Urban Revitalization, Gentrification, and the Public Library: The Case of Lausanne, Switzerland

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Gentrification – a process of replacement of a poorer population in an urban neighborhood with a richer one and the change of the looks of this respective neighborhood – has become a widespread topic of societal debates in recent years. This process is linked to public art and cultural activities, and sometimes triggered with projects of urban revitalization by the respective cities. Public libraries are part of this process and they are used in the concepts of urban revitalization as well as institutions for public culture. This puts them in an uneasy position: thus, libraries also become part in processes of the repulsion of socially vulnerable groups. The text will discuss the current position of public libraries in respect to gentrification, using some incidents in the city of Lausanne, Switzerland, as a case study.

Should public libraries engage in projects for urban revitalization and if so, in which role? What, if this revitalization leads to gentrification, social segregation and displacement of open drug users or other socially vulnerable groups? This text will try to deal with these issues.

In recent years, discussions and social movements around the question of urban revitalization, the "right to the city" and/or gentrification have emerged with a remarkable vitality in Europe, Australia, and North America. (Lees, Slater & Wyly 2008) More often than not, art and cultural projects became part of these controversies. Sometimes, libraries happen to be used as part of the revitalization attempts of urban spaces as well. This is what happens in Lausanne, Switzerland and this text will use Lausannes situation – both the neighborhood of the Flon and the Place de la Riponne – as case study for this phenomenon. But: the dealt issues one can find in this text are not limited to Lausanne. Big cities in Europe and the Global North keep growing, almost all of them have strategies to govern these growth processes. In an increasing number of cities those changes lead to social conflicts, some, like the protests in Berlin, New York or San Francisco with a widespread coverage, but most of them only with local visibility. Either way, public libraries in those cities can't ignore upcoming conflicts around urban revitalization and/or gentrification, because they are affected by changes and are part of them at the same time.

The remaining text is structured as follows. (1) It discusses the gentrification process and its importance in recent urban development by introducing a three phase model. (2) Afterwards, text continues with a greater insight in Lausannes situation, especially to the neighborhoods of Flon and Riponne. The text ends (3) with an outline of the role of public libraries and proceed with a formulation of proposals for a further discussion in the library community.

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1 Urban revitalization, gentrification, and the displacement of the socially excluded

In recent years, gentrification has become one of the pressing topics of social uproar in different countries, especially in big cities and metropolises. (Holm 2014, Prince 2014, Andres & Grésillon 2013, Naegler 2012, DeSena 2009, Lees, Slater & Wyly 2008) Starting as a term used in urban sociology and by political activists it is now used as a common term in newspapers, everyday discussions and political programs. In some cities like Berlin or Hamburg gentrification seems to be a social development which concerns nearly everyone. As this former scientific term becomes more and more widespread, the meaning of gentrification broadens up. It is sometimes an expression of a feeling of an unwanted shift in the urban landscape and culture, not always grounded in empirical facts. And it is a postmodern concept, as usually those people which seem to drive gentrification are the same people who want to limit negative consequences of this urban change.

Gentrification is at first a term for a tremendous rise of rents. Sooner or later, a change in the population living in certain urban neighborhoods happens, as it seems as if the more poor and more vulnerable population of those neighborhoods is gradually driven out of the gentrified area. But it is more than that. Gentrification also describes the change of the culture, the social structure, and the lifestyle in one neighborhood, usually marked by the closure of the infrastructure used by poor people for their everyday life – like cheap supermarkets or stores, basic pubs and so on – and a rise of the number of cafés, restaurants, shops and infrastructure for a better paying clientele at the same time. This is not just a question of prices, it is also a question of different cultures, whereas the new bars and shops usually seem to be oriented towards a clientele that is more interested in culture, health and alternative lifestyles.

But: not all of those changes are seen as a bad thing, not everybody conceives them as negative. For instance, more art, a wider range of eating offers (Stock 2013) or a less violent street live (DeSena 2009) are quite often described as a good outcome of the processes known as gentrification. Most often these processes are linked to the disappearing of visible illegal behavior. Groups of public visible drug users are often among the first ones being targeted by those changes and tend to disappear quite fast. For instance, the fight of local stores and neighborhood groups against a public injection room marked, in a way, also the beginning of the active gentrification of the "Schanzenviertel" in Hamburg. (Naegler 2012)

Still, there are other terminologies used to describe these process, especially when those changes are planned. Then they are discussed as "urban renewal" or "urban revival". Usually, "urban revival" is fostered by the cities itself, but also by organizations commissioned by the cities too – like the "Quartiersmangement" in Berlin or the "Stadterneuerungs- und Stadtentwicklungsgesellschaft Hamburg" (Naegler 2012) – or private investors. Lees, Slater and Wyly (Lees, Slater & Wyly 2008) point out that cities and investors usually avoid the term gentrification by choice, even outright disputing the legacy of the term. They understand gentrification – or, in their words, "urban development" – as a favorable process, providing much more positive than negative effects for the respective neighborhoods and their inhabitants.

