

# “Bibliodiversity Indicators” – abstracts in English

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***How should cultural diversity be measured? An application using the French publishing industry*** – by Françoise Benhamou and Stéphanie Peltier, economists (France)

Despite the lack of a clear definition of the concept, “cultural diversity” has remained a core issue for more than a decade (WTO, UNESCO, etc.). The aim of this paper is to begin to fill this gap. We argue that cultural diversity is a multidimensional concept and that accurate metrics must rely on three criteria: variety, balance and disparity. We also stress that supplied and consumed diversity have to be distinguished. We apply this set of multiple measures of diversity to publishing data for France over the period 1990–2003. Our main result is that the situation of the publishing industry in terms of cultural diversity is highly dependent on the dimension considered. Hence, diversity increases when variety is the sole consideration, whereas taking balance or disparity into account leads to the opposite conclusion. This issue raises a series of questions about the use of diversity measures in a policy debate concerned with furthering cultural diversity.

***Bibliodiversity and its Indicators, Foundation, and Outlook*** – By Luc Pinhas, Associate Professor and Co-Director of the Master’s Degree Program in Book Marketing at the University of Paris 13 (France)

The term “bibliodiversity” appears to have emerged toward the close of the 1990s in the world of independent Spanish-language publishing. However, it was the International Alliance of Independent Publishers who, starting in 2002, worked to endow the term with intellectual content corresponding to the notion of biodiversity. Since then, the term has spread rapidly and is now widely recognized, including in institutional settings. Its use was fostered by a fringe of small- to mid-sized publishers, from both the global south and the global north, who – by virtue of their independence – asserted their freedom to create. Acting collectively, they mean to affirm their role in the face of trends toward consolidation and internationalization caused by economic globalization and to draw the attention of public authorities to the uniqueness of cultural goods, which has been called into question by the World Trade Organization. In November of 2005, UNESCO did adopt a “Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions”, but this convention lacks a binding mechanism; as such, the pressure of cultural stakeholders remains essential. Furthermore, the extended definition of culture proposed by UNESCO does not focus on the specific challenges posed by mass culture or by the monopoly on mass culture of a small group of industrial actors who dominate the mechanisms of dissemination and distribution. At the present time, little work has been done on possible indicators of bibliodiversity, with the exception of a valuable study conducted in the field of French publishing by Françoise Benhamou and Stéphanie Peltier. It draws its methodology from research performed in the field of biodiversity and adapts three major properties of diversity to the context of books: variety, balance, and disparity, while maintaining a fundamental distinction between “available diversity” and “consumed diversity”. Nonetheless, this approach remains interdependent on the available statistical studies and calls for further study, notably by going beyond published titles and translated languages and taking into account publishing structures.

***Bibliodiversity: Indicators and Debate*** – By Stella Puente, cultural industries consultant and Post-Graduate Director of Cultural Industries Management at the University Tres de Febrero (Argentina)

The notion of cultural diversity, and its progression over time, constitute the central issue in the present connection between a mostly-industrial type of cultural production and its inability to represent diverse voices, actors, opinions, and regions, along with everything that this implies about the construction of social imaginaries. The fact that this concept emerged during the GATT round and then found sponsorship among international bodies illustrates the influence that national, regional, and global policies have on its development. Within this framework, we discover actors who produce and disseminate cultural content in market conditions dominated by large conglomerates; to say the least, these conditions pose great difficulties. It is at this point where the State, as an actor assuming the responsibility of market equalizer, plays a central role. As a condition for its existence, the notion of bibliodiversity presupposes the existence of a network of small stakeholders, not to mention other indicators that could provide a more complete overview of the subject.

Using a study methodology based on a survey of secondary information and statistical sources, the article focuses on the consolidation processes affecting the publishing industry and its many variations. Finally, employing a methodology previously used to measure diversity in the film industry, a series of indicators has been proposed that can be applied to the creation of a diversity index in the book industry.

