

## Papers

# Letters from Mexico to the World: The discourse of solidarity in the promotion of tourism online<sup>1</sup>

Cartas de México al Mundo: El discurso solidario de la promoción turística on line

Cartas do México para o Mundo: O discurso da promoção do turismo virtual: um equilíbrio entre sua plausibilidade

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### Keywords:

Tourism promotion;  
Critical analysis;  
Solidarity discourse.

### Abstract

The institutional handling of the promotion of tourist destinations has been enhanced by the use of video on the Internet as an effective tool to reach the user and display solidarity values towards the places visited. Given the scant analysis of Mexico's official tourism promotion strategies, based on these values, this article seeks to make a critical analysis of the content of the Ministry of Tourism's promotional strategy, called Letters from Mexico to the World, operated with Atlas.ti software. To carry out this critical analysis, the theoretical-methodological design combines reflections on the role of cultural industries and mass media, the analysis of the content of messages in audiovisual media, and even the resignification of the codes and categories susceptible to the analysis at hand, to demonstrate the meaning that online tourism promotional content has in Mexico's tourism strategy. The main conclusion demonstrates the reproduction of a conventional model, going beyond the assumed pretension of making tourism a tool for social cohesion.

### Palabras clave:

Promoción turística  
Análisis crítica;  
Discurso solidario.

### Resumen

El manejo institucional de la promoción de los destinos turísticos se ha visto favorecido con el uso del video en internet como medio efectivo para llegar al usuario y desplegar valores solidarios hacia los lugares que visita. Ante el escaso análisis de las estrategias de promoción turística oficial de México, bajo esos valores, este artículo tiene como objetivo realizar un análisis crítico de contenido en la estrategia promocional de la Secretaría de Turismo, denominada Cartas de México al Mundo operacionalizado con el software Atlas.ti. Para ese análisis crítico, el diseño teórico-metodológico reúne reflexiones en torno al papel de las industrias culturales y los medios de comunicación masivos, el análisis de contenido de mensajes en medios audiovisuales, hasta la resignificación de los códigos y categorías susceptibles del análisis en cuestión, para evidenciar el sentido que adquiere del contenido promocional turístico on line en la estrategia turística de México. El principal hallazgo muestra la reproducción de un modelo convencional, más allá de la pretensión asumida de hacer del turismo una herramienta de cohesión social.

### Palavras-chave:

Promoção turística;  
Análise crítica;  
Discurso solidário.

### Resumo

A gestão institucional da promoção de destinos turísticos tem sido favorecida pelo o uso de vídeos na internet como meio efetivo de alcançar o usuário e mostrar valores de solidariedade nos lugares que ele visita. Dada a escassa análise das estratégias oficiais de promoção turística do México, com base nesses valores, este artigo tem como objetivo realizar uma análise crítica do conteúdo da estratégia promocional do Ministério do Turismo, denominada Cartas do México para o Mundo operacionalizada por meio do software Atlas.ti. Para essa análise crítica, o desenho teórico-metodológico reúne reflexões sobre o papel das indústrias culturais e dos meios de comunicação de massa, a análise do conteúdo das mensagens nos meios audiovisuais, até a resignificação dos códigos e categorias suscetíveis à análise em questão, para demonstrar o significado que adquire do conteúdo

Peer reviewed by pairs.  
Received in: 11/05/2020.  
Approved in: 27/08/2020.  
Editor:  
Glauber Eduardo de Oliveira Santos



turístico promocional on-line na estratégia turística do México. A principal descoberta mostra a reprodução de um modelo convencional, além do objetivo assumido de tornar o turismo uma ferramenta de coesão social.

**How to Cite:** Chávez, A.R.V.; Nechar, M.C.; Jimenez, G.C.; De los Monteros, G.N.E. (2021). Letters from Mexico to the World. The discourse of solidarity in the promotion of tourism online. *Revista Brasileira de Pesquisa em Turismo, São Paulo*, 15 (3), e-2022, May./Aug. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7784/rbtur.v15i3.2022>

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The promotion of tourism in Mexico, which is currently carried out by the Federal Ministry of Tourism on an institutional basis, is an official strategy intended to turn tourism into a tool for social cohesion (Sectur, 2018) which raises the awareness of the recipients, among whom not only the visitors, but also the entrepreneurs themselves and the local population, among others.

The study of the promotion of tourist destinations, based on the critical analysis of the content of promotional messages, highlights the importance of the language used and not only the visual content, unlike the traditional approach with which this type of study has been carried out based on textual or visual reading, as an instrument for collecting information (Andréu, 2018).

Despite the fact that the research acknowledges the importance of classic methodologies in the analysis of message content (Berelson, 1952; Hostil, 1969; Bardin, 1986; Casetti and Di Chio, 1991), with procedures that can be used for verification by other researchers, this research does not stick to a replication of any of these methodologies, due to the limitation they present to reconstruct the meaning and significance that Mexico's official body tries to imprint on the tourist promotion it designs and disseminates through audiovisual media, with the support of the Internet: a model of solidarity tourism (Sectur, 2020).

The literature review undertaken shows how little analysis has been done on the subject at hand. Ranging from classic approaches to content and message analysis to "new" media marketing strategies, the aim is to disseminate the image of tourist destinations as facilitators of unique and differentiated experiences, showing the warmth of local communities, their culture, history and heritage as the main attractions (Wan, Liu & Innes, 2019).

Considering the impacts that communities have suffered in tourist destinations, the pretensions of a change in contents and media messages are present in the current tourism promotion, where tourism tries to become a real tool for social cohesion. For this reason, the formulation of a critical base is the element that introduces another sense to the analysis of the commercial promotion of tourism online by highlighting the value of conscience, solidarity and empathy that a new way of promoting tourist destinations and places should have or acquire, particularly when, in the case of Mexico's tourist promotional strategy, the use of the internet is the factor that seeks to be not only efficient and effective in the diffusion and impact of the messages on their addressees, but also conscientious in its contents.

Several researchers are included in the analysis of audiovisual content, among them the Italian theorist Francesco Casetti, described as "the best analyst of cinematographic enunciation" (Metz, Durand & Brookets, 1991), along with Federico di Chio, Casetti's duo in the book in which basic ideas about codes are rescued. They are accompanied by researchers such as Andréu (2018) and López (2009), among others, to retrieve the importance of the production and reception of messages that are implemented in the program Atlas.ti (Muñoz, 2008) with codes and categories created and founded specifically for this methodological proposal.

