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Who and what belongs to us? Towards a comprehensive concept of inclusion and planetary citizenship

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Abstract

In this theoretical article, we ask who and what belongs to us. We aim to conceptualise planetary citizenship and identify the scale for experiences of planetary inclusion. As a basis for the planetary approach, we utilise systems thinking and eudaimonic well-being that transcends hedonism and materialism and that focuses on meaningful and purposeful living, personal growth, engagement and positive relationships. Expanding the concept of human participation is necessary as the contemporary lifeworld has gradually stretched beyond the traditional boundaries of local communities and nation-state societies. Furthermore, the lifestyle of people living in high-income industrial countries has also been noted to have serious consequences in wider circles of life. Thus, human–biosphere

relationships must be renegotiated to strengthen responsible citizenship and facilitate caring for life on Earth. To promote this ideal, we widen the already validated scale for experiences of social inclusion towards a scale for experiences of planetary inclusion. We introduce the concept of planetary citizenship, which enhances the concept of inclusion. Planetary citizenship refers to a life orientation where the boundary between humans and the rest of nature disappears. It refers to the citizen who is simultaneously a local, global and planetary actor. The attachment to something larger could help planetary citizens grow towards being a person who is aware and reflective and can look at the world from new perspectives. Experiences of planetary inclusion could also help to solve the problems of climate change, depletion of natural resources and biodiversity loss.

Keywords eudaimonic well-being; systems thinking; social inclusion; planetary citizenship; planetary inclusion

Introduction

Well-being is an end in itself. Depending on whether the well-being research focuses on individual behaviour, group dynamics or structures, it has a particular approach. From the individual hedonic approach, well-being is understood as feeling happy or experiencing pleasure and a lack of pain (VanderWeele et al., 2020). This article focuses specifically on eudaimonic well-being that transcends individualism, hedonism and materialism. The eudaimonic approach to well-being involves engagement with self-transcendent ideals by focusing on criteria of a good life, such as meaningful and purposeful living, personal growth, engagement and positive relations with others (Kristjánsson, 2020; Ryff et al., 2021).

Traditionally, an individual's attachment to the world is viewed as social inclusion based on belonging to communities and society (Hämäläinen, 2013; Leemann, Martelin et al., 2022). However, this research goes further because it is motivated by the globalised contemporary lifeworld that has gradually stretched beyond the traditional boundaries of local communities and nation-state societies, especially in high-income industrial countries. Today, the borders of nations are crossed via the internet in the blink of an eye, without border formalities. The current global economy is characterised by the fact that the impacts of everyday consumer behaviour are reflected in people's lives worldwide. These impacts are, for example, pollution and a depletion of natural resources caused by production and consumption (Salonen, 2021). Due to the impact of increasingly consumerist societies, particularly in the Global North, the physically finite Earth is undergoing profound changes. We live 'in the midst of a planetary emergency of our own making' (Dixson-Declève et al., 2022, p. 1), and consequently, this suggests a need for a new understanding of citizenship, responsibility and ethics.

As the impact of human well-being has broadened, in this research we apply a planetary approach that dissolves the border between humans and the rest of nature. It is based on the social-ecological world view, emphasising that people, communities, economies and societies are embedded in the biosphere as a systemic whole (Folke et al., 2016). In recent years, a planetary approach has been applied to various research fields; for example, planetary boundaries (Rockström et al., 2009), planetary well-being (Kortetmäki et al., 2021), planetary responsibility (Salonen and Åhlberg, 2012), planetary health (Horton et al., 2014) and planetary diet (Willett et al., 2019). A theory of planetary social pedagogy has also been created (Salonen et al., 2023) that refers to a general orientation concerning 'the entire population' (Hämäläinen and Eriksson, 2016, p. 138) and focuses more on 'ethics and values than methods and techniques' (Hämäläinen, 2012, p. 12).

