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### **Abstract**

This research study is confronted with the crystallization of a specific antinomian travel counterculture that advocates withdrawal from the social milieu by visiting the island of Gavdos (a Greek island on the margin of European civilization). By adopting two naturalistic data collection techniques, in-depth participant observation and interviewing, it explores antinomians’ specific travel patterns, motivations, activities, norms, beliefs, appearance and forms of social interaction. The main findings include that antinomians place an emphasis on independently organized, long-term and flexible travel schedules, non-mainstream activities, rejection of materialism and intense social interactions. The aforementioned attributes distinguish antinomians not only from institutionalized travel, but also from other forms of alternative budget traveling.

**Keywords:** antinomian counterculture, deviant behavior, drugs, nudity, antimaterialism, social interaction, budget travelers

### **INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, people are participating in tourism activities more frequently. This in turn introduces multiple travel patterns and behaviors, which, if placed on a continuum, range from the Robinson Crusoe isolated situation to the high consumption global society. This study addresses the extreme end of the continuum of budget travelers by exploring a travel counterculture which rejects the present norms of the ambient society and adopts antinomic behaviors. To initiate an understanding of the antinomian counterculture, the two terms ‘antinomian’ and ‘counterculture’, having claimed growing scholarly attention in the past, but until now have received little attention within the field of tourism; need to be accompanied by an appropriate explanation.

The term antinomian, discussed in detail by Adler (1968) more than 40 years ago to distinguish the hippy counterculture from other groups of people, is used to label travelers under study. The term has emerged from the Greek words ‘anti’ and ‘nomos’ which are translated ‘against’ and ‘law’, and mean a tendency considering existing laws as no longer applicable (Bowker, 1997). It first appeared in theological vocabulary to indicate that moral law is not obligatory (Whitaker, 2000). Anomie, which for mainstream citizens is a main attribute of antinomians, has been defined by Webber and Durkheim as literally the ‘absence of guiding values’ and ‘ultimate ethical standards’ and as a multifaceted social phenomenon that affects sociological, psychological and physiological aspects (Orru, 1989, p. 265). Individuals who exhibit anomic behaviors, are considered countercultures, i.e. groups of people who reject established norms, behaviors, values, beliefs, and consumption patterns of the affluent societies (Cutler, 2005). Due to this rejection, their members react to social dislocation and alienation of the society, and are perceived to embody an oppositional stance to the normative ideals (Thornton, 1997, p.236). As Cutler (2005, p.238) states the term counterculture has its strongest historical associations with those who advocate a communal or nomadic lifestyle, rejection of consumerism, unconventional

clothing, espoused anarchy and search for a life, which breaks up the humdrum existence of what is taken to be the societal norm. Thus, there are types of budget travel personalities, like the antinomian, which can be explored from the prism of antinomian countercultures.

In this study the words ‘antinomian’ and ‘counterculture’ are used to designate travelers’ opposition to established norms and to explore a group of people whose stereotypical travel behaviors are characterized by an alternative mode of adjustment similar to the character traits of Adler’s (1968, p.327) antinomian personality of early hippies. In an attempt to initiate an informed debate on the ‘antinomian’ counterculture, which displays different cultural travel variants and lifestyles compared to most members of modern society, this study explores a personality which visits Gavdos, a remote Greek island located on the margin of European civilization. In particular, to explicate the antinomians’ travel patterns, motivations, activities, norms, beliefs, appearance and forms of social interaction, two naturalistic data collection techniques were adopted; in-depth participant observation and interviewing.

## **ALTERNATIVE TRAVEL COUNTERCULTURES**

In the early stages of tourism research alternative budget travelling was a topic of great interest. Historically, non-conventional budget travelling has been associated with ‘hippies’ (Wilson, 1997), ‘drifters’ (Cohen, 1972, 1973), ‘wanderers’ (Vogt, 1976), and more recently ‘backpackers’ (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). The use of so many terms for the alternative budget traveller means that there is heterogeneity within this market, a fact that needs further investigation. As a result, various studies have explored specific segments of non-conventional budget travellers. Cohen (1972, 1973) was among the first who identified drifting as one of chief expressions of early travellers. According to him, the distinguishing characteristics of young people whose lifestyle and aspirations articulated a rejection of western values and a search for their own piece of primitive paradise were:

*the loosening of ties and obligations, the abandonment of accepted standards and conventional ways of life, the voluntary abnegation of the comforts of modern technological society and the search for sensual and emotional experiences (Cohen, 1973, p.93).*

Cohen (1972, 1973) also saw drifters as voluntary tramps, escapists and anarchists, and called hippy tourists those who commonly begged for money, had strong connections to drugs and shared food and lodgings. In addition, according to various studies (e.g. Adler & Adler, 1999; Cohen, 1972), travelers who participate in the drifter counterculture come into less contact with the tourist industry, and are differentiated from other travelers not only because of their limited budget and lack of fixed itinerary and timetable, but also because they venture away from the ‘beaten track’ and from the accustomed way of life. One of the most representative forms of non-conventional behavior has been expressed by hippies, a normative group of people who had purportedly ‘dropped out’ of society to foster an ‘alternative mode of existence’ (Spates & Levin, 1972, p.326). For instance, ten Have (1974) found hippie drug taking and begging to be an inappropriate and social problem for Amsterdam. Various studies over the last two decades (e.g. Cohen, 2003; 2011; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001; Sørensen, 2003), have examined young budget traveling in the context of ‘backpacking’, a direct successor of early drifting. In one of these

studies, Cohen (2011) found that backpacking has become a preferred way of life for those who style their lives around backpacking enduring practice.