Please note that this research was not conducted in a communication database, as such, because this was not the aim of this study and because the official agency of Mexico, the Ministry of Tourism, in its promotional strategy, uses various media (social networks, YouTube, the very same platform, among others), to collect feedback and opinions of its subscribers or Internet users, regarding the audiovisual material it creates. The research is based on a program that promotes Mexico's tourist destinations online: Letters from Mexico to the World. This program produces a promotional strategy that not only employs technology and the Internet, as well as the promotion of a model, with certain values and ideology, which is why, to investigate them, the program Atlas.ti is used, in which codes and categories are redesigned and given new meaning for the study of this reality: the tourist promotion of Mexico online.

The theoretical-methodological design of the research is a creation of a procedure that is not intended to be an "empirical proof" of a previously established methodology—this would be equivalent to applying an empirical formula—but rather to discover, unfold and expose what is meant to be a fresh promotion of tourism in Mexico,

oriented around certain values and awareness: sustainability, equity, social cohesion, and so forth. Bearing in mind that the videos analyzed in the research are built for the Internet, they are studied using a reformulated methodology; a particular one is not chosen, as it has already been indicated, because of the limitations it would have for the analysis regarding not only the promotional messages, but also the media and networks on that promotion.

Note that these types of promotional strategies were already being carried out—in an incipient manner—as of 1999 with the creation of the Council for the Promotion of Tourism in Mexico (CPTM), but with the extinction of this body—in a conventional way—the current government confers it to the recently created Council for Tourism Diplomacy (CDT), which is in charge of the coordination and operation of the strategies for the promotion of the Mexico brand internationally (Expansión, 2019). Unlike the CPTM, the CDT tries to grant tourism promotion a seal of social cohesion for solidarity-based tourism; this is precisely why a methodology is developed that, under a critical perspective, revalues the best arguments of the theorists of content analysis, criticism of cultural industries and procedures that question such codes and categories.

The innovation of the subject is not only in the use of software, but in the discursive foundation (theoretical construction) for the operation of the software used, manifesting a theoretical-methodological coherence and consistency that goes beyond a replicative empirical “design” and “proof”, with the intention of advancing knowledge in this area of study. The different authors and approaches, reviewed in the literature on promotion and image, linked to the renewal of the critique of the cultural industry, its contents and media, the critical analysis of discourse, are weighted to reformulate a critical-reflective perspective that gives meaning to the construction of the categories and codes of analysis in the software used. Despite the fact that the case analysis was carried out with four promotional videos, with the intention of showing that the strategy results in the irreparable mistake of not differentiating public-consumers, nature and condition of the same spaces, only one of these cases is selected because it gathers a greater amount of evidence that breaks with the idea that the current promotional strategy seeks to strengthen an alternative model for social cohesion, which 4T has called solidarity (Sectur, 2019).

## 2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The insertion of technology in the everyday life of human beings has transformed not only their way of dealing with the world in the economic, political, and social fields, but also their forms of interaction and communication. The web generates messages that reflect ideologies, trends, fashions, and policies.

From Adorno's (1984) perspective, the industry of culture is that of entertainment, which implies the expropriation of men's conscience, replacing genuine experience with an inferior one. Adorno notes that ideas loaded with impulses for change, such as liberation or progress, have achieved precisely the opposite: enslaving and objectifying man under a sophisticated technology used in the modern media, which create and spread a certain form of consumerist culture, emerging from the market (Del Rey, 2004). In this regard, Horkheimer and Adorno (2003:166) emphasize that this "industry of culture marks everything with a trait of similarity, in a technological and cultural universe in which cinema, radio and magazines constitute a system [...] that is nothing but pure business that serves as an ideology to legitimize the filth that they deliberately produce.

This reflective critical approach, rescues the approaches of the notion of cultural industries, made by Adorno and Horkheimer (1947) and continued by others (Getino, 1995; García, 1999; Quiroz, 2006; Vizer, 2011), relating it to the critical analysis of discourse (Van Dijck, 1999; Stecher, 2010), in the handling of the messages that these industries emit, to link it with the three-dimensional perspective of promotional language (Fairclough, 1995) and with such approaches to formulate a current proposal that serves as a framework for the proposed analysis, since none of the authors and perspectives mentioned, by themselves, carry it out.

Under this critique, one can recognize the preponderance that audiovisual messages and contents disseminated on the Internet acquire, with the preeminence of technology, as a form of manipulation, segmentation, and conditioning. Beyond the democratizing, supportive discourse, conscious of aspiring to a sustainable world, which the institutionalism apparently promotes, society becomes indifferent to these situations and to others related to problems such as poverty, violence, pollution, and discrimination.

In addition, new marketing strategies and promotion of tourism online group of the digitization of the world economy, focused on four 1 axes: cloud, mobile, IoT and social (Gimeno, 2016), which shows how not only new rules are being

<sup>1</sup> This article derives from research "Letters from Mexico to the World. Between the conventional model and the three-dimensional language of online tourism promotion, as a tool of social cohesion", registered Institutionally.

established in the business game, but also how new relationships are being generated in public-private cooperation in the promotion and competitiveness of tourism destinations (Muñoz and Fuentes, 2013; Piédrola, Artacho and Villaseca, 2016; Izasa, 2014; Choque, 2013; Liu and Chou, 2016; Dolnicar and Ring, 2014; Shaw, Williams and Bailey, 2011). The function of positioning the image of the destination, through those promotional strategies, is to captivate the tourist to live unique and differentiated experiences (Álvarez, 2015; Carballo, Moreno, León and Brent, 2015; Luque, Cerruela and Gómez, 2016; Andrade, 2011; Losada and Mota, 2019; Cardoso, Dias, De Araújo & Andrés, 2019; Kanazawa, Giraldi and Oliveira, 2019).

Therefore, the Internet becomes the means par excellence to reach tourists and provoke emotions that influence the decision making process in the choice of one or another destination (Túñez, García & Guevara, 2011; Altamirano, Túñez & Valarezo, 2016; Ramkissoon, Uysal & Brown, 2011; Santos, Lunardi, Maia e Anãã, 2020). The approach to these documents, through the repository of the Scientific Information System Network of Scientific Journals of Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal (Redalyc), Elsevier and Scielo, from 2011 to 2019, shows that tourism promotion, under digital media, follows a model that seeks to reach more people, position the destination brand, greater economic spill (Pinheiro & Cristóvão, 2014; Valladares, 2015), but, little is mentioned about the awareness of the tourist about the needs or conditions of the destinations and the important role of promotion to position the tourist activity as a tool of social cohesion.