In this theoretical article, we aim to go beyond the social inclusion experience (Leemann, Martelin et al., 2022) and expand human inclusion towards a planetary citizen world view. We seek to move from the social to the planetary realm by both conceptualising planetary citizenship and proposing indicators for experiences of planetary inclusion. We understand inclusion as incorporating the experiences of connection, connectedness, belonging and participation. We further assume that without inclusion, people cannot reach fulfilling eudaimonic well-being. Eudaimonic well-being also depends on how

people value their life as part of the world around them. It is about the purpose of one's aspirations in the world (Hanson and VanderWeele, 2021). Furthermore, an extended circle of morality is needed for human growth, because life on Earth is 'existentially intertwined in a common destiny, both as a species and as a biospheric community' (Stein, 2023, p. 124). The extended circle of morality is based on an enhanced sense of belonging (Salonen and Åhlberg, 2012) and refers to 'an ethical approach that values the non-human world for its own sake, and not only due to its importance for humans' (Salonen et al., 2023, p. 624). Thus, we assume that human experiences of planetary inclusion could help to solve the problems of climate change, depletion of natural resources and biodiversity loss, because people tend to feel responsible for what they perceive they are a part of, and commit to what they feel connected to.

Systems thinking helps us to understand the structure of the lifeworld

From a systems thinking point of view (Bunge, 1979), people and the whole planet form a deeply intertwined complex system (Dixson-Declève et al., 2022). Everyday life happens as a part of a nested, interacting social and ecological web of life that connects different things and phenomena from near and far (Capra, 1996; Sterling, 2003). For example, the manufacturing process of a conventional smartphone phone, with 400 parts and the raw materials of 30 different metals, connects the phone user to the collective socio-material system, with a worldwide network of people, natural resources and technologies.

As complexity increases in daily life, systems thinking is needed to understand the reality that our generation is living through. Systems thinking can empower people as it makes it possible to develop a sense of linked coherence by seeing a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in a city and a city in the world. As a result of more holistic systems thinking, for example, cocoa farmers in the Global South could be considered neighbours of chocolate eaters everywhere, as there is no chocolate without cocoa. The world is therefore not approached mechanistically as a collection of separate things, but rather as a system connecting things and phenomena (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Folke et al., 2016). In contrast to the fragmented atomist way of thinking, systems thinking considers the relationships between things and phenomena, as well as the interactions in those relationships (de Rosnay, 1979).

Understanding reality as an interwoven web stretches back to pre-Socratic philosophers and is a natural, if slightly counterintuitive, perspective of the human mind. The concept of Apeiron – the endless, beginningless, one substance that encompasses and composes every seemingly separate thing – appears in Anaximander's works, who is often considered as the second Western philosopher after Thales (Rovelli, 2023). In Asian traditions, the same ideas appear in Indian Advaita Vedanta, or non-dualistic Vedanta, which does not see the world of objects in terms of a dualism between the experiencer and the experienced. Dzogchen or Maha-Ati Buddhism, prevalent in Tibet, has the same orientation as do most forms of Chinese Ch'an and Japanese Zen lineages (Waite, 2007). Seeing reality as inclusive wholeness is therefore a natural antidote to the narrower identities that bar people from entering the perspective of the socio-ecological world view.

This type of systemic perception of reality is also typical for Indigenous peoples. For example, Indigenous wisdom argues that 'there is only one water', as different forms of water can be returned to the same idea of water. The Sámi have a habit of choosing a place for their home and moving it to the next place, which leaves no traces after it is dismantled. It is thought that such traces could limit the capabilities and freedom of the next arrivals, and the custom tells that the Sámi people experience belongingness to a temporal network of life and a responsibility for the future of others (Näkkäläjärvi, 2007). Inherent to these traditions, no fundamental barriers exist between humans and other life forms.

