Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

Articles

Studia Iuridica Lublinensia vol. 33, 1, 2024
DOI: 10.17951/sil.2024.33.1.159-178

Anna Młynarska-Sobaczewska
Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland
ORCID: 0000-0003-3029-2836
anka.sobaczewska@gmail.com

Jacek Zaleśny
University of Warsaw, Poland
ORCID: 0000-0002-8231-4454
zalesnyjacek@gmail.com

On the Myth of Electoral Accountability*

O micie rozliczalności wyborczej

ABSTRACT

The article presents scientific research on certain assumptions concerning electoral accountability and provides conceptual insights. The central hypothesis is to demonstrate the illusory nature of accountability for the exercise of power once the electoral process comes to an end. An analysis is made of the character and epistemic value of electoral accountability as a myth – a creation structuring an image of political reality. The research is supported by empirical evidence from contemporary social studies. The purpose of the article is to show that the concepts of representation and accountability in political relations are mythical constructs; such an insight allows us to better understand the false expectations those constructions lead to. The study takes an international approach and contributes to worldwide deliberations on political representation.

Keywords: electoral accountability; electoral process; representation; political reality

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS: Anna Młynarska-Sobaczewska, PhD, Dr. Habil., Associate Professor, Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Law Studies, Pałac Staszica, Nowy Świat 72, 00-044 Warsaw, Poland; Jacek Zaleśny, PhD, Dr. Habil., Associate Professor, University of Warsaw, Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28, WNPiSM Auditorium Building, 00-927 Warsaw, Poland.

* The paper was written as part of the project "Accountability as a Category of Constitutional Law", funded by the National Science Center, UMO 2018/29/B/HS5/01771.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

INTRODUCTION

The ideas of representation and accountability are central to the concept of democracy, even though sceptics have raised a number of questions regarding them ever since they began to be used. The purpose of this paper is to present a model in which electoral accountability is described in terms of a myth, a collective notion based on ontologically fragile foundations that nevertheless underpins the practice of political functioning. To this end, we present the basic assumptions associated with the idea of electoral accountability, highlight their nature and epistemic value in structuring the landscape of political reality, and contrast them with empirical evidence provided by contemporary social studies.

Our reflections are undertaken in response to widely held views on parliamentary elections as a vehicle for accountability. By looking at electoral accountability as a mythical construct rather than a description of reality or a statement of normative character, it is easier to understand the misguided expectations people have from parliamentary elections.

We employ the concept of myth from the Durkheimian tradition,[1] treating it as an anthropological phenomenon that embodies the sacred and at the same time allows observable or desirable phenomena to be classified. We therefore acknowledge that myth, being a collective notion with its primordial roots in the structures of religion, performs the function of ordering (nomising) reality. It imposes a framework for thinking about phenomena, including those of a social nature, and gives direction and meaning to narratives about them. It builds rituals around which the meaning of social life becomes structured.[2] There is nothing new or unusual in the history of political relations about mythical thinking, but its consequences can be quite disastrous, both intellectually and in practical life: it can result in a myth being held to be the only objective reality, in attaching meaningfulness and adhering to imaginings that are increasingly remote from the observable facts. Certain features of myths – their source in the *sacrum*, the link between nature and culture, the characteristics of the mythic hero and the expression of belief through a ritual constitutive of the cultural community – provide a specific commentary on the questions and challenges of contemporary democracies. Myths free us from the obligation to engage in independent inquiry; by (purportedly) revealing the definitive truth,

[1] E. Durkheim, M. Mauss, *O niektórych pierwotnych formach klasyfikacji. Przyczynek do badań nad wyobrażeniami zbiorowymi*, [in:] *Socjologia i antropologia*, ed. M. Mauss, Warszawa 2001, p. 516; E. Durkheim, *Elementarne formy życia religijnego*, Warszawa 1990, p. 41. Cf. E. Kwiatkowska, *Mit zbiorowy, społeczny, indywidualny? Kilka uwag o możliwości pojęcia mitu indywidualnego w socjologii*, "Prace Kulturoznawcze" 2010, vol. 11, pp. 166–168.

