# Personal grid:

One of the existing issues with our society is the complexity of the global village that we live in. This is not a new phenomenon and Globalisation as a process has been traced in many traditional and contemporary things. There are three possibilities to the origins of globalisation, the first argument dates it back to the origins of civilization so therefore it started around 5000 years ago. The second argument relates to religions as a globalisation process, for example Islamic globalisation, and lastly the third scenario and most recent one suggests that this process started in 1970 during and after the recession in Western countries. (Mittelman, 2000)

Over the last three decades we've also witnessed the rise of many off grid homes and communities. Vannini (2015) describes these new off-grid practices as ways that people are trying to live a more simple life, a life that is more respectful towards the environment, very innovative and at the same time old way of life. A life that is more aware of what will happen behind their plugs. “... flicking a switch to turn on an electric lamp at my home I am in a way incorporating the kinetic power of water channelled into dams, water-wheels, and turbines by my utility provider. Someone who lives off the electrical grid had to incorporate the same essential resource (e.g., water) and assemble a tool (e.g., a turbine) to generate electricity. But the key difference relies in the way our respective bodily activities unfold...”.

Off gridness was arguably a movement in response to the energy crisis, climate change and also providing energy to parts of the world that are not economically profitable for energy companies to invest in, such as Knoydart or other small Hebridian Islands.

Off gridness is not only a way of life with no connection to a national energy grid, but it is a movement that aims to encourage and create a more conscious and aware life. As Vaninni (2015) argues, it is a simplified way of life, more aware and more respectful towards the environment.

Reflecting from interviews that I conducted on Eigg, Knoydart and an initial study of my own grid, off gridness can not be achieved unless through an extensive revaluation of each individual's grid based on their values and community values. For example Eigg can be a community that is off the energy grid, but they still need to bring 20000 gallons of diesel for extra energy, cars on the island being fuelled by diesel and petrol, holidays and business trips around the world, clothing, food, infrastructure materials and, finally, their digital network through the Internet; none of these arguably are off the grid, therefore from this point of view Eigg has never been off grid.

The promise of the global village was connectivity, transparency, equality for all, however by the beginning of 21st century after over three decades of its development after the second world war, what is left is an increased force of capitalism and its transformation through the digital. By digital I mean digital transactions, online shopping, online relationships through means of Viber, Skype, Facebook, whatsapp and other popular communication and socialising tools. This includes anything that we do using the internet and digital network infrastructure. This promised-land currently only connects less than one third of the world. We also witnessed the birth of neo-liberal slavery, disappearance of classes and its new manifestation through social media which arguably lacks discourse....

I call this process which accelerated exponentially over the last two decades, privatisation of the self. A process during which every aspects of our life turns into valued commodities (for example the cost of listening to 30 minutes of music on Spotify which is a digital music streaming service is 30 seconds of advertisement through our ears). This also shows a transformation from labour to product; the labour does not exist any more in its conventional understanding. (Wilkie, 2011) This privatisation expands further into the monetisation of our relationships and communications through social media such as Facebook, twitter, email, Flickr and many others. A process that is privatising many aspects of our lives, from entertainment that gets filtered through media distributors such as Netflix, Lovefilm powered by computer algorithms to tailor down the consumer options into smaller numbers whilst selling these personal information and preferences to other third parties for further cross database comparisons and data mining and value extraction.

In his work the Global Village (1984), Macluhan predicted how the internet and networked society will develop. “... By this power of video-related technologies alone, the U.S. economy would be finally shifted from a manufacturing to a marketing society...” (p.88) He also predicted the development of large cities, their expansion culturally, digitally and increase in their population and immigration.

Capitalism used to function based on ideas of scarcity, however forms of digital capitalism function on unlimited access to resources, instant shopping, one click shopping, next day delivery. Amazon recently proposed drones-only airspace for even providing faster delivery of one click purchases (Pilkington, 2015). Wilkie (2011) refers to this new mode of capitalism as “network capitalism beyond the contradictions of class, what is necessary is a theory of capital networks-the way in which all aspects of life today are determined by the unequal property relations between those who own and control the means of production and those who own nothing but their labour”. The privatisation however doesn't just exist in the domain of entertainment, it's increasingly expanding into more aspects of our life. For example monetisation of community practices such as couch surfing and its monetization through AirBnB (?) or hitchhiking through Uber.

These digitalisation of practices, while they may have potential positive impacts on our culture and societies, they are also increasingly moving towards even more exploitation of labour through a step by step process. “Reading digitally is the form ideology takes in what might be referred to as the era of the digital condition: a regime of accumulation that emerges in the post-World War II period in which developments in production, communication, and transportation have enabled capitalism to encircle the globe. It is the means by which the exploitation of labour is obscured behind a "spiritual aroma" that suggests that humanity is entering a postcapitalist, postnational, postlabor, posthierarchy, postwork society in which consumption rather than production drives the economy and developments in science and technology have replaced labor as the source of surplus value.”. (Wilkie, 2011)

The first step is to eliminate or weaken any existing competitor. During this competitive elimination traditional class struggles also disappear. For example see the current struggles Taxis are facing since the birth of Uber. Uber competes with taxis by offering cheaper prices at first. This is possible due to the fact that Uber does not require any permanent offices and arguably they do not have the same standards of training, background check or any licencing fees. After the success of the first phase, then the second phase starts which is about elimination of their own labour forces. This is through an individualised competition which will be through betting for cheaper prices. However, in this scenario the digital managed to end other existing unions and class struggles and therefore the lonely individual behind a google uber map will have no place to protest or struggle for their rights.

The purpose of privatised self study is to demonstrate the cost of savings we make and how it effects other classes, for example the labour and workforce that produce the things we use. The study consists of two parts, one will focus on the study of the grid itself and the latter focuses on methods of resistance.

The first part of the study is to develop a method to better understand the digital culture and its effects on our lives.

The personal grid aims to untangle some of the complicated spaces and grids that we inhabit, connect, relate and consume through.

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<https://www.academia.edu/2596678/Made_in..._Appreciating_the_everyday_geographies_of_connected_lives>

[http://followthethings.com](http://followthethings.com/)

David Harvey <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic80806.files/Week_6/Harvey_D_Between_Space_and_Time.pdf>

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