

Equality and Group Identity Revisited

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Multiculturalists argue that ethnic groups and ethnoreligious groups like Muslims in the West should be recognised as a group(s); for many egalitarians the issue, however, is not recognition but defeating stereotypes about (say) Muslims, not promoting a Muslim identity but protecting Muslims from anti-Muslim prejudice, discrimination, politics, violence etc. So, what is the relationship between challenging inferiorisation and promoting positive group identities? I affirm the consensus around the truth of anti-essentialism; that Othering is a characteristic phenomenon in relation to the minority identities; and that anti-essentialism is a powerful way of critiquing Othering – sexism, racism, Islamophobia. It is possible to be part of this consensus without holding that ethnic or ethnoreligious groups are ontologically deficient relative to other social phenomenon such as Othering, or say, socio-economic processes. If this is granted, I argue for three propositions:

- 1. Critique of Othering Presupposes non-Othered Knowledge of the Other**
- 2. Critique of Othering Presupposes a Normative Framework which needs to be Justified**
- 3. Multiculturalism Remains Available as an Egalitarian Inquiry and Politics**