[2] A. Ceglarska, *Law as a Fable: The Issue of Myth in the Interpretation of Law*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2021, vol. 30(2), p. 50.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

they eliminate the need for reflection.[3] In this paper, we demonstrate how socially and commonly shared beliefs regarding electoral accountability, representation and parliamentarism correspond to these conditions. We show that the narrative of the Sovereign will, representation and political accountability pursued through universal suffrage shares many characteristics with mythical narratives about protagonists and the nature of relations concerning collective will and governance. We draw on research to empirically demonstrate the function and actual shape of electoral accountability in relation to its doctrinal and normative assumptions. Such an interdisciplinary approach used to analyse accountability as a concept of constitutional law is one current in socio-legal research.[4]

The subject of electoral accountability is addressed in a number of publications (in particular, H.F. Pitkin; L. Bartels; A. Przeworski, S.C. Stokes and B. Manin; A.C.L. Davies; K. Strøm, W.C. Müller and T. Bergman; J.A. Schumpeter; D. Runciman; T. Hellwig and D. Samuels; S. Birch; J.M. Carey; A. Lever; A. Schedler, L. Diamond and M.F. Plattner; C.T. Borowiak; K. Lundell; D. Oliver; I. Somin; J. Brennan; G. Dimova; A. Fumarola). These, though, tend to feature reflections on the theory of (prospective or retrospective) electoral accountability, or simply refer to the empirical grounding of electoral accountability. What is missing are analyses in which the category of accountability is applied to actual electoral processes taking place. The following considerations constitute a response to this research gap.

THE MYTH OF THE SOVEREIGN HOLDING POLITICIANS ACCOUNTABLE

Representative democracy has been adopted in the vast majority of modern states, regardless of the form of government. It is a widely shared axiom that the source of all public authority in a state is the will of the people in their capacity as sovereign, and that elections are regarded, first and foremost, as an important indicator of democracy.[5] According to this perspective, representatives become authorized to make decisions that bind the entire political community, and their mandate is renewed or terminated according to the will of that community (the people) after an evaluation.

[3] S. Filipowicz, *Mit i spektakl władzy*, Warszawa 1988, p. 22.

[4] R. Cotterrell, *Why Must Legal Ideas Be Interpreted Sociologically?*, "Journal of Law and Society" 1998, vol. 25(2), pp. 171–192.

[5] Cf. the constitutionalism of the Fifth French Republic, where it is emphasized that parliament is at best a partner to the institution of the referendum, not the body having the greatest prerogative powers over the work of implementing the idea of sovereignty. See J. Wawrzyniak, *O niektórych osobliwościach Konstytucji V Republiki Francuskiej*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2014, vol. 22, p. 153.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

The idea of political representation makes it possible to answer a question that is of existential importance for the political community: Who is in power, and why? The will of the Sovereign, embodies in the electoral act, provides legitimacy – on condition, however, that it is in line with the common will. It must therefore be renewed in regular cycles to be worthy of being called democratic. Democracy is generally considered to be a system of governance in which those in power are held accountable for their public performance by citizens who act indirectly through competition and cooperation among their chosen representatives.[6] Accountability is supposed to affect the behaviour of those in power,[7] it is supposed to establish a correlation between the positions of the representatives and the represented, because it is what defines the representative relationship.[8] As A. Palumbo states unequivocally, political accountability forms a cornerstone of modern democracy.[9] It is the core of democracy, argues A.C.L. Davies.[10] This is because the existence of a "vertical linkage" between voters and representatives allows members of the public to hold governments accountable for their actions, and provides governments with the opportunity to give the public an account of their decisions and actions.[11]

It is therefore assumed that elections provide a moment in which a representative government is held to account.[12] We speak of voting "for" or "against" a government endowed with the power to shape public policies;[13] voters express their approval or disapproval of the government *via* the ballot box.[14] Accountabil-

[6] P.C. Schmitter, T.L. Karl, *What Democracy Is… and Is Not*, "Journal of Democracy" 1991, vol. 2(3), p. 76; P. Pettit, *Three Conceptions of Democratic Control*, [in:] *Political Accountability*, eds. R. Bellamy, A. Palumbo, Farnham 2010, p. 30.

