



# Reclamation and Authorization: Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa on in-group Restriction

Pasi Valtonen<sup>1</sup>

Received: 9 April 2023 / Revised: 4 January 2024 / Accepted: 5 April 2024 /

Published online: 28 May 2024

© The Author(s) 2024

## Abstract

It is generally thought that the reclamation of slurs is restricted to the in-group. Bianca Cepollaro and Dan Lopez de Sa challenge this assumption by presenting cases in which slurs are successfully reclaimed by members of out-groups. I agree with the idea that the out-groups often participate in reclamation. In this paper, I present a view which accommodates the fact that sometimes out-groups successfully reclaim slurs. At the same time, the view preserves the central role of the in-group in reclamation.

**Keywords** Slurs · Reclamation · Authorization · In-group restriction

## 1 Introduction

In reclamation, slurs are used to express pride and solidarity instead of the conventional derogation. It is widely held that reclamation is restricted to the target group. Only members of an in-group can reclaim a slur targeting them. However, Bianca Cepollaro and Dan Lopez de Sa question this in-group restriction with an impressive amount of evidence. On the basis of the evidence, they argue that the in-group restriction “merely approximates the correct extension of the phenomenon”. Moreover, the restriction “impedes further research into more complex conditions that need to be in place for successful reclamation”. They conclude that the restriction deprives valuable theorizing concerning reclamation (Cepollaro & Lopez de Sa, 2022). I argue that even though sometimes members of an out-group do successfully reclaim slurs, as Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa show, the in-group still has a key role in reclamation. It is argued that the in-group has the authority to assess what counts as appropriated use of slurs.

The key difference is the nature of the analysis. Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa offer a contextual analysis of reclamation but I aim to show that their analysis fails to capture the central role of in-group. I go on to outline a view which does support the idea that

---

✉ Pasi Valtonen  
pablo.valtonen@gmail.com; pasi.valtonen@tuni.fi

<sup>1</sup> Tampere University, Tampere, Finland

the in-group has an essential role in reclamation. The dialectical crux turns out to be the contextual part as my analysis is contextually insensitive. Admittedly, reclamation does involve contextual variation but still my authority-based view anchors reclamation to the role of the in-group as I argue that the in-group authorization is the invariant part of reclamation. Although this is a weaker version of the in-group restriction, it is still a more plausible version because it accommodates the evidence presented by Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa.

## 2 Out-Group Reclamation Cases and the Contextual Analysis

Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa challenge the in-group restriction with cases of successful reclamations which involve out-groups:

- (C1) Men often participate in ‘Slut walks’, which are seen as events to reclaim the misogynist slur.
- (C2) In the TV series, *True Blood*, a character, who identifies himself as a man, successfully uses the term ‘bitch’ in the positive sense. He also applies the term to himself.
- (C3) In response to a homophobic attack, a photo-petition was launched in 2020. People were asked to write on social media “-fasci+froci” (“less fascists, more faggots”). Many people, regardless of their sexual orientation, joined the campaign. Thereby, people, regardless of their sexual orientation, participated in reclaiming the slur.
- (C4) (a) In 2015, there was an Italian newspaper article about five Italian immigrants from Sicily who were lynched in Louisiana in 1899. The title was: “Siamo tutti negri” (“We are all Ns”). According to Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa, the writer was most likely white.  
 (b) In 2009, a posting on a website dedicated to fans of the Italian football club Internazionale Milan condemned a racist attack against Mario Balotelli, a black Italian player, with the title ‘Siamo tutti “negri italiani”’ (“We are all “Italian Ns”).