According to a systemic perception of reality, there is a connectedness between the individual, other people and the rest of nature (Lehtonen et al., 2018). There is also a connection between generations, as people who lived before us created the foundation on which we build our well-being today. Our choices today therefore affect the lives of people born later because our generation is a part of the intergenerational chain (McNeill and McNeill, 2003). In addition, human and non-human life interacts in everyday life. The interconnectedness between humans and the rest of nature (more-than-humans) can be identified in real-life quotidian acts. For instance, when I breathe, I breathe in the oxygen that plants produce. When I eat, I consume nature into a part of myself. At the same time, I become a part of the living and non-living world – its plants, water, light and soil.

Solving contemporary planetary crises requires systems thinking that recognises the interaction between different beings, things and phenomena. Without considering the complex interactions that led to the current crisis, there is a risk of developing tunnel vision, in which symptoms are tackled without addressing the cause of the disease.

Planetary citizenship is about spatial, temporal and ethical lifeworlds

Homo sapiens are one species – people with similar basic needs. Regardless of our weaknesses that manifest as injustices, inequalities and even war, humans everywhere aim to have 'inner harmony and a peaceful relationship with others' (Xi and Lee, 2021, p. 469). Humans can also intuit reality as a seamless whole, where differences in appearance do not necessarily entail a separation between objects. From this perspective, the socio-ecological world view is a human birthright – there is no separation between the planet and its citizens, and different things and phenomena from near and far are connected on a deeper level, where they are seen as aspects of the one thing going on and should, morally, be treated as human selves (Davis, 2021; Wilber, 2017).

Planetary citizenship (Henderson and Daisaku, 2004; Misiaszek, 2021) refers to a perception that people are fully aware that they 'do not live in a city, a state, or a nation, but in a single and finite planet that they share with all other components of this nature' (Moraes et al., 2021, p. 52). Planetary citizenship is also about meaningful life; because enhancing meaning requires connecting with the world (Farrelly, 2021). Meaning in life consists of an 'attachment to something larger, and the larger the entity to which you attach yourself, the more meaning in your life' (Seligman, 2002, p. 14). Attachment to the inner self and the outer world could enhance human flourishing (Xi and Lee, 2021). Therefore, planetary citizenship is linked to human growth towards being a person who is aware, reflective and free of prejudice, and who can look at the world from new perspectives; for example, by imagining the world from the perspective of a plant, a rock or an unborn child (Baril, 2021). New perspectives are needed to rethink responsibilities of humans.

The enhanced circle of morality refers to the dynamics of responsibility, and it answers why an individual or community acts as it does. If the sense of belonging is limited, then care remains close to oneself, but if people experience belonging to a vast web of life, the everyday sphere of responsibility extends far beyond themselves. Therefore, planetary citizenship is about personal and societal growth that enhances and maintains a sphere of care beyond one's immediate surroundings. It could be materialised by themes relating the local, regional and global to the planetary level in human growth. When the sphere of responsibility starts to expand, social responsibility typically broadens towards planetary responsibility (Salonen and Åhlberg, 2012). Planetary responsibility is therefore needed to reflect on and address the negative effects of humans on Earth. Humans are also responsible for other species as there is an asymmetry of power (Sen, 2009). Consequently, the future's quality depends more on humans than ever (Dixson-Declève et al., 2022; Thomas et al., 2020).

When the sphere of responsibility is defined in time, the world could be perceived as a loan from future generations. The current generation in power is responsible for returning the planet to people living after this generation has gone, in the same – or better – condition than it was borrowed (Sen, 2009). Long-term thinkers, such as the Australian futurist Richard Slaughter and the Scottish philosopher William MacAskill, ask why our generation should care for future generations and what we owe them (MacAskill, 2022; Slaughter, 1994) – according to them, intergenerational responsibility is needed because there is no fundamental separation between future generations and our generation – we are part of a continuum. Therefore, we need to leave a legacy for future generations to see themselves in this way too, as, like us, they are planetary citizens with an apeironistic moral imperative (that is, the ontology-ethical refusal to separate between living beings and systems while retaining necessary pragmatic distinctions). Table 1 illustrates the dynamics of planetary citizenship in terms of spatial, temporal and ethical orientations, the perception of reality, as well as comparison between atomist and systems thinking.