It is worth mentioning that, from magazines such as: PASOS. Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural, Opción, Cuadernos de Turismo, revista de Estudios Regionales, Estudios y Perspectivas del Turismo, Revista Latina de Comunicación Social and Cuaderno Virtual de Turismo, the magazine Brasileira de Pesquisa em Turismo has current documents that emphasize the importance of tourism promotion and even work analyzing Cuba's tourism advertising (Barrios e Reis, 2019).

In addition, there are limitations to the critical analysis of content around messages and discourses created online and, even more so, about tourism promotional strategies. The main contributions to the subject, from the classics to the avant-garde, are beginning to use computer programs (Hays, 1960; Mostyn, 1985; Krippendorff, 1990; Bradley and Rockwell, 1995; Altheide, 1996) for this type of analysis.

The great challenge of this perspective is the reconstruction not only of categories, but also of procedures that allow revealing that this strategy of tourist promotion maintains the conventional marketing essence that traditionally the official organ of Mexico has carried out in the last federal administrations. The same CPTM tried to manage its promotional strategies for tourism in Mexico under the term solidarity tourism in which "its links with tourism that fights poverty, and in the community, can be seen as a model of a bridge between social tourism and commercial tourism" (Sectur, 2013:35).

This kind of notions generated online marketing strategies with the measurement of user behavior in social networks, the analysis of marketing campaigns for a certain brand, product or service, etc., all of them guided to improve the performance of companies, which is done—commonly—by measuring web positioning, social networks, e-mail marketing and contents.

In this regard, the content, in the evaluation of digital marketing, is aimed at "analyzing what content generates greater interest in our publications such as the blog. In addition, we are able to know where the visits come from and thus, better adapt to the target. The time a user spends on our website, the comments made or the number of times it has been shared, will help us know if our content is of quality and interesting" (Fast Digital WS, 2019:1).

Therefore, it was necessary to resort to experts in critical content analysis to reformulate the arguments oriented to the research approach.

The classic approach content analysis as a model and research method to be followed in order to study and analyze papers in a systematic, objective, and quantitative way (Cook and Reichardt, 1986; Cohen and Manion, 1990; Pérez, 1994). Others deal with qualitative models and methodologies prone to interpretative, ethnographic, phenomenological, ethnomethodological, symbolic interactionist aspects, etc., (Bisquerra, 1996; López, 2002). However, one line of research that stuck to the approach of this research was that of critical discourse analysis (CDA), which has its origin in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School (Rasmussen, 1996) and gave rise to "critical linguistics"

<sup>2</sup> Cloud: digital products and services around cloud computing (all those offered in a distributed way over the Internet) and DATA, understood as data collection, management, and processing.

Mobile: the entire ecosystem consisting of mobile devices with internet connection, as well as all platforms, services and applications associated with them.

Internet of Things (IoT): The set devices and objects connected to the Internet with special attention to its application in home automation and sensorization.

Social (Social Networks and Collaborative Economy): Digital platforms through which users participate, collaborate, share, and exchange content, goods and services.

(Fowler, Hodge, Kress & Trew, 1979; Mey, 1985). But a more refined view is that of Teun Van Dijk (1999:23) who understands the ACD as a kind of analytical discourse research that studies the relations between power, dominance and inequality that are practiced, reproduced and occasionally combated in textualities; it is an attempt to offer a different “way” or “perspective” of theorizing, analyzing and applying content analysis, through this broad field of research.

From this theoretical perspective, the strategy of online tourism promotion, of the so-called Letters from Mexico to the World, challenges us to analyze its contents, messages and discourses that intend to contribute to social cohesion and, in order to operationalize this, Atlas.ti software is used, on which codes and categories are based that reveal the scope of the so-called solidarity tourism that seeks to differentiate itself from the conventional model with which the brand Mexico has been promoted.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

The strategy Letters from Mexico to the World was launched at the end of 2017 and during 2018 by the then CPTM. The strategy consisted of 18 "video letters", from which four were chosen: Dear Italy, Dear Spain, Dear Canada, and Dear Colombia. This choice responded to the similarities among them in design, characteristics, contents, and purposes in their implementation. For the report -in this article- only the Dear Colombia letter is analyzed, complementing it with some ideas and characteristics of the other three regarding the underlying discourse of making tourism a tool for social cohesion.

For the development of the technical and instrumental procedure, the ACD is incorporated through which the contents of the phenomena of social life understood as a production-reception of messages, textualities can be described, observed and understood (López, 2009; Andréu, 2018). This procedure integrates codes and categories that are operationalized in the program Atlas.ti to code and analyze the “video cards”, obtaining as a result the graphic representation of the relationships between the categories and codes, for their visualization and interpretation.

The selection of categories and codes is based on the emancipation of the traditional model, to resignify tourist promotional strategy, given the game of language used in that one (Wittgenstein, 1975), which hides conditions of the conventional consumerist model, from the manipulation of the contents in the audiovisual media (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1947), which are guided by technical-instrumentalist interests (Habermas, 1985), as well as power structures and class interests (van Dijk, 1999), focused on obtaining -basically- economic benefits from the promotion of tourist destinations, recognizing in their contents and discourse, the three-dimensionality of language (Fairclough, 1995). In this sense, this three-dimensionality is understood as referring to:

- Discourse as a text, to understand how relations between institutions and society are shaped;
- Discourse as a discursive practice, to understand how the process of reception and interpretation of the models accepted by the social fabric is developed; and,
- Discourse as a social practice to identify the conditions of language use imposed by various political, economic, or cultural structures

The design of the methodology was conceived in three stages:

- The design of the codes and categories that account for the elements that make up the discourse.
- The integration of the information into Atlas.ti software which, for analysis, collects the information from the video for its contextualization and proceeds to the analysis, in order to identify codes and categories.
- The generation of networks and interpretation of the results obtained based on the authors and the theories under which this work is developed.

With respect to codes and categories, the notion of code is rescued as an equivalence system established in the context of a message in which sender and recipient operate on a common ground, i.e., the same language is spoken (Caseti & Di Chio, 1991). Meanwhile, the category refers to the abstraction of one or several common characteristics of a group of objects or situations, which allows them to be classified according to their nature and content (Hurtado, 2000).