***The Center for Books and Reading in Poitou-Charentes, a tool for bibliodiversity*** – By Sylviane Sambor, Director of the Center for Books and Reading in Poitou-Charentes (France)

The author reveals how the Center for Books and Reading in Poitou-Charentes, a public regional establishment, has become a veritable tool for the promotion and defense of bibliodiversity. In this context, bibliodiversity is understood to refer to the production and widespread distribution of those creations in the form of books. The notion of bibliodiversity depends not only on the diversity of these creations, but also on their extensive distribution and their critical reception. Sylviane Sambor goes on to emphasize the need for regulation, and therefore for a public intervention in the cultural sector, to ensure the sustainability of production and flow of sundry knowledge and imaginaries in a commercial context. Accordingly, the Center is endowed with a capacity for concrete action on behalf of the stance it has adopted: bibliodiversity. A book coordinator has been specifically charged with promoting local authors, supporting the professionalization of regional book salons, and providing high-quality cultural offerings throughout the area. In addition, a book promotion coordinator is overseeing the establishment of a bookstore support policy – viewed as a key component of the preservation of bibliodiversity. In fact, the region of Poitou-Charentes has established a seal of approval program for high-quality bookstores. This seal of approval is accompanied by a Charter that acts as both a symbolic and contractual agreement. When accompanied by acceptance of the Charter's provisions, this seal of approval opens the door to grants that address not only the investments that a business requires, but also business operations. From 2007 to 2010, 15 bookstores were awarded the seal of approval, are signatories of the Charter, and have received a total of € 600,000 worth of grants. In addition to its mediation capacity and the program targeting bookstores, the Center for Books and Reading organizes a large annual event that is planned and coordinated with all the local literary stakeholders. This coordination promotes community spirit and greater synergy at the local level – essential components of bibliodiversity. Finally, in this article Sylviane Sambor emphasizes the

importance of shielding (at least partially) those establishments that perform cultural transmission activities from the profit-making sector and short-term diktats. According to the author, the efficacy of those programs that permit this can not be measured, particularly quantitatively. Quite the opposite: the assessment should be qualitative and concern long-term activity.

***Measuring Diversity: Toward the Development of a Bibliodiversity Index*** – By Daniela Allerbon, editor and cultural coordinator (Argentina)

In use for the past few years, the term bibliodiversity is understood to refer to the diversity of publishing supply, thereby guiding the efforts of various bodies to foster this diversity. Despite this, no measurement of bibliodiversity has yet been performed. This is due in part to the recent nature of the term and to the subsequent difficulty defining it. To address this shortcoming, this article, with the creation of a “Bibliodiversity Index”, offers a preliminary approximation that would assign a value to the various degrees of association between different aspects of the book market. This measurement presupposes a working definition of bibliodiversity. Bibliodiversity will be defined not only in terms of the quantity and thematic variety of titles circulating in a given country via commercial channels, but also in relation to the extent to which various book market actors are in equilibrium and degree to which the book supply is accessible to consumers. Throughout the document, the choice of each variable in both the production and marketing sectors is based on what comprises the index, namely: distribution of titles by publisher, number of local author and topic titles from foreign-held publishers over the total number of titles from foreign-held publishers, thematic variety in the titles, participation in the market by foreign-held publishers, number of titles published per one-hundred thousand inhabitants, number of inhabitants per bookstore, and number of chain bookstores over total bookstores.

A range of statistical tools was used, including the Gini Coefficient, the Shannon Index, and the weighting of each of the variables mentioned. We hope that the use of this index sheds light on future discussions concerning bibliodiversity and represents a step toward the development and evaluation of public and private book-related policies.