The planetary context of human life means that the lifeworld is simultaneously local, regional and global, connected to the past, present and future continuum, and transcending human and non-human reality. From an apeironistic standpoint, borders between humans and other living beings and our generation and future generations are crossed intellectually and as a point of origin for identity. On these farther reaches of planetary citizenship, human and more-than-human realities are seen as facets

of deep systemic reality, where the moral imperative is to treat no one as other, including everything and excluding nothing, in our circle of care and compassion.

Table 1. Comparison between atomist thinking and systems thinking in relation to planetary citizenship regarding spatial, temporal and ethical orientations, and perception of reality (Source: adapted from Salonen and Åhlberg, 2012; Salonen et al., 2023)

Way of thinking	atomist thinking								systems thinking
Spatial orientation	local								global
Temporal orientation	history								future
Ethical orientation	individual								planetary
	I	My family	My friends and relatives	People in my country	All people	People and animals	People, animals and plants	Ecosystems	Earth

From experiences of social inclusion scale to experiences of planetary inclusion scale

In this section, we seek to expand human participation and belonging on the planetary level by offering an alternative to the traditional approach of social inclusion. We explain how the experiences of social inclusion scale (Leemann, Martelin et al., 2022) differ from our proposal for the experiences of planetary inclusion scale.

The framework for the experienced social inclusion scale has an empirical foundation in longitudinal qualitative poverty research conducted in Finland, with adults facing prolonged financial scarcity. The study indicated that being a significant part of a predictable and manageable entity where one has opportunities to participate in shared activities is a factor that maintains well-being, even under challenging circumstances (Haushofer and Fehr, 2014; Isola et al., 2021; Mani et al., 2013; Zhao and Tomm, 2018). The phenomenon behind the finding was named the 'experiences of social inclusion', and it provided an empirical underpinning for developing a related indicator with 10 statements (Leemann, Martelin et al., 2022). Exploratory and confirmatory validation analysis showed that the indicator is one-factorial (Isola et al., 2021; Leemann, Martelin et al., 2022; see Table 2). A weak experience of social inclusion is statistically associated with severe material deprivation, involuntary absence from the labour market, illness and disability, psychological distress and the experience of being othered due to being different from the assumed norm, among other things (Leemann, Nousiainen et al., 2022; Leemann and Virrankari, 2022). A weak experience of social inclusion predicts mental health problems (Haddadi Barzoki, 2024) and a strong experience is protective against anxiety (Repo et al., 2022).

As planetary citizens' sense of belonging varies temporally, spatially and ethically along with the variations brought by everyday life, we propose extending the human-centred notion of inclusion to planetary inclusion. This examines the nexus that unites the intragenerationally local and global, as well as human and more-than-human realities. Similar ideas have been described in new-materialism (Barad, 2007; Bennett, 2010), post-humanism (Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 1991), actor-network-theory (Latour, 2005), ecophenomenology (Abram, 1996; Bannon, 2011), ecofeminism (Plumwood, 1993; Warren, 1990) and common worlds pedagogies (Hodgins, 2019). Then, the focus of planetary inclusion is on the things and phenomena the connections create. All the connections can increase eudaimonic well-being of humans because they connect people to the greater whole. In practical terms, planetary inclusion is grounded on three elements: (a) continuum of past, present and future; (b) consequences of human action on local, regional and global levels; and (c) responsibility that overcomes barriers between human and more-than-human lifeworlds.