I agree with Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa that these are successful reclamations by members of out-groups (Cepollaro & Lopez de Sa, 2022). First, it seems to me that other types of appropriated uses can be ruled out. It is widely held that in reclamation slurs become polysemous. In addition to the conventional negative meaning, in reclamation slurs also acquire a positive meaning (see Ritchie, 2017). The polysemy makes reclamation a distinctive type of appropriation. It seems clear that in the above cases slurs are used in the positive sense which is a definite sign that the above cases are about reclaiming slurs. Given that the above cases indeed are instances of reclamation, one might wonder if there is an alternative explanation for them. For that end, Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa discuss Katherine Ritchie’s alternative explanation. According to her insider view, in some contexts gay men count as gay women and this explains the reclamation of ‘dyke’ by gay men (Cepollaro & Lopez de Sa, 2022 and Ritchie, 2017). To elaborate Ritchie’s view, she argues that slurs include an indexical element ‘we’. This is especially noticeable in reclamation as the in-group meaning of ‘bitch’ in reclamation is something like “we women are laudable for being women”. The indexicality

of ‘we’ ties the positive meaning and the in-group use together. Given this, we then have two possible interpretations for the out-group reclamatory use. According to the first interpretation, a member of the out-group does not have access to the positive meaning just because out-group members do not count as insiders. That is, outsiders by default are not part of ‘we’. Nevertheless, given the right contextual setting, “it is clear to all addressees that no offense was intended and that the speaker meant to convey solidarity” (Ritchie, 2017). This is indeed a possibly interpretation of C1. The participation of men in ‘Slut Walks’ could be seen as an endorsement of women’s reclamation of ‘slut’. While this is a tempting interpretation for me just because it does not challenge the in-group restriction, I am still admitting, perhaps for the sake of argument, that C1 is a genuine case of out-group reclamation. If this is admitted, then Ritchie’s second option becomes very relevant. She says that, alternatively, sometimes out-group members can reclaim a slur, not just endorse someone else’s effort to reclaim a slur. In this case, when a man reclaims ‘slut’, the context is such that it “allows a speaker to count as satisfying the presupposition that he is a member of the group targeted by the slur” (Ritchie, 2017). According to Ritchie, this is dependent on a contextually sensitivity interpretation of the term ‘woman’.

While Ritchie’s alternative view is interesting, I agree with Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa in that an authority-based view is still more plausible. To illustrate, in C2 the character’s appearance could be described as genderfluid. In this case, I find it plausible that the character has authorization from the in-group, women, to reclaim the slurring term, perhaps because of his genderfluid appearance. I find this explanation more plausible than the explanation that in the reclamatory situations he counts as a woman. After all, the character identifies himself as a man despite his genderfluid appearance. Nevertheless, it turns out that the details regarding the authorization are very important as I disagree with the details of Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa’s authority-based contextual analysis of reclamation.

Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa say that their evidence shows that reclamation is relational between the speakers and the audience. Namely, it is dependent on the audience’s uptake and this applies both to the in-group and to anyone who is authoritative in the context. According to them, a successful reclamation depends on the audience’s response and that settles whether the reclamer is authoritative enough. (Cepollaro & Lopez de Sa, 2022; see also Cepollaro, 2017). This analysis challenges the in-group restriction. Even though in-groups are often involved in reclamation, the restriction is still off the mark because there is a wider group of authoritative speakers who can reclaim a slur. While agreeing with this claim, there is a further aspect in Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa’s view which I do not agree with. It seems to me that the consequence of Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa’s contextual analysis is that in certain cases the involvement of the in-group could be completely by-passed. Consider a group of gay men reclaiming ‘dyke’ and furthermore an audience of heterosexual people. In this case, the reclaimers are not the target of the slur. So, the instance of reclamation does not depend on the in-group, gay women. Rather, the contextual analysis predicts that the reclamation can be successful depending on the audience’s response or uptake.