The existence of so many travel personalities within the non-conventional budget segment provides insight into specific travel lifestyles that some people aspire to. However, space limitations do not permit a thorough and comprehensive review of past research on travel personalities. There is a dearth of research on alternative travel countercultures, with an absence of recent systematic research on non-institutionalized forms of travelers, other than backpackers who have an alternative lifestyle who have set out to distance themselves from mainstream tourism. As a result, there are calls in the tourism literature (e.g. Sørensen, 2003), supporting that the focus of analysis should be turned away from fixed forms of budget traveling on specific alternative subtypes. Informed by the lack of research on the antinomian style travel personality, the study's focus is on the crystallization of a specific travel configuration which advocates social withdrawal from the social milieu, while vacationing.

### **THE ANTINOMIANS' COUNTERCULTURE OF GAVDOS**

*Gavdos - An Antinomian Paradise.* Gavdos is the southernmost Greek island and the southernmost point of Europe (Figure 1). Home to about 55 permanent residents, it is a remote island which is only accessible by a small ferry covering a journey requiring several hours over rough seas. It has neither a bank, nor cash machines (ATMs), and where credit cards are not accepted, and most food needs and consumer goods are imported. Inhabitants have to collect rainwater for use as drinking water and only part of the island is on the power grid. With problematic telecommunications, electricity shortages and unreliable ferry connections (travelers can be marooned for days even during the summer due to strong winds), the island is far from what is considered a technologically advanced world.

**Figure 1. Map of Gavdos.**



Before the introduction of tourism, Gavdos was a traditional agrarian island characterized by its remote location and high level of marginalization. Today, the island has become popular as a vacation spot among Greek beach dwellers of an

alternative counterculture. Although for the majority of Greek islands free camping is frowned upon, and actively discouraged by the police, in Gavdos free camping is encouraged. Most travelers arrive in Gavdos during July and August drawn not only by the free camping, but also by nude bathing and opportunities to acquire drugs. Travelers' overall lifestyle and attitude to drug use and nudity is incomprehensible and diametrically opposed to those of the natives who continue to hold a conservative view of society and are opposed to reforms. Nevertheless, locals turn a blind eye toward travelers' activities, not only because they confine themselves to the beach, but also because their spending has resulted in the development of a small scale industry characterized by a wide local ownership of resources and a broad distribution of benefits throughout the local community. The fact that the island has no hotels and only a limited number of rented rooms exist, in combination with the ferry's limited schedules which inhibit day-tripping, has meant that organized tourism has so far bypassed Gavdos, thereby allowing the island to remain off the mainstream tourist radar.

The vast majority of travelers camp at two beaches, Agios Ioannis and Lavrakas. These two beaches have been used for recreation and free camping, mainly for the last ten years. Although mainstream beaches in most coastal resorts provide various types of facilities and infrastructure, the two beaches have not been transformed through human action and are free from market capitalism and state control. Thus, their natural qualities have been preserved and their function as countercultural sites has arisen through the ways in which patrons use and transform the space into their own personal space. With this in mind, the two beaches cater to the particular needs and preferences of travelers who seek out activities removed from the mainstream and prefer a more "natural" form of travel in "untouched" and "unspoiled" environments.

Agios Ioannis can be reached by bus from Karave (the harbor of Gavdos). In Agios Ioannis there are only three tavernas, two mini markets and six rooms for renting. There is no road access to the beach. Access to Agios Ioannis beach is via extremely steep trails which begin at the edge of the tavernas and takes approximately ten minutes to reach on foot. From there it is a further 35 minutes to reach Lavrakas beach, climbing up the rocks or following the coast but also having to wade in the sea at some point. Both beaches have dozens of old cedars one can use as shade. Agios Ioannis beach is where most travelers to Gavdos congregate where they can find tavernas and mini markets in the vicinity, and where they can camp and practice nude bathing. In Lavrakas there are no facilities with the exception of an underground well with fresh, chilled, drinkable water. During the low season, people camping on the two beaches are evenly scattered and absorbed over the large beach area, allowing for privacy and quiet. During July and August the beaches are invaded by large numbers of beach dwellers, and as a result they lose some of their "paradisiac" image of "dream worlds". The fact that travelers camp in tents on the beach under cedar trees and in surrounding hills, makes it difficult to estimate their actual numbers. It is estimated that during July Agios Ioannis accommodates 500 people and during August travelers exceed the 1,100. Due to lack of accessibility, the lack of desirable amenities and the limited number of desirable locations to set up a tent, the number of travelers in Lavrakas is much lower, approximately 100 in July and 200 in August.