[7] M. Bovens, T. Schillemans, R.E. Goodin, *Public Accountability*, [in:] *The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability*, eds. M. Bovens, T. Schillemans, R.E. Goodin, Oxford 2014, p. 9.

[8] S. Mainwaring, *Introduction: Democratic Accountability in Latin America*, [in:] *Democratic Accountability in Latin America*, eds. S. Mainwaring, C. Welna, Oxford 2005, p. 29; J. Szymanek, *Reprezentacja i mandat parlamentarny*, Warszawa 2013, p. 27.

[9] A. Palumbo, *Introduction*, [in:] *Political Accountability…*, p. xi. Similarly N. Bamforth, *Accountability of and to the Legislature*, [in:] *Accountability in the Contemporary Constitution*, eds. N. Bamforthe, P. Leylan, Oxford 2013, p. 259.

[10] A.C.L. Davies, *Accountability: A Public Law Analysis of Government by Contract*, Oxford 2001, p. 76. On the need for accountability, see S. Mainwaring, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[11] A. Fumarola, *The Contexts of Electoral Accountability: Electoral Integrity Performance Voting in 23 Democracies*, "Government and Opposition" 2020, vol. 55(1), p. 41.

[12] D. Oliver, *Accountability and the Foundations of British Democracy – the Public Interest and Public Service Principles*, [in:] *Accountability in the Contemporary Constitution…*, p. 291.

[13] G.B. Powell Jr., *Wybory jako narzędzie demokracji. Koncepcje większościowe i proporcjonalne*, Warszawa 2006, p. 14.

[14] A.C.L. Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 76–77; M.W. Dowdle, *Public Accountability: Conceptual, Historical, and Epistemic Mappings*, [in:] *Public Accountability: Designs, Dilemmas and Experiences*, ed. M.W. Dowdle, Cambridge 2006, p. 4; S. Patyra, *Konsultacje społeczne w procesie przygotowywania rządowych projektów ustaw – zarys problemu*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2014, vol. 22, p. 497.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

ity means parliamentarians' answerability to the preferences and demands of their principal, implying that information about parliamentarians' activities is available to the principal, and that the latter can punish parliamentarians for unresponsiveness.[15]

Attention is drawn to the fundamental assumptions that that the voice of the people is the primary source of political power[16] and that parliament is elected in a manner that gives the electors a real and unfettered choice of candidates. In this way, the political representation of the political community is formed; it is endowed with legislative power and the right to debate any subject under what are termed "democratic conditions".

When one looks at the legitimacy of the above assumptions, several doubts come to mind. The first concerns political representation, which is an ambiguous and hard-to-define concept, with different interpretations corresponding to mutually contradictory understandings of political accountability.[17] The most elementary issues are thus rather vaguely identified: Who is the representative (the nation, the people, the citizens, the electorate, the constituency, or perhaps those voting for an elected candidate)? Is the parliament considered the representative, or is it the individual MP? What does the representative represent: the electors, their will, their interests? What are the consequences of a discrepancy between the will of the represented and the acts of the representative? These doubts indicate the contentiousness of the rudiments of representative government, the meaning of the concept of political representation.[18] The intrinsic disagreement over the meaning of the term stems from the legal fiction of treating the nation as a collective entity having a will of its own. In turn, from the fictitious assumption that the nation has a will of some kind comes the equally fictitious assertion that this will can be represented,[19] i.e. that one can represent something that does not have a designator. Questions about the reality or fictionality of the sovereign have accompanied discussions on the state since the end of the 18th century.[20] Representing the nation is

[15] J.M. Carey, *Legislative Voting and Accountability*, Cambridge 2009, p. 3. Similarly A. Schedler, L. Diamond, M.F. Plattner (eds.), *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*, Boulder 1999, p. 14; K. Strøm, *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies*, [in:] *Political Accountability…*, p. 119.

