

## The periphery of independent bookshops in the face of the centralisation of the Mexican publishing industry.

La periferia de las librerías independientes  
ante la centralización de la industria editorial mexicana.

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### Abstract:

Based on a general overview of the centralisation of the publishing industry in Mexico in the private and bookshop sector, this article presents an analysis of the current situation in which independent bookshops operate as a form of resistance to market priorities and demands. Based on interviews with booksellers from El Traspatio (Morelia) and La Cosecha (San Cristóbal de las Casas), the article seeks to contribute to the construction of a written archive that demonstrates the main challenges they face as a project on the periphery of the country, as well as the social spaces they have strengthened in their bookshops through years of constant work. It concludes that the current strategies of independent book agents are a crucial part of the resistance to the system, such as the creation of alliances between booksellers and publishers, the organisation of meetings and festivals on literary themes that integrate current and urgent discussions, as well as a common commitment to bibliodiversity that mitigates the homogenisation of publishing catalogues.

**Keywords:** Cultural centralisation. Cultural homogenisation. Independent bookshops. Independent publishing. Bibliodiversity. Periphery.

### Resumen:

A partir de una aproximación general a la centralización de la industria editorial en México en el sector privado y librero, este artículo presenta un análisis del estado actual en el que operan las librerías independientes como resistencia a las prioridades y exigencias del mercado. Gracias al resultado de las entrevistas a las librerías de El Traspatio (Morelia) y La Cosecha (San Cristóbal de las Casas), se busca contribuir a la construcción de un acervo escrito que demuestre los principales retos que enfrentan como proyecto en la periferia del país, así como los espacios sociales que fortalecieron en sus librerías a través de años de trabajo constante. Se concluye que las estrategias actuales de los agentes independientes del libro son una parte crucial de la resistencia al sistema, como la creación de alianzas entre libreros y editores, el funcionamiento de encuentros y festivales bajo alguna temática literaria que integre discusiones actuales y urgentes, así como la apuesta en común por la bibliodiversidad que mitiga la homogeneización de catálogos editoriales.

**Palabras clave:** Centralización cultural. Homogeneización cultural. Librerías independientes. Edición independiente. Bibliodiversidad. Periferia.

### Introduction

Bookshops are among the agents within the publishing ecosystem that enable the effective distribution of all types of editorial material throughout the country. According to the Cámara Nacional de la Industria Editorial Mexicana in the report *Indicators of the Private Publishing Sector in Mexico 2023–2024* (2024), bookshops constitute the principal channel for book

commercialisation, accounting for 29% of total revenue from copies sold and 36% of accumulated turnover nationwide. Among these are chain bookshops, recognised for their wider reach and presence across multiple cities in Mexico due to their network of branches. In such establishments, readers may access a relatively homogeneous catalogue, including high-selling titles typically produced by transnational publishing houses such as Penguin Random House and Grupo Planeta, whose print runs range between 11,000 and 12,000 copies.

On the one hand, the Fondo de Cultura Económica is currently the bookshop network with the largest presence in the country. Founded in 1934 through the initiative of Daniel Cosío Villegas, it was originally established as a publishing house and has been recognised for publishing prestigious authors across diverse thematic areas, including economics, political science, law, and literature. During the directorship of Arnaldo Orfila Reynal (1948–1965), the first branch was opened in Mexico City (Canal Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2019). At present, the institution operates 117 bookshops in Mexico and 12 internationally, located in Argentina, Colombia, Spain, Ecuador, Peru, the United States, Chile, and Guatemala.

On the other hand, this category also includes Librerías Gandhi, which operates 44 branches—21 in Mexico City and 23 across the rest of the country. Likewise, Librerías Porrúa has more than 60 outlets nationwide. Librerías Gonvill is also present in the Mexican territory with 31 bookshops distributed between the central region and other parts of the country. According to the *Study of the Publishing Sector in Mexico* (2020), other bookshops with fewer branches but significant sales figures include El Sótano (11 branches across Mexico City, the State of Mexico, Jalisco, Querétaro, and Guanajuato), La Casa del Libro (13 branches in Mexico City and the State of Mexico), and El Péndulo (7 branches in Mexico City) (ProChile, 2020).

