

Compartmentality

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Compartmentality (noun): A cognitive and practical state characterized by the tendency to compartmentalize the deeply entangled dimensions of “life-domain,” typically into the ecological, political, economic, and social spheres, without adequately recognizing their interconnectedness and interdependencies. It arises from a reductionist mindset that separates and isolates these aspects, potentially hindering a comprehensive understanding of their complex relationships and limiting the exploration of transformative possibilities within the pluriverse. Compartmentality obscures the inherent interplay and potential synergies among different dimensions, hindering the development of integrated approaches that address systemic challenges and promote collective and regenerative alternatives.



Compartmentality is not a natural state but rather a product of the decommonization of life under the dominant modernist and capitalist value regime. As the collective and regenerative ways of living in commons (and as commons) are reified and commodified into capitalist value bearers, th

e compartmentalization of life becomes a perceived necessity. This compartmentality is then reinforced and normalized through various systems, including education and knowledge production, which perpetuate a reductionist mindset that separates and isolates different dimensions of life.

The relationships among the fundamental sources of [true value](#) ^[1] in the commonist state of living are characterized by their organic nature, transcending boundaries, functions, and hierarchies. These relationships enable decentralized flows of care, power, and information, forming a cohesive and interconnected whole. These fundamental value sources represent a higher commons, constituting the life-domain in commonist living. They function as vital organs within an organism, deriving their vitality from the collective wholeness of the life-domain. ^[2]

However, under the capitalist framework, the organic interconnections among these fundamental value sources, namely creativity, ^[3] liveability, conviviality, and alterity, become mechanistic and fragmented. They are compartmentalized into *socio-economic, socio-ecological, socio-cultural, and socio-political categories*, governed by mechanical interactions. This compartmentality within the capitalist system disregards the undermined yet persisting intrinsic interplays and potential synergies among these dimensions, leading to a reductionist and fragmented understanding of their interdependence.

The compartmentalization of these value sources reflects the dominance of a mechanistic mindset that prioritizes individual aspects over their interconnectedness. This reductionist approach obstructs the recognition of the organic relationships and potential synergies that arise from their holistic integration. By compartmentalizing these dimensions, the capitalist system hinders the development of integrated approaches that address systemic challenges and promote collective well-being within the pluriverse. However, we need to bear in mind that the 'actually existing pluriverse' of alternatives to capital is not immune to compartmentality. This necessitates pathological and critical studies of the pluriverse of post-capital alternatives and their associated transformative movements.

Recognizing the shift from organic interconnections to mechanistic compartmentalization sheds light on the limitations imposed by the capitalist value regime. It underscores the importance of embracing a commonist perspective that acknowledges the organic and interconnected nature of the fundamental value sources. By transcending compartmentality and embracing holistic approaches, we can nurture a more 'integrated' and 'regenerative' relationship with the pluriverse, fostering collective well-being and transformative possibilities.

An example of compartmentality can be observed in frameworks like the [Measure of Australia's Progress \(MAP\)](#), where societal progress is compartmentalized into mechanistically interrelated domains such as society, economy, environment, and governance. This approach, while providing a structured means of measurement, fails to adequately recognize the interconnectedness and interdependencies between these dimensions.

The consequences of compartmentality, in this case for instance, include a fragmented approach to policymaking and decision-making, unintended consequences due to the lack of systemic thinking, and the inability to identify synergies and trade-offs between different dimensions. It obstructs the development of integrated solutions that address systemic challenges to collective wellbeing and promote regenerative alternatives. In essence, compartmentality undermines our capacity to holistically address the interconnected issues of our time and inhibits the pursuit of regenerative, equitable, and inclusive progress.

References

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