



*Between
Imagination*

and Realization

*Individual, Local, National and Global
Prospects*

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Prologue

Dada Atmapranananda is a Tantra Yoga monk of the global spiritual organization called Ananda Marga (Path of Bliss) that was founded by the Guru Shrii Shrii Anandamurti also called Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar. In the next conversation Dada Atmapranananda tells how the global prospects and dreams of this organization inspired him to serve humanity. During that time he was still a suspicious young adult named Nelson challenging a Yoga monk by asking some deep questions.

“I said: ‘Look, sir, is there a way to make the planet a paradise?’ And he said: ‘Of course!’ and he snapped his finger like that. He talked like if it was very easy. So I asked, ‘How can we make this planet a paradise?’ He said, ‘Look someone who lives in a paradise should deserve it. If you don't deserve it, then you don't live in a paradise, but if you deserve it, then you will. So how would you do that? Of course there is one way. Change your heart. Change your mind. Take out all the anger that you have, because anger is not a part of paradise. Love, unconditional love is part of paradise, so practice love... If you have all the qualities of a person and you are a deserving person to live in paradise, meaning the one-meter by one-meter place where you are standing... is a paradise. It is a paradise!’ And I was just listening. ‘Now when you start to change another person, the mind of that person, the attitude of that person, the mentality of that person, the heart of that person, then you have two one-meter-by-one-meter paradise in this planet. Now, if both of you again will change another person, then what do you have? You have a four square meter paradise. And that’s it. Where you are, nobody will take away your paradise. Wherever you go, wherever you stand, that is a paradise.’ He said: ‘It is like that’.

“Of course it was still an abstract answer you know, but I think that was the answer I was looking for. Because I knew very well, rationally, scientifically, that a paradise didn't exist according to the desire that I had. It was just a dream that I wanted. It was impossible. But how he said it in this case, it is possible then. There is a possibility. So it is a mission to make others deserve to be in paradise.”

The small *Tantra Yoga* monk from the Philippines with long dark hair tied back and an Asian shaped beard, talks in an evocative way and with a Filipino accent about his initial contact with Ananda Marga. On that day Dada Atmapranananda realized that the possibility to experience a paradise on earth lies in our own vision, how we look at the reality around us, instead of what we think that the reality is, or ought to be. After Dada Atmapranananda changed his own vision of reality, he could slowly pass it on to other people. He never broke his ties with Ananda Marga

since his first contact, and a few years later he became a monk himself, with the goal to realize a better world for humanity, a paradise on earth.

By working in agriculture, practicing meditation and yoga, having deep conversations about politics, economy, culture and spirituality and by tracing the pathways of their devoted life, I explored several forms of movement toward small and large dreams made by people in and around Centro Madre. For the three months I spent there from February to May 2013, Didi Ananda Sadhana, Melquis (foster child of Didi) and Dada Atmapranananda welcomed me as a part of their community; I felt the same welcome from Dada Maheshvarananda at the Prout Research Institute of Venezuela in Caracas and by Didi Ananda Amegha at the Ananda Marga Centre of Caracas. I traveled a lot between Centro Madre in Barlovento and the two organizations in Caracas and got the opportunity to be present at different retreats organized by the Prout Institute and the Ananda Marga Centre.

During my research, on May 5, 2013 the Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez died and on that day I went to attend Chávez's funeral procession in Caracas with two monks, Dada Atmapranananda and Dada Maheshvarananda, my dear friend Manatos'a (a volunteer of the Prout Institute) and my dear friend Kate (a Journalist from Australia). At a close quarter I experienced how the monks grieved at the death of their beloved president Hugo Chávez.

"When the entire property of the universe is the common inheritance of all its creatures, how can there be any justification for a system in which some are rolling in the lap of luxury while others are dying for want of a handful of grain?... Considering the collective interests of all living beings, it is essential that capitalism be eradicated."

- Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar

Key Terms

Ácárya A full-time monk or nun, or a family person, who initiates others into meditation and performs social service.

Ananda Marga 'The Path of Bliss' a socio-spiritual movement founded in 1955 by Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar.

Asana Yoga posture that brings about purification of the physical body by harmonizing the functioning of such glands as the hormone and lymph as well as many others. Regular practice of asanas helps with physical health and mental equanimity.

Ávadútha A male acarya of Ananda Marga who has learned a special type of meditation. "One who is thoroughly cleansed mentally and spiritually."

Ávadhútika A female acarya of Ananda Marga who has learned a special type of meditation. "One who is thoroughly cleansed mentally and spiritually."

Baba Nam Kevalam Universal mantra signifying that 'the vibration of the Cosmic Consciousness is everywhere'. In Ananda Marga, this mantra can be used as a simple meditation, or sung to a tune. See Kiirtan.

Barrios Slums in and around urban areas.

Dada "Elder brother." A term signifying love and respect, commonly used to address Ananda Marga acaryas.

Dharma 1. Innate tendency. 2. The defining characteristic of something or someone. Thus, as the distinguishing property of fire is its ability to burn, this ability is said to be the dharma of fire. According to yoga philosophy, the dharma of human beings is their longing for infinite happiness.

Didi "Elder sister." A term signifying love and respect, commonly used to address Ananda Marga acaryas.

Kiirtan Devotional mantra singing, usually performed to prepare the mind and body for meditation. The mantra Baba Nam Kevalam is used.

Krsna A Guru of Yoga who lived 3,500 years ago.

Mantra A sound or collection of sounds that, when used in meditation, leads to spiritual liberation.

Margii One who is following the practices and philosophy of Ananda Marga.

Master Unit A rural development cooperative community.

Namaskar A form of greeting or farewell which ascribes divinity to the other person. The palms are pressed together and touched to the forehead and heart to indicate that, "With all the charms of my mind and all the love in my heart I salute divinity within you, the place where we are One."

Neo-humanism Love for all created beings of the universe.

Prout PROgressive Utilisation Theory. A comprehensive socio-economic-political theory propounded by P.R. Sarkar and based upon spiritual humanism and the progressive utilisation of all resources. Prout provides the guidelines for the establishment of a dynamic human society, which ensures the welfare of both the individual and the collective.

Rajah A mutative force.

Sadvipra A conscious and dedicated leader, recognisable by his/her conduct, devotion to service, dutifulness and moral integrity. These leaders, having the welfare of all classes as their

sole concern, devote their entire lives in order to bring about a social change.

Sanskrit An ancient language, developed in India. Through this language many spiritual ideas are expressed. It is also used for mantras and other spiritual incantations. The deep, inner sounds of the human body and of human nature are expressed through this language. It is the root of many contemporary Asian languages as well as European ones. Also samskrta.

Sattva A sentient force.

Siva Also known as Sadashiva. The first person to systemise Tantra Yoga 7,000 years ago.

Supreme Consciousness The transcendental entity that is beyond all pleasure and pain. State of eternal bliss.

Tamah A static or solid force.

Tantra Yoga "Liberation from crudeness." A spiritual tradition, first systematised by Shiva. It emphasises the development of all-round human vigour. Meditation and other physico-psychic-spiritual practices are integral to Tantra. Tantra also refers to a scripture that comments on this tradition.

Introduction

It is still early in the morning I wake up after my first night in Venezuela. Outside I hear the crowing of some parrots and the singing of several other birds. The mantra *Baba Nam Kevalam* sounds gently into the room chanted by two *Tantra Yoga* nuns Didi Ananda Amegha and Didi Ananda Sadhana, while the pleasant odor of incense spreads in the air. Yesterday after Didi Ananda Sadhana picked me up from the airport of Caracas, I decided by myself to start immediately with *Kiirtan* and meditation exercises usually done by the *Tantra Yoga* nuns and monks at sunrise and sunset. So, I get up to join the two light-skinned European nuns with their *Kiirtan*. To imitate them I put the palms of my hands against each other so that my fingers are facing upwards, in *namaskar* position. With an upright standing rocking motion and toes of both feet taking alternately taps to the ground, I am singing the mantra *Baba Nam Kevalam* along the rhythm of the vocal sounds. After singing the mantra in three different melodies we sit down in an easy pose in order to meditate...

After the half-hour meditation we start breakfast. While eating breakfast of papaya, mango, guava, bread and yoghurt we talk about Didi Ananda Sadhana's car trouble she had on the way from the grassroots-organization Centro Madre (where she lives) to Didi Ananda Amegha's place in Caracas. Last night Didi Ananda Sadhana and I stayed in Didi Ananda Amegha's apartment, where the question arises how we could go to Centro Madre? Didi Ananda Sadhana says, 'We can go by bus, but I think it is a bit dangerous to go by bus with your suitcase, we can easily get robbed with the crowd of carnival'. So she decides to call Dada Maheshvarananda who lives at the Prout institute of Caracas a few miles away from Didi Ananda Amegha's place, to ask him if he is available to bring us. Fortunately he is and in the midday Didi Ananda Amegha is willing to drop us off at the Prout institute, a research institute that pursues 'to transform lives and strengthen communities for the welfare of all' (Maheshvarananda, 2013: 267).

At the Prout Institute the light-skinned *Tantra Yoga* monk Dada Maheshvarananda, who is dressed in orange robes and has long white hair with a long beard, is waiting to bring us to the grassroots-organization of my research; Centro Madre. It is a 2-hour ride from Caracas to Centro Madre that is located in Barlovento, where most of the people are Afro-Venezuelans and descendants of ex-slaves. Dada Maheshvarananda drives us in a jeep that he borrowed from his friend Eugenio. The large white rickety jeep has some defects; one of the two doors won't open properly and the seats are somewhat outworn, but the jeep works well enough for Venezuelan

standards.

During the ride I am looking outside the window to catch the first insights of the landscape of my anthropological research. Along the highway from Caracas to Centro Madre I observe at one side of the way slums around high hills on the city's outskirts called *barrios*. These *barrios* are built up from stacked shacks made on the steep hills with narrow alleys and stairway's that give access to the small brick houses. While at the other side of the highway I see middle and higher class houses and a big shopping mall. This contradictory streetscape shows a fractured city where rich and poor, formal and informal, organized and disintegrated, ruled and un-ruled are separated and linked at the same time (Koonings & Kruijt, 2007). Or in other words it displays in one view the dark side of globalization social inequality.

The dark side of globalization is strong evident during natural calamities when the most vulnerable have the less chances to survive and where social inequality is the most visible. One of such a calamity that happened in and around Caracas was called the 'Tragedia de Vargas', a flood that occurred in December 1999. After several days of ever-increasing rainfall this Tragedy caused a great number of deaths estimated as between 25.000 and 50.000 (Takahashi, et al. 2001). Vargas is an area between the seacoast and a high mountain range that has protected Caracas from hurricanes up till now (Briceño-León, 2007). This was the same story during the 'Tragedia de Vargas' that mostly affected the *barrios* built on the mountain edges. Whole *barrios* were swallowed in to the sea by floods and landslides (Fassin & Vasquez, 2005). This tragedy also affected the middle and higher-class, but most victims came from the poor-class because of the unfavorable location of the *barrios*. Furthermore it was not a matter of if, but when this calamity would happen. So, most of the poor-class that lived in the flood-risk area, were already classified to be a victim, before the calamity even started. Or how Zygmunt Bauman (2011:5) should describe this predetermination of potential victims, as a 'collateral damage', of which he says that it 'tacitly assumes an already existing inequality of rights and chances, while accepting a priori the unequal distribution of the costs of undertaking (or for that matter desisting from) action'.

This 'collateral damage' as consequence of the 'Tragedia de Vargas' also brought the *Tantra Yoga* nun Didi Ananda Sadhana and the *Tantra Yoga* monk Dada Atmapranananda to Barlovento. On behalf of the Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT) they volunteered to help the affected people. After this mission, the AMURT organization in Switzerland offered Didi Ananda Sadhana the opportunity to build a permanent AMURT Centre in Barlovento with the money that was left from the relief operation. Many years of struggle followed before the grassroots-movement started to take shape in a model eco-farm. In 2007 it was renamed as Centro Madre. In the early years the service project took many different forms, such as different

types of education classes, cooperatives, training (such as yoga and meditation) and agricultural projects. Eventually various agricultural projects of Centro Madre began to blossom, strengthened by various Venezuelan political interventions, such as the National Agrarian Reform and ALBA (The Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America). The creation of an ecological model farm became more and more visible.

Centro Madre was established with the inspiration of the Indian Philosopher Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar (1921-1990), also known as a guru and master of *Tantra Yoga* Shrii Shrii Anandamurti. With a global viewpoint, Sarkar founded in 1955 the spiritual organization Ananda Marga in India. Ananda Marga is a Sanskrit word, which means 'Path of Bliss'. It is an organization with a hierarchical structure. The degree of devotion to Ananda Marga determines the hierarchical position someone gets. There are senior *Tantra Yoga* monks and nuns called *avadúthas* and *avadúthikás* who also are *ácáryas* or spiritual teachers. There are also family *ácáryas* those who are not monks or nuns and have a family household. All members of Ananda Marga are called *margiis*. Almost 60 years after Sarkar founded Ananda Marga, the multicultural organization has established its presence in more than 180 countries around the world (Srivastav, 2010) in order to fulfill one of Sarkar's (1989) main global goals: the achievement of ecological equilibrium in every facet of life. These facets are on the individual scale, local scale, regional scale, national scale and global scale. By following Tsing (2000) I call these different scale goals scale-making projects. By using this terminology, Sarkar's different scale-goals can be described as speculated, imagined and conjured scale-making projects. As such, it will also contribute to a better understanding of global processes (ibid.).

According to Sarkar, the equilibrium on our planet has been deeply disrupted by Capitalism and Communism polluting 'the air, water and environment in this peace-loving world'. In order to reverse this worldly disequilibrium, economical development is needed, and according to him this can only be achieved through a bottom-up process. This bottom-up process is the same process that Appadurai (2000) describes as 'grassroots globalization' or 'globalization from below'. Grassroots globalization means; the development and trans-nationalization of state independent organizations derived as counter reaction to destructive global and national forces such as capitalism and neoliberalism. More and more grassroots-movements are popping up out of the earth like mushrooms from under the ground. Mushrooms are the fruits of an underground network called 'mycelium' that I use to denote on the informal networks that grassroots-movements mostly make use of. These networks are bound to strategies, visions and horizons on globalization on behalf of the poor. For this reason Appadurai (ibid.) argues that in the study of grassroots-globalization; 'lies an obligation for academic research...that might make its

deliberations more consequential for the poorer 80 percent of the population of the world (now totaling 6 billion) who are socially and fiscally at risk.’ And to contribute to this obligation this thesis will concentrate on ‘grassroots globalization’.

