The green representation in the outdoor hospitality

A cultural analysis of green campsites in contemporary France

Master thesis

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Abstract

Since the dawn of time, camping has always existed. It is now seen as a significant field of tourism studies, especially with the expansion of green tourism. However, little is known about the representation of green campsites in France. Hence, this research focuses on the cultural values that are transmitted by them, as well as their online representations on French websites. This thesis analysed twenty-two websites through an inductive approach by employing a discourse analysis methodology which included both textual and visual analysis at the same time. Subsequently, coding and theming allowed the researcher to identify clear patterns which could be observed. Observations resulted in three main themes encompassing firstly, '*back to nature in green campsites*'; secondly, campsites as '*places to socialize*' and thirdly, as places that meet '*high standards and expectations*'. The cultural values all revolved around nature, which is therefore the anchor for the others values. In a nutshell, well-being, respect, sharing, conviviality, safety and uniqueness are some of the values transmitted by the green campsites through their texts and pictures displayed online. On a theoretical level, this paper contributes a recent view concerning the camping sector in France, as well as a relevant insight for the management and marketing of outdoor accommodation by empirically assessing discourse surrounding the green camping sector, using established models. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact such values may have on social practices. Furthermore, the results indicated that there is a clear trend towards green tourism, and that it can be studied more deeply in further research.

Keywords: Campsites; Camping; Green Tourism; Cultural Values; Discourse.

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"We modern humans, increasingly competent about making our way through the natural world, have been decreasingly confident about its values, its meanings. The correlation is not accidental. It is hard to discover meaning in a world where value appears only at the human touch, hard to locate meaning when we are engulfed in sheer instrumentality, whether of artefacts or natural resources. One needs a significant place to dwell." (Rolston III, 1988)

1. Introduction

Recently, a trend is emerging in France regarding the search for a 'green campsite'. There was a peak of interest for internet search, reaching the maximum value of 100 in July 2020. A value of 50 means that the term is half as popular and it only scores 70 in the same period in 2019 (Google trends, 2021 – Appendix A). The same tendency is observed thanks to a survey by Chahine (2021), where 40% of the respondents say they are prepared to pay more to travel in an environmentally responsible way. Besides, 85% of the French people questioned expect travel platforms to offer a selection of '*responsible'* and '*environmentally friendly holiday'*. It applies to the mode of transportation, but also to the accommodation.

According to another survey, in addition to the campsite's friendliness and accessibility, the interviewees almost all share the feeling that the campsite brings you closer to nature – 85% in 2020 and 78% in 2013, +7 points – (Fourquet & Chasles-Parot, 2020). Thus, people are looking for nature and space. For that, camping is one of the solutions thanks to the privacy of accommodations and outdoor activities, specifically in green campsites (Perrin & Montiel, 2021).

Besides, looking at the proximity and attachment to nature, campers choose a type of holiday thanks to their selection criteria, but also their inner values. The idea of what is desirable, the value, can shed light on the contemporary phenomenon of green camping. For that, and over the last twenty years, new brands such as *Huttopia* or *Sea Green* have appeared on the market to develop green campsites. Labels such as *Clef Verte* have also been created to guarantee sustainable tourism for tourist accommodations. However, it is difficult to grasp their values, that is to say, "the importance or worth of something for someone; or the beliefs people have, especially about […] what is most important in life" (Cambridge Dictionary). Values are shared within society, and they vary from one individual to another (Tigre Moura et al., 2015). Their complexity, therefore, lies in bringing the majority of people together through these shared values, and then, to create the real proposition and a tangible manifestation that can regroup them towards a common understanding of what green campsites are.

To this end, creating a common understanding through the use of a certain language, with a particular meaning, leads to a discourse that brings tourists together. Indeed, the role of language therein is crucial, as it characterises social and cultural change, as well as structures the area of knowledge and social practices (Fairclough, 2010, p.2). That is why an academic insight into the values associated with this trend of nature can shed light on the relationship between discourse and social practices. As stated by Urry (1994), there are four possible forms of relationships: "first, tourist practices and culture develop in opposite directions; second, that tourist practices are

separate from culture but reflect how it changes; third, that tourist practices lead cultural changes and provide a good index of its future transformation; and finally, that tourist practices simply cultural, that is, they comprise signs, images, texts, and discourse".

This relationship between discourse and social practices motivates the focus of this thesis, which aims to answer the following research question: *how are green camping sites represented on French websites, and what kind of values concerning camping culture are key to these representations?* In other words, the focus of the thesis will be on the understanding of the cultural values transmitted by green campsites thanks to the representation made online on websites. The objective is to emphasise how they have applied a certain green discourse to convey a specific significance. Through discourse in the broadest sense, this includes linguistic texts and it covers other symbolic forms such as visual images, so the thesis analyses websites of green camping looking closely at textual and iconographical data.

The research goal of this study is to build knowledge on the common values shared by green campsites in France and potentially beyond, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the impact such values may have on social practices. Such understanding is essential to ensure effective management of a green campsite, to launch activities that are as green as possible, as well as proposing impactful communication.

To foster this understanding, the concept of representations (Hall, 2013), the use of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2010), as well as cultural values will be used to capture the overall structure and meaning which the campsites seek to portray. Theoretically, campsites and the culture around them have been studied since the seventies (Clark et al., 1971; Hassell et al., 2015; Hogue, 2011; Mikulić, 2017). However, there is no literature on green campsite because the majority of previous research is outdated, or with a focal point on the USA and the motives of campers in the national parks. This research will add a more in-depth view concerning green campsites and their cultural values related to discourse in France. Furthermore, Brooker & Joppe (2013) suggest further empirical research on the representation of such campsites. This thesis, therefore, aims to address these identified gaps by analysing website content drawing on theories from Hall and Fairclough's concepts. The aim is to connect insights within tourism studies including cultural concerns, representation of nature, and place meaning in green camping sites (Norton, 1996).

As suggested at the beginning of this introduction, changes in language use are an important part of wider social and cultural changes. This is increasingly the case, but the claim needs more explanation and justification concerning green campsites in order to bring a new focus on the extent

to which social realities and actions are products of discourse, or are shaped by larger social factors (Fairclough, 2010, p.5). Therefore, this thesis attempts to empirically assess discourse surrounding the green camping sector using established models in the theoretical concepts which satisfy the scope of the study.

In terms of its societal relevance, this thesis contributes valuable insight into how to approach marketing on websites in particular, and even how to put forward certain values to better apprehend and meet the needs of the future holidaymaker. In light of the recent increase in demand for green tourism destinations as mentioned at the beginning, this contribution may help tourism managers to expand their knowledge of how people find meanings in their holidays. The influence of discourse on social practices is proven and might remain stable in the era of social media, where it "intersects with most aspects of their lives" (Appel et al., 2020). For this reason, the issues of representation and values transmitted will still be important in the future, and this thesis might bring facts and examples to deal with those.

For that, the paper is structured as follows: first, it provides a theoretical framework covering the evolving concept of camping culture, as well as key academic concepts. Then, the methodology is explained and is based on a discourse analysis with an inductive approach. It is followed by the discussion of findings thanks to a textual and visual analysis which led to the interpretation of cultural values. The research is concluded by summarising the study's main results, highlighting its limitations, as well as proposing possible areas for future research. In the next chapter, the theoretical framework helps to delimit the subject around the current knowledge already acquired.

2. Theoretical framework

On one hand, this chapter aims to outline the history of campsites from the beginning thanks to previous academic contributions. It will help to further understand the relationship between discourse and cultural values, discovering from where the phenomenon of camping has emerged. In addition, it will lay the foundations of an activity that has spread beyond Europe and spilled into the United States. Then, it has been democratised in France until the development of green tourism and green campsites.

On the other hand, the theoretical framework will go through the key concepts, firstly delving into the explanation of '*representations'* that will be necessary for the empirical assessment of the selected discourse surrounding the green camping sector. Secondly, the concept of '*discourse'* stated by Fairclough, and influenced by Foucault, will mainly help to build the method section, and later on, the discussion. Thirdly, the key terms of '*culture'*, '*value'* and '*cultural values'* will be explained.

2.1. Around camping culture

2.1.1. History of campsites

The joys of camping are ageless. It can be considered as an old phenomenon with the Prehistory being the beginning of the campsite's establishment. The way of living of cavemen was really simple such as choosing a base for a camp, building a roof, cutting wood, or creating a fire and cooking place (Hogue, 2011). In addition, literature shows across the centuries, from the 17th to the Romantic Era and Enlightenment movement, the different benefits of nature contact and the notion of escape (Stoll, 1998; Thoreau, 1864). In fact, in the 19th century, the American Thoreau (1864) was one of the first to experiment with ecological camping, living for more than two years in the heart of nature as it considered it as the condition to understand it and discover its rhythms. That is to say, the joy of camping is not recent, and the reference to nature neither.

From this, one of the key studies on camping culture explains that it is based on four pillars: "sitting, clearing, making and breaking" (Hailey, 2008). Precisely, sitting means build the establishment. Clearing refers to the nomad way of living, where after the establishment, there is a need to explore around. Then, making is doing activities and living, while breaking is finally tidying up. That is why, the construction and arrangement of camping sites are versatile, and allows to have different layers of places. It includes camps, campgrounds, and taking the example of a pitch, it can welcome caravan parks, recreational vehicles (RV), cabins, or different types of shelter that allow campers to ensure comfort (Brooker & Joppe, 2014; Ramsing, 2007). Other insightful studies have

described the history of camping and have a different meaning to explain what is a campsite. In North America, it is called 'a *campground, trailer park [...] or RV resort'*. For Oceania, have a free and rural experience with a caravan is referred to as '*boondocking'*, whereas in Europe, the pieces of land offering camping are called '*campsites'* (Brooker & Joppe, 2013). Thus, the reference of '*campsite'* will be used in the following sections, as this paper focuses on the analysis of France.

In general, the campsite encompasses different spaces, such as picnic tables or common sports areas, putting nature and pleasure at the centre of the holidays (Hassell et al., 2015; Lucivero, 2012; Mikulić, 2017; Sirost, 2001). In this direction, the campsite creates mobility across spaces and it structures the social life of people during their stays. Nevertheless, the literature established a debate that camping is paradoxical, and the word itself of the campground is paradoxical (Hogue, 2011). Camp signifies mostly a temporary and informal area and the ground is a dedicated place. Being in a certain demarcated ground, visitors cannot use a spot they could normally use if it was wild. It is also notable with the organised camping dedicated for youth, as the camp is made to "escape the troubles of city living" and receive education "to create a strong culture of learning" (Ramsing, 2007). In other words, there is an extremely thin nuance concerning the spatial enclosure between freedom and the illusion of being into nature and being captive.

It is also evident that, in the past few decades, campsites have become organised and modern. Campers unlike their ancestors, no longer practice adventurous and survival camping in the same way they did (Brooker & Joppe, 2013; Garst et al, 2009). Literature shows how it is nowadays considered as a holistic activity, where socialization, connectedness, nature, and freedom are crucial. In this way, the comfort is not especially a rudimentary one and outdoor hospitality is not only a cheap form of travel but a total immersed outdoor experience (Sommer, 2020).