In actuality, Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa anticipate this kind of objection. They point out:

Importantly, removing the in-group restriction does not provide any support or theoretical backing for offensive uses of slurs (by either in-groups or out-groups), whether these are due to insensitivity, erroneous assessment, or bad faith, nor does it imply any downplaying of the special role that members of the target group may end up playing vis-à-vis the ultimate validation of successful reclamation. (Cepollaro & Lopez de Sa, 2022)

Agreed that their analysis does not give any support or justification for the offensive uses of slurs. Their claim applies only to reclamation, to the positive uses slurs. Still, I have a reservation concerning their second point as it seems to me that, at least to some extent, their analysis does downplay the special role of the target group. I claim that, in order to account for the special role of the target group, that role should be incorporated into the theory. Since their analysis is contextual, perhaps it could be one of the parameters. At the present stage, the parameters include only the speaker and the audience's uptake and that is what allows the possibility of a situation in which the in-group is by-passed.

### 3 In-Group Authorization and Identity Ownership

As already pointed out, I agree that the cases above are cases of genuine reclamation, but I disagree with Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa's contextual analysis because, in my view, their analysis does not recognize the role of the in-group in its full extent. To illustrate, it is implausible that the use of the N-word by white people is reclamatory if a totally white audience took it as such. Admittedly, Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa could fix this issue by including the role of the in-group to the contextual parameters. In fact, they very well acknowledge that their view is not yet "a full-fledged theory of authoritativeness". They say that it is still unclear "what parameters should be factored in" in their contextual analysis. (Cepollaro & Lopez de Sa, 2022) If this is indeed the case, then it highlights the contrast between their contextual analysis and my context-insensitive proposal. My suggestion takes the one feature that is constant in reclamation, the special status of the in-group, and builds the view on that. Given the polysemy involved with reclamation, the question then comes down to the employment of the positive meaning, and the proposed view says that the in-group controls access to the positive meaning. I argue that the in-group is always in an authoritative position to assess the use of the positive meaning of a slur. This entails that sometimes members of an in-group can authorize out-groups to participate in reclamation. The entailment then explains the above cases while still acknowledging the special status of the in-group in reclamation. This authorization does not depend on the audience. Rather, it is an agreement between the in-group and the out-group reclaimers. Admittedly, the manifestation of the authorization may depend on contextual factors but that does not change the fact that, according to the proposed view, the one constant feature in reclamation is the authorization from the in-group. Let us examine the proposed view more carefully by contrasting it with Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa's contextual analysis. They comment with regard to C1:

As revealed by a quick look at the signs displayed on the marches, even men are sometimes authorized in these contexts to hold a sign saying ‘slut pride’ or ‘slut walk’. It is not that those men count as women in this situation; [still,] they are recognized and accepted as being in a position to reclaim this sexist slur. (Cepollaro & Lopez de Sa, 2022)

Sometimes out-group members are authorized to reclaim a slur. The issue is the source of this authorization. For Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa, it is a contextual matter; in reclamation, “being authoritative is not something absolute but context-relative” (Cepollaro & Lopez de Sa, 2022). This is the part I disagree with. I think that the authority of the in-group is context-insensitive in reclamation. If a member of the targeted in-group uses the positive meaning of a slur, reclamation cannot fail.<sup>1</sup> Neither do I think that the authorization is contextual in the sense that it is relational between the authoritative group and the audience’s uptake in a specific situation. I think that the authorization comes from the in-group. It is the in-group that authorizes suitable members of the out-group to reclaim a slur.

The idea of authorization by the in-group is not new. Robin Jeshion applies the idea to the reclamation of slurs like ‘queer’. She calls it pride reclamation. The authorization by the in-group stems from what Jeshion calls identity ownership of the in-group. It is reasonable to argue that slurs involved with pride reclamation are no longer polysemous. It seems to me that ‘queer’ has lost its derogatory meaning, and its meaning could be considered neutral. However, she explicitly denies that the authority view applies to the reclamation of the polysemous slurs in which we are interested. According to her, identity ownership does not apply to the reclamation of slurs like the N-word. She calls it insular reclamation. Hence, insular reclamation is not authorized for out-groups. Only members of the in-group can reclaim the N-word (Jeshion, 2020). Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa’s cases contradict this because the cases involve insular reclamations. In the light of Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa’s evidence, the proposed view extends the authorization also to polysemous slurs. Jeshion says two things about insular reclamation: it does not express pride, and it does not involve identity ownership (Jeshion, 2020). I disagree with both claims. I do not see any reason why the positive meaning of the N-word could not be something like ‘standing proud against oppression’. When the positive meaning of the N-word is construed in this way, the reclamation of the N-word is compatible with identity ownership. The target group takes control of the slur: the meaning of the slur coheres with the way the target group sees and represents itself.