These processes are even more complex, as they sometimes seem to be triggered by groups who explicitly don't want to displace poor and socially excluded people, but try to live alternative

lifestyles – like artists, students or member of different subcultures – or even people who contest the current economic system, such as left-radical centers like the "Rote Flora" in Hamburg (Naegler 2012). At the same time, not every project of urban revival succeeds, not every neighborhood that could become gentrified will do so, and simultaneously, other areas of the cities become less gentrified or even impoverished.

1.1 A Model of Gentrification

A widely used theoretical model to explain gentrification in the context of urban sociology was introduced by Andrej Holm.[1] His model will be used in this text.

Gentrification, as it is described in Holms model, is triggered first and foremost by the interests of homeowners to rise the rents of their housings up until the point where they get the most profit out of them. This can, but does not have to, include the massive renovation of housing and infrastructure that should support the quality of housing. Every housing that is up for rental has a potential rent, which is defined by the quality of housing, by the infrastructure and culture around the housing, by the whole renting market of a city, by interests and financial potentials of the possible renters, but also by political guidelines, zoning and policies. Homeowners tend to try to exploit those potential rents – or, in other words, close the "rent gap" –, but are usually not able to max out those rents in a short time, because a rise of rents is not only in their hands. Usually, they try to get the potential rents in cases of new tenants.[2]

Gentrification is understood as a process, not a static situation. As every process it can be interrupted, slow down or change direction. Nevertheless, Holm (2011) presents a model of gentrification that describes three distinct phases.

- Phase 1: An urban area is suited for gentrification. Rundown building stock exists in an acceptable quality or can be renovated towards such quality, rents are low, usually there are a great number of vacant spaces or shops. Typically, those areas are part of the inner city or nearby, with public transportation already in place. The number of people looking for a relocation into the inner city is rising.
- Phase 2: "Pioneers" move into the area, usually because of cheap rents and/or the search for free space to try alternative forms of lifestyle. Those alternative styles can include political activism, art, alternative forms of personal live and the like. Quite often those pioneers combine high cultural and social capital with little economic capital, e.g. artists who do art, but doesn't gain much wealth from selling it or students, which study and accumulate cultural and educational capital without making money out of this capital,

[1] Holm gained somewhat of prominence right at the time, when gentrification as a term became known outside of sociology and political activism, when in 2007 he was – together with three other people – arrested on behalf of the Federal Attorney General of Germany and accused of membership of a left-wing, terrorist group called "militante gruppe". In the progress of the case it became clear, that authorities had added Holm to the group because both used the terms "gentrification" and "precarization" in their texts. The detention of Holm became a political issue when several international scientists signed a declaration for Holm. No charges against Holm were pressed, but this story became one of the starting points for the popularity of the term "gentrification" in the German public.

[2] This doesn't mean that homeowners always estimate the potential rents correctly. Sometimes, they overestimate the demand or financial possibilities of potential tenants. This seems to be the case in Zürich, where recently a growing number of high-priced new apartments have problems to find new tenants, although the demand for apartments is still high. (Stadt Zürich Präsidialdepartement 2014)

yet. The look of the neighborhood changes: street cafés, art galleries, diverse forms of restaurants and shops tailored to the pioneers emerge. Over the time, rents tend to rise, old shops and infrastructures tend to disappear and the population changes as well. Usually, the most vulnerable groups tend to disappear from the landscape.

