

CHAPTER ONE

Prolegomenon

If we confine our historical scrutiny to revolutionary success, we discount that vast proportion of human social action which is played out on a humbler scale. We also evade, by teleological reasoning, the real questions that remain as to what *are* the transformative motors of history.

—Jean Comaroff (1985, 261)

It was late September, the summer season was ending, and the school year about to begin. The narrow streets of Skala Eresos were all but empty—just a few cafés and tavernas that line the Aegean shore were open for business. In this seaside village on the Greek isle of Lesbos, tourists, travelers, and local Greeks sat in relaxed conversations over drinks on wooden balconies perched by the sea. Cobbled and concrete streets separate diners from kitchens and storefronts that waiters walk across to serve true oceanside meals—a scene typical of Greece’s coastlines.

I felt like I missed the better part of a great party. Many of the local residents were leaving their seaside summer homes and returning with children and potted plants in hand back to the upper village of Eresos, a few miles uphill, or to homes in Athens, Greece’s capital, or Mytilini, the island’s largest town. The unseasonably warm Mediterranean weather in 2008 held open more than the handful of dining venues that usually remain after summer’s end. These businesses, along with a few bakeries and grocery shops, serve the small community of Skala’s several hundred yearlong residents and straggling visitors who appear on occasion during the island’s cold, wet winter.

Having come to Lesbos for research, I considered who I might interview in this evaporating beach town. My plan had been to study the

women's food cooperatives that operate in villages throughout the island as a form of gendered models of alternative economics. Yet I could not relinquish an interest in the lesbian microenterprises and tourist enclave in Skala Eresos, which had piqued my interest during a visit to the island almost two decades prior.* Skala Eresos is an archetypal Greek island village steeped in Greek Orthodoxy, agriculture, fishing, and tourism and also the proclaimed birthplace of Sappho, the famed ancient Greek lyrical poet, who wrote about her love of women.** The lesbian hotels, cafés, and bars—such as Sappho's Garden—owned and visited by both ethnic Greek and transnational lesbians seemed to easily coexist with traditional Greek *kafeneions* or coffee shops, which are recognized as bastions of Greek masculinity (Papataxiarchis 1991). I decided also to explore the mingling that occurs at Skala Eresos' diverse drinking and dining venues based in lesbian and traditional Greek sociality and enterprise, as a way to further study the local, alternative economics practiced on Greek isles.

In its analysis of alternative economic practices, *Sappho's Legacy* weds the women's village cooperatives that operate throughout Lesbos with the lesbian-owned microenterprises in the village of Skala Eresos, presenting both of them as spatiotemporal alternatives to neoliberal economics and gendered, heterosexist normativities. The start of my fieldwork in late September 2008, which continued intermittently through May 2016, coincides with the global financial crisis. News of the high wire act

*Throughout I use the term “lesbian” or “lesbian identified” with the awareness that the term is both historically specific (Faderman 1992) and that “place is central to the form identities take” (Browne and Ferreira 2015, 4). Furthermore, I follow Browne and Ferreira's (2015, 5–6) argument that while the term may be “fluid and constructed in spatial and temporal ways,” “lesbian” highlights the heterosexism and patriarchy in the politics of sexualities, and it remains a way that people, including the women in Lesbos I interviewed, chose to identify. I refrain from using LGBTQ+ because this conception was not relevant to the time period I am most focused on and would conflate, for example, the experiences of lesbian and gay travelers with that of trans travelers. I apply the term “queer” when discussing theoretical perspectives post-1991 but generally not in reference to groups or earlier writings on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans communities. I distinguish between Lesbian, a native resident of Lesbos, and lesbian, a sexual orientation, but mostly apply the phrase “residents of Lesbos” to the former for greater clarity.

**I sometimes qualify Greek with “ethnic” to indicate the autochthonous people of Greece. When referring to Greek culture or other social aspects, I refrain from this to recognize the many other races and ethnic groups that live in Greece and participate in or create Greek culture.

of traditional investment firms and hedge funds and their surreptitious management of the US housing market had broken just a few days after arriving in Lesvos. Tied to the US financial scandal was the unscrupulous lending practices of banks within the European Union (EU), which would eventually bang Greece and other peripheral EU nations (Ireland, Spain, Portugal) up against the bulwark of global capital.

To a certain extent, *Sappho's Legacy* became an account of Greek islanders' interpretations and responses to this crisis. The multiple years in which I returned to the field were a propitious moment to study small-scale local, collective, and community-minded economic practices in Greece. My timing lent insight into how these island enterprises survived, and even succeeded, during unfavorable economic circumstances. I explore the ways in which they conduct business—pricing, lending, gifting, wages, purchasing, trading, rent agreements, work schedules—to support the survival of the wider community. *Sappho's Legacy* illustrates how groups that have been marginalized or discriminated against socially, are less privileged economically, or are geographically distant from centers of capitalism seek or create economic alternatives for the purpose of autonomy, community, and convivial work (Simone 2004; Hau'ofa 1994; Illich 1973).