It is important to note that more than 30% of all establishments are located in the capital of the country, followed by Jalisco and the State of Mexico. The remaining cities are distributed according to their proximity to Mexico City, as shorter distances between purchase and distribution processes tend to increase profitability and promotional opportunities for books. For the purposes of this study, the concept of centralisation will be understood as a system characterised by the presence of a single central organ where cultural activity operates (Méndez, 1971). This allows for an illustration of the general panorama of the publishing industry, given the concentration of publishing houses and bookshops operating in Mexico City as the country's central node. Conversely, the periphery will be understood as the external zone situated at a distance from the central urban structure (Arteaga, 2005), where, in comparison with metropolitan or capital areas, spaces face dependency on dominant regions and infrastructural deficiencies.

The objective of this article is to analyse the general panorama of centralisation within the Mexican private publishing industry, as well as the number and types of bookshops operating from the capital, in order to contrast this with the rest of the states. Based on this approach, qualitative results derived from individual interviews conducted with independent booksellers from El Traspatio (Morelia) and La Cosecha (San Cristóbal de las Casas) will be presented, with the aim of identifying

the configuration of their bookshops, their understanding of independence, and the relevance of the bookselling profession. These bookshops were selected because they are located outside the capital—thus within the periphery—and maintain a strong community presence in their respective territories. Furthermore, examples of cultural management projects within the independent context will be discussed as community-based strategies within the book ecosystem in response to cultural centralisation.

### The Configuration of Independence in Bookshops

In the article *The Bookshop: Between Literary Narrative and Historical Traces* (2019), Edgar García offers a concise yet detailed overview of the transformation of bookshops in Mexico. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the introduction of Spanish publishing houses into the Mexican publishing economy led several editors to adopt bookselling practices. One example is the project developed by Porrúa and Robledo. As book distribution networks expanded, agents required spaces for the purchase and dissemination of books. With the introduction of new models of bookshops, distinctions began to emerge: “From this moment onwards—at least in Mexico—there was a differentiation between new and second-hand bookshops, marked by the temporality of the product, its preservation, and its demand” (García, 2019, p. 75).

In this way, readers gained access to different types of bookshops according to their needs, under the guidance of the bookseller. At that time, the semantic conceptualisation of a bookshop did not differ from being a space dedicated solely to the sale of books. Consequently, a bookseller was understood as someone who sold books—whether new or second-hand—in a space expressly devoted to this purpose, ensured the ‘moral’ quality of the offering, and was recognised as knowledgeable about the diverse editorial production (García, 2019, p. 76).

Since the mid-1980s, the book production chain has been transformed by major production trends that are also reflected in contemporary reading practices. The book market gradually evolved into a process of centralisation, accompanied by the acquisition of publishing houses by transnational capital, which significantly altered the conception of both publishing houses and bookshops (González, 2019). Within this context—necessary for the dissemination and discussion of written culture—projects incorporating the term “independent” into their names have emerged.

At present, new bookshop initiatives can be found in the market, identified by their booksellers as independent, in response to the need to position projects that move away from the massification of books and instead promote bibliodiversity within their catalogues. Examples include El Traspatio (Morelia), Impronta (Guadalajara), La Cosecha (San Cristóbal de las Casas), La Pessoa (Querétaro), and Polilla (Mexico City), among others.

Each bookshop reflects the ideals of a bookseller committed to cultural expression and diversity; therefore, although it is possible to distinguish between independent and non-independent bookshops, each possesses a distinct nature. According

to Hernández López (2021), in *Map of Bookshops in Mexico according to the Cultural Information System of the Government of Mexico*, independent bookshops are not only the result of a bookseller's deep passion for books but also spaces that foster the creation of audiences and networks around books and bibliodiversity, promoting independent publishers and emerging writers.

