



D1.4: Publication of 10 podcasts and online interviews on 'New Visions of Democratic Representation'

WP1 - Analytical framework: The system of democratic representation – its ecology and forms of disconnect

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1 Introduction

Visions of Representation is a series of interviews recorded by Andrew Schaap with scholars in democratic theory as part of the Horizon-funded Redirect project. In these interviews, world-leading experts in democratic theory discuss their ideas about the shifting dynamics in practices of representation in contemporary political life. *The interviews introduce the state of the art of contemporary academic debates about the nature of representation, including diagnoses of the disconnect between representatives and represented in Western democracies and proposals for reconnection through democratic innovations.*

The interviews were recorded by Andrew Schaap in-person over a period of two years in a range of locations including *Falmouth, Dublin, York, London, Exeter, Vancouver and Brussels*. The locations were chosen opportunistically, often to take advantage of a scholar being at a conference also attended by Andrew. We decided to record the interviews in-person rather than online, not only to ensure high quality recording, but to establish rapport between Andrew and interviewee, which helped to make the interviews more engaging. In the introduction to each video, Andrew sought to capture a sense of both the time and place in which it was recorded. He adapted the format of interviews through trial and error. Following the first two interviews (with Alfio Mastropaolo, online; and Mihaela Mihai, sitting side by side), Andrew settled on a format in which he first appears on camera greeting the interviewee. However, he would then conduct the interview from behind the camera, while later editing out the questions he put so that the length of the podcasts is kept brief (usually around 20 minutes) and engaging.

The interviews were usually based on asking each scholar to discuss key aspects of one of their recently published articles on representation. As such, the point of the interviews was to make these articles accessible both to scholars working on representation outside of political theory and to wider audiences (including students, policy makers and interested publics). Publication details and links are included on YouTube so that viewers, who want to explore further, can read the original article. The range of topics and scholars interviewed were selected to reflect the core themes of our REDIRECT project.

Taken together they reflect the state of the art of contemporary scholarly debates about representation and especially, what we call the representative disconnect. While much focus has been paid to the decline of political intermediary bodies, such as parties and media, for instance, Nadia Urbinati draws attention to the importance of *social intermediary bodies*, such as trade unions. In doing so, she corrects the tendency to view the decline in intermediary bodies as a general phenomenon, insisting that *the representative disconnect should be understood in terms of an unequal division of political power between socially associated and socially disassociated citizens.* Consequently, she highlights the need to foster social associationism (e.g., in trade unions) among the weaker parts of society (including precarious workers and the poor).

Similarly, Simone Chambers questions a common assumption that the digital revolution has contributed to the representative disconnect by producing fragmentation and privatization, which threaten the democratic function of public sphere in hosting a wide and inclusive debate about matters of public concern. While recognising the challenges of fragmentation and privatization to be

significant, *Chambers argues that the source of this representative disconnect is primarily political rather than technological*, due to political choices, power structures and institutional contexts that result in uneven fragmentation so that some voices have disproportionate influence while others are marginalised.

Other interviews drew attention to how representative practices can themselves contribute to the representative disconnect. For instance, the interview with *Mihaela Mihai* explores how, far from acting as a filter through which raw mass opinion is transformed into informed public opinion (as traditional justifications of representative government envision), *representation can nurture social ignorance*. Focusing on representative claim-making by key figures in the Leave campaign during the Brexit referendum, Mihai explores *how practices of representation can become implicated in legitimising political imaginaries that are in tension with democratic values and institutions*.

Anne Phillips reflects on the ongoing importance of descriptive representation within contemporary politics and the significant increase of women's participation in representative government since the publication of her classic book on the *Politics of Presence*. At the same time, she expresses concern regarding the lack of any corresponding increase in participation of working-class people in formal representative roles, which provides opportunities for right-wing populists to exploit in claiming to represent those left behind. In a similar vein, *Monica Brito-Vieira* examines how claims to represent a 'silent majority' can construct particular constituencies in ways that marginalise the represented further. She proposes normative criteria to evaluate such claims against standards related to domination (whether the claim reinforces unequal power relations) and displaced involvement (whether actual constituents are being listened to or are being spoken for without their consent).

However, the interviews also provide insights into the potential that *practices of representation might serve to reconnect citizens and elected officials*. The interview with *Alfio Mastropaolo* provides historical context in which to understand the emergence of representative government as a democratic practice while also providing some key concepts (text, pretext and context) with which to understand the ecology of representative claim-making. While recognising the importance of deliberative mini-publics, such as citizens assemblies, to address the representative disconnect, *Mark Warren* analyses the incentive structures that are required for elected representatives to support democratic innovations.

The interview with *Suzi Dovi* explores how representation is not only a practice of making present what is absent (as classically defined) but can also include *practices of making absent*. While the remedy for the representative disconnect is often assumed to require inclusion of a wider range of social perspectives, Dovi examines *how strategic absences*, like those produced through recusals and resignations, *can benefit democracy*. *Michael Saward* similarly highlights the potential of 'shapeshifting' representatives to reconnect citizens to representative government. Such representatives, who present different aspects of themselves to different constituencies and audiences, are typically viewed distrustfully as part of the problem of the democratic disconnect because they encourage cynicism about politics. However, Saward shows how they can also address the representative disconnect by making present a wider range of political perspectives and possibilities in democratic life than might otherwise be available.

