



Jordà, Joan-Pau; Colom, Joan and Gabriel Mayol. *Somnis compartits. La identitat mallorquina a debat* (Documenta Balear, 2016), 132 pp. ISBN: 978-84-16163-74-8.

Since the nineteenth century, reflection on the national community and its constitutive elements has been the subject of extensive discussion in the Catalan-speaking sphere.

Intellectuals have addressed the issue

from multiple disciplines, perspectives and textual genres and have attempted to have an impact on their respective societies in each historical moment. Works that have become common reference due to their influence in their communities include Jaume Vicens Vives' *Notícia de Catalunya* (1954), Jaume Fuster's *Nosaltres, els valencians* (1962) and Josep Melià's *Els mallorquins* (1967). Two main trends have emerged within this long-standing tradition of self-reflection: essays dealing with commonly accepted traits of each nation, and works that put forward a political project from a nationalistic perspective.

In the case of the Balearic Islands, there is a solid tradition of reflection on *mallorquinisme polític*, the Majorcan version of Catalanism. This coexists with a literary trend that has carried out an analysis of the islanders' ethos, often through interviews and conversations with public figures and citizens. Some relevant works within this field include *Queridos mallorquines: Claves del trato personal en la isla de Mallorca* (1995) by Guy de Forestier (pseudonym of the Catalan-born architect Carlos García-Delgado) and *Queridos forasteros* (1996) by Majorcan journalist Santiago Miró.

However, there has been a lack of works questioning the very nature of identity in a land that has been traditionally perceived as socially unstructured, especially among nationalist intellectuals such as Miquel dels Sants Oliver (1984-1920), Melià (1939-2000) and Damià Pons (1950). *Somnis compartits: La identitat mallorquina a debat* (2016) attempts to fill this gap by examining Majorcan identity, drawing on its political, historical, social, economic and cultural roots. Written by young historians Joan-Pau Jordà, Joan Colom and Gabriel Mayol, this work aims to spark debate on an unresolved issue by addressing a wide audience and incorporating divergent views of the community.

The book is divided into four sections. The first, a prologue by Valencian historian and anthropologist Antoni Rico i García, compares Valencian and Balearic literary traditions on the issue of national identity and advances the two key questions that inform the entire work: Is it possible to speak about a shared common identity in the twenty-first century? Is it possible to do this in the case of a complex and heterogeneous society such as the Majorcan one? (9).

In the second section, titled ‘Paraules preliminars’, the authors expose the main motivation of the book, which is the fact that there has been insufficient debate about Majorcan identity and what goals the Majorcans have as a society (13). From the authors’ point of view, not facing the debate could be a burden for the island’s social, political and economic progress in the medium term (15). The chapter continues with a historical overview of Majorcan identity and *mallorquinisme polític*, a discussion of the feeling of belonging as shown in recent polls, the impact of immigration over the last few decades, and the influence of the island’s economic structure in the formation of its national identity.

Data from different surveys suggests that, for the majority of islanders, one just has to live, work and be willing to be part of the community in order to be considered a Majorcan. According to the authors, this suggests ‘una visió cívica de la pertinença a l’illa, en

detriment d'altres concepcions més de base etnolingüística o administrativa' (37). This, in turn, allows them to connect with ideas of integration promoted by Catalan intellectuals such as the 23-year president of the Catalan *Generalitat* Jordi Pujol, while acknowledging that Majorcans might not have the same participative and civic conception of the community as Catalans do (37).

The third section of *Somnis compartits* consists of eight interviews with public figures from the island who have different ideological stances within the political spectrum. Here we find leaders from diverse fields such as politics, business, teaching and trade unionism, and political conceptions ranging from an overt opposition to Catalan nationalism to a neat defence of sovereignty. There are key questions that permeate the whole set of conversations and show the authors' criticism of the way identity has been managed by both governments and nationalist parties. For instance, the interviewers pose questions about the failure of *mallorquinisme* to attract larger sections of the population that do not usually speak Catalan (44), or the lack of discourses favouring the integration of immigrants along the lines of what Francisco Candel did in Catalonia (45).

The last section, entitled 'El debat', develops the main thesis of the book, which is that Majorcan society does not have shared social values nor an hegemonic common project the majority of people can benefit from (105). Insular individualism, cosmopolitanism derived from the touristic boom and the absence of a politics of social cohesion account for the fragmentation of the community and the lack of a collective narrative (105). Following German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, the authors propose the development of a sense of social patriotism based on a 'visió de la identitat, líquida, útil, flexible, inclusiva, que no demani lleialtats absolutes ni renunciar als bagatges culturals de cadascú' (118). This patriotism would be mostly based on the acceptance of diversity, the

questioning of the touristic and territorial model, the protection of the environment, the defence of the welfare state, the recognition of insularity, and support for the Catalan language as a means to attain social cohesion.

Somnis compartits is a bold and valuable contribution to the debate on Majorcan identity in a moment of nationalistic tensions in the Catalan-speaking communities and Spain. Jordà, Colom and Mayol's proposal arises from a genuine eagerness to enrich identity debates with the perspective of a new generation that is less subject to established political ideas. Despite the authors' endeavours to go beyond their primary field of study, the book is inevitably inclined towards a historical approach. The work's aim to reach a wide audience could have benefited from a more extensive discussion of certain dimensions of Majorcan identity that are scarcely analysed in the work. Although no relevant terrain remains untouched, there is little discussion on culture, which is a fundamental aspect in identity formation. For instance, the book could have included a deeper exploration of the role of literature, popular practices or media consumption and their impact in the creation of common imaginaries.

It must be said, though, that the three historians do not attempt to encompass all aspects of Majorcan identity. Rather, they seek to spark debate on a question that has been mostly left aside by former generations of politicians and intellectuals. Certain social dynamics developed in the last few years suggest that there are grounds for an open discussion on the matter. The popular success of cultural products such as Toni Gomila's *Acorar* (2012), a theatre play dealing with Majorcan identity, seems to point in this direction.

Ernest Carranza Castelo
The Ohio State University