Jeshion also argues that reclamation should be seen as a process (Jeshion, 2020). To explain the difference between ‘queer’ and the N-word, my view latches on to this processual aspect of reclamation. According to my view, the goal of the process is always the neutralization of the slur word. Hence, the polysemy between the negative and the positive meaning is just a stage in the process of being neutralized. Therefore, the term ‘queer’ and the N-word are in different stages. The former is completely

<sup>1</sup> Echoing Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa’s first point in the quote in previous section, this should not be understood as a justification for the derogatory uses even by the members of the in-group. For example, Chris Rock’s stand-up line “I love black people but I hate Ns” has been considered objectionable just because the word is used in the derogatory sense but if the slur word is used in the positive sense by a member of targeted group, then reclamation cannot fail.

reclaimed and neutralized. Therefore, it is also available for everyone and the in-group restriction no longer applies to it. Whereas, the N-word is still in polysemous stage and for that reason the reclamation is constrained by the in-group restriction.

## 4 Detailing the Authorization View

### 4.1 Proactive Authorization

According to proposed authority-based view, the one constant factor in reclamation is the role of the in-group. It is the in-group that always authorizes members of the out-group to reclaim a slur. However, I also admitted that the manifestation of the authorization may be context-sensitive. In the following, I will discuss two contextually depended manifestations of the in-group authorization. There might be more than two ways the authorization can be manifested, but the two are relevant because they are enough to account for the data presented by Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa.

First, let us revisit the example in which gay men reclaimed the slur ‘dyke’. It is actually a simplified version of an example provided by Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa. The full story is that, in Gay & Lesbian March in Washington in 1993, three men were observed carrying signs which said “We like dykes” and “Fags in support of dykes”. (Cepollaro & Lopez de Sa, 2022). I suggest that marches and public protests are perfect examples proactive authorization as participation can be granted or denied. Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa refer to a newspaper article which describes an incident in which members of a Zionist group were ejected from Chicago Dyke March because they were carrying Pride flags adorned with the Star of David. The organizers said that the reason for this was that the nature of the event was anti-Zionist. In this case, it seems clear that the organizers were not ready to authorize “Zionists” to reclaim ‘dyke’. The newspaper also says that initially SlutWalk Chicago banned the Star of David in signs but later allowed religious symbols but banned national flags.<sup>2</sup> To me, these cases show that there is a proactive authorization in a form of granting or denying access to reclamatory events.<sup>3</sup> The nature of the proactive authorization can also be consultational. C2 exemplifies this as it is well known that the creator of True Blood, Alan Ball, is gay and is “a strong voice in the LGBT community”. So I take it as given that he has consulted, not only the LGBTQIA+ community, but also the actual target of the slur, women.

### 4.2 Retroactive Authorization

Admittedly, a proactive authorization is not very common. It is limited to cases in which the in-group has the means to authorize out-group members in advance. As seen, in public events, this can be done simply by granting or denying the right to

<sup>2</sup> For further details, see <https://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/New-progressive-Zionist-group-to-march-in-Chicago-SlutWalk-502159>.