- Phase 3: In the third phase of gentrification, the culture of the everyday life has changed completely. New tenants pay high rents, usually the building stock is renovated and kept in high quality. The street life is dominated by people from the higher social classes and the infrastructure is tailored to their demands. For instance, discounter chains have vanished, more expensive organic grocery stores have emerged. The rhythms of the neighborhood have changed according to the inhabitants, e.g. were bars tailored for students and young artist tend to be open until the early morning, bars in highly gentrified areas tend to close early, as most of the inhabitants tend to work in "normal" nine-to-five jobs. Not only poor people have left the neighborhood, but pioneers of the second phase did also. Sometimes they have become older and richer, like students who finished their education, entered the job market and settled with children. Although most of the inhabitants tend to have liberal or leftist political views, and sometimes engage in favor of alternative lifestyles, most of those have vanished or have been incorporated into the picture of the neighborhood, without being actually lived.[3]
- A possible phase 4 of hyper-gentrification is only suggested by Holm (2011): Sometimes neighborhoods or parts of them evolve into a phase of hyper-gentrification, where those areas become home of much richer people, with an international focus, usually marked by luxury apartment buildings. They become part of what may be better termed as "global cities": a network of places, interconnected, depending on the city functions, like the amassing of cheap but talented labor, and highly specialized small businesses belonging to the tertiary sector, but without a real touch to the rest of the neighborhoods they are in. (Sassen 2001)

Holm (Holm 2011, Holm 2014) emphasizes that most of the social conflicts surrounding gentrification tend to happen in the second phase (see e.g. DeSena 2009, Prince 2013), although the real problems of expulsion and exclusion are to be found in the third phase. The moving in of pioneers, openings of street cafés as well as organic grocery stores, or the first "sightings" of tourists don't pose a threat to the more vulnerable inhabitants; but rising costs of rent and living do. But sometimes such visible changes are necessary as catalyst for protest against gentrification to happen, because the conflicts then would become concrete. (Holm 2014)

Gentrification usually is a longtime process of replacing a population with a significant much richer and more powerful population, starting with the most vulnerable. For instance, in Berlin it is usually not the rich who follow when the poor move out of a gentrified area or apartment,

[3] Hae (2012) analyzed those contradictory changes in New York nightlife, when parts of the city moved from the second to the third phase of gentrification and described it as a process of becoming "boring" (DeSena 2009), while still trying to profit from the picture of a highly vitalized city life fostered in the first and second phase: "As the city has experienced gentrification throughout the last three decades, 'noisy' and 'boisterous' nightlife businesses in gentrifying neighborhoods, including bars and lounges as well as dance clubs, have been censured as the number one enemy of 'quality of life' in these neighborhoods due to their nuisance effects. Ironically, this process has gone on even as the real estate sector trumpeted and marketed the profile of nightlife in these communities as a sign of neighborhood vibrancy in order to boost property values. That is, nightlife establishments and their cultural elements have been one of the important catalysts for gentrification of the very neighborhoods in which the presence of these businesses, later, have been intensely contested by groups of gentry that have moved here." (Hae 2012, 2)

but slightly less poorer people, which are then followed by even a little more richer ones and so on. (Holm 2014, Bonal & Gude 2014) But still, when gentrification starts to enter the second phase in one area, the number of "gentrification moments" (Prince 2014) starts to rise. Today, people and activists seem to be alerted to such changes and moments, compared to some years ago.

1.2 Culture and Gentrification

An open issue – both in the scientific and the societal discussion – is still the connection between culture and gentrification. Usually the opening of cultural places like art galleries is seen as a trigger of gentrification. This is consistent with Holms 3-phase-model: Pioneers moving in a previously impoverished area mark the beginning of the second phase. Artists and people with high cultural assets are seen as such pioneers, which doesn't mean, that they always intend to be such pioneers. Many a time, they specifically try to reject that role. They are the ones which try to bring more aspects of cultural life to such an area, but don't want to repulse people. Sometimes they try to reflect their situation, sometimes they strictly reject it.[4]

The idea of a conjunction between cultural activities and gentrification is a result of the discussion about a "creative class". This creative class, it is believed particularly in institutions which are in the position to plan the development of cities, is a term for people doing "creative" work, whereby this includes quite different professions, from artists to marketing specialists, from actors and writers to architects and entrepreneurs. Such a creative class should need each other to be productive, for example architects and entrepreneurs should need the stimulus of art and theaters as well as the concentration of a busy urban live. Although, empirical facts about the realities of the "creative class" are ambiguous, more and more city officials got convinced – with the help of academic or economic advisors –, that they need more members for flourishing their cities. (Terrin 2012) Hence, they try to stimulate urban revitalization with the help of creative endeavors. Art galleries and little theaters are funded, sometimes only on a short term basis, festivals of different forms are invited or invented, special regulations for pubs, like longer opening hours or the relaxation of the enforcement of regulations, are put in place, museums are opened, and even libraries are included into the strategies for urban redevelopment.

