Building the Case for Transformative Tourism in South Africa

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Abstract

The study builds a case for future growth of transformative travel in South Africa driven by Cultural Creatives, the new silent class of conscious consumers in a quest for personal transformation through authentic and immersive tourist experiences. The main objective of the study was to identify preferred activities and experiences of Cultural Creatives in Soweto which is expected to drive the future growth of transformative tourism in South Africa. This qualitative study was based on 20 semi structured interviews with international tourists visiting Soweto in the period 3 January to 30 March 2018. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and thematic content analysis was carried out in identifying tourist activities and experiences most closely aligned to emerging themes of transformative tourism as: individual experiential walking through the township; living as the locals do; and dining with the locals. The results validate the need for clear alignment of South African destinations' offerings with Cultural Creatives' transmodern values and worldviews in facilitating the future growth of transformative tourism in South Africa.

Keywords: Transformative tourism; authenticity; Cultural Creatives; Quality of Life; Soweto, South Africa

Introduction

Transmodernism signifies a paradigm shift in human consciousness towards a new planetary vision and a new world order not experienced in the past 600 years, since the Renaissance. (Ateljevic, 2009, 2013; Dussel, 2008; Ghisi, 1999, 2008; Meconnen, 2012; Raskin, 2016; Rifkin, 2005; Rodriguez, 1989, 2001). It embodies a societal transformation evident in all aspects of people's life, from consumption, value(s) system, work, leisure patterns to global ecological awareness, concerns towards survival of the planet and a desire to live the more meaningful and spiritual life (Gibbons, 2017; Inglehart, 2008; Ogilvy & Mather, 2010; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Popcorn & Marigold, 1996; Sardar, 2013). Leading the silent revolution towards a newly emerging transmodern world order is a powerful class of conscious consumers, known as Cultural Creatives (Ray, 1996, 2008; Ray & Anderson, 2000). Cultural Creatives are recognised as influential lifestyle leaders in pursuit of authenticity and self-betterment through personal transformation, a newly emerging need positioned beyond Maslow's original self-actualisation pinnacle (Gelter, 2010:48; Ogilvy & Mather, 2010:41).

Notwithstanding leading the way towards new world socio-economic order, Cultural Creatives are notoriously difficult to detect as they naturally disassociate themselves with sub-

717

cultural classification and remain demographically invisible (come from all walks of life and are not age or gender circumscribed). In 2000, they were detected for the first time in the life-style value survey of the US adult population conducted by Ray and Anderson. The surprising results of the study revealed that 26% of the population belonged to a new type of conscious consumer that authors named Cultural Creatives. In the follow up study conducted by Paul Ray in 2008, Cultural Creatives share in the population of the United States of America increased to 34.9%. Ghisi (2015) estimated that Cultural Creatives account for approximately 33 – 37% of the general world population in developed countries (America, Europe, and Japan) and 10 – 25% in developing countries with expected annual growth of 3%. Another thought-provoking fact about Cultural Creatives is that about 65 – 70% are women (Ghisi, 2015). This rapid growth of Cultural Creatives in a population is thus highly significant for the world's economy as their transmodern values, worldviews and lifestyle choices have the power to influence and disrupt the most advanced capitalist consumer driven societies on the planet (Anderson & Ray, 2000; Euro RSCG, 2010:19; Ghisi, 2015; Ogilvy & Mather, 2010; United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2016:16).

In the literature, Cultural Creatives are consistently identified and described as neither traditional nor 'dressed for success'. They are deeply grounded in both the inner-directed kinds of psychological and spiritual development, and tellingly, as highly engaged in big issues of our time such as the equality of sexes, climate change and survival of the planet (Anderson & Ray, 2000; Euro RSCG, 2010; Ghisi, 2015; Ray, 2008). By extension, the growing share of Cultural Creatives in a general population means their increased occurrence in tourism travel. This further implies a growing demand for a kind of travel which is educational, experiential, authentic, altruistic and/or spiritual, leading to personal transformations is expected to redefine the nature of tourism in the post COVID-19 world (Ateljevic, 2013, 2020; Cheer, 2020; Lew, Cheer, Haywood, Brouder & Salazar, 2020; Tomljenovic, 2015).