<sup>3</sup> Even though it was not revealed whether the people in Chicago Dyke March actually were members of the in-group, the case shows that the authorization to participate to reclamation is at the discretion of the organizers.

participate. However, a retroactive authorization is much more common. C3 and C4 fall under this label. It seems to me that the phrase “silence is a sign of consent” explains the cases quite well. The cases C3 and C4 were successful because there was no retroactive denial of the authorization. To view successful out-group reclamation in this way, it is on par with cases in which the reclamation was not successful. Consider the numerous cases in which a white person, perhaps with good intentions, blurted out the N-word with bad consequences. In such cases, the authorization is explicitly denied.

At the same time, there is a question about reclamatory uses of slurs in the absence of members of the in-group. It is particularly important for the authorization view because, according to the proposed view, the success of the reclamation depends on the approval of the in-group and, to approve something, one has to be aware of it. In these kind of cases, I argue that something is missing. Namely, the authorization from the in-group. Therefore, one cannot say that reclamation is successful. At first, this might seem a rather stringent view but on a reflection I believe it does cohere with our intuitions about the use of slurs. Consider what René Jorgensen calls a *stubborn speaker*. According to her, a stubborn speaker insists that when they use a slur, it is not derogatory. The speaker has always used the term and they do not mean anything rude by it. Jorgensen argues that, in order to respond to this kind of usage, one has two choices: either convince the speaker that they are mistaken about the meaning of slur or make a compelling case for the view that the speaker has strong moral reasons not use the term, even if they are not mistaken (Jorgensen Bolinger, 2020). Jorgensen recommends the latter strategy and while these indeed are optional strategies, I do not think they are exhaustive options. I think there is a third option: Convince the speaker to consult the in-group and ask what they feel about the term. Needless to say, reclamation is different from the usage of the stubborn speaker. Nevertheless, the options in both cases are surprisingly similar. It seems to me that there are two options in the absence of the in-group members: Either seek the permission from a member of the in-group or refrain from the attempt to reclaim the slur at that instance, even in the case the intention is to mitigate the power of the slur word.

### 4.3 Authorization and Prohibitionism

The in-groups are by no means homogenous groups and there can be conflict in the authorization, whether it is proactive or retroactive. As Cepollaro and Lopez point out, C4 would not be possible in the US because of the much stronger taboo status of the N-word (Cepollaro & Lopez de Sa, 2022). I think this is an important point, not only because it highlights the cultural differences regarding reclamation but also because it highlights the main difference between my authorization-based view and Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa’s contextual view. It seems to me that Gwyneth Paltrow’s tweet is a very good example to illustrate the difference. In 2012, Gwyneth Paltrow attended Jay-Z and Kanye West’s concert in Paris. The show included the duo’s most successful song, *N\*\*as in Paris*, from their collaboration album. Paltrow even joined Jay-Z and Kanye West on stage. So it might be said that, on this contextual setting,

Paltrow participated in reclaiming the N-word.<sup>4</sup> However, she later tweeted about the event with aforementioned song title. The reception of the tweet was highly divided (see Hess, 2020). Russell Simmons and Nas defended Paltrow's use of the word. They both appealed to Paltrow's close relationship with Jay-Z and Beyoncé.<sup>5</sup> However, Q-tip and Whoopi Goldberg were not so sympathetic. Q-tip argued that, given the historical weight of the word, she should have been more apologetic when it was pointed out that the use was objectionable. (She never apologized but insisted that she just quoted the name of the song.)<sup>6</sup> It seems to me that this controversy emphasizes the differences between Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa's contextual view and my authority-based view. According to the contextual view, Paltrow successfully participated in reclaiming the N-word in a specific context, namely in Jay-Z and Kanye West's sold out concert in Paris. I admit that there are good reasons to agree with this, given Paltrow's close relationship with Jay-Z and Beyoncé (she was there as the guest of the couple) and given the fact that there was singalong during the *N\*\*as in Paris*. In contrast, the authorization view also takes into account the debate afterwards. The debate concerning the authorization continues as the incident shows that the initial authorization (by Jay-Z and Kanye West) can be challenged.