At the same time, pioneers are more inclined to do such creative work on their own, for instance by opening up art galleries, pubs and other entrepreneurial ideas their like to start up with, including organize cultural events. It is not clear, if any of this activities leads directly to gentrification. Schuetz (Schuetz 2013) points out that art galleries in European and US-American cities, when they are established or move, do not follow the movements of gentrification, but rather historical patterns of their respective city and orient themselves on already existing galleries and museums. On the other hand, nearly every area that was affected by gentrification in the last decades possessed a share of some forms of cultural infrastructure. (Terrin 2012)

While the data are not much coherent and even though not all forms of cultural activity lead to gentrification, it is not possible to talk about gentrification or urban revitalization without

[4] For instance, when Christina M. Heinen (Heinen 2013) did her research on the musical cultures in Berlin-Neukölln - one of Berlin's gentrification areas - in 2008 to 2010, she received a strict rejection for an interview from one musician, because she, as a researcher, was seen as part of the gentrification process and the musician wished to have no part in this: "At first the field researchers arrive, then the diggers." (Heinen 2013, 30. "Erst kommen die Feldforscher, dann die Bagger.")

reflecting on cultural activities, particularly those tailored not just to a small elite but to a wider audience, like for instance libraries.

2 The case of Lausanne

Lausanne, which will be used here as the case study object, is the fourth largest city of Switzerland, with about 130.000 inhabitants and the second biggest one in the French speaking part of this country. However, compared to cities in the neighboring countries, it is a major city with a rather average size. It is the capital of the Canton of Vaud and among other things, home to the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, the University of Lausanne as well as the International Olympic Committee. Situated at the Lac Léman and at the border of Switzerland and France, Lausanne today is known as the main spot for the clubbing scene in the area, as well as a center for cultural events. It is, compared to other Swiss municipalities, quite a young and busy city with a high number of young people and students.

2.1 From deserted warehouses to Flon-Flon, from Flon-Flon to Flon

The example of the Place de la Riponne in Lausanne, which this case study is focusing on, has an important predecessor in the city, the area of Flon. The Flon is an area, highly gentrified today, only one metro station away from the Riponne. From the 1950s onwards this was a rundown, post-industrial district, situated in the middle of the city, but in a small valley, some meters below the city level and filled only with partly used warehouses. Subject to different plans for revitalization and societal conflicts (Zuppinger 2012), it became a center for alternative culture in Switzerland under the name "Flon-Flon". Since last century turn, the Flon increasingly became the "in quarter" of Lausanne for another kind of young, urban, but not always alternative or "hip" groups of people. Although one of the places for nightlife in the city, today it seems like a big outdoor commercial-zone in contrast to the more bottom-up culture of the 1990s. Whereas the transformation in the 1990s was made possible by the conflicts of the years before, but impelled by people that could be described as pioneers according to Holms model, the turn after 2000, enforced by the city and the main proprietor of the Flon, can be linked to the third phase.

Until the 1950s, the Flon was a port on the way to the nearby Lac Léman, used primarily for industrial goods. Most of the industry situated in the Flon left the area in course of the years. This was consistent with movements one could also observe in other European cities, were the actual industrial production got sourced out. As in other cities too, this left brownfields of slowly deteriorating buildings. Every city had to deal with its brownfields. Some, most renowned Detroit (2012), left most of this area open in case the city is able to change their current course of urban development. Other cities like Marseille tried to reanimate their usable area by installing cultural institutions (Andres & Grésillon 2013) or, like Berlin in the 1990s, left the horizon of their not used space quite open and developed a culture of short-term uses (Andres & Grésillon 2013). In this context, Lausannes situation is specifically marked by a constant shortage of housing, most notably affordable ones. This is consistent with the situation of most larger Swiss cities. (Andres & Grésillon 2013) Therefore the Flon, as an only rarely used space next to the city center, was for decades a subject to plans for different uses. Nevertheless, none of these plans bear fruit. In 1984, the city together with the main real estate of the Flon, proposed a project for a

city interstate, which would have included the demolition of the existing buildings. The plan was an example of plans for automotive cities. While some of these plans were implemented in other cities, in Lausanne a group of concerned citizen formed the group "Groupe Action Urbanisme", which took to the streets against such schemes. Later, this group and other citizens formed the "Association pour un aménagement harmonieux du Flon" (APAHF, Coalition for a harmonic development of the Flon). For the next decades, the actions of the APAHF influenced to evolution of the Flon.