Unlike post-modern tourists whose behaviour differ at home and in destinations visited (i.e. increased alcohol consumption, irresponsible sexual behaviour, disrespect for local environment and cultural norms), Cultural Creatives uphold the same life values when travelling as they do in everyday life (Tomljenovic, 2015). It means that they are aware of the consequences of their own actions, activities and behaviour and the possible negative impacts these may have on environments and local cultures when travelling (UNWTO, 2016). Subsequently, there is a rising awareness amongst destinations that Cultural Creatives represent a type of 'super' tourists who do not need to be managed, as they self-manage and self-correct their behaviour in alignment to held transmodern beliefs, values and lifestyle choices. For same reasons Cultural Creatives are recently recognised by UNWTO (2016) as a powerful force to counter various negative economic and socio-cultural impacts of tourism in destinations world-wide, especially in developing countries in Africa and Asia.

Given Cultural Creatives growing share in the population of South Africa's main generating markets and their non-impactful transmodern behaviour, it is of a paramount importance that the occurrence and experiential preferences of Cultural Creatives in South Africa is better understood (Ivanovic & Saayman, 2015; Mkhize & Ivanovic, 2019). The township of Soweto is selected as the area of study for two reasons; firstly, Soweto is a well-known top 20 'must-see' destination in South Africa, visited by 212 000 tourists in 2018 (South African Tourism, 2018); at the same time, it is a living community highly iconic for its political prominence during the struggle against apartheid as a centre of the famous Soweto uprising in 1976. In post-1994 South Africa, tourism has been recognised as an economic panacea for job creation and poverty alleviation of previously disadvantaged and racially segregated classes of the population (Booysen, 2010; Ivanovic, 2008). However, in order for tourism to benefit local people in the most effective and sustainable way, it needs to be developed with an

understanding of who the new tourists are, what values they uphold, what do they do while in a destination, and what experiences are most authentic to them.

Unfortunately, there is a notable lack of literature on transformational tourism as transmodern phenomenon, in particular on the changing nature of tourism demand and impacts it will have on destinations worldwide (Gelter, 2010; Kirillova, Lehto & Cai, 2017; Robledo & Batle, 2017; Ross, 2010). This paper is set to contribute to the transmodern tourism discourse in South Africa by uncovering Cultural Creatives' preference for activities in Soweto that conform to their transmodern value system the most. These transmodern preferences thus contribute to their experience of authentic-*Self* characterised by a shift towards transformative travel in South Africa when international travel resumes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodologically, this is a qualitative study based on the results of 20 semi structured interviews with respondents identified as Cultural Creatives in Soweto. Conceptually, the paper cross-examines the main theoretical concepts underpinning the paradigm shift towards emerging transmodern planetary vision with the results of the thematic content analysis of primary data collection on the nature of transformative tourist consumption in Soweto by Cultural Creatives. Specifically, the paper presents a discussion of the main transmodern concepts underpinning transformative tourism: a notable shift towards new consumers' value system, the Quality of Life, *Being* in the world as the lifestyle choice, and authentic and transformatory experience.

Structurally, the paper is organised in two sections. The first section provides a theoretical overview of the relevant theoretical concepts while the second section present the results of the activities of Cultural Creatives in Soweto as part of transformative tourism. By critically analysing the results, the paper demonstrates that the way South Africa responds to Cultural Creatives transmodern value system, world views and lifestyles, will directly affect the country's ability to align its tourism experiential offerings to the main requirements of transformative tourism.

Shift in the consumer value system

As expressed by Yankelovich (1991: 122) in the model known as an Inverted pyramid of opinions, attitudes and values (see Figure 1), values should be seen in a different light from opinions and attitudes. Opinions derive from attitudes and attitudes derive from values. Opinions can change from day-to-day, attitudes change much slower, while values may take generations to change.
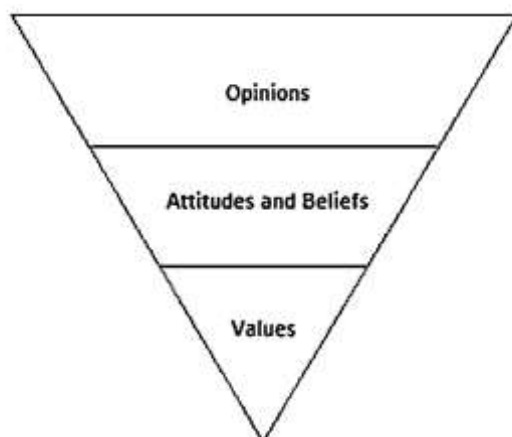

Figure 1. The inverted pyramid of opinions, attitudes and values (Yankelovich, 1991:122)

Values are distinctive to subcultures because each culture supplies a context from which values are consciously or subconsciously learned overtime as opposed to values being embodied as a

function of IQ (Ray, 1996:9). In the context of transmodernism, the adoption of a new value system emerges as an adaptive intelligence in people and societies in response to the challenges and complexities of life conditions of modern times (Beck & Cowan, 2014). Ray (2008) urges that one should be aware of the in-depth and slow changing nature of values, especially as indicators measured with surveys or in-depth interviews. The fact that Cultural Creatives can only be identified based on their transmodern worldviews and new value system makes them notoriously difficult to detect, which also explains lack of research studies on Cultural Creatives and transmodernism worldwide (Ray & Anderson, 2000).