Given the heterogeneity of basically any given in-group, you might wonder how disputes over permission to engage in reclamation are settled. To answer this, the proposed view takes, to a certain extent, inspiration from Luvell Anderson and Ernest Lepore's prohibitionism. I use the phrase "to a certain degree" because even though I agree that slurs are prohibited words, I disagree with order of the explanation. Anderson and Lepore's view is highly deflationary. They do not think that there is anything wrong with the meaning of slurs. Rather, they think that slurs are bad because they are prohibited (Anderson & Lepore, 2013). Whereas, I think slurs are prohibited because they are bad words (see e.g. Predelli, 2021). Despite the difference, I do think Anderson and Lepore are right about the fact that the relevant members of the in-group declare a certain derogatory word a slur and it should not be used. (Again, the difference is that for Anderson and Lepore the prohibited status does not reflect the meaning or any other property of the word (Anderson & Lepore, 2013). Whereas, I think the declared taboo status does reflect the derogatory meaning of the word.) For one thing, prohibitionism captures the declarative nature of prohibition. One could see it as kind of a speech act: When a word is declared a taboo word, the group aims to take control

<sup>4</sup> Needless to say, there is some vagueness involved. But for the sake of argument, let us suppose that no one in the audience objected, neither any employer at venue objected Paltrow's involvement in reclamation. In this setting then, Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa's view rules the reclamation successful.

<sup>5</sup> Nas further defended Paltrow by saying that she is cool so she gets a pass. This suggests that Nas views Paltrow as endorsing the reclamation of the slur word, just like Ritchie's view predicts. Nas also defended Paltrow by saying that Paltrow is "my homie". This strongly suggests that Nas sees Paltrow as a member of the in-group. And this is also what Ritchie's view predicts. Nevertheless, the two options cannot be true at the same time. One cannot endorse a reclamation of a slur but not actually reclaim it *and* reclaim the slur at the same time. So I opt for the most charitable interpretation of the situation, charitable for my view and also for Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa's view. I opt the view that Paltrow gets a pass because Nas knows that the tweet was meant as an endorsement of reclamatory use.

<sup>6</sup> On Nas', Russell Simmons' and Q-Tip's responses, see <https://www.xxlmag.com/nas-gwyneth-paltrow-is-a-real-n-word-thats-my-homie/>. On Whoopi Goldberg's response, see <https://www.essence.com/news/real-talk-gwyneth-paltrow-drops-the-n-bomb-so-what/>.

of the way they are spoken about. The declaration has the consequence that the target group that made the declaration remains in an authoritative position regarding the use of the term. Most importantly, the in-group has the authority over the access to the positive meaning of the slur word. In this sense, the act of prohibiting words and granting permission to reclaim them are both analogous to gender ascriptions as discussed by Quill Kukla and Mark Lance. On their view, gender ascriptions are not just description of gender but rather they are “social negotiations over how someone will be positioned within social normative space” (Kukla & Lance, 2022). They go on to argue that gender ascriptions should not be assessed as correct descriptions “but in terms of whether they were performed with the proper authority or not, and whether their effects are ethically appropriate or not” (Kukla & Lance, 2022). Analogously, the in-group restriction is about the proper authority over reclamation and the ethical consequences can be investigated through the use of the positive meaning of the slur word. Namely, the aim is to mitigate and neutralize the negative effects of slurs.

