



*International Journal of Humanity Studies*  
<http://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/IJHS>  
Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

## **A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF COMPATIBILISM FROM THE INDIGENOUS NOTION OF *KAHIMTANG***

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**DOI:** 10.24071/ijhs.v5i1.3423

received 28 May 2021; accepted 23 September 2021

### **Abstract**

The Freedom-determinism debate is one of the important current discussions. Its scope covers philosophy to theology, psychology, and even the neurosciences and genetics. Though there are already attempts to reconcile the freedom-determinism perspective, a definite answer to it remains unclear. This research attempts to contribute an input offered by an indigenous understanding of the two perspectives. Using the hermeneutic phenomenology on the Visayan people in the Philippines, this paper attempts to contextualize and understand the debate from their perspective. As such freedom and determinism are put into the context of *Kahimtang*. The discussion is divided in two parts. The first part discusses three themes or nuances of *kahimtang*: 1) *kahimtang* as *hatag sa Ginoo* (God-given), 2) the notion of *kahimtang* as *latid sa kinabuhi* (path in life), and 3) the concept of *kahimtang* as *baruganan sa pagkatawo* (state of being-human). The second part discusses the determinism and freedom found in the themes of the previous part and argues on a framework of compatibilism in *kahimtang*. The study concludes that life for the Visayan is an interplay of freedom and determinism.

**Keywords:** Compatibilism, Freedom, Determinism, *Kahimtang*, Indigenous Philosophy

### **Introduction**

The paradox of freedom has been a perennial question in philosophy since ancient times (Mills, 2013). The question of freedom and its re-evaluation with its antithesis – determinism – affects various disciplines such as psychology and theology, and even in the neurosciences (Sartorio, 2015; Lavazza, 2016) and genetics (Willoughby, et.al. 2019). The debate is still in place (Austin, 2014) with different entry-points (Müller, & Placek, 2018). People claim to have freedom because they regard themselves as autonomous in performing their actions. The idea of free will has extended importance in morality and politics as well (Baumeister, 2014) since it is the nucleus of human agency, decision-making, and responsibility (List, 2014). Free will implies that human beings are pro-active agents capable of improvement (Feldman, 2018). Ordinary experience, however, informs that humans are always determined in their actions (Campbell, et.al., 2004), seemingly caught up in a vicious cycle. Negating determinism seems

difficult on the argument of human experience where one's choices, decisions, values, and judgments are influenced if not shaped and constrained by social exigencies. While some debates focus on the problem of structure in finding compatibilities (Pleasant, 2019), this paper looks at local and indigenous understanding of the tension between free will and determinism as it may shed light on this matter.

There were several attempts made to synthesize freedom and determinism, but the issue persists. Several articles tried to reconcile these two conflicting ideas. List (2014) claims that determinism and free will need not conflict and argues that there is a need to distinguish between physical and agential possibility. He suggests that to make the two ideas compatible, it is important to consider that free will is a higher-level phenomenon and not at the level of fundamental physics. Similarly, Mills (2013) argued on the compatibility of free will and determinism by stating that determinism (psychic determinism) is an expression of freedom, the freedom of *unconscious* expression. Furthermore, Jütten (2012) argues that freedom is always conditioned by our embodiment. Freedom is always affected by our situations and conditions. This idea is somewhat supported by Pauen (2008) who claims that if freedom is translated into "self-determination," then it is compatible with determinism. Freedom simply becomes self-determination by personal preferences. Though some claim that self-determination (authorship) calls for autonomy and the absence of pure chance (Rinofner-Kreidl, 2008), still freedom is freedom despite limits and these limits should not cancel out the whole thing.