Traditionally, tourism promotion has focused on boosting the positioning of tourist destinations. With the emergence of the web, products and services are being introduced on the Internet to reach a greater number of people. However, little attention has been paid to the promotion discourse, the content and how the use of the Internet can generate a change in the way tourism is done, with more responsibility and more awareness.

That is why, as part of the analysis, it is decided to integrate categories that emphasize the need to make present concepts, images and meanings that make online promotion a tool that displays solidarity values, social awareness and proactivity on the part of those who receive it, in order to position tourism activity as a meeting of human beings, sensibly connected by culture, traditions, gastronomy, their natural resources and human environments, recognizing and valuing the other. These characteristics are linked to solidarity tourism. Hence, the categories emerge from the diverse conceptions around this type of tourism.

It should be noted that the categories and codes—included in this work—are a split from the traditional model. They start from the idea of manifesting elements different from what is conventionally shown in the promotion: a massive production imposed by economic demands exercising ideological manipulation on the consumption of tourist products and services oriented by aesthetics, which responds to interests of power (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1947).

The proposal includes ten categories to be identified in the content. For its analysis, two possible definitions of each one are presented, which correspond to the vision of conventional tourism and another to the critical vision; the purpose is to contrast both visions (marked with the number 1, the conventional vision, and with the number 2, the critical vision). These categories are:

- **Sustainability.** **1)** as a mere commercial strategy to make products attractive to consumption; **2)** as a real attempt to transform the relationship between the human being, the environment, diversity, the policies generated for protection, in general; a wide and deep sense of the concept.
- **Social cohesion.** **1)** As the sense of belonging that society has through a common project that generates unity; **2)** as a mechanism that establishes rights and promotes policies related to health, education, environment, culture, economy.
- **Equity.** **1)** as giving to each one what corresponds to said person according to his/her merits or conditions; **2)** as that quality that does not accept favoritism and establishes a balance between the needs of the population, in the areas of environment, economy, and politics.
- **Justice.** **1)** as a political discourse to show a benevolent tourism, promising for the society; **2)** as a moral and responsible principle, both of companies and local actors to favor the concurrent practice of tourism, giving to each one what really corresponds to him.
- **Solidarity.** **1)** as an economic activity that benefits the less favored populations; **2)** as the main travel motivation of the tourist collaborating in projects of social interest.
- **Respect.** **1)** As a reliable follow up of the norms established in society; **2)** As the recognition of the own value and the rights of individuals in society, their culture, traditions, and organization.
- **Identity.** **1)** as a slogan of mass production exalting the exoticism and colorfulness of a destiny; **2)** as the set of characteristics of an individual or a collective that characterizes them and unites them in front of others.
- **Loyalty.** **1)** As the possibility of generating clients, demand, and economic revenue; **2)** As the deep satisfaction of the visitor, related to the significant experiences that a destination offers.
- **Hospitality.** **1)** As the social practice where the needs of the visitors for food and shelter are satisfied, turned into a commercial transaction; **2)** as the ethical value that recognizes the needs of the other, their dignity, their diversity.
- **Ethics.** **1)** As the driving force for work excellence through responsible service at all levels; **2)** as a behavior that values human relations for the integral development of individuals and their communities.

It is worth mentioning that, as the letters are audiovisual material, spread on the web, it is full of meaning and significance to convey the message to the recipients. Therefore, the codes are of vital importance since they channel the message towards its credibility and acceptance. Such codes are:

- **Image.** It is used to show itself to the public and turn it into a passive receiver or an active actor, influencing its behavior. It can reach a degree of iconicity by presenting reality, highlighting qualities that do not show it faithfully.
- **Object.** It becomes the representation of a sign, image, idea, or message that wishes to communicate; it is determined by the cultural codes of society. If its use is not questioned, it can reach the reification of the object in question.
- **Characters.** They define and identify the type of audience to which the message is directed, physical appearance, sex, age, language, clothing, attitude. Their choice determines, to a certain extent, the discourse transmitted.
- **Color.** It is used as an expressive resource evoking emotion, attitudes, perceptions; it is related to the identity of the individual. Its interpretation varies according to the context.
- **Sound.** It determines the relationship between image and word, creates an atmosphere of affinity; it allows to remember the product, to remember specific features. It is a means to create tension or relaxation, related to voices, sounds, music. It can provoke emotion, creating a captivating atmosphere that captures the attention of the receiver.

These codes and categories have been concentrated in table 1, which allows a quick visualization of the elements identified in each chart for a more detailed interpretation of the findings.

**Table 1** - Codes and categories

<b>Categories</b>				
Sustainability	Social cohesion	Equity	Justice	Solidarity
Trade label	Perception	Inclusion	Speech	Activity
Social Revaluation	Social mechanism	Balance	Practice	Motivation
Respect	Identity	Loyalty	Hospitality	Ethics
Attitude	Authenticity	Economy	Social practice	Excellence
Guideline	Mass production	Empathy	Ethical value	Speculation
<b>Codes</b>				
Image	Object	Characters	Color	Sound
Receiver	Representation	Transmits	Expression	Atmosphere
Participant	Reification	Segments	Condition	Emotion

**Source:** The authors.

A relevant fact identified in the four letters was the marked repetitiveness in their content, subject matter, and structure. Although they are addressed to potential tourists of different nationalities, they only coincide in the change of language and in certain images that mark the difference between each destination. Therefore, the analysis of content is made at the four, but it is chosen to delve into only one of them, Dear Colombia (*Querida Colombia*), since it has the necessary characteristics for a deep analysis: visual, textual, and symbolic content.

#### 4 LETTERS FROM MEXICO TO THE WORLD: DEAR COLOMBIA, A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The analytical exercise of the selected letter starts by recognizing the audiovisual material as a communicative textuality that, in order to be understood, needs to be fragmented in order to know its structure, its language, the meaning of each part in which meanings, symbols, codes, which, as a whole, have a purpose that can be semantic, pragmatic, semiotic or communicative. The visual, sound, graphic and syntactic codes of the audiovisual material provide guidelines for selecting the components to be analyzed. It was also included the audiovisual sequence that favors the analysis of the video cards, by showing the context of the content of the videos: the staging, the camera movement, the framing and the development of characters (Cassetti and Di Chio, 1991).