A number of studies conducted in the past twenty years or so independently identified a transition towards the new value system. Popcorn & Marigold (1996:36-37) was the first study aimed at analysing and predicting current and future consumer behaviours and trends in the American population that are symbolic of an intrinsic shift in life values towards more sustainable lifestyles. Early indicators of consumers' shift in behaviour and lifestyle patterns are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Indicators and descriptors of transformations in consumers behaviour and lifestyle patterns

Indicators of change	Descriptors
Save our Society	Interest and involvement in community, environmental and societal concerns
Anchoring	Connecting with the spiritual sense
Female think	Caring and sharing approach
Icon topping	Anti-big, especially as it comes to business and government
Clanning	Getting together with others with whom you share common interests
Egonomics	Focus on self and inner feelings
Staying alive	Concern with and focus on health and wellness
The vigilante consumer	Emphasis upon demands and expectations for values and personalization in the marketplace
Cashing out	Tendency to exchange monetary rewards for life quality and satisfaction

(Source: Popcorn & Marigold, 1996)

In the report called 'Eyes wide open, wallet half shut' Ogilvy and Mather (2010) revealed the surprising results of the market study on the emerging 2009 post-recession consumer trends, or what Paul Raskin (2016) called the Great Transition towards planetary civilisation. Surprisingly (or not) 75% of the study respondents expressed that they would rather get out of the 'rat race' than climb the corporate ladder, while 76% would rather spend more time with family than make more money.Evidently, Cultural Creatives are not only creating a dominant values system, but without them even knowing it, they are activating the 21st century transmodern paradigm, ultimately leading to personal transformations and demand for transformative tourism (Ghisi, 2008:158). Unsurprisingly, the world's progressive societal transformation towards the new world order detected 20 years ago, is only expected to accelerate in the future especially after the COVID-19 pandemic crisis is over. The expected acceleration of transmodern values is supported by Tucker & Swimme (2009:429) view that all societal transitions "come at times of crisis, they involve tremendous cost, and they result in new forms of creativity". This hypothesis has already been proven true by ample evidence of an accelerated growth of Cultural Creatives worldwide during the 2008-2009 global economic recession. Additional evidence of the faster adoption of transmodern life values and rejection of consumerism driven lifestyle has been already documented in a number of follow up research studies (Euro RSCG, 2010;. Ogilvy & Mather, 2010; Raskin, 2016;). The same

Tucker and Swimme (2009) hypothesis is used to predict an impending transition of post COVID-19 tourism towards transformational tourism as recently argued by Ateljevic (2020), Cheer (2020), Lew *at al*. (2020) and Rowen (2020) among the others. Rowen (2020:5) explains that the very nature of current pandemic "as an agent of global liminality that has subverted the usual social roles and subjectivities of tourism" will be a catalyst in promulgating transformational travel and events in the future. Based on arguments presented so far it is therefore expected that an ongoing transmodern shift towards a Quality of Life and transformative experiences, identified as integral part of Cultural Creatives life values, will play a major role in determining their consumption choices in the future, most notably a choice of tourism destinations offering authentic and transformative tourist experiences.

Quality of life

Quality of Life (QOL) encapsulates the shift from an emphasis on materialistic assets to intangible assets and the harnessing of human potential (Ateljevic, 2009:284; Čomić, 2014). The QOL is a perspective that criticizes the normalized or generalized notions of work in its artificial detachment from life. As such it denotes a subjective set of qualities of life which can be acquired by an individual based on the following two distinctions (Veenhoven, 2014):

- Between opportunities for a good life and the outcomes of life. Here the focus is on the utility of life and so the quality is in the environment.
- Between external and inner qualities of life. Here the focus is on individual appreciation of life.