From the discussions above, it is evident that the debate on free will and determinism can be entered through an attempt at reconciliation, that is, through compatibilism. Compatibilists take it that 'there is no conflict between determinism and free will' (Sarkissian, et. al., 2010). This paper joins this debate using the indigenous or Visayan concept of *kahimtang*, the generic term that means one's state of living. The Visayan, henceforth, is understood as the collective indigenous term to represent the participants of the study who reside in the Visayas, one of the three main group of islands in the Philippines. The research gap is that the Visayan idea on the debate is not yet known. Hence, this research is an attempt to expound this local understanding for this debate. The researcher presents the idea of the Visayan understanding of *kahimtang* to show how this concept has the potential to reconcile the differences between the two. This attempt hopes to provide insight using an indigenous input, one that is rooted in the lived experiences of the people. Scholars have recently worked on consulting indigenous knowledge to explain some concepts such as freedom (Molabola, et.al, 2020), identity (Kahambing, 2018; 2019), and peace (Fernandez & Villaluz, 2017). This paper attempts to show that in the mind of the Visayan, there is no conflict between the two ideas. Rather, if combined, they can form a holistic perspective of human experience and the human person themselves.

Freedom and determinism find their niche in ethical discussions. Freedom is said to be the foundation of our moral actions. Without which, there can be no morality. It is necessary to have a unified idea of the two seemingly contradictory ideas to save morality from those who want to discredit it. This paper can be an important contribution to the discussions. Furthermore, this paper can also be used in the localized discussion of ethics, psychology, and theology since these

disciplines are affected by this debate. This paper can also be a material in teaching ethics to Filipino young men and women who desire to understand the good and bad from a Filipino perspective. Freedom holds a strong foundation in ethics, so a Filipino take on it makes the topic familiar and interesting to the students.

### **Method**

The Visayas is a group of islands located at the mid-point of the Philippines, sometimes scholarly labeled as ‘Central Philippines’ (see for example, Kahambing & Demeterio, 2018). In terms of custom, it is important to firstly disambiguate that the indigenous ways of Visayan aboriginal groups have a very different story compared to the indigenous tribes in northern Luzon (who were migrants from China) or the (southern) migrant groups of Mindanao (who share Malaysian and Indonesian features or lineage due to proximate sea-trading activities). Visayan indigenous tribes have ‘little and no contact with outside groups over many centuries’ (Hogan & Singh, 2018, p. 3) but the notable tradition that was carried over by the locals, among others, was that of Christian religion. It is noteworthy to distinguish that the *Visayan* here does not pertain to the members of the aboriginal tribes but the locals of the group of islands who inhabit customary ways of life that are indigenous to the area. Specifically, the research locale is situated in the island of Leyte who understand the term. Ilonggo-speaking Visayans in other islands also speak of *kahimtang* but the understanding still correlates to the semantic substance despite geographical variance. As limitation, the term *kahimtang* is delve into within two of the major languages used by the Visayan which are Cebuano and Waray-Waray (Samar-Leyte language). Cebuano is the most spoken language used in the Visayas while Waray-Waray is spoken in most parts of Samar and Leyte. According to Inocian et. al. (2020), the Philippine languages are a cluster of Austronesian languages. The Visayas is also known to be the cradle of Christianity in the Philippines. The people are heavily influenced and dominated by the Roman Catholic religion. Reflective of the religious tradition, Visayas is known for its five most famous festivals, Sinulog, Ati-atihan, Maskara, Dinagyang, and Pintados. These festivals are Christianized religious practices of the Visayan. Since Cebuano speaking places are scattered all over the Visayan region (and extensively in other parts of the country as well), the Cebuano respondents were purposively chosen from the native place of the researcher in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte. While the Waray-Waray respondents were chosen from the town of Palo.