Drawing on his own experiences in campaigning for Universal Basic Income and reclaiming public urban spaces for citizens, *Philippe van Parijs* reflects on *the role that public intellectuals can play in reconnecting citizens to elected officials as intermediaries between civil society and political decision-makers*. He discusses the unique role public intellectuals can play due to the institutional context that authorises them to intervene in political discourse while also having greater freedom to speak precisely because they are unelected.

Andrew Schaap is Associate Professor of Politics at the University of Exeter with research interests in democratic theory and twentieth century political thought. His current research examines the politics of civility, with particular focus on understanding how ordinary citizens undertake the 'labour of civility' in social and political life, including within health care, higher education and urban life.

2 Visions of representation: episodes and synopsis

2.1 Episode 1: Mihaela Mihai on Representative Claim-Making and Social Ignorance

In this interview, recorded in Falmouth on 29 May 2024, **Prof Mihaela Mihai** (Edinburgh) discusses her article, '**Foundational Moments, Representative Claims and the Ecology of Social Ignorance**' *Political Studies* 70(4) 2021: 962-982. She explains how, especially in moments of constitutional re-founding, representation can nurture social ignorance, despite the availability of ample opportunities for political contestation and alternative opinion formation.

Mihaela Mihai is Professor of Political Theory at the University of Edinburgh's School of Social and Political Science. Her research lies at the intersection of critical social and political theory, political emotions (including eco-emotions), political memory and historical injustice, art and politics, architecture and political theory, gender, and democratic theory. She has held fellowships and visiting positions internationally, including at the University of York, the Centre for Research in Ethics at the University of Montréal, and the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies at Oxford University. Between 2015 and 2020 she led a European Research Council Starting Grant on complicity in human rights violations and she currently leads an AHRC interdisciplinary network on environmental emotions. Mihaela is the author of *Political Memory and the Aesthetics of Care: The Art of Complicity and Resistance* (Stanford University Press, 2022) and *Negative Emotions and Transitional Justice* (Columbia University Press, 2016), alongside numerous articles in leading political theory journals. She supervises graduate research on critical theory, democratic theory, and related fields.

2.2 Episode 2: Suzanne Dovi on Representation and Political Absence

In this interview, recorded during the ECPR annual conference at University College Dublin on 13 August 2024, **Prof Suzanne Dovi** (Arizona) discusses her article, '**What's Missing: A Typology of Political Absence**,' *The Journal of Politics* 2020 82(2): 559-571. She explains how understanding and properly evaluating representation requires attending not only to how representation makes groups present but also to how it makes groups absent.



Figure 1: Screenshot from Youtube of Episode 1.

Suzanne Dovi is Professor of Government and Public Policy at the University of Arizona's School of Government and Public Policy. She is a political theorist whose research focuses on democratic theory, representation (particularly of historically disadvantaged groups), feminist theory, human rights, ethics, and public policy. Dovi's work examines how democratic citizens should evaluate those who hold and exercise power over vulnerable and marginalized populations and explores issues such as exclusion, hypocrisy in humanitarian intervention, and the limits of democratic institutions. She earned her Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University, along with an M.A. from Georgetown University and an M.Litt. from Trinity College, Dublin. Her scholarship has been published in leading journals like *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of Politics*, *Political Theory*, and *Constellations*, and her book *The Good Representative* (Blackwell, 2008) established influential standards for evaluating democratic representation. She is currently developing a new book project on undemocratic and inequalitarian effects in representation.

2.3 Episode 3: Monica Brito Vieira on Representing Silence in Politics

In this interview, recorded during the BIAPT annual conference at the University of York on 10 January 2025, **Prof Monica Brito Vieira** (York) discusses her article, '**Representing Silence in Politics**,' *American Political Science Review* 2020 114(4): 976-988.

Against the tendency to understand silence as the absence of voice, she argues that silence is best understood as the site of a potential or actual *presence* and proposes criteria to assess the legitimacy of claims to represent silent constituencies.

Mónica Brito Vieira is Professor of Political Theory in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of York. She works at the intersection of the history of political thought, normative political theory, and intellectual history, with a particular focus on



Figure 2: Screenshot from Youtube of Episode 2.

early modern thought and contemporary debates about political representation and democracy. Brito Vieira earned her MA (2001) and PhD (2005) from the University of Cambridge and held a Junior Research Fellowship at Murray Edwards College, Cambridge. Before joining York in 2012, she was Research Assistant Professor at the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon. Her books include *The Elements of Representation in Hobbes* (2009) and the co-authored *Representation* (2008). She has published widely on topics such as Thomas Hobbes, political representation, democracy, and the aesthetic dimensions of politics, and is the author of *Democracy and the Politics of Silence* (Penn State University Press, 2024), which rethinks the role of silence in democratic life. Brito Vieira also supervises doctoral research in political theory and representation.

2.4 Episode 4: Anne Phillips on Revisiting the Politics of Presence

In this interview, recorded in London on 19 March 2025, Emeritus Professor **Anne Phillips** discusses her contribution '**Descriptive Representation Revisited**' to Rohrschneider & Thomassen (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Representation*. OUP 2020: 174-191. She explains the key reasons why descriptive representation matters and addresses three perennial concerns: worries about essentialism; disagreements about the extent to which it implies a form of group representation; and questions about whose exclusion matters.