This volume documents how the local, subaltern economic logic of Greeks and the everyday economic practices of autonomous cooperatives and microenterprises on Greek islands remain stubbornly resistant to neoliberalism.* Though outlying and small, understanding how these

*There exist wide debates on the meanings of globalization, neoliberalism, and economic development in the social sciences (i.e., Harvey 2005; Kellner 2002; Guillen 2001; MacLean 2000). My use of the terms here distinguishes neoliberalism as the Washington Consensus–promoted ideological shift from state-led or Keynesianism development strategies to an increased capital bias that limits state regulatory capacities and supports privatization but relies on governments' facilitating capital expansion. Neoliberal tenets have shaped development strategies in most of the globe, encouraging an uneven, interdependent system of production and consumption (McMichael 2008; Klak and Conway 1998). Some use globalization and neoliberalism interchangeably (see Harvey 2005), but the social movement literature in particular demonstrates that the term “globalization” denotes not only the concentrated networks of capitalism but also those of the global justice movement (Smith et al. 2008; Brecher, Costello, and Smith 2000) to create a “globalization from below” (Smith et al. 2008; Starr 2000). Or, in the case of the migration literature, globalization reflects the increase in transnational livelihoods that blur national borders and the large portion of the world's population that maintain diasporic rather than national identities (Kraidy 2005; Braziel, and Mannur 2003; Hall 2003).

local island enterprises persist in defying norms of global capitalism draws attention to less studied transformative motors of history (Comaroff 1985). Even as the European Union, International Monetary Fund, and European Central Bank, popularly referred to as “the troika,” demanded economic and cultural capitulation, many Greek islanders and those attracted to them seemed to reject the fundamental ethos by which global capital stands. *Sappho's Legacy* is about how *convivial economics* are generated by subaltern groups in peripheries, and how gender and sexualities inform the creation of food and drink venues—bars, cafés, cooperatives, and restaurants—that offer both opportunities for leisure and employment. In naming convivial economics, I draw inspiration from *The Tools of Conviviality* (1973, 18) by Ivan Illich, an anarchist and academic outsider (Hoinacki 2002), whose book emphasized “personal energy under personal control” for the advancement of a just economy. Contributing to the recent fields of island studies, food studies, and alternative economics, my research of economic alterity on Lesbos considers how island societies may be inclined to meet the needs of the environment and the community first, offering a counter to the failure of continental-centered neoliberal approaches.

The Organic and Attritional Alterity of Cooperatives and Microenterprises

Both the women's cooperatives and the local and lesbian enterprises in Skala Eresos speak to economic alternatives in island societies and the ways gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and tourism shape those alternatives. While mainstream economic development discourses now address gender differences, most often by co-opting feminist analyses to promote neoliberal agendas (Bedford 2009), an appreciation of intersectionality (Ken 2011; Choo and Ferree 2010; Hill-Collins 1990), or that gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, or nation intersect to inform economic choice is limited in both the academic and popular alternative economic literature (for examples, see Mason 2016; Burlingham 2005; Botsman and Rogers 2011; Wright 2010; Hess 2009; Laville, Levesequé, and Mendell 2006). Given their marginalization in the formal labor market, women and groups snubbed in the formal economy due to social identities or island geographies seek and make alternatives to conventional economics. This volume brings an intersectional approach and geographical awareness to alternative economics including an appreciation that sexualities are constitutive of economic practice.

Based in Greek cooperative traditions and located in island village communities, the women's cooperatives on Lesbos represent an *organic* resistance to neoliberalism. The women's cooperatives have evolved from a long tradition of cooperatives production in Greece where there is evidence of over a century of sailors, shepherds, fishers, artisans, and farmers working collectively, in formal or loosely organized cooperatives, distributing income equally or by the type of work, and collaborating on financial decisions (Petropoulo 1993). The women's cooperatives in Greece were also prompted by development strategies in the 1980s and later with the formation of the European Union to advance agrotourism and increase women's employment in rural and island regions.

Arriving from their nearby homes, often by foot to their production and retail facilities in the village square, during mornings and after the traditional Greek midday break, women's cooperative members across Lesbos keep a similar routines of work. Preparing pastries, savory treats, and fruit preserves, the women are working in constant engagement with each other and rely on one another to make production plans and coordinate kitchen duties, while they discuss current events and politics with demitasses of Greek coffee. They ply and fold thin layers of dough, sometimes rolled over ten feet on a table between them, which they turn into artistic patterns and shapes flavored and embellished with a variety of local nuts, fruits, and honey.

Table 1.1. Women's Cooperatives on Lesbos in 2012

Village	Year Initiated	Membership
Agra	1998	15
Anemotia	1998	10
Asomotos	1998	4
Ayia Paraskevi	1999	11
Ayiassos	1998	12
Filia	2004	11
Mesotopos	1998	34
Molyvos	2004	13
Parakila	2001	16
Polichnitos	1997	9
Petra	1982	unknown
Skalachori	2000	17

The data in this table represents a snapshot of the membership of the island's women's cooperatives. Between 2008 and 2019 only one cooperative had closed on Lesbos. Women's cooperatives such as those I study in Lesbos are found throughout rural villages in Greece. Although there is a central organization that hosts awards and annual meetings, the cooperatives operate independently.