The researcher used hermeneutic phenomenology as a framework in this study. In a hermeneutic phenomenological framework, assumptions about the participants are bracketed. Their tie to Catholicism and its possible conception to the Catholic interpretation of predestination are set aside to give way, rather than prod or lead them to a pre-arranged theme, for their own ideas to emerge. It is important that though they have similar ideas with existing arguments, their positions are not informed and thus not biased by academic terms. To help the researcher gather the data needed, he used a key informant interview (KII) format. KII can be done either by phone or face-to-face interview (Acampado & Fernandez 2019). For this research, face-to-face interview (before the pandemic) is deemed necessary for the researcher to see an embodiment of the facial

expressions and body languages of the respondents. Further, purposive sampling was used. Therefore, the researcher preferred to interview those people above 50 years old on the reflexive assumption of their rich experiences in life. Six Cebuano people were interviewed and four in the Waray-speaking region. The ten key informants form the collective term Visayan. Consent and permissions were secured and asked before the interview for the face-to-face discussion and for possible publication. After the data was gathered, the researcher proceeded with a philosophical analysis of what transpired during the interviews.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### ***The Visayan Nuances of Kahimtang***

*Kahimtang* is a common term in Cebuano and Waray-Waray. Generally, it means one's condition or situation in life. The researcher interviewed both Cebuano and Waray people to interpret the nuances of this term in relation to freedom and determinism. In the process of interviewing people, whom the researcher considered to have rich experiences in life about their notion of *kahimtang*, three nuances or themes emerged that are constant in their testimonies. These nuances on *kahimtang* are: *hatag sa Dios* (God-given), *latid o plano sa kinabuhi* (Fate in life), and *baruganan o estado sa pagkatawo* (State of being-human).

#### **1. *Hatag sa Ginoo* (God-given)**

The Visayan believed that their *kahimtang* is something given by a divine entity. *Hatag sa Ginoo* (God-given) is one of the ideas that are common to both Cebuano and Waray. The terms involved are *Ginoo* (Lord), *Grasya* (Grace), and *Sagrado* (sacred).

The Visayan used the term *Ginoo* to express their belief in a higher being. It is the term used to name the higher being who is the source and giver of everything, including the *kalibutan* (world), *tawo* (human), and *kahimtang*. The Visayan used the term *Grasya* to show their appreciation of *kahimtang* as a blessing to them. It refers to their acceptance, contentment, and association with their loved ones that give worth to their situation. The Visayan used the term *sagrado* to express their recognition for *kahimtang* as a sacred thing that came from God. It connotes their strong aspiration to uphold the sanctity of their situation, which is manifested in how they value their work to provide for their needs. It also describes their journey of surpassing hardships to have a better life. *Kahimtang* is *hatag sa Ginoo*. For the Visayan, there is no greater phrase to describe it but as something coming from a divine entity. It is an acknowledgment that everything a person has is by no means something caused merely by themselves.

#### **2. *Latid o Kapalaran sa Kinabuhi* (Path in Life)**

Another idea that the researcher discovered about *kahimtang* is *latid sa kinabuhi* (path in life). The theme is expressed respectively by the Cebuanos and the Waray using the terms *kapalaran* or *latid* (path), *lina* (line), *paningkamot* (hard work), *pangandoy* (dream), and *kinabuhi* (life).

The Waray people used the term *kapalaran* to describe *kahimtang* as their fate in life. It signifies their belief that their situation is predetermined by fate. For

them, the kind of life they live is not based on their choice but is fated and such fate is solely dependent on God. The Cebuano people use the term *latid* to describe their *kahimtang* as a “blueprint” or something that is pre-made. They believe that their *kahimtang* is already planned by God and that they were put to the world to live by God’s providence. The Visayan used the term *lina* to describe *kahimtang* as a line or path. While *kahimtang* initially connotes fate or blueprint, as a line or path, it nonetheless gives them a sense of direction as a guide to take the right way to improve their quality of life. The Visayan used the term *kinabuhi* to deeply refer to *kahimtang* as *life*. It is not just an extrinsic factor that influences their lives but is the very lives they are living. That is, *kahimtang* is life itself. This expresses their firm conviction on the relationship between life and *kahimtang*. For them, one cannot exist without the other. Their *kahimtang* tells the quality of their lives while their life gives essence to their *kahimtang*. The Visayan used the term *paningkamot* to express their belief that perseverance is the key to improve their *kahimtang*. Though it is already given and planned by God, they still have the freedom to improve what is given to them. *Paningkamot* becomes the context of freedom for the Visayan. The Cebuano people use the term *pangandoy* to describe their aspirations for a better *kahimtang* in life. For them, without dreams, one will not strive to change their *kahimtang*.