Anne Phillips is Emeritus Professor of Political Theory in the Department of Government at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), where she previously held the Graham Wallas Professorship of Political Science. She joined LSE in 1999 as Professor of Gender Theory and served as Director of the LSE Gender Institute before taking a joint appointment in the Government Department. Phillips is a leading figure in feminist political theory, renowned for her work on democracy, political representation, equality, multiculturalism, and the intersec-

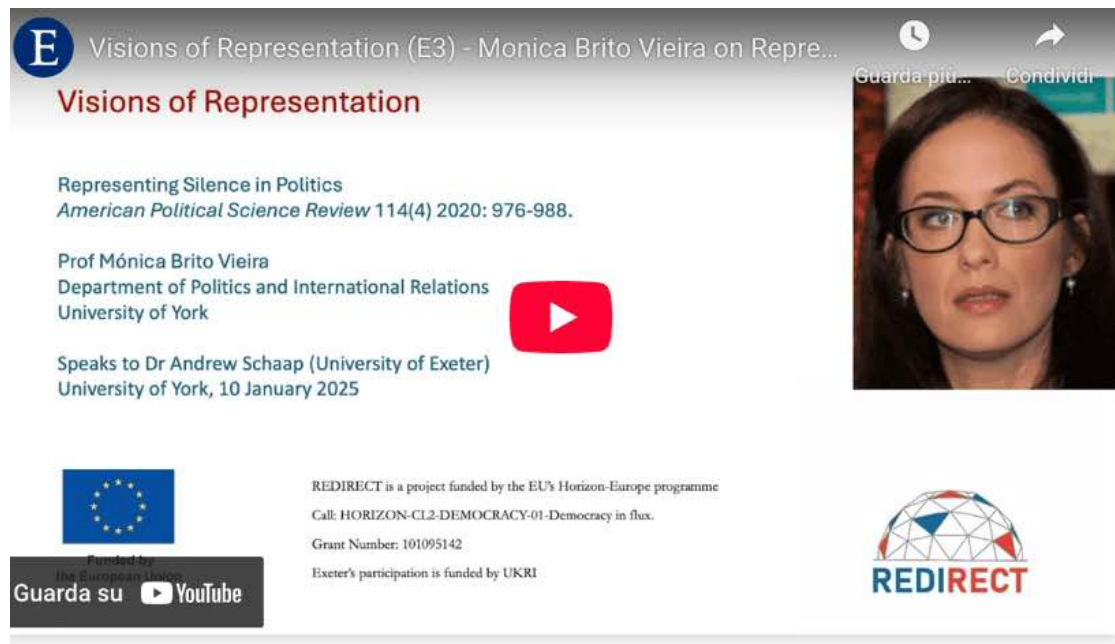


Figure 3: Screenshot from Youtube of Episode 3.

tions of feminism with liberal and multicultural thought. Her most influential book, *The Politics of Presence: the Political Representation of Gender, Race, and Culture* (1995), helped reshape debates about descriptive representation in democratic theory. Her later works include *Multiculturalism Without Culture and Unconditional Equals* (2021). Phillips was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2003 and of the Academy of Social Sciences in 2013, and has received honorary degrees and lifetime achievement awards for her scholarly contributions.

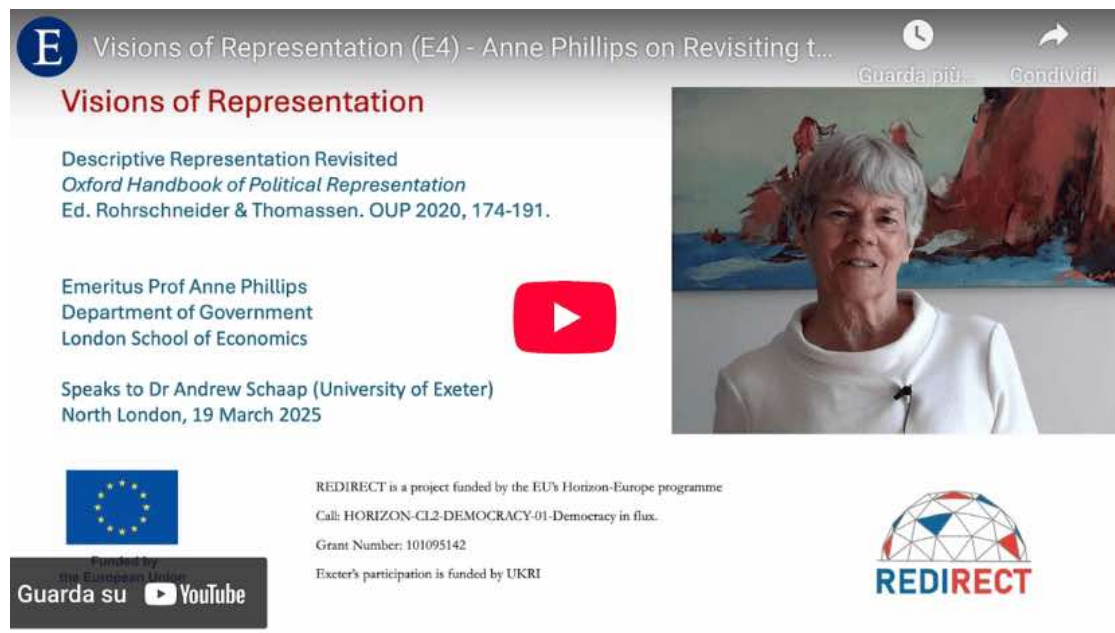


Figure 4: Screenshot from Youtube of Episode 4.