APAHF preferred a development of the city they called "l'urbanisme du rêve" (urbanism of dreams or utopian urbanism), which aimed to include interests and participation of different groups and had the vision of a more lively city. (Zuppinger 2012[5]) In 1986, APAHF won a popular vote against this plan. Such popular votes are common in Switzerland on such vast projects. The city had zoned the Flon as "industrial site", which meant, that other ways of utilization like flats or commercial projects were not possible as long term alternatives. This situation left the real estate in an uneasy position. There was little industry to settle there. A part of the Flon became a carhouse for the public buses in Lausanne, another building at the edge of the Flon was turned into a shopping center. But most of the old warehouses were rented out in the years ahead for short term leases like galleries, bars, alternative clubs et cetera. In the early 1990s, the Flon had become a center for alternative cultures, mixing interests of artists, political activists and mostly small shop owners, above all galleries, second hand shops and bookshops. (Andres & Grésillon 2013) In other words: the Flon moved into the second phase of gentrification, although tenants were only slightly affected, as there were only a small number of flats on this site too. This development was only possible because of the Flons vague status then, leading to an open attitude by the real estate, which gave out short-term rent, and the city which didn't impose another development plan of the Flon.

Starting in 1989, the commercial center mentioned above, published a magazine, "gazette du flon", which in the first year was used as a marketing tool for the center. After the first year, the magazine was taken over by another editorial team and focused on the Flon itself. Nevertheless, in the third number of the Gazette, still published by the center, an article that dealt with the emerging art scene first can be found there. (Anonymous 1989) In the short time between the popular vote in 1986 and 1989, the image of the Flon had changed completely.

Still, in 1999, the city and the real estate made a crucial turn. (Zuppinger 2012) A new plan for the Flon emerged. This plan proposed a new face for the whole area, including a renovation of most of the houses – which, until then, were painted by the new users, mostly with different forms of street art –, a new zoning, and a commercialization of the Flon. It also previewed a new building for the subway station at the Flon. This led to new forms of social protest, in which the APAHF participated, which were interested in an evolution of the area in a manner that would preserve not only the image but also the spirit of the alternative Flon-Flon of the 1990s.

Nevertheless, in longer struggles, most of the pioneers of the Flon-Flon left the area, and new, more commercialized bars, clubs and restaurants moved into the Flon. Still, there is some free space to be found at the Flon, some art galleries still exists. The renovation of warehouses led to a postmodern, but anorganic look. The people who are using the Flon now, mainly at the

[5]This book was written as a retrospective of one of the most involved member of the APAHF. Although it includes an immense batch of otherwise unknown sources, it surely presents the position of the APAHF in a good light. Nevertheless, the influence of the group should not be underestimated, as they won popular votes in the city and had a high publicity in the public debate.

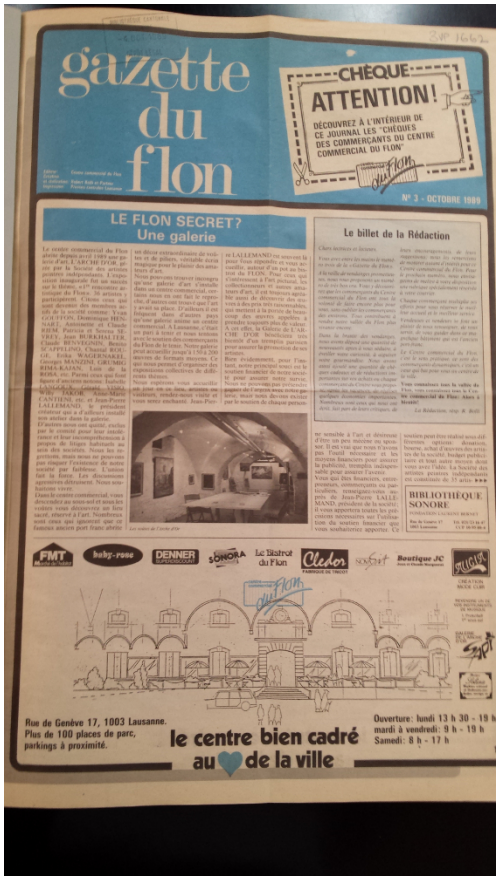

Figure 1: The 1989 issue of the "gazette du flon" mentioned above with the first article about the galleries at the Flon, one of the first signs of a cultural life in this neighborhood for commercial purposes.

weekends, would not usually claim themselves as members of alternative cultures. The image of a wild and creative Flon is preserved, but used for a different purpose. (Zuppinger 2012, Andres & Grésillon 2013, Alonso-Provencio & Da Cunha 2013) This could be interpreted as the third phase of gentrification, fostered by a city and private investors with clear financial and political interests.

