

The Democratic Inclusion of Nature*

Exploring the Categorical Extension of the All-Affected Principle

Jonas Hultin Rosenberg**

Abstract

This article contributes to the Rights of Nature debate by exploring the preconditions for extending political rights to non-human natural entities. This is done by exploring the scope of inclusion of the all-affected principle. It is argued that the categorical scope of inclusion of the principle could be stretched to include natural entities, including nonsentient organisms. Stretching the scope of inclusion in this way assumes that the class of interests worthy of political concern is interpreted in a maximally inclusive way. Doing this would imply that artifacts have a claim to democratic inclusion too.

Introduction

Rights of Nature involve the idea that nature or natural entities should be recognized as right-holders. Natural entities should be granted standing in themselves and not because natural entities matter to human rights-holders. “Standing” could refer to legal, moral, or political standing. The rights of nature debate has mainly been focused on granting legal and moral standing to nature or natural objects.¹ This article will focus on the *political standing of individual natural entities* (organisms and objects).² The democratic way of ensuring equal political concern is through democratic inclusion. As evident from historical practices of exclusion, individuals and

groups that are excluded from the demos risk having their interests disregarded in the political process. In this respect, political rights are instrumental in ensuring the protection of other rights and the interests that these rights are meant to protect.

As understood here, democratic inclusion concerns the scope of the demos (understood as the group of entities) that should govern or elect those who govern. Democratic inclusion has been widely discussed in recent scholarly literature within the field of normative democratic theory. The main focus has been on basic normative principles of democratic inclusion. These are the principles that specify under what conditions an individual entity has a claim to inclusion in a particular demos governing or electing those who govern a particular democratic state. The debate has essentially revolved around two major alternatives and different versions of these alternatives: the all-affected principle (AAP) and the all-subjected principle (ASP).³ According to

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** Associate professor, Political Science Department, Uppsala University.

¹ Daniel P. Corrigan and Marku Oksanen, “Rights of Nature: Exploring the Territory,” in *Rights of Nature: A Re-examination*, eds. Daniel P. Corrigan & Markku Oksanen (London: Routledge, 2021), 1–13.

² Focusing on individual natural entities, this article does not address the question of the political standing of nature as a whole or of entire ecosystems.

³ See Ludvig Beckman, *The Boundaries of Democracy: A Theory of Inclusion* (London: Routledge, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003359807>; Robert E. Goodin, “En-

the former, an entity has a claim to inclusion in the demos if and only if affected by political decisions taken by the demos or by those who are elected by the demos. According to the latter, an entity has a claim to inclusion in the demos if and only if subjected to political decisions taken by the demos or by those who are elected by the demos. The difference between the two is that the claim to inclusion, on AAP, is determined by the scope of the causal implications of political decisions while the claim to inclusion, on ASP, is determined by the scope of the binding rules, principles, or norms. Both AAP and ASP have been argued to stretch the boundaries of inclusion far beyond the current limits. For the question of the democratic inclusion of Nature, AAP is a particularly suitable point of departure since it opens the possibility of stretching the scope of inclusion to non-human entities.⁴

This article contributes to the Rights of Nature debate by exploring the normative and conceptual preconditions for extending political rights to non-human natural entities. This is done by investigating the scope of inclusion of AAP. The article will be structured as follows: in the first section, I will distinguish between three dimensions of inclusion, the spatial, the tempo-

franchising All Affected Interests, and Its Alternatives," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 35, no. 1 (Winter, 2007): 40–68; Robert E. Goodin, "Enfranchising all subjected, worldwide," *International Theory* 8, no. 3 (2016): 365–389; Jonas Hultin Rosenberg, "The All-Affected Principle Reconsidered," *Social Theory and Practice* 46, no. 4 (2020): 847–867; David Miller, "Democracy's domain," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 37, no. 3 (2009): 201–228; Laura Valentini, "No Global Demos, No Global Democracy? A Systemization and Critique," *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 4 (2014): 789–807.

⁴ Robert Garner, "Animals and Democratic Theory: Beyond an Anthropocentric Account," *Contemporary Political Theory* 16, no. 4 (Nov. 2017): 459–477; Ludvig Beckman and Jonas Hultin Rosenberg, "The Democratic Inclusion of Artificial Intelligence? Exploring the Patency, Agency and Relational Conditions for Demos Membership," *Philosophy and Technology* 35, no. 24 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-022-00525-3>.

ral, and the categorical. Thereafter, in the second section, I will develop the categorial scope of AAP by specifying its relational requirement and argue that on the most inclusive interpretation of the principle all entities with an interest that could be causally affected by political decisions have a claim to inclusion. In section three, I will introduce an additional patency requirement and argue that the scope of inclusion of AAP could be stretched to include nonsentient organisms. However, interpreted in this way AAP would also include artifacts (human-made objects). I conclude this section with a few remarks on the problem of political agency.