2.5 Episode 5: Mark Warren on Incentives for Elected Representatives to use Democratic Innovations

In this interview, recorded at the University of Exeter on 19 May 2025, Prof **Mark Warren** (British Columbia) discusses his co-authored paper (with Şule Yaylaci & Eden Beuavaïs), 'When, Where and Why Might Elected Political Elites Reach for Democratic Innovations'. He explains the potential incentives for elected officials to adopt democratic innovations (such as deliberative mini-publics or participatory budgeting) and the conditions under which innovations might align with their interests.

Mark E. Warren is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of British Columbia, where he held the Harold and Dorrie Merilees Chair for the Study of Democracy and joined the department in 2004. His research spans democratic theory and practice, with interests in citizen participation, democratic representation, the relationship between civil society and governance, and the corruption of democratic relationships. He established and directed UBC's Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions and co-founded the international Participedia project, a web-based platform documenting democratic innovations globally. Warren earned his B.A. from Lewis & Clark College and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Toronto, and previously taught at Georgetown University, Northwestern University, and Rice University. He is the author of *Democracy and Association* (Princeton University Press), winner of the Spitz Prize, and editor of *Democracy and Trust* (Cambridge University Press). His work appears in leading journals across political science and theory.



Figure 5: Screenshot from Youtube of Episode 5.

2.6 Episode 6: Nadia Urbinati on The Need for Social Intermediation

In this interview, recorded at the APSA annual conference in Vancouver on 11 September 2025, Prof **Nadia Urbinati** (Columbia University) discusses her article, '**The decline and the need of**

the key force of intermediation,' *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 51(4) 2025: 559-570. She explains how it is not only the decline of parties as intermediary political bodies that contributes to the democratic disconnect: we also need to foster social intermediary bodies to make representative government more responsive to the weaker parts of society.

Nadia Urbinati is the Kyriakos Tsakopoulos Professor of Political Theory in the Department of Political Science at Columbia University. She is an Italian political theorist whose work focuses on modern and contemporary political thought, with special emphasis on democratic and anti-democratic traditions, political representation, and populism. Urbinati earned her Ph.D. from the European University Institute in Florence in 1989 and has taught at institutions including the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna in Pisa, Bocconi University in Milan, Sciences Po in Paris, and UNICAMP in Brazil. She co-chaired Columbia's Faculty Seminar on Political and Social Thought and served as co-editor of *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* with Andrew Arato. Urbinati's major books include *Me the People: How Populism Transforms Democracy*, *Democracy Disfigured*, *Representative Democracy: Principles and Genealogy*, and *Mill on Democracy*, the last of which won the David and Elaine Spitz Prize. In 2008 she was named a Commander of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic for her contributions to democratic theory and the international diffusion of Italian liberal thought.



Figure 6: Screenshot from Youtube of Episode 6.

2.7 Episode 7: Simone Chambers on Deliberative Democracy and the Digital Public Sphere

In this interview, recorded at the APSA annual conference in Vancouver on 12 September 2025, Prof **Simone Chambers** (UC Irvine) discusses her article '**Deliberative Democracy and the Digital Public Sphere: Asymmetrical Fragmentation as a Political not a Technological Problem**,' *Constellations* 30(1) 2023: 61-68. She explains how the fragmentation and privatization of public life,

which poses a challenge for representative government, is not primarily due to the rise of social media but to authoritarian actors attacking democracy by wrecking the public sphere.

Simone E. Chambers is Professor and Chair of Political Science at the University of California, Irvine, where she specializes in democratic theory and public discourse. She earned her Ph.D. (with distinction) in Political Science from Columbia University, where her dissertation explored discourse and procedural ethics, and she has held academic positions at institutions including the University of Toronto and the University of Colorado. Her research focuses on deliberative democracy, referendums, constitutional politics, the public sphere, secularism, rhetoric and civility, digital misinformation, and the work of Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls. Chambers's recent monograph *Contemporary Democratic Theory* (Polity, 2024) offers a comprehensive account of recent developments in democratic thought, and she is currently working on a collection of essays titled *Deliberation and the Future of Democracy*. She has also published widely on the ethics of public discourse and democratic participation and contributes to collaborative projects on democratic innovations.