For Roger Chartier (2007), in *Bookshops and Booksellers: The History of a Profession and Contemporary Challenges*, certain bookshops began to transcend mass sales and the exclusive promotion of well-established authors. While large-scale models succeeded within specific segments of the publishing market, smaller bookshops responded to emerging needs by proposing new approaches within the publishing universe. These include the incorporation of emerging writers and lesser-known editorial projects as strategies to engage new or potential readers.

However, labelling small-scale projects as independent serves as an initial framework to distinguish them from large transnational publishing conglomerates, suggesting that they operate from an alternative position within the market. Nevertheless, as López and Malumián (2016) argue in *Independents—Independent from What?*, no entity can be entirely independent from the market, as such detachment would render it economically unviable. In the case of publishing, preferences and decisions are shaped according to a target audience or niche, making it difficult to establish a single definition of independence. The concept is therefore situated amid exceptions and contradictions.

This article does not aim to define the term “independent” in the context of Mexican bookshops within the contemporary book ecosystem. Attempting to do so would reduce a complex expression, political stance, and multifaceted response to the current discourse of independent booksellers. Instead, the article contrasts the responses of booksellers based on their experiences and interests, in order to analyse similarities and differences and enrich the existing body of knowledge on independent Mexican bookshops.

The formation of communities, while expressed uniquely at a local level, also coexists with global communities, thereby enriching the broader panorama through the sharing of concerns and reflections on the positioning of independent bookshops and the role of booksellers. As the bookseller Arias (2019) notes: “I believe that a bookshop is a metaphor for diversity, capturing what is permanent within change, and in the case of bookshops, this is precisely people: people who ask questions and seek answers [...]” (p. 24). The following section presents the current state of the Mexican publishing industry within which independent bookshops are situated.

## The Contextualisation of the Publishing Industry in Mexico

The Mexican publishing market is divided into two principal sectors: government and private. According to the *Study of the Publishing Sector in Mexico* (2020), the three main sales channels within the private sector are government institutions,

bookshops, and schools. An illustrative example occurred in 2018, when approximately 200 million copies were produced through the relationship between private-sector agents and the Comisión Nacional de Libros de Textos Gratuitos, demonstrating that the government functions both as publisher and purchaser (ProChile, 2020).

Within the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the cultural sector, ten general areas of production are included, among which books, printing, and the press are prominent. According to the Cámara Nacional de la Industria Editorial Mexicana (2023) in *The Weight of the Book in the Mexican Cultural Industry*, the publishing sector represents 2.4% of total GDP, amounting to 17 billion pesos. In the specific area of books, GDP stands at 4.694 billion pesos. These figures reflect a decline, as in 2017 the GDP for books reached 6.513 billion pesos. During this period of continuous reductions, 2020 recorded the most significant decrease, with a contraction of 29.3%.

In recent decades, the publishing sector has undergone significant transformations in both the production and distribution of books, as well as in the total number of publishing houses operating nationwide, particularly as a result of the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, 21 publishing houses suspended their activities out of a total of 277 private-sector publishers. Of the remaining 206 publishers, all reported growth in commercialisation—0.31% in copies sold and 7.6% in revenue. However, 38% of the total number of copies sold corresponded to editions purchased by the government (Canal Cámara Nacional de la Industria Editorial Mexicana, 2021).

Within the Latin American context, Mexico is the country with the highest level of publishing production, followed by Argentina and Colombia, and, at a greater distance, Peru, Uruguay, and Chile. Globally, Mexico ranks eleventh in the publishing market. According to the Economic and Commercial Office of the Embassy of Spain (2022), the country's cultural GDP reached 815.902 billion pesos, of which 24.968 billion correspond to the publishing sector. Compared to 2021, these figures represent an increase of 1.6%, despite the inactivity of certain agents during the pandemic period. At the global level, however, the Mexican publishing sector cannot be directly compared with that of other countries in terms of production and export figures. In Spain alone, book production and sales significantly exceed those of Latin America, even if the figures of the 21 countries that contribute substantially to the cultural GDP of the region were combined.