In Table 2 we compare the experiences of social inclusion scale items (Leemann, Martelin et al., 2022) with our suggested experiences of planetary inclusion scale items. The items we present aim to go beyond the social inclusion experience and expand towards a socio-ecological world view. Therefore, we seek to move from the social to the planetary realm. The statements are written in the first-person singular because the experience of being in the world is personal and experiential for the subject. However, planetary inclusion does not manifest through one-way goals, objectives and effects, and only becomes meaningful in life's multifaceted relativity and reciprocity.

Table 2. Comparison of the human-centred social inclusion scale and the proposed planetary inclusion scale

	Items of the experiences of social inclusion scale	**Items of the experiences of planetary inclusion scale**
1	I feel that what I do every day is significant.	I feel that my presence in the world is significant.
2	I get positive feedback on what I do.	I believe that those who will live after me will be satisfied with my choices.
3	I belong to a group or community that is important to me.	I feel I do not belong only in a community or a nation, but on a single and finite planet.
4	Other people need me.	I believe that the planet needs me to preserve future opportunities for a good life.
5	I can influence the course of my life.	I can influence the intertwined future of me and the planet.
6	I feel that my life has purpose.	I experience meaningfulness.
7	I can strive for things that are important to me.	I am engaged in broadening my sphere of care.
8	I get help when I really need it.	I belong to the world that supports my life.
9	I feel trusted.	I live in peace and harmony with the world.
10	I can influence some things in my living environment.	I am part of the intergenerational chain and contribute to the world to make it a better place.

In what follows, we demonstrate how ten claims of experiences of social inclusion translate into proposed planetary inclusion scale.

Claim 1 – 'I feel that what I do every day is significant'

In prolonged periods of hardship, people are prone to feelings of redundancy, uselessness and insignificance. Helping others or doing valuable things builds a sense of significance, combining meaning in life, a feeling of coherence and purpose (Martela and Steger, 2016). A sense of significance broadens future perspectives, motivates individuals to set and achieve goals, and increases their accountability for life. To highlight the intrinsic – instead of instrumental – value of every living being in the world, we propose an experience of planetary inclusion to reflect that: 'I feel that my presence in the world is significant'.

Claim 2 – 'I get positive feedback on what I do'

When positively tuned and hopeful about one's opportunities, one has better possibilities to achieve the goals set in life (Snyder, 2002). Positive feedback may later direct one towards further actions in the future (Martela and Steger, 2016). This claim translates into planetary citizenship by considering that one who is constructively connected with the reality outside of oneself can also imagine the consequences of one's choices, and understands that the feedback comes afterwards from future generations. We propose an experience of planetary inclusion to reflect that: 'I believe that those who will live after me will be satisfied with my choices'. This refers mainly to the temporal element of planetary citizenship.

Claim 3 – 'I belong to a group or community that is important for me'

Belonging to a preferred community involves recognition. One can also show benevolence in a community, which produces a sense of meaningfulness (Martela and Ryan, 2016). Imagined communities such as the worlds of novels or movies may also provide a sense of belonging. The reformulated claim extends the human-centred concepts of human belonging to cover all the intertwined lives of planetary beings. This overall well-being on Earth refers to planetary well-being (Kortetmäki et al., 2021). Therefore, we propose an experience of planetary inclusion to reflect that: 'I feel I do not belong only in a community or a nation, but on a single and finite planet'. This refers to the socio-ecological world view.

Claim 4 – 'Other people need me'

One must have good quality and reciprocal relationships to feel needed. Being needed also gives feelings of being a significant and recognised community member. Reciprocity motivates one to do good and show respect for others. After seeing this human-centred claim through the planetary citizenship lens, we inverted the claim so that the planet needs caring for. This means that every being on the planet is thus needed to preserve the opportunities for a good life. Constructive relationships with people and the natural environment advance this aim. Exploitative relationships are contrary to both inner and outer peace. Complete peace may remain elusive in a conflicted world. However, inner and outer peace contribute to the fullest possible flourishing experience. Therefore, an experience of planetary inclusion to reflect that: 'I believe that the planet needs me to preserve future opportunities for a good life'. This refers to planetary responsibility (Salonen and Åhlberg, 2012).