The QOL thus emerges as a deeper confrontation with the inner authentic-*Self* and a desire to live a more fulfilling and sustainable life (Gelter, 2010; Ghisi, 2008, 2015; Nicolaides, 2017; Tibbs, 2011). The notion of QOL as a concept used to measure progress in society is to its core, an inherent transmodern value and one of the main pillars of transmodernity. It therefore stands for an all-encompassing socio-cultural, economic, political and philosophical mind-shift that actively recognises mankind's undeniable interdependency and responsibility for the survival of the Earth and the advent of an all-inclusive and democratic order of society (Ateljevic, 2009, 2013; Rodriguez, 1989, 2001).

Being in the world as the lifestyle choice

Cultural Creatives are not age and gender specific, are making choices which are active, deliberate and complex and are described as 'awake, alert and aware' (Anderson & Ray, 2000; Ogilvy & Mather, 2010:41). Most importantly, they are not passive consumers but rather active co-creators of authentic values corresponding to their own self-image. As such, Cultural Creatives see consumption as an extension of their own world views, world-values, beliefs, and lifestyle choices (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). What they consume *is* who they really are, what they stand for and how they want to *be* (and *be seen*) in the world, the reason why they are called conscious consumers. Being conscious consumers, they are conscious tourists who seek long-term solutions and as they immerse themselves in the local culture, promote equality and show respect to local people and their way of life (Nicolaides, 2014). Their interaction in a destination is sustainable, honest and inspiring as they are genuinely interested in the problems of the destination and therefore tend to come back as volunteers or to help people in various ways (Ghisi, 2008, 2015). The Cultural Creatives lifestyle choices and clear descriptors as tourists are presented in Table 2. From descriptors of Cultural Creatives as tourists presented in Table 2 it is clear that they know exactly what they stand for, what they want to *Be* and what they want to *Become*, and most of all, what they want their travel to be. Given that travel is experienced as an extension of their lifestyle and value system, they travel in order to re-invent

themselves in the world through deep transformatory experiences conforming to held self-image of the authentic-*Self*. (Ivanovic, 2014).

Table 2. Lifestyles descriptors of the Cultural Creatives as tourists

Lifestyle	Descriptors
Arts and culture	They are excessive consumers of the arts and culture. As travellers they show great respect for and want to learn about local cultures.
Stories of whole process and systems	They like a system overview of a product. They demand holistic information and have exceptionally good deception detectors for a misleading corporate or political claims.
Desire for authenticity	They lead the consumer rebellion against things that are plastic, fake, imitations, poorly made, cliché or high fashion. In traveling, they like meeting/talking to local people. They want access to nature, walking and biking paths, and are highly invested in ecological and historic preservation.
The Foodies	They are people who like to talk about food, experiment with new kinds of food, cook with friends, eat out a lot, do gourmet and ethnic cooking, and try natural foods and health foods.
Off-the-beaten path immersive activities	Define the leading edge of vacation travel that is exotic, adventuresome, educational, experiential, authentic, altruistic and/or spiritual. Tours 'off the beaten-path' where tourists do not go. They do not go for package tours, fancy resorts, or cruises but rather an immersive, non-invasive individualised interactions with local people
Experiential consumers	Many are the prototypical consumers of the experience industry which offers an intense/enlightened/enlivening experience rather than a particular product. Examples include weekend workshops, spiritual gatherings, personal growth experiences, experiential vacations, the vacation-as-spiritual-tour, or the vacation-as-self-discovery.

Source: Ray & Anderson (2000: 35)

Transformative tourism

The link between tourism and transmodernity is logically caught in between terms such as transformative travel (Tomljenovic, 2015), transmodern tourism (Ateljevic, 2013; Ivanovic & Saayman, 2015; Mkhize & Ivanovic, 2019), hopeful tourism (Pritchard, Morgan & Ateljevic, 2011), transformative tourism (Reisinger, 2013; Robledo & Batle, 2017; Ross, 2010); and conscious travel (Pollock, 2015). In a nutshell, transformational travel denotes a self-directed and experiential travel motivated by self-discovery, independence, care for places visited, and seeking deeper meaning in travel that would foster self-development resulting in transformation (Tomljenovic, 2015). The transformational change emerges as an individualized process which can lead to a critical awareness of the *Self* and new self-definition (Coghlan & Weiler, 2018; Kirillova, Lehto & Cai, 2017). Transformation is therefore the new transmodern value reflective of individual experience of the authentic-*Self* through tourist experiences. Transformation can be facilitated in a tourism service setting if it can challenge and instigate self-reflection (Kirillova et al., 2017:501). As such, the new transformational tourism has unrestricted potential to initiate personal and societal shift towards new life values and world-views through tourist's desire for authentic and transformational experiences (Robledo & Batle, 2017; Tomljenovic, 2015). In this sense, travel emerges as an opportunity for travellers to be aware of themselves and their impact on a destination and, therefore, upon their return, possibly change both their life(style) as well as the impact they make on the places they visit in the future (Wolf, Ainsworth & Crowley, 2017).