Centro Madre is one example of a state independent grassroots-movement that is connected to a global network called Ananda Marga and works on behalf of the poor. Centro Madre is also established as counter reaction to neoliberalism and Capitalism. So, the grassroots-movement contributes to ‘grassroots-globalization’, in the realization of Sarkar’s global goal the achievement of ecological equilibrium in every facet of life. To accomplish this, the staff of Centro Madre and the Prout institute envisions different scale-making projects (individual, local, regional, national, global and universal) in order to put a global process in motion beginning on the local scale. These imagined, conjured and speculated scale-making projects are the main focus of this thesis, where I seek to give answer on the question; *How does Centro Madre imagine individual, local, regional, national and global scale-making projects in order to spread the seeds for their global dream ‘equilibrium in every facet of life’?*

To answer this I put Centro Madre’s cultural and spiritual visions on the same level as some anthropological and sociological theories. I use this method in contrast to Western hegemonic scientific knowledge, which often appears to be an inescapable universal truth and describes traditional cultural knowledge as local perceptions (Ingold 2011, Appadurai 2000). Therefore, I follow Ho’s opinion (2010), to consider globalization as a hopeful, strategic and a triumphant act instead of assuming it to be a simple scientific fact. Rational analysis on the universal scope is still a concept, categorized and formed by human local perceptions through models and theories (Tsing, 2000). For this, science is not able to determine all comprehensive universal facts and global claims. So, instead of looking to the world as a scientifically proven thing I direct my focus more locally to the opinions about globalization of the people who are connected to the grassroots-movement Centro Madre.

Seeking for local viewpoints of globalization makes it able to redefine local and global connectivity as a strategy to oppose the idea of an omnipotent global homogenizing system (Tsing, 2000). To contribute to this I describe Centro Madre’s ‘scale-making projects’, as imagined, conjured and speculated to denote on the interchangeability, interconnectivity and flexibility of the grassroots-movements goals and opinions. One reason for this is because of moving in the direction of the scale-making projects, leads to encountering of other ‘scale-making projects’ on different layer of scales, for example between the local scale and national scale. These encounters in turn lead to ‘friction’ between the different scale-making projects causing them to follow new pathways (2000). So, to trace the movement of global motion I will

pay attention on these frictions between the scale-making projects.

The purpose of this study is to connect local prospects with global processes by considering these as dynamic cyclical co-movements allowing grassroots-movements to create. My approach is three-fold. First, it is my aim to compare spiritual knowledge with scientific knowledge as an alternative way to explain globalization and creation. Secondly, I seek to explore different scale-making projects of the grassroots movement as motive to create and to provide a better understanding of global processes. Lastly, I attempt to find the logic behind 'grassroots globalization'. To denote on the cyclical co-movements in each chapter, I will discuss the three dynamic forces *Sattva*, *Rajah*, *Tamah*, which are focused on each outlined chapter. According to Ananda Marga these three forces are essential for procreation and movement.

The first chapter starts with the individual scale-making project 'self-realization'. Self-realization is a word that *Ananda Margiis* (member of Ananda Marga) use to describe their goal to bring spirituality closer to people, enabling them to find a true balance between the inner and the outer world (Ananda Marga, 2009). To achieve this goal they provide courses for yoga, meditation, social service and the promotion of the idea for a new global economic system. The first part of this chapter I will discuss how does Centro Madre give meaning to this spiritual knowledge based on *Tantra Yoga* and practices such as *Kiirtan* and meditation. The second part will outline Centro Madre's vision on movement and creation, which is based on *Sattva*, *Rajah* and *Tamah*.

Chapter two concentrates on the local scale-making project 'Master Unit'. This chapter shows how 'frictions' create new directions allowing the grassroots-movement to become a model eco-farm. It also shows the way Centro Madre has been build up from below as an example of 'grassroots-globalization'.

Chapter three will discuss the national-scale making project of Centro Madre 'Progressive Socialism' compared with Hugo Chavez's 'socialism for the 21st century'. The 'Progressive Socialism' Centro Madre pursues is based on the Progressive Utilization Theory founded by Sarkar. The theory is a systematic model witch underlies the goal to create equilibrium in every society. For this, Chapter three will also introduce the Prout model.

In chapter four the Prout model will be more explained that underlies the global scale-making project of Centro Madre 'Economic Democracy'. The systematic model promotes 'Economic Democracy', which can be used as an alternative to contemporary global Capitalism. The chapter also focuses on the importance of 'Grassroots-globalization' and a 'Global Revolution'.

Finally the last chapter will be the conclusion, which is on 'Neo-humanism'. According to Sarkar 'Neo-humanism will elevate humanism to universalism', which is 'love for all created beings of this universe.' This chapter is a conclusive one because the individual, local, national and the

global scale-making projects are all a reflections of Neo-humanism. In other words all these scale-making projects are directed to balance the Universe.

SELF-REALIZATION: A INDIVIDUAL SCALE MAKING PROJECT

Yoga psychology, though a part of philosophy, is also a science... It is the science by which spiritual aspirants can acquire knowledge and mastery of themselves in their quest for Self-realization. Knowledge of yoga psychology is essential for spiritual practices; without this knowledge, aspirants will not achieve success in their spiritual endeavors.

Yoga psychology is, according to Sarkar, a science that connects people to spiritual knowledge and practices. Becoming spiritual awakened in the inner human body to experience a total sense of infinite peace and happiness and seeking to balance the outer world, is what he called; 'self-realization' (Ananda Marga, 2009). In this chapter I will elaborate on 'self-realization' as a imagined scale-making project on the individual scale. Why is spirituality so important for most people that are connected with Centro Madre? What moves them to practice Tantra Yoga, Meditation and Kiirtan? How do they give meaning to spiritual practices and knowledge? To shed light on the intrinsic motivations of Centro Madre for practicing and learning spirituality, in the first part of this chapter I seek to give answer on these questions. While in the second part of this chapter I will pay more attention on their view of creation. How do Tantra Yogi monks and nuns of Ananda Marga explain creation? All those questions are related to the main question of this chapter:

How does Centro Madre imagine the individual scale-making project 'self-realization' in order to create 'equilibrium in every facet of life'?

Self-realization: a individual scale-making project

Shortly after sunset Didi Ananda Sadhana is teaching me some *asanas* or yoga postures on the first floor of Centro Madre. A warm tropical breeze flows through the window that is only covered by an insect screen and steel bars formed in a lotus flower that protects unwelcome intruders from the outside. While lying on yoga mats, which we have slid onto the ground, Didi Ananda Sadhana gently teaches an *asana* called the Cobra-pose. ‘Lie down on your stomach. Bring your hands next to your shoulders, your forehead and nose against the ground.... Take a deep breath, push yourself up look to the sky hold your breath for eight seconds ... and ex-hale, bring yourself down with your forehead against the ground, relax your body and we will do it again inhale... and exhale, inhale and exhale... inhale... and exhale... inhale... and exhale..., inhale... and exhale... inhale... and exhale,... one more time inhale... and exhale.’ After we finished the Cobra-asanas we sit down for a moment when Didi Ananda Sadhana explains that ‘The *asanas* is a good exercise for women, because it balances the menstruation cycle’.

The Sanskrit term *asana* means ‘a posture giving physical comfort and mental composure’ and according to Ananda Marga this posture affects the glands, nerves, muscles and all organs of the body (Ananda Marga, 2009). By using the term ‘biopsychology’ Sarkar described how the glands, nerves and brain affect our behaviors, thoughts and feelings. According to him practicing *asanas*, a vegetarian diet and meditation helps to overcome selfish, negative instincts, which channels the mind into positive feelings and thoughts (Dada Maheshvarananda, 2012). For this reason *asanas* is an important daily activity among Ananda Marga *avadhútas*, *avadhútikas*, *ácáryas* and *margiis*, which most of them practice one or two times a day.

Yoga has a broader approach than just the *asanas* alone. It is this broader aspect that makes it hard to define what actually is meant by Yoga (Samuel, 2008). Yoga can be defined in standard categories of thoughts such as religion, spirituality, metaphysics, and science, but each of these categories on its own would not be comprehensive enough to understand what is actually meant with Yoga (Alter, 2004). Mruitanjaya a Venezuelan *margji*, who weekly volunteers to help Centro Madre explains; ‘Yoga is a style of life. This includes meditation, it includes massage for the body, it includes food (vegetarian diet), it includes service, includes everything that let you to grow and to become more attached to God.’ This is in line with Geoffrey Samuel’s (2008:2) consideration when he describes Yoga as; ‘disciplined and systematic techniques for the training and control of the mind-body complex, which are also understood as techniques for reshaping of human

consciousness toward some kind of higher goal'. The 'higher goal' that Samuel mentions is understood by Mrutanjaya as 'to grow and to become more attached to God'. During My fieldwork the following words have been used interchangeably to describe this attachment are; 'the supreme consciousness', 'my beloved', 'guru' and 'baba'. God in this sense is a 'limitless supreme consciousness, with all beings of the universe part of a cosmic family (Ananda Marga, 2014).

Dada Atmapranananda explains; 'God means Generator, Operator, Destroyer'. He refers to God as a kind of only Truth. According to Ananda Marga human beings are able to experience this truth by practicing *Tantra Yoga*, meditation and *Kiirtan*. Joseph S. Alter's (2004) describes this as follows; 'The practice of Yoga is designed to transform illusion into reality by transcending ignorance and training the embodied mind to experience Truth'. Ananda Marga calls this experience of Truth 'self-realization' and when it is reached there will be a feeling of infinite happiness and peace. Dada Atmapranananda expresses this feeling as: 'My happiness is when I go in deep meditation and my guru, the supreme consciousness gives me a glimpse of his mysteries and I feel and I enjoy that every split seconds.' This feeling of infinite happiness and experiencing the 'Truth' is one main reason why most Ananda Margiis agree on the importance of spirituality.

The guru P.R. Sarkar has been described as an incarnation of both '*Sadaśiva* (True *Śiva*) and Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, who has come to earth in an enlightened state or to be supreme consciousness. According to Ananda Margiis '*Sadaśiva* lived 7000 years ago and was the first to teach *Tantra Yoga* (Crovetto, 2008). Dada Maheshvarananda tells; 'Tantra literally means "that which liberate you from darkness". Seven thousand years ago it became systematic with the first true yoga master called *Śiva*. He taught mantras. Mantra is the sound, which liberate the mind. A secret word you meditate with.' When someone is initiated by a *ācārya* the person is given a secret word that he or she uses to recite during meditation. The recitation of the mantra contributes to the person's spiritual awakening to experience infinite happiness. Dada Maheshvaranda continues; 'There are also mantras that are not secret. Those are available to everyone'. The mantra he mentions is '*Baba Nam Kevalam*', which is sung during *Kiirtan*. This Mantra means; 'Only the essence of the Supreme Consciousness' or 'Love is all there is' (Maheshvarananda, 2012).

Love is a word that Ananda Margiis uses to describe spirituality and divinity. For most Ananda Margiis spirituality is the essence of human life. Didi Ananda Sadhana explains; 'In *Tantra Yoga* there is a concept that is called *Dharma* which is a Sanskrit word. It is something about the nature or essence of something, everything has its *Dharma*, and everything has a reason for existence. So animals have a *Dharma* and that is sleeping, procreation, fear and eating. Human beings have their *Dharma* and as they come from animals, they have the same essence and nature as animals also

have. Yet if that is all we are than we are not different to animals. What makes us different to animals is that beside this animal *Dharma* we also have what we called a divine *Dharma*. The divine *Dharma* is the effort for growth, the continued effort to go back to our origin to the supreme consciousness to merge again with the supreme consciousness. What makes us a human being is to consciously participate in that effort to unite with the supreme consciousness. We call this our divine *Dharma* and that is what spirituality is.’

Kourie (2006) explains ‘Spirituality refers to the *raison-d’être* of one’s existence, the meaning and values to which one ascribes’. By referring to *Tantra Yoga*, Didi Ananda Sadhana explains that this *raison-d’être* is based on *Dharma* that includes every being in the universe. In this explanation human beings have the most developed divine *Dharma*, which make them to search for *raison-d’être* and spirituality. As Mruitanjaya puts it, ‘First the human being is going to live without knowing what the essence of life is. But the spiritual consciousness starts when you ask yourself what is the reason of my life, who am I? And to answer this question you start to look for it.’ For Mruitanjaya the effort to search for the *raison-d’être* started when he was in pain because of a stomach ulcer. Searching for alternative ways to cure this ulcer, he came in touch with Yoga and Ananda Marga. Before Mruitanjaya came in contact with Ananda Marga he went to the church, but according to him ‘the church is not complete in their answer to the people,’ because ‘the church only talks about God as if God is unconnected to social or political growth.’ Like other spiritual organizations Ananda Marga affirms that God can be seen in every being and every being is in God. Spirituality in this sense is how Griffin (1990:3) explains, ‘a nondualistic relation of humans to nature and of the divine reality to the world; the immanence of both the past and future (albeit in different ways) in the present; the universality and centrality of creativity; postpatriarchy; communitarianism (versus individualism and nationalism); the “deprivatization” of religion, meaning the rejection of the autonomy of morality, politics, and economics from religious values; and (specifically) the rejection of materialism...’ The non-dualistic nature of Ananda Marga’s spiritual view creates an open space to give meaning to political, social and religious thoughts.

Juleidy a 35 years old Venezuelan woman, who lives in a nearby village of Centro Madre and governs the banking business of the organization, also feels a strong connection to the spiritual views of Ananda Marga and combines it with her own religious views that she obtains in the Church. As she says, ‘To me there is no conflict between Jesus and Baba, because I think it is the same religion.’ Juleidy’s spiritual view transcends local boundaries, which she maybe never had formed if she did not came in contact with Ananda Marga. The appearance of the grassroots-organization Centro Madre nearby her village caused her to see a whole new world with new

ideas, symbols and meanings.

In the fast fluid modernity people are less bounded to their social framework of their local habitat (Bauman, 2011). In addition, the world is not merely a matter of one-way, western cultural imperialism, but more a dislocated cultural space of plurality (Inda & Rosaldo, 2008). The grassroots-organization that has been established according to the principles of the Indian spiritual organization Ananda Marga, through which Juleidy and Mruitunjaya came in contact with a new world, is a good example of this dislocated cultural space. The organization not only attracts people from India, but also people from all over the world with many different cultural backgrounds.