2.1.2.   Different forms of campsites

Concerning France, a real revolution was underway, with the upheaval of society and the two weeks of paid holidays in 1936 (Rauch, 2001). In the 1950s, the folding tent was all the rage while the caravan was the height of luxury with a gas stove, running water, and a refrigerator (Sirost, 2001; Maximus, 2019). Naturist camps also experienced a real explosion, with some influences from Germany and Switzerland which offer naked body practices such as hiking and cure towards nature to urban populations (Sirost, 2002). Camping is therefore a clever tool to prolong the moments spent in contact with nature. At the beginning of the 80s, freedom is a house on four wheels, with an engine: the motorhome and then the mobile homes (Franceinfo, 2015; Maximus, 2019). It shows a trend towards comfort, and today there is an enormous range of campsites, from the small one to the luxury one, and the number of tourists visiting campsites continues to rise

(Favre, 2017). The literature described it as '*glamping'*, which combines the word glamour and camping, with a tacit contact with nature (Brochado & Pereira, 2017). In other words, even when there is a development in term of camping accommodation, from the tent to motorhome, the connection with nature is always floating in the air to escape from urban settings and enjoy the company of their family or friends in natural settings (Dwyer & Edwards, 2000; O'Neill, 2010).

Moreover, because more commodities are offered, gathering wood or locating water is not anymore necessary, it leads to an important cultural shift: the idealization of nature as peaceful and non-threatening (Hogue, 2011). It especially comes from the development of new forms of tourism that appear as a result of mass tourism (Weaver & Jin, 2016), as the importance of nature and respect for the planet are increasingly recurring concerns. To group different types of tourism where it is important, the term '*green tourism'* encompasses different sorts related to these recent preoccupations.

'*Sustainable tourism'* is one of those, and is described by the World Tourism Organisation (2021) as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities". It is the most recent definition, and it includes the notion of social and environmental impact that is also a key point in green campsites. However, as pointed by Liu (2003), there are still "weaknesses in measuring the degree or level of sustainability". Looking at campsites, the following analysis will help to understand that some labels exist to prove a certain level of commitment. In addition, '*ecotourism'* is closely linked to the concept of sustainable tourism, and mostly includes "natural areas, conservation, culture, benefits to locals and education" (Fennell, 2001; Pfoor, 2001).

Another one is described as '*slow tourism'*. It is promoting and defending ethical and decelerated or slow-paced experiences, giving priority to quality over quantity to bring more favourable social, psychological, and environmental effects (Heitmann et al., 2011; Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011). Other research emphasises the surroundings, and the importance to engage with local history, culture, and people to connect on a deeper level (Heitmann et al., 2011; Oh et al., 2016). Furthermore, '*rural tourism'* is different from touristic resorts created for mass, because it consists of renovating and adding value to the current properties – and heritage – as tourist housing and attractions. The aim is to valorise the authentic countryside, with its culture and practices, usually small-scale with locals (Lane & Kastenholz, 2015; Pato & Kastenholz, 2017). Again, the same idea can be found in the green campsites.

As a whole, the previous literature explains different forms of tourism which fall within the general term of '*green tourism'.* It is defined as a product or service when it is beneficial to the

producer and consumer, without harming the environment. It is environmentally friendly at the broadest senses, including the context and the planet (Jones, 1987). The same applies to green campsites, it includes the resolution of becoming aware of the environment, having conscious holidays, enjoying the joy of nature and the landscapes.

Finally, returning to the history of campsites from the perspective of the production and creation of space also provides insight into its general touristic appeal. Literature shows it as a mix of mobility and fixity, locality and foreignness, temporality and permanence which refers to nomadism (Hailey, 2008, p.1). It is frequent to see tourists from different regions in France or even from different countries. A long time ago, moving was related to changing place to find food and other resources. However, in a western context, camping is often about going from home into nature, and sometimes, people are also taking their camping spot over a second home (Sirost, 2002). That is why, the neo nomadism is related to a specific quest, from a different way of life to the search for a substitute lifestyle (Korpela, 2020) created by specific ideas and representations given by the society, or imagined by campers, thanks to certain cultural values. The following section explains deeply how to understand these notions of representations, discourse, and cultural values.

2.2. Key concepts

Previous research has investigated camping as a cultural phenomenon in the United States. Others explore and compile the diverse motivations of tourists to experience camping. Indeed, some motives are more important, such as the aesthetic outdoor experience, or escape from routine responsibilities and urban stress (Hollender, 1977). For others, especially for camping in US national parks, the experience of reconnecting with nature is also crucial (Hassell, 2015). However, before the motivations, there is the process of campsites' selection by campers. It has been studied, saying that there is a logical relationship between the selection and the motivations, as the selection is based on certain criteria that influenced the motivations themselves (Choo, 2015). However, the process of selection is influenced by the representation, as well as the discourse used. It is also related to the cultural values transmitted. This section is therefore explaining the main concepts that will be used in the analysis in chapter 4.

2.2.1. Representation

Campsites are tangible locations that do exist in real life. And in society, there is a representation of the mode of camping. Academically, the literature, and especially Hall (2013, p.3) states it as "the production of the meaning of the concept in our minds through language". According to the Oxford English Dictionary, to represent is "to describe or depict, but also to symbolize and stand for". However, it is complicated to describe and implement what an individual thinks because

it depends on the relationship between things that work as mental representations. Hall (2013, p.45) describes it as "the process by which members of a culture use language to produce meaning". Indeed, in society, there is a manner to create narratives and stories around meanings (Mackay, 1997, p.68).

Taking the case of campsites, it is possible to imagine that campers have a certain idea of how to practise camping thanks to some cultural codes. It comes into a general context because one word can have a meaning, which does not have any sense of being rough into a sentence. That is why, to transmit a message, the context counts (Scherer & Jackson, 2008). The challenge for a green campsite is therefore to convey a message through signs, to different people who have a diverse way of thinking and interpreting. There is no correct or single answer to what an image means.

For that, Barthes (1964) investigated semiotics which is related to the 'how' of the representation, it is the study of signs. Semiotics sees communication as composed of signs, made from the '*signifiers*' – what the viewer sees – and the '*signified*' – what it means. It then forms a picture to convey a message. Moreover, he splits it in two. On the one hand, the '*denotation*' corresponds to the descriptive level where most people agree on the meaning, as it is the first common sense. On the other hand, the '*connotation*' is more an interpretation, a general belief, that will be used later in the findings for the textual and iconographical analysis. However, it is an old static system that has been revived, notably through the concept of discourse.

2.2.2. Discourse

The representation as stated by Barthes is later modified by Foucault. He adds a notion by stating that it is not only about language, but '*discourse*'. Characterised by a group of statements, there is argumentation and construction around a topic, including the importance of knowledge and a specific historical context (Foucault, 1981). The discourse is built through time and true experience. He also argues that there is a difference, not debating about meaning and language, but more about the production of knowledge through discourse due to "the process of creating and attempting to fix a particular message or meaning to representation" (Leve, 2012).

Building on this conception, Fairclough proposes a new approach to such an analysis the *'critical discourse analysis'* (CDA). Based on social relations, it is a complex network and relation of communication between people through spoken or written language, as well as visual representations (Fairclough, 2010, p.26). CDA is described as a simple means of communication because the spoken or written discourse is the same as a conversation. The discourse can result from human or multimedia interactions. In other words, the discourse is the whole act of communicating, including the production, comprehension, as well as background or knowledge

shared between the speaker and the listener. Indeed, it is not only the discourse analysis but the relations between discourse and other elements of the social process.

That is why, the textual analysis has two modes, one being interdiscursive, knowing that texts can and generally do draw upon and articulate together multiple discourses, multiple genres, and multiple styles (Fairclough, 2010, p.7). It is also a linguistic or multimodal analysis of the language with visual or sound effects if there are videos. Most of the time, multimodal discourse is used, especially on camping websites which include texts, videos, and pictures (Bloor & Bloor, 2013, p.7). As the role of camping has evolved, from survival to family holidays in tents with the fully equipped mobile home, new approaches to tourism are needed to appropriately address and reflect the nature of green campsites. In this case, Fairclough's approach helps to analyse the discourse displayed online.

To complete the picture, it is crucial to highlight the role of marketing, which is part of the discourse of green campsites. In the tourism sector, marketing is focused on the customer. It "is geared towards making promises through value proposition, enabling the fulfilment of individual expectations created by such promises" (Grönroos, 2006). Here, the value proposition is not delivered by an organisation, but the consumer is the co-creator of this value (Dolnicar & Ring, 2014; Grönroos, 2006). It comes from the wish to create a personal and social singularity, to have three aims: to belong (i.e., to society), to stand out (i.e., compared to other brands) and to have popularity – either it can be seen as positive or negative. In this direction, as the marketing suggests implicit ideas as well as websites of campsites, it helps to identify and chooses a destination. That is why, it is interesting in green campsites to look at the combination between the hidden, positive, and negative meanings, as well as at signs and symbols which are vital elements in tourism marketing (Bastos & Levy, 2012). In other words, due to the competition and the increasing availability of unique and peculiar places, the considerable market of green campsites influences the production of constructed representation to create a place even more distinguishable (Nair, 2017). This creation of a distinct place is done by sharing a discourse that transmits certain cultural values.

2.2.3. Cultural values

In order to understand what cultural values mean, it is important to look one by one at the word '*culture'*, '*value',* and '*cultural values'*. '*Culture'* has always been one of the most studied subjects in literature, even on camping, with a generous number of definitions (Clark et al., 1971; Moussavi et al., 2016; Tigre Moura et al., 2015). It is considered as a "dynamic process whereby people are actively engaged in constructing group life", it is a whole development of a way of living (Stephenson, 2008). Derived from psychology and anthropology, it also represents "codes of

conducts embedded in a specific social group" (Moussavi et al., 2016). Because culture also refers to shared identity and behaviours between a group, it also means shared meanings.

Anthropologically, '*meaning'* is related to how people, community, nation, or social group are living (Hall, 2013, p.1). They are not fixed at the individual level, but society makes the meanings significant. They change with time, but also with population, and might help to regulate or control the structure of a nation or a group (Thompson, 1997, p.3). However, they depend on the interpretation of the participants (Hall, 2013, p.xix) which is produced by each individual and then interpreted more as a set of practices to express a certain identity (Woodward, 1997, p.54). For that, '*language'* is the way to exchange those shared meanings, the mean of communication to make sense and create a basis for dialogue. Into it, there is a use of signs and symbols that can be expressed with sound, written words, or even feelings. So, language is also related to emotions (Semetsky, 2006).

As emotions are intangible, it is also the same for the concept of '*value'*. It is a universal state, a belief, and it guides principles in the life of a person, or at a larger scale, social entity. These *values* evolve with time, vary in importance through experience (Tigre Moura et al., 2015). For the Barrett Values Centre (2021), values are also "the energetic drivers of aspirations and intentions", which are a source of human motivation and decision-making. As a result, by combining culture and values, '*cultural values'* are therefore shared by a group or community or are socially constructed (Stephenson, 2008). There are various ways of valuing campsites and the world around them – cultural values shared by campers or managers are different for instance. This includes traditional attributes such as stories but also attributes that might be considered part of green campsites and are culturally valued – a return to basics for example (Stephenson, 2008). Cultural values are thus transmitted through representations that come from the imagination of individuals and society, as well as through the use of a particular type of discourse.

To summarise this chapter, the campsite has a long history going all the way back to prehistoric times. It has continued to evolve towards a greener dimension over the past few decades, and more so in recent years. This evolution has been grouped around cultural values, underlined by a certain type of representation. The latest is a complex phenomenon linked with language and meaning. It has led to the creation of discourse, which will be used as the methodology upon which is the research is based. In other words, this chapter is a basis to understand the relationship between the discourse and the social values transmitted within the green campsites, as well as to an empirical framework to dive into the method section.