The table provides the names of the cooperative villages, the years the cooperatives were established, spanning from 1982 to 2004, and membership, ranging from four to 34 members, in 2012. The organizational forms of cooperatives vary depending on their scale and the product or services provided; however, cooperatives are generally owned by employees and democratically governed by members (Wright 2010; Hacker 1989). The International Labor Organization (2002) defines a cooperative as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.” Cooperatives are also characterized by transparency where production and managerial information is distributed equally among leadership and workers, there is an equal share in profits, and decisions are made collectively (Bernstein 1982).

In the push toward alternative economics, cooperatives are being revisited as a form of economic governance that depend neither on the logic of accumulation nor on state control (Restakis 2010). Beyond the commitment to ensure fair and safe labor, cooperatives rely on solidarity and a mutually constructed vision of the enterprise, countering hierarchical models of business management. Motivated by the camaraderie they held with each other, each of the women's cooperatives I met had developed such models, engaging and articulating their own planning process and vision of the cooperative.

Like the women's cooperatives, the locally run and family owned microbusinesses that dominate Lesbos and many Greek islands are also examples of what I classify as *organic economic alterity*, which display grassroots subaltern economic sensibilities. Contributing to the organic economic alterity in Greece are the numerous enterprising efforts of mostly Northern Europeans who relocate to Lesbos and to other Greek isles. Many of the lesbians who initiated enterprises in Skala Eresos left urban and suburban regions and material pursuits to set up a small enterprise in a far-flung island village. I refer to this desertion of the dominant economy and entry into the Greek island microeconomy as *attritional economic alterity*.

Lesbian-centered microenterprises constitute approximately one-third of the enterprises in summertime Skala Eresos. While some of the current lesbian entrepreneurs originally arrived in Skala in the late 1980s, there was also a newer generation of lesbians, those that first came to Skala a decade or more later, who established enterprises shortly after their arrival. Several of the first set of lesbian entrepreneurs to open

businesses in Skala Eresos in the 1990s continue to operate the same or different businesses from those they started. These women often mentor, advise, and encourage new prospective lesbian business owners. All of the lesbian businesses in Skala that have operated for at least a decade involve ethnic Greek lesbians in ownership or management. Many of these enterprises consist of partnerships between ethnic Greek and Northern European women.

Microenterprises, defined as businesses with fewer than nine employees, make up the vast majority of enterprises in Greece (ILO 2019). Over the last several decades, microenterprises became a topic of interest for international development agencies. Initially, microenterprises, or subsistence and self-employment strategies, in much of the Global South as well as Greece were widely criticized by modernization proponents and theorists and considered to thwart economic development. By the early 1990s development approaches toward microenterprises transformed with a neoliberal policy agenda. Small informal urban and rural enterprises of the Global South were now viewed as opportunities for development by the policymakers and international institutions that once dismissed them (Karides 2005; Otero and Rhyne 1994). Whereas microenterprises had been most closely associated with the informal sector that involves legal economic activity conducted off the books and entities not in compliance with government regulations or not reporting earnings in an official capacity (Rakowski 1994; Portes 1983), the shunning of them seemed to have simply vanished in development policy circles. Supporting poor entrepreneurs was envisioned as a viable *neoliberal* path for development (Jurik 2005; Karides 2005).

Neoliberal support of microenterprises in the Global South grew out of the failures of modernization to create the industrialization and employment expected by its advocates (Karides 2005). With nowhere to turn, the “development set” (Coggins 1976) shaped by and shaping neoliberalism claimed the survival efforts in the Global South as their own novel strategy for economic development, relieving the state as well as capital from employment creation and placing it in the hands of the jobless (Karides 2010; Jurik 2005; Servon 1999).

Notwithstanding the association of microenterprises with the informal sector, as an international development strategy, or a last resort for earnings, I reframe microenterprises within the alternative economic literature. Often created and depended upon by marginalized groups and by those in marginal locations for the purpose of supporting subsistence and one’s community, they have been an important source of economic

survival (Osirim 2009; Karides 2005; Creevey 1996). Furthermore, women, indigenous groups, persons of color, and other subalterns prefer the autonomous conditions of work that operating a microenterprise offers, including options to care for and respond to the needs of one's locality. Microenterprises are also established to avoid the discriminatory and biased overseers found in formal employment, even if the earnings are less and the labor more encompassing (Karides 2010; Campbell 1987). In Greece, microenterprises epitomize Greek life, suiting Greeks' "anti-authoritarianism and independent streaks" (Hartocollis 2015).

Sappho's Legacy addresses the subalternity of the women's cooperatives and Greek and lesbian microenterprises to consider how they may offer alternative pathways for development that are not formally institutionalized or state-centric, but local, immediate, and convivial. Throughout time and in various locations, concentrations of locally embedded small-scale enterprises have with little recognition changed the world. We have a lot to learn from Greek islanders and their resilience and preservation of an economic culture that generously hosts visitors and migrants, who sometimes are able to establish their own alternative economic enterprises on Greek islands.

