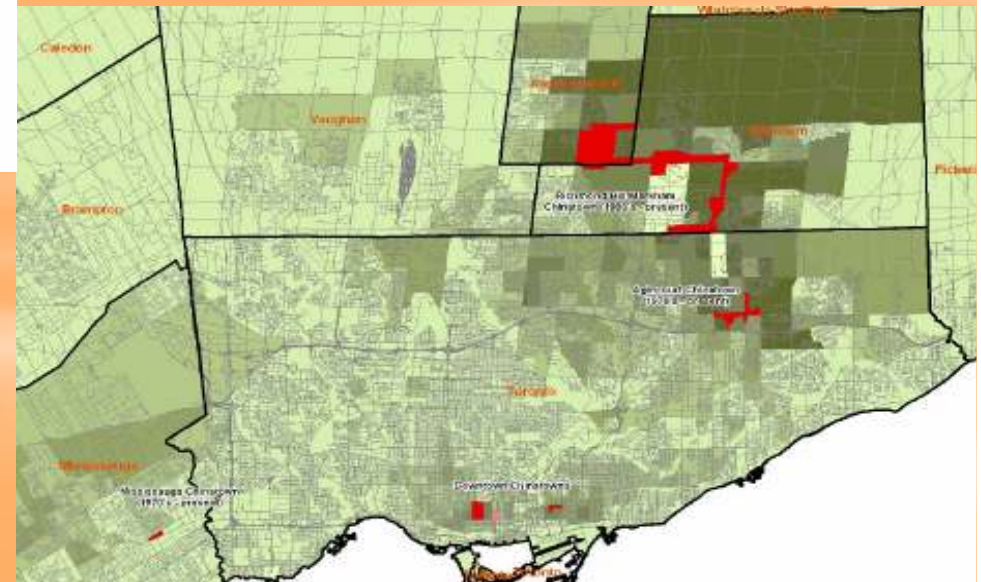
## **A Tale of Two Cities**

Lucia Lo  
York University  
Canada

# Chinese concentrations



1991



2001

# Central Chinatown





# Pacific Mall



# Objective

To examine the processes that bring about the commodification of Chinese ethnic retail spaces in Toronto

# Findings (1)

- many direct actors
  - local businesses
  - developers/real estate agents (ethnic, ethnic other)
  - community organizations
  - municipal politicians
  - city staff (planning, economic development)
  - Customers (locals, tourists, ethnic, ethnic other)
- multiple agenda
  - economic (survival, profit, development)
  - political (votes, status)
  - cultural (identity creation/expression)

## Findings (2)

- The transformation is collective work combining bottom-up initiative generated by ethnic business people and top-down reinforcement implemented by city officials, with community agencies and city politicians playing a bridging role.
- The transformation reflects the political economy of the time: recession, affluent migrants, investor program.