Within the general panorama of the industry, and according to the Government of Mexico (n.d.), there are currently 377 active publishing houses in the country, divided between the public and private sectors, which include large conglomerates, university presses, and independent publishers. The Cámara Nacional de la Industria Editorial Mexicana (2024) reported that in 2023 there were 233 companies dedicated to book production within the private sector. Likewise, according to Foreign Trade Consultancy and the Commercial Office of Chile (2020), the past decade has witnessed growth in the number of independent publishing houses that now constitute a significant proportion of the sector. This trend presents challenges in

terms of production models and market standardisation, given that independent projects face constraints in reach, financial capacity, and distribution that conventional publishing houses do not encounter—or at least not to the same extent.

It is important to note that more than 72% of all publishing houses are located in Mexico City, as illustrated in Figure 1. Among the states that follow—at a considerable distance from the capital—are Jalisco with 21 publishing houses, the State of Mexico with 18, and Puebla with 9.

**Figure 1.** National data on publishing houses: distribution of resources by scope.



**Source:** Adapted from the Secretaría de Cultura (n.d.).

**Note:** The count of publishing houses includes both the public and private editorial systems. Nevertheless, the highest percentage remains concentrated in Mexico City.

The total number of publishing houses listed does not include emerging independent editorial projects; therefore, the data provide only a general overview based on those entities that already have an established trajectory within the market. In this sense, it would be erroneous to assume that there is no form of local publishing production in the eight remaining states, or that the figures presented for other states are exhaustive or definitive. Future research should undertake the task of mapping those editorial projects that are not yet reflected in national cultural databases, in order to better represent the current recovery and diversity of bibliodiversity in the publishing landscape.

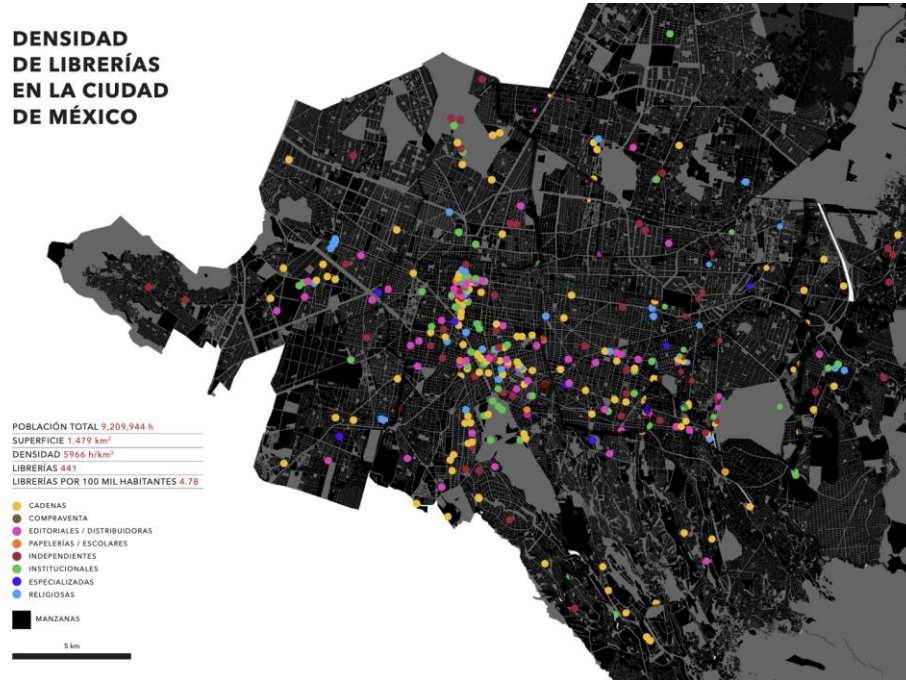
## Cultural Centralisation of Bookshops in Mexico City

As a result of cultural centralisation, Mexico City currently hosts the largest number of independent bookshops, due to the convergence of other sectors within the book world, including publishing houses, distributors, writers, artists, workshops, and printing centres. Within the territorial and cartographic diagnosis of bookshops conducted by Hernández López (2021), a specific section was dedicated exclusively to Mexico City. Owing to its population density and the concentration of cultural industries across many areas of the city, the number of bookshops it accommodates is incomparable to that of other cities in the country.

