Recognition. A means for the political expression of identity?
Or a method for its political transformation?

Recognition is a topic at the forefront of both modern and postmodern political philosophy. It results from the conceptualisation of the circumstances of the self; the individual’s otherness within the political community and fundamental need to make that community recognise their particularity. The solution presented by Rousseau leads to the annihilation of individuality in general will, while that put forward by Hegel gives rise to the transformation of both self and community in the process of recognition. The Hegelian idea inspired postmodern conceptions of recognition. Postmodernity is confronted with claims of recognition on the part of determinate determined, pre-political identities, particularly ethnic ones. These identities are hardly reconcilable with the notion of equality. The solution lies in shifting the objective of recognition from the fulfilment of inner, psychological need (Charles Taylor, Axel Honneth inter alia) to the changing of institutional structure (Nancy Fraser, Jurgen Habermas inter alia). The last stage of this evolution is the concept of identity as politically constructed, and not politically expressed, in the process of recognition. The main examples of this approach are postmodern feminism (Judith Butler) and queer theory.