As transformative travel embodies a search for conscious consumption and growth through learning and discovery, it is with the prevalence of Cultural Creatives that the need for the creation of new authentic experiences arises. It is therefore of the paramount importance

that the use-value of economic and tourism offerings as part of transformatory experience is in alignment with the consumer's self-image which can only be achieved by means of research based decision making (Ivanovic & Saayman, 2015: 33).

Methodology

The study assumes the position of an exploratory qualitative study with an interpretive approach. This allows for an explanatory understanding of a visitor's sense of a subjective reality and the meaning attached to it in relation to the transmodern paradigm. The 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted by one of the authors who is Soweto native with international tourist visiting the township of Soweto in-between the 3rd January – 30th March 2018. A convenience, non-probability sampling method was used in selecting the respondents based on initial qualifying question.

Based on the fact that Cultural Creatives are notoriously difficult to detect in a population as they naturally disassociate themselves from any sub-cultural classifications (i.e. hippies, Baby boomers, New agers) and are demographically invisible (come from all walks of life and are not age or gender specific), identifying Cultural Creatives amongst the general population of tourists visiting Soweto proved a time consuming task. This being the reason why studies on Cultural Creatives are rarely conducted. Notwithstanding the limited number of interviews being the main limitation of the study, it provided a valuable confirmation of transmodern life-values of a new breed of conscious tourists who can clearly be identified as Cultural Creatives, validating the findings of two earlier studies by Ivanovic and Saayman (2015) and Mkhize and Ivanovic (2019). The sampling method followed the following steps.

In the first step, the so called 'wandering tourists' were identified based on the observations of their behaviour by the researcher who is a Soweto nativ. The selection criteria were as follows: a) tourists drifting away from the tour group, b) tourist wandering alone in the township, c) tourist interacting with locals, and d) tourists who stayed with locals in the township.

In the second step, identified wandering tourists were approached and asked a qualifying question regarding their motivation for visiting Soweto. A potential Cultural Creative was selected based on a choice of one or more responses deemed the closest representations of a transmodern line of thought: to find myself, volunteering, spiritual journey, or personal transformations.

In the third step, qualifying respondents were asked to participate in an interview. The questions asked during the interview were: where are they from; the reason for visiting South Africa and Soweto; where do they stay; which experience/activity was most authentic while in Soweto; whether what they have experienced in Soweto reformed or reconfirmed their life values; if it changed their outlook on life and how; if they feel safe; to what an extended they are driven by material things in their lives; and what are they passionate about. These broad questions left enough space for probing which often led to an open conversation on different mostly transmodern topics. The interviews lasted for up to an hour and all interviews were transcribed verbatim. Each respondent was asked for permission for the interview to be recorded and for a photo to be taken. The tourists walking around did not have a problem being interviewed and showed excitement towards the study.

The thematic content analysis was conducted to identify the relevant themes. Open coding was applied in order to keep on reducing a mass of data until an emerging pattern was revealed (Neuman, 2009). The following main themes and related codes were identified:

- Cultural and historical interest and learning (CHIL)
- Strong conviction for environmental and social justice (HLI)
- Travel to reaffirm values (CESJ)

- Highly immersive tourist experience (HITE)
- Desire for authenticity (REV)

For the purpose of this paper, the main themes resulting from the open coding process were discussed in the context of Cultural Creatives transmodern life values. Only the most relevant excerpts expressive of transmodern value system are presented in the discussion of the results.

Area of study
Soweto is a highly significant tourist node in South Africa attracting 212 000 tourists in 2018 (SAT, 2018:85) of whom 55 000 took part in organised tours (SAT, 2018). Tourists visiting Soweto are interested in seeing the main symbols of South Africa's struggle against the apartheid, the Hector Pieterson Museum and the Nelson Mandela Museum/House in Orlando West (Booysens, 2010; Butler & Ivanovic, 2016). As Soweto history represents a symbol of oppression and liberation of the human spirit, thus, the freedom values associated with Soweto are in line with what the new emerging transmodern consciousness and Cultural Creatives stand for. The facts that Soweto attracts a high number of tourists as a must-see destination in South Africa and being a symbol of a victory against oppression which is aligned to Cultural Creatives values justify the choice of Soweto as the study area.