Hernández López (2021) identifies several factors that facilitate and sustain the circulation of books and the viability of bookshops, including political and economic centralisation, continuous migratory movements, and employment opportunities. According to the Cultural Information System of the Government of Mexico (n.d.), 177 bookshops are concentrated in the Cuauhtémoc borough alone. Despite this favourable context for many businesses, independent bookshops face significantly greater challenges compared to chain bookshops, particularly in terms of purchasing power, the sale of high-circulation titles, and the promotion and distribution of their catalogues, among other factors. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, many bookshops were forced to close: “particularly within the independent sector, the most vulnerable segment of the book chain” (Hernández, 2021, p. 71).

Figure 2 illustrates the number of bookshops distributed across the city. The total number amounts to 441 establishments, which are categorised into chain bookshops (the majority), second-hand and resale shops, publishing and distribution outlets, stationery and school supply shops, independent bookshops, institutional bookshops, specialised bookshops, and religious bookshops. There are 4.78 bookshops per 100,000 inhabitants.

Figure 2. Density of Bookshops in Mexico City (2021)

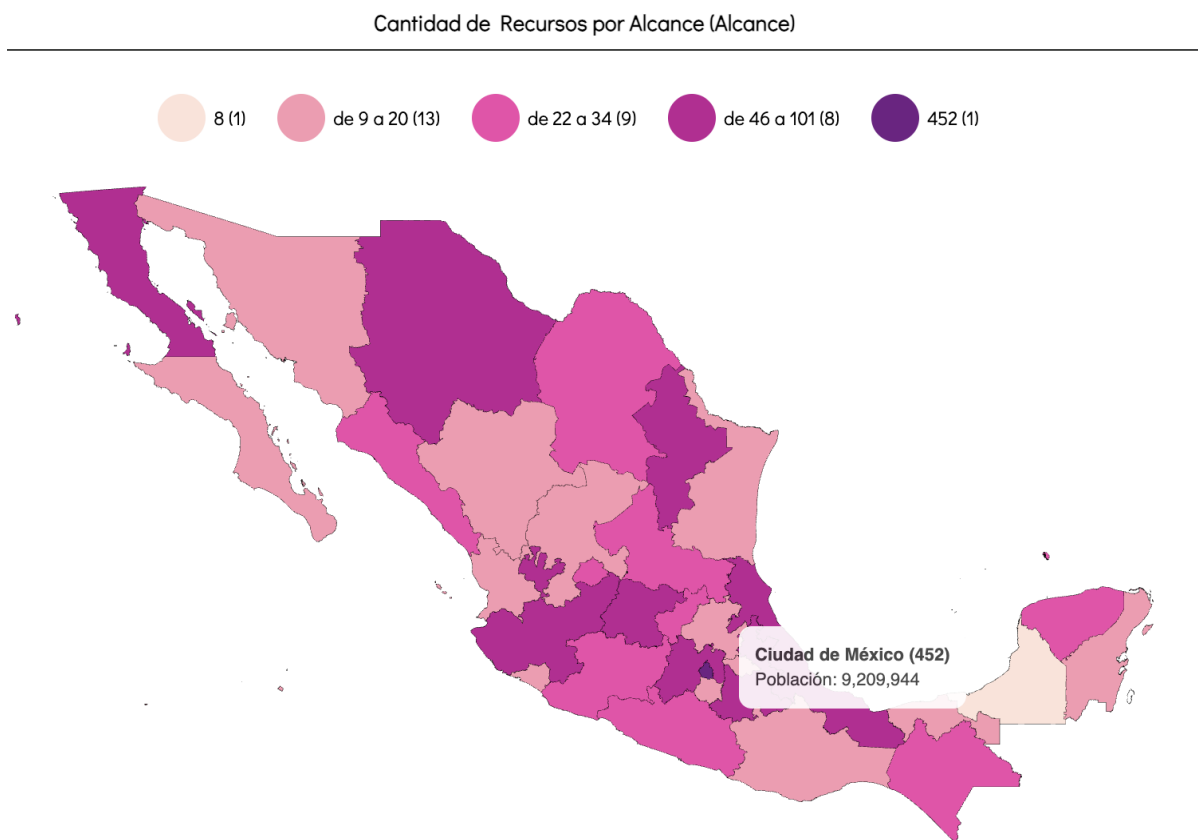


Source: Adapted from Hernández López (2021, pp. 72–73).