3. Methodology

According to Grossberg (1997, p. 237), a key methodological issue for cultural studies pertains to *"describe and intervene in the ways texts and discourses (i.e., cultural practices) are produced within, inserted into, and operate in the everyday life of human beings and social formations"*. As stated before, this thesis focuses on the understanding of the cultural value transmitted by green campsites thanks to the representation made online on websites. Thus, the objective is to emphasize how they have applied a certain green discourse.

This chapter details the research design, the data collection, and the data analysis. The research design presents the qualitative approach used. The data collection specifies the chosen green websites. Finally, the data analysis describes the process, from the use of the software *ATLAS.ti* to the coding of the qualitative data.

3.1. Research Design

The research question has been answered employing discourse analysis. It allows to "examine social phenomena […] and explore how the socially produced ideas […] were created and are held in place" (Hardy et al, 2004). The methodology suited perfectly with the objective of the thesis which aims to understand the representations and cultural values transmitted by websites. The discourse analysis has been made through an inductive approach that is a qualitative research approach. The objective was to look, not on global discourse, but specifically on wordings, linguistic and principal patterns of green campsites. One of the main goals of the inductive approach is to "allow research findings to emerge from the dominant themes inherent in the raw data, without the constraints imposed by structured methodologies" (Thomas, 2003). It also allows to have diverse sources and thus, multiple interpretations. In this way, the inductive approach measures all the distinguishing features of the phenomenon of the green campsite, in various French locations, and on several websites (Sabherwal & King, 1991).

To gather the data which will then be analysed in this research, the internet and websites have been used. The main reasons for this included the unlimited number of websites, the free information, and the reduced costs involved. Indeed, the internet is an actual huge network that exchanges data between computers. In this case, it has been used in two ways, as a tool to gather data, cross diverse cultural fields, as well as retrieving and assessing public information (Mann & Stewart, 2000). It is a language system itself (Silverman, 2004, p.96) as, in the past decades, the internet has been selected as a new tool to build qualitative research, as well as a new setting for social research, and "new means for understanding the way social realities get constructed and reproduced" (Silverman, 2004, p.95). Indeed, it has had different functions being "a communication

medium (a tool), a global network of connection and a scene of social construction (a place)" (Silverman, 2004, p.97). In addition, the internet is also a social phenomenon that allows us to understand how a specific group develops, here, green camping. That is why, to understand what the values of green campsites are, the internet sources are analysed in order to determine how language is built and sustain social reality.

Concretely, to understand the cultural values, a textual analysis was made. The paper mainly used Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), based on social relations to look at the written language and visual representations. It represented the whole act of communicating – a multimodal discourse – especially on websites that included texts, videos, and pictures (Bloor & Bloor, 2013, p.7). In other words, it was not only the discourse analysis but the relations between discourse and other elements of the social process.

As a complement, a visual analysis focused on the pictures or photographs chosen by camping websites. Indeed, photography is a language, which allows constructing a meaning (Hall, 2013, p.xxi), not only "what the camera can record, but what the eye can see" (Silverman, 2004, p.246). The fine nuance here resided in that most images are in 2 dimensions, whereas reality exists in 3 dimensions. That is why, the context and the space needed to be taken into account, as images are not simply a sphere of representation, it also contained (lived) data, as well as information to investigate social and cultural processes.

The textual and visual analysis were complementary in the sense that when a text wants to convey information, there is sometimes a need to see it in a photo, to imagine via the visual what the words describe. Indeed, "visual modes project meanings" that texts can have (Royce & Bowcher, 2007). Text and image support each other, as it allows double confirmation that both illustrate a particular green activity or green campsite for instance. Hence, the textual data analysis was undertaken first, complemented by a visual analysis based on photos.

3.2. Data collection

The aim was to identify the cultural values of green campsites, as stated by the research question. Although some research has been concerned with the motivations of green campers, or even the marketing campaigns of green campsites (Hollender, 1977), it was found that previous papers explored only the surface meanings of these types of holidays. To further explore the underlying values, an analysis of 22 websites was conducted to identify the main emerging trends. Twenty-two sites were needed in total, until similar patterns were found, thus reaching saturation. Indeed, thanks to the inductive approach, recurrent and dominant trends were found (Thomas,

2003). In this way, saturation occurred in the sense that each time the same observations came out, and by collecting more sites, the results were similar.

Concerning the selection of the websites, it was made after a preliminary study of all the camping brands available on the French territory. It was based on the websites' description – where words like '*nature'* or '*respect for the environment'* were predominant for example–, if they were registered with a green label, as well as the knowledge of the researcher concerning the outdoor hospitality industry. Other affiliations such as *Homair Vacances, Yelloh Villages*, or *Tohapi* are known for offering fun family holidays, often with large water parks and a high number of pitches, but these brands were outside of the study scope. Thereby, the following table lists the analysed websites of green campsites resulting from the final selection:

Affiliation	Name	Campsite
Association	*La Via Natura*	Le Lac O fées Campsite Mandala Campsite du Mettey
Brand	*Huttopia*	Chardons bleus - Ile de Ré Campsite Dieulefit Village Saumur Campsite
	Sea Green	Les Grenettes Campsite Emerald Campsite Le Paradis Campsite
	Sites & Paysages	Le Village des Meuniers Gien Tourist Campsite Le Ventoulou
	Slow Village	Biscarosse Lac Loire Valley Breizh Légendes
Label	*Clef Verte 'Normal'*	Ile de Boulancourt Les Mouettes Lou Pantai
	Clef Verte Naturist	Le Clapotis Creuse Nature Héliomonde Origan Village

Figure 1: Table listing campsites used in the analysis

- *La Via Natura* is an association of 17 small to medium-sized campsites, with owners passionate about nature, educational activities, and the discovery of local wildlife and flora.
- *Huttopia* is a group of 44 campsites and villages and is oriented toward escape and outdoor activities. It has more than 40 years of experience and is one of the leaders of the market.
- *Sea green* is a recent group that combines campsites on the Atlantic Ocean. They promote the proximity and benefits of the sea.

- *Sites et Paysages* is oriented towards environmental protection and nature activities, with more than 20 sites in France. Now it is merged with *Les Castels* and they formed the group *French Time.*

- *Slow Village* is a small group of 5 sites centred around a slower lifestyle. It is expanding and it is renovating new campsites in France.

- *Clef Verte* is a certification label gathering more than 5,000 campsites, that have energy, water, and waste management policies, responsible purchases, and that raise awareness of environmental issues. Naturist campsites that are also part of the label have been chosen to look at similarities.

These affiliations have been chosen because they are the most represented in France when searching for green campsites. In addition, they all have a different website presentation, different means of communication, and funding, allowing a more global, complete, and impartial analysis with enough rich data.

3.3. Data analysis

To contextualise, the data was retrieved in April and May 2021. The tourism sector was in a global pandemic, affecting some information that might not appear in normal time. Thus, some discourses were oriented towards a specific mode of communication. As a result, the analysis was divided into different phases. First, the collection of data has been made through the websites mentioned above and then compiled in a document. Then, the tool of *ATLAS.ti* helped to code the main information and values found on websites. Inspired by the grounded theory from Glaser and Anselm (Bryman, 2012, p.569), the aim was to give label or name to the most recurrent observations to create codes such as '*accommodation type*', '*activities*', '*souvenirs*', or longer with '*commitment to the environment*' and '*creation of the campsite*'.

Throughout the process, the researcher compared the website data with the other websites and other codes. It helped to constantly connect each one and formulate common codes. It was the initial coding (Appendix B). It allowed new ideas to emerge without having preconceived themes in mind by studying fragmented data such as words (Charmaz, 2006, p.48). Right after this step, main themes were able to be identified, it corresponded to the process of the focused coding (Appendix C). For instance, green campsites are places to socialise because codes such as '*sharing*', '*souvenirs*, '*local producers*' appeared several times. This focussed coding also allowed the explanation of the larger segment of data, and it required to "make decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize the data completely" (Charmaz, 2006, p.58). To specify, the codes were not only for an organisational purpose, but they were key to successfully generate the main findings.

This is how the researcher had interpreted the most recurrent patterns which led to the following part, the results (Bryman, 2012, p.571).

The researcher positioned herself as an observer, not a consumer, and tried to be impartial. The findings were the result of recurrent codes. Nonetheless, the interpretation of the major themes may be less objective, or may not be agreed upon by all, as each person has a different point of view. It was part of the inductive approach where there were no precise concepts. The ideas that came from the discourse were thus, the most evident ones in the eyes of the researcher. Hence, the following analysis was based on an interpretation that has been intended to be as objective as possible by the researcher.

To summarise, this chapter has presented the research design which guided this study, describing the inductive approach of the discourse analysis; then it has described the data collection to specify which websites have been chosen; finally, the data analysis and coding process were detailed. The next chapter presents the main observations and findings which emerged from the empirical assessment of the collected data.

4. Results

The following section seeks to portray the relationship between the discourse and cultural values, in order to provide a comprehensive answer to the main research question this thesis is concerned with: *how are green camping sites represented on French websites, and what kind of values concerning camping culture are key to these representations?* For that, the analysis of text and visual data was conducted separately. However, the findings were similar and led to an interpretation of the cultural values represented by green campsites. The discussion brings the observations together and the following results were divided into three parts that emerged the most during the coding process due to the repetition of certain words. '*Surroundings'* and '*natural heritage'* described a link with nature; the words '*sharing'* or '*souvenirs'* pointed the need to interact with others; and finally, the word '*insurance'* or '*label'* reflected a new approach to green camping with high standards.

To clarify, observations resulted in three main themes encompassing firstly, '*back to nature in green campsites'*; secondly, campsites as '*places to socialize'* and thirdly, as places that meet '*high standards and expectations'*. These themes and meanings are linked to each other by common values that will be explained in each section, and derived from the discourse analysis.

In addition, it is important to locate the context in which "camping practices, texts, and cultural identities are produced, represented, contested, and consequently never guaranteed" (Scherer & Jackson, 2008). In fact, the covid-19 is hitting the tourism sector in 2020-2021 which has led to a state of flux and continual adaptation due to the global pandemic. Some information was therefore different compared to the pre-covid period, and it might represent a turning point, perhaps an important one, in the years to come (Wut et al., 2021).

4.1. Back to nature

"There is a deeply bonded and reciprocal communion between humans and nature. The denial of this bond is a source of suffering for both for the physical environment and the human psyche" (Davis, 1998).

4.1.1. Textual analysis

On the websites, what is most obvious from the start is the emphasis on nature, to raise awareness about it, especially focusing on the wealth and resources it has to offer:

> *"The Slow mindset is primarily to get closer to nature" (Slow Village – Breizh Légendes)*
> *"Going on a Huttopia adventure means exploring the great outdoors, living in the heart of nature, getting back to the basics, enjoying a breath of fresh air" (Huttopia)*

"An environmental and social ethic that will make your holiday a moment of dream, discovery, experience and adventure" (La Via Natura).

The emphasis is therefore on nature, including both the area and that which welcomes activities. It is put at the centre, especially on the welcome pages of the websites as a vitrine, to stress its predominance. These texts are therefore linked with green tourism, considered as environment friendly going together with the context and the planet (Jones, 1987).