As I see it, the original prohibition and the subsequent reclamation are part of the same project, to assess the ethics of language use. Moreover, at the heart of Anderson and Lepore’s view is the dynamics of the in-group. Just like there can be failed attempt to declare a word prohibited, the permission for reclamation can also be contested as the previous example suggests.<sup>7</sup> The dynamics of the in-group might also explain why there are not any reclamation processes concerning milder, or perhaps more accurately archaic, slurs like ‘Frog’. Even though a few individuals might try to start the process, the process just does not gain enough momentum, because people just do not see the effort worthwhile. A slur word like ‘Frog’ is already archaic enough. Anderson and Lepore highlight the make-up of the people declaring a word prohibited. Within the in-group, some are in a more advantageous position to declare a word prohibited. The same applies to permitting reclamation. As I see it, within the in-group, those who are *recognized* to have knowledge on the issue are in an advantaged position to authorize reclamation. The recognition might be associated with an institutional position. In the past, NAACP has had a lot of power in judging what counts (and what does not count) as slurring language. The recognition might also relate to other things, even to rather idiosyncratic reasons. For example, in the dispute between Nas, Russell Simmons, Q-tip and Whoopi Goldberg, I am very keen to hear what Q-tip has to say. On a reflection, my interest lies in the fact that Q-tip is the founding member of the pioneering band, A Tribe Called Quest. Vice versa, members of the in-group who do not encounter abusive language, perhaps because of their privileged position, have less authority or, more accurately, their authority can be overridden by those who are recognized as more knowledgeable. At the same time, I would also like to emphasize the role of argumentation in disputes concerning authorization of reclamation. In many cases, knowledge translates to better arguments. As we saw in the previous example, there are arguments for and against concerning the authorization. Still, sometimes despite the best effort, the debate over the permission can result in an impasse. The previous example highlights this. At first, one might think that this is a disappointing aspect

---

<sup>7</sup> Anderson and Lepore talk about Jesse Jackson’s failed attempt to prohibit the term ‘black’ (Anderson & Lepore, 2013).

of the proposed view but, on a reflection, the resulting outcome does cohere with the above case. The fact is that it remains controversial whether Paltrow reclaimed a slur.

The discussion shows that both, my proposal and Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa's view can accommodate the evidence concerning reclamation. They both can handle the cases from C1 to C4. Moreover, both views can account in their own way for the controversial cases like Paltrow's case. (The different outcomes just emphasizes the controversial nature of the case.) So the real difference remains in the attitude toward the involvement of the in-group in reclamation. Namely, the proposed authorization view aims to highlight the central role of the in-group in reclamation.

## 5 Conclusion

Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa aptly point out that their cases show that the in-group restriction needs further finessing. The proposed view provides those finer details. It accommodates Cepollaro and Lopez de Sa's insight that sometimes the out-groups can reclaim slurs. This is important because it allows the members of the out-group to participate the combat against oppressive language. Still, the current view acknowledges the essential role of the in-group in authorizing reclamation.

**Funding** Open access funding provided by Tampere University (including Tampere University Hospital). This article received funding from the Research Council of Finland project 'Social and Cognitive Diversity in Science' led by Kristina Rolin. The work was also funded by the Kone Foundation and the Finnish Cultural Foundation.

## Declarations

**Competing Interests** The author has no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

**Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

## References

- Anderson, L., & Lepore, E. (2013). Slurring words. *Noûs*, 47(1), 25–48.
- Cepollaro, B. (2017). Let's not worry about the reclamation worry. *Croatian Journal of Philosophy*, XVII(50), 181–193.
- Cepollaro, B., & Lopez de Sa, D. (2022). Who reclaims slurs. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 103(3), 606–619.
- Hess, L. (2020). Practices of slur use. *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 97, 86–105.
- Jeshion, R. (2020). Pride and prejudiced: On the reclamation of slurs. *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 97, 106–137.
- Jorgensen Bolinger, R. (2020). Contested slurs: Delimiting the linguistic community. *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 97(1), 11–30.
- Kukla, Q., & Lance, M. (2022). Telling gender: The pragmatics and ethics of gender ascriptions. *Ergo*, 9, 1130–1159.
- Predelli, S. (2021). Unmentionables: Some remarks on taboo. *Organon F*, 28(3), 726–744.

---

Ritchie, K. (2017). Social identity, indexicality, and the appropriation of slurs. *Croatian Journal of Philosophy*, *XVII*(50), 155–180.

**Publisher's Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.