**Note:** The map represents all categories of bookshops described in the legend. For the purposes of counting and location, only those with geolocation data were considered. The red markers indicate independent bookshops.

At present, it is possible to compare the maps produced by Hernández López with updated data from the Cultural Information System (2025). In Mexico City, there are 452 bookshops (see Figure 3), while eight states follow with a range of 46 to 101 bookshops, nine states with 22 to 34, thirteen states with 9 to 20, and, finally, eight states with only one bookshop. It will be essential to revisit the updated data from the system in order to classify the different types of bookshops and to verify how many of these establishments remain active in the market, as well as to identify those that may have been replaced due to closures.

Figure 3. National data on bookshops: distribution of resources by scope.



Source: Adapted from the Government of Mexico (n.d.).

**Note:** The system does not classify bookshops on the map according to their modes of operation or identity within the publishing market. However, the database provides access to a complete list of bookshops, which enables such classification to be carried out.

The following section revisits the maps produced by Hernández López (2021), which offer an approximation of the different types of bookshops according to selected state capitals. As shown in Figure 4, in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area it is possible to observe a smaller number of bookshops in comparison with Mexico City. Nevertheless, it is the second city in the country with the highest number of bookshops (p. 24). There are 1.57 bookshops per 100,000 inhabitants in the area, with a total of 84 establishments encompassing the same classifications.



Figure 5 Density of Bookshops in Morelia (2021)



Source: Adapted from Hernández López (2021, pp. 30–31).

Note: As of 2021, there are only four independent bookshops in Morelia.

Figure 6. Density of Bookshops in Tuxtla Gutiérrez (2021)



Source: Adapted from Hernández López (2021, pp. 30–31).

Note: As of 2021, Tuxtla Gutiérrez has a total of 12 bookshops, none of which are independent.

Although these graphics were derived from the Cultural Information System in 2021, it is important to consider the potential changes these cities may have experienced over the past four years, such as the closure of certain bookshops or the emergence of new ones in Michoacán and Chiapas, as well as in other states. Since the purpose of this article is not to provide a current diagnosis of these cities, future research will need to undertake a comparative analysis using updated data verified by booksellers and shop managers themselves.

It is essential to highlight the proportional difference in the number of bookshops per inhabitant in Mexico City compared to the rest of the states. Owing to the high concentration of publishing practices in the country, it may be inferred that citizens in the capital enjoy a more favourable context in terms of accessibility and editorial diversity. In contrast, within the territorial context illustrated in Figures 5 and 6, reading communities located in peripheral areas face greater challenges in accessing bookshops due to factors such as travel time, distance, work or school schedules, and even manifestations of violence within their territories. Consequently, the position of an independent bookshop outside Mexico City entails broader social, political, and symbolic implications, and its operation must prioritise strategies that strengthen community ties.

## El Traspatio and La Cosecha: Independent Bookshops Beyond Centralisation

El Traspatio bookshop was not initially conceived as a bookshop project. In an interview with its founder, Mara Bautista explains that its origins lie in the planning and organisation of the Meeting of Independent Editors and Publishing Houses in 2014. Traspatio emerged as a consequence of what takes place behind the book. Through funding from FONCA, a space was created for discussing collection practices and processes such as curation, distribution, and translation (M. Bautista, personal communication, 8 April 2025). In 2016, the bookshop was formally established with the aim of sustaining the bibliodiversity gathered in Morelia throughout the year. At Mara's request, several publishers entrusted her with copies to be sold locally, and thus the bookshop began with just three boxes of books.