Related with nature, and as the main part in campsites, are the accommodations. The selected green campsites argue that the facilities adapt to the environment, and not the contrary. It begins by settling the installation of accommodations into a natural space, without colonising it to be the most natural possible and, preserve the landscape as it is. As the ancestors were used to do when settling a camp (Hogue, 2011), the green campsites try to settle neutrally in the space, without damaging it, to be in total harmony with it. It refers again to the literature and the nomadism way of life (Hailey, 2008, p.1), as tourists stay for a fixed period in their accommodation. They know exactly when they are going to leave the place, so, the idea is to settle in temporarily while leaving the minimum of traces in the natural and rich environment.

"Trappeur tents from a stone's throw from the lake"; "A village Cahutte in the heart of nature" (Huttopia)
"A unique seaside experience in Brittany, […] [with] our Maori Lodge Tent […] built out of wood and durable canvas"; "Our pitches are separated with natural hedges […] without breaking away from a natural environment" (Sea Green).

Insisting on unaffected environments creates a difference between campsites and urban or built areas. The green campsite is not a place similar to the city, where neighbours are close in a building for instance. The abundant vegetation which separates the pitches, but also the offer of diverse accommodation, the way of living in green camping is translated into a place to disconnect, live into nature, but still with some commodities. The range of accommodation on offer is in keeping with the way they fit in the environment and with nature, i.e., the classic white mobile home is sometimes offered, but always with a green frame. From being traditional in the way of doing camping, or being in a certain culture like yurts, lodging is comfortable (Brochado & Pereira, 2017). It is different from the fire and tent at the beginning of the camping time in the 30s, without any bathroom for example (Rauch, 2001).

> *"Eco chalet, comfort and premium cottages, cabin or bivouac by the beach, bivouac nomad, huts, wood-clad lodges, 'slow house', 'nature countryside pitch', yurt, mobile home 'grand charme' tent coco sweet …" (retrieved from all websites).*

These names are clear and precise to remind the campers where they are, in a special campsite promoting greener space and accommodations. Using the indication '*countryside'* or '*beach'* allows the dwelling to be situated in its natural environment. It is important to emphasize these names, as they clearly represent the greenness and the contact with nature. Again, it is different from urban infrastructures, as here campsites can gather sea and fields for example, always being incorporated into nature. Moreover, the offer adapts to the needs and the setting.

> *"Nestling within pedestrian areas at the heart of lovely plots"; "perfectly located as close to the Breton countryside as possible, pitches are literally on the waterfront" (Slow Village – Breizh Légendes)*
>
> *"Wooden chalet"* or *"dry toilet"* that is thought of as *"water-saving, enrichment of the soil or respect for the environment, instead of the old hole at the bottom of the garden!" (La Via Natura).*

The lodging is therefore adapted but also took advantage of the setting to offer special spots. In the housing description, there is also a focus on materials that are natural, good for the environment as well as for people. Hence, actions are taken to make the accommodation better, to offer a form of housing adapted to the environment that is the least harmful and to propose a '*coming back to nature'.*

Nonetheless, accommodations can only fit in the natural setting if different types of actions are taken to ensure a viable living environment. It requires to have commitments towards nature such as the use of renewable energy, the saving of water, or the reduction of waste production (*La Via Natura, Slow Village, Clef Verte*). But it is not the only approach. For instance, *Clef Verte - Lou Pantai* divides its commitments into several parts: water, customer, energy, cleaning, landscaping, waste, and partners. At this level, there is a clear engagement towards a sustainable way of doing camping:

> *"It goes from the training of staff to find water leaks, to favour email and digital exchange instead of paper brochures, to participate in the carbon compensation of the journey, to provide solar energy to the swimming pool, to have a compost, to use natural materials, to develop a partnership with Toulon university to intervene in the raining of students […]" (Clef Verte - Lou Pantai).*

The commitment to nature is not only focused on the lodging or simple and easy actions of sorting waste, but the green campsite tries to go further and develop deeper ideas that do not only impact the area of the campgrounds. Involving students from a university in the process is about including and making room for the next generations that, in addition, may have solid ideas for safeguarding their world of tomorrow.

Besides, it is easy to find this commitment towards the type of activities proposed: cycling, mountain biking, walking, yoga, sailing, etc. These activities do not require any electrical material or any oil that can pollute the environment. However, most of these activities are available at all campsites, green or not. The difference appears in precise activities, proposed to children for example:

> *"Ephemeral creation, recycling creations, plant creations, discovering the least, saving the plant, walks and observation, culinary and botanical workshops" (Slow Village – Lac Biscarosse)*
> *"[Thanks to] our beloved residents to stay close to nature [...] you can also play at being a farmer by feeding the animals with us" (Clef Verte – Les Mouettes).*

These extra and uncommon activities participate in the richness of green campsites, where it is easy to enjoy the beauty of nature. Again, to have free and open access to a farm, for instance, is not necessarily accessible in the city or the urban environment. In addition to the accommodations that allow escaping to city life thanks to the green contact, the same applies to the activities connected with nature. It allows the tourists to have an extra activity they are not used to have, at least taking into consideration urban tourists. Furthermore, when it is not dedicated to children, adults can still enjoy nature, or simply appreciate:

> *"The herbal/fruit tea room to gaze upon the landscape while sipping special organic herbal and fruit teas"* and "*Thai, Korean, and Plantar reflexology massages are given by Lionel" (Sites & Paysages – Le Village des Meuniers).*

Here, activities go with the discovery of unusual, but also relaxation by the fact to enjoy the activities proposed.

As specified in the activities, and because nature is always at the centre, the environment and atmosphere surrounding the campsites are crucial. Lakes, mountains, sea, forests, all of the green campsites have a special environment, a sort of natural heritage.

'The functioning of this area is closely linked to its relationship with the land as well as the sea. The lack of industrial activity [...] with moderate population pressure, has allowed the vast ecological wealth of the lake to remain until the present time' (Clef Verte – Le Clapotis).

Likewise, each website has a dedicated section reserved for the surroundings and the touristic offer available around the campsites. Because the green campsites are located in an outstanding natural area, they promote the local economy and richness. It is even portrayed on the first page, which directly positions the reader into a specific location.

"Enjoy a holiday in between the Alps and Provence next to the UNESCO Geopark" (La Via Natura – Mandala Campsite)

"In this region, we should be constantly filled with wonder" or *"with a sense of Caribbean Islands" (Slow Village- Biscarosse Lac)*

"Unique granite land, dotted with menhirs and dolmens which have been here for centuries [...] next to three areas classified Natura 2000" (Slow Village- Breizh Légendes)

"Beautifully located in Saint-Briac, a fishing village with pretty alleys that have passed through time" (Sea Green – Emerald).

It seems important and relevant to mention the presence of added-value that can tip the balance in the right direction for the green campsite. It allows the tourists to position themselves. That is why, as an interpretation, it is possible to assume that the direct environment participates in the emancipation of green campsites. Without the setting and rich natural surroundings, campsites could not be as green as they promote. The presence of a geopark or a protected area is fully part of the green concept. In addition, the particularity of green tourism is coming from another point:

"An untouristed region waiting to be explored" (La Via Natura – Mandala Campsite).

To emphasise the preserved environment of the campsite, it helps to attract green campers who are seeking unknown places, at least, far from mass touristic places because *"the waterfront and the surrounding forest will do the rest" (La Via Natura – Lac ô Fées).* In other words, a key point to establish a green area is to have rich natural external conditions. Indeed, the green campers represent a certain type of tourists, that are not going on holidays in a resort, or people who want to differentiate themselves from others, or just want to prolong the way of life they have already adopted at home. Therefore, it is possible to imagine that the customer base is mainly due to the surroundings which are an asset to promote and put forward by the campsites.

"Hikers, horseback riders or bikers can stay, eat, refuel, repair, or stock up on materials or transportation, for an excellent and unforgettable stop on their route" (Sites &Paysages – Gien Tourist Campsite).

In green campsite, everyone is welcome, no matter what the will and purpose, but at least, for the campsite, it is a way to show a facet of green tourism. Otherwise, this clientele, by their activities, is keen to choose a certain type of housing for a break – on their route, or for holidays. It also means that green campsites are open to receive unusual campers that are not especially coming by cars, and that need this type of welcome. In other words, such a green campsite consists of a crucial place to keep for those types of travellers. However, forecasts predict an increase in glamping, which consists of a form of camping that involves better and luxurious accommodation, facilities, and services compared to the traditional ones associated with camping (Milohnić, et al., 2019). Here, the green campsite might stay in its offer, reserved for a special type of client doing activities related to nature. On a whole, tourists and activities proposed should respect the environment, even if the campers are from different backgrounds.

It is impossible to close this section without dwelling on the phenomenon of naturist campsites. Indeed, the discourse of green campsites had similarities with the one on naturist websites. The observations above are related to nature and are almost identical to the aim of naturism, which is to "unite people by their common desire to live naked and the search for a simple and healthy life" (FFN, 2021). These people meet in peace, without constraint or obligation. Above all, they seek independence and freedom. Indeed, the International Naturist Federation explains that "naturism is a way of life in harmony with nature [...], respect for others and the environment" (INF, 2021). That is why, there is every reason to believe that there are similar patterns with green camping, such as to rediscover nature. It is probably too easy to say that green camping has copied many aspects of naturism, but:

"Naturism aims at the well-being of the naked body in contact with the natural elements that surround us, like air, sun, light and water" (Clef Verte – Le Clapotis).

The parallel is thus possible with green campsites, where elements such as sun and air are just as vital. In addition, green and naturist campsites have in common the same vision of respecting the environment, as well as promoting another way of living linked with nature.

"One of the basic and essential values of naturism is respect for the environment" (Clef Verte – Heliomonde)

"When you wake up ... go naked to the morning ablutions, run barefoot in the dew ... breathe deeply the fresh air and the smells of the new day ... At nightfall, walk naked in the calm and perfumed atmosphere, chat ..., laugh ..., sing ... then fall asleep with the silence of the night" (Clef Verte – Le Clapotis).

As presented by Fairclough in his approach to CDA, discourse possesses the power to influence social practice, and thus impact touristic trends surrounding green camping. Based on the observed nature trends' demonstrating an increased interest in such modes of travel and holiday-making, these observations solidify this relationship, suggesting that the identified trends may have an impact on the practices in French campsites, and on values later on.

4.1.2.   Visual analysis

In the previous section, the emphasis was on the accommodations, as well as the surroundings and how the green campsites described them via text. In the next lines, the centre of attention is based on the photos retrieved from different websites. It also focuses on the same idea of a green environment, showing housing included in their natural place.