The next few sections review literature and conceptual influences that help me to frame what I have experienced throughout Greece and studied in Lesbos. I use *convivial economics* to refer most directly to the alternative economic forms and practices engaged in by subaltern groups and those living in subaltern locations, that are oriented toward the collective success of enterprises, sociable, and in support of local community, rather than emphasizing individual economic achievement.

Enterprising Resistance

The women's cooperatives across Lesbos and enterprises in Skala Eresos, which are inspired by conviviality and reliant on shared labor, resist co-optation and are less acquiescent to dominant economic ideologies and norms. James C. Scott (1985, 229), an academic force in subaltern and anarchist theory, explains the advantage of everyday forms of resistance: "Unlike hierarchical formal organizations, there is no center, no leadership, no identifiable structure that can be co-opted or neutralized. These forms of resistance will win no set-piece battle but are admirably adopted to long run campaigns of attrition."

Scott's oft-cited (1985) study of Malaysian peasants, *Weapons of the Weak*, was a tribute to the potency of a subordinate class's ability to deconstruct, dismiss, and resist hegemonic ideologies. Through detailed ethnography, Scott (1985, 1979) shows how peasants reject and challenge the philosophies of the dominant class. His work confronted mainstream scholarship (Moore 1978; Bourdieu 1977; Piven and Cloward 1977) that identified ideological hegemony or the mass acceptance of what is deemed "inevitable" by the dominant class. Scott (1985) added to perspectives on resistance of dominant political economic systems, suggesting that it is not necessarily measurable by intention and organized collective action. Scott identified a whole realm of activities that Malaysian peasants engaged in, which were separate from formal or collective protest, that countered the dominant discourse of efficiency. This enabled Scott (1985, 287) to address the distinction between "real" versus "token" forms of resistance that characterized early social change and social movement literature and to suggest: "The privileged status accorded organized movements, I suspect, flows from either of two political orientations: the one, essentially Leninist, which regards the only viable class action as one led by a vanguard party serving as a 'general staff,' the other more straightforwardly derived from a familiarity and preference for open, institutionalized politics as conducted in capitalist democracies."

Real resistance had been limited to organized and systematic efforts motivated by a revolutionary consciousness. Even though unorganized or individual acts may negate the logic of the dominant system, they were considered opportunistic or self-indulgent accommodations within the system. Scott (1985) confronts this interpretation by stressing that academic literature had misunderstood the political and social struggles of those marginally located. Defying dominant understandings at the time, he argued that repeated and independent acts of self-preservation that do not adhere to the dominant ideology signified a form of resistance. The cornerstone of Scott's argumentation is that, while not systematic or driven by revolutionary thought, independent acts of resistance may synergize to challenge the prevailing system. The collective impact of daily, local forms of resistance is echoed in Scott's most recent works (2012, 2017) in which he continues to explore anarchic, daily, or small-scale forms of resistance as a challenge to global capitalist expansion.

More recently, Marxist sociologist Erik O. Wright (2010) outlined a variety of alternative strategies for dismantling capitalism, but he seems to have reconstituted a hierarchy of resistance similar to the one

that Scott (1985) reproached. Wright (2010, 288) describes small, local independent efforts as *interstitial strategies* that “operate outside the state and try as much as possible to avoid confrontations with state power,” sharing the core tenet of building counterhegemonic institutions in society. Wright (2010) shelves interstitial strategies for their perceived associations with anarchist traditions. Like many social scientists (Piven and Cloward 1977; Moore 1978; Bourdieu 1977), he deemed the small, local, and mundane as being less able to counter hegemony.

Revisiting conceptualizations of resistance is essential for envisioning how small convivial enterprises may offer a counterpoint to global capitalism. The current flurry of enterprises in the Global North that identify as “local,” “communal,” “community,” “subsistence,” “diverse,” “social,” “solidarity,” “human,” or “sharing” has activated academic research on the potential of alternative economics. Though previous scholarship has disregarded local, small, and collective alternatives as motors of social change, recent inquiries, including this one, are reviving assessments of these initiatives as forms of resistance.

Markedly, three literatures focused on autonomous small-scale, artisanal, micro-scaled enterprises blossomed between the late 1950s and early 1970s: European protocapitalism (Frank 1996; Butlin 1986; Chirot 1985; Black 1984; Berg, Hudson, and Sonenscher 1983; Wolf 1982; Wallerstein 1974), hippie or counterculture economics (Cotterill 1983; Illich 1973; Schumacher 1973; Bookchin 1969; Belasco 1989), and “third world” development (McClelland 1967; Geertz 1963; Tax 1956; Redfield 1962). These frames of analysis, which developed contemporaneously but separately, are all equally relevant for assembling a conceptual location of the nonexpansive small-scale, autonomous enterprises I study in Lesvos. The protocapitalism or the creation of cottage industries and guilds in the medieval era, the cooperative and commune movement of the 1960s, and the informal sector in cities of the Global South influenced patterns of economic development in their own time and place by pursuing economic forms that countered the prevailing economic system.