*Study Methods.* According to Lincoln & Guba (1985) the manner in which individuals experience a natural setting and the meanings they associate with it are highly subjective. Thus, the qualitative method of naturalistic inquiry, which adopts logical procedures of methods to study behavioral acts by placing the researcher as

sociological observer close to the people he/she studies, can help in the understanding of complex human phenomena of people's interactions as they naturally occur (Denzin, 1971). Naturalistic inquiry involves two stages, both of which were followed in the current study. The first stage, exploration, involved the writing of actual empirical instances of the phenomenon under study. Two tasks were performed during this stage (Blumer, 1931). The first was to acquire firsthand knowledge about the phenomenon and an empirically sound basis for defining the phenomenon and selecting the initial rudimentary ideas. According to Gerson & Horowitz (2002) qualitative research can begin by choosing a site that offers the chance to observe groups about which little is known and while vacationing choose to give up living in mainstream society due to a clash in ideologies. The primary motive for undertaking the current research was the author's firsthand knowledge of the region as a visitor, which initiated a personal interest to study its alternative counterculture. As a result, and motivated to learn more, he used different search engines entering countless combinations of keywords, but found little by way of useful literature on the topic.

Informed by the limited published studies which did not correspond to author's firsthand observations in relation to the antinomian travel counterculture of Gavdos, the decision was taken to complement this by undertaking qualitative primary research. Thus, the second task was to describe the phenomenon by adopting two naturalistic data collection techniques, in-depth participant observation and interviewing. At first, observational techniques were used to collect direct information about antinomians' behavior and travel patterns, including their attire, their various encounters and how they spent their time on the island. Also, observable demographic characteristics were noted and are reported in the text where appropriate.

To narrow inquiry into a subset of the larger population which would be most apt to provide a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999, p.24), participant observation was supplemented by unstructured personal interviews. Supplemented with extensive probing, the interviews aimed at encouraging the subjects to talk freely and to express detailed beliefs and feelings on and around the topic (Kinneer, Taylor, Johnson & Armstrong, 1993, p.240). (Although the author identified in total three different groups of people on the two beaches, for the purpose of this study only one, the seasonal antinomian, has been used in the sample. For more details about each group see section describing the antinomian profile). In total 26 interviews were conducted during August and September 2010 and July and August 2011, both individually and in groups. Interviewing stopped when saturation was reached, that is, data redundancy was achieved and little new information was obtained. Given that more than 95% of antinomians were Greeks and that the vast majority of non-Greeks were newcomers with limited experience on the antinomian counterculture of Gavdos, only Greeks were interviewed. Interviews lasted between 25 minutes and three hours and took place on the ferry, in tavernas, gathering places and beaches.

At first, the author introduced himself and briefly explained the purpose of the study. He then asked subjects to respond explaining that the information they provided would not be shared with others or published in any commercial magazine. Conversations were initiated with superficial discussions on simple descriptive questions, such as previous journeys to Gavdos, purpose of visit and how long each person intended to remain on the island. There was no strict sequence of questions, and the use of prompt questions gave room to interviewees to describe their opinions and explain their experiences in detail. However, a study on antinomians cannot be conducted in the usual manner of interviewing for various reasons. First, antinomians'

lifestyle is one that rejects materialism and thus differs from members of the mainstream society. As a consequence, some subjects were uncomfortable having their remarks recorded and for this reason data were not tape-recorded. Rather, field notes were taken on issues germane to the study. Second, many antinomians have little respect for sociological research and little enthusiasm for cooperating in research because of the pressures exerted on them by the modern world. As one lady in her early forties who visits Gavdos for nearly 15 years noted,

*I enjoy talking with outsiders, if I don't feel like we are regarded as 'animals in the zoo'. I'm not trying to offend anybody but I would like researchers to stop treating us as something weird. The only thing they do is to publish articles that merely increase the influx of tourists.*

Third, antinomians engage in highly stigmatized behavior which is at odds with state rules. Drugs, even of the 'softer' varieties used by antinomians, are illegal and, in Greece, users face heavy penalties if charged. The drug choices of individuals made them reluctant to disclose drug use and some were suspicious of the real intentions of the researcher. Considering these limitations, the participation of antinomians in the study had to be predicated by the researcher's ability to gain trust, assure confidentiality and build rapport. However, in order to enter a world which one is not naturally a part, it is necessary to present an identity that permits interactions to develop (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002, p.212). In this respect, the researcher had to talk in an open, informal, spontaneous and non-judgmental manner, all of which often are typical patterns of interpersonal communication among the study group members. In addition, the author attempted to mingle with the study group by dressing in worn casual attire, having disheveled hair and facial hair, a practical style common among antinomians.