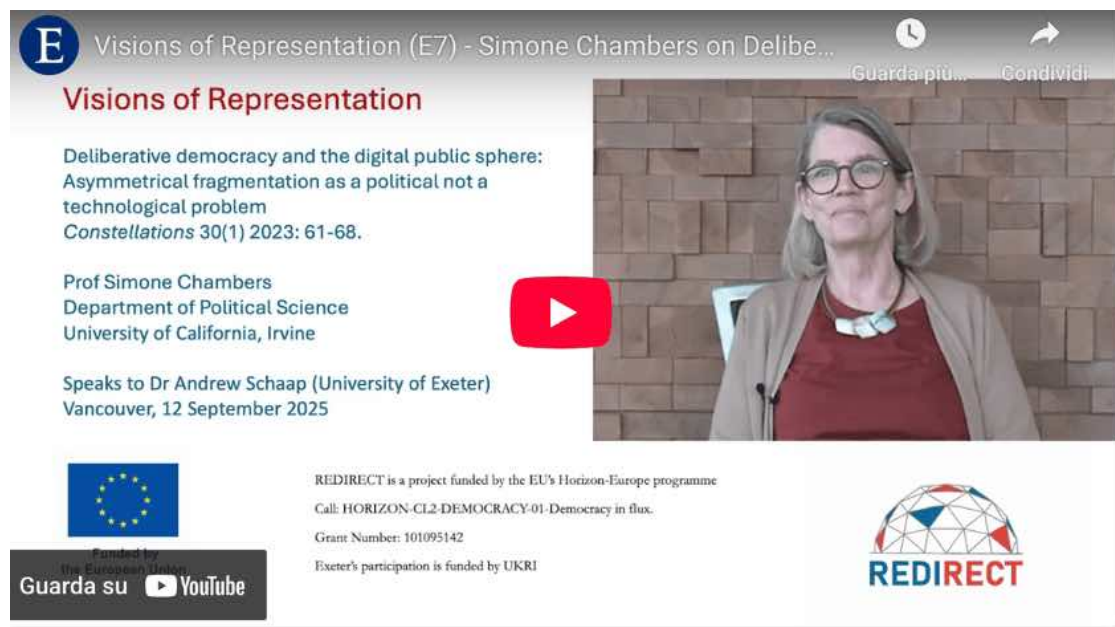


Figure 7: Screenshot from Youtube of Episode 7.

2.8 Episode 8: Michael Saward on Shape-Shifting Representation

In this interview, recorded at Friends' House in London on 24 October 2025, Prof **Michael Saward** (Warwick) discusses his article '**Shape-Shifting Representation**.' *American Political Science Review*. 2014;108(4):723-736

Michael Saward is Professor of Politics and International Studies in the Department of Politics and International Studies (PAIS) at the University of Warwick. Originally from Tasmania, he holds a BA (Hons) from the Australian National University and a PhD from the University of Essex, and previously taught at Royal Holloway, University of London and the Open University. His research is in contemporary democratic theory, especially theories of political representation, democratic design, and the role of political ideas in practice. Saward's influential books

include *The Representative Claim* (Oxford University Press), which won the George H. Hallett Prize, and *Democratic Design* (Oxford University Press), awarded the W.J.M. Mackenzie Book Prize. He has collaborated internationally on projects and edited volumes on representation, European citizenship, and politics and performance, including co-editing the *Oxford Handbook of Politics and Performance*. His work explores how representatives and citizens enact democracy in varied social and institutional settings.

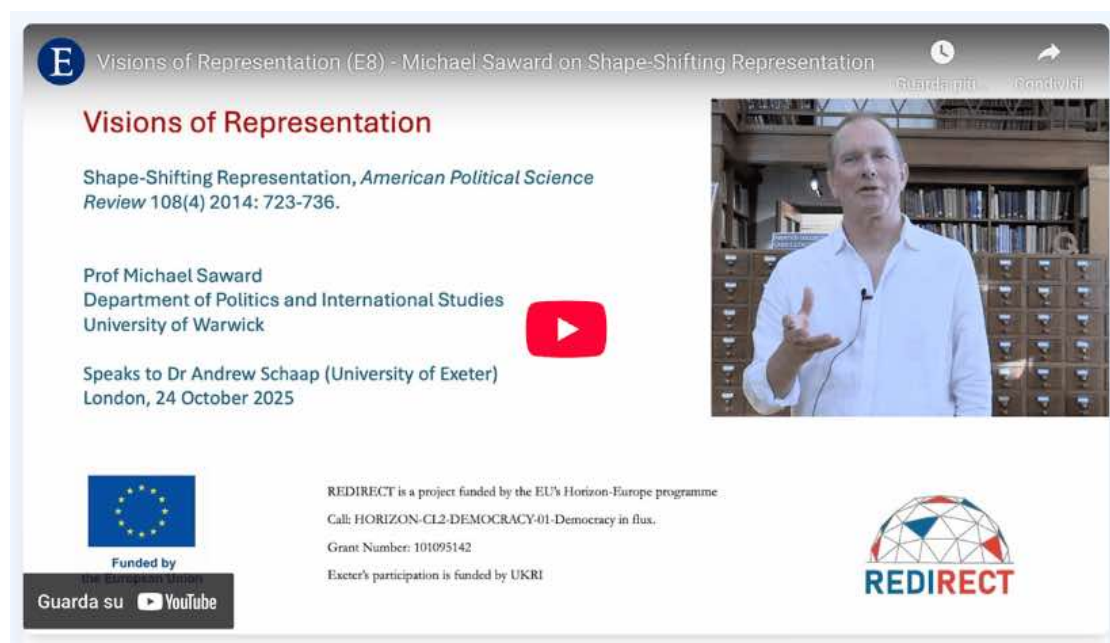


Figure 8: Screenshot from Youtube of Episode 8.

2.9 Episode 9: Philippe van Parijs - Public Intellectuals & Representative Democracy

In this interview, recorded at the Bourse in Brussels on 6 December 2025, Prof Philippe van Parijs reflects on the role of the public intellectual within representative democracy, including his own contribution to public debates about and political campaigns for an unconditional basic income. *Visions of Representation* is a series of interviews with scholars in democratic theory recorded by Andrew Schaap as part of the EU Horizon-funded project Redirect (101095142).