Three dimensions of the scope of inclusion of AAP

The present discussion addresses AAP as a principle of democratic inclusion – a principle that specify under what condition an individual entity has a claim to inclusion in a particular demos. AAP shares with its main rival, ASP, the notion that democratic inclusion is triggered by a relationship between an individual entity (human or non-human, natural or artificial) and a decision. AAP and ASP thus identify a *relational requirement* as a necessary condition for inclusion.⁵ The disagreement concerns the more precise formulation of this relational requirement. On AAP, an individual entity has a claim to inclusion in the demos governing or electing those who govern a particular state if and only if the entity is causally affected by political decisions taken in that state.

The scope of inclusion of different principles of democratic inclusion has been the subject of extensive discussion. The main focus in these discussions has been on the *spatial dimension* of inclusion. This dimension of inclusion concerns the territorial boundaries of the demos.

⁵ Beckman and Hultin Rosenberg, "The Democratic Inclusion of Artificial Intelligence?"

One key issue is whether or not the boundaries of the demos should follow the territorial boundaries of the state. AAP has been argued to stretch the scope of inclusion beyond the territorial boundaries of the state by suggesting that all entities that are causally affected by political decisions taken by a state (directly by the demos or by those who are elected by the demos) have a claim to inclusion regardless of whether these entities reside within the territorial boundaries of the state or not.

The spatial inclusiveness of AAP depends on how it is more precisely formulated. There are different versions of the principle with radically different implications in this regard. The differences between these versions consists in different specifications of the relational requirement of AAP. As specified above, the relation that triggers democratic inclusion is the relation between an individual entity (human or non-human, biological or artificial) and a state such that the former is causally affected by a decision take by the latter. This specification is close to what appears to be the most common specification in the literature. The relation that triggers inclusion is the relation of an individual entity being affected by an *actual decision* taken by the state (directly by the demos or by those who are elected by the demos). When specified in this way, all individual entities who are affected by the actual decisions taken by the state have a claim to inclusion. However, as I have argued elsewhere, this version of AAP can be considered under-inclusive because it requires the exclusion of entities that would have benefitted from a decision that could have been taken but that was not. This version of AAP arguably requires us to do something that we cannot do and therefore violates the principle of ought implies can.⁶

⁶ Hultin Rosenberg, "The All-Affected Principle Reconsidered."

The main alternative position in the literature is that *possible decisions*, not actual decisions, should determine democratic inclusion and exclusion. This is a view that Robert Goodin introduced and defended in his "Enfranchising All-affected Interests and its Alternatives."⁷ Specifying the relational requirement in this way, AAP requires the inclusion of "anyone who might possibly be affected by any possible outcome of any possible question that might possibly appear on any possible ballot."⁸ Since the focus falls not on actual decisions, but on possible decisions, the important issue is not what is decided, but what could possibly be decided. Specifying the relational requirement of AAP in this way avoids the problems mentioned above.

Both the actual decision and possible decision versions of AAP focus on decisions, not on non-decisions. This is important with respect to the actual decision version of AAP since the domain of all actual decisions does not include any non-decisions. This is not as obviously important with respect to the possible decision version of the principle since a non-decision could be understood as a decision that could have been taken, but was not. Understood in this way, the domain of all possible decisions is identical to the domain of all decisions plus the domain of all non-decisions. It is not necessary to understand a non-decision in this inclusive way, however. An alternative understanding of a non-decision is that it is a decision that was available to the state (or more precisely to those who govern the state) in question but was not taken.

⁷ Goodin, "Enfranchising All Affected Interests." See also David Owen, "Constituting the polity, constituting the demos: on the place of the all affected interests principle in democratic theory and in resolving the democratic boundary problem," *Ethics & Global Politics* 5, no. 3 (2012): 129–152; Hultin Rosenberg, "The All-Affected Principle Reconsidered."

⁸ Goodin, "Enfranchising All Affected Interests," 55.