In numerous historical moments, subaltern groups, and those in subaltern locations, have sought to construct small independent and autonomous economic solutions when the dominant economic system was failing. By doing so they created a path for an alternative economics. Although too early to evaluate, the current burst of alternative economic activities—such as bartering, community gardens, fair trade, collective ownership, alternative lending schemes, sharing, housing or consumer

cooperatives, community currency, and convivial microenterprises and self-employment—may also be shifting economies away from the domination of neoliberalism (Mason 2016; Gibson-Graham 2006).

As a whole, though, the alternative economy literature makes little sense of how social inequalities and groups marginalized by race, ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, and sexuality shape the growth and development of alternative economic projects and practices. There is limited consideration of the Global South and the informal character of alternative economic practices in peripheral locations or how the rhythms of a place—its history, culture, or geography—may shape the possibilities of economic alterity. Adding a subaltern perspective to the study of resistance and economic alterity may help elucidate the ways in which convivial economics is a habit of the marginalized or the subaltern. Subaltern studies evolved from a critique of colonial and elite perspectives in South Asian history that “failed to account for the dynamic and improvisational modes of peasant political agency” (Chaturvedi 2000, viii). Grappling with Marxist thought, subaltern studies expanded resistance beyond class consciousness, an approach particularly embraced by South Asian and Latin American scholars (see Rodríguez 2001).

A significant momentum in subaltern literature, and one that provides insight for convivial economics, has been its focus on everyday acts of resistance. Scholars within the subaltern tradition consider daily challenges to the dominant system as enduring and in the long run possibly more effective in their slow and almost imperceptible transformation of subordinating conditions. A subaltern approach is cognizant of the nonhegemonic or counterhegemonic values carried by marginalized groups that resist, restrict, or qualify hegemony. E. P. Thompson (1978, 163) states: “Whatever this hegemony may have been, it did not envelop the lives of the poor and it did not prevent them from defending their own modes of work and leisure, and forming their own rituals, their own satisfactions and view of life.” In taking stock of contemporary economic alterity there is much in the Greek case to suggest that what is being defended contemporarily by the Greek population is “their own modes of work, leisure, rituals, satisfactions, and view of life” (Thompson 1978). According to Lila Leontidou (1990), a scholar of Greek urban development, Greece diverges from Northern Europe by the ways in which Greeks resist capitalism. She explains that the traditional left is uneasy with Greece’s “spontaneous alternative culture” and does not accept “informality, communal life and socializing, song and football attendance,

or mutual aid and illegal building” as oppositional (Leontidou 1990, 2). Leontidou (1990, 2) writes, “Cities of the North, mostly cold and disciplined, contrast with the light, heat and spontaneity of Southern cities and the corresponding popular attitudes. Mediterranean labouring people have their own ways of opposing capitalism and confronting poverty and exploitation.” The convivial economics found in Lesvos may very well capture the Mediterranean’s unique ways of opposing capitalism.

Naming who or what exactly is subaltern is a task that has hounded the field and includes a range of traits, characteristics, and experiences that might qualify. Antonio Gramsci’s own position on the subaltern also has been variously described. Gramsci (2003, 191), who grew up on the island of Sardinia where his experiences of marginality as an islander appear to have been influential, recognized that even in medieval Europe “the subaltern groups had a life of their own . . . institutions of their own.” In effect, by identifying the subjectivity of subordination, Gramsci substantiates a subaltern consciousness, extending the possibility of rejecting hegemonic discourse beyond the proletariat (Mignolo 2005, 381).

Other well-regarded subalternists have characterized the subaltern. O’Hanlon (2000, 105) suggests that “when we are talking about the subaltern, we are referring to a presence which is in some sense resistant: which eludes and refuses assimilation into the hegemonic.” Arnold (2000, 32–33) claims that at a minimum the subaltern can be “regarded as little more than a convenient shorthand for the variety of subordinate classes—industrial workers, peasants, laborers, artisans, shepherds and so forth.” Or as Gayatri Spivak (1993, 2194) most notably put forth: “The ‘subaltern’ always stands in an ambiguous relation to power—subordinate to it but never fully consenting to its rule, never adopting the dominant point of view or vocabulary as expressive of its own identity.” Feminists, queer theorists, and postcolonial analyses have expanded the scope of subaltern identities to include those constructed as the “Other” by dominant frames. These studies have highlighted the ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and nation work as categories of privilege and subordination that attempt to legitimize economic and social disparities. Subaltern analyses keep in view dynamics—both structural and discursive—that sustain systems of power and modes of resistance (Gandhi 1998), lending powerful insight for exploring alternative economics as a tool of the marginalized.

Islandness

If alternative economics, broadly conceived, offer a pathway to more just economies, it is critical to understand where they do and can occur. Unless anywhere is possible, the spatial dimension of economic alterity requires more consideration (Leyshon and Lee 2003; Lobao, Hooks, and Tycamyer 2007). Islandness—or the perspective that living and working on an island comes with a distinct set of social and economic features and orientations (Baldacchino 2006; Hau’ofa 1994; McCall 1994)—significantly shapes the economics practiced on Lesvos.