Results and discussion
The study results from the tourist interviews are presented under three themes corresponding with the literature, the transmodern value system, *Being i*n the world as reconfirmation of the authentic-*Self,* and immersive tourist activities experienced as transformative.

Theme 1: The transmodern value system
As seen from the literature, values are relatively stable across contexts and situations and the reason why they proved highly useful in explaining tourist behaviour. Directed by their conscience, the transmodern tourists exhibit self-restrictive and responsible tourist behaviour reflective of their social and moral concerns, and life values (Ghisi, 2008; Ray, 2008). Cultural Creatives don't like to be seen as tourists and are clearly able of self-managing themselves; this is evident as they do not feel right about taking photos of local people without consent. This sentiment was clearly experessed by an interviewee.

"...but like regularly taking photos and that's really not normal and don't really feel right…you feel like a tourist". (USA, 20-29, Female)

Travel is used by Cultural Creatives as a way to reconfirm their values and beliefs which are an integral part of their authentic-*Self*. This is supported by the interviewee's statements below.

"I think the whole purpose of travelling is to reconfirm values" (Austria, 20-29, Female)
"Last year (2017), I worked a lot so I got stressed and only doing things to survive but now I can think about my values" (Brazil, 30-39, Male)

They may make concessions to environmental concerns, let their political ideals shape their choices, and have a heightened awareness of the ways in which their tourism spend contributes to economies and local markets. They understand that tourism boosts economies and plan their travels with an investor or an altruist's attention to the impact of their 'dollars'. They often opt out of the big travel ecosystem to make sure that tourist spend is pumped directly into local economies (Future Foundation, 2015)

Theme 2: Reconfirmation of the authentic-Self

MacCannell (1976:101) asserts that what motivates touristic consciousness is the desire for an authentic experience (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Taking into account the rapidly emerging consumer sensibility towards authenticity as part of an authentic economy, new transmodern tourists seek highly personalised and self-directional travel experiences (Mkhize & Ivanovic, 2019). As such, pre-planned packaged tours tend to be avoided, preferring instead to go for tourism offerings that quietly guide towards what is legitimate contrary to what is superficial, populist and flagrantly commercial. As a treat for irony, places in Soweto that are specifically designed for tourists are indeed the very places that deprive transmodern tourists (Cultural Creatives) from having an authentic experience. Cultural Creatives visiting Soweto are very much aware of the tourist settings that are essentially contrived specifically to attract tourism thus seen as a 'tourist trap'. This sentiment is clearly shared by a number of respondents as presented below.

"...feeling like the whole Vilakazi Street is like the less authentic part" (USA, 20-29, Male)
"Anything that was super touristy was inauthentic for me." (Lithuania. 30-39, Female)
"For me, I really missed the authentic stuff. We had a guided tour which was very touristy, which is ok, but I only got to meet Soweto in a touristy way...not any other way. That was kind of...something was missing...I mean a guided tour you can only go here and not there..." (Austria, 30-39, Female)
"I would say it's not authentic because I just felt like a tourist -stop here, take a picture. Stop there, take a picture" (Belgium, 20-29, Female)

Further to their sensitivity for authentic, Cultural Creatives naturally detect things that are imitation and cliché (Ray & Anderson, 2000:35) which is evident in the following responses.

"...with all crafts, some of them come from Asia and from other countries in Africa...It was not particularly local crafts, which was a shame" (Netherlands, 20-29, Female)
"And then there a couple of guys dressed up in like Zulu stuff. That's a bit...I know it's part of the culture and stuff, but it's sort of a bit...tacky and touristy in that way... I don't know if that's authentic to be honest." (Scotland, 30-39, Male)

When travelling, Cultural Creatives want to meet and talk to local people. They value human interaction or some form of reciprocal interaction which is an essential element in the construction of the tourist's perception of an authentic tourist experience (Gilmore & Pine, 2007; Wang, 1999). The two tourists from Austria clearly described their own authentic moments from Soweto:

"....he explained to us his story about his art and graffiti there and it was really nice...this was authentic for me" (Austria, 20-29, Female)
"And there was also a small authentic moment for me when I just walked next to her down the street and it was actually a part of Soweto that she lives in" (Austria, 20-29, Female)

Since tourism in Soweto happens within a living community and so, essentially it offers a mirage of other tourism offerings that are complementary to historical political routes. However, for tourists to encounter the authentic they themselves need to become active participants in the shaping of their own experiences. The following answers reveal tourists' most immersive and authentic experiences of the locals.