This implies a clear alternative to the actual and the possible decision versions, whereby inclusion and exclusion should be determined neither by what the state does, nor by what the state could possibly do, but instead by what the latter does together with what it has the political power to do, but abstains from doing. The key here concerns what the state (those who govern the state) has the political power to do. That is to say that the democratic state is responsible only for those aspects of the current state of affairs that it has the political power to change. With this interpretation of AAP, all those who are affected by an aspect of the current state of affairs that the state (those who govern the state) has the political power to change, but has nonetheless left unchanged, are in the relation that triggers inclusion. That which the state (those who govern the state) has the political power to do consists of what it has the capacity and authority to do. Political power, as understood in the present discussion, is thus a combination of might and right (understood as a right to rule).⁹

This version of AAP that focuses on what the collective agent has the capacity and authority to do differs from the actual decision version in that it equates decisions and non-decisions, while it differs from the possible decision version in that it differentiates between that which the state could possibly do and that which it has the political power to do. The actual decision version, the possible decision version, and the non-decision version are thus three distinct views concerning what the state does that triggers democratic inclusion. How much AAP stretches the spatial boundaries of inclusion depends on how the relational requirement is specified in this regard. The version that focuses on possible

decisions is the most inclusive one while the version that focuses on actual decisions is the least inclusive one.

The spatial boundaries of AAP are important when determining which (if any) currently existing individual natural (non-human) entities to include in which demos. In order to fully specify the scope of inclusion of AAP, two additional dimensions need to be taken into account – the *temporal dimension* and the *categorical dimension*.¹⁰ The temporal dimension concerns whether AAP stretches the boundaries of inclusion beyond currently existing entities (human or non-human). In this regard, it has been argued that AAP requires the inclusion of both future and past generations.¹¹

More important for this article is the categorical dimension. The categorical dimension concerns what type of entities could have a claim to democratic inclusion. Currently, democratic inclusion is the privilege of human beings. However, democratic inclusion does not have to be reserved for humans. This “speciesist” assumption of democracy is increasingly under pressure.¹²

¹⁰ See Beckman and Hultin Rosenberg, “The Democratic Inclusion of Artificial Intelligence?”

¹¹ For scholarship examining implications for future generations, see Andrés Cruz, “The Case for Democratic Patients: Epistemic Democracy Goes Green,” *ethic@-An international Journal for Moral Philosophy* 17, no. 3 (2018): 423–444; Goodin, “Enfranchising All Affected Interests”; Clare Heyward, “Can the all-affected principle include future persons? Green deliberative democracy and the non-identity problem,” *Environmental Politics* 17, no.4 (2008): 625–643. For scholarship examining implications for past generations, see Goodin, “Enfranchising All Affected Interests”; Andreas Bengtson, “Dead People and the All-Affected Principle,” *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 37, no. 1 (2020): 89–102.

¹² Beckman and Hultin Rosenberg, “The Democratic Inclusion of Artificial Intelligence?”; Garner, “Animals and Democratic Theory”; Robert E. Goodin, “Enfranchising the Earth, and Its Alternatives,” *Political Studies* 44, no. 5 (1996): 835–849; Will Kymlicka and Sue Donaldson, “Locating animals in political philosophy,” *Philosophy Compass* 11, no. 11 (2016): 692–701.

⁹ This version of AAP is developed in more detail by Hultin Rosenberg, “The All-Affected Principle Reconsidered.”

AAP is usually formulated in the literature as a principle that requires the inclusion of “all” or “everyone” relevantly affected without further specifying who is included in “all” or “everyone.” This could be taken to imply that all entities who are affected should be included, which would if taken literally, include currently excluded entities such as infants, non-human animals, artificial intelligences, corporations, and natural organisms and objects. If understood in this way, AAP would be radically inclusive in the categorical sense and challenge common practices of inclusion and exclusion in a fundamental sense.

However, AAP is not necessarily this inclusive. An alternative and far less inclusive view is that only adult human beings are eligible for democratic inclusion.¹³ Even if other types of entities were affected by decisions taken by the state (directly by the demos or by those who are elected by the demos), they should nevertheless not be included in the demos. This view concerning eligibility for inclusion appears to be what David Miller has in mind when he claims that the most inclusive version of AAP means “including every (competent adult) human being in the demos.”¹⁴ In order to address the questions of the democratic inclusion of nature, the categorical dimension of the scope of inclusion of AAP needs to be elaborated in more detail.