Since *kahimtang* is something made and given by God, the human has just to accept it and make the most out of it. *Kahimtang* is what they call *latid sa kinabuhi*. *Latid* is a line that delineates an area or boundary. It is a plan of God for humans that they have to follow. Furthermore, *kahimtang* is something one has and never asked for. It is a path to take, a mission to survive and accomplish, and life itself. It is in *kahimtang* that one becomes conscious of his purpose and mission in life. “*Nadawat na laman kay unsaon man ug wa gajud ta. Ang man ug mangawat ta aron manaa ta, di ato nang dawaton ng atong kakabos kay mao ra man nay imong linya* (What can I do if I will not accept it. I cannot steal just to have something. I just have to accept that I am poor because this is my path),” says one respondent when asked on accepting *kahimtang*. *Kahimtang* is something that is not asked. According to another respondent, “*naa na gajod na nga, usa ka natawo ning kalibutana, daan ng gilatid sa Ginoo nga anha ka mabutang ug mao nay imong dalan nga subayon. Sa imong gipuy-an nga gitagana na daan, anha jud ka mopujo dinha* (It is there before you were born. God had already planned where will you will be and what path you shall take).” *Kahimtang* is following the plan of God for each person. God has already planned everything including the *place* that one lives, the *time* that a person is born, and as well as the time of one’s *death*, and what a person shall *become*. This is said in the same words by yet another respondent, “*kay Duna may latid na ang Dios nga mao ni imong linya. Diha kang dapita, dinhi ka* (because there is a plan of God for your place. It is either here or there).” And she said further that as long as people are here on earth they have to live with it (“*samtang naa sa kalibutan, dawaton nalang*”). So the only thing that humans must do is to accept one’s *kahimtang*.

*Kahimtang* is a plan (*latid*) and is always connected to life. There is no *kahimtang* when there is no life. Furthermore, it requires not just any kind of life but a conscious kind of life. *Kahimtang* is only proper to people who are conscious of their existence. In the words of one respondent, “*Mao ng pagtan-aw naho sa kahimtang sa kalibutan nag-agad sa sitwasyon sa tawo, lihok sa tawo,*

pangandoy sa tawo kay naa naman tanan (This is the reason why *kahimtang* is construed as dependent on the situation, actions, and dreams of the person, because everything has been provided).” The phrase “*kahimtang sa kalibutan*” does not refer to the *kahimtang* of the world in itself because the world has no *kahimtang*. Rather, it refers to the *kahimtang* of the human person who is conscious of the world. By saying that phrase, he means *kahimtang sa tawo nga naa sa kalibutan* (Kahimtang of the person in the world). *Kahimtang* then is proper to humans since humans are conscious beings who think about themselves. Superficially, then believing in the *latid* (plan) makes one think that there is no room for freedom because God has already planned everything. However, the Cebuanos consider freedom as basic to the human person because in life, they can opt to choose their work and pursue their dreams.

### **3. *Baruganan o Estado Sa Tawo* (State of Being-Human)**

The last theme or nuance that the researcher discovered from the responses made by the respondents is *estado sa tawo* (state of being-human). This concept is supported by the connected terms used by the respondents during the interview. The terms are *panindugan* or *baruganan* (standing), *riko* or *adunahan* (rich), *kabutang* (placement), *trabaho* (work), *pobre* (poor), and *igo-igo* (enough).

