

ABSTRACT. Bilewicz Aleksandra, Próba asercji. O nadawaniu nowych znaczeń tożsamości etnicznej żydów sefardyjskich [Attempts at assertion. Ascribing new meaning to the ethnic identity of Sephardic Jews]. My i oni. Interdyscyplinarne obrazy wielokulturowości [We and They. Interdisciplinary pictures of multiculturalism] edited by H. Mamzer – „Człowiek i Społeczeństwo”, vol. XXX, Poznań 2010, pp. 117-135. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISBN 978-83-232-2120-3. ISSN 0239-3271.

The aim of the article is to describe some aspects of the identity construction among contemporary Sephardic Jews, basing on qualitative research conducted on the Facebook networking site as well as several individual interviews. The research results are being interpreted through the categories of the constructionist theory of Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann (1998). The authors define assignment and assertion as two possible ways of ethnic minority identity construction. The focus of the article is on the way in which Sephardic Jews ascribe new meanings to their identity. This includes (1) defining Sephardic Jewish culture as more ancient and simply better than Ashkenazi Jewish culture, (2) perceiving Sephardim as people of color and thus adapting some notions of African-American emancipation movement, or even (3) using orientalist categories to describe Sephardic identity. In conclusion it is stated that although Sephardim try to construct a positive and self-assured identity (assertion), they are still referring to some meanings assigned to them by the dominant group (Ashkenazim). Thus the Ashkenazic Jews continue to serve as their key point of reference for Sephardic ethnic identity.

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