The categorical scope of AAP

Despite the fact that the categorical extension is rarely discussed, the literature on AAP offers some guidance on how to interpret the principle

in this regard.¹⁵ As specified in the previous section, all and only those who are causally affected by actual/available/possible decisions have a claim to inclusion. Being affected is usually specified as being better or worse off. This general characterization could be further specified. This general notion of what it means to be affected could be combined with a number of different specifications of better or worse off. Two aspects in particular of the general notion need to be specified, namely, what it means to be worse off, and how much worse off one needs to be in order to be affected in the relevant sense.

The statement above could then be reformulated as follows: an entity is relevantly affected by a decision (or non-decision) if that entity is *sufficiently* better or worse off in the *relevant sense* as a consequence of that decision (or non-decision). Accordingly, an individual entity has a claim to inclusion on AAP if significantly better or worse off as a consequence of decisions (or non-decisions) taken by a state (directly by the demos or by those who are elected by the demos). It is debated whether inclusion is triggered by actual, possible, or foreseeable consequences.¹⁶ This is important when determining which individual natural entities that should be included in which demos (the spatial scope of inclusion of AAP). It does not decide the more fundamental question of whether natural entities at all could have a claim to democratic inclusion. In other words, it does not decide the categorical scope of inclusion of AAP.

Whether we care about actual, possible, or foreseeable consequences, only entities that could be better or worse off (in any meaningful sense) could have a claim to democratic inclusion. A reasonable starting point is that only en-

¹³ Limiting the scope of inclusion of AAP in this way could be done by combining AAP with some additional principle that excludes non-humans and young humans or by assuming a speciesist and ageist limitation on the scope of application of principles of democratic inclusion.

¹⁴ Miller, “Democracy’s domain,” 215.

¹⁵ For an exception see Beckman and Hultin Rosenberg, “The Democratic Inclusion of Artificial Intelligence?”

¹⁶ Hultin Rosenberg, “The All-Affected Principle Reconsidered.”

tities with *interests* could be better or worse off. Understood in this way, the relational requirement of AAP implies that only entities with an interest could have a claim to democratic inclusion. On this understanding of AAP, the scope of inclusion, categorically understood, is determined by what type of entities have an interest that could be causally affected by political decisions taken by a state (directly by the demos or by those who are elected by the demos).

In order to determine the categorical scope of inclusion of AAP, we need to specify what type of entities could be attributed interests. An inclusive interpretation is that all entities with welfare have interests. Theories of welfare can be divided into mentalistic views, satisfaction views, and objective-list views.¹⁷ Mentalistic and satisfaction views are subjective in the sense that “having cognitive capacity is a necessary condition for having welfare.”¹⁸ The objective list view is not committed to this limitation. Based on this view, the scope of entities that *could* be attributed interests include not only human and non-human sentient beings but also non-sentient organisms. It does not include natural objects.

John Basl develops an objective-list account of welfare that includes nonsentient organisms.¹⁹ In this account, nonsentient organisms are teleologically organized in the sense that these entities have ends. Something is bad for the organism if it frustrates these ends and good for the organism if it promotes these ends.²⁰ According to Basl, this teleological account meets three reasonable requirements on an account of welfare.²¹ The teleological account is nonarbitrary, nonderivative, and subject-related. It is an account of

what is *objectively specifiably* good for nonsentient organisms not because it is *derivatively* good for some sentient being but because it is good for the nonsentient organism itself.²² The teleological account of welfare suggested by Basl is etiological in the sense that “the ends of an organism are defined directly in terms of the organism’s selection history.”²³

The teleological account of interests suits our purpose by offering a basis for the maximally inclusive interpretation of the relational requirement of AAP. A nonsentient organism is affected by the consequences of a political decision if the political decision frustrates or promotes the ends of the organism. The organism is better off if the decision promotes the ends of the organism and worse off if the decision frustrates the ends of the organism. Some natural objects are not teleologically organized and therefore have no ends that could be promoted or frustrated as a consequence of political decisions. Stones reasonably fall within this category. Interpreted in this way, the categorical scope of AAP stretches the boundaries of inclusion far beyond the human domain. Non-human sentient beings and nonsentient organisms can have a claim to inclusion. Natural objects that are not teleologically organized cannot.

Political patiency and political agency

The relational requirement of AAP could be interpreted to imply that all entities (sentient or non-sentient) that are teleologically organized have a claim to democratic inclusion. This makes AAP highly inclusive (in a categorical sense) – much more inclusive than how the principle is typically understood. As Beckman and Hultin Rosenberg suggested, AAP could be argued to have an implicit patiency requirement that

¹⁷ John Basl, *The Death of the Ethic of Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

¹⁸ Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*, 46.