The Waray used the term *panindugan* to describe *kahimtang* as their current standing in life. Their *kahimtang* depends on their job where they gain income and the place where they live. The Waray used the term *riko* to express the most desirable *kahimtang* in life. For them, being rich is the best *kahimtang*. If they are hardworking and if they are blessed by God, they will become rich and sustain their needs and wants in life. The Waray used the term *kabutang* to express *kahimtang* as their status and situation in life. What they are currently experiencing speaks their *kahimtang*. The Visayan used the term *trabaho* to signify the relationship of their work to *kahimtang*. The kind of work that they have determines the quality of their *kahimtang*. A better job will bear a better *kahimtang*. The Visayan used the term *pobre* to express their current status in life. This shows their *kahimtang* of being poor. They describe themselves as poor because they do not have money to provide for their daily needs. The Visayan used the term *igo-igo* to show a sustainable *kahimtang*. *Igo-igo* means that they just have enough (not much, not less) means to cater to their needs. They have enough money to buy their basic needs but not their wants. The Cebuano people describe *kahimtang* as *adunahan* or rich. Just like the Waray people, they also believe that being rich is the best *kahimtang* that they can have in life. The Cebuano people likewise describe *kahimtang* as *baruganan* or their status in life. Their current standing (what they do and where they are) in life also expresses their *kahimtang*.

*Kahimtang* for the Visayan caters to a very wide scope. As discussed, it is being conceived by the Visayan as *hatag sa Ginoo*, *latid sa pagkatawo*, and *baruganan sa kinabuhi*. That is why in a deeper sense it is the essence of a human person. In the words of a respondent, “*kahimtang is pagka-sija* (being itself).” *Kahimtang* being described as *hatag sa Ginoo* springs from the belief that everything is given by God. *Latid sa pagkatawo* is the belief of the Visayan that everything has been ordered before a person is born. God has given everything to humans, even though they did not ask for it from God. People realize that in being

human, there is a specific path for them. Man becomes conscious of it. That is why *kahimtang* is proper to a human person and not to things because it is only the humans who are conscious of their *kahimtang*. They are conscious of their *baruganan sa kinabuhi*. *Baruganan sa kinabuhi* is the Visayan belief that every human person has a specific place in this world. *Baruganan* is also something proper only to a living person.

### ***Towards Compatibilism: Freedom and Determinism in Kahimtang***

#### **1. The Deterministic Perspective of *Kahimtang***

Determinism is the philosophical belief that all human actions are determined by previous causes. There are several kinds of determinism such as logical determinism, theological determinism, psychological determinism, and physical determinism (Lucas, 2011). Logical determinism is also known as fatalism. It is the belief that the future is already determined by the past. Psychological determinism is the belief that human actions have bearings in previous experiences. This is supported by the Behaviorists and the Psychoanalysts. Theological determinism is the belief that the human has been determined already by the all-knowing God. Physical determinism is the belief that all physical events are but products of the laws of physics such as the law of motion and gravity. In addition to those mentioned, there is also biological determinism, biodeterminism, or genetic determinism (Jamieson & Radick, 2017) which holds that human actions are products of genetic compositions.

The Visayan understanding of *kahimtang* is partly deterministic. The belief that *kahimtang* is something given by God is deterministic. It is a kind of theological determinism. God is a being responsible for determining the *kahimtang* of humans. The fact that no human person has ever chosen his/her *kahimtang*, in the beginning, means that the human was not free at all. Their belief that *kahimtang* is *grasya sa Ginoo* connotes a deep understanding that *kahimtang* depends on the mercy of God. *Grasya* (grace) is something unmerited. This “unmeritness” that is attached to the idea of *kahimtang* contextualizes the notion that *kahimtang* connotes a deterministic belief of the Visayan. When a person receives something which is unmerited, that person has no right to demand such. People can only demand what is due to them like a worker demanding a salary from the one who asked them to do the work. The act of demanding is essential for a person who earned something. Demanding is also important in the concept of justice or giving what is due for a person. The belief that *kahimtang* is “*hatag sa Ginoo*” excludes the concept of justice. The parable of Jesus (Matthew 20: 1-16), for instance, about the vineyard owner hiring workers from the by-standers in the market at 9 am, 10 am, 12 pm, 3 pm, and 4 pm, and paying them with the same amount speaks more of the generosity of God, rather than the justice of God. God is just when it gives us our *kahimtang*. This is often called grace. But no Cebuano respondent would question the unjust differences of *kahimtang*. This is because everyone knows in his/her heart that *kahimtang* is something unmerited. If a person perceives someone’s *kahimtang* is better than theirs, they should not complain. When a person questions the goodness of their *kahimtang* during difficult times, that is because of the experience they are particularly going through and not the totality of *kahimtang* that they are in. Rather, since this *kahimtang* given, it must be accepted. This idea of *kahimtang* as being *hatag sa*