Claim 5 – 'I can influence the course of my life'

People must understand what is happening in their inner and outer lives to influence their lives (for example, Antonovsky, 1989). When they lack a sense of freedom, it reduces their belief in opportunities. Even if there are opportunities around, one may not see them (Zhao and Tomm, 2018). Alternatively, one might see the possibilities, but not dare to grasp them and put effort into achieving preferred aims. Regarding planetary inclusion, an individual life course and the planet matter in experiencing inclusion. Influencing one's life thus includes also acting for a good future by putting the planet first. This may refer, for instance, to shaping sustainable environments, conserving natural resources and nurturing biodiversity. Therefore, we propose experiences of planetary inclusion to be described as a claim that: I can influence the intertwined future of me and the planet. This represents overcoming barriers between humans and the rest of nature in planetary inclusion.

Claim 6 – 'I feel that my life has purpose'

Whereas senses of meaningfulness and being needed are often associated with short-term objectives, life's purpose is linked with long-term goals (Haushofer and Fehr, 2014; Isola et al., 2021). The purpose of life may emerge from taking care of and having control of someone; for example, as a parent, a grandparent, a supportive adult or an ecologically aware citizen (Isola et al., 2019). For planetary inclusion experiences, we propose the position of 'I experience meaningfulness' to highlight the significance of life itself and not as an instrumental reason or objective intention behind it.

Claim 7 – 'I can strive for things that are important to me'

To strive for subjectively valuable functions, one must have essential freedoms for financial exchange, social relations and political activity (Sen, 2009). In addition, one must feel economic security and access to education and services that enhance one's capabilities. Social circles often affect subjectively valuable functions. The broader the sense of belonging, the broader sphere of responsibility one takes on, and the more expansive the actions and care one is willing to engage in become (Salonen and Åhlberg, 2012). This is why, for experiences of planetary inclusion, we propose the position of 'I am engaged in broadening my sphere of care'. This refers to the consequences of human action globally and also in the more-than-human world.

Claim 8 – 'I get help when I really need it'

To receive help, people must belong to a good-quality community, such as a family, neighbourhood or local community, where help and support are readily available. In contrast, to receive institutional support, one must first be informed about the services that one is eligible to access and the related practices. The services must meet the expressed need and be manageable, for instance, accessible without obstacles and discrimination. In the framework of planetary inclusion, people, communities, economies and societies are embedded in the biosphere. Therefore, for experiences of planetary inclusion, we propose the position: 'I belong to the world that supports my life'.

Claim 9 – 'I feel trusted'

Population surveys typically measure trust in institutions such as the police or social and health care. Trust, however, is a two-way phenomenon that emerges and is built in interactions with people and institutions. Regarding social inclusion, mutual trust counts (Montgomery et al., 2023) and creates a feeling that one is recognised and accepted in any community. From the extended perspective beyond human life, it is not only people and institutions, but all beings in the world who should live in harmony. Thus, as a mostly human phenomenon, trust is not the best or most valid term for planetary inclusion. For experiences of planetary inclusion, we propose the position: 'I live in peace and harmony with the world'. This is a basic factor of eudaimonic well-being (Xi and Lee, 2021).

Claim 10 – 'I can influence some things in my living environment'

Besides a sense of belonging, social inclusion covers participation that enables one to contribute to the common good. Participation brings positive feedback from people. Participation and positive feedback, by implication, build a sense of meaningfulness. From the planetary perspective, a contribution to the common good is spatially and temporally broader. When one considers that they share the same world with their preceding and following generation, they are more willing to take responsibility for it. For experiences of planetary inclusion, we propose the position: 'I am part of the intergenerational chain and contribute to the world to make it a better place'. This captures the transgenerational orientation of planetary citizenship.