1.1 Movement to its realization

‘I envision a time when the store becomes stronger, so that we can have more people working here and we can relax a little bit more, and do not so much physical work ourselves. I would like more balance between the physical work, mental work (teaching) and the spiritual practices. I also envision that the store will attract more people to come here, and we will also offer courses on yoga, meditation, biopsychology and Prout; bringing Prout here, teaching about Prout and why social change and spirituality go together. I envision Centro Madre becoming much more a place of education while we will continue all the agriculture. I think the farm is extremely important as we are building up the project from nothing. But I hope that soon it can become more balanced.’ Didi Ananda Sadhana talks about future prospects of Centro Madre that she envisions and forms by using her imagination. Since 2009 Centro Madre has been working mostly on the agricultural aspect. Now the grassroots-movement is settled, she admires to work more with the spiritual aspects of Ananda Marga.

Creation is formed through a constant interplay of the real and the imagined. It is the space or junction between imagination and reality and the space where action and movement occur by pursuing dreams, ideas, projects and visions. Or how Karen Abney-Korn, Shawn Cassiman and Dana Fleetham (2013) put it: ‘The space or distance between reality and imagination is what moves us forward’. If we talk about movement of an individual or about movement of an organization one thing remains the same, everything we do interacts with our imagination. For this reason Ingold (2011: 178) puts more emphasizes on movement than the actual goal as he writes: ‘The creativity of making lies in the practice itself, in an improvisatory movement that works things out as it goes along.’ From this viewpoint, the process of creation as an improvisatory movement is more important than the original idea or the ultimate goal.

Ingold (2011) explains movement by referring to three components, which are medium, substance and surface. The medium provides all essential transmissions and enables dynamic circulation, substance in contrast is solid and provides all physical needs, and the surface determines the form and shape of substance (Ingold 2011). Ingold (2011:120) writes: ‘Wherever there is life and habitation, the interfacial separation of substance and medium is disrupted to give way to mutual permeability and binding. For it is in the nature of living beings themselves that, by way of their own processes of respiration, of breathing in and out, they bind the medium with substances in forging their own growth and movement through the world’ as a line that ‘mounted upon the pre-prepared surface of the ground.’

Ananda Marga has almost the same view on creation. Didi Ananda Sadhana describes this process by reference to the germination of a mango seed. To explain this, she refers to her guru’s teaching about three subtle energies or ‘gunas’ essential for all creation in the universe. These three gunas are called: *Sattva*, a sentient force, *Rajah*, a mutative force and *Tamah*, a static or solid force. She says; ‘there is a constant dynamic between these forces’, which expresses itself in motion and life. ‘In a balanced state the sentient is converted into mutative, the mutative into static, and the static into sentient’. This dynamic triangle process in its turn goes on endlessly until the static forces starts to dominate. Didi Ananda Sadhana explains: ‘A mango seed is hard and static meaning the static force dominates, though the other forces are still present in it. If you add soil to it, which has a dynamic force, the static force and mutative force struggle with each other. When this struggle occurs, a germ will burst out of it shield and manifest itself.’ This germ is, according to Didi Ananda Sadhana, an expression of the sentient force that occurs through the struggle between the mutative force and static force. Dada Atmapranananda adds to it; ‘When it starts to die the static force will win again.’ Which means that the static force dominates.

In short, Ingold’s explanation on medium, substance and surface as well *Rajah*, *Tamah* and *Sattva* both apply to imagination, movement and reality. Imagination in this sense is the *Rajah* force or the medium, which is dynamic and imagines new possibilities to pursue. *Tamah* is the reality, which is more solid or a static force that already has been realized. Movement and creation occur when the two forces through an agency are combined upon the surface causing, which means that the *Sattva* force dominates.

The next chapter is concerned with the creation and the establishment of the grassroots-movement Centro Madre.

CENTRO MADRE: A LOCAL SCALE MAKING PROJECT

The justification for establishing socio-economic units throughout the world lies in the fact that any attempt to develop an area economically must start at the grassroots level. That is, the direction of economic development should be from the bottom to the top, not from the top to the bottom. The latter approach is impractical and a utopian myth.

-P.R. Sarkar

Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar explains the way a sustainable global economical system should be implemented. For this idea Didi Ananda Sadhana and Dada Atmapranananda started to build their local grassroots-movement 'Centro

Madre'. The next chapter shows the development of a grassroots-movement as a bottom-up process, formed by imaginations and 'frictions' encountered on the pathway to its realization. In other words this chapter displays an example of 'grassroot-globalization'. The aim of this chapter is to give answer on the questions: In what directions did the grassroots-movement move in order to fulfill a local scale-making project? What is the junction between imagination and realization of the grassroots-'movement'? Which other scale-making projects were encountered before it started to form in a model eco-farm?

Those questions as a whole are in line with the main question:

How was the local scale-making project 'Centro Madre' imagined in order to create 'equilibrium in every facet of life'?

Centro Madre: A local scale making project

“I am standing on the roof of Centro Madre’s building looking at the diversity of crops that Centro Madre produces. On the right side of the building you see a banana tree plantation, on the left rows of guava bushes. In a distance you can see also papaya trees, lemon trees, mango trees and orange trees. One of the Cuban agronomists, Raül, is digging the soil of the potatoes, next to the sweet potatoes and the yucca that all grow along the entrance. In the backyard the Cuban Alberto is irrigating the vegetable beds that have different kind of salad crops, tomatoes and other disease-susceptible crops. Behind the vegetable beds desperate chickens are cackling because a bulldog puppy on a long leash runs after them, playing cat and mouse. In the front Didi Ananda Sadhana and the Cuban Elio are guiding a group of students who came to learn about agriculture. Between the guava bushes a film crew is recording a documentary about agriculture for the Venezuelan national television next to the fishpond. Marco, Centro Madre’s full time employee, is chopping the banana trees. Dada Atmapranananda is talking with some customers who came to buy some vegetables and fruits. The dogs in a kennel bark at some customers. Everyone in Centro Madre simultaneously moves in order to achieve a goal. Movement is all around.”

The above description of Centro Madre is what Ingold (2011:251) calls ‘a momentarily arrested movement,’ meaning the description is only a fraction of the project’s motion. Movement occurs as a butterfly effecting new forms of movement and creation. Today Centro Madre has grown into a place where they educate students, farmers and other local people in agriculture. Didi Ananda Sadhana and Dada Atmapranananda work together with four Cubans Elio, Alberto, Raül and Pedro who work on a regular base for Centro Madre. Centro Madre has also three permanent employees Noris, Omayra, Marco and some part-time employees. Didi Ananda Sadhana’s fourteen-year-old foster child Melqui is also helping more now that she is becoming older. Time by time volunteers from different parts of the world come to work for them in agriculture or education and also bring in new ideas for the grassroots-movement to establish. Centro Madre has become an important agricultural model of Barlovento. In addition to their basic teachings they sell for the minimum price a lot of different organic crops of more than 40 different kinds of species. Every morning Didi Ananda Sadhana loads her jeep to sell these crops in the nearby villages to poor families and some greengrocers in the nearby cities of San Jose and Rio Chico. Centro Madre also grows and sells guava plants that started from a plant that a Cuban

brought with him from his home country. So far they have sold more than 20,000 guava tree lings to farmers from all parts of Venezuela.

Centro Madro moved a lot between new ideas and forms before it became a model eco-farm as described above. These visions are negotiated between many scale-making activities of different people and stakeholders who came in touch with Centro Madre. Different interests and (cultural) backgrounds have their influence on Centro Madre. So different scale-making projects visualized on different scale-levels met each other through which a reaction occurred that Tsing (2005:4) calls 'friction': "the awkward, unequal, unstable and creative qualities of interconnections across difference." Frictions make it possible to create new opportunities and at the same time provoke inequalities so that new collaborations are formed. Frictions arise in dialogue between different cultures and stakeholders and are in Tsing's opinion (2005:6): "a reminder of the importance of interaction in defining movement, cultural form and agency." In order to consider Centro Madre as a movement first of all I will elaborate on these 'frictions'. Secondly I will describe this movement as 'entangled history of relations by which it came to be there' (Ingold, 2011:251) For this I shed light on the subtle interactions between people with different imagined ideas. In doing so I discuss some 'frictions' that Centro Madre has encountered during the way they created the grassroots-movement, which caused the movement to change its course many times.

The movement for Centro Madre started with the 'Tragedia de Vargas' in 1999. Didi Ananda Sadhana saw what happened on TV and it felt her duty to go there and help: 'We really wanted to do something, baba (the guru) has always said: "If there is a disaster go see and help"'. The news about the tragedy also reached Dada Atmapranananda. Very soon, he has made his decision to go, and tells: 'as a member of Ananda Marga and as a monk of Ananda Marga we always try to find a way to do social service.' Didi Ananda Sadhana and Dada Atmapranananda went in a small international Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT) to Caracas. The road to Vargas was impassable, so Dada Atmapranananda decided to start looking around if there was another place where they could do social service. Eventually Dada Atmapranananda got in touched with a Japanese relief team that was operating in Barlovento. After the Japanese had told that much help was needed they went all together with the Japanese to Barlovento where a dam in the Al Guapo town had broken.

The idea from Dada Atmapranananda to go to Barlovento occurred in friction between AMURT and the Japanese relief team, which had determined the pathway of their movement. Tsing (2005:6) compares roads with friction to exemplify how it works 'Roads creates pathways that make motion easier and more efficient, but in doing so they limit where we go.' From this view friction begets and simultaneously restrains movement. Frictions between the Anananda Marga

Universal Relief Team and a Japanese relief team created a kind of road, but limited their way to go in the direction to Barlovento.

Once in Barlovento they started to do service Didi Ananda Sadhana tells; ‘we got a call from AMURT Switzerland and they said that they had a fund-raising for the disaster in Venezuela, so shall we work together, we started to utilize those funds for the wellbeing of the people. Those who had lost everything; water, clothing, mattresses, sheets, small stoves and gas tanks that people had lost. So we worked very hard and that’s how we got to know Julia and Ines.’ Julia and Ines are two sisters who live in a village nearby the affected area of the flood. When they came to know about the disaster they wanted to do something to help: ‘We saw people of AMURT in La Paz but didn’t make any contact. After we went in a small car to our home we heard ‘Peep Peep’. The people of AMURT where signing to us with their claxon, but we didn’t understand why. We stopped and Hendrika (birth name of Didi Ananda Sadhana) got out the car and said: “We want to get to know you better how should we do that?” and we were all covered with mud. That is how our first contact started.’ From then, Ananda Marga started to work with Julia and Ines, while helping them to ‘sustain a little bit better’ in their work.

When Didi Ananda Sadhana and Dada Atmapranananda encountered Julia and Ines new frictions occurred throug an unexpected course started to emerge, what Tsing calls, ‘awkward engagements’. When Julia and Ines started to work for Centro Madre they had to stay with them in a Hotel provided to relief teams and NGO’s, Julia tells: ‘the hotel gave us three big rooms one for men and another for women. But we were not only working for AMURT we also had to adjust to them, they didn’t adjust to us.’ The relief team AMURT consisted of about eight persons coming from all different countries and brought their own customs, traditions and rituals with them. AMURT was a little bit extraneous to Julia and Ines; ‘I saw Didi and Dada practicing meditation in the morning and Dada was wearing orange clothes most of the time, but Didi didn’t. One day Didi was also dressed in her uniform and I was a little bit looking at her like, gosh.’ And Julia continues: ‘One day we went with them (AMURT) to Caracas and we came also to know about other Didi’s and Dada’s (other Tantra Yoga nuns and monks). It was a strange place to be, that house was different. I am the oldest of us and because we were in a strange house I couldn’t sleep, it felt like I had to protect my sister’. Julia is telling a story about what Tsing calls ‘zones of awkward engagement’. It is a zone where frictions arise between different expectations from people with different cultural backgrounds. These different expectations rub up against each other so that unexpected outcomes occur (Tsing, 2005). For Julia and Ines it was a strange situation to be with people of Ananda Marga. But despite of the unpredictable outcomes of the ‘awkward engagement’ these outcomes also leded to new collaborations. For

example the connection of Didi Ananda Sadhana with Julia and Ines also caused them to stay in Barlovento.

1.2 Grass “roots” movement

While, frictions paved the way for the grassroots-movement to start a project, much more was required to establish something in line with Ananda Marga. AMURT from Switzerland came up with the idea to start a clinic, but Didi Ananda Sadhana says: ‘I thought to myself: “a clinic? I mean a clinic would be for free than? Where would we get the money from?”’ So instead of a clinic I thought: “No, let us do land and do a service project and see what comes out.”’ Didi Ananada Sadhana tells about the moment an idea in her mind was born. ‘It was an idea to start a Master Unit where Sarkar also talks about. Where we get a piece of land which we develop in the agricultural aspects and the communitarian aspect and that is what the Master Unit will be then.’ In speaking of a Master Unit Didi Ananda Sadhana means a kind of permaculture eco-village where a group of people together lives in a self-sustainable community that acts as a model miniature of Ananda Marga (Sarkar: 1989). Permacultures ‘expand all possible service to the communities at large particularly in the field of education, culture, economics, and spiritual upliftment’ (Diver, Fitzgerald & Inayatullah, 1999). Besides like a permaculture these Master Units seek ways to counteract the global political economy in order to relieve the social injustices and ecological degradation (Veteto, Lockyer, 2008). Therefore it needs to be a self-sufficient ecological community enabling people to be independent from the global economy.

There are five primary requisites for the Master Units, ‘which correspond’ according to Sarkar (1989) to the five minimum requirements in Prout’. These requirements are: providing food through agriculture, the production of fibres and fabrics for clothing, own primary and post-primary schools, general and special medical units, and constructing houses for extremely poor people (ibid). So the Master Unit that Didi Ananda Sadhana envisions is a ambitious scale-making project, but with a piece of land she was able to spread the first seeds of a collective movement.