*Ginoo* is already an idea of determinism and is expounded in the next idea of *kahimtang*, which is *latid sa kinabuhi*.

The concept of *latid sa kinabuhi* (path in life) elaborates more on the deterministic perspective of the Visayan. This idea of *kahimtang* is very close to the previous idea, which is the believe that God as the giver of *kahimtang*. God would not just choose a human's *kahimtang* but also the *kahimtang* that God has chosen is a blueprint already of that person's life. This deterministic perspective of life is not just limited to the givens of life but covers the whole existence of a human person. God has already determined life. The Visayan would call it *kapalaran*. *Kapalaran* as the course of life is sometimes believed to be written in the palm (*palad*) of one's hand and this is practiced in the different parts of the world known as chiromancy (De Metz, 2010). It is common knowledge for the Filipinos that there are a lot of practices in the Philippines on palm reading. This is tied to the belief that everything has been written by God, so that one just has to look and unveil the future written on the palm of one's hands. Moreover, the phrase "gulong ng palad" or the wheel of one's palm, literally, can mean the 'wheel of fate' or the 'wheel of fortune' where there is a roller coaster of fortunate and unfortunate events. Other practices related to the idea of *latid sa kinabuhi* is card reading. The point is that Filipinos have a strong sense of deterministic belief. This deterministic belief does not spare the Visayan to think that their *kahimtang* has been carefully planned from the start.

The concept *estado sa pagkatawo* (state of being-human) also contains the deterministic idea of the Visayan. They believed that *estado sa pagkatawo* is given. It is part of the plan of God for humans. Being-human is the actuality of the individual human person. *Kahimtang* has been mostly and commonly identified with financial status, though it is actually the condition, situation, and context where a human being fulfils his being a person. These conditions are being rich or poor, famous or unpopular, a parent or a child, a friend or a foe, etc. This perception was formed because of the partly misconceived idea that money makes *kahimtang* better. Visayan people have this notion that the best *kahimtang* is the *adunahan* (rich) and the worst *kahimtang* is to live in extreme poverty (*kakabus*). In connection with their deterministic belief, they have the idea that their *estado sa kinabuhi*, such as being poor or rich is something determined by God or the being-above. The phrase "if only I could choose my *kahimtang*" resonates with all of the respondents' beliefs. It is a wish for a better *kahimtang* but is untenable at the moment, so that there is a little exasperation experienced for the *kahimtang* they are in. No one in this world has the right or even the privilege to choose their *kahimtang* in the first instance of their life. The existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre in his book *Being and Nothingness* explains that the human's essence is his existence. This is phrased as the existentialist "existence precedes essence." This means that there is no essence willed by any divine entity before the existence of the human. There is no essence before existence. However, this is contradicted by the Visayan idea that the human fulfils his humanity in a certain way as planned by the divine. No one can escape this fact. No one chose to be poor. No one chose to be marginalized. No one chose to be disabled. No one chose their own family. Things are all determined yet, as we will discuss next, there is still freedom.

## 2. The Notion of Freedom in *Kahimtang*

The response to determinism can be through thinking about whether determinism really matters or not (Vihvelin, 2013). There are several notions of freedom. Foner (1998) classified freedom into five, namely, political freedom, civil liberties, Christian ideal, personal freedom, and economic freedom. Political freedom is the freedom of the people to participate in politics. Civil liberty is the right of the people to air grievances against the authority. The Christian ideal is the Christian perspective of freedom that fulfils nature. Personal freedom is the ability to make choices without coercion. In addition, economic freedom is the freedom of an individual for economic autonomy. The Visayan's notion of freedom in their *kahimtang* is a combination of these kinds of freedom.