During the final stage of naturalistic inquiry, called by Blumer (1931) inspection, analysis of the written descriptions of the study phenomenon was undertaken. In doing so, data included in the notebook were read and re-read, bracketed, and compared to identify the essence of the phenomenon. Then data were clustered around themes that recurred as commonalities in most visitors and describe the textures of an antinomian travel personality. The following step was to undertake a delimitation process whereby irrelevant, repetitive, or overlapping data were eliminated (Patton, 2002:486). As a central methodological problem in the data analysis of onsite studies (see Berg, 1998), is to balance adequate subjectivity with adequate objectivity. For instance, the researcher's past travel experiences and lifestyle might have affected the interpretation of the results. To minimize the risk of personal influence on results, triangulation was used. To validate the analysis, Colaizzi (1978) recommends returning to the subjects who provided the data and ask if the analysis describes their experience, or whether any aspects of their experience have been omitted. In doing so, the author relied on one interviewee who is studying for a postgraduate degree. In addition, the author relied on a colleague to read, reflect on, and respond to the synthesis of the data and he referred back to the original notes to find the most powerful and eloquent quotes that speak directly to the phenomenon in question. (These quotes are provided in the text where appropriate). Also, in order to support a more interpretive discourse in the notes, links across the relevant literature were sought. All these actions were useful in order to reduce researcher bias that could emerge from imposing one's own beliefs and values.

*Profiling the Antinomian Traveler.* As in every society, the patrons of the two beaches contained various subgroups, each with its own characteristics. Although all travelers to the two beaches undertake independently-organized trips and are prepared to endure varying degrees of discomfort by using tents and rucksacks, it is possible to separate them into three sub-groups, all of which interact within the same space. Firstly, in recent last years the beaches have become a magnet for those who are attracted by free camping opportunities rather than the alternative lifestyle. For many, camping has evolved because they are unable to afford more expensive forms of accommodation. The vast majority comprises of Athenians, or those from other urban areas of Greece seeking a complete detachment from civilization. They camp in Agios Ioannis beach in close proximity to low-priced tavernas and the isolated beach of Lavrakas. It is not within the scope of this paper to study this group because they are not part of Gavdos' antinomian counterculture, and for this reason they were omitted from the analysis. Secondly, there was a core of permanent antinomians who tried to avoid and keep a safe distance from the rest by settling themselves in the isolated areas of the two beaches and away from the main transit routes. Although this group is the most representative of the antinomian counterculture, it is not included in the analysis because its members live on the beach all year round, for instance one of them has lived in Lavrakas for 18 years, and hence, they cannot be considered travelers.

Thirdly, a group of seasonal antinomians exists whose positive experiences and permissive local attitude compels them to return each year. This group was the focus of the current research. Demographically, the bulk of them were young (in the 18-30 age bracket). This might be because many people choose drifting in their youth and then return to mainstream lifestyles (Cohen, 2011). There were also a small number of middle-agers who have been returning to the place for years. The largest proportion was males, with most females accompanied by a partner. Antinomian families with children were very limited. (The author while conducting the interviews met only two young antinomian couples each with one young child. Both of them stayed in Sarakiniko where they were able to find moderate types of facilities and thus avoid imposing physical deprivations on their offspring.) In more detail, the selection of camping sites in Gavdos was explained by a female vendor in her early forties who was also camping at Agios Ioannis beach along with her daughter. She was selling necklaces made from beads, leather and wood at a location next to a taverna:

*Fifteen years ago we used to camp at Sarakiniko beach and visit Agios Ioannis only for a few days. The reason for this was that there were not any shops or tavernas in the proximity of Agios Ioannis and we had to walk for an hour to buy food. The last years this has changed. Sarakiniko became too commercialized with rented rooms and tavernas. As a result those of us who want to be close to amenities move to Agios Ioannis and Lavrakas is ideal for those who seek isolation.*

Antinomians take flexible trips each year to Gavdos for prolonged periods of time, much longer than the brief vacations of mass tourists. For many, it was impossible to reckon how much time their stay would last and it was common to constantly alter its duration. As one stated, "I'm not sure how long I will be here; A couple of weeks or more." Two others, the author met at Lavrakas beach, declared they were going to stay until November (six months in total) if weather conditions will allow so. Like Riley's (1988) drifters, antinomians come into less contact with

the tourist industry compared to other types of tourists, by being more self-sufficient and self-contained and avoiding commercialized settings. The antinomian group travels to Gavdos lightly, carrying a rucksack with clothes, cooking utensils, a tent and a sleeping bag, as well as small amounts of cash. Those who stay longer have built their own huts.

A definite and distinctive lifestyle of antinomians was apparent in their attire, personal appearance and adornment. Those who decide to dress in the way antinomians do, are often stigmatized by society and are often subject to rejection and social isolation. Nevertheless, for the members of the antinomian counterculture their distinctive mode of appearance advocated a liberal attitude and communicated their ideological beliefs. The most salient hallmark of antinomians was long disheveled hair, sometimes rasta style, and for men abundant facial hair. As one stated, “our hair grows and this is natural. There is no point in cutting it”. All day long, antinomians lay beneath a cedar tree either naked or wearing beach wraps, and from time to time swam naked. When in an urban environment they preferred to wear either beach wraps or casual and worn clothing that set them off from the look of the mainstream. They also were barefoot nearly all the time and only rarely wore sandals. A young antinomian girl explained her choice of clothing as follows: “I do not wear name brands and expensive clothes, the clothing of the civilized world as most people of my age do. Instead, I dress to feel comfortable and in line with my lifestyle.”