Philippe Van Parijs is a Belgian political philosopher and economist and Emeritus Professor at the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain), where he established and directed the Hoover Chair of Economic and Social Ethics from 1991 to 2016. He studied philosophy, law, political economy, sociology, and linguistics at Université Saint-Louis (Brussels), UCLouvain, Oxford, Bielefeld and the University of California, Berkeley, and holds doctorates in social sciences and in philosophy. Van Parijs is best known for his advocacy of unconditional basic income, which he argues is essential to achieving “real freedom,” and for his work on linguistic justice. He co-founded the Basic Income Earth Network, serving as chair of its international board, and has held visiting positions at Harvard University, the University of Oxford, and KU Leuven. His scholarship spans distributive justice, democratic institutions, and ethical aspects of social policy, and he is a member of Belgium’s Royal Academy and a Fellow of the British

Academy.



Figure 9: Screenshot from Youtube of Episode 9.

2.10 Episode 10: Alfio Mastropaolo on Representation & Invention of Modern Politics

In this interview, recorded online on 29 February 2024, Prof Alfio Mastropaolo discusses the chapter on 'Representation and the Invention of Modern Politics' from his book *Waging War by Other Means: Historical Sociology of Democratic Government*.

Alfio Mastropaolo is a political scientist and Emeritus Professor of Political Science at the University of Turin. Among his publications are *“La mucca pazza della democrazia. Nuove destre, populismo, antipolitico”* (Bollati Boringhieri, 2005), *“Il parlamento. Le assemblee legislative nelle democrazie contemporanee”* (with L. Verzichelli, Laterza, 2006), *“La democrazia è una causa persa? Paradossi di un'invenzione imperfetta”* (Bollati Boringhieri, 2011), and *“Fare la guerra con altri mezzi. Sociologia storica del governo democratico”* (Il Mulino, 2023).

3 Communication strategy and next steps

The *Visions of Representation* interview series constitutes not only a substantive intellectual contribution to WP1 but also a core communication and dissemination action of the REDIRECT project. Particular attention has been devoted to ensuring that the outputs circulate beyond academic audiences, reaching practitioners, students, policy communities, and wider publics interested in contemporary debates on democratic representation.

First, all interviews have been made publicly available through the official *YouTube channel* of the Centre for Political Thought at the University of Exeter, the coordinating institution directly responsible for the production and editorial supervision of the series. Hosting the interviews on a



Figure 10: Screenshot from Youtube of Episode 10.

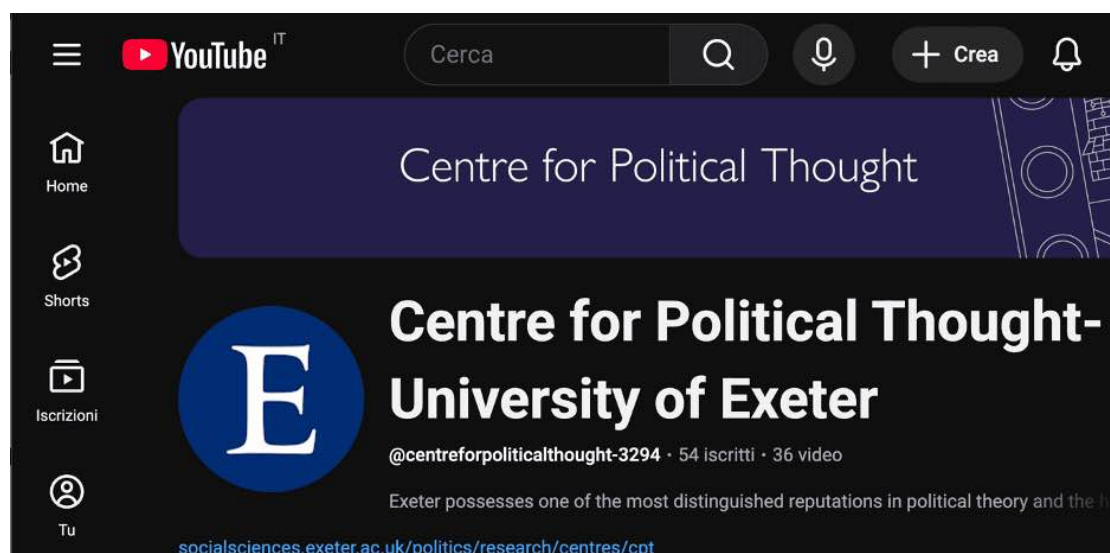


Figure 11: The CPT Youtube Channel.

well-established academic channel ensures long-term accessibility, professional curation, and continued visibility among audiences already engaged with democratic theory and political thought, while also allowing the materials to be embedded in teaching, workshops, and public events.

Second, dissemination has been reinforced through the creation of a **dedicated section** on the REDIRECT project website, which provides a structured entry point to the series and connects the interviews directly to the project's broader analytical and policy-oriented objectives. By situating the interviews within the project's digital infrastructure, users are encouraged to navigate across work packages, reports, and related outputs, thus strengthening cross-deliverable visibility and reinforcing the coherence of REDIRECT's public-facing communication.