"Living with local people in their house" (France, 30-39, Male)
"Workshops with kids, arts and crafts" (Lithuania, 20-29, Female)
"Attending historical classes at the community hall" (Mozambique, 20-29, Male)
"Dining in local house with locals eating local food" (Netherlands, 20-29, Male)
"Most people take taxi buses to go to work so that's what I do now so I feel that it's quite authentic" (Germany, 20-29, Female)

The majority of tourists visiting South African townships rarely walk around the township and therefore do not interact with the locals (Booyens, 2010). Walking as a pedestrian, whether aimlessly directed by whim (derive by Deborg, 1958) or consciously guided, the tourist is presented with the opportunity to grasp the township in its unfolding complexity, become aware of the overlooked surroundings and begin to see new possibilities of experiencing life in the township of Soweto beyond the tourist veil (Gros, 2014). The tourists in this study indeed express that the most authentic moment of their visit to Soweto was linked to merely walking around the township. This preference is evident in tourists responses below.

"I think walking around in a township" (America, 20-29, Female)
"When we walked through the township" (Lithuania, 30-39, Female)
"No, I don't like that (tours), I like to walk" (Yemen, 20-29, Male)

Walking around the township emerged as the most authentic activity of Cultural Creatives when visiting Soweto (Mkhize & Ivanovic, 2019). For travelers who uphold a transmodern value system, walking and wandering about is not only a menial leisure activity but part of a transformative activity of *Being* in the world. It allows inner-directed Cultural Creatives activists, whether self-acknowledged or not, to act out their motif, navigate increasingly blurred cultural boundaries and quietly challenge narratives of commodification and securitisation of space (Debord, 1981).

Theme 3: Immersive tourist activities experienced as transformative

The interviewed respondents in this study expressed a need for a 'live like a local' immersive experience. There is a need to eat what the locals are eating and do what a local would do rather than visit the over-hyped restaurant in the destination or hotel (Future Foundation, 2015). They express the desire for a tourism experience that involves varying degrees of immersion with the lives of the local people (Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016), evident in their responses below:

"Talks with locals instead of tiring tourist tours would be great" (Austria, 20-29, Female)
"I want to…meet people, talk to them, cook together, share history" (Germany, 30-39, Female)
"Not just staying in a fancy hotel, eat at a restaurant, just do shopping and leave Johannesburg. Real vacation or real life is to be with the family and to be in their daily life…" (Sweden, 30-39, Female)

Transmodern tourists use their travel as an opportunity to immerse themselves in an unfamiliar culture, looking to break themselves entirely from their home lives and engage sincerely with a different way of living (Morrison, Paulauskaite, Powell & Coca-Stefaniak, 2017). The experiences described by the tourists in the study are indeed highly immersive experiences as reflective of the desire for authenticity (Wang, 1999). The following responses are quite insightful.

"A couple of days ago her nephew had her 11ᵗʰ birthday and we just sat at the grandmother's and I met a lot of family members. We had pap and chicken and yeah then I felt at home" (Belgium, 20-29, Female)
"We want to be as close as possible to the truth of Soweto" (France, 30-39, Female)

The tourists' enjoyment seems to depend on the realism of the experiences that locals can create for them. Thus, specific activities undertaken by transmodern travellers will vary depending on the culture that the traveller attempts to make contact with and therefore in many cases, it will mean rerouting towards the unbeaten path (Future Foundation, 2015). This desire for transformational type of travel denotes a search for meaningful consumption and growth through learning and discovery (Ross, 2010). In the case of the Cultural Creatives, consciously or subconsciously, it is the search for tourism offerings that lead to transformatory experiences that validate a sense of being true to one's (authentic) *Self* (Ivanovic & Saayman, 2015: 33; Wang, 1999). As described by an interviewee from Brazil:

"…we are like staying with a family…we have eaten with them. And they gave us names, African names so yeah, a very great experience" (Brazil, 30-39, Female)

Tourism activities that directly challenge tourist's comfort zone and allow tourists to be active participants in the shaping of their own tourism experiences carry the potential to elicit an enduring form of transformational wellbeing (Pope, 2018). Mental stimulation through personal effort is a basic actualising and transformational tendency related to striving for change, striving to understand oneself and the world better (Smith & Diekmann, 2017: 6). For this reason, many Cultural Creatives integrate some elements of volunteering, community development or eco-sustainable activity into their holidays.