Nature is always at the centre. The environment and atmosphere surrounding the campsites are an integral part of the housing. By being next to the sea, or in the mountains in a natural setting, brands already have such characteristics. Indeed, concerning the organisations, *Sea Green* is mostly on the Atlantic coast; *Huttopia* offers villages in the mountains or campsites in a green area with assets such as a forest or a lake; la *Clef Verte,* as being a label, lists some important requirements that sites must have such as soil treatment or reasoned clearing of land which lead to clean and pollution-free areas; *Slow Village* emphasises on taking a step back and setting up a vegetable garden or compost; *Sites et Paysages* focuses on a special tangible and natural heritage; whereas *La Via Natura*, being smaller, proposes more a community environment where campers help each other. In other words, the campsites have characteristics that make them special in their

environment, and the same applies to their proposition of accommodations (Hassell et al., 2015). In the photos, it is possible to see the direct link and proximity with nature.
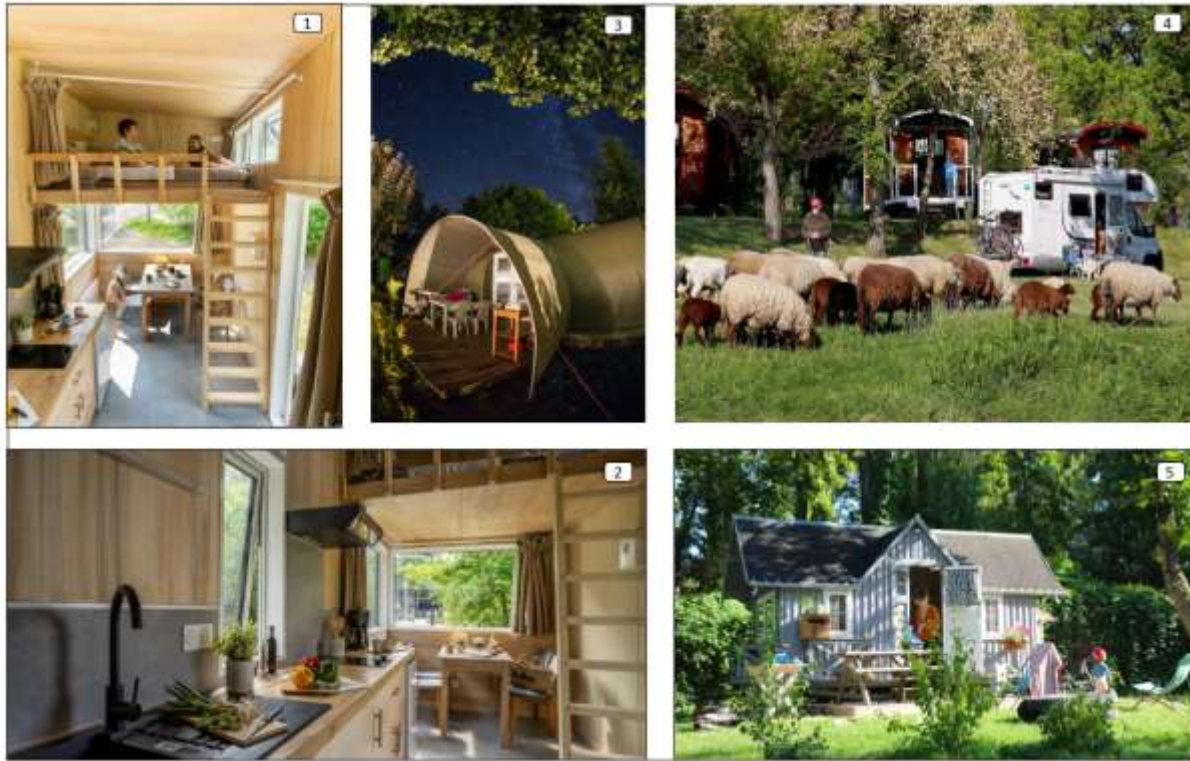

Figure 2: Typical photos of accommodations displayed in green campsites. Respectively in a (1-2) Tiny house (*Slow Village – Loire-Valley*), (3) premium tent bivouac (*Sites & Paysages – Le Ventoulou*), (4) hut (*Sites & Paysages* – Gien Tourist Campsite) and (5) countryside cottage (*Clef Verte – Ile de Belancourt*), always presented in a green setting.

The accommodations are open to nature, via their windows where it is directly possible to see green landscapes, via the terrace, or the open door. For instance, the tiny house (figure 2.1. & 2.2.) is presented with a wood arrangement. By looking further, the tourist can imagine oneself inside, to smell the natural and soothing smell of wood. The hut (figure 2.4) also has a similar layout, by being surrounded by sheep. The focus is therefore on the natural elements that surround and make up the housing. Furthermore, the photo of the tent bivouac (figure 1.3.) by night immerses the tourist into a typical night that can occur, giving a sense of calm and serenity which contrasts with the other pictures taken during the day. In general, there is always the presence of a green touch, from the grass or a tree.

Besides, on websites, the photos often show the environment in which the campsites are situated. It presents how nature is involved and how green it is. Indeed, the photos are used to

support what is written, highlighting green spaces or preserved wilderness, in which human beings are in perfect balance.

Figure 3: Views from the sky (1) *Sites & Paysages – Le Village des Meuniers* ; (2) *Sea Green – Le Paradis* ; (4) *Slow Village – Breizh Légendes* ; and (3) Activity in the nature *Clef Verte – Héliomonde*.

The picture with the woman from behind (figure 3.3.) is a perfect example to illustrate the balance between humans and nature. Sitting in the middle of the grass, she is probably practicing yoga or meditation and enjoying the forest to relax. It is conceivable to interpret that, in *Clef Verte – Héliomonde*, the meaning through the photo is that human beings and nature can live together in harmony. The same applies to the motor home (figure 3.4.), the campsite is just next to the sea and the beach, where each element coexists together. The views from above (figure 3.1. & 3.2.) are also adding another dimension to the discourse transmitted, as it proves the splendour of nature and that the campsite has only been added to it. The green colour dominance remains again the presence of nature, everywhere.

4.1.3. Cultural values related to nature

From the discourse analysis, including textual and visual information, it is then possible to retrieve the meaning hidden underneath. It allows to deep into the relationship between the discourse and the cultural values associated with it. Again, cultural values are described as beliefs shared by a group or community (Stephenson, 2008).

To begin with, for many tourists, going camping means that "nature is expected to remain comfortable as well as visually and emotionally inspiring" (Hogue, 2011). For others, campsites are

related to fun activities including resort swimming pools, games rooms, sports events, and huge water parks (Brooker & Joppe, 2013), whereas some are looking for "escape, relax, rejuvenate, and spend time with family and friends in a natural setting" (Brooker & Joppe, 2014). From these different points of view, campsites create by themselves a real contradiction: it offers more and more sophisticated services to feel comfortable, however, it can also be sold as a '*coming-back*' to roots and nature. This paradox helps to understand how nature is finally predominant in the discourse of the green camping websites and shown as one of the most important values by the latter.

Indeed, there is a will and desire to create a sustainable way of traveling and having holidays in France, as well as promoting responsible behaviour with viable practices of consumption. Nature is the first and recurrent value transmitted but also celebrated in a way that it is positioned as the star of the campsites. The written discourse highlights all its assets, by qualifying them with superlatives or by highlighting them in the images thanks to references to the elements: water, forest, sea. These elements are crucial because they are important for the campsite itself, the place of holidays, and also important for personal development. After all, campers are seeking for connection to nature.

This cultural value of nature also comes from the environmental issues that are increasing concerns to the organisations (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2007). Campsites in general feel that they need to change the actual market of the tourism industry and turn toward a greener and more sustainable proposition. Thus, one of the solutions to show this commitment is to put nature at the first plan with the accommodations or the environment surrounded by greenness, such as trees and nature, for instance. Having nature as the main value also helps to distinguish from other campsites to propose this added value in the activities like '*gardening'* or '*feeding animals in the farm'*. It is a way to be positioned in the green sector in campsites.

In addition, and complementary to the value of nature, the value of well-being is featured to make the tourist feel at home. Indeed, there is a significant relationship between connection with nature and well-being, as "individuals who reported experiencing more connection with nature reported higher levels of flourishing, subjective vitality, and positive emotions, as well as lower levels of negative emotions" (Wolsko & Lindberg, 2013). In this direction, green campsites are proposing holidays in green settings that enhance the well-being of their holidaymakers. It is seen in the activities proposed, such as yoga which advocates a reconnection with nature and oneself, and then, that provides well-being at both psychological and physical level. The same applies for the accommodations where there is a large choice of housing, to let the holidaymakers choose the one

they are more comfortable with. No pressure or stress from booking is also part of the well-being. Thus, the idea of well-being is another value transmitted by green campsites.

Another point is that the representation of tourism can be harmful in the mind of some people because certain activities have "historically generated negative perceptions in terms of their impact on the environment" (Hanna et al, 2019). However, tourism does not only harm, but it can have a positive impact. That is why, more subtly, green campsites try to make tourists aware of the value of the environment, but mainly to convey the value of respect where it governs positive reciprocal interpersonal relations (Grimwood et al., 2015). Probably influenced by the naturism that blends into an environment by being as natural and vulnerable as possible, in the case of green campsites, respect is represented by the consciousness of the surroundings and the environment. It is defined by Cambridge Dictionary as "a feeling that something is right or important and people should not attempt to change it or harm it". This importance, even honouring nature, leads to certain care, admiration and attention. This can be seen in the photos, where the green surroundings are extremely present, clean, and therefore do not encourage to damage it. Showing the best of the natural environment, or even the richness of the surroundings, is fundamental to make the tourist, as said before respectful, as well as responsible for the place.

In fact, "tourist places are produced places and tourists are co-producers of such places" (Larsen, 2006). Comparing with urban areas full of traffics, noise, or horns, there is a contrast with the quietness of the green campsites which have such rules. The landscapes are free of people, there is no crowd for instance and the accommodations are embedded in their environment. Hence, it preserves peacefulness and offers security for children and all the campers. That is why, another value transmitted through discourse by green campsites, as well as naturist ones, is peacefulness. Indeed, it is part of the motivations of tourists to get away from this complex everyday life, to find relaxation, tranquillity, mental rest (Dorfman, 1979; Kristensen et al., 2021), and to focus on recovering to be connected with nature. The absence of crowds and good weather in the pictures participates in this peacefulness. In addition, the cultural value of peacefulness can be observed in the activities proposed, such as the '*Thai massage'* or the '*culinary and botanical workshops'*.

To conclude this section, as the quote of Davis suggests, it is indeed essential for humans, including campers and tourists, to be connected with nature. That is why, the representation of nature, via photos with green landscapes, or textual indication selling its benefits, is therefore predominant and indispensable. Therefore, nature expresses one of the fundamental cultural values of green campsites. Connected with the essential value of nature, well-being is also conveyed through particular activities. In addition, the consciousness of the richness of the surroundings

brings the value of respect, as green campsites are registered in their respective areas and do the minimum to damage it. Moreover, the peacefulness of the places is pointed out as an underneath value, as green campsites do their best to offer tranquillity and peace of mind to the tourists.

4.2. Place to socialise and exchange

"Camp, if it is worthy, is one of the greatest socializing, humanizing, civilizing factors which can enter the life" (Mason, 1930, as cited in Ramsing, 2007).

4.2.1. Textual analysis

Most of the time, holidaymakers are coming to enjoy holidays with someone else: with their family, friends or in a couple.

> *"An intimate and welcoming place for couples looking to discover rich culture and cuisine";*
> *"Ideal family campsite, for a tranquil vacation"; "Lovers of beautiful scenery, our campsites are at the heart of beautiful tourist areas" (Sea Green).*

With these statements, campsites are including the reader, and they become active participants by being part of the atmosphere around them. The focus is therefore on groups of people, families, or couples while taking care to talk about everyone. So, all types of holidaymakers are welcome at the green campsites. It is a place of gathering for anyone who wants to enjoy being close to nature, as mentioned before.