According to Sarkar (1981) collective movement requires three things: ‘First, an inspiration – an impetus from behind. When one person stops moving, another will have to push from behind, saying, “Move ahead!”’ The inspiration of Didi Ananda Sadhana came from Sarkar. Inspired by her guru she felt the desire to work in the direction to a sustainable world, without war, poverty or environmental disruption. In case of tribulation this inspiration will feed the impetus of Didi Aananda Sadhana to move ahead. The second requirement according to Sarkar is ‘the capacity

for movement – that is, the one who moves forward must have the requisite strength to do so. In the absence of adequate strength, how can one move forward?’ Didi Ananda Sadhana and Dada Atmapranananda were both healthy and capable to realize the project. In addition AMURT of Switzerland provided them a part of this strength by providing funding to them. The third requirement is: ‘the goal of movement,’ which in this case is the Master Unit. So what we see is that the inspiration of Didi Ananda Sadhana was something else than the goal. While the inspiration determines the perseverance, the goal concretized the way the movement should move. So an inspiration and a goal are both required to pave the way for movement whether in mind, or in reality. However to accomplish something in reality both movements are required.

In the above example of Didi Ananda Sadhana, movement only took place in her mind. She first became inspired by AMURT Switzerland to start a project in Venezuela but at the beginning she couldn’t envision what kind of project it should be. When she started to visualize a Master Unit, she could see new forms of mobility of how to realize that. This form of movement that took place in her mind is what Tsing (2005: 214) calls: ‘movement as mobility’. Meaning when Didi Ananda Sadhana became inspired, ‘the transformation of consciousness’ had taken place, allowing her to visualize new goals and forms of mobility. Thus, movement as mobility takes place in the mind and moves between an inspiration and visualization but the action hasn’t occurred yet. The action is where according to Tsing ‘movement as mobilization’ starts.

When Didi Ananda Sadhana knew that the project had to be a Master Unit, she, with the help of Dada Atmapranananda, Julia, Ines and others she had met, was able to come in action and build Centro Madre. Tsing (2005: 214) calls this: ‘movement of the heart- for travel to remake the world’, meaning the inspiration needs to conjure a person's heart in order to come into action. So movement of mobility is when the inspiration moves to visualization of new goals and possibilities, in turn these goals allow movement to mobilize.

In terms of movement and creation: inspiration creates the same reaction as friction. That is to say both inspiration and friction makes motion more efficient by visualizing new goals and defining new collaborations. By doing so, these new goals and collaborations put limits on where to go showing that inspiration, as well as friction, simultaneously begets and restricts movement. Consider Tsing's (2005: 5) metaphor in describing the importance of friction: ‘A wheel turns because of its encounter with the surface of the road; spinning in the air it goes nowhere.’ In this regard we can say in order to move again three components are necessary: the road, a spinning wheel and friction. Let’s take a closer look at Tsing's metaphor by referring to the three gunas of the first chapter: Rajah, Tamah and Sattva. What we see is a dynamic mutative force (*Rajah*), which is the spinning wheel and the static force (*Tamah*), the road, both of which are required to

move. However, movement is only set in motion when the two meet allowing friction in forcing it to come in action. In this regard, friction and inspiration will be the sentient force (*Sattva*), the impetus that forces it to move in new forms and directions.

Like friction, inspiration also induces new negotiations. Didi Ananda Sadhana tells, when she got inspired to create a Master Unit: 'I had a kind of vague idea in my mind how we would do that. It wasn't so clear. But when I heard Dada talking about it, I realized he had a different kind of idea.' They were inspired by different visions of the same goal of a Master Unit, both formed by their own ideas for which they brought their own references with them. Ingold (2011:74) puts it: 'With their feet on the ground and their heads in the air, human beings appear to be constitutionally split between the concrete and imaginary.' When Didi Ananda Sadhana and Dada Atmapranananda inhabited a piece of land in Barlovento, the environment started to interact with both their different envisions.

Dada Atmapranananda was raised in a mountain tribe in the Philippines; at a very young age he learned how to work on the land. So as soon as they started Centro Madre, he was looking for a source to get a sustainable income from agriculture. He tried different kinds of agriculture projects, for example a plantain cooperative and a beekeeping cooperative. In contrast, Didi Ananda Sadhana was raised in a Dutch family with a father who was accountant and a mother who performed a lot of social service. Education has been her main focus of work for Ananda Marga. She wanted to spend time teaching and doing social service to the local people of the area; she started projects for teenage mothers, for women and reading programs for children. None of the projects that they started separately worked out really well but laid the basis for new inspirations where new arrangements could arise.

1.3 The base "Mother Earth"

'We had to go back to the base and the base is actually that the earth was going to give us the possibility to do what we want to do. That mother earth was going to give this through the agriculture through cultivation. She would guarantee us. So we had to go back to the land and dedicate ourselves to the land. And that is what we have been doing for the last few years. That is also we started it to call Centro Madre. It is actually in honor of mother earth, who is actually the base or the one who sustains this project. It is mother earth. And that is why it is called Centro Madre. Beside that our neighboring village is called Madre Vieja and the small canal that runs behind the land is also called Canal Madre, the Mother Channel. So it all kind of fit it all kind of match. So we all decided that is the name than.'

Didi Ananda Sadhana tells that she started to realize agriculture had to be the starting point for their project. When AMURT in Switzerland had withdrawn, they decided to change the name of the grassroots movement in Centro Madre. The name Centro Madre (Mother Centre) refers to the nearby village and channel but also to the earth. Didi Ananda Sadhana became more inspired by the idea that mother earth was the point of reference from where the grassroots should grow. So instead of looking for people to create the Master Unit with, they first had to start with the base of the project. Therefore was a change of scope needed Dada Atmapranananda explains: 'the vision is fine but the objective should be smaller than the vision' and continues: 'I was frustrated than you know so I said; "no we have to explore a door what we can have in the Centre, without people who come here". So, I went to Didi and started to talk ... and what happened is that we started also here with agriculture.'

After about two years working under the name Centro Madre, there occurred a new friction between their local scale-making project, a national scale-making project called the National Agrarian Reform, and a continental scale-making project called ALBA, Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America, both implemented by late President Hugo Chávez. The National Agrarian Reform is a state intervention with the goal to develop agriculture also in order to benefit the poor and to sustain Venezuela on its own resources and the ALBA is a continental alliance between different countries in Central and Latin America. In this alliance Hugo Chávez made a new arrangement with the Cuban president Raúl Castro to exchange petrol oil with Cuban employees in agriculture and health care (Harnecker, 2010). In 2009 this new arrangement also reached Centro Madre that inspired the movement even more to continue with agriculture. Didi Ananda Sadhana tells with excitement in her voice; 'The Cubans came!! It was a miracle!! And it gives me really the feeling that yes there is a purpose for this project.'

In this sense friction between a national-scale making project and a continental scale-making project reached a local scale-making project that caused the movement to grow more into a model eco-farm. Dada Atmapranananda tells: 'and that is how Centro Madre started to bloom and now agriculture is our reference for all the students and all school around this area.' The Cubans found a place where they can educate students and farmers in agriculture and Centro Madre was able to expand. Didi Ananda Sadhana tells: 'the amount of attention and the amount of people that comes here is growing, but not only through our clients, but also people who are involved in politics.'

In addition, it was very important for the Cubans to find a place where they were able to teach locals around the area. Because after the Cubans spent almost two year of agricultural work in Barlovento most of them had to leave the area. Dada Atmapranananda says: 'The Cubans don't

have any strategies and now they are going to leave Barlovento.’ Then Didi Ananda Sadhana continues: ‘People are very tough here they don’t make any efforts to learn new strategies from the Cubans. That is because these people have suffered a lot from centuries of exploitation and colonization.’ In the region Barlovento live predominantly poor Afro-Venezuelan ex-slaves, who have been marginalized by the state for centuries. Despite the effort made by the government to support the poor by implementing grassroots-movements in education, political participation, culture and economic development (Glover, 2012), a long history of marginalization is not easily forgotten. Therefore the people in Barlovento barely accept support from others and as Dada Atmapranananda tells ‘only the Cubans who work for Centro Madre are going to stay and the rest are going to leave Barlovento.’ Now Centro Madre is the only place in Barlovento where the Cubans are going to stay, new scale-making projects are imagined. Which not only are envisioned for the local-scale, but also extend to the regional scale of Barlovento. They are planning to become an agricultural Centre of Barlovento where they provide tools for neighbor farmers and villages and educate people in agriculture.

After almost ten years encountering frictions searching and exploring new possibilities Dada Atmapranananda and Didi Ananda Sadhana found out that they had to combine their visions in order to establish a sustainable project that is as well directed to agriculture as directed to service and education. By establishing this local scale-making project Didi Ananda Sadhana and Dada Atmapranananda did not simply occupy the environment, as how it often seems to be when an organization is described. It is more like Ingold (2011:71) explains; ‘they inhabit it, and in so doing – in threading their own paths through the meshwork – they contribute to its ever-evolving weave.’ The meshwork where Ingold (2011) speaks of is a way to describe life of (human) beings as a moving entity that evolves through what is encountered on the pathway of life. The grassroots movement also evolved on this manner and for this Didi Ananda Sadhana and Dada Atmapranananda had to go through all these frictions they have encountered before they were able to establish Centro Madre. Eventually through frictions that occurred between scale-making projects of the Venezuelan government and the grassroots-movements, the pathway of the grassroots-movement became much clearer. They had to combine their imaginations to accomplish Centro Madre. But not only on the local level, also on the regional and national level they started to become an actor. The next chapter will concentrate on the national-scale making project by describing in what way Centro Madre’s prospects are involved with the Venezuelan government.

PROGRESSIVE SOCIALISM: A NATIONAL SCALE MAKING PROJECT

The social system that will come into being, keeping parallelism and harmony with time, space and person, will be called progressive socialism. Our Prout is that very progressive socialism. Society will have to make provisions to ensure an increase in the living standard of every individual. When progressive socialism is established within the framework of democracy, then democracy will be successful. Otherwise, government of the people, by the people and for the people will only mean government of fools, by fools and for fools.

- P.R. Sarkar

Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar had a very clear vision of how policy should be driven to balance the society. Like Hugo Chávez he was a proponent of progressive socialism. Sarkar designed a whole model to implement this socialism called the Progressive Utilization Theory or Prout. In this chapter I seek to compare Centro Madre's national-scale-making project 'progressive socialism', with Hugo Chavez's 'socialism for the 21st century'. I also introduce the Prout institute that is strong connected to Centro Madre. Both of them share the same goals in the direction of the national scale-making project 'progressive socialism' and are based on Prout. Questions that underlie this chapter are: What is Centro Madre's view on the national politics of Venezuela? What are the principles of Prout to implement the progressive socialism? To what extent do the national scale-making project of Centro Madre and the national scale-making project of the Venezuelan government share common goals?

How does Centro Madre imagine the national scale-making project 'progressive socialism' in order to create 'equilibrium in every facet of life'?

Progressive Socialism: a national scale-making project

Today was a heavy day, especially for Dada Atmapranananda and the Cubans. Centro Madre expects the Cuban minister of agriculture and the Venezuelan minister of agriculture to visit Centro Madre soon. The whole day they have worked hard to clean up the driveway, walkways and everything in and around the land in order to make it look like a perfect model farm. As usual in Venezuela, it is not clear what day and time the ministers will arrive. "Soon" is the common answer. Now almost everything is done, it is just a matter of time before the ministers will arrive. But then Didi Ananda Sadhana came with the news: 'Chávez is dead. I can't believe it. Dada, did you hear the news?' While Dada loads little bags with soil into the wheelbarrow, he takes a deep breath. He remains quiet for a while and finishes the work that he was doing. That same evening Dada Atmapranananda, Manatos'a and I decide to go to the Prout Institute of Caracas, in order to pay our last respect to President Chávez during his funeral procession the next morning.

The next day we are in a giant stadium waiting 11 hours for the procession to come. The small Asian monk Dada Atmapranananda and the tall, light-skinned monk Dada Maheshvarananda with long white hair and beard, are both dressed in orange robes and wear an orange turban on their heads. Passing people with cameras ask the Dada's if they can take photos with them. Today they are dry fasting, while the hot sun shines brightly in their faces. Standing with a hundred thousand people who came from all over the country, waiting to catch a glimpse of the coffin. The people wear red t-shirts and colored caps. Some are wiping their tears away as they shout loudly: 'Yo soy Chávez!' (I am Chávez!), 'Chávez vive! La lucha sigue!' (Chávez lives! The battle continues!); the solidarity among the people is strongly perceptible. People are crying and embracing each other, while others sing along with the popular songs about their beloved president, 'El Comandante Chávez'. The music starts to sound louder and the crowd stands up looking around in order to catch a glimpse of the coffin. While the crowd is standing both Dada's sit down in lotus position. They close their eyes and focus their mind in meditation for half an hour.

Hugo Chávez became a very important leader for the staff of Centro Madre and the Prout institute, even though they did not always agree with his rhetoric. A lot of Chávez's ideas are in line with Centro Madre's vision of Prout. For example the way Chávez takes care for the poor and his vision on the minimum requirements for everyone. In Venezuela, a form of counter-

globalization evolved into the national domain. It was Chávez's aim to counteract global destructive processes such as capitalism, which he was hoping to reach with the 'socialism for the 21st century' (Harnecker, 2010) through the implementation of communal councils and by supporting grassroots-movements (Valencia-Ramirez, 2009), Chávez managed to respond on contemporary developments such as 'grassroots-globalization'. Ida Susser (2006) argues that counter-hegemonic ideas are very much needed nowadays, as she states: 'At the grey dawning of the twenty-first century, and in the face of US imperialist aggression and global corporate wealth, such visions are not only much needed but also much in evidence in the massive worldwide anti-war movement and other recent events.' Since the very beginning of his presidency Chávez was a proponent of grassroots-movements, and in 2005 he implemented a new form of 'socialism for the 21st Century' (Harnecker 2010; Lebowitz, 2006). Could this socialism for the 21st century be a form of the progressive socialism in the Prout model?

1.4 'Revolutionare Cien por Ciento'

Chávez's body was lying in state at a military academy in Caracas. People with children and babies were waiting days and nights to see for the last time possible their president's body in reality. Didi Ananda Sadhana says: 'It was not about the person that affected me but more how the people of the nation responded to the death of Chávez, and how they were making those long lines just to say goodbye to him, that in particular was very emotional for me.' Mercedes also waited a whole night long from two o'clock pm until eleven o'clock am the next morning. After asking her for who she will vote she said: 'Nicolas Maduro, revolutionare cien por ciento, Chávez está en mi corazón y todos somos Chávez.' Mercedes use two slogans to speak out her feeling for Hugo Chávez, meaning: revolutionary for hundred percent and Chávez is in our heart and we are Chávez. Mercedes tells: 'I still cry when I think about him, he was like my family and as a father to me and still I cry.' A lot supporters of Chávez, called Chávista, feel a strong connection with him like if they were family. Didi Ananda Sadhana was more concerned with the political ideology: 'I observed myself I'm not a Chávista, I'm a Proutista, so it is not my attachment to him as a person. I'm attached to the process.'