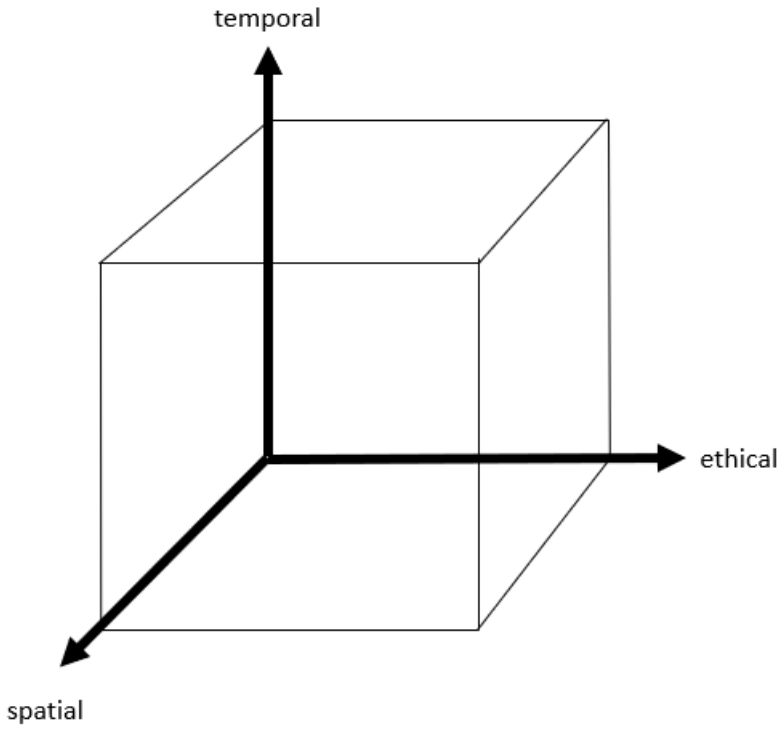
Conclusions

Human participation and belonging on the planetary level can be measured by the proposed experiences of planetary inclusion scale. This is important because humans' role on Earth has increased. Complex problems such as climate change, biodiversity loss and global social inequality require 'in-depth sustainability transformations, across all sectors, scales and actors' (Alamäki et al., 2024, p. 8). Fundamentally, these changes are about reconsidering the role of humans on Earth.

The core of the planetary citizenship is that of human–biosphere relationships that need to be renegotiated to strengthen responsible citizenship and ensure a caring for life on Earth. As a result of the renegotiating process, people understand that they live on a finite planet where the intergenerational local and global, as well as humans and the rest of nature, form an intertwined whole. Planetary citizenship refers to a broader lifeworld than the global lifeworld, as it crosses the border between humans and the rest of nature. Planetary citizenship manifests as agency that combines temporal, spatial and ethical orientations (Figure 1). People who learn to behave on Earth as planetary citizens:

1. Perceive the continuum of past, present and future.
2. Consider their actions' local, regional and global consequences.
3. Include human and the rest of nature in their sphere of responsibility.

Figure 1. Planetary citizenship is about a spatial, temporal and ethical lifeworld



Embracing the principles of planetary citizenship entails recognising the interconnectedness of all beings and the continuum of past, present and future. Individuals who embody this ethos conscientiously consider the repercussions of their actions at local, regional and global levels, extending their sphere of responsibility to encompass both human and non-human entities. This holistic perspective is echoed in the sentiments expressed through the items of the experiences of planetary inclusion scale (Table 2). Feeling a profound significance in their presence on Earth (Claim 1), individuals aspire to leave a positive legacy for future generations (Claim 2) and acknowledge their integral role in preserving the whole planet's well-being (Claims 3 and 4). They understand that their actions reverberate through the intricate web of life (Claim 5), contributing to the collective endeavour of creating a sustainable world (Claim 6). Through engagement with the world and a commitment to broader spheres of care (Claim 7), individuals cultivate a sense of belonging to the interconnected tapestry of existence (Claim 8), living in harmony with the planet (Claim 9) and actively shaping a better future for all (Claim 10).