To attract holidaymakers, campsites are "culture brokers who create meaningful dream vacations" and "yet provide tools with which tourists may create their own fantasies, images and selves" (Reimer, 1990). The aim is to let the tourists free to imagine their own holiday, with who they want and in which everyone can find themselves. In other words, the social interaction in the campsite is an important aspect of the green experience thanks to social, common, and exchange areas.

> *"You can meet other campers, discuss your hiking plans or climbing routes, having a large table to sit and eat together" (Clef Verte – Ile de Boulancourt)*
> *"Proposition of rides in car sharing, provision of bicycle, and shared furniture made available to give other customers what you do not want to keep" (La Via Natura – Lac ô Fées).*

The fact to propose places that allow to exchange with strangers, or even with relatives, around common activities in campsites made it as a social place to be in. These interactions and shared moments are indeed a key point in green campsites, where common activities such as hiking gather

people together and facilitate the dialogue between tourists. It opens the mind by allowing random encounters. For a naturist campsite, it is even easier thanks to:

> *"The communal nudity [that] erases social barriers, thus facilitating egalitarian exchanges. There is no place for appearances, everyone is acknowledged for being who they are' (Clef Verte – Le Clapotis).*

The idea of ease in the exchange is possible thanks to the campsite itself. There are no superfluous things or other parasites to mar the moments shared, the main thing is to share with others. In fact, as explained in the theoretical framework, camping includes different spaces such as picnic tables for sitting and eating, sports fields and swimming pools for leisure, or even a bar for drinking (Hassell et al., 2015). It cunningly creates mobility across spaces and it structures the social life of people during their stays.

Despite the time spend in family, or with people campers are going on holidays with, there is also an important aspect in camping life, the owners and managers of the place. They indeed embody and represent the camping lifestyle by implementing the desired initiatives in their establishment. *Sites & Paysages*, or *La Via Natura* present the owners of the campsites posting a photo on the websites. It is comforting to see the people who manage, maybe the ones campers will deal with – positively or negatively. For that reason, it is common in a particular section of the websites to explain the history around the campsite, how the owners get to the point to build or buy the actual site.

> *Fabienne and Phillipe "warmly welcome you to this holiday paradise full of things to do and people to meet, where you can create wonderful memories" (Sites & Paysages – Le Village des Meuniers)*
>
> *Isabelle and Stéphane "are committed to welcoming you and giving you our full attention, as well as with the collaboration of our employees, conviviality, consideration, trust, generosity, solidarity, listening [which] are values that we put forward through small actions on a daily basis on the services offered on-site" (La Via Natura – Lac ô Fées)*
>
> *"Our campsite Mandala is born […] after the big team works […] trying to improve and to welcome you in best conditions" (La Via Natura - Mandala campsite).*

Indeed, the arrival on-site represents the first exchange tourists have with the collaborators or the owners; the first social interaction that may change the whole impression of the stay. This human proximity is also seen in the linguistic thanks to the use of '*we/our'*. It creates a close relationship with the reader, already knowing where they are going, the story behind it, and it installs a base of

confidence and trust. The notion of conviviality is therefore important, as well as the closeness that allows the visitor or the camper to feel a bond or a connection. The size helps to have particular proximity and intimacy, and it is then explained by the fact that it offers a place that is different from other forms of tourism:

> *"Our small family campsite has 30 pitches in all for a personalised welcome that is far removed from mass tourism" (La Via Natura – Mandala campsite)*
> *"Human scaled campsite" (Clef Verte – Lou Pantai).*

Again, the idea of conviviality is far from the mass service which is different from the ones suggested by the green campsites. Most of them propose local products, sold by local producers such as a fresh breakfast every morning in high season, French baguette, and fresh goods. It participates in the social and economic process of green campsites. The idea to highlight the richness, not only of nature, but of the local identity, is crucial.

> *"You will enjoy genuine local people who are proud of their identity, their heritage and their language" (Slow-Village - Lac Biscarosse)*
> *"We offer to produce boxes from the region which support local farmers. Enjoy fresh and local fruits" (Clef Verte – Ile de Boulancourt).*

It adds an authentic element to the campsite and participates in the local economy. It is beneficial for each side, even for the campsite, so there is a three-way exchange going on. The links between the campsite, which welcomes the farmer and thus allows him/her to sell; the farmer and the tourists who exchange on the way of production and thus raise awareness; and the campsite and the tourists who are satisfied with this proposed event. As described before, social interaction is essential and it also works with external collaborators. It does not only imply the local producers but the professionals coming for extra activities in the green campsite, such as an instructor for the archery or yoga class.

To continue with the social interaction, during holidays, it is also the time for family to reconnect with each other. The organisation, activities, and layout of the green campsites enhance the interactions inside the family, especially by spending time together, being active altogether, and listen to each other (Garst et al., 2009). Indeed, the promotion is made as such:

> *"The countryside brings us closer together"; "It is time for children and adults to share happy times!" (Slow Village – Biscarosse Lac)*
> *"Re-resource yourself and spend pleasant sharing moments!" (La Via Natura – Lac ô Fées).*

The will to unite, join, and group people in a green place is important, as nature is a place to directly connect with, or with humans. At home, distractions, lack of time, or opportunities lead to a decrease in connection and discussions. The fact of being in an environment, different from home, facilitates conversations and exchanges, but also the creation of relations. In other words, the destination in green campsites is not only holidays, but it can even be a pretext to (re)build relationships.

Later on, these relationships create memories. It is an important part conveyed by the different websites. Even though practising camping might be the type of holiday grandparents and parents were doing, it is still a generational thing. The tradition and joy of camping are then kept, and transmitted to the next generations, to children. Families are coming back to the place they were used to come, and for some, it is a tradition.

> *"The naturist movement is composed mainly of families with children [...], it is not uncommon to find three, even four generations of naturists"; "Some holidaymakers have been coming here for more than 35 years... a real love story!" (Clef Verte – Le Clapotis).*

The shared values around ecology, or at least the green sensitivity, develops in particular thanks to the family circle. Two or three generations are mingling, as well as in the activities such as gardening lessons. Thus, there is a clear link between nature and the activities on offer, creating memories. Besides, the transmission of knowledge or tradition is part of the process to come to a green campsite. As it is not only normal and funny holidays, with a huge aquatic fun park, for instance, the ecological dimension represents a form of learning which differ from school.

> *"Let's give a sense of responsibility to our children" (Clef Verte – Le Clapotis).*
> *"Engaged on the way [of] developing and transmitting the values of tourism holidays in harmony with the environment and other humans" (La Via Natura – Mandala campsite).*

Practising, seeing, touching, doing is part of the children learning process for instance. Campsites are thus involved when concerning the transmission to new generations and children. In other words, the knowledge, or respect of nature as mentioned before, must be transmitted to children and the younger generation to perpetuate the movement. Above all, it serves to make people aware on a wider scale that a lifestyle close to others is vital, creating interactions, as well as memories and knowledge.

4.2.2. Visual analysis

The textual analysis emphasises the social interactions, sharing moments with the family, as well as the local production and exchange. The same ideas are shared by the visual analysis, which is

based on the photos retrieved from several websites. One of the first things that stand out on the websites is the photos that show moments of sharing. It can be a family walk with different generations around the campsite or a time of sharing knowledge in the vegetable garden to pass on a certain way of gardening for example. The images give the impression of seeing families united, smiling, having a good time together. Thus, there is a sort of positivity that emanates from the whole and also makes the viewer want to be there. In addition, there is quite an obvious difference in age in the pictures. It shows that coming to the green campsite regroups the family, with children and grandparents. Hence, there is this notion of tradition that emerges and is put forward, due to those generations mingling.

Figure 4: Shared moments, in family or with other campers. (1) *Sites & Paysages – Le Village des Meuniers* ; (2) *Huttopia – Dieulefit* ; (3) *Slow Village - Breizh Légendes* ; (4) *Clef Verte – Les Mouettes.*

If it is not with the family (figure 4.1. & 4.3.), the activities proposed by the green campsite allow to meet other campers when it is led by an activity leader (figure 4.3.) or to learn from an external collaborator such as in the lavender distilling (figure 4.2.) Hence, the possibilities of interactions are multiple, and if the activity is not spent with the family, it is at least accompanied by other people. Going further, the tourist can also put themselves in the place of these people who are interacting, and thus have the desire to go there, to do the same, to live these moments.

To continue with the activities that allow sharing moments, there is also, as in the texts, the highlighting of local producers, regional products, and local market in the campsite. These images are colourful, and highlight the richness of the surroundings through the products but also through those who produce. Thus, the market is also a time for sharing, to know the surroundings better, or to learn about the local agriculture or craft by tasting new local products, and perhaps to take souvenirs at home.

Figure 5: Fresh local products and traditional food market in green campsites. (1) *Sites & Paysages*, *Gien Tourist Campsite* ; (2) *Clef Verte – Les Mouettes* ; (3) *Lou Pantai*).

The fresh products can be displayed in different places, such as in the grocery shop (figure 5.1.), or small fairs and events (figure 5.2. & 5.3.). Again, it brings mobility into the campsites, as possibilities to interact differs, as well as discovering new things (Hogue, 2011). Going further, it reminds the cavemen, where they hunt for food was paramount (Hailey, 2008). Here, it is a return to the roots that can be done thanks to these local producers who intervene on the campsites.

4.2.3. Cultural values related to socialisation

As a result of the discourse analysis, this section deeps into the cultural values tacitly transmitted by green campsites. It therefore, helps to understand the relationship between the

discourse and the cultural values associated with it. The quote of Mason (1930, as cited in Ramsing, 2007) stated at the beginning of the section implied that camping is "one of the greatest socializing places". It has been approved by the textual and visual analysis through diverse implementations.

Camping culture is above all something to be shared, no matter with whom. The accent in the texts or the pictures is on shared moments, where different generations, or at least different people, participate in an activity. It means that sharing, being with family or friends, is a key value for holidaymakers. It has been seen in the activities, where parents can participate with children, or where adults can also enjoy a time in the campsite during an evening. It is normal to have this emphasis because when coming back to the theory, camping was first and foremost a form of travel favoured by working families who wanted to get away, and spend some time with their loved ones (Rauch, 2001; Sirost, 2001). It is still the case by looking at the pictures where two generations are enjoying doing camping, or when the texts explain that nature brings people closer.

In addition, campers get to know each other more deeply, relationships or friendships are formed, and for others, it is also a point to reinforce their bonds. In pictures, when families are together, the value of conviviality is conveyed. It is defined as "the quality of being friendly and making people feel happy and welcome" (Cambridge Dictionary). Indeed, green campsites are organised around living spaces, or communal areas, where people can talk about the walks, the trips they have made, the plans for the summer for instance. They exchange impressions or just talk about camping, cycling, driving, canoeing, and photography. As a result, each one leaves with something more in their camping baggage than they had when they arrived thanks to these friendly moments of sharing. This conviviality brings joy and helps campers to feel comfortable, like at home.

This idea of conviviality is related to the value of closeness, which allows the visitor or the camper to feel a bond or connection. Thanks to the presentation of owners who explain their stories, it indicates an ability to share a part of themselves, and thus, to transmit a vulnerability that makes one want to be close. The size also helps to have particular proximity and intimacy, because most green campsites are on a human scale. It is explained by the fact that green campsite offers a place to live that is different from other forms of tourism by the immersion into a natural environment which gives some social advantages. Indeed, people are becoming more and more sedentary, living in big cities where greenness is getting further and further away from their everyday life, partially due to increasing urbanisation (Borella, 2020). Comparing with the nomadism way of life from the ancestors, green camping allows to escape and create this small community life as before, and bring back this missed closeness.