Hugo Chávez was beloved by the poor, which included most of the Venezuelan population. While, he had strong pragmatic political ideals, he was often considered by academics as a populist (Gott, 2008). This not really a right consideration Gott (ibid) argues: 'Chávez is an exceptionally original political figure who does not fit easily into an existing frame of reference.' Therefore we need to pay more attention to the political process of moving instead of

categorizing Venezuelan reforms in an already existent political framework.

According to Wimmer (2002:39), through these political processes: ‘new cultural forms may emerge according to the new constellation of interest and possibilities for compromise. Depending on these changing structures of inclusion in, and exclusion from.’ This probably already happened in Venezuela when Maduro was elected. As how Didi Ananda Sadhana mentions, ‘When Maduro won the elections with only 300.000 votes more than the opposition candidate, that was really shocking for me; because the party of Chávez, four months previously won by 1 million votes. While 300.000 went to Maduro, the rest of them, 700.000, went to the other side. So I was wondering, where and why did all those people go? Someone was telling: ‘I know who those 700.000 people were who normally voted for Chávez, and has now after his death chose the other side – they don’t want to pay the loans they received back to the government.’ This whole experience has shown me that the people of Venezuela are not ideological voters but they vote for the person.’

The ideology that Didi Ananda Sadhana speaks of is a socialist ideology for economic justice, which Maduro continues to implement on the whole society. However, since supporters are more attached to Hugo Chávez as a person instead to his ideology, it is not clear if they are willing to continue considering the amount of voters who defected to the opposition. In addition polarization has become stronger and conflicts arise more and more in Venezuela, like the demonstration on 15 April 2013 that cost nine lives. According to Modood (2007), these conflicts occur through the prevailed ideology that moves people to live in dichotomies allowing an inclined change of segregation, polarization and conflicts. Mruitanjaya is of the opinion that: ‘It was necessary to create polarization in Venezuela in order to pass a level of social growth... this level of social growth can be reached through a revolution.’ Mruitanjaya refers to Sarkar’s theory of the stages of revolution that eventually could lead to one united globally-oriented human society (Inayatullah, 1999 Maheshvarananda, 2012).

There are four stages of revolution, Mruitanjaya explains: ‘The first stage is equilibrium which is the ideal level, one stage down you have disequilibrium and more down the society will collapse, the deepest level is degeneration.’ These stages are also called the stages of equipoise and equilibrium, derangement, disruption and degeneration (Sarkar, 1987). Equipoise and equilibrium are only stabilized if there is a true balance between the physical, mental and spiritual sphere. These three different spheres are also related to the dynamic triangle of the three gunas that is to say the physical sphere is related to the static force Tamah, the spiritual sphere to the sentient force Sattva and the mental sphere to the dynamic force Rajah. The equilibrium and equipoise in these three spheres in society is disturbed, the physical force, Tamah becomes dominant,

meaning the minds of most people become crude causing materialistic thinking, religious dogmas and a lack of improvement of peoples creative potentials (Sarkar, 1987). When disequilibrium takes place the other three stages will follow (Maheshvarananda, 2012).

In his book *A few problems solved* Sarkar(1987) explained: ‘the derangement of equilibrium begins due to influence of time, space and person and the clash of propensities ... if it is not re-established people will degenerate’ the physical, spiritual and mental dynamic triangle ‘and the society will enter the stage of disruption.’ For example, the equilibrium in Venezuela has been disturbed through a history of slavery, followed by environmental pollution, racism and a lack of distribution of basic needs. The political system called the ‘Punto Fijo Pact’ was created in 1958 but overthrown by Hugo Chávez in 1998 (Valencia Ramirez, 2006). ‘This system’ Dada Atmapranananda tells, ‘was a family elite that dictated the government.’ It was a political pact of three parties that ruled the country for 40 years in a downward movement (Valencia Ramirez, 2006). According to Sarkar (1987): ‘If people fail to counteract this trend of downward movement, descends to the stage of degeneration...and, as a result, is lost in the wilderness of economic bankruptcy, social unrest, cultural degeneration and religious superstition’. The degeneration Sarkar talked about, also relates to communism and capitalism, which he considered as materialistic ideologies because both of them emphasizes on the distribution of money and matter.

According to Sarkar (1987) this is how the revolution should start. He explains, ‘although all three aspects of life – physical, psychic and spiritual – carry equal significance, the physical stage should be given greater importance in the initial stage.’ In this regard the government sold food and cleaning products for a very cheap price, including weekly in the nearby villages of Centro Madre. Besides in almost every village Cuban doctors and dentists work for free.

This does not mean that all the problems have immediately been solved; the country has not returned to a balanced stage yet. ‘Rather’ Sarkar says, ‘society will have to be lifted up step by step from the stage of degeneration to the stage of disruption, and then from the stage of disruption to the stage of derangement; and in the final stage whole balance ...will have to be established.’ Before he died Chávez could only lead the country so far. For Maduro now the task is to lead the country back towards a balanced society.

1.5 Venezuela needs good spiritual leaders

The Prout Research Institute began in Caracas in 2007. This Institute functions as a community place available for people from all over the country and the world who visit the institute for volunteering, research, networking and other reasons. The institute has a patio from where you can walk to the stairs to the first floor with bedrooms provided for men and to the second floor with bedrooms for women. Dada Maheshvarananda, the director, explains why he chose Venezuela to establish the Prout Research institute: ‘Because I asked for it.’ And he continues: ‘When my first book was published in Caracas in 2003, I was invited to be a guest on President Chávez's weekly television show... I told him about what Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar had said when he visited Venezuela in 1979, which is: “Venezuela needs good spiritual political leaders. If Venezuela can produce spiritual political leaders, it will not only be the leader of Latin America, it will also be the leader of the planet. Venezuela is a blessed country.” And President Chávez said, “Dada Maheshvarananda has given us a book that we appreciate very much. Your visit has come at such an opportune moment.... Thank you very much, brother, and let’s continue with spirituality, spirit, good faith, morality, and the mystical force that moves the world. Dada Maheshvarananda and other citizens of the world are welcome to visit, especially those who come in good faith and offer their ideas, their spirit and their moral flame to the Bolivarian Revolution. This has attracted the attention of the whole world, especially those that struggle and dream of a better world, just as it says in *After Capitalism: Prout’s Vision for a New World*.”’

After his conversation with President Chávez, Dada Maheshvarananda (2013) was invited to give lectures about Prout to executives of the petroleum company. Then he returned in 2006 with four volunteers from Europe to start the Prout institute of Venezuela. He says: ‘A major reason we did this was because of how closely the goals of Prout’s socio-economic model were shared with the Bolivarian Revolution initiated by President Chávez.’

This story shows how friction works between global scale-making projects and national scale-making projects. While Dada Maheshvarananda envisioned a global scale-making project, he wrote two books about the next phase of life after global capitalism. In these books Dada Maheshvarananda (2003, 2012) advocates the Prout model in order to transform our world and create an alternative global economic future. When Dada Maheshvarananda saw that the vision of President Hugo Chávez for the future was similar to his, he decided to come to Venezuela to help. Dada Maheshvarananda led other Proutists in giving several training sessions to executives of the national petroleum company to share and learn from their common visions. In Venezuela Dada Maheshvarananda has done extensive research on Chávez’s politics. He says: ‘I feel sad

when Chávez died because to me he was a great leader. I disagreed slightly with few of the things he did or said, but for the most part he was a leader who, for the first time in the history of Venezuela, used money that the country gets for selling petroleum to help the poor people. His goal was to provide the minimum requirements to everyone, which is the same as Prout's goal.'

This goal of Prout (Progressive Utilization Theory) that Dada Maheshvarananda mentions is based on five minimum necessities that every government needs to guarantee for the people: food, health care, clothing, education and housing. Dada Atmapranananda tells: 'in the government of Chávez and the present government of Maduro, they are trying to guarantee health care and education as much as possible, and also housing and food, so the government is trying to provide most of these basic necessities. This is why we support this government'. These basic necessities in turn are based on the five fundamental principles of Prout that I will compare with the Venezuelan state intervention.

The first principle is, 'No individual should be allowed to accumulate any physical wealth without the clear permission or approval of the collective body' (Sarkar, 1959). This principle is based on the assumption that 'one man's gain is another man's loss', or as the Dutch phrase, 'One man's bread is another man's death', meaning that there are limitations in the physical world for everyone. Or how Bauman (2011:80) explains this: 'We know all too well that the resources of the planet have limits and cannot be infinity stretched.' Therefore the 'collective body' (the society) as how Sarkar called it, needs to pursue a social balance based on physical wealth for everyone. Today, a collective body is still associated with the nation-state and according to Bauman, 'is 'social' when it promotes the principle of communally endorsed, collective insurance against individual misfortune and its consequences.' Therefore Dada Maheshvarananda (2012:63) says, 'the government would have to assume responsibility for setting limits to the accumulation of wealth. It would do this by forming economic boards'. While, also by providing 'applications from citizens for exceptions to the ceiling.' For example people who need special healthcare interventions (ibid).

These limits were set by Chávez first of all by nationalizing companies of raw materials, and by closing the borders for multinationals (Valencia Ramirez, 2006, Harnecker, 2009). Dada Atmapranananda explains: 'Their basic products are controlled by the government instead of run by the corporations, or international corporations.' Secondly, before Chávez died he started a mission to provide benefits for people with special needs, for example, to Mercedes son and Nora's son and daughter shown in the next example.

During a ride with Mercedes, Nora and Didi Ananda Sadhana to several factories in order to find a company that is willing to provide on a regular base diapers for Nora's and Mercedes sons we

started a conversation about the government that was ruled by Chávez. Both of them live in a flood zone. Nora in a *barrio* and Mercedes on a farm. Since one year ago Nora became widow, because her husband was accidentally shot down during a robbery. She has three children to take care. Nora tells, 'My daughter has a brain tumor. We are afraid that during the next operation she may become blind. We are praying to God every day. And my son has Down syndrome, epilepsy, diabetes, gland problems, asthma and is a little bit autistic. He needs diapers and I need to feed him because he doesn't chew his food.' Then Mercedes tells, 'My son has spina bifida and was operated on 27 times in his head because of a hydrocephalus. The government supports us too – they paid the last two months of my son's high school.' Nora says: The government supports me also sometimes. Sometimes I get diapers and recently I got two helmets for my son because he beats his head on the wall.'

The government led by Chávez certainly tried to protect the Venezuelan boards and made effort to provide special care to the most needed. Both Nora and Mercedes were very pleased with the government under Chávez and became very emotional when he died.

The second principle of Prout is, 'There should be maximum utilization and rational distribution of all mundane, supramundane and spiritual potentialities' (Sarkar, 1959). This principle underlies the need for the rational distribution of resources, because there are enough resources for everyone on this planet, if these resources are properly utilized and distributed (Mahesvarananda, 2012:63). Even though society spends a lot of money on healthcare, the unequal distribution of recourses is more striking. As Bauman (2011:38) puts it, 'The rising levels of specifically health-related expenditure has had almost no impact on average life expectancy – but a rising level of inequality does have such an impact, and a strongly negative one.' Therefore according to the Prout model the rational distribution of recourses has to be guaranteed.

This principle also indicates that the supramundane and spiritual potentialities also should be utilized and rationally distributed. Supramundane means mental properties and 'include subtle knowledge and powers, such as ideas, concepts, scientific theories, aesthetic creations, intuition, etc. Spiritual potentialities refer to spiritual philosophy and practices' (Mahesvarananda, 2012:64). In this regard it is important to give everyone the same rights of education, as well in the mental as the spiritual aspect. For example Dada Maheshvarananda says, "Chàvez built schools and hired teachers to make sure that every child can go to school and now everyone is going to school. There are free universities and also the best public universities charge only 20 bolivares per month, which is very cheap. Plus they have programs for all those adults who didn't complete elementary school who can now go to night-school to get their elementary and high school diplomas and later even earn a university diploma. So there is a great push towards

education for everyone who wants to go to school and that is a great accomplishment.”

In Taylor's (1994) explanation of the politics of recognition, he describes two opposing desires of groups in multicultural societies, that is to say while people are searching for ‘equal dignity’ that implicates sameness, they also search for ‘equal respect’ that implicates otherness. For example free education to everyone underlines ‘equal dignity’, while the free teaching of spiritual practices underlines ‘equal respect’. In this regard Chavez supported the establishment of indigenous universities that teach ancient customs alongside modern law and technology (Daniels, 2011).

The third principle of Prout is, “There should be maximum utilization of physical, metaphysical and spiritual potentialities of units and collective bodies of human society’ (Sarkar, 1959). This principle emphasizes the importance of the wellbeing and uniqueness of individuals, communities, cultural and collective groups and societies (Maheshvarananda, 2012). Bauman explains (2011:21), ‘we cannot effectively defend our freedoms here at home while fencing ourselves off from the rest of the world and attending solely to our own affairs.’ So, there is a dynamic interplay between individual human beings and the ‘collective body’ on different scale-levels, which means that solidarity is very important for our collective. In addition this principle also emphasizes the importance of uniqueness of individuals and groups. Dada Maheshvarananda (2012) explains, “The society needs to respect human diversity and to allow people the freedom to think for themselves, to express their creativity, and to form different relationships.”

The aim of this principle is to seek a balance between collective solidarity and individual potentiality, which is inline with Modood’s consideration of how a multicultural society has to be governed. According to Modood (2013), it is important that everybody will be presented in a multicultural society, for this he suggests that the nation-state has to emphasize ‘equal dignity’ by referring to one common goal, which is citizenship, while simultaneously pluriformity or ‘equal respect’ is respected. In addition, the government has to guarantee the individual conditions of empowerment and participation. Modood (2013) argues, ‘unconditional and full citizenship are important for ethnic minorities including the right to express their socio-cultural identity and group identity in the public sphere. These include groups based on gender, communities, race, religion, ethnicity, etc.’ So the principle underlies the importance of diversity in groups and communities, which allows people to have more control in the political sense as well in their own environment and daily live.