¹⁹ Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*.

²⁰ Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*.

²¹ Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*.

²² Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*.

²³ Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*, 81.

could potentially limit the categorical scope of inclusion.²⁴ Having an interest that is causally affected by political decisions taken by a collective agent is necessary but not sufficient for having a claim to democratic inclusion. To have a claim to democratic inclusion, the interest must be of a certain kind. It must be *an interest that is worthy of political concern*. There are good reasons to assume a mentalistic view on political patiency which means that only entities with cognitive capacities that are required for *experiencing* welfare, harm, pleasure, and pain qualify as political patients with interests worthy of political concern.²⁵ This *sentientist* interpretation of AAP is more inclusive than the *anthropocentric* interpretation that reserves political patiency for humans.

In this section, I will explore the reasonableness of a more inclusive, *biocentric*, interpretation. Alfonso Donoso's argument that nonsentient organisms have interests that are worthy of political concern provides a suitable starting point for such an endeavor.²⁶ In Donoso's account, the set of interests that are worthy of political concern cannot be reduced to cognitive states.²⁷ In this sense, Donoso rejects the mentalistic view. Nonsentient (as well as sentient) organisms have biological *needs* and *functions*. To fulfill these needs and functions is in the interest of all organisms (independent of their mental states). As put by Donoso, "to not be burnt or chopped down is in the interest of a lemon tree, even though the lemon tree cannot desire or take an interest in

not being burned or chopped down."²⁸ Donoso extended the scope of entities with interests worthy of political concern to include all *living organisms*. Understood this way, all living organisms are political patients. Donoso does not conclude that nonsentient organisms have a claim to inclusion, however. To qualify for democratic inclusion, entities need a capacity for democratic agency.²⁹ However, AAP does not contain an agency requirement. It could perhaps be argued that an agency requirement is implicit in the rationale behind AAP.³⁰ I will return to the issue of agency later in this section.

According to Donoso's account, all entities with welfare have interests worthy of political concern.³¹ As specified by Donoso, nonsentient organisms have welfare because they have needs *and* functions.³² The needs of the nonsentient organism seem to be perfectly reducible to its functions, however. Of course, it makes sense to say that a plant *needs* water and light. But that does not answer the question of why water and light are good for the plant. In this sense, needs are similar to integrity, stability, growth, and reproduction discussed by Basl as alternatives to ends.³³ To answer that question, we must refer to its ends. Water and light are good for the plant because water and light are essential for the plant to fulfill its ends.

Interpreted in this way, Donoso's account of the welfare of nonsentient organisms is teleological (although not described by Donoso in this way).³⁴ Being a teleological account, the welfare of an organism is given by its ends. Follow-

²⁴ Beckman and Hultin Rosenberg, "The Democratic Inclusion of Artificial Intelligence?"

²⁵ Beckman and Hultin Rosenberg, "The Democratic Inclusion of Artificial Intelligence?"; see also Bauböck, 2018; Ben Saunders, "Defining the demos," *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 11, no. 3 (2012): 280–301.

²⁶ Alfonso Donoso, "Representing Non-Human Interests," *Environmental Values* 26, no. 5 (2017): 607–628, <https://doi.org/10.3197/096327117X15002190708137>.

²⁷ Donoso, "Representing Non-Human Interests."

²⁸ Donoso, "Representing Non-Human Interests," 614.

²⁹ Donoso, "Representing Non-Human Interests"; see also Saunders, "Defining the demos."

³⁰ Beckman and Hultin Rosenberg, "The Democratic Inclusion of Artificial Intelligence?"

³¹ Donoso, "Representing Non-Human Interests."

³² Donoso, "Representing Non-Human Interests."

³³ Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*.

³⁴ Donoso, "Representing Non-Human Interests."

ing Basl, its ends are given by natural selection. Nonsentient organisms have welfare by virtue of being teleologically organized.³⁵

Donoso manages to stretch the scope of interests worthy of political concern to include not only sentient beings but also nonsentient living organisms.³⁶ However, if the aim was to include *all and only* living organisms Donoso's account is over-inclusive.³⁷ If nonsentient organisms qualify as political patients, other entities (including artifacts) that are teleologically organized also qualify as political patients.