Interestingly, one of the last, still not built, buildings of new urban development plan is a "maison du livre et du patrimoine" (house of the book and cultural heritage), a public library and archive. (Ville de Lausanne, direction des travaux service d'architecture 2012) This building, as the documents for the architectural competition state explicitly, has to fit into the new style of the Flon. It could be stated here: after building this library, the transformation of the Flon will be complete. The library will find a quite different user base at today's Flon, than it would have in the time of the Flon-Flon. Most of the groups that made the Flon-Flon a special space have been gone. It would be interesting to ask, whereto they have moved or if they just have ceased to exist as subcultures. One of these groups, the scene of open drug users, once a steady group of users of the neighborhood of the Flon, seem to have moved upwards the hills of Lausanne to the Place de la Riponne.

Figure 2: Flon, situation 2014. On the right the last remainders of the "old" Flon-Flon of the 1990s, on the left the backside of the renovated buildings. The barracks on the right will be demolished, if the "maison du livre et du patrimoine" will be build instead.

2.2 The Place de la Riponne

As mentioned before, the Place de la Riponne is just one metro station further up the hill from the neighborhood of Flon, surrounding together with the Flon the economic most important parts of the city of Lausanne. The spacious place is marked by the Palais de Rumine, which hosts the Musée des Beaux-Arts, the Cantonal Library and other cultural institutions. During the last decades, the place has lost its reputation as cultural center, due to different innercity movements, such as the Hotel Mövenpick, which moved to the neighborhood of Ouchy at the Lac Léman, or the closing of the cinema Romandie, once the biggest cinema in the city, which, after a transformation into a club, moved to a new location next to the Flon. (City of Lausanne 2003)

For the last decade, local journals mostly mentioned the Riponne in a negative manner, mainly because of the open drug scene. This scene may be a result of the economic re-animation of the Flon and one could assume that the drug users, one of the socially most vulnerable groups, installed themselves on the Riponne, after having been repulsed as one of the first groups by the ongoing gentrification process on the Flon. Today, the open drug scene at the Riponne contains

about 50 to 80 persons, organized in different groups, loosely oriented by perceived ethnic characteristics, and constantly changing its different "locations" on the place itself. In 2007, the city of Lausanne tried to open a public injection room. After a very aggressive debate, the population rejected the proposal in a public vote with a result of 54.6%. (RTS 2007, Kraushaar 2012) Today, a mobile bus called "Distribus", operated for the social-work foundation "Accueil à Bas Seuil" offers first aid, information and exchange of sterile material for the described target group. There is a helping infrastructure in place for the drug users and even if they are described from the outside as "dangerous to everyone", mostly towards children, the groups generally remain in their own community and solve the problems on their own. (Zehr 2014; see also Naegler 2012 for nearly the same discussions in Hamburg.)

Still, the emptiness and wasted space of the place, which apparently fosters the open drug scene, turns the place into a blemish of urban planning. At the beginning of 2011, a proposal for a cultural re-animation of the Riponne including a new cultural center with a public library, has been announced by the minister of culture. (Cordonier 2011) When she left the local politics shortly after this last announcement, the project disappeared from the public attention and apparently nothing happened. Only a few months later, another local politician submitted a so called "Postulat", a parliamentary initiative, which asked the city for a sustainable solution of the South-East of the place, where the majority of the drug users was situated at this time. (Laurent 2011) As a direct answer, a few months later another Postulat asked for the protection of the Northern part of the place, as well. (Blanc 2011) Both initiatives were in the interest of several shop and cafe owners within this area. According to them, the hygienic conditions and security situation was intolerable and the repeating conflicts within the drug using groups kept customers away. As a last action, a petition with 1.435 signers, collected and submitted to the communal council by a pub owner at the Northern end of the place (Oberti 2011), turned the interest of the media to the Riponne and nearly forced the local politics to find an appropriate solution. (RTS 2011) During the upcoming year, nothing really concrete in direction to a cultural re-animation happened. The media attention was mostly turned to another socially difficult area, not far away from the Place de la Riponne, where the open drug scene, prostitution and homelessness clashed with the inhabitants of an economic better-off quarter. (Barata 2012) In autumn 2012 and spring 2013, media wrote about violent conflicts at the Riponne. (Détraz & Giroud 2012, Maspoli 2013) As Géraldine Morel argues, this growth of violence can be explained by the fact that the drug users and homeless people started to feel attacked themselves, because the number of present players, the rise of drug prices, and the constant tension between vendors and buyers increased. (Morel 2013) They felt that the space they could use for themselves became smaller and smaller.