For this concern, Chàvez gave power to the grassroots-level to communal councils that also empowered woman (Harnecker, 2010, Fernandes, 2007). Dada Mahesvarananda says, “Women were very much empowered both in the community councils as well in every part of the government.” One example of this is Mercedes who decided to participate in such a communal

council in the area where she lives saying, 'I became member of the communal council because the river repeatedly flooded due to a hole in the dike. Together with Vice President Elias Jaua we were able to achieve a lot for our neighborhood. Another project of the communal council is a construction project to build 14 new houses and repair 15 damaged houses. Now we are waiting for the answer of the government – it will probably give the funds for this'. These community councils are an interesting contribution to Modood's (2013) idea of citizenship wherein everybody in society could be presented and could gain their own knowledge.

The fourth principle of Prout states, 'There should be a proper adjustment amongst these physical, metaphysical, mundane, supramundane and spiritual utilizations' (Sarkar, 1959). This principle concerns the sustainability and durability of resources. 'Prout asserts that regional self-sufficiency is the most affective means to increase the living standard of all people. Hence Prout requires that the farmland of every region should first produce for its people, and only after that requirement is achieved should surplus production be exported' (Mahesvarananda, 2012). This principle is in line with the idea of transition, which suggests, 'The need to fit into the local environment or bioregion (Cato, 2009), as well as the importance of making use of local resources, including those of culture and history. This idea is reflected in the transition town movement which was first established in 2006 in England's region Totnes, and 'attempt to change it, by thinking transversally and embracing more eco-sustainable ways of living to reorient the objectives of material and immaterial production (Cato & Hillier, 2010).' Like Prout, transition towns also speak of sustainability and production of immateriality, which includes the mental and spiritual spheres.

Prout's fourth principle is reflected in the efforts Chávez made to focus on the local autonomy of communal councils. In addition, Venezuelan National Agrarian Reform and the goal of food sovereignty, bringing Cuban agronomists to Venezuela to educate local farmers is also in line with this principle.

The fifth principle of Prout says, 'The method of utilization should vary in accordance with changes in time, space and person, and the utilization should be of progressive nature' (Sarkar, 1959). The fifth principle emphasizes adaptation to change and movement. Sarkar (1979) has said: 'Everything on this earth is moving. Movement is its nature, it is a sign of advancement. There is no way, no scope, for anyone to stop. It cannot happen. A dead body also cannot stop, because it is on this earth. The earth revolves, it moves continuously. Whatever has been created in this universe... is moving.' Or how Ingold (2011:4) puts it, 'Life... is a movement of opening, not of closure'.

For this, Dada Maheshvarananda (2012) explains: "Prout is not a rigid mold to be imposed on

people or a society- Rather it comprises a holistic set by dynamic principles that can be applied appropriately by the people and by their leaders to help the country prosper and so that all the people achieve a higher quality of life.” Therefore Prout is a theory, which takes into account that everything constantly moves and in order to stay progressive it has to be open-ended. Or how Tsing (2000: 90) puts it: ‘If we want to imagine emergent forms of resistance, new possibilities and the messiness through which best laid plans may not destroy all hope, we need to attune ourselves to heterogeneity and open-endedness of the world.’

Although the Venezuelan government shares a lot with Prout there are also some differences based on this principle. Dada Maheshvarananda says: ‘Both Chàvez and Maduro have a tendency to copy the communist model. The communist model is a failure in Cuba, because even though they have very good education and health care, there is a lot of alienation.’ According to Prout, communism, as well as capitalism is based on materialism. Dada Atmapranananda explains, ‘Communists say that the matter is higher than the mind, because the mind came from the material, it focus only on material growth and not on the mental or spiritual growth. So human society will not be able to grow spiritually and mentally.’ In communist regimes, people were seen more as material beings, instead of beings that could feel, hope and express their emotions.

For this Bauman (2011: 27-28) calls this communism, a bona fide ‘solid modern’ phenomenon and explains, “Communism was bound to find itself an antiquated curiosity, a relic of bygone times, with nothing to offer to the generations born and groomed inside the new era and no sensible reply to their profoundly altered ambitions, expectations and concerns.’ In short, because of its materialistic view communism had no scope to future movement and was too rigid to change. Therefore, according to Prout, the task for Maduro is to foresee future changes and move along future transitions. Maybe the ‘21st century socialism’ could contribute to this.

1.6 Socialism “for” the 21st Century, Progressive socialism?

‘President Chàvez called for socialism for the twenty first century, but he admitted that he didn’t know what that was; he wanted it to be constructed by the people. I heard socialist thinker Michael Lebowitz said that the Cubans were arguing about one little word in the sentence, ‘socialism “of” the twenty first century’ and Chàvez said, ‘no socialism “for” the twenty first century’, because its going to be different than the socialism in the last century, so not “of” but “for”.’

Dada Maheshvarananda is telling that Chàvez’s socialism has to be a new form, different than the socialism that our world already has experienced. According to Tsing (2005: 214) the success of

mobilization depends on the model wherein people could imagine themselves. So, to possibly set a nonexistent national scale-making project in motion, a model is required that applies to everyone in that nation. Therefore it is important for the Venezuelans to have a clear model in order to mobilize the social revolution. Dada Maheshvarananda says, 'I believe that Prout with the progressive utilization theory, what Sarkar called "progressive socialism" is the kind of socialism this country needs... I think it is a more advanced model with a much clearer vision that can be applied.' Didi Ananda Sadhana shares the same idea and tells, 'Prout is more advanced because it has humanism and spirituality and the knowledge to create a new society and I hope we are in the position to offer more to the people of Venezuela especially when it can enrich the process.'

Chàvez opened the door for a new 'socialism for the 21st century'. But the Venezuelan government has to change their scope a bit, because according to Harnecker (2010) this socialism 'cannot... come into being because a government or an enlightened vanguard says so; it cannot be decreed from above; it is a process that is built with the people.' Therefore the government needs to create an open space for more people instead of only opening their doors for the poor. Harnecker (2010) continues, 'we need a left that realizes that being radical does not consist of raising the most militant slogan or carrying out the most extreme actions - with which only a few agree, and which scare off the majority - but rather in being capable of creating spaces for the broadest possible sectors to meet and join forces in struggle.' Dada Maheshvarananda says, "For this reason a lot of people disagree with Chàvez, because of his 'habit of insulting the opposition, calling them 'squalids'." Dada Atmapranananda agrees, but 'Now Maduro is imitating Chàvez by using violent rhetoric.' Maduro started to use the same strategy as Chàvez. Juleidy explains, 'The president is very abusive, but if we want peace, will this then be the right way to achieve this? If the Venezuelan government wants to reach more people, Maduro has to become less abusive. Didi Ananda Sadhana explains, 'Maduro has to know that all the people have to be included to make this process successful. And who are these people? These people are the middle class; you can not kick them and say that they are the problem.'

According to Centro Madre, socialism for the 21st century has to include more people than Chàvez's and Maduro's rhetoric till now has reached. They are in the right direction, but an opening of scope is needed in order to reach all people who are ready for a revolution in the direction of a progressive socialism. This opening of scope applies not only to Venezuela, but is directed to the whole world. As Bauman (2011:2 5) argues: 'modernity needs to perform one more task, one that is yet more formidable: to raise human integration to the level of humanity, inclusive to the whole population of the planet. The 'social state' is no longer viable; only a 'social

planet' can take over the functions...' According to Ananda Margiis, Prout will be an important model to achieve the global scale-making project of a 'social planet'. How this global scale-making project could be reached will be explained in the next chapter based on Prout.

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY: A GLOBAL SCALE MAKING PROJECT

This earth of ours is passing through a critical juncture. The solution is of immediate necessity. It brooks no delay. That is why our Prout is to be propagated throughout this universe, especially on this planet of ours.

-P.R. Sarkar

Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar insisted on the urgency of a global revolution. The Prout model is a systematic model that promotes 'Economic Democracy' and can be used as alternative for contemporary global capitalism. This model seeks to balance global homogeneity with local cultural diversity or how Dada Mahesvarananda firmly expressed, 'Localize economy and globalize humanity'! The next chapter is an outline of the Progression Utilization Theory and will address the importance of 'Grassroots-globalization' as well the importance of a global revolution to implement 'Global Economic Democracy'. How does Centro Madre imagine globalization? What are Centro Madre's prospects to propagate Prout? Why is there, according to Centro Madre, such urgency for 'grassroots-globalization' and 'Economic Democracy'? What is Centro Madre's view on a Global Revolution?

Or to put it in one question:

How does Centro Madre imagine the global scale-making project 'Economic Democracy' in order to create 'equilibrium in every facet of life'?

Economic Democracy: A global scale-making project

In a red old-timer jeep that Centro Madre was given by a volunteer who lives in Caracas, Didi Ananda Sadhana and I are driving to the one-kilometer nearby *barrio* Madre Vieja. The jeep is loaded with bananas, guava, papaya and lemons that Didi Ananda Sadhana sells for the minimum amount to Madre Vieja's residents. Afro-Venezuelans were sitting on the veranda of their small houses painted in beautiful bright colors waving at Didi Ananda Sadhana. Children between 4 and 10 years old, dressed in ragged clothes walk by, with a big smile on their faces saying, 'Hola Didi! Cómo estás!' When we pass a wall somewhere in the center of the *barrio* Didi Ananda Sadhana shows me a mural painted on the wall. 'This was a project we started, with the children of this village', Didi Ananda Sadhana tells. It is a beautiful painting that pictures the small world those children daily observe in the *barrio*. Didi Ananda Sadhana says, 'I am happy to be here. I mean if we are going to do something good, I am very happy to know if it reaches people who have been excluded for a very long time. Which are the Afro-Venezuelans in this country'

A history of slavery and social exclusion is still perceptible in Barlovento the regional area of Centro Madre. The region is largely populated by Afro-Venezuelans who are the descendants of slaves and most of them live in poor small houses in the *barrios*. And although the Venezuelan government did much to prevent racism in the public domain, the ingrained endo-racism (internal racism) in Venezuela is still notable. Didi Ananda Sadhana tells, 'Racism is very present here. It affects the people, it affects their self-esteem, but real racism is not so much at the base. You see a lot of mixed people, mixed marriages from different colors. In the *barrios* it is very mixed. But where I see racism very obvious is on television. I see it on the billboards. That's why I know racism is very alive. And I think that it comes from the top. From the middle class and the higher class. They are the ones who make these programs.'

Racism is clearly visible in the Venezuelan media (Herrera Salas, 2005). While 'the old slaves and free blacks of the colony continue to belong predominantly to the popular, oppressed sectors, holding less qualified, lower-paid jobs that require greater physical strength and sharing a social environment of scarce benefits' (Montañez 1993:51; Herrera Salas, 2005; Wright, 1990; López Sanz, 1993). Although it has still not been recognized largely, colonialism has left a legacy of inequality and social exclusion of the dark-skinned world population (Bauman, 2011). Or how Dada Maheshvarananda expresses our world's 'underclass' is excluded by the current global

economy, 'If you have compassion and love for all people, how can you stand and see people die of hunger and malnutrition, suffering in poverty and without a house? Unfortunately to feed the hungry and to eliminate poverty are not the priority of the global economy.' It hurts him that the first priority of the political agenda is war, instead of allowing the underclass to eat.

Bauman (2011:3) also writes about the exploitation of the underclass by calling it a political failure: 'The only meaning carried by the term 'underclass' is that *falling outside* any meaningful, that is function and position oriented, classification. The 'underclass' is maybe 'in', but it is clearly not 'of' society; it does not contribute anything that society needs for its survival and well-being in fact the world, society would do better without it.' According to Bauman (2011:49) 80 percent of the poorest people around the world are excluded from a decent life and are mostly dark-skinned. One reason for this social inequality has to do with the lack of the nation-state controlled politics. Bauman (2011: 50) writes: 'Capital, free-floating in the 'politics free' global 'space of flows', is keen to search for areas of the globe with low living standards and which are amenable to the 'virgin land' treatment – cashing in on the (temporary self-destructive) profit-generating differential between the lands with low wages and without institutions of self-defense and state protection of the poor, and the long exploited lands afflicted by the impact of the 'law of diminishing returns'. In short global capitalism, was not only able to reach the global level due the lack of national restrictions, it also re-exploits the poor areas allowing inequality to grow.

To minimize this worldly inequality Didi Ananda Sadhana argues, 'There should be no superpowers interfering in our daily lives, otherwise there will always be this tendency of some group to exploit others.' By superpowers she means speculative and exploitive global capitalist corporations and investors. In other words, when the 'law of diminishing returns' operates on a 'virgin land', these superpowers devastate it by 'spectacular accumulation'. According to Tsing (2005: 75) this is due, 'Speculative accumulation occurs when investors speculate on a product that may or may not exist.' And to regenerate speculative accumulation she (ibid: 76) argues, 'capitalist forms and processes are continually made and unmade; if we offer singular prediction we allow ourselves to be caught by them as ideologies.' To follow Tsing's argument Speculative accumulation is not only controlled by what Didi Ananda Sadhana calls superpowers, they also produce pseudo-ideologies that make people believe that there is a need for it. Or how Didi Ananda Sadhana explains, 'Capitalists are so smart they can fool you with anything. They are like parasites because they suck the blood of their hosts; when the hosts die, they move on to other hosts. They are so destructive, they don't care about the people or nature or the planet – they have no sense of humanity.' Capitalism therefore is able to keep operating in a destructive manner; but however much Mother Earth provides, everything is limited. Consumption levels are

rising so much that we currently require five planets of natural resources (Bauman, 2011) Globalization from this perspective seems more a global catastrophe at the end of humanity's history, than an era at the beginning of a new world order.

So it is clear that the global economy of 'spectacular accumulation' must change. According to Dada Maheshvarananda therefore, the first priority for our world is to end stock markets, the speculative economy and encourage cooperatives, because, he says, 'The financial markets are not conducive.' To change this hegemony of spectacular accumulation Dada Maheshvarananda explains, 'We need cooperative banks, local banks and a national bank in each country that can lend money to the people, businesses and cooperatives in that country, locally. The 'Economic Democracy' of Prout has different ways to organize enterprises depending on its scale. On the small scale, private ownership is very appropriate. When enterprises get bigger they should become cooperatively owned, so that everybody benefits. Finally, when you get large key strategic industries and services, they should be owned by the state and run by an autonomous body for the benefit of the entire economy.' Eugenio, who comes from Mexico and lives with Crisal, his Venezuelan wife and their son Mario at the Prout Institute, says, 'Globalization doesn't necessarily have to be a bad world. If you combine it with 'Economic Democracy', then it can be worked out on every level.'