*Motivating Factors of Antinomian Travelling.* While some antinomians identified “escape from life crises”, “get away from it all”, “meet friends” and “failed relationships” as travel push factors, most traced their enduring involvement within the antinomian counterculture broader societal alienation and economic crises. As Adler asserted forty years ago, “the global economic crisis and the growth of unemployment are elements that can contribute to antinomian social movements. These movements surface in times of social disequilibrium and critical change (1972, p.21)”. Recent economic crises in many European countries has brought a shift in values for many youth who radically oppose their parents’ society and tend toward far-reaching change of the existing social order. In the case of Greece, many young people whose country is currently undergoing huge social and economic change are disgusted with civilization and rebel against their own culture by following an antinomian lifestyle. This was the case of most interviewees who sought “anarchistic” travel experiences in Gavdos where the materialistic ethos of western society are ignored. This is not to infer that the antinomian counterculture has appeared only recently. Like 60s and 70s hippies, who in protest against industrial society used to sleep in the caves of Matala (Crete), the antinomian group has for a while now felt alienated in society having chosen to turn their back on the system and its values. Thus, the crack in the traditional values of the puritan world gave voice to the hippies who prepared the ground for the birth of antinomianism.

In brief, catalysts for participation in the antinomian style of traveling were the economic crisis and/or a transitional phase in their life mainly associated with career disruption. For instance, a male in his late thirties mentioned, “I first visited Gavdos in 2002. Since then I camp at Agios Ioannis beach for at least two weeks every summer. This summer I lost my job and I am planning to stay for three months”. For him as well as for many others, participation in a self-marginalized social group of alienated people recognizable by their counterculture was not only a “unique experience” and “a need to put aside a bunch of things he had accustomed himself to on earlier trips”, but also “to get rid of the feeling of being busy and in a hurry” and



an opposition to a “reutilized”, “materialistic”, “production” and “consumption-oriented” world. Most travelers have the chance to experience adventures denied to them in everyday life only during the summer season. As a male university student declared, “I cannot have the same free spirit back home. At home there are too many rules and regulations. Everything is confined. Only in Gavdos I can enfranchise myself and live my lifestyle”.

*Engaging in Focused Interactions.* For antinomians, locals are not an ‘attraction’. Hence, they have little interest in meeting them and learning about their culture. Like Cohen’s (1973) study on drifter travel, who found that drifters’ actual degree of interaction with local culture is very limited, and human contacts tend to become narrowed to the company of co-travelers, there was little evidence of antinomians establishing repeat contact with local people. In practice, the main form of socializing with locals was limited to commercial transactions, either when working in a local enterprise or when buying local products. The literature on budget travelling (e.g. Murphy, 2001), indicates that being together in a particular social space with other fellow tourists is an integral experiential attribute of the trip. As discussed by Gahagan (1984) and Murphy (2001, p.51), the most common levels of social interaction for contemporary tourists is co-presence, i.e. when two individuals use the same space, and focused interaction, i.e. when tourists gather together in various settings to communicate and exchange ideas. In contrast to modern tourists who stay in fashionable resorts where they interact with others only through co-presence, antinomians stay in Gavdos, for long periods, and spend most of their time with like-minded travelers. As a result, focused interaction takes place among antinomians. This has been explained by Cohen (1982) when he wrote about the distinction between ‘tourists’ and ‘travelers’ by noting that the former avoid while the latter, including antinomians, seek one another’s company. As a consequence, the antinomian counterculture has a very strong sense of community and their commune way of life makes social interaction a commonplace.

Interaction for antinomians was not only shaped by the nature of the “utopian lifestyle enclave”, but also the same enclave was shaped by that interaction. The high cohesiveness and collectivism in an absolutely isolated place, far away from civilization, created a kind of shared territory with geographical boundaries. In line with Adler’s (1968) hippies, the antinomians under study synthesize an identity of Indian tribalism that disdains and repudiates social interaction. This interaction is enhanced through social nudity. Antinomians spend most of their time nude not only while swimming but also during their daily activities. This practice enhances opportunities for socialization (Andriotis & Theocharous, 2012). Apart from nudism, drug use is one of those activities which enhance social interaction. Group smoking of marijuana became a kind of secular sacrament which served as a collective bond by hippies (Peny, 1972). This applies also to antinomians. In one of the gatherings the author attended, the smell of hash smoke filled the air. Also at one of the interviews the author conducted, herb was smoked in his presence. For antinomians the availability of drugs constituted an essential part of positive recreational experience. As Uriely & Belhassen support the most current research “addresses the usage of drugs as a ‘normal’ societal phenomenon rather than as ‘problematic behavior’ to be overcome” (2005, p.245). This has been demonstrated by one respondent, when he noted: “if hash is inexpensive and readily available many people, even those who are not familiar with it, will use it. All over the world it is normal to smoke hash. Hash today is socially accepted. It is a part of many people’s recreation. There is nothing

wrong with it". Nevertheless, while respondents favored softer drugs, most, if not all, were reluctant to talk about their frequency of use.