As successfully argued by Basl, the etiological account of teleological welfare could be generalized to include entities that biocentrists (like Donoso) intend to exclude.³⁸ Basl's argument concerns the moral and not the political considerability of nonsentient organisms.³⁹ However, his argument has clear implications for the position defended by Donoso and for the question of the categorical extension of AAP. Basl argues that artifacts have welfare and that there is no coherent case to be made for an asymmetry of moral considerability between (nonsentient) organisms and artifacts.⁴⁰ He starts by providing an argument for the welfare of artifacts. Artifacts are teleologically organized in the sense that "they are oriented toward achieving particular outcomes or goal-states."⁴¹ The welfare of artifacts can be defined in the same way as the welfare of organisms; something is good for an artifact if it promotes one of its ends and bad if it frustrates one of its ends.⁴² He goes on to argue that there is no difference between organisms and artifacts which is of such a kind that it

can justify treating the welfare of the former as different (in terms of moral considerability) from the welfare of the latter.⁴³ Especially important in this context is the living/nonliving distinction since it seems to be the most plausible candidate for a substantial difference between artifacts and organisms. However, there seems to be no other quality that all living things have together that is not also shared by some artifacts.⁴⁴

If what has been suggested so far is true, the categorical scope of inclusion of AAP can be stretched to include not only sentient beings but also nonsentient organisms (as has been suggested by for example Cruz).⁴⁵ However, there seems to be no coherent formulation of the principle such that *all and only* (sentient and nonsentient) organisms have a claim to democratic inclusion. Adherents of the biocentric interpretation of AAP are forced to either exclude some (or perhaps all) nonsentient organisms *or* include (at least some) artifacts. In the environmental ethics literature, this is sometimes referred to as the "Artifact *Reductio ad absurdum*."⁴⁶ Biocentrists might be uncomfortable biting the bullet and extending the scope of democratic inclusion in this way. It is nevertheless the case that AAP could be interpreted as a principle according to which all living natural entities have a claim to inclusion.

It could be argued that meeting the relational and the patiency requirements is necessary but not sufficient for democratic inclusion. An additional *agency requirement* is arguably implicit in the normative rationales for democratic inclusion on the AAP.⁴⁷ Having an interest

³⁵ Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*.

³⁶ Donoso, "Representing Non-Human Interests."

³⁷ Donoso, "Representing Non-Human Interests."

³⁸ Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*.

³⁹ Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*.

⁴⁰ Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*.

⁴¹ Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*, 131.

⁴² Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*.

⁴³ Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*.

⁴⁴ Basl, *Death of the Ethic of Life*.

⁴⁵ Cruz, "The Case for Democratic Patients."

⁴⁶ Joel MacClellan, "Is Biocentrism Dead? Two Live Problems for Life-Centered Ethics," *The Journal of Value Inquiry* (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10790-023-09954-5>.

⁴⁷ Beckman and Hultin Rosenberg, "The Democratic Inclusion of Artificial Intelligence?."

that is causally affected and worthy of political concern is not enough to have a claim to inclusion. Democratic inclusion is about extending political influence to entities whose interests are affected as a consequence of political decisions. A minimal capacity for political agency is necessary for exercising political influence (independent of how the democratic decision procedures are organized). Nonsentient organisms lack this capacity and do therefore not have a claim to inclusion. The same is true for most artifacts. On this account, we still ought to take the interests of nonsentient organisms and artifacts that are teleologically organized into account when making political decisions. However, some artifacts (certain AI-powered systems) might possess a capacity for some kind of political agency. Assuming that this is true, the “biocentric” interpretation of AAP would (counterintuitively) exclude all nonsentient organisms and include some artifacts.

Concluding remarks

The categorical scope of inclusion of AAP could be stretched to include non-human natural entities (both sentient non-human beings and nonsentient organisms). This interpretation of the

principle could be substantiated by an etiological account of teleological welfare and a conception of political considerability according to which all entities with welfare have an interest worthy of political concern. On this account, nonsentient organisms meet the relational requirement of AAP in the sense that they could be better or worse off (having their ends promoted or frustrated) as a consequence of political decisions. Nonsentient organisms also meet the patiency requirement assuming that all (non-derivative) interests are interests worthy of political concern. On this interpretation of AAP, all entities with teleological interests (i.e. entities with ends) sentient and nonsentient, artificial and biological have a claim to inclusion. Adding an agency requirement that does not follow from the principle but could be justified by the normative underpinnings of the principle, AAP does not require the inclusion of biological or artificial non-sentient entities unless these develop with a minimal capacity for political agency. This is highly unlikely in the case of biological non-sentient entities but is quite possible in the case of artificial non-sentient entities.