The experiences of planetary inclusion scale provides a tool to encompass, concretise and talk about planetary citizenship that goes beyond a human-centred understanding of reality and being in the world. It refers to a lifeworld without boundaries between humans and the rest of nature. A planetary citizen recognises that human life is part of the more-than-human world, and not separate from it. One's life is temporally and spatially extensive and is part of a web in which various ties link different forms of life near and far. The circle of life includes the generations that lived before us and those that will come after us. Such a lifeworld broadens participation, a sense of belonging and inclusion, and helps one to know the spectrum of influencing possibilities better than that of a narrow and fragmented lifeworld (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

With the help of systems thinking, planetary citizens come to know that humans cannot exist without vital nature. Planetary citizenship ensures that humans can nurture the conditions for diverse life by imagining themselves in the position of the next generation. This type of eudaimonic well-being is

associated with human flourishing, which is 'the achievement of all goods, purposes, and ends of human existence' (Messer, 2013). This refers to the human growth process that is about values and dispositions. It enhances and maintains empathy that extends beyond one's immediate surroundings. In practical terms, planetary citizenship could be materialised by appreciating and acting on the connections that everyday life offers. Every identified connection to the world can enhance eudaimonic well-being by (a) increasing the subject's experience of belonging, (b) giving meaning to their life, (c) extending their sphere of care and (d) making them aware of their influence on the world. In search of eudaimonic well-being, humans act as rational, moral, emotional and social agents (Haybron, 2016, p. 41), part of a systemic entity, characterised by the fact that even small changes in one part of the system can cause significant changes in the entire system (Bunge, 1979; Clark and Szerszynski, 2021).

The planetary approach to human life is an internal growth affair where people evolve from various points of meaning-making, from having an individualist-impulsive mind, to gaining a socialised-conformist mind that is self-authoring and self-transforming (Kegan, 1982). Each successive stage gives them access to a wider and deeper perspective, and the ability to hold competing cognitive commitments in their consciousness. Despite being a natural function for humans, the ability to take a planetary viewpoint as a sustained capability is an achievement of internal, mental and cognitive evolution that is not to be taken for granted. It is a goal to be strived for, but requires, among other things, shifts in the ability to take and hold multiple, often seemingly contradictory and paradoxical perspectives. This could also be facilitated by adopting a radical shift in seeing oneself as an interconnected human whose sense of being is not to be found in an individualistic, separate self. In this way of seeing, the ontological nature of humans is that of a person among persons, fulfilling multiple roles, none of which necessitate a fixed, singular self that has the ethical world revolving around its solitary position (Garfield, 2022). In practical terms, this refers to a lifeworld where freedom and responsibility go together. As planetary citizens, our generation is obliged to take care of Earth so that future generations will have the same or better capabilities and freedoms than we have. Our responsibility is, therefore, a planetary responsibility that is not limited to humans and other animals or plants, but one that also includes ecosystems. In other words, we have both a freedom to breathe clean air and a responsibility for the cleanliness of the air.

Future research concerning planetary inclusion and planetary citizenship is needed. Collected side by side, the experiences of social and planetary inclusion scales build data on how the experiences of social inclusion and planetary inclusion are associated with each other. Also interesting is the question of whether a strong experience of planetary inclusion is, for example, related to a person's cultural background, income level, education, health or position in society. To take this forward, it is important to validate the suggested experiences of planetary inclusion scale in empirical research.

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Consent for publication statement

The authors declare that research participants' informed consent to publication of findings – including photos, videos and any personal or identifiable information – was secured prior to publication.

Conflicts of interest statement

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest. All efforts to sufficiently anonymise the authors during peer review of this article have been made. The authors declare no further conflicts with this article.

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