Several comments made by antinomians illustrated the development of social interactions among them. For instance, many respondents explained to the author that they deliberately sought to visit Gavdos because of the opportunity offered to participate in direct and profound social interaction. In reality, the majority spent most of their time in the company of other travelers of similar mind which enabled the development of long-term relationships and travel experiences framed by group behavior. This sense of community was a contributing factor to repeat visitation. As many claimed, they enjoyed returning to Gavdos to meet significant "others", rather than merely "consuming" the place, as most mass tourists do. In this manner, the beaches have been turned into meeting places where antinomians meet up with friends living elsewhere and establishing new friendships. For the majority, interpersonal relationships were very intense and friendships were made much more quickly than usual.

In fact, those interviewed valued highly their interactions with others and engaging in group activities such as parties and any sort of gathering with people. The familiar, friendly and community-like atmosphere of the two beaches created a sense of belonging for them. In this vein, the norm of interaction in the lifestyle enclaves may be seen as offering the possibility of being in a fraternity of people. As one respondent stated: "I like it here because I can find like-minded people with similar interests. I feel like I fit in". Antinomians were eager to share a wide range of ideas that could change the society according to their beliefs. The abundance of time to spend with other group members allowed conversations and meaningful interactions. Antinomians talked to people without imposing barriers and were incredibly open. They often spoke about their life stories, told jokes and discussed their views of the meaning of their lifestyle as well as their natural way of life. They also readily accepted outsiders and were friendly to peers in other groups. As one middle-aged male remarked:

*Everybody gets along with everybody here. Our community can be likened to an 'open club', to which anyone is welcome. As long as a person is ready for a radical departure from the accepted boundaries of 21<sup>st</sup> century civilization, he can join our club.*

In particular, during field work it was frequently observed that antinomians greeted each other warmly. Regulars were likely to highlight their warmth and openness and to display affection publicly, by openly hugging others. In addition, and without exception, they would always greet anyone whether they were previously acquainted or not. As a university student said, “In the civilized world, nobody says hello when he meets a stranger in the street. In our world, which is considered uncivilized, everyone greets everyone else”.

*Rejecting Materialism.* In the consumption-driven world of the 21st century, antinomians attempt to live free from material possessions and abhor traditional tourist-driven advertised localities. Antinomians do not worry whether they have money, tickets, hotel reservations or any of the other accoutrements of mass tourists. Gavdos has a limited number of cars and only one community bus with unreliable schedules. It has no cinema and the radio receiver picks up only a couple of signals. On the beaches there is no electricity and running water and at night there is no light pollution. Without modern distractions, antinomians can focus on the ‘art of correct living’ by suspending customary rules and normal notions of time of most contemporary tourists. Thus, antinomians, who avoid western notions of time, discard their watches and use cell phones only in an emergency. Along these lines a female stated, “In Gavdos I seek escape from the mundane rounds of quotidian life. For this reason I keep my mobile switched off and I do not use any timepiece”. This attitude is perhaps appropriate on an island where time and the technologically advanced world hardly impinge.

The beach lifestyle enclaves under study are populated by people of limited cash flow. The low cost of living in Gavdos and respondents’ anti-commercial attitude allows prolonged sojourns. For instance, the author met an undergraduate student who spent less than \$270 during his first month in Gavdos. He, as most antinomians in Lavrakas, drank water from the well, bought raw cooking materials and fruit, cooked his own meals and very rarely had meals in any of the tavernas. Rejection of materialist pursuits was articulated by him, as follows:

*I was brought up in a city by a middle-class family which offered me everything I wanted. But, I decided I haven't gotten into being materialistic. I just thought there are so many things that are important in life other than material objects.*

Another antinomian rejected materialistic and state-oriented lifestyle and looked for simpler life in terms of possessions, especially clothes and consumer durables by stating:

*I want to pursue an antimaterialist way of life. I do not want to get trapped by any material possessions. I am thinking of moving here to obtain freedom from material things. I want to escape from boring urban life. I want to have a simple natural life. A rucksack with a few clothes is enough for me. I can work on the soil and fish to provide the food I will eat.*

Taken together, both narratives repudiated the values of the consumer society, particularly as these relate to buying things which society says are necessary for a good life. Thus, antinomians decry the consumption mania that is trashing the planet

(Cantlon & Koenig, 1999). They grieve that most people are victims of a consumer society where according to O'Brien (2008) consumption and happiness have become inextricably linked. In reality, many antinomians wanted to free themselves from the imprisonment of material acquisitions and conventional life. Their philosophy corresponded to Adler & Adler's (1999) transient workers whose lifestyle was driven by experiential rather than material goals.