It was in spring 2014, when the city of Lausanne announces several cultural actions, which took place during summer of the same year. (City of Lausanne 2014) Soon afterwards, mobile snack bars are installed at the Southern end of the place, one of the meeting points of the drug users. Then, in the context of the cultural intervention project "Lausanne Jardin 2014", flower checks at free disposal were installed at the Riponne as well as other places in the city which should have been watched after by the marginals (De Paola 2014). An ephemeral restaurant/bar, the "Café Grenette", was installed at the Northern end of the place, which offered, besides open and free sitting opportunities, cultural activities, such as concerts, lectures and activities for children. The concept included a mobile branch of the public library of Lausanne in a container offering books and open-air reading opportunities.[6] This project lasted the entire summer and ended in

[6]It has to be mentioned, that temporary or, rather connected to the topic of gentrification, "pop-up" branches of

October 2014. (Rohrer 2014)

Figure 3: The container of the branch of the public library at the Place de la Riponne.

Figure 4: A panorama of the public library container and the reading possibilities in front of it. The small box in the front contains information for free use.

All these activities were taken in order to permit a better mixture between the social vulnerable groups and better situated social groups, as the local politics claimed. (De Paola, Cachin 2014) They are a good example for how gentrification takes place. In Holms model, the Riponne was suited for gentrification during a period of more than ten years, meaning: in the first phase of gentrification. Even if it is not clear how this process started, probably the upgrading of the Flon into the third phase of gentrification around the year 2000 played an important role. The Riponne now seems entering the second phase of gentrification, where pioneers emerge in cities everyday picture, where young, hip and wealthy people come by and make use of their offers, whereas the social vulnerable groups such as the drug users and drug sellers are expelled slowly. In the case of the Riponne, a forced expulsion in order to repress the open drug scene is visible in the mobile snack bars at the Southern part of the place, the Café Grenette and the public library branch at the Northern end, and even in a more noticeable police involvement. (De Paola 2014, Cachin 2014)

It is a question of time, how the Riponne will develop and if the activities really continue into a full flown gentrification process. As described before, gentrification is a process, not an automatism. Until now, the case of the Riponne remains interesting, because the whole revitalization process is apparently targeted to make the open drug scene disappear, but until now it only led to a position shift of the scene within the place. The "problem" seems not resolved so far, but just relocated. But, at the same time, the Riponne became a new in-place in Lausanne, where new shops have opened in previously closed spaces. Moreover, different projects of renovation

public libraries are not an unusual concept in Switzerland. Especially in the summer, library branches in parks, public pools, and other public or "tourist" places are quite common.

Figure 5: A birds-eye view of the Café Grenette.

take place that could solve problems the city have not been perceived as "important enough" before.[7]

As always, these processes of gentrification lead to the question, for whom the space is reanimated. For everybody? For the city? For "the right folks"? Or for the former users? For future inhabitants? The open drug scene at the Riponne is only the most visible group of users and actual tenants which now live in a new in-place with rising rents and a new everyday culture. Is this good for them?

3 The role of public libraries in gentrification/revitalization

The text will now turn to the public libraries and their role in the described processes at the Flon and the Riponne.

First, the case of the Flon. As mentioned, this area can be described now as being in the third phase of gentrification. In 2012 a competition for architectural concepts for a "maison du livre et du patrimoine" was proclaimed by the city of Lausanne. (Ville de Lausanne, direction des travaux service d'architecture 2012) This house should be placed at the edge of the Flon, right where the last remainders of the second phase of gentrification can be found. If opened, it will be the host of a youth library, a public library, the city archives, and the historical comic collection of the city. As already mentioned, this building could be interpreted as the last brick in the redevelopment process of the Flon. This should not be underestimated. The city did not choose anything for this last stone, but a cultural institution like the library, which has a standing in the public as a place for everybody. But who is this "everybody"? The Flon now is a space for commercially oriented businesses and the people who are attracted by those businesses, which is not the whole population of the city.