Today, the notion of independence is often associated with resistance to capitalism and neoliberalism, given the difficulty of existing outside such systems. For Mara, independence is understood as the capacity of the Traspatio team to make their own decisions: what to sell, how to sell it, whom to invite, and how to use their space. Independence is not only reflected in the bookshop's operations but also in the publishers it collaborates with, which contribute to its symbolic value: "We are convinced that the independent publishers we work with also hold a political stance [...] they do not run independent presses to buy a mansion, but because they want to contribute to the world from wherever they are" (M. Bautista, personal communication, 8 April 2025).

The collective effort of these actors shapes what El Traspatio understands as bibliodiversity: a form of community-based work grounded in recognition, support, and collaboration among independent projects within the book ecosystem. This collective dynamic distances the independent bookshop from cultural hegemony.

Current challenges for the bookshop are reflected in the difficulties of operating outside Mexico City, as well as in the effort required to build a community around independent publishers. While commercially successful titles may promise higher sales, Mara emphasises that part of the bookshop's identity lies in deliberately choosing not to prioritise them in order to make room for books aligned with its core values: "[...] we are so small that we have to think very carefully about which books we give space to" (M. Bautista, personal communication, 8 April 2025).

When asked to imagine potential government interventions to improve the conditions of independent bookshops, Mara expresses scepticism, pointing to a lack of genuine interest in books and cultural projects: "It seems to me the result of enormous ignorance. I do not expect any public policy support for bookshops. Rather, as long as they do not interfere, we are fine." Instead, she emphasises the importance of alliances among bookshops and ongoing mutual support: "[...] books are not made alone; they require a team. It is important for that team to be well organised" (M. Bautista, personal communication, 8 April 2025).

## La Cosecha

La Cosecha is an independent bookshop located in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, founded in 2016 by a pair of friends who initially ran an independent publishing project. The bookshop operates under a cooperative model, where planning and decision-making are conducted horizontally. As Francesca Gargallo explains: “[...] from day one we formed ourselves as a collective and sought to organise work horizontally and non-hierarchically [...]” (F. Gargallo, personal communication, 8 April 2025).

The bookshop’s catalogue reflects the personal libraries of those involved in the project, making its collection an extension of shared reading practices. One of its primary challenges lies not in its independent stance but in its location within the periphery: “[...] everything related to culture in Mexico is highly centralised [...] it all gravitates around Mexico City, and to some extent Guadalajara due to the book fair” (F. Gargallo, personal communication, 8 April 2025).

Logistical difficulties significantly affect operations, as transportation costs for acquiring and returning books are considerably higher. Additionally, author visits—common in central regions—are rare; in nine years, only one publisher has covered travel expenses for a book presentation. Gargallo further highlights structural inequalities: “[...] there is an issue of racism and classism that permeates the publishing world, from what is published to who is published and their reach [...]” (F. Gargallo, personal communication, 8 April 2025).

Promoting local authors constitutes a key distinguishing feature of La Cosecha. Supporting regional literary production reinforces bibliodiversity and responds to the centralisation of authors based in major cities. However, this effort also faces challenges due to low reading rates in Chiapas.

Although state involvement through public policy—such as the *Ley de Fomento para la Lectura y el Libro*—is crucial, Gargallo underscores a general lack of institutional interest. In contrast, strong support networks exist among independent booksellers, both locally and nationally, particularly in peripheral regions. These networks foster collaboration, dialogue, and shared strategies, exemplified by initiatives such as the *Liga de Librerías Feministas*, of which both Mara and Francesca are members.

## Projects Led by Independent Editors and Booksellers

### *Pasaporte Colectivo Poetry Festival*

Much of the independent publishing sector in Mexico is sustained through close collaboration and mutual support among similar projects. In response to industry challenges, editors have developed strategic alliances and maintained continuous dialogue with writers and booksellers. Many sell directly to readers via digital platforms, although their works are commonly distributed through independent bookshops.

One example is the Pasaporte Colectivo Poetry Festival, organised by the independent publishing house Palíndroma (Querétaro). This event brings together contemporary poets working across diverse themes and poetic traditions. The most recent edition, held from 22 to 24 August, honoured the Querétaro poet Luis Alberto Arellano and featured 37 poets, including Elisa Díaz Castelo, Yol Segura, Iveth Luna Flores, and Xitlalitl Rodríguez Mendoza (Palíndroma, 2024). Activities took place at the independent bookshop La Pessoa.