The antinomians under study were undemanding. Living primitively in the wilderness allowed them more freedom. Maintaining an antinomian lifestyle was possible by spending less and generally consuming fewer resources. In the absence of external pressures, life in Gavdos is reduced to the basic elements of nature. Frequently it was reported by respondents that they strived to live sustainably and reach a higher level of consciousness by enjoying the greater interaction with the natural environment. Informal and unregulated camping at the two beaches was considered by respondents to offer a rewarding environmentally sound experience. The comparatively primitive style of camping antinomians endure makes them to get closer to nature and have greater interaction with the outdoors. As an unemployed male said, "being in the outdoors is a great source of pleasure for me. I enjoy sleeping on the sand without any artificial lighting above me and with the only roof the sky filled with stars. I say that I stay at a 1,000-star hotel." In contrast to most modern tourists who demand hot baths and large swimming pools (Andriotis, 2008), antinomians do not demand luxury. They swim in the sea and have cold showers. The fact that on the two beaches the absence of shops, cafes, roads and cars made one respondent to feel like he had turned back the clock hundreds of years.

Antinomians aspire to maintaining a deep respect for the environment and many of them claimed strong ties to nature. As one stated, "the environment has always been very important to me and I appreciate all bounties of mother nature". This was evident through their activities. Interviewees did not undertake any active pursuits. They were inactive and spent most of the day naked at the beach lying under the shadow of a cedar tree rolling cigarettes. They would be nude even when they were involved with their everyday duties such as cooking, washing cooking utensils and dishes in the sea, drawing water from the well etc. This "back to nature" attitude which has strong ideological and philosophical roots to naturism (Andriotis & Theocharous, 2012), has been identified through antinomians' comments, such as "nudism puts us closer to nature" and "in paradise Adam and Eve were naked. They could live without clothes. We can do the same". As Andriotis & Theocharous claim for true naturists, "naturism means a lot more than just removing clothes. Naturism is living in respect and harmony with nature, or as nature intended" (2012). Thus, naturism on the unspoiled beaches of Gavdos can be seen as a conscious and intentional abandonment of the conventional forces to which a western city dweller is accustomed. However, nudist practices run directly counter to some of the most cherished values embedded in the conventional social system, making antinomians 'deviant' in relation to rule breaking.

*Maintaining the Antinomian Lifestyle.* Although Rozin (1988, p.56) reports that hippies considered work as an artificial procedure and, instead, they preferred to extend their hands and beg for money or something to eat, begging was not encountered while conducting the current research. Like most budget travelers, antinomians did not have sufficient savings to sustain their travel lifestyle. Although they had turned their backs on the money- and status-driven society by being undemanding, they had to find some ways to earn their living and fund their

prolonged stay in Gavdos. For most, desire to work was driven by their consumption needs and lifestyle. They funded themselves in three ways. Firstly, a large number of students on extended summer holidays had two main sources of income; financial support by their parents, or working part-time, either during the academic term or for short duration during summer. On the other hand, the author met two students who, during their stay, played music at one of the local tavernas for a couple of days. For them the main reason for this job was to earn some pocket money to extend their stay. However, their interest in music was largely independent from financial motives. This was evident from the fact that they often played music, in the nude on the beach, in order to entertain their friends.

Secondly, the majority of antinomians had intense periods of work at home not only to support themselves, but also to save money for their annual trip to Gavdos. From the interviews, it was frequently evident that when respondents exhausted their savings they would leave Gavdos to return to their ordinary pursuits. As one stated, “I ran out of money. If I had money and I didn’t have to work, I would be staying in Gavdos longer. Now, I have to go back home to look for a job.” For those without any full-time jobs, there was a balance of seasons, with intense intermittent periods of work at home and prolonged sojourns to Gavdos. Of course, the main motivation to work was not only to fund their travel, but also as a way to maintain their lifestyle. One respondent exemplified the reasons that she had abandoned her earlier life as follows,

*I don't need large amounts of money. I never needed them. In the past I worked in the private sector all year round just for the money. I earned a lot of money. However, I hated this job. For this reason I resigned. I am not going to pursue money like my parents did. My parents spent all their life acquiring material objects and they had only short vacations every year. I do not want to have the same life.*

Finally, a small number of antinomians took part in the local labor market of Gavdos. For those who wanted to earn money while in Gavdos among the limited options were either to sell artifacts, often hand-made, or to work in the local economy. Although most of those who worked at local enterprises did so mainly for short periods, those who sold items at Agios Ioannis tavernas or on the way to Agios Ioannis beach did so for many years, one of them for nearly 10 years. However, for antinomians the main reason for work was not to save money for their retirement. Instead they aimed at gaining a minimum income in order to earn their living and finance a prolonged stay in Gavdos. Thus, their work motivations respond more to their ideology and personal recreational interests rather than business goals. As typified by a woman who was selling items as an extension of her recreational activity, “I wanted to be in a business related to my own recreational interests and experiences. For this reason I decided to sell articles made of clay, wood, and leather here”.