[16] G. Rodan, C. Hughes, *The Politics of Accountability in Southeast Asia: The Dominance of Moral Ideologies*, Oxford 2014, p. 7.

[17] H.F. Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, Los Angeles 1967, pp. 8–10.

[18] D. Runciman, *The Paradox of Political Representation*, "Journal of Political Philosophy" 2007, vol. 15(1), p. 93 ff.; J. Szymanek, *Reprezentacja polityczna: interpretacja pojęcia*, [in:] *Ustroje: historia i współczesność. Polska – Europa – Ameryka Łacińska. Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana Profesorowi Jackowi Czajowskiemu*, eds. M. Grzybowski, G. Kuca, P. Mikuli, Kraków 2013.

[19] J. Hogan, *Election and Representation*, Cork 1945, p. 114; J. Szymanek, *Reprezentacja polityczna w ujęciu doktryny francuskiej*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2014, vol. 22, p. 135 ff.

[20] J. de Maistre, *Studium suwerenności*, [in:] *O rewolucji, suwerenności i konstytucji politycznej. Wybór pism*, Kraków 2019, p. 444; C. Maurras, *Przyszłość inteligencji i inne pisma*, Dębogóra 2020,

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

representing a fiction, since what is represented does not exist except as the object of representation.

Still, as a subject of power, the Sovereign is the hero of this narrative that fulfils the conditions of myth – it is an entity that transcends the boundaries of humanity, is endowed with superhuman powers, is a hero of which each of us is a part of and which acts for the good of all while battling the forces of evil – the tyrant or adversity that fate and history bring to every community. So good is this hero that it is hard not to share a belief in its existence. This faith is encouraging and flattering to the myth's followers, each of whom feels as though they are a part of something bigger and better than themselves. It is also easily cultivated during the electoral ritual, when for a moment each voter can feel themselves to be a part of an embodied Sovereign.

PARLIAMENT AND THE WILL OF THE SOVEREIGN

The outcome of the paradigm of the nation delegating its power to parliament, is said to be a parliament that expresses the will of the people. The effect of an election is to create an arrangement of political relations that provides a legal basis for parliament's authority to act, and a commitment to accept its decisions. Often, however, as is the case in Belgium, Israel or the Netherlands, this effect is completely non-obvious when the election results are announced, with the result that accountability loses its primary criterion; coalition governments mean that voters cannot count on their preferences being implemented during the term of office. It is this phenomenon of the absence of institutional and political clarity that has long been recognized and studied in political science.[21]

The discrepancy between the general agreement on the theoretical principals of political representation and the controversy over how those principals become manifest in practice and in specifically arranged legal arrangements highlights the uncertainties surrounding the institutions of representative democracy.[22] The asser-

pp. 471–472; J. Zalesny, V. Goncharov, *Ontological Core of the Social Concept of Global Constitutionalism: A Socio-Philosophical Analysis of Content and Evolution*, "Future Human Image" 2019, vol. 12; M.B. Vieira, D. Runciman, *Reprezentacja*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 161–165.

[21] K. Lundell, *Accountability and Patterns of Alternation in Pluralitarian, Majoriatarian and Consensus Democracies*, "Government and Opposition" 2011, vol. 46(2), pp. 145–167; S. Hobolt, J. Tilley, S. Banducci, *Clarity of Responsibility: How Government Cohesion Conditions Performance Voting*, "European Journal of Political Research" 2013, vol. 52(2), pp. 164–187; T. Hellwig, D. Samuels, *Electoral Accountability and the Variety of Democratic Regimes*, "British Journal of Political Science" 2008, vol. 38(1), pp. 65–90.