Table 2 shows the analysis of Dear Colombia:

**Table 2** - Codes and categories *Dear Colombia*

Running time: 1:50 minutes	Views: 1,121,712	Comments: 102		
Likes: 726	Dislikes: 30	From: February 22, 2018		
<b>Categories</b>				
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Social cohesion</b>	<b>Equity</b>	<b>Justice</b>	<b>Solidarity</b>
Trade label	Perception	Inclusion	Speech	Activity
<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>
Social Revaluation	Social mechanism	Balance	Practice	Motivation
	<b>X</b>			
<b>Respect</b>	<b>Identity</b>	<b>Loyalty</b>	<b>Hospitality</b>	<b>Ethics</b>
Attitude	Authenticity	Economy	Social practice	Excellence
	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Guideline	Mass production	Empathy	Ethical value	Speculation
<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
<b>Codes</b>				
<b>Image</b>	<b>Object</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>Color</b>	<b>Sound</b>
Receiver	Representation	Transmits	Expression	Atmosphere
<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Participant	Reification	Segments	Condition	Emotion
<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

**Source:** Own elaboration based on the analysis *Dear Colombia*.

The content of *Dear Colombia* is divided into three moments, the first one: the presentation of Mexico to Colombia, where the singular characteristics of each destination are emphasized, the vitality for the celebration of life, the traditions, the similarity in the way of living; in this part the existing richness in the socio-cultural expression of both societies is shown. In a second moment, Mexico makes an invitation to Colombia to enjoy the experiences that Colombians can live. The third moment exhorts Colombia to project the greatness of the fusion between both cultures. The reader will be able to access the complete audio-visual material at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gYISWXSwo>

As in the letters *Dear Italy*, *Dear Spain* and *Dear Canada*, the colorful and cheerful images, which combine the natural lighting of the environment with artificial lighting, are eloquent of a lifestyle unconcerned with what is happening in the environment. The rhythm is agile, where images, objects, characters, color, and sound are synchronized in a harmonious way to give fluidity and movement.

The images take advantage of the socio-cultural identification of the countries with the relaxed and pleasant approach that one wants to communicate to integrate the viewer to the message. The discursive practice of the message has been apprehended by the society as part of the reception and interpretation of the models given by the institutionalism (Pardo, 2007); that is to say, if it is recognized in the young people their vitality in seeing the reality, discovering the world and relating, it is because this way it is represented in the society, happy, relaxed, according to what it is wanted to communicate specifically in this material.

This content might seem, at first sight, to integrate solidarity aspects that tourism in Mexico intends to achieve—even with the objectives set by the then CPTM—and that are claimed in the 4T model: a solidarity tourism; however, the conventional notion that is manifested in its analysis survives. In spite of this, there are categories that the current situation, not only of the tourist activity, but of the society in general, require to intensify their presence and sense of solidarity within the promotion.

As for sustainability, it is present when we talk about celebrating life, traditions and nature, but the images denote more the simple enjoyment of nature than its care, showing itself as a commercial label that is placed on products and services to make them attractive. The meaning of sustainability would be deeper if the images presented the characters not only making use of nature but appreciating its beauty and protecting it.

Social cohesion is presented as the means to offer the tourist restaurants, hotels, leisure spaces during their stay. Solidarity could be identified, not in the motivation of the tourist to be in Mexico or to participate in a social project with the community, but in the coexistence of meetings friends, in participating in the same activities with images of young people gathered in a *cenote*; on the beach, dancing at sunset, in a restaurant.

The identity supposes the own characteristics that differentiate us from the others and, when being directed to another country, it is natural to present elements considered distinctive, nevertheless, some images are repeated in all the videos like the waterfall of Tamul, same that appears in the letters of Colombia, Canada and Spain.



The hospitality is part of the discourse itself, because with the images it represents the satisfaction of the basic needs of the visitors, enjoying the destinations, products and services that are offered, but in view of the ethics within the social context as a way to work excellence, highlighting the way in which the food is presented, in the places where it is served. These details point to a segment with possibilities of accessing this kind of services. Loyalty is part of the very objective of the campaign, the possibility to generate more clients, more demand and more economic revenue, where images play an important role; it is through them that the desire to visit a destination is generated. In this case, images are focused where groups of friends are pleased to be in the spaces offered by both countries.

The analysis of Querida Colombia's Letters from Mexico to the World, as well as that of Dear Italy, Dear Spain and Dear Canada, shows the repetitiveness of the contents in the promotion of tourism. They are designed for a market segment with specific characteristics: adults with high purchasing power. The analysis carried out with the software Atlas.ti shows this repetitiveness.

## 5 RESULTS

The analysis of content and discourse—of the selected letter—gives an account of the communicative purpose of the message, which articulates ideologically specific codes, making possible its process of acceptance and interpretation in the receivers of that message. This process is known as the three dimensions of discourse. An institution (in this case the Ministry of Tourism) issues a message, articulated and structured to give a sense of idealization of a destination in order to obtain greater economic benefit (discourse as text); the receivers receive and interpret that message according to what society establishes and identifies on the Internet as the socially accepted model (discourse as discursive practice); these established models, in this case online tourism promotion, are inserted in the contexts where political and cultural structures are present, as is the case of the Internet (discourse as social practice).

The harmonious, natural and apparently casual form in which images, sound and characters deliver an invitation to the destination countries, is rather an articulated network of meanings that are part of a discourse, a reflection of the social construction of meaning, modeled by the way of perceiving the socially accepted reality and that has been adjusted by the ideological perspectives of society (Pardo, 2007).

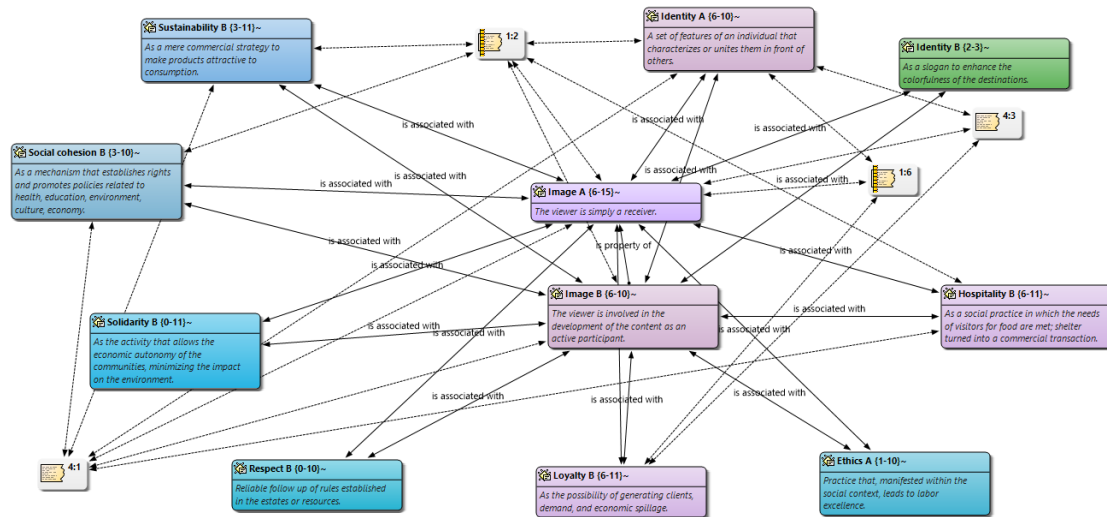
In this context, the importance of the relationship between image, object, characters, color, sound, in other words, the codes of the discourse and the proposed categories (sustainability, social cohesion, equity, justice, solidarity, respect, identity, loyalty, hospitality, ethics), are vital because this symbiosis is the core of the transmission of messages on the web and tourism promotion is part of this set of meanings that move and give meaning to the generated content. This relationship can be visualized graphically thanks to the use of Atlas.ti software which generates graphic representations, called networks, which are the result of the process of segmentation and coding of the video. These networks show the software's representation of the relationship between codes and categories by segment.