The entry point on the discussion of freedom in *kahimtang* resides in its temporality: is *kahimtang* temporary or permanent? The Visayan would not answer that it is permanent. They perceive *kahimtang* as something temporary, which is to say that a human holds the ability to change their *kahimtang*. The human has the freedom to make their *kahimtang* better (or worse). Freedom lies in the ability and capability of the human to redirect one's *kahimtang*. Although, it is important to bear in mind that there are a priori conditions that either capacitates or incapacitates a person living their *kahimtang*, these a priori conditions merely lay out the rules and environs of one's condition. It is necessary then to make use of the givens in life for the betterment of *kahimtang*. To emancipate this freedom, time and space are part of the givens in the temporality of *kahimtang*.

Space, from the notion of *kahimtang*, is understood by the Visayan as *lugar nga pinuy-anan* (home) and *lugar nga gi-trabahoan* (place of work) (Acampado & Fernandez, 2019). In the mind of the Visayan, space is in itself a kind of *kahimtang*. *Lugar nga pinuy-anan* tells the *kahimtang* of a person. A rich person lives in a grandiose house while a poor person lives in a house made of recycled materials. *Lugar nga gi-trabaho-an* also tells the *kahimtang* of a person. An air-conditioned office is a better *kahimtang* than an office filled with the steam of a hot day. The prior inability to choose one's places of upbringing and life become a priori conditions. However, these places are also opportunities to exercise freedom. One's family for example is an avenue for the practice of freedom. There is no way to choose these conditions before existence. However, these are places that become spaces which either capacitate or incapacitate a person and further become the possibilities to exercise the direction of oneself as an autonomous act.

Time in the context of *kahimtang*, on the other hand, speaks of contingency (*dili permanente*) and relativeness to work (*depende sa panginabuhi*). Though time is so much beyond the control of a human person as enshrined in the idea of *dili permanente* and can end at any moment that is least expected, time is an avenue too to exercise freedom. Human beings manipulate time in a certain way and in the Visayan idea of *depende sa panginabuhi*. To manipulate time, the human makes use of it. It is within the freedom of the human to decide on what to do with his time. This manipulation of time, however, is usually done in the context of work. Depending on the work of a person, they are appropriate times that are advantageous to the subject.

Though the idea of *kahimtang* contains an idea of freedom, it is not total freedom. It is a kind of freedom that points out to be a freedom that is conditioned

by the specific situations or circumstances a person is in (Jütten, 2012). This freedom is similarly a claim that we are not unconditionally free but only *conditionally* free. Human beings have the inseparable unity between the moment of autonomy and the moment of determinism, of freedom and nature, and individual and social existence (Huhn, 2006, 61). This perspective of freedom is different from that of Sartre's (2007) dictum that "man is condemned to be free." For *kahintang*, man is only free *contingently*, but free nonetheless.

### **3. The Visayan brand of Compatibilism in *Kahintang***

Compatibilism is an attempt to synthesize the debate between freedom and determinism. Compatibilism is distinguished into classical and contemporary. Classical compatibilism argues that determinism does not mean that the agent has no alternative ways to do otherwise, while contemporary compatibilism argues that determinism is only a guide to one's actions (McKenna, 2012). Here, it can be argued that the Visayan compatibilism is species of contemporary compatibilism.