[22] B. Manin, A. Przeworski, S.C. Stokes, *Introduction*, [in:] *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*, eds. A. Przeworski, S.C. Stokes, B. Manin, Cambridge 1999, p. 3.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

tion that those in power act to best serve the public interest is suffering significant empirical erosion. As studies of the representative mandate in Poland indicate, members of parliament themselves are also not convinced that they embody and pursue the public interest, that this constitutes the foundation of their political actions.[23]

The facts seem to verify the assumption that political representation functions in favour of the public interest, perceived in the same way by both the people in power and the people represented.[24] Following the rejection of the Constitution for Europe by a majority of the French on 29 May 2005, and by the Dutch in a referendum three days later, regulations similar to those in the constitution were introduced into the Lisbon Treaty and, without the consent of the people being sought in referendums, they were approved by the parliaments of the EU countries, away from public scrutiny.[25] Only one approval referendum was held in Ireland, and when the people voted against being bound by the Lisbon Treaty, another referendum was held, the idea being that the Irish people would just have to keep on voting until they understood what was good for them. When in a 2015 referendum the Greeks rejected the programme of substantial public spending cuts and tax increases imposed on them by the so-called Troika (the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund), a few days later the Greek government introduced an even more restrictive package of public spending cuts and tax increases.

In passing a law, Parliament becomes not so much an expression of the *volonté générale*, but the actual *volonté générale*.[26] Such a determination of the people's will by parliament is arbitrary, as it is made solely by the parliamentary majority. Significantly, this will is subject to change, and not only in the context of the end of one parliamentary term and the formation of a new political majority after an election. It can also change during a term of parliament – as the policy preferences of the parliamentary majority evolve, as the inter-fractional configuration changes, or as a reevaluation is made within the same parliamentary majority. In turn, as shown by the examples of the Polish Sejm in the eighth term (2015–2019) and in the ninth term (2019–2023) on politically crucial issues (such as the constitutional court system, common courts, electoral procedure) the will of the parliamentary majority can be permanently changed (so-called "repair laws"), occasionally surprising the proponents of the change themselves, as well as other deputies voting

[23] M. Kruk, K. Kubuj, M. Laskowska, J. Zaleśny, M. Godlewski, M. Olszówka, *Representational Mandate in the Polish Deputies' Practice*, Warsaw 2013, p. 156 ff.

[24] B. Manin, A. Przeworski, S.C. Stokes, *op. cit.*, p. 2 ff.

[25] R. Eatwell, M. Goodwin, *Narodowy populizm. Zamach na demokrację liberalną*, Katowice 2020, p. 123.

[26] J. Szymanek, *Reprezentacja polityczna w ujęciu doktryny francuskiej…*, p. 139.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

for those changes, in terms of both their content and their effects.[27] Does the nation really constantly change its position on key systemic issues? Is it truly the case, as in Poland, that one day the nation wants to use correspondence elections, then doesn't want to use them at all, only to want to use them again a moment later?[28] This type of extreme instability in political preferences is not reflected in opinion polls. Parliament does many things, but it does not express the will of the people, because the people do not possess a single will, and consequently cannot transfer it to parliament.

This myth of parliamentary representation – that parliament expresses the common will and, in its capacity as a forum for representatives, is the place where public affairs are discussed, is needed to maintain confidence in the value of parliament. The erosion of that myth, though, is more than apparent, not least in light of the decomposition of European national parliaments' competencies in favour of EU bodies.[29] Even a cursory examination of parliamentary debates painfully reveals that they are a far cry from an effective environment for communication and cognition, where the truth about social processes and their consequences is sought and reached.

Accordingly, and as is very evident, the will expressed directly by members of the public (the Sovereign) can be disregarded in the decision-making process. This casts the assumption concerning the will of the people as the source of all power in the democratic community in a very different light.[30]

ELECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY – CRISIS OR MYTH?

The above assertions on the mythical nature of the notion of entrusting the power of the sovereign in the hands of parliament must be accompanied by further remarks on electoral accountability.

---

[27] In 2020, the Polish Sejm repealed legislation on a supplementary care allowance, much to the surprise of the MPs voting for the change, most of whom claimed that they had not wanted to repeal the legislation.

[28] The deputies of the parliamentary majority repealed the electoral law provisions on the election of the President of the Republic of Poland that permitted correspondence elections to be held to a narrow extent. The argument was that correspondence elections contribute to the perpetration of a wide range of electoral offences. Subsequently, the same lawmakers in the majority passed a law mandating that only postal ballots be used to elect the President of the Republic of Poland.

