

## **Abstract**

My thesis is based on a broader context of theories and categories of tourism and touristic experiences elaborated by authors belonging to a comparatively new subdiscipline of social and cultural anthropology – the anthropology of tourism. I focus on Mexico, the area of my interest and a part of el Mundo Maya (Maya World) through the eyes of tourism categorization of Valene Smith (1989). I specify two distinct (but yet similar) anthropological fields – one being Riviera Maya with fieldwork in Cancún, Tulum and Chichén Itzá and the other one Ruta Maya with fieldwork in San Cristobal de las Casas and the village of Chamula. I focus on the area of a popular beachspot and adjacent Maya ruins as a destination of historical tourism and also on the area of Chiapas highlands with an authentic Maya village which is a popular destination of ethnic or more accurately cultural tourism. My work is about the process of construction of the (English speaking versus Spanish speaking) tourist image of ancient Maya and the Maya of today. The conclusion of my fieldwork helps me illustrate the term monumentalization of the Maya (Canclini, 2005) or inventing the great Maya through touristic artefacts, experience and travellers' guides.

## **Key words**

Anthropology of tourism, Maya tourism, Tulum, Chichén Itzá, Cancún, San Juan de Chamula, San Cristobal de las Casas, ethnic tourism, cultural tourism, historical tourism, monumentalization of the Maya, ritual of tourism, el Mundo Maya, la Ruta Maya