Based on the discussions about freedom and determinism in *kahintang*, it is safe to assume that the Visayan are compatibilists: their position is neither pure determinism nor pure freedom. It is clear for them that humans have both the givens in life expressed most especially in their belief that *kahintang* is *latid sa kinabuhi* (path in life) and *hatag sa Ginoo* (God-given) but also the freedom to change their *kahintang* into something better. Considering a family, no one desires the kind of family a person is born into. A person, when born, is blind to the possible family that he is becoming a part of. That person is not aware of their possible father, mother, and even brothers and sisters if there are. They are helpless in this a priori condition of being human. Likewise, it is beyond the knowledge of the newly-born the geographical space (*lugar*) they are in. That child cannot foresee and choose the kind of place they will be living, whether it is on the mountainous part of town or the seaside area, a city or a town, an island, or in the mainland. It is the same also with time. The person cannot decide the year, the month, day, second, and era or period of history to be born (and death). These helpless a priori conditions are *hatag sa Ginoo*. Moreover, all these helpless a priori conditions are essential in the formation of a person or the fulfillment of being human. This also constitutes the life being planned already (*latid sa kinabuhi*). This is not seen as dismal and oppressive. For the Visayan, it is rather easy to accept all these helpless a priori conditions because there is the motivation to strive to be better. It is worthwhile to do something that will augment and improve their *kahintang*. This is the part where a person, from the perspective of the Visayan, recognizes their freedom. They are entitled to make use of their freedom to change their *kahintang*. The idea of the Visayan speaks of the necessity to use freedom. A person must use one's freedom for the better; otherwise they suffer the consequence of having a very difficult situation. The assertion is that time can change *kahintang*. One must grab every chance that comes with time. Though, in the end, no one can go beyond one's *latid sa kinabuhi*. Freedom in 'the plan' means the line of life which forms its path is somewhat of a trajectory that must be about the struggle for progress, whether it is economic progress or moral progress. For example, Francis Drake's prayer about the believer's hope for disturbance ("Disturb me, Oh Lord") pertains to the

positivity of one's struggles for progress in freedom (Kahambing, 2018). This forms the reply to a purely deterministic universe, which cannot account for moral progress.

Freedom and determinism are necessary concepts to understand the existential experience of *kahimtang*. The Negation of one constitutes the negation of an essential part of their lived experience. A person needs to hold this perspective to grasp the complexities of human experience, especially in their respective *kahimtang*. This world, therefore, is an interplay of the helpless a priori conditions and the capacity to liberally determine in a certain way our individual life. With semblances to arguments of moral responsibility (Vincent, et.al, 2011), the Visayan believes that there is a place for *panigkamot* (hard work) in one's *latid* (path in life). These kinds of understanding about the mutual necessity of freedom and determinism fall more on the contemporary discussions of compatibilism – open to the workings of both fate and free will.

### Conclusion

The long quest to understanding freedom and determinism is not yet a case closed. Any idea that can contribute to the clarification of the two seemingly contradictory terms is still helpful. This research explored the Visayan idea of merging freedom and determinism into one concept of *kahimtang* and attempted to contribute to its debate. In the idea of *kahimtang*, the Visayan claims that there is no necessary contradiction between freedom and determinism. Both concepts are necessary to understand *kahimtang*. The Negation of any of the two beliefs would undermine the existential experience of the Visayan. *Kahimtang* is an intricate idea to the human person given that no human being has without it. Moreover, the idea of being-human in *kahimtang* connotes an interdependent relationship between the two. There is no human without *kahimtang* and there is no *kahimtang* without human beings.

*Kahimtang* as an essential condition of being-human is perceived to be both deterministic and free. With the complexity of human *kahimtang*, it is not impossible to merge the two seemingly contradictory ideas. *Kahimtang* is understood to be a deterministic belief in a sense of it being *latid sa kinabuhi* and *hatag sa Ginoo*. In addition, it is known to be in favor of the theory of freedom when it claims that there is a certain autonomy of humans to determine to make better or be contented with their *kahimtang*. It is then argued that the Visayan people lean to the side of contemporary compatibilism rather than classical one. The Visayan people are not thinking of the “otherwise” but making the conditions better. And this inherent positivity of trudging the path of becoming better as a form of moral responsibility and moral progress, believing on the line of life to be progressing, makes the Visayan notion of *kahimtang* an unbiased compatibilist rejoinder.

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