Moreover, closeness is also related to authenticity. Campsites, in general, want to attract visitors who share the same vision of green tourism, and who are prepared to live the experience the place has to offer, especially related to the social interactions. The discourse analysis helps to understand how this authenticity is articulated with lived experiences and social relations (Fairclough, 2010, p.2) when green campsites are welcoming local producers to come over, for instance. Websites displayed authentic pictures of local products, or markets, where people are talking to each other. Besides, it is an exchange for all parties involved – the camper, the producer and the campsite – and it provides a local experience. Indeed, the experience remains a fundamental component in outdoor recreation research (Kristensen et al., 2021; Pernecky and Jamal, 2010), including human contact. That is why, the research for authenticity and connection with others – via the owners, the local producers, the family, the children – is, therefore, one of the main values displayed by green campsites. In addition, the memories are also part of the value of authenticity, as there are parts of the human and social experience. Campsites want to make the stay special or to leave a trace in the tourists' minds. The responsibility of the stay does not only apply to the duration of the vacation but with a will to also have an impact later, when coming back home.

As the last words, to summarise this section, the cultural values around green campsites are primarily the importance of sharing. Getting together for an activity or a meal, with family or friends, is fully part of the message conveyed via the discourse. In addition, conviviality, closeness, and authenticity are also significant cultural values that are transmitted by green campsites. It is in line with the forms of tourism mentioned in the theory, such as slow tourism which gives priority to quality over quantity, synonymous with the importance of pure interactions (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011).

4.3.   High standards and expectations

"Comparisons of developed camping in the 1960s and 1970s with early 21st-century camping suggests that some aspects [...] have changed considerably over the past 40 years, [such as] demographic changes, technological advancements, camper preferences, and campground management models" *(Garst et al., 2009).*

4.3.1.   Textual analysis

The global pandemic of Covid-19 hits the world in the years 2020 and 2021, and thus at the same time the tourism sector. Some people were a bit repellent to book holidays (MacSween & Canziani, 2021). That is why, on most of the websites, it is common to see banners on the first page to comfort the tourist and to propose safety features such as cancellation insurance. The same applies to the rules to prevent covid-19, there are always put forward online to not worry the

tourists and ensure a peaceful holiday. The aim is above all to reassure and to show that holidays are the same as before. In case new measures or restrictions are put in place, the possibility to have insurance and to be able to change plans is necessary.

> *"You can book your stay with complete peace of mind" (Slow Village)*
> *"Zen rate" (Huttopia)*
> *"Because a successful stay starts with a serene reservation […] you will still benefit from a refund within 48 hours under conditions" (Clef Verte – Les Mouettes).*

Similar to the closeness value seen before with the owners and their presentation, the fact to show what is applied helps the green tourist to believe that the chosen place is safe. The transparency also shows that the campsite is flexible, by proposing the postponement of the stay for instance.

The safety measures are also available in the services proposed, as well related to the standards demanded by tourists. The unmistakable campsite swimming pool attracts families. However, in the green campsite, it is not the huge one that can be found on 5-stars ones, it is an alternative swimming pool. It has a special way of treating water, more natural, and therefore less dangerous, both for humans and for nature than chlorine.

> *"Natural bathing, a pool with pure, crystal-clear water, without chlorine, with biological filtration" (La Via Natura – Campsite du Mettey).*
> *"Ecological aquatic park with an area of 3,000m² […] a concept unique of its kind, here you can swim whilst respecting Mother Nature!" (Slow Village – Loire Valley)*

The high expectations are thus reached by proposing a non-threatened alternative to the classical swimming pool. It is possible to enjoy the pleasures of the pool while knowing that it is respectful of the environment.

To offer these high services, to propose safety measures, and to prove a certain level of quality, certification labels serve to demonstrate the relative excellence and the attributes of the campsite. *Clef Verte* is one of them, there is also the *EU Label*, *Camping Qualité*, or the state mark, *Qualité Tourisme* to confirm the minimum standards of reception or professionalism, among others. It is important to get one of them to be reliable because it can make a difference when the tourist is booking compared to another place without certification, for instance. However, these labels are quite recent in the tourism industry and report frequent changes over the years and even months. It reflects a recent evolution concerning a quest for quality, and at the same time, it helps to clarify how campsites are green. To verify the validity of this commitment, the need for regulation is felt to

ensure veracity on the product and to identify the organisation that claims themselves as being green. Attention is therefore required when it comes to looking at labels, eco-ones or not (Buckley, 2001, p.22).

That is why the quest for standards concerning sanitisation and cleanliness, specifically in covid-19 time, is decisive. *Huttopia* has received – and paid – for the certification by the *SOCOTEC Group* for its commitment to hygiene. It checks the quality and the disinfection of the campsites to ensure the highest level of hygiene. The cleaning was part of the process before in campsites, green or not, but it has been reinforced a lot in the pandemic. Tourists are seeking escape and disconnection, but also safety, protective measures, and strict hygiene protocols. When camping culture is asking for a reconnection to nature, tourists are thus, also seeking safety, as found in the online discourse.

The safety features are also shown in the suggested services which ensure an individualised approach. There is a focus on the services proposed to fully offer personal assistance to make the tourists feel at home, and not have to worry them about problems related to covid or reservations. Small details can make the difference.

> *"For the well-being of the morning, breakfast can be served on your pitch or mobile-home" (La Via Natura – Lac ô Fées)*
> *"A 'slow Box' which includes (for a charge) an additional equipment: a small cabin with a fridge, an electric hob, a storage box, and a small garden furniture set" (Slow Village)*
> *"We have special conditions of advantageous bookings in place for you" (Clef Verte – Héliomonde).*

It is not especially related with covid-19, but the fact to bring the breakfast at the pitch is synonymous with personalised attention. This adds value where the tourist feels served, accompanied, and pampered.

Another important point concerning the high expectations and practicality is the proximity to the big cities. Many websites mention the large cities in the vicinity to highlight the accessibility.

> *"Being only 2h30 away from Paris you will be able to enjoy camping in Normandy while being close to capital" (Clef Verte – Les Mouettes)*
> *"Nestled among the vegetations between Hyères and Toulon" (Clef Verte – Lou Pantai)*
> *"A few minutes from Dinard and Saint-Malo" (Sea Green – Emerald).*

It is therefore important, even for green campsites that respect a certain location away from the cities, to keep geographical proximity to attract a clientele that needs to get some fresh air. This

proximity and ease of access allow tourists to take shorter holidays out of season. Short stays are therefore growing and multiplying (Bourges, 2021). The credo to go away for less time but more often is fashionable, driven by the crisis of the covid. Remote work and being in a similar environment every day are pushing people to get away for a short time (MacSween & Canziani, 2021). That is why the information transmitted by green campsites offers to stay for a short period in order to attract campers who do not necessarily come at other times. In this way, they can enjoy the green lifestyle and perhaps return to it for longer.

> *"If you want to spend one night [...]' (Sites & Paysages – Gien Tourist Campsite)*
> *"Come and relax you in our campsite, an ideal place for a change of lifestyle" (La Via Natura – Lac ô Fées)*
> *"[It] is easy to reach and ideal for families with children who do not want to drive long distances" (Clef Verte - Creuse Nature).*

This local and short-stay tourism is consolidating its status as a safe escape, as well as responding to people who have a desire for a change of scenery: "a nearby getaway, at a lower cost and at the last minute" (Jeon & Yang, 2021).

In addition to the high expectations, authenticity, different from the value associated with socialisation, is also felt thanks to honest and raw propositions. A certain type of language is involved, by using a regional one for instance: the Breton's language in the name of the campsite for *Slow Village – 'Breizh' Légendes,* or also in the speech on the website*: "Deger mat" (welcome),* or *"Kalon Digor" (bon appétit).* This strong identity shows an authentic place, unaltered, and where the origins are clear, well-rooted, and deep. Green campsites also go straight to the point by displaying simple principles such as '*Respect, Authenticity and Simplicity'.* The use of specific words such as *'Explore'*, '*Discover'*, '*Admire'* (*La Via Natura*) is a real invitation to fully enjoy nature in its total beauty. The emphasis on positive adjectives is also noticeable, such as '*magical'*, '*fantastic*, '*extraordinary'.* The wording is important in marketing or advertising because the message conveyed sent the camper into a certain world, like *"as Robinson Crusoe on his island" (Slow Village – Loire Valley).* It helps the tourists to envisage themselves and use their imagination (Bastos & Levy, 2012).

4.3.2.   Visual analysis

The high expectations are also reflected in the presentation of the websites, where nice and well-chosen pictures are displayed to show the best of the campsites. The use of green and its associated colour palette is almost everywhere, to remember the reader that it is green campsites. It

means that it belongs to nature, leaves, grass, but also fertility and balance in the collective image, linked with feelings and emotions (Zammitto, 2005). Presented even on the logos of *Huttopia*, *La Via Natura, Sites & Paysages*, and *La Clef Verte*, it allows having a clear understanding of the direction and the type of holidays they offer, just at the first sight. Brown is present in the websites, it is the wood colour also closed by the representation of nature, but related with comfort, ground, earth (Zammitto, 2005). Exceptions are made by *Sea Green and La Clef Verte*, having green in their names, but being respectively blue and turquoise and blue and green. Blue represents peace, calm, relaxation, wisdom, introspection, or even solitude. For *Slow Village*, the logo is mainly white, representing light, purity, innocence, and cleanness (Zammitto, 2005).

On the first pages of the websites (figure 6), it shows photos with colours that convey the message of nature. Taken from an aerial view, it shows the magnificence of the campsite, as well as good resources to communicate. The green campsite sells itself by displaying good-quality pictures. The welcome banners look similar, with a choice of an aerial view of the surroundings of the campsite and its landscape (figure 6.1., 6.2 & 6.5), of the accommodations still with lots of green thanks to the trees (figure 6.3. & 6.6.) and of nature (figure 6.4.)

Figure 6: Welcome page on different websites. It shows the first main colours appearing, also meaning a lot concerning their identity ((1) *Huttopia – Village Dieulefit*; (2) *La Via Natura –Mandala campsite;* (3) *Sites & Paysages – Le Ventoulou;* (4) *Clef Verte – Ile de Boulancourt;* (5) *Sea Green – Campsite Emerald;* (6) *Slow Village – Loire Valley).*

The status of colours plays a causal role in producing visual experience. They function as signs of objects, representations, having a role also in the emotional and aesthetic effects upon the imagination, the perception, and the psyche. Dealing with the representation mentioned in the theoretical framework with Hall (2013), at least, it is possible to imagine that these colours are

reassuring for the holidaymakers, they only confirm their expectations and wish to choose a more responsible holiday.

As also stated in the textual analysis, logos of label certifications are predominant on the websites (figure 7). Mostly situated at the bottom of the internet page, they show the reader what the campsite has to offer in terms of recognition. The consumers have to understand and select the most important to their eyes.

Figure 7: Medley of labels displayed on the website of *Sites & Paysages –Gien Tourist Campsite*.

Figure 8: *Socotec* Label, proudly displayed on *Huttopia websites*.

When properly displayed, they are synonymous with quality (figure 8). Besides, as stated in the textual analysis, holidaymakers are always looking for handiness and accessibility, it represents the safety they are more and more looking for. These labels are thus representing the safety features that the text presented.