Considering that the main contribution—of this work—is the inclusion of codes and categories to the analysis of the discourse of Letters from Mexico to the World, five graphic representations or networks are presented that respond to the five codes that have been used for the analysis of the cards: image, object, character, color and sound, which are described in detail below.

The first network or graphic representation is the image code. Each box is named with the node name. In the center, the image code is placed in its two connotations: 1) the receiver as a simple spectator, 2) the receiver as an active participant. The nodes around it are the categories related to this code.

The colors are designated by the program according to the greater number of relationships and associations that are obtained when generating an analysis between the nodes. The color lilac is designated by the program to the node that has the largest number of quotations (fragments of the documents with meaning) associated with it and the color changes as the number decreases. Two numbers (either category or code) appear with each node. The first one indicates how many quotations (fragments) it is associated with and the second one how many categories or codes it is related to. It is worth mentioning that in the network these numbers do not appear as shown in image 1, image code, they can be observed when the direct analysis is being performed in the software, but, these numbers are extracted from their description.

Image 1 - Image Code



Source: Own elaboration based on the analysis *Dear Colombia*.

As it can be seen in the image code network, the nodes with the most associated citations are: the code image A (4/15) and image B (4/10); and the categories loyalty B (4/11), hospitality B (4/11) and identity A (4/10), all five of which have four associated citations.

With a lower number of relationships, the nodes social cohesion B (2/10) and sustainability (2/11) appear, followed by ethics A, in Mayan blue (1/10), in green identity B (1/3), in sky blue, respect B (0/10) and solidarity (0/11).

These data show the important role that image plays in online tourism promotion, it is the representation of an artistic reality that offers the human being an escape from his daily life, it can reinforce the destination brand. The image represents everything that is positive about a tourist location, but without the socio-cultural responsibility that it implies, it only presents, and even creates, the desire to visit a destination.

This conception of image reinforces the consumer society that produces content to entertain the masses and reinforce the ideology of use and exploitation of resources, leaving aside the economic, political, environmental, and socio-cultural problems present in today's society (Sontang, 1981).

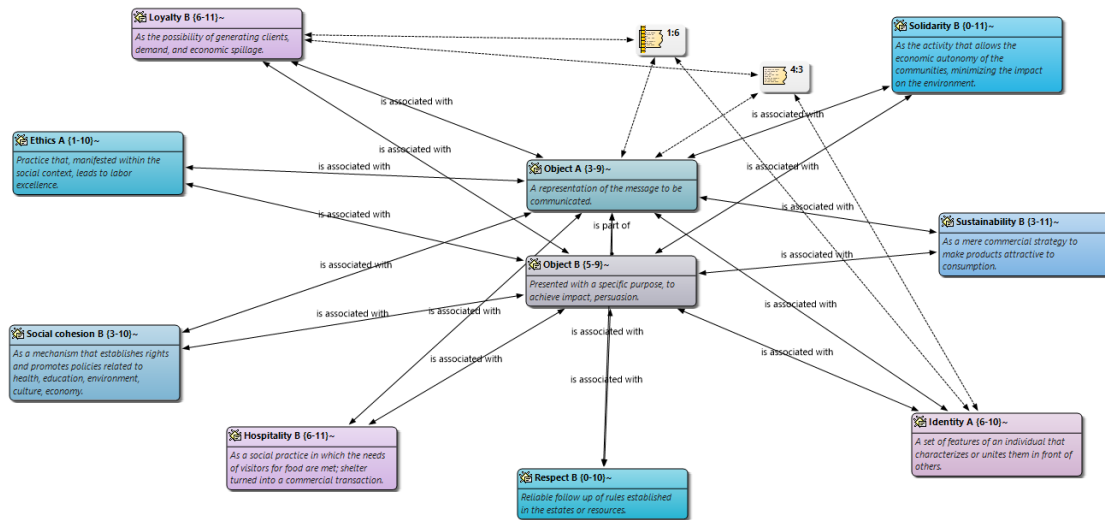
The image is an essential piece in the puzzle of online tourism promotion therefore, much attention should be paid to the selection and construction of images within an advertising discourse. And if this construction responds to an institutional level, this care is a major responsibility.

The second network (graphic representation) is that of the object code, in image 2. In this image, the object shows a lesser presence in the quotes of the discourse: object a (2/9); as the representation of the message to be communicated and object b (3/9); presenting it with the aim of achieving impact and persuasion. The categories that present more density (relation with other categories and the object code) are loyalty b (4/11), hospitality b (4/11) and identity a (4/10). This is followed by sustainability b (2/11), social cohesion b (2/10). Those with the lowest density are ethics a (1/10), solidarity b (0/11) and respect b (0/10).

The object is positioned as the representation of the image, idea, or message you want to communicate. The representation of objects is determined by the cultural codes of society. Whether it is an idea, a tangible or intangible fact, it is presented without questioning whether the use opts for the reification of such an object (García and Cabezuelo, 2016).

The representation of the idea of what Mexico is and what it offers, through the objects that make up the content, has a strong relationship with the values of hospitality, loyalty, and identity. Presenting a flag, the gastronomy of a destination, means showing what makes it unique and unites it in front of others. In a deep connotation, a flag would be showing its independence as a nation, the greatness of its history and its people, the pride of the country, the respect and care in the relationship with its resources.