According to Prout principles it is not globalization, which is bad, but the way that the world is organized in a capitalistic society. Dada Maheshvarananda explains, 'Prout believes in a mixed economy and not a centralized economy – both communist countries and capitalist countries tend to have a very centralized economies; the latter not by planning, but because of the nature of capitalism, which involves that the biggest companies become monopolies. They fix the prices and control the entire economy. Prout instead encourages 'Economic Democracy' and local economies, so that every community can have full employment and provide the basic needs of their people.' Dada Atmapranananda adds to it, 'Globalization will be the next phase of human civilization in order to progress and evolve. There is no other way forward, because if we go back, it means to nationalism.' From a Proutist perspective globalization is a natural process of evolution of human beings that should be dissociated from capitalism and therefore global capitalism is certainly not the only futuristic outcome. And Didi Ananda Sadhana tells, 'The good side of globalization is, "think globally and act locally", meaning we are one family living on one planet. We need to unite in that sense and act locally to meet our local needs on a local level.' In the next section I will lay out Prout's proposal for a local economy.

1.7 Localize economy

‘Prout is the organization or the department of Ananda Marga that propagates *Samaja*. *Samaja* is a group or community living together with the same language, culture traditions of culture, the same economic problems and the same sentimental backgrounds. And in a *Samaja* there should be the basic requirements. They should have their own common language, common economic problems, common or identical culture or traditions and other thing to make them unite as one. So we can consider Barlovento as one *Samaja* because they have one legacy. Almost 80 percent is Afro-Venezuelan and they have one sentiment. And they also produce the same crops like cacao, and plantain. That makes them also united in that sense. Centro Madre therefore is also trying to emphasize on their identity as Afro-descendants.’

With *Samaja* Dada Atmapranananda refers to the self-sufficient socio-economic zones that Prout propagates. Dada Mahesvarananda explains, ‘There is a normal sentiment of pride in the local culture and language of the people. Every people need that pride. Superiority complex is a problem, and inferiority complex is also a problem. So we should encourage every society to protect their culture and language.’ In this regard Wimmer (2002) speaks of ‘cultural compromise’ based on moral categories and social classification that people use to accept others, which is important because it is connected to a process of ‘social closure’. But while Wimmer (ibid.) emphasizes on ‘social closure’ as ‘excluding those who are not felt to belong’, *Samaja* emphasizes on including everyone who wants to live there and ‘merge their socio-economic interests’ in the place, while excluding economic dangers and exploitation, with no outside ownership of businesses or land or buildings by corporations or investors, and no capital flight. Social closure in this regard underlines, by following Kymlicka (1995), the protection of the identity as well by means of ‘internal restriction’ as ‘external protection’. One example of a potential cultural compromise of a socio-economic zone or *Samaja* is Barlovento, which Centro Madre also tries to emphasize on by supporting the feeling of a united sentiment. Creating a *Samaja* in this sense is a regional scale-making project of Centro Madre.

According to Prout the entire world can be recognized into socio-economic zones or units, which ‘would not merely be geographical areas but also socio-economic areas (Sarkar, 1989).’ The basic consideration of a socio-economic unit ‘is social, cultural and economic and not religious or linguistic.’ And should be built up from the grassroots-level in order to adjust to the local costumes, cultures, ethnicities, needs, resources, geography, environment and other aspects that differentiate localities.’

To implement socio-economic units on the local level, Sarkar promoted Master Units, which is based on variable functions including the five minimum requirements of Prout: producing food, clothing, housing, education and medical care' (Diver 1999). He explains, 'As there are different nerve centers in the body which control the function of the different limbs and organs, and which are finally controlled by the mind itself, likewise the Master Units will be treated as the nerve centers of the society.' The Master Unit has to grow from the grassroots level and should be made with the creativity of the local people and their customs. It has to establish more like Ingold (2011:6) says, 'Growing into the world, the world grows in them', that allow the Master Unit's roots to grow deep into the ground.

Eco-villages are good examples of comprehensive Master Units, since intensive farming (or at least a kitchen garden) takes a central role (Maheshvarananda, 2012: 137). Dada Maheshvarananda says: 'The Master Unit that Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar conceived of was a very holistic integrated project with so many components. Centro Madre is an excellent example of many of them. Their sustainable agriculture includes about ten different components. With only 3.5 hectares of land, they have fishponds, beekeeping, chickens, medicinal plants, a nursery, seed bank, vegetable gardens, fruit trees, production of dried fruits, etc. Another aspect is Neo-humanism, trying to teach everyone that we are one human family with the animals and plants that are part of our family. We have to take care of planet earth. So an ecological consciousness, an ecological awareness is being promoted there in all the theater pieces that they do and all their work in the schools.' Like Dada Maheshvarananda Mruitanjaya also considers Centro Madre as a Master Unit and is keen to learn from the project saying, 'The time you spend here you do many things, improving different methods, learning and inventing. That is all Prout. Working for the world and not only for one's personal growth, but also for the environment, taking care of the environment, using products that don't damage the environment, using natural ways to get healthy. It is all Prout.'

The idea of the Master Unit slowly spreads to local people in the area. Dada Atmapranananda explains, 'While the Master Unit should be established on a local scale, the intention is to reach the regional scale by establishing a *Samaja*.' According to Didi Ananda Sadhana, 'Master Units are the seeds of the *Samaja* movements.' These *Samaja* movement also has an economic importance that Dada Maheshvarananda explains, 'Micheal Towsey, a Proutist writer from Australia, suggests that the best way to think of an economy is like a biological cell which has a membrane that allows food to come in and the waste to go out; the membrane of the cell and the skin of any creature protects the internal temperature and metabolism of the being, its equilibrium. Sarkar proposed that economies should also allow for some imports and exports, but they have to

protect the local manufacturing and agriculture of the economy.’

These socio-economic units are in line with Modood's (2013) idea about a multicultural society where everyone has the right to pursue their own cultural preferences (see chapter 3). But while Modood puts more emphasis on nation-states, Prout emphasizes the economic function of these units. Socio-economic units therefore also contribute to ‘equal dignity’, the feeling of sameness and togetherness and ‘equal respect’ the uniqueness of a people’s identity and culture. Emphasizing on human uniqueness and culture is according to Prout important for humanity to survive. Metaphorically speaking Didi Ananda Sadhana explains this, ‘When you plant with a lot of diversity, you get less disease, because the different plants can protect themselves better. On a human level also, variety and diversity strengthen us.’ The philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1957) explained this as follows, ‘It is difference that founds being’. And, ‘In nature, roots are taproots with a more multiple, lateral, and circular system of ramification, rather than a dichotomous one.’ Therefore Tsing (2000) writes, ‘The cultural divergence we find must be part of the globalist phenomenon. Outside the thrall of globalization, a more nuanced and surprising appreciation of the making and remaking of geography might yet be possible.’ So, by focusing on the local level, these global prospects will have a more nuanced view on the creativity of local diversity instead of one hegemonic global outcome.

It is the aim of Centro Madre to make the Barlovento region self-sustaining in education, food, medical care, housing and clothing, which is their regional scale-making project of a *Samaja*. In short, according to Prout, the economy not only has to be democratized and localized, the economic boundaries of the nation-states also have to downgrade to local scales. Because one of Prout's main global scale-making projects is to implement local projects or to put it in one word ‘grassroots-globalization’. This underlines what Tsing says, ‘we might stop making a distinction between "global" forces and "local" places.’ Because in order to create a global world wherein every human being will get a deserving life, we need to take care for every local environment.’

To localize economy is one part of Prout, the other part is to globalize humanity. Therefore Prout not only considers local change, but also a global revolution. For this ‘Prout can be called a revolutionary mystic socialism’ (Crovetta, 2008) that according to Sarkar is required to overthrow the global capitalistic system. Because of this revolutionary thought Ananda Marga had to deal with a lot of struggles concerning Prout, which I will outline in the next paragraph.

1.8 Globalize humanity

‘Sarkar was arrested on 29 December 1971 along with several disciples and accused of abetting the murder of half a dozen ex-disciples. It was alleged that Sarkar was poisoned in 1973 while in government custody at the Bankipur Central Jail. The government then tried unsuccessfully to prevent Ananda Margis from holding government jobs. On 26 June 1975 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared another emergency and instituted martial law, banning Ananda Marga along with other organizations. In 1976 Sarkar was convicted’ (Crovetta, 2008).

Dada Atmapranananda tells, ‘The reason why they had put Baba in jail and the reason why they harassed Ananda Marga is because he was a threat to the established power. Indira Gandhi was the prime minister.’ Didi Ananda Sadhana continues, ‘She saw Baba as such a big threat that she even made efforts to kill him in prison. There were quite a few times that Baba had visits from the CBI [Central Bureau of Intelligence], the secret police of India. They watched him to see what he was doing. Once they said to him, ‘You can be a guru, but you have to remove Prout from your agenda; if you remove Prout then you are free to go.’ By imitating Sarkar with a high slow strong voice and Indian accent Dada Atmapranananda says, ‘Even if this planet is going to collapse, I will still stay in this jail because of Prout.’ Dada Atmapranananda continues with his own voice, ‘It is still a materialistic stage of human society. So there should be a strong humanistic philosophy and that is Prout. Sarkar came to this world to implement Prout.’

According to Prout, humanity has reached the time for a global revolution. Bauman (1994) also speaks about an upcoming revolution, ‘The revolutionary process has started, but its destination and the direction it will take are uncertain.’ What this revolution is ought to be, and how it will be established is unknown, but the idea and the necessity of a possible global revolution becomes more and more accepted (Shaw 2001, Coleman 2009, Webb 2006, Bauman 2011). According to Deleuze the aim of a philosopher is to ‘find the conditions under which something new is produced’ (Deleuze and Parnet 1987, p. vii). To follow this I will explain the global revolution that possibly will lead to a new global society by referring to Prout philosophy.

Prout underlines the model of social dynamics and historical analyses called the social cycle, ‘Social cycle progresses in a natural sequence of historical eras (linked to human characteristics). In the first stage started the *Shudra* era, which is a laborer society. This society progressed into a *Ksattriya* era build upon warriors, followed by *Vipra* the intellectual’s and then *Vaeshya*, which are the merchant. Subsequently, a new cycle begins (Maheshvarananda, 2012). The achievement of this new cycle will be reached by a revolution.

Sarkar (1958) explained this progress by reference to thesis, antithesis and synthesis from a

universal perspective. This universal perspective is in line with Edgar and Sedgwick (2007) reconsideration on the work of Kant, Fichte and Hegel. As they wrote ‘Hegel’s dialectic is not simply a structure of argument, but is the very structure of the cosmos, manifest from the grandest levels (the development of human history, or the movement of a planets) to the humblest (the growth of a plant).’ Sarkar wrote ‘Social advancement is the triadic blending of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. When a particular theory or thesis loses its competence and power to effect the collective welfare, an antithesis is created against the prevalent theory. As a result of clash and cohesion between these two opposing forces a resultant is created, and this resultant is called synthesis.

This progress could also be explained on the base of the previously mentioned *Rajah*, *Tamah* and *Sattva*. As already mentioned the dynamic triangle; *Sattva* (the spiritual sphere) converts into *Rajah* (the mental sphere) that converts into *Tamah* (the physical sphere), and again in *Sattva* which goes on and on until the static force will take it over and starts to dominate. This process also applies to the Enlightenment. When the French Revolution burst out, Didi Ananda Sadhana explains, ‘The *Vipra* age had begun and the intellectuals gained power.’ During the French Revolution *Sattva* or the sentient force dominated, which also was the synthesis on previous thesis. In the Prout philosophy the *Vipra*’s (intellectuals) started to control and dominate during that age. The intellectual created a mental sphere (when *Sattva* converted into *Rajah*), in which they demanded for political freedom. Friction occurred between Communism (thesis) and Capitalism (antithesis). In Bauman’s (2011) words, there was a shift ‘from the agora to the marketplace’, causing a Cold War between Capitalism and Communism. With its claim for economic and political freedom capitalism was more flexible, or Bauman would say; capitalism was ‘liquid’ and communism was ‘solid’. In a world always in motion ‘liquid’, wins from ‘solid’, and the death of communism became real. A new revolution (or synthesis) burst out of the Berlin wall (ibid.). Or in other words the Veasyon age dawned and from this time people started to admire the physical and material world. Solidarity changed in commercialized morality (Bauman, 2011) and scientifically knowledge about the physical or material sphere became most important. How Bauman (2011:81) puts it, ‘Once it is set and kept in motion by moral energy, the consumerist economy has only the sky as its limit.’ But this consumerism also has caused an antithesis that started to develop. Sarkar explained, ‘If the oppressed are an intellectual group, then no matter how few their numbers, they can put up an antithesis. As soon as the antithesis is created the former ideology ceases to be a synthesis. It becomes the thesis in the next phase. So, in the second phase, an antithesis will again emerge against that very thesis. In this phase, as long as a synthesis does not emerge, unabated struggle will continue.’

According to Webb (2006), 'Much would hinge on the changing patterns of cross-regional intellectual networks, the exhaustion of more insular movements as they fail to make headway politically, and the like. To have revolutionary prospects on a global scale, however, such leadership would need plenty of cosmopolitan imagination.' Sarkar also talked about a spiritual counter-elite called Sadvipra's, which means those with subtle mind. 'They are leaders devoted to the welfare of society. By personal example they can inspire and guide society forward in a holistic and progressive way' (Maheshvarananda, 2012). According to Sarkar, Sadvipra's are also the ones who will lead the revolution to a new cycle. Mruitanjaya explains, 'They are spiritual leaders that will lead people to adjust to the new cycle. The mission is that every mind comes step by step to the highest level of spiritual progress.'

According to Prout the entire world suffers from disrupted equipoise and equilibrium, first through communism and now through capitalism, causing a lack of spiritual, and mental improvement, that leads to a moral deficiency, dogma's and a lack of true knowledge. While the physical sphere is overemphasized, causing a lot of harm to the animate and inanimate world. Communism already collapsed, and now Capitalism probably has to follow, (Webb 2006, Bauman 2011) and according to Prout organized dogmatic religion too. Or how Molly Scott-Cato & Jean Hillier (2010) put it 'Some systems, pushed to their limits, will collapse and die. Others will be more resilient, learn from the event and, perhaps, creatively adapt to changed conditions.' Like friction in the solid factor of a seed that causes a germ to burst out of its shield (see chapter 1.2), this could also explain a possible global revolution. When the *Tamah* force dominates, Dada Atmapranananda explains, 'You have two forces operating intern the solid factor: a centripetal force that goes inside or the centrifugal that goes outside.' According, to Sarkar the centrifugal force is dominated by the static force (Tamah) and the centripetal by the sentient force (Sattva). These centrifugal and centripetal forces can also be applied to a revolution.