***Bibliopoverty or Bibliodiversity: from a Paper Medium to the Digital Native*** – By Alejandro Zenker, Director General of Solar and Ediciones del Ermitaño (Mexico)

Drawing from his studies, analysis, and musings, the author – a scholar, pioneer in the use of digital printing technology in Mexico, and analyst of over 15 years of the effect of new technologies on the publishing industry and the transformation of the reader and reading – suggests that the issue of bibliodiversity can be approached from many different angles: as a rallying point for the independent publishers that exist in an environment dominated by large publishers, or as a human right that we are close to realizing thanks to new technologies. This article outlines, in broad strokes, how we got to the point where we are and where the book industry in general and independent publishers in particular are heading, with special attention paid to the central participant: the reader, and therefore, reading. The transition from bibliopoverty to bibliodiversity presupposes the universal adoption of the electronic book and its derivatives. But this alone is not sufficient: one must also understand that the reader has been transformed into a member of this new generation of “digital natives” – on whose shoulders it falls to change the world.

***Indicators of Bibliodiversity: A multiversalist's matrix*** – By Dr Susan Hawthorne, Director of Spinifex Press, Adjunct Professor, Department of Humanities School of Arts & Social Sciences, James Cook University (Australia)

The research focus for this essay is the theoretical and practical basis of bibliodiversity among independent publishers. The theoretical foundations are based on research developed ten years ago while the author undertaking her PhD. Central themes of the research were biodiversity, cultural diversity and epistemological multiversity. The work drew an analogy between agricultural monocultures of factory farming and intellectual monocultures formed by dominant social constructions. Susan Hawthorne contested the idea of a single universalist knowledge by proposing instead a wild politics based on resistance to domination, globalisation and a one-size-fits all decontextualized approach.

As Maria Mies says, in order to change a thing, you need to experience it first. Working as a publisher has given Susan Hawthorne plenty of scope and opportunity to test her ideas and to discover how applicable they are in the light of the concept of bibliodiversity. She found that the concept of bibliodiversity fitted easily into her schema of epistemological multiversity, discovering along the way that writers, publishers and educators at the margins of the dominant discourse were simultaneously coming up with similar ideas in South America (bibliodiversity), India (monocultures of the mind), Africa (multiversity), Australia (multiversity and wild politics). Not only that, but that they provided a way to critique a vast array of institutional dominations including agriculture, production, pornography and heterosexuality. Using feminist and anti-racist theoretical tools alongside insights from ecology, pluralistic viewpoints can be put without falling into a conservative, anything-goes, cultural relativist post-modernism.

In the precursor to her conclusions, the author outlines principles of bibliodiversity, drawing out particular systems of thinking and action in order to make bibliodiversity a genuine outcome. In her second conclusion, she names a number of key areas in which active and conscious resistance is necessary in order to create the social change that is at the root of the idea of bibliodiversity.

***Digital Challenges to Bibliodiversity*** – By Helge Rønning, Professor, and Tore Slaatta, Professor, Dr., Department of media and communication, University of Oslo (Norway)

As the book becomes harder to define as a physical object, power relations, and cultural-industrial strategies and policy options are rapidly changing. This article reports from recent research on trends in international publishing based on qualitative management interviews, document analyses and systematic readings of existing research literature. Seen from a cultural-industrial critical perspective, the digital challenge to authors, publishers and distributors of literature today raises fundamental questions concerning international cultural politics. Concerning bibliodiversity, one particularly important question is whether the industry will manage in the future to maintain its cultural obligations to society in the face of increasing pressures from globalisation and oligarchic market structures. At the moment, competition is a mixed battle for market positions, technological platforms and vertical control over the distribution chain. The national library institutions seem to be caught in the battle, and search for open access solutions to avoid lock-in effects and unilateral dependencies on international oligarchies in academic and higher education publishing. But without support from political institutions and the state through active national or regional cultural policies, the national libraries' roles as public institutions are increasingly being challenged. An analysis of the debate on the Google Agreement, highlights the differences between U.S and European legal traditions regarding market regulation and the role of the state in cultural policies.