As finite locations that have incurred the wrath of colonial projects and as robust sites of local forms and thought, islands provide subaltern space (Clayton 2010). Islands remain at the fringe of mainstream development that conceives of disparate places as interchangeable, absent of particularisms, and without requirement of diversified approaches. Moreover, the perceived or real remoteness of islands, as imagined paradise and exceptions to mainland lifestyles, suspend islands as places that attract subalterns and others seeking to delink from the dominant system.

Although the term “subaltern” had been rarely used to describe space, Daniel Clayton (2010) opened it to human geography and others in the field have followed suit (see Jazeel and Legg 2019). Clayton (2010) applies subaltern to describe locations where antisystemic or counterhegemonic projects develop. Clayton (2010, 249) distinguishes subaltern space “first, as a space of domination, the abject and disquieting space in which people are placed and kept in situations of subordination, a closed and contained space of difference; and second, as a resistant and anticipatory space within the past and the present, from which, it is hoped, domination will or can be subverted or overturned. [And] . . . an alternative and counter-hegemonic space in which the desire and ability to fracture and challenge power is imagined and enacted.” Because the production of space is geographically and historically contingent (Lefebvre 1991), it is in local sites, with discourses and structures that have not been grasped by apparatuses of power or which refuse to acknowledge them, where subalternity can exist.

By conceiving attachment to place as parochial or a form of separatism, more than one alternative economics perspective slights the notion that location matters (Wright 2010; Hess 2009; Gibson-Graham 2006). Yet downgrading spatial attachments or geographic identities

seems to stem from more privileged outposts. David Harvey (2000, 556) explains: "The depiction of others' geographical loyalties as banal or irrational . . . helps foster ignorance and disinterest in the lives of those others; meanwhile space after space is opportunistically demonized or sanctified by some dominant power as a justification for political action. Such biased geographical knowledges, deliberately maintained, provide a license to pursue narrow interests in the name of universal good and reason." Appreciating subaltern space as a platform from which actions and perspectives counter dominant frames, *Sappho's Legacy* addresses alternative economics as strategies of place. Some places, like islands, may lend themselves to organic or attritional economic alterity, or both, more than others. The replication of these qualities in other geographies is a potential avenue by which alternative economics can expand.

Islands and archipelagos have been places not only of colonial domination. They are also liminal spaces existing between societies that bridge cultural and social forms of exchange, including Pacific, Caribbean, and Mediterranean island groups. The Aegean Islands are especially suitable for thinking about islands as *borderlands* and places of interchange and opportunities for novel exchange (Anzaldúa 1999). Located in the still contested waters between Greece and Turkey—a geographical, economic, and ideological partition that constructs "east" and "west"—places Lesbos and other Aegean Islands as borderlands (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2006; Anzaldúa 1999). Islands present possibilities for both geographic and epistemic distance from modern dominant ideologies. According to Mignolo (2011, 1), border thinking occurs "wherever the conditions are appropriate and the awareness of coloniality (even if you do not use the word) comes into being." The subalternity of the economic practices found in Lesbos, and across much of Greece and its islands, implies a type of border thinking that collides with the EU's neoliberal agenda attesting to Greece's geo-historic peripherality in Europe.

The study of islands originally emphasized their isolation, cultural distinctions, and perpetual dependency (see Hau'ofa 1994). However, analyses focusing on the vulnerability and remoteness of islands, and islanders, have faded among those who study islands. Instead, the rather recent island studies framework, or nissology, seeks to understand "islands on their own terms" (Hau'ofa 1994; McCall 1994; Baldacchino 2006; Brinklow 2011). Early nissological literature was devoted to unpacking "islandness," or the distinct experience, quality, and phenomena of islands. Despite the diversity across islands, the study of islandness seeks to provide a basis for introducing a conceptually cohesive island studies

perspective. Grant McCall (1994, 1), a geographer who helped found the field of island studies, proposed *nissology* “as a rhetorical, subaltern discourse for islanders as well as for understanding islands in their stewardship of two-thirds of the resources of the planet.” Yet island studies is only beginning to consider the inequities and structures of bias and discrimination that are shaped by islandness and contained by islands (Karides 2017).

The resilience, reciprocity, and self-reliance of island populations, and locally informed cultures around food, sociality, and environment, are traits that may prove useful as we seek a better balance between economy, ecology, and society. Given that current mass-scale production systems, or the current world-system, have likely reached their ecological limits, exacerbated poverty, and deepened social divides, insights into how to proceed to build better futures are imperative (Calhoun and Derlugian 2011; Restakis 2010). Because of their unique geographies



Figure 1.2. Contemporary Sappho statue at Skala Eresos’s port/courtesy of Tzeli Hadjidimitriou. The seaside village of Skala Eresos is bordered by its port on one side and a small mountain on the other. This sculpture by Ross Macaulay is set next to a wood bench that overlooks Skala Eresos’s tiny marina where local fishers keep their boats.

and histories, island spaces are fertile ground for convivial economics to flourish. Islands reflect distinct patterns of both human movement and settlement, which provide unique insights into the basis for alternative economic development. Islands include large populations of people who have resided on them for generations that sustain organic economic alterity. Many mainlanders migrate, permanently or semipermanently, to build lives around the subaltern logic of island spaces, the roots of attritional economic alterity.