There was also one case of someone working to save money for another trip. This was a young chambermaid at the only rented room enterprise in Agios Ioannis. This girl had camped at the beach of Agios Ioannis and was working in order to collect money to visit an alternative commune in Spain along with her partner. When the author asked for her during the second year of this research, the owner of the rooms told him that she didn’t work for her anymore. The owner also told him that it was customary for her antinomian style employees to engage in occasional and short-term employment and for this reason she had to regularly hire new staff. In brief,

antinomians avoided working the conventional full-time jobs. As a result, only few were in straight occupations and the majority was in jobs in which tolerance for new ideas was accepted and which facilitated alternative lifestyles. In addition, while antinomians exhibited several different work patterns their motives were entirely driven by their values and lifestyle. This lifestyle marked them as a unique category of workers who differed from the norms of conventional society.

## CONCLUSION

From the current research it is evident that the users of the two beaches were not a homogeneous group. Instead, they were divided into three groups which indulged in a variety of activities suited to their particular interests. In addition, even within the antinomian types there are subtypes worth exploring, this was not possible. Although a comparative study of all groups and subgroups visiting the two beaches would be worth exploring, space limitations, did not allow this.

Despite these limitations the study of seasonal antinomians, an under-researched segment of the alternative budget market has helped to enhance the understanding of a particular travel personality that holds different travel orientations than that of their normative counterparts and express them in a variety of ways. This study found that antinomians are predominantly young, place an emphasis on independently organized, long-term and flexible travel schedules, and on intense social interactions coupled with informal participatory activities with fellow travelers. They attempt to live with low amounts of money and opt out of the steady job and career path. They are characterized by a mix of travel motives including the desire to experience genuine freedom and adventure with others who hold similar beliefs and are likely to be in disagreement with dominant capitalist economic norms. In contrast to vacationing tourists, antinomians avoid crowded touristic spaces by placing particular emphasis on pristine locations and nature. Compared to most other alternative forms of budget travelers who visit multiple destinations, antinomians stay for prolonged periods in Gavdos forming a type of single destination travelers.

Although most budget travelers (e.g. modern backpackers), who “profess to various degrees the ideals of modern tourism, such as the experience of non-touristic sites and their actual practices are marked by many traits of postmodern tourism” (Cohen, 2003, p.101), antinomians are perhaps among the limited forms of travelers who are amenable to the influence of postmodern tourism. Traveling to marginal spaces for extended periods distinguishes them from short-stay tourists who simply restrict themselves to established sites and activities. Thus, Adler’s antinomian personality configuration which arose more than forty years ago “in a time of social crisis and transition, when values and behavior controls were no longer adequate and new ones had not yet emerged to take their place (1968, p.338)”, is still evident in some parts of the world.

As a cry of protest, perhaps due to economic crises and social alienation, antinomians reject the past. For this reason they withdraw temporarily, and only a few permanently, into Gavdos where they can reduce the strain of adjustment by adhering to some sort of alternative or nonmainstream lifestyles. Antinomians differ also from most forms of budget traveling principally with regard to social organization. Although budget travelers have neither any concept of community nor any dream of transforming society, antinomians in Gavdos, have created an intimate community of like minded regulars with an idea about how wider society could be better.

Antinomians live modestly, use soft drugs, swim nude, reduce external stimuli, especially artificial ones, depart from the taken-for-granted society and

abandon temporary existing commitments while some periods of the year integrate themselves into the mainstream world. In practice, antinomians are poised in psychological uncertainty between two social worlds, the 'antinomian' beach during summer and the mainstream society during winter. Withdrawal into a tourist resort can be something that many tourists do when on holiday, in an attempt to escape their home environment. However, antinomians' life in Gavdos is not set apart from their travel activity. Instead, it has become part of it, since elements of everyday life such as cooking are infused with travel activity.

The location of the two beaches in a remote insular space allows a certain degree of spatial isolation. The two beaches are located far from mainstream society and ghettoized on the edges of society. Many antinomians visit Gavdos due to the absence of drug policies on the two beaches and community tolerance towards nudism. For instance, the island has only one policeman who never visits the two beaches. Thus the function of the two beaches as marginal paradises where no laws exist has made them utopias for travelers who perceive them as an ideal society. In reality, the location of the beaches "renders them ideal spaces upon which utopian rebellions can be acted out and where their particular counterculture can evolve outside of the surveillance and intervention of the powers that normally regulate social behavior in Western society" (Evans, 2000, p.5).

To conclude, to add rigour, breadth and depth of the inquiry, a multi method approach incorporating in-depth interviews, participant observation and collection of relevant secondary data was adopted. However, in this study, as in most sociological studies involving interviews, forging a close bond in a short and bounded time period is required (Gerson & Horowitz 2002, p.214), meaning that the sampling approach may not yield a strictly representative sample. In addition to the short duration of data collection, care must be taken in extrapolating general conclusions from small-scale research studies. Nevertheless, this study reflects larger travel trends of a particular travel personality and not just the idiosyncrasies and the intricacies of lives of a narrow countercultural group. There is still a great need for research on other alternative countercultures to determine whether the findings of this study can be generalized to them. Only when the findings of this study are corroborated by further observations, will they provide some tentative answers to the understanding of complex phenomena of travel interactions and behaviors as they naturally occur.

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