By referring to past revolutions in China and French Samuel Huntington (1968) argues; Western revolutions flow from the center outward, while Eastern revolutions from the periphery inward (Huntington, 1968). In this explanation Western Revolution is more considered with the centrifugal force, while Eastern Revolution is more considered with the centripetal force. Dada Atmapranananda explains, 'If the influence of the centrifugal force is stronger it wants to go out causing the solid factor to explode and burst out, But, if the centripetal force is stronger, meaning the force is going inside, the solid factor will pressure so much that it goes to the nucleus, and then a mind will be born.'

Consider these two forces there are two scenarios for global revolution: The first one is; if materialism or global capitalism remains stronger, it will lead to a global collapse, but if the

centripetal force will be stronger, through the pressure of the solid force a mind or a higher consciousness will occur. 'But' Dada Atmapranananda explains, 'that mind is without a body, it had to find a way to express itself.' Webb (2006) puts it as follows: 'Structural pressures usually catalyze revolutions, but revolutions take shape because they offer an ideological and cultural breach with the old regime. They also matter to posterity most because of the new vision they offer and the new political culture they forge.' According to Prout the pressure of the materialistic world will cause a 'self-awakening' of an agency that will look around to find a political body to express itself. This 'self-awakening', according to Bauman (2011:81), 'is not an easy task, to be sure: it will take nothing less than the universe of moral obligations to embrace the whole of humanity, complete with its dignity and well-being, as well as the survival of the planet, it shared home.'

Prout's global scale-making project that is directed to the local scale as well to the global scale is in line with Webb's (2006) prospects of global politics and says: 'The focus of political life would shift in two directions over the long term, therefore: downward to local and provincial levels as well as upward to a new universal state.' This new universal state is imagined by Centro Madre as a world government. Dada Atmapranananda says, 'If we start this world government the first projection should that we are creating a global family. It should be representing all the countries and you will see other country's immediately evolve psychologically, consciously and morally.' Which according to Bauman (2011:26), 'is very important now in order to reach 'human as a whole' as its object.' The decline of nation-state boundaries therefore has to accelerate with a different approach than the global capitalistic society of today (Bauman, 2011; Webb, 2006).

The loss of nation-state boundaries will in some degree reduce social inequality. Dada Maheshvarananda tells a story about when he came to the Netherlands and was visiting the jail in Den Bosch, 'There were 30 men in this part of the jail that I was visiting, and the crime of 29 of those men was that they were born in a different country, meaning they didn't have a visum. I have USA passport I don't need a visum and I don't even have money I can go there literally with no money in my pocket and I can basically stay as long as I like and all those 29 of 30 men were in prison because they were born in the wrong country. That is not justice! We need a better world where everybody has a job and everybody makes enough income, but how can we do that? Prout has a systematic way to implement grassroots economic planning, to make economic democratic jobs, for all minimum necessities, for all of them a high quality of life, but with less impact on the environment.'

In short, Prout is a model that has a systematic way to reduce inequality, social exclusion and environmental exploitation. The model is not only suitable as an alternative to destructive global

capitalism of today; it also seeks to balance global homogeneity with local cultural differences. The Prout model propagates a suitable way to implement global 'Economic Democracy' as alternative of contemporary Global Capitalism.

But, according to Prout there is something more that has to be applied, Didi Ananda Sadhana says, 'The next direction of the human society is universalism not only mentally but also physically and spiritually.' Didi Ananda Sadhana refers to Neo-humanism that Sarkar described as the sentiment, which fully unites spiritual with social idealism. While humanism is broader than geo-centric, cultural or socio-centric sentiments or ideologies, Neo-humanism is the state in which 'the underlying spirit of humanism is extended to everything, animate or inanimate, in this universe'. Neo-humanism will 'elevate humanism to universalism, the cult of love for all created beings of this universe'. Thus Neo-humanism could also be termed spiritual or universal humanism, a concept, which Prout's 'Progressive Socialism', 'Economic Democracy', '*Samaja*', 'Master Units' and 'Self-realization' all are based on. Furthermore, 'Economic life, political life and social life are', according to Sarkar, 'not everything for living beings and human beings. They have also got a mental world and a spiritual world. For development and progress in the mental and spiritual worlds, our Neo-humanistic ideology is to be propagated everywhere. Spiritual life controls all other arenas of human life.'

CONCLUSION: NEO-HUMANISM

Human movement is movement towards ecological equipoise – towards the supreme synthesis. In the inner world, balance must be maintained as this leads to spiritual progress. Ecological order is not only for the earth, but for the entire universe, and it must be maintained both within and without. The angular displacement of any celestial body may affect the human mind as well as the physical universe, so balance must be maintained between the internal and external spheres. In all aspects of human life this subtle balance must be maintained. This is ecological balance.

-Sarkar

Conclusion: Neo-humanism



“ The triangle that points downwards, turns one inwards, inspires one to do meditation and connect one with ones higher self. The triangle that goes upwards emanates an energy that inspires one to go out and do service and do something for society. When these two triangles merge into one and there is a balanced energy of that what I dedicate outwards and inwards then I have the six-point star. When I have the six-point star, this means that I work in a society and that I work on my spiritual growth. Which in turn means that I make progress on a spiritual path and I am growing spiritually. The progress is the rising sun. When we meet our goal, we find our reunion between my individual mind and the cosmic mind. This is also known as spiritual victory, which implies the strength of the swastika. The swastika means spiritual victory. It is an ancient symbol that has been used throughout the history in many different cultures, the Chinese the Japanese the indigenous people of the United States, the Aztec you will see they are similar in many places”.

By reference to the *Praktik* (symbol of Ananda Marga), Didi Ananda Sadhana symbolizes how balance can be created between the inner and outer world. Pursuing this balance is called ‘self-realization’ and in present thesis this has been considered as an ‘individual scale-making project’. According to Centro Madre the individual scale-making project ‘self-realization’ can be realized through the spiritual practice of Tantra Yoga. Tantra Yoga is considered by Centro Madre as the oldest form of a systematic spiritual philosophy and practice that includes ‘a style of life’ to bring human beings closer to God or to the ‘Supreme Consciousness’. When people during meditation reach the state of awareness, close to the ‘Supreme Consciousness’, they experience a great feeling of infinite happiness. Tools to become spiritual awakened are *asanas* (Yoga postures), *Kiirtan* (Dancing and singing on the Mantra Baba Nam Kevalam) and meditation. While *asanas* are more related to find a balance between the physical and mental body, meditation is more directed to the feeling of true infinite happiness that can be reached through the recitation of a Mantra. According to Centro Madre spirituality gives reason for existence and life that underlies *Dharma*.

God is in this sense, according to Centro madre, the ‘Generator, Operator and Destroyer’ and in this concern human beings are more progressed than for instance animals. Searching for reason of existence and spirituality makes, according to Centro Madre’s view, people to become divine and more attached to the ‘Supreme Consciousness’. In other words human beings progress to become spiritually awakened enabling them to reach ‘self-realization’.

Juleidy and Mruitanjaya are both examples that use their imagination to transcendence boundaries of their local habitat to seek reason for existence. In this fast fluid modernity and dislocated cultural space of plurality, this form of transcending boundaries are more common than ever.

Another way to give reason for existence envisioned by Centro Madre is based on the three essential forces *Rajah*, *Tamah* and *Sattva*. These three essential dynamic forces are related to imagination, movement and reality as well to medium, substance and surface, which is a way of explaining creation.

This form of creation is also related to the realization of the local scale-making project of a ‘Master-Unit’. The first seeds of this project were planted shortly after the natural calamity the ‘Tragedia de Vargas’. Through friction pathways were followed and the grassroots-movement started to grow on a piece of mother earth in Barlovento. The grassroots-‘movement’ had to go through many obstacles and many prospect were met before the grassroots-movement started to form in a model-eco farm. Eventually through the frictions that Centro Madre encountered between a national scale-making project and a continental scale-making project, from the Venezuelan and the Cuban government, the grassroots-movement was resulted in a Master-Unit. Now the Master-Unit is established, Centro Madre’s prospects are reaching the whole region of Barlovento. Which is not a too idealistic dream since they are supported by the National Government.

The example of the local-scale making project shows how a grassroots-movement is established from below and started to grow in a grassroots-movement that has connections with the National Government. Centro Madre and late Hugo Chávez shared common prospects about national scale-making projects because both directed to a progressive socialism. Centro Madre envisions ‘Progressive Socialism’ according to the principles of Prout. In line with these principles the Venezuelan government started; to nationalize raw materials, a mission to provide benefits for people with special needs, seek to balance national ‘equal dignity’ with local ‘equal respect’ in education, empowered organizations by offering communal councils at the grassroots-level and started the Venezuelan National Agrarian Reform with the goal of food sovereignty. One fundamental difference between the ‘Socialism for the 21st century’ of the Venezuelan

government and the 'Progressive Socialism' is according to the prospects of Centro Madre more open-ended to the world as a moving entity, when compared with the prospects of the government, which is more molded in a model of communism. In addition, it is very important for Centro Madre to direct the national government more to the middle and higher class in order to involve them more in political decisions.

According to Centro Madre, Prout needs to be propagated in the global world by the realization of the global scale-making project 'Economic Democracy'. In this regard Centro Madre's perspective on globalization is two-sided, which has a good side and a bad side. The bad side of current global Capitalism is the tremendous amount of inequality, the materialistic outlook, and the centralization of economy. The good side is; 'Think globally and act locally'. The first denotes on a global consciousness that stimulates a kind of global family feeling and belonging which is a way to 'globalize humanity'. The latter denotes on the importance of 'grassroots-globalization' as a manner to 'localize economy'. According to Centro Madre's view, Prout has to be propagated locally by means of socio-economic units or Master Units, and socio-economic zones or *Samaja*. Centro Madre envisions these *Samaja* to be self-sustaining in the five basic necessities education, food, medical care, housing and clothing and act as a kind of 'membrane' that protects the biological cell allowing food to come in and waste to go out.

According to Centro Madre, Prout also has to be propagated globally in means of a global revolution and by the establishment of a World Government with a cosmopolitan view and that less emphasizes on the nation-state. Logically this will be the result of (r)evolution based on thesis, antithesis and synthesis, as well as the three dynamic forces Rajah, Tamah and Sattva and the other two forces that are centripetal and centrifugal. According to Centro Madre all of them lie at the basis of all creation in this 'manifested Universe' and are important to manage the Universal scale-making project: Neo-humanism or love for all created beings in every facet of life. Love for the smallest electron of an atom and love for the biggest planet in the Universe, which is according to Centro Madre the reason why the individual scale-making project 'self-realization' has such urgency today to find a balance between the inner and the outer world and to find infinite happiness.

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Appendix

Informant								
Didi Sadhana	Ananda	Nederland	55	Centro Madre/ Prout	Directrice Madre	Centro	Uitgebreide spiritueel/nationaal/ centro madre, informele gesprekken, groepsgeprek	interview
Dada Atmapranananda		Filipijnen	50	Centro Madre/ Prout	Projectbegeleider Centro Madre		Uitgebreide spiritueel/nationaal/ centro madre, informele gesprekken, groepsgeprek	interview
Dada Maheshvarananda		Amerika	59	Prout	Directeur Prout		Uitgebreide spiritueel/ informele gesprekken, groepsgeprek, globalisering	interview nationaal,
Didi Amegha	Ananda	Duitsland	56	Universade/ Prout/Winkel	Directrice kinderdagverblijf en winkel eigenaar	Universade	Interview Nationaal, informele gesprekken, groepsgeprek	
Melqui		Venezuela	13	Centro Madre	Woont 5 dagen per week bij Didi en Dada in Centro Madre		Informele gesprekken	
Manatos'a (Mike)		Amerika	22	Prout	Vrijwilliger en student bij de Prout institute		Interview spiritueel en Prout informele gesprekken, groepsgeprek	
Kate		Australië	26	Prout	Journalist en vrijwilliger	Prout	Interview spiritueel en Prout, informele gesprekken, groepsgeprek	
Noris		Venezuela	30	Centro Madre	Medewerker Centro Madre, schoonmaken en eten koken		Interview, Centro Madre, nationaal, informele gesprekken	
Juleidy Flores		Venezuela	35	Centro Madre	Medewerker Centro Madre (bankzaken) Project staat op haar naam omdat ze een nationaal paspoort heeft		Interview Centro Madre nationaal	
Mrtuinjaya (Mario)		Venezuela	53	Prout/Centro Madre	Medewerker Centro Madre en Prout		Interview, Prout, spiritueel, Informele gesprekken, groepsgeprek	
Marko		Venezuela	-	Centro Madre	Werkt in loondienst op het land bij		Informele gesprekken	

				Centro Madre	
Pedro	Cuba	-	Centro Madre	Werkt op het land (in loondienst bij de regering Cuba)	Informeel gesprek
Alberto	Cuba	-	Centro Madre	Werkt op het land (in loondienst bij de regering Cuba)	Informeel gesprek
Raul	Cuba	-	Centro Madre	Werkt op het land (in loondienst bij de regering Cuba)	Informeel gesprek
Elio	Cuba	-	Centro Madre	Werkt op het land (in loondienst bij de regering Cuba)	Informeel gesprek
Mercedes en Jose	Venezuela	-	Centro Madre	Hulpbehoevenden: overstroming en gehandicapt kind/ werken ook regelmatig voor Centro Madre	Interview centro madre/ nationaal
Nora	Venezuela	-	Centro Madre	Hulpbehoevende: weduwe en twee gehandicapte kinderen	Interview centro madre/ nationaal
Lely	Venezuela	31	Centro Madre	Hulpbehoevende: Gehandicapt kind en moeder van melquis.	Informeel gesprek
Judy	Amerika	-	Centro Madre	Donateur/vrijwilliger	Informeel interview
Rosa	Venezuela	-	Centro Madre	voormalig projectleider van naaicursus	Informeel gesprek
Eugenio	Mexico	-	Prout	Vrijwilliger	Informeel gesprek, groepsgesprek
Kristol	Brazilië	-	Prout	Vrijwilliger	Informeel gesprek, groepsgesprek