Sappho's Lesbos

Because it is Sappho's informal community of women who engaged in creative, convivial, and collective work on Lesbos that inspires the direction and title of the volume, I devote some attention to her story as backdrop. The sexual orientation and poetry of Sappho, and the multiple interpretations of them, have inspired countless scholars to ruminate on their implications. The intimacy and the bonds among the women in the cooperatives and the lesbian enterprises in Eresos, and the positive evaluation they have of themselves in their production, seems to at least echo the enchantment that appears in the writings of Sappho. It is Sappho's poetry that inspired my first journey to Lesbos (Barnard 1958). Eventually my attention was drawn to tracing the rhythms of the subaltern economics that capture the daily life and exchange in the Aegean and the gendered spatiality of Greek islands.

Most Mediterranean islands are referenced in Greek mythology and hold at least a bit of ancient history. Lesbos's story, for whatever reasons, seems to be gynocentric and shapes the arguments developed in this book. The island of Lesbos is recognized for having a culture in which women had greater freedoms than in other places of ancient Greece (Slatkin 2000). Many of its ancient cities were named after the granddaughters of the Greek Titan Helios and continue to retain these names. The Byzantines presented the island as a dowry to a Genoese prince in 1335, a practice of marriage proposals that some ethnic Greek residents informally continue on the island to this day. And it is on Lesbos where Orpheus's head washed ashore and was collected and buried by the sometime resident Muses (Watson 2013).

The cultural richness of Greece's third largest island reveals a timeline of some of the world's masterful artists, poets, and philosophers,

who were either born and raised in Lesbos or traversed through the island. Theophrastus, for instance, a student of Plato who successfully replaced Aristotle as the head of the Peripatetic school, was originally from Eresos. The well-known novelist Stratis Myrivillis and the poet Odysseus Elytis—whose poetry was recognized in 1979 with a Nobel Prize for Literature—are acclaimed artists with ties to Lesbos. Despite her spectacularity, Sappho, the lyrical poet who lived on the island more than 2,500 years ago, is sometimes given little or no adulation as a master of arts and letters in many histories of Lesbos that one might find on the internet, in travelogues and guidebooks, or in national tourism paraphernalia.*

Yet Sappho and her works have been heralded among others by Greeks, Victorians, and lesbians. Sappho is best known for her poetry and is one of the lyric canonical poets who were required study for the educated aristocracy in Classical Greece. Many academic accounts address the magnificent artistic and cultural influence of Sappho, past and present (Reynolds 2000; Snyder 1997; Wilson 1996; Harris 1996; Williamson 1995; Snyder 1994). Sappho's poetry is highly regarded during her lifetime and in centuries after. That she was named "the Tenth Muse" by Plato is repeated in vast writings on her life and work, particularly in Victorian literary circles, and was also the name of a central lesbian café-bar in Skala Eresos.

*See, for example, the 2007 Road Editions map of Lesbos, published in Athens, that remains the most thorough and widely used map of the island by locals and visitors. It does not include even a mention of Sappho in its historical summaries of major persons and events. See also the *Lesbos Guide 2007: Life In Style*, published by Empros, a local newspaper. One of the only locally produced Lesbos guides in English, it mentions Sappho along with Alcaeus, another lyric poet, and suggests that "according to some rumors they were much more than simple friends" (2007, 3). In its review of Eresos, the guide does not mention it as Sappho's birthplace nor is the lesbian tourist scene discussed. However, the page does include an advertisement for Antiope, a women-only hotel in the village. Finally, in the *Tourist Guide Holidays in Lesbos*, 2008, the title page on the section previewing Eresos refers to the village as having "the scent of Sappho," it seems in an attempt to not completely slight the historical figure and offer a nod to the lesbian tourism to the village. On the other hand, Tzeli Hadjidimitriou's (2012) *Girls Guide to Lesbos*, whose photos grace this volume, provides historical information on Sappho and her ties to Skala Eresos, a discussion of the village as a lesbian tourist destination, as well as offering general tourist information for the island.

Sappho's repertoire included love poems and erotic verses demonstrating a deep sensitivity to human emotions and connectivity (Rayor 1991). She was aware of the novelty of her topics in writing such as is evident in her well-cited fragment 16, Carson's (2003) translation:

<p>Οἱ μὲν ἰππήων στρότον οἱ δὲ πέσδων, οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖς' ἐπ[ι] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὄτ— τω τίς ἔπαται</p>	<p>Some men say an army of horse and some men say an army on foot and some men say an army of ships is the most beautiful thing on the black earth. But I say it is what you love.</p>
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Remarkably, Sappho's lyrics were concerned with an appreciation for everyday life and social relationships, raising these topics to the level of poetics during the grand era of Classical Greece—a time in which war and gods were all anyone wrote about (Rayor 1991). Her poetry carries sociological insights, as she gave empirical fodder—stories of women, her daughter, or details of interactions—for her philosophical musings about love, sexuality, and personal interactions.