Conclusion

In the existential quest for an authentic-*Self*, tourism emerges as an essential tool for enhancing QOL through self-development and adopting and living new transmodern values and lifestyles (Ray & Anderson, 2000; Smith & Diekmann, 2017: 6). In this sense tourism presents the opportunity to lower everyday anxiety, embrace freedom, reach one's true S*elf* and facilitate an authentic lifestyle (Ateljevic, 2013; Tomljenovic, 2015:30; Wolf *et al*, 2017). To a certain extent, immersive travel offers physical, psychological, cognitive, affective and spiritual experiences that can change one's assumptions, expectations, world views and fundamental structures of the *Self* that creates new meaning, offers fulfilment of unsatisfied existential needs and the development of new values (Reisinger, 2015:5). Evidently, an increasing demand for unique, authentic and immersive travel experiences indicates a significant maturation of consumers' society waiting for a response from the tourism industry.

Judging from the interview responses, the tourists in this study reflect increasing demand for type of activities they engaged in to be aligned with that of transformative tourism which is "travel to re-invent themselves in the world" (UNWTO, 2016: 46). A high level of interaction with the locals and walking around seems to be what a close representative of a Cultural Creative visiting Soweto is after. The continued presence of the Cultural Creatives in Soweto can also encourage the locals to proactively use their local heritage and personal knowledge in order to meet the demand for immersive experiences. However, development of this nature should be approached sensitively as it should be an act of open dialogue with the locals and aligned with the principles of responsible tourism (Booyens, 2010).

Despite the study limitations regarding small sample comprising of only 20 interviews with international tourists visiting only one township, Soweto, this study clearly reveals a need

for transformative tourism to be further researched in other historically and culturally significant townships in South Africa and Africa. In addition, the results not only confirmed a presence of Cultural Creatives in Soweto, but further reconfirmed the transmodern character of their values, worldviews and lifestyle, known to be driving the current growth of transformative tourism worldwide. The world's leading experts' (Ateljevic, 2020; Cheer, 2020; Lew *et al*, 2020) projection that transformative tourism will experience an accelerating growth post the COVID-19 pandemic, is based on two emerging trends discussed in the literature. Firstly, the number of Cultural Creatives in the populations worldwide will continue to grow at the minimum rate of 3% annually which will in turn increase their occurrence in the tourism destinations. Secondly, Cultural Creatives' personal inner transformation reflected in all the layers of the outer world (from work and leisure to spending patterns and travel), will inevitably force destinations to reposition and align their tourism offerings to new transmodern/transformational tourism paradigm (Ateljevic, 2020; Cheer, 2020).

The most effective approach to tourism research and development in response to this prediction is to further explore the triggers of tourist transformations and also awareness of the hosts and their willingness to respond to new tourism demand which is expected to pave the way to new mainstream types of tourism in the near future. As Cultural Creatives inner-directed quest for transformation beyond self-actualisation continues to deepen, it will set a new trajectory towards sustainable post pandemic world order and by default, a likely shift towards transformative tourism as a dominant type of travel. The differentiating factor in how effectively this shift is going to be utilised by destinations worldwide will depend on how well each destination understands and caters for the transformative needs of Cultural creatives as powerful new transmodern consumers.

The main research finding of this study that Cultural Creatives prefer immersive tourist activities, further demonstrates that the process of blurring a distinction between hosts and guest was happening in Soweto way before the pandemic and that a paradigm shift brought about by the pandemic is expected to only speed up this process (Tucker & Sweene, 2009). In order to align tourism offerings to the requirements of transformative tourism and proactively facilitating its growth in South Africa, it is recommended that there should be more emphasis on the development of experiential walking trails for travellers as it allows for un-orchestrated encounters with the locals. In addition, locals should be encouraged to incorporate tourism in their everyday lives as a secondary form of profession by becoming local guides and Airbnb hosts. Finally, tourists that exhibit pro-sustainable behaviour should be directed to alternative tourist settings as they will have less impact on the destinations.

As a need for transformational experiences by Cultural Creatives continues to grow, it is of the paramount importance to align the South African tourism destination's offerings with the economic value representative of Cultural Creatives transmodern value system. If this can be achieved there is no doubt that South Africa will be presented with unique opportunity to lead the way in post pandemic world dominated by transformative travel.

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