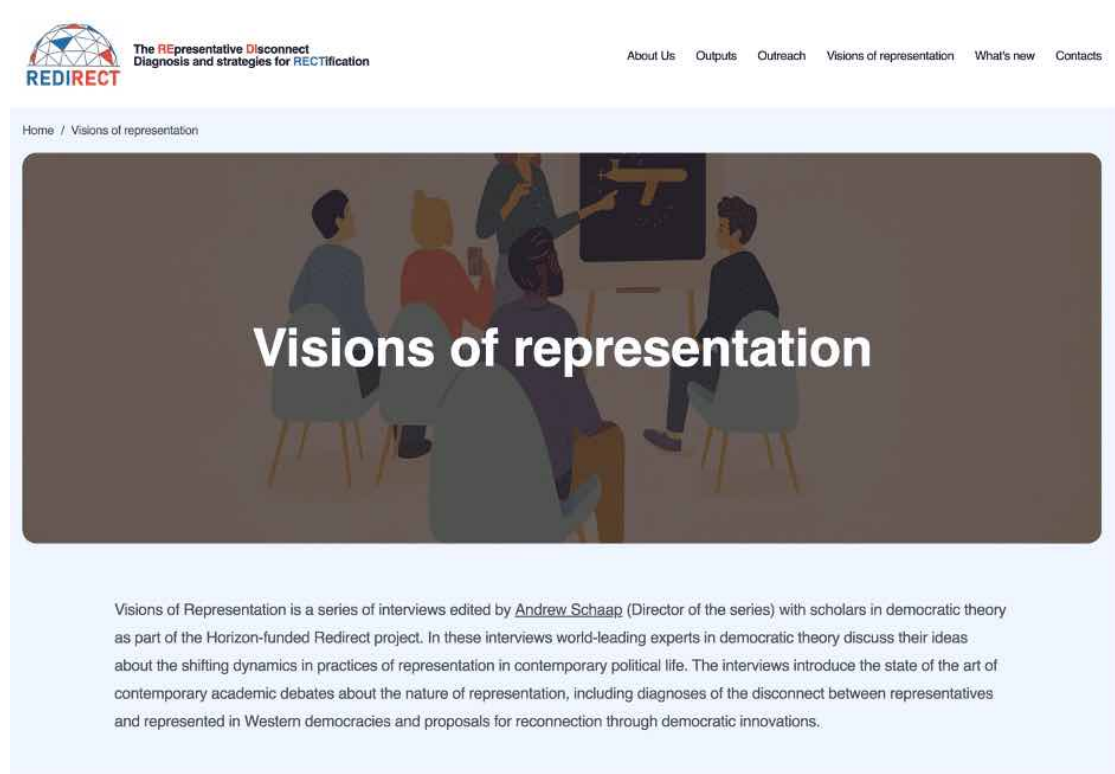


Figure 12: The Visions of representation webpage.

Third, the interviews have been actively promoted through the project's social media channels on LinkedIn, X, and Instagram. Rather than relying on single announcements, dissemination has been organised around a narrative strategy, releasing interviews progressively and framing them around thematic clusters relevant to current debates on representation, democratic innovation, and political participation. With more than 1,500 followers, these channels provide an expanding community of engagement and allow the project to reach audiences beyond academic networks, including civil society organisations and policy stakeholders.

Fourth, the consortium is currently developing an official *REDIRECT presence on Spotify*, which will host both existing interviews and forthcoming podcast material. This step is expected to further diversify audiences, particularly among younger users and non-academic listeners who increasingly consume policy and research content through podcast platforms. The Spotify chan-

nel will enable easier subscription, sharing, and integration of episodes into broader public debates.

Importantly, the overall dissemination approach fully complies *with the Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication Plan outlined in Deliverable D9.2*, ensuring coherence between WP1 outputs and the project's long-term communication strategy. In addition to public outreach, the interview series has played a crucial internal role by maintaining sustained dialogue with members of the Scientific Advisory Board while simultaneously expanding REDIRECT's intellectual network. Indeed, interviewees include not only SAB members but also globally recognised scholars whose work significantly shapes contemporary debates on political representation, thus reinforcing the project's scientific visibility and credibility.