Many writers and scholars highlight Sappho's poetic professions of love for the women in her life as a demonstration of her same gender attraction. As evidence they point to the fragments (approximately 650, with two new poems found in 2004 and 2014) of her poetry that were not lost in translation, decayed, or destroyed by the Byzantines (Mendelsohn 2015). In many of these fragments, Sappho vividly describes her adoration for women (Way 1920, 14). Consider fragment 31, Carson's (2003) translation:

<p>καὶ γελαισας ἱμεροεν, το μ' ἢ μάν καρδίαν ἐν στηθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν ὥς γάρ <ές> σ' ἰδω βρόχε' ὥς με φώνη- σ' οὐδέν ἐτ' εἰκει</p>	<p>And lovely laughing—oh it puts the heart in my chest on wings for when I look at you, even a moment, no speaking is left in me</p>
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Debates on whether or not the group of women who Sappho wrote about engaged in sexual exchanges is as lively in the streets of Lesbos's villages as in the academy. The Victorian literati, for example, were enamored with Sappho. They forced her sexual leanings into heteronormativity, as they envisioned her community of women as a finishing school for

girls. Others, however, argue that Sappho led a *thiasos* or religious cult for Aphrodite with related ritual sex work. It is critical to underscore that the veracity of both claims is limited, and a more modified view is that Sappho's circle consisted of women who arrived from other regions for the purpose of learning and sociality; it seems a foreshadow of the current pattern of visitors to the Aegean island and Skala Eresos, Sappho's presumed birthplace. However, the opening of gay and queer scholarship has lent academic credibility to the readings of Sappho's homoeroticism, with scholars sticking close to Sappho's original poetry in their interpretations and contextualizing these with discoveries regarding sexuality and ancient Greek social life.

In Sappho's Lesbos, sexual relations and contact between same gendered persons were not aberrant. Yet, as Calame (1996), Greene (1996), Snyder (1997), and others document, Sappho's love for women was denied by authoritative ancient texts of later eras, when it was considered to mar a woman's character. Books by Greene (1996), Williamson (1995), and Snyder (1997) describe the altered pronouns in translations from Greek-to-Roman and Greek-to-English to heterosexualize Sappho's life and writings. These changes mark attempts to mask Sappho's sexual involvement with women and the arts and sociality carried out by a community of women who surrounded her (Calame 1996). The scrutiny and denial of Sappho's love life was unique to her; the homoeroticism practiced by the men of her era has not received the same criticism and denial by scholarly communities nor by the Greek public (Greene 1996; Harris 1996).

Although debates abound, the first use of the term "lesbian" to demarcate women's sexual expression seems to have occurred in a Greek comedic play in the fifth century BC. The term was used to refer to the sexual prowess of Lesbian women but not necessarily as homoerotic. At the turn of the twentieth century, German and English sexologists, such as Havelock Ellis, began using "lesbian" to refer to "female same sex relationships," which they defined as socio-pathological, grounding a homophobic medicalization of sexuality. German and English psychologists' choice to use Lesbos as the referential base for same-sex relations between women, at a time when peer writers and literary critics devoted so much attention to denying Sappho's same gender attraction, is ironic. Both cases reflect the larger legacy of Northern Europeans appropriating Greece and Greek culture, with little awareness of doing so, to serve their own purposes.

As the term “lesbian” became the common reference to women attracted to women, it seems those who are from Lesbos have stopped referring to themselves as Lesbians. Unlike other Greek islands, Lesbos is commonly denoted as Mytilini, the island’s capital, including on airline and ferry schedules, and in travel books, implying a distancing from the term that likely reflects homophobia.* There is still ongoing contestation of the term “lesbian,” which is exemplified in a recent lawsuit over the term. In 2008, a resident of Lesbos sued the Homosexual and Lesbian Community of Greece—the only registered organization in Greece using the term “lesbian” to refer to same-sex relationships between women—over whether this term can be used to refer to women who love women. The plaintiff in this suit attempted to reappropriate the term to refer only to the people from Lesbos. The plaintiff stated that the suit “was not an aggressive act against gay women” and that the usage of “lesbian” as a referent to same-sex sexuality began only recently (Brabant 2008; Flynn 2008; Wright 2008). Much was made by critics of the lawsuit, since the term “lesbian” is sanctioned by the United Nations, leading many blogs to decidedly describe the legal case as ignorant and vengeful.

I happened to be in Lesbos during the summer of the trial and listened to discussions about the lawsuit. There was little doubt for most I spoke with in the villages of Lesbos that the decision to sue by the plaintiff derived from personal grudges rather than a real interest in saving the term “lesbian” for those from Lesbos. The case ruled against the plaintiff and in favor of the organization permitting the use of the term “lesbian” by the Homosexual and Lesbian Community of Greece to refer to same-sex relations between women. Whether it is Lesbos’s historical fate of gynocentrism, an outcome of European appropriation, or contemporary lesbian tourism, lesbianism remains a distinctive rhythm in the island’s past and recent social history.

Methodology: Rhythmanalysis

I utilize rhythmanalysis, an intuitively attractive method to grapple with interacting temporalities of social forces and the island geography of the Aegean. A novel approach, rhythmanalysis is just beginning to be

*There are multiple spellings of Mytilini, the capital of Lesbos. I follow Kantza’s (2002) usage.