Image 2 - Object code

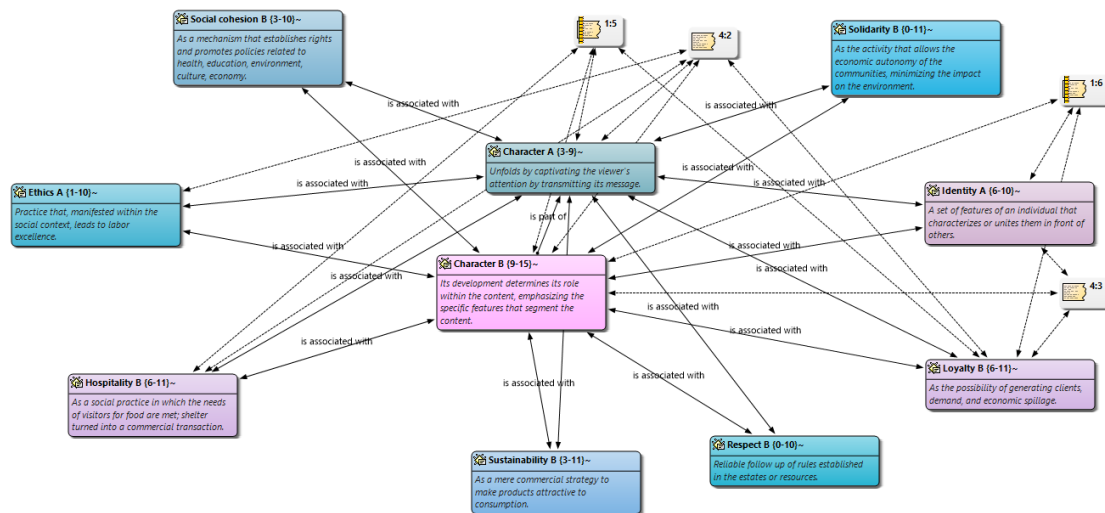


Source: The authors, based on the analysis *Dear Colombia*

The third network is that of the character code, in image 3. In this network the character b (6/15) stands out; as the one that delimits and segments the audience it wants to reach, with less density is the character a (2/9); as the one that has the role of transmitting the discourse. The categories do not vary neither in their density nor in their foundation: Loyalty b (4/11), hospitality b (4/11) and identity (4/10) are those of greatest association followed by: sustainability (2/11), social cohesion (2/10) and ethics a (1/10) to leave at the end a: respect b (0/10) and solidarity b (0/11).

The character b is the one with the highest density and foundation not only in the network, but in relation to all the codes. Through the character, the audience to which the message is addressed is identified. Therefore, their physical appearance, sex, age, body language, clothing and attitude are important to reach the desired segment.

Image 3 - Character Code



Source: Own elaboration based on the analysis *Dear Colombia*

The character, presented in a specific context, transmits concrete values: family, status, simplicity while determining, in a certain way, the transmitted discourse. In this sense, the characters develop within a context that denotes health, vitality, a relaxed lifestyle, with the economic capacity to spend their free time in pleasant places and carry out activities to which not all adults and young people have access. However, a part of the speech mentions: “let's keep making the world dance and sing, it's just what the world needs” (from minute 1:37 to 1:42). This message is far from creating awareness among tourists of the impact their presence has on the destination they visit.

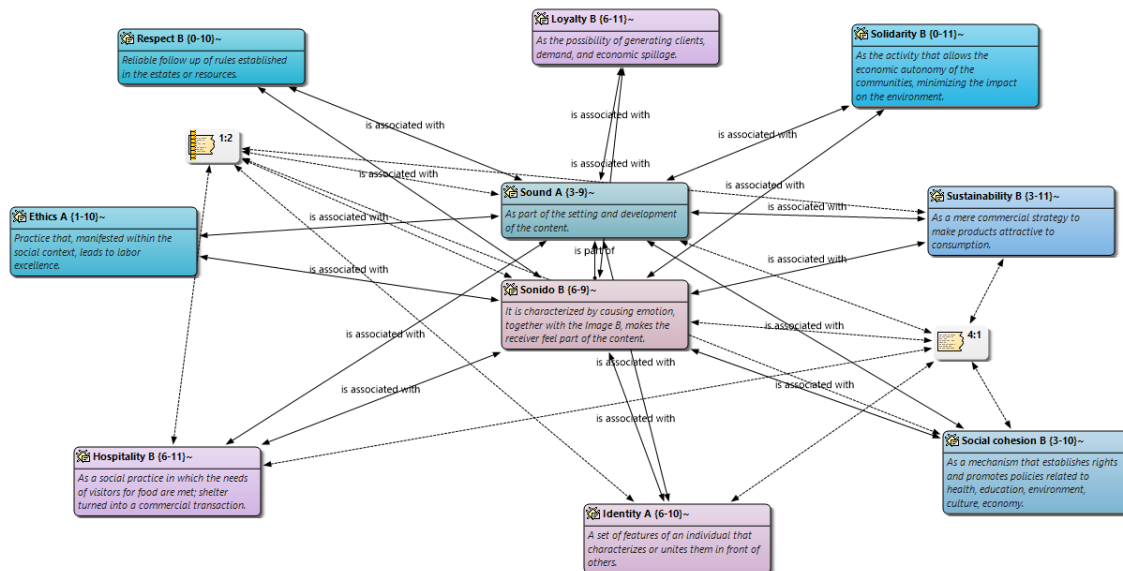
In the fourth grid the sound code, image 4, shows less density and substantiation; sound a (2/9); as the means to create ambience and sound b (4/9); evokes emotion to create an atmosphere that captures attention. The categories do not vary in density or foundation: loyalty b (4/11), hospitality b (4/11), identity a (4/10), sustainability b (2/10), social cohesion b (2/10), solidarity b (0/10), respect b (0/10) and ethics a (1/10).

Through the sound you can make a complete denotative and connotative reading. It has several roles: it determines the relationship between the image and the word, it creates an atmosphere of affinity, it allows to remember the product and to highlight specific characteristics; it is a means to create tension or relaxation, it is related to voices, noise and music. Sound can also evoke emotion to create an atmosphere that captures attention and directs the message towards specific purposes.

Sound participates in the creation of content in its two connotations mentioned in the description of the code. It is an element that prepares the viewer to enter the content and capture their attention. At the right moment, it combines characters and objects to generate emotion and make the message memorable for the receiver who has created an emotional bond with the content he or she is receiving.