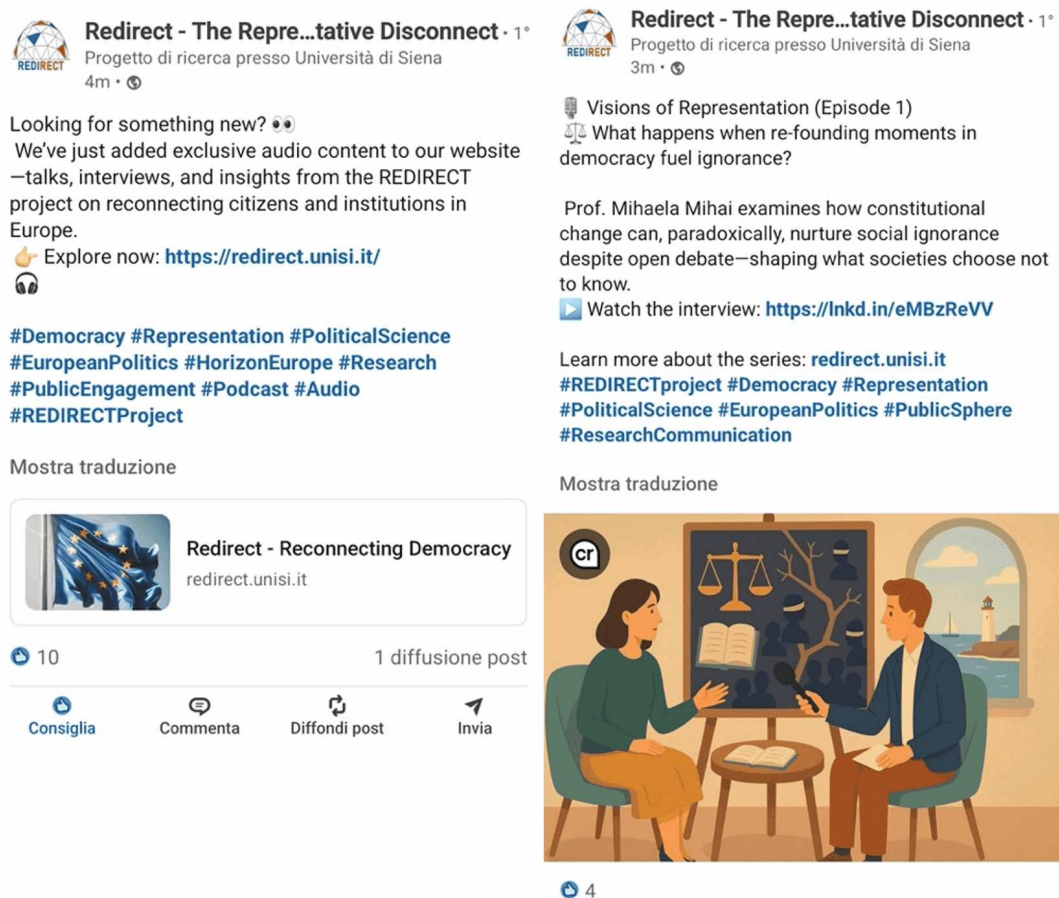


Figure 13: The First two LinkedIn posts.

Looking ahead, the success and reception of the initial ten interviews have created *momentum for a second phase of recordings*. Additional interviews and podcast episodes are already being planned for 2026 and will continue through the final stages of the project. These forthcoming outputs will both deepen thematic coverage and provide opportunities to connect empirical findings and policy recommendations emerging from later work packages with ongoing academic and public discussions. In this way, the Visions of Representation initiative evolves from a one-off dissemination action into a durable communication platform supporting REDIRECT's

objectives up to and beyond the end of the project. Finally, insights and materials emerging from several interviews have informed contributions to The Loop¹, the political science blog of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), further amplifying the project's visibility and connecting REDIRECT debates to broader scholarly and policy discussions.

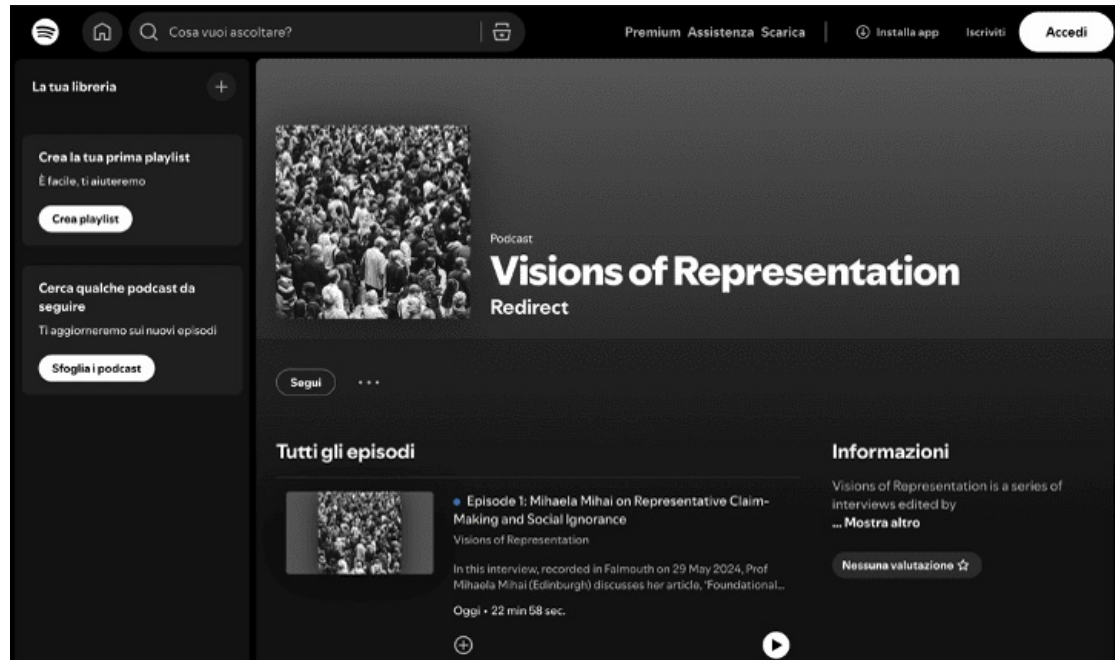


Figure 14: Vision of representation on Spotify

D1.4 officially concludes WP1, 'Analytical framework: The system of democratic representation – its ecology and forms of disconnect', while the project will continue to advance through a continuous dialogue between theoretical and empirical work.

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