The dissertation examines the issue of identity and ways of self-identification of nineteenth century Slav-speaking elites of Macedonia under the Ottoman rule. Because of the characteristics of the region and the examined period, the subject allows us to answer the basic questions about the ways of expressing identity and Slavs’ self-identification on the related territory, but also to expand the knowledge about the Balkans as a region inhabited by people of various faiths, languages, ethnic groups that remain in close mutual contact; the Balkans as a region inhabited and colonized by many peoples, cultures and religions since the antiquity. The Tanzimat era - which is the period of deep institutional reforms of the Ottoman Empire, forms a meaningful historical context for the presentation of the changes of identity affiliations among the Slav-speaking elites of Macedonia.

During the systematic transformation, Macedonia, being a double periphery and existing on the margin of both the Ottoman Empire and Europe, was also subject to socio-political and economic changes, and its elites were participating in socio-cultural changes and co-creating them. In my dissertation I am trying to tell a history of a certain period within the Ottoman Empire as heard from „within”, giving voice to the representatives of a doubly dominated social group, which tells its story - and the story of the Empire - from the inside, using the voice of the periphery itself. The examination of Slav-speaking elite identity from this region and this specific period is giving the voice to the double subaltern social group. Slavs were on the one hand living under the Ottomans, who held the political-economic power, and on the other hand, under the jurisdiction of Greek Patriarchy in Constantinople, which held the economic, but also socio-symbolic power expressed through partial tax collection and control over the education and the language of liturgy.

The analysis is based on a wide range of textual sources enriched with analysis of physical artefacts of culture treated as identity texts. Their authors are representing variously defined elites of the Macedonian territory, from the head of the village, through clergy, to kulturträgers. Among them there are: Joakim Krčovski (1750?-1819?), Kiril Pejčinović (1771-1845), Gürčin Kokale (1775-1863), Partenija Zografski (1818-1876), Gorgijia Pulevski (1822/23-1895), Dimitr Miladinov (1810–1862), Konstantin Miladinov (1830–1862), Jordan Hadži Konstantinov „Džinot― (1818-1882), Grigor Prličev (1830-1893), Kuzman Šapkarev (1834-1909), Rajko Žinzifov (1839-1877). The enlisted authors derived from Ottoman Macedonia and for a large part, or majority of their lives, they were active in representative and for the region important urban or rural centres. While using the terminology introduced by Pierre Bourdieu, I have ascribed the representatives to one of two habitus: Debar/Reka and Veles/Ohrid. This division reflects the differences present in the fields of cultural production: the Serb and Orthodox Slavonic (Debar/Reka), or the Greek one (Veles/Ohrid).

The main assumption was that identity is not given to the individual or group, but is rather a process of constant becoming. Identity is indeed an empirically elusive phenomenon, however its emanations can be grasped. The deconstruction of identity was possible through examination of chosen markers of identity, such as the language, religion, and traditional costume, the symbolism of the cultural artefacts. In the dissertation I was trying to present the identity markers through the images of the Self and the Other, Alien, especially in reference to group affiliation. Only after extracting them was I able to set them onto a net of mutual dependences. The
analysis thus extracts the panorama of affiliations, including the negotiation and renegotiation of own identity as an individual and member of a group, simultaneously. This renegotiating process was often expressed within the language. Importantly, the dissertation presents a wide array of identity affiliations without focusing on confirmation or rejection of the existence of national identity in the particular researched moment.

The Introduction explains basic concepts, such as the elite, markers of identity, linguistic picture of the world as understood by Jerzy Bartmiński and Ethnolinguistic School of Lublin, and also: habitus, field, capital by Pierre Bourdieu. This part includes the state of the art and the justification of the choice of elite representative. It also includes relevant theoretical concepts that explain the process of identity development, renegotiation of positioning of the Self, and finally, the image of the Other. These concepts were introduced to place the analysed identity markers and oppositions Self/Other, Own/Alien in a wider context of humanities. The theoretical-introductory part of the dissertation encompasses the factographical background, which shows the reality of the region in the relevant period. Among others, it presents the region's geographical range, its ethno-religious composition, the collocation of population, the meaning and the role of Tanzimat, the question of the language and education among the local population, the centres of political and cultural power, the categorization of Ottoman-based range of Christian elites, and finally, short biographies of the authors of the analysed texts. By setting the sources in a proper context, the analysis becomes possible.

The analytical part of the dissertation is divided into two twin-built chapters, devoted to the habitus of Debar/Reka (chapter three) and Ohrid/Veles (chapter four). In these chapters I have extracted the identity markers, opposition Own/Alien, Self/Other, and defined the fields of power and cultural production.

The conclusions reconstruct the image attained through the analysis and compare the Debar/Reka habitus with Ohrid/Veles one. The synthesis of partial conclusions answers to research hypotheses posed at the beginning of the analysis. The analysis proved that the process of commoner's nobilitation to the position of elites was mirrored in the process of the transmission of notions and values typical for the pastoral society onto the more ideological levels of identification with social groupings that were taking over the functions of the extended family, while retaining the kin-related linguistic categorisations. The concepts of family affiliations, in the understanding of extended family, conditioned the political choices, alliances, and - finally - the language of persuasion and propaganda justifying the choice of one fraction over the other. This can in turn be interpreted as a universal problem. The investigation shows that when it comes to the possibility of gaining promotion or personal/social freedom of the researched elites, especially against the double Ottoman-Greek domination, the prestige connected to the economic capital served this purpose better than the prestige ascribed to the symbolic capital, i.e. writing or scholarship. The latter was never a guarantee of full freedom, whereas the social promotion required renegotiation of own identity, thus condemning the individual to painful failure. Instead, it would offer only a choice of another field of cultural production, i.e. switching the Greek for Bulgarian or Serbian one, or replacing the Turkish by the Russian field, with no guarantee whatsoever of full independence.
The dissertation is ended with bibliography and appendix which includes illustrations: the analysed folk dresses, the graph conceptualization of affiliative fields in the habitus of Debar/Reka, and the source literary texts which were analysed but not included in their entirety into the corpus of the dissertation, for instance because of their length.