Despite not having a high association, like the image or the character, the sound is fundamental to give rhythm to the message. In this sense, an adequate handling of sound can make the tourist aware of the need to re-humanize the tourist activity and motivate him/her to understand the conditions of the destination he/she is visiting

Image 4 - Sound code



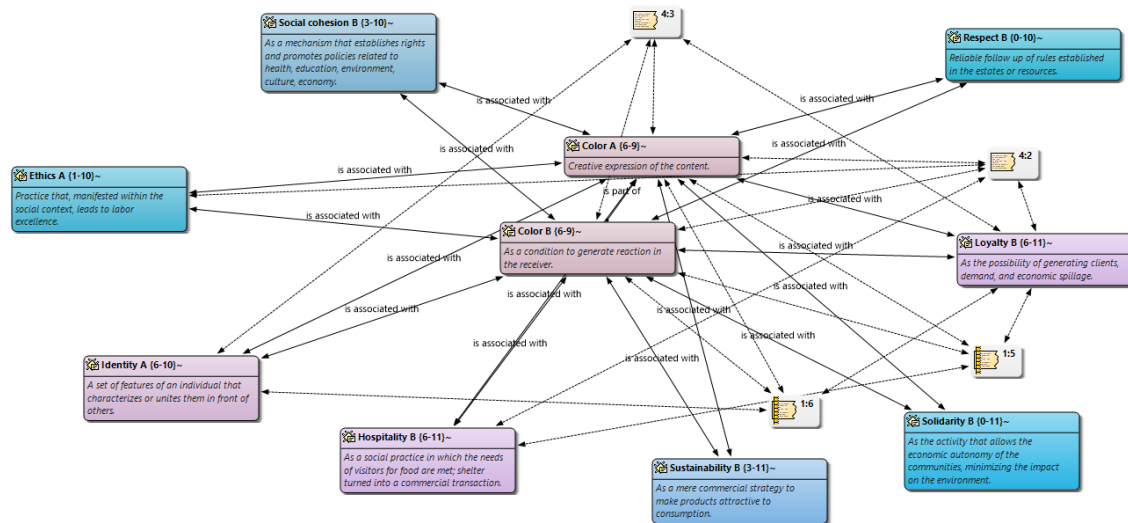
Source: Own elaboration based on the analysis *Dear Colombia*

The fifth and last net is that of the color code, image 5. Color also presents a lower density and foundation: color a (4/9); as a means of expression and color b (4/9); conditioned by the context. In this network the categories do not vary, loyalty b (4/11), hospitality (4/11), identity a (4/10), sustainability (2/11), social cohesion (2/10), ethics (1/10) and solidarity (0/11).

Color is not only an expressive resource, it also evokes emotions, attitudes, and perceptions; it is a manifest phenomenon in the everyday life of society, it comes to have a representation of identity in the individual. Its interpretation, condition and meaning vary according to the context.

By taking advantage of the emotions that a sunset, a sunny day, can arouse in the receiver in all its splendor and with all its color, color is a functional part of the story. It helps to remember an experience, emotional states of the tourist or the differentiation of the moments that are presented in the narrative of the message.

Image 5 - Color code



Source: Own elaboration based on the analysis *Dear Colombia*

The analysis carried out on the four cards shows the important relationship between the codes that are part of the structure of the message (image, object, character, sound, color) and the categories that have been incorporated. Each code is a key element in the structuring of a message; the fusion of each of these elements helps to communicate ideas, to imprint a fingerprint in the memory of the receiver and to identify the message easily. Hence the importance of understanding their role in the discourse.

The result of this analysis shows the presence of the categories: identity, loyalty, and hospitality in the discourse. The structure harmoniously designed to highlight these categories makes use of specific objects to denote them; by showing a flag with the right music, at the right moment merging it with the landscape, it creates the right atmosphere for the narrator to raise the tone of his voice and achieve the credibility of the discourse. Despite having been identified in the content, the categories have only one meaning: to reinforce the objective of generating economic flow.

The intrinsic relationship between the indicators allows us to support the initial hypothesis of this research work: online tourism promotion in Mexico perpetuates the conventional discourse underlying the refunctionalization of the traditional model of institutionalized tourism promotion that encompasses programs, regulations and content, commodifying the cultural and natural heritage of a reality that becomes “fantastically fantastic” due to multimedia content and does not reflect the real conditions of the dynamics of the tourist destinations, hiding the crises (of diverse types and orders) that are part of them, to strengthen a tourist model that only serves hegemonic interests and moves away from solidarity tourism (tourism as a tool of social cohesion).

The media discourses that for many decades have regulated the socio-cultural environment of society divert attention from maintaining the immediacy that envelops the community concerned with various fashionable issues, which the groups in power control and channel for their benefit, opinions are silenced because reality has been accepted passively and almost imperceptibly.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the institutional management of online tourism promotion through the use of video—as an effective and efficient means to reach users—in Mexico there was a possibility to make visitors aware of the importance of tourism as a tool for social cohesion, especially in regions and places, including top tourist destinations, where poverty, marginalization and social inequalities are evident.

The analysis of the content of Letters from Mexico to the World allows us to recognize the validity of the culture, media, and discourses that started in the School of Frankfurt and that stands out in a plethora of researchers. When analyzing the tourist promotion online, the tendency to dominance and preponderance of one class over another is observed, and this is evident in the discursive structure of the letters. Characters, images, colors, sound, objects, and the discourse itself, articulate the refunctionalization of the mercantilist model that dictates how, where and under what conditions the consumption of tourist products and services should be.

The magnification of the goodness of a destination and the human unconsciousness in the promotion is presented as “what the world needs”, textually expressed in the letter Dear Colombia. The cultural industry that exempts man from all conscience and turns him into an object of tourist consumption continues to be re-functionalized in promotional strategies that are articulated with specific ends and ideologically colonized—in a massive way—by means of the Internet, seeming an innovative freshness; the apparent spontaneity in the content is nothing more than a commercialized creation.

This work contributes not only in its theoretical approach, but also in its methodological design by operationalizing codes and categories that show the importance of a critical analysis of the content of online tourism promotion, which aims to change the conventional sense for one oriented to social cohesion and solidarity tourism.

The inclusion of notions of apparent socio-cultural interest in online tourism promotion must break with hegemonic interests, which are far from responding to the solidarity, ethical, sustainable, respectful, hospitable, and identity-based needs demanded by current tourism development and about which further research is needed.

## 7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT) for the support provided during this research.

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