4.3.3. Cultural values related to the high standards and expectations

As a reminder, the image of camping that has circulated through the past decades was more related to the poor way of going on holidays, different from the balneary stations in Deauville or Cannes. Nowadays, the image is different, camping can also be glamour, with the glamping especially (Sommer, 2020). The previous traditional representations of camping – primitive, unlimited outdoor recreation – are not the same as today, and no longer the reasons why campers stay in green areas. They are more searching for social interactions as seen previously, or for comfort, and also security. As stated by Garst et al. (2009) at the beginning of the section, the camping of the 21st century is different from the one of the 1960s and 1970s.

The safety, or the certainty, is determinant, even more in time of covid-19. To define it, it can be understood as the fact that something is not likely to fail, as well as the feeling of being confident about the choice of holiday, for example (Cambridge Dictionary). The green campsite is connected

with nature; however, accommodations are still used by different tourists. Thus, the fact of having labels related to hygiene, or certifications that promote a high quality of the standards is reassuring for the campers. One of the main motivations of campers is to feel relaxed or to not have stress. That is why the value of safety is nowadays primordial to make the tourists comfortable.

Still related to the idea of safety, uniqueness is a key value in the tourism sector, as well as in green campsites. Defined as the quality of being unique, or special in a way (Cambridge Dictionary), the fact to propose extra-service or personalised approach such as delivering the breakfast at the beach, is one of the options available on the green campsite that add value to it. It makes the tourists unique because by offering the best services that match their wishes, green campsites compete with the market (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). It proposes a personalised service that presents a particular feature, local and typical from green campsites. Besides, people nowadays want to experience unique and exceptional things that can only be done on a camping holiday as a total immersed outdoor experience, as explained by Sommer (2020) in the theoretical framework. Thus, the experience is tied with the notion of ease where tourists get what they like, adapted to their needs because each person has their own preferences.

Besides, another value is ease: ease of escape, ease of reservation, ease of services. It is also related to the relaxed mind of being secured. Green campers want to reconnect with nature, and at the same time, want to have a stay as simple as possible. When campsites are easily reachable, not that far from the city, it makes it effortless and the experience is smooth. Moreover, they show that holidays are not obviously one or two weeks, but can also be shorter for a weekend. There is no need to wait for the paid holidays, it is also possible, in the low season for example, to get away for a shorter period. Making it possible for couples or families to get away together attracts a varied clientele, and also allows the campsites to be in business. Looking further afield, short breaks holidays were already proposed and the phenomenon already exists with *Center Parcs* in the early 90s. It was not easily classified into one category at that time, it was considered as a holiday centre inviting to be closer to nature and having fun with a massive aquatic park (Avignon, 1988). Their assets are like the green campsites, a quality environment, with a lush nature in the surroundings and high-quality services. Nowadays, the customer is looking for this escapism, and the city break is part of that.

To summarise this section, the high standards and expectations requested by the campers are not limited to nature, but they also request quality, and respect for the environment which is dear to the green campsites. The associated cultural values are therefore first and foremost safety and certainty, in terms of hygiene, for instance. Uniqueness is also an important cultural value, as

the camper wants to have a personal service, as well as experiencing something exceptional. The last value related to the high expectation is ease. It means that the holidays need to be smooth, from the reservation to the stay.

5. Conclusion

This master thesis aimed to understand the representations of green campsites in France and to identify the cultural values that are transmitted. Camping has always been related to nature and is more and more turning toward green tourism and green camping (Hogue, 2011). Based on the previous literature which was reviewed in chapter two, the extensive history of campsites is evident and considered to be a relevant concept to further explore in scholarly literature. This study, thus, contributed to this body of literature by empirically investigating the relationship between the cultural values and the discourse displayed online by green campsites. It focused the lens of the French green camping sector and built on the trends which have been observed, as well as completing the picture that has already been observed in the United States, for example. Further, it was also an additional insight for the field of marketing to understand the underlying meaning conveyed through text and images. Going even further, it can also help to ensure the effective management of a green campsite because it examined the main points that campers look for. Based on Fairclough and his approach to critical discourse analysis, this thesis reinforced the beliefs that discourse has the ability to impact social practices and thus influence touristic habits surrounding green campsites.

In order to answer the research question, *how are green camping sites represented on French websites and what kind of values concerning camping culture are key to these representations?,* the master thesis investigated websites of green campsites in France by analysing the discourse of websites content, through an inductive approach. For the methodology, the purpose was to have as many options as possible concerning the findings, without having any predetermined concepts, as well as allowing the data to speak for itself (Thomas, 2003). To explain, the discourse analysis was divided into textual analysis to look at the words used, and visual analysis to examine the type of pictures displayed online. For this purpose, it was needed to proceed in several steps. Firstly, the data was gathered from twenty-two websites, secondly it was coded thanks to the software *ATLAS.ti* to find similar and recurrent patterns, to finally create the main themes. This method of coding and theming was inspired by the grounded theory of Glaser and Anselm (Bryman, 2012, p.569).

The findings and observations resulted in three main themes encompassing firstly, '*back to nature in green campsites'*; secondly, campsites as '*places to socialize'* and thirdly, as places that meet '*high standards and expectations'*. The first theme encompassed a return to the roots, a come back to nature. By praising the merits of contact with nature, commitments to it, or the naturism movement, the values depicted underneath are the nature that is celebrated. There was also the well-being of being connected to nature which gives positive energy. The value of respect was also conveyed

thanks to the text or the authentic depiction of natural sites, encouraging the holidaymaker to want to protect it. Related to it, the value of peacefulness was also carried thanks to the calm activities proposed or the absence of a crowd compared to mass tourism. The second theme included a social dimension that was common between green campsites. Thanks to the social interactions available with the owners, the local producers, or during the activities, the value related to social interaction was the value of sharing, with family, friends, or other campers. It was also related to the values of conviviality and closeness carried by the discourse which formed a small community in a green campsite. The value of authenticity was presented thanks to exchanges in the campsite that are honest and thanks to pictures that shown an unaltered nature, for instance. The third theme was related to contemporary values seen in the discourses, highlighting high standards and high expectations. Especially, the value of safety was crucial to reassure the tourist, even more in pandemic time. Also, the values of uniqueness and ease, by offering a personalised service or propose effortless solutions for shorter stays, were important.

Overall, the bigger picture of cultural values is always linked with nature. As being part of the first theme, it is also the common value that can be found in the place to socialise as it participates in interactions knowing that, without nature as a shared space, social interactions do not take place. Similarly, for the high standards and personalised services, they are related to the value of nature. Thus, nature is the main value represented by green campsites and it is translated through clear patterns, constantly highlighted in the texts, as well as in the pictures, through the type of accommodations, the activities, the services, or the certification labels. To come back to the statement of Rolston in 1988 from the beginning of this master thesis, "we modern humans, [are] increasingly competent about making our way through the natural world", 30 years later, this statement is still relevant and applicable. The green campsite values have a common will and purpose, to make tourists all feel concerned to the safeguard of the true values attached to it, where the main one is nature.

However, despite the relevance and contributions of this paper, a few limitations of the research are notable. The method used is limited because the internet language is not fixed. It is in constant flux and evolve at a higher pace than the oral language. The discourse might change from one season, one culture, or one place to another. Besides, on-site or fieldwork analysis would have added a deeper understanding of the cultural values of camping (Silverman, 2004, p.120). Even with a wide array of discourse, and precise type of linguistic on websites, it is difficult to have a whole analysis without investigating on-site to see if the values stated online are also visible on the ground. Nonetheless, this master thesis was more general. Additionally, focusing on one target – i.e.,

family, couple, or naturist campsites – might influence the results because it is different to be in a family, or with friends. It changes the perception, but also the length of time at a place, as well as the decision to move. Campers might also have been influenced by activities and conducts of the others because human is attentive to the presence of others (Silverman, 2004, p.261). That is why, by focusing on a certain type of holidaymaker, a certain age group, or a specific location, the values may be even more accurate.

Further research on the subject matter may consider conducting a geographical analysis about the perception of green campsites in Europe, to not only have the representation of France but to extend it at a larger scale. Besides, further study concerning the labels will be interesting to understand if, after certification with *Clef Verte* or *EU Ecolabel*, for instance, the values have changed, or resulted from this certification label. Also, interviewing campers might lead to know if the ecolabel encourages their visits and touristic habits, whether it has tipped the scales, and thus at the same time encourages the participation towards a greener and more sustainable tourism. The aim would be to search towards the real aspects and benefits around the eco-certification, as well as the meaning behind it (Buckley, 2001, p.14). Nonetheless, and as last words, it is only thanks to the implication of society and stakeholders that green tourism will not be seen as a particular form of tourism; rather, all forms of tourism will have to strive to be more sustainable (OECD, 2020). For that, green campsites are therefore heading in the right direction and can set a good example.

6. References

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7. Appendices

Appendix A
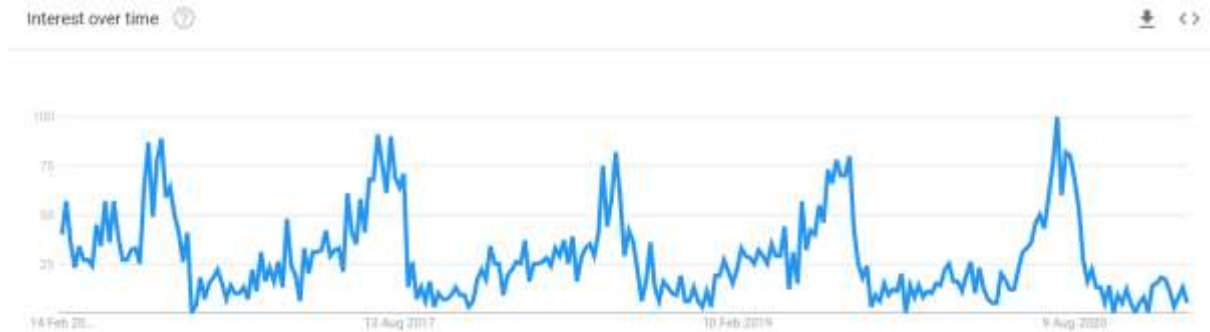
Graph of research trend concerning '*green camping'* in France, the past 5 years (*Google Trends*, 2021).

Appendix B

<u>Codes retrieved from *ATLAS.ti*</u>:

- Accommodation type
- Activities
- Authenticity
- Closeness
- Commitment with nature
- Covid insurance
- Creation campsite
- Environmental education
- Label
- Linguistic
- Local
- Natural Heritage
- Natural swimming pool
- Naturism

- Proximity city
- Safety measures
- Services
- Sharing
- Short break
- Souvenirs
- Surroundings
- Target

Appendix C

Themes resulting from the coding process:

Theme 1 : Back to nature		Theme 2 : Place to socialise		Theme 3 : High standards and expectations	
Descriptive	Cultural Values	Descriptive	Cultural Values	Descriptive	Cultural Values
Accomodation type	Nature	Closeness	Sharing	Creation campsite	Safety/certainty
Activities	Well-being	Environmental education	Conviviality	Label	Uniqueness
Authenticity	Respect	Local	Closeness	Linguistic	Ease
Commitment with nature	Peacefulness	Services	Authenticity	Natural swimming pool	
Natural Heritage		Sharing		Proximity city	
Naturism		Souvenirs		Safety measures	
Surroundings				Short break	
				Target	