This event exemplifies the multifaceted role of independent editors, who engage not only in publishing but also in cultural management and community-building initiatives. Both editors and booksellers are increasingly involved in cultural programming, highlighting the need to recognise such projects at a national level.

### **Agua Viva: A Virtual Cultural Festival Managed by Independent Booksellers**

The Agua Viva Festival is organised by three independent bookshops: El Traspatio (Morelia), La Cosecha (San Cristóbal de las Casas), and El Entusiasmo Libros (Veracruz). This self-managed, annual, and virtual festival focuses on contemporary editorial production by women and queer individuals. Through thematic programming and interactive activities, the festival convenes participants over three days to strengthen reading communities and foster dialogue around contemporary writing.

The 2025 edition features authors and editors such as Elisa Díaz Castelo, Libia Brenda, Natalia Toledo, Socorro Venegas, and Dhalia de la Cerda (Guerrero, 2025). Through such initiatives, readers gain access to inclusive cultural spaces that promote critical thinking, writing, and collective reading practices.

Agua Viva represents a long-term project rooted in the vision of booksellers committed to literature, editorial work, and urgent thematic concerns. At the same time, it underscores the importance of reader engagement in sustaining such initiatives through participation and consumption.

### **Cultural Homogenisation of Editorial Catalogues in Bookshops: The Importance of Bibliodiversity**

When discussing accessibility in the book market, chain bookshops are often considered the preferred option due to their extensive presence and user-friendly digital platforms. However, as Epstein (2009) notes, these bookshops tend to prioritise bestsellers—typically self-help, financial advice, spiritual literature, celebrity gossip, or political commentary. The recurrence of identical titles across branches reflects a market strategy aimed at ensuring sales.

In contrast, independent publishing involves considerable risk, as it challenges mass production and commercial predictability. Espinasa (2012) describes independent publishing as a form of cultural resistance, grounded in the deliberate selection of specific types of texts rather than market-driven choices.

Similarly, Zanella (2023), editor of *Gris Tormenta*, conceptualises the editorial catalogue as a corpus that expands the boundaries of language and society. Such projects depend on the vision of editors who curate and share unique perspectives. Recognising independent editorial initiatives entails valuing these alternative viewpoints, often found in less visible areas of bookshop shelves.

Independent bookshops thus play a crucial role in promoting bibliodiversity. As Espinasa (2012) argues, collaboration between independent editors and booksellers is essential in redefining the role of books within the market. In this context, books are not merely commodities subject to discounting, but symbolic objects that are defended, promoted, and shared within a community.

## Conclusion

The overview of publishing houses and bookshops in Mexico City compared to other states reveals a clear pattern of cultural centralisation within the country's publishing industry. The concentration of professionals and projects in the capital reinforces its economic, political, and cultural dominance.

As illustrated throughout the figures, accessibility to bookshops is largely determined by proximity to central regions, affecting distribution, author visits, and participation in cultural events. In peripheral areas, limited editorial offerings highlight the importance of bookshops as spaces for sociability, diversity, and identity formation.

Peripheral conditions should not be understood solely as limitations. Independent bookshops such as *El Traspatio* and *La Cosecha* reconfigure these spaces through community-oriented practices and culturally relevant programming. The role of independent booksellers extends beyond commercial transactions, fostering meaningful relationships between books and readers.

Projects such as the *Pasaporte Colectivo Poetry Festival* and the *Agua Viva Festival* demonstrate how independent initiatives contribute to cultural development and community engagement. These spaces enable the formation of readerships and must be supported through dissemination and participation.

Independent bookshops have consolidated their position within a centralised and profit-driven industry by developing distinctive identities grounded in resistance. Building a body of knowledge around bookshops and booksellers is essential for understanding the contemporary configuration of the publishing chain and recognising those who are transforming it from within their communities. Ultimately, readers play a crucial role in sustaining these spaces through engagement, appreciation, and support.

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