Secondly, in the case of the Place de la Riponne, the temporary Café Grenette included a branch of the city's public libraries. This small branch was tailored to children and their parents. The collection contained mainly printed materials for children (picture books, first reader material, comics etc.). Although the library itself didn't announce anything on the concept and program of this specific branch, it can be observed that especially on weekends this offer was used quite strongly by young families. Again, this should not be underestimated. Once more, the library was chosen as part of a process that could be described as gentrification. Several other solutions would have been possible. It could be asked, again, for whom this library is useful and for whom not. Apparently the open drug scene, which is a part of the "Riponne culture", is not the target group, but a group that previously has not been part of this culture. Nonetheless, this should not be understood as a critique against the library itself. It is without a doubt an important task to provide some offers for children and their parents. It is just, as gentrification itself, a complex situation.

[7] DeSena (DeSena 2009) describes such a renovation project in Greenpoint, NY, were a rundown water park, that had been closed in the 1980s and was – despite engagements of community groups – left to rotten, had been renovated and opened again right at the time gentrification took of in Greenpoint, when working-class tenants left the neighborhood and middle-class people were moving in. She sees such projects, which take place right when gentrification starts – the beginning of the second phase in Holms model – as characteristic for such processes.

These two libraries are not a seldom exception. Any deep research into actual concepts of redevelopment of urban space provide examples for the use of libraries within. When cities and other stakeholders reflect on strategies to revitalize impoverished urban space, libraries turn up as parts of these strategies again and again. (Lees, Slater & Wyly 2008) There could be different reasons for this, but it could be assumed that the reputation of public libraries as cultural spaces open to all is an important reason. Again, the case of Riponne provides an example for this phenomenon. As mentioned before, already in 2011 a local politician formulate a strategy for the reanimation of the place and included a public library. (Cordonier 2011)

These two examples led to several open questions regarding the role of libraries within such urban revitalization processes. Some of the most striking ones are presented as follow, intended to be starting points for discussions within the library community.

- It is self-evident that libraries should have an idea about the processes that happen around them, such as the ones which have been described in this text as gentrification. Obviously, this topic has become important in recent societal debates for a good reason. The question is, if libraries are aware of their participation in this processes, no matter if in active or passive ways? Libraries are, like the pioneers in the second phase of Holms model, in a conflicting position: They are both part and victim of those changes.
- If libraries are always part of these changes, they could position themselves for or against them. The question is, if they should do so or not? Even if the answer is yes, it stands to discuss which position they should take. For instance: Should they foster urban development? Should they play an active role for the most socially vulnerable groups in the society? Or should they chose a middle ground? In any case, it should at least be discussed in an open way.
- It is a matter of fact, if the libraries chose to stay passive, they will be utilized anyhow by the cities or investors. As gentrification has become part of societal debates, the decision to stay passive could mean to act against the interests of a part of the population. Again, this is a complex question and libraries can not escape this situation.
- Should libraries be concerned with the effects of gentrification for the whole city? Usually, if one area becomes gentrified, another one impoverishes. People who leave a gentrified area, often don't leave the town, but look for a new space within city limits. Can libraries integrate these changes into their long-term strategies and if so, how?
- As gentrification is an important debate in the society, libraries also can define themselves as information centers. Being a democratic institution, libraries can present facts and different positions on this topic and become a place of public debate. This may not be reduced to the distribution of handouts of different interest groups, but can include, for instance, discussion rounds, workshops on the change of urban space around the library, or exhibitions. But should libraries do so?

4 Résumé: As cities change, libraries can not choose to stand aside

Public libraries can't escape the development of the cities they are in. In recent years, projects of revitalization of urban space have become re-interpreted as gentrification, whereas gentrification is perceive as a complex process, with negative and positive effects. On the one hand, gentrification, especially in the second phase, is seen as a rise of cultural possibilities and a new life for former impoverished areas. But on the other hand, gentrification became a word for displacement of poor and socially vulnerable groups by better-of people of the middle class and, in the third phase, a synonym for the commercialization of former interesting urban spaces. Furthermore, it is, in some way, a paradox process, because the people who seem to initiate it usually don't want to cause the negative effects mentioned above.

Here Lausannes situation and two of its neighborhoods have been used to discuss this process in light of the involvement of public libraries. Because the concept of gentrification is apparently not yet a topic of discussion in the library community, it took a long introduction for the core subject of the text. This is common for topics which arise as new. Anyhow, the text also made it clear that libraries are part of this process, no matter what. Therefore this article can be seen as a first contribution to a necessary discussion, beyond the case of Switzerland, as gentrification today is a process observed in all of the countries of the Global North. (Less, Slater & Wyly 2008)

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