[29] According to J. Barcz (*Parlament a Unia Europejska. Analiza prawna na przykładzie doświadczeń Austrii (wraz z podstawowymi dokumentami)*, Warszawa 1999, p. 11), along with Poland's accession to the EU, the Sejm lost about 60% of its legislative competences to the EU, and about 80% of its legislative competences in the field of economic law issues.

[30] Cf. W. Orłowski, *Stare i nowe problemy procesu ustawodawczego*, [in:] *Konstytucja w państwie demokratycznym*, eds. S. Patyra, M. Sadowski, K. Urbaniak, Poznań 2017, p. 163 ff.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

The premise of accountability is that citizens evaluate in retrospect. They can reject or approve of what they have come to know.[31] Such accountability is paradigmatically similar to a representative relationship in civil law – the agent gives an account to the principal; the principal then carefully weighs the rationale and makes an electoral decision – punishing or rewarding the agent. Thus, there are two stages of electoral accountability: 1) receipt of a report on the mandate by the one who made the entrustment of power; 2) enforcement – in the sense that the incumbent will receive the mandate anew or be stripped of it in the next election.[32]

These assumptions, however, are illusory. First, no widespread practice has developed of MPs or the government drawing up a precise report at the end of their term of office on the tasks accomplished, evaluating the effects of the actions they took. Nor is there any custom of conducting a comprehensive, objective evaluation of those actions. Secondly, even if individual MPs do prepare some kind of report on their activities, they are still not subject to scrutiny by their constituents.[33] Electoral accountability finds its origins in the mythical assumption that electors are the best guarantors and judges of their own interests,[34] that they know everything that is relevant regarding the activities of MPs, and that they independently make decision on both the public relations and private affairs[35] that make up the public interest most effectively. This assumption finds no validity when the complexity of legal, economic or social relations is increasing, when even among experts in the field there is no consensus on the matter. There is no reason to believe that voters are capable of rationally assessing what best serves their development and welfare, or that, during an election, they grasp the forms and essence of things in an enlightened manner. Can the public rationally evaluate government's policy for limiting COVID-19 transmission, or the negative consequences of that policy, when there is no *communis opinio* on the subject among virologists or epidemiologists? Are members of the public competent to discern who is correctly carrying out the representative mandate concerning the macroeconomic policies implemented, or international alliances, when even expert opinions differ in this regard? And yet, the idea of retrospective accountability is based on such a relationship: rewarding some and punishing others for particular acts of entrusted power.

[31] V.O. Key, *The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting, 1936–1960*, Cambridge 1968, p. 61.

[32] T. Bergman, W.C. Müller, K. Strøm, M. Blomgren, *Democratic Delegation and Accountability: Cross-National Pattern*, [in:] *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies*, eds. K. Strøm, W.C. Müller, T. Bergman, Oxford 2003, p. 110; K. Lundell, *op. cit.*, pp. 145–167, 147.

[33] An objectivised, formal criterion for the coverage of reports is the number of so-called downloads of the online report, i.e. the number of people who have opened the report in question.

[34] B. Manin, A. Przeworski, S.C. Stokes, *op. cit.*, p. 10; H.F. Pitkin, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

[35] E.L. Bernays, *Propaganda*, Wrocław 2020, p. 20.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

Social science argues that large groups of voters are more ignorant than it appears to observers of political relations.[36] Even the compulsion to vote does not increase voters' political awareness.[37] According to surveys conducted in Poland, less than 20% of voters follow closely, or fairly closely, what is happening in politics.[38] For the most part, voters are not familiar with the names of their representatives in parliament, and more significantly, they are unaware of how the latter vote on issues resonating in the public debate.[39]

It is a fallacy unsupported by science that voters have adequate awareness of the actions of their elected representatives, can quantify and assess those actions, and can use this information to rationally decide to hold those representatives accountable.[40] Citizens lack sufficient knowledge of what officials and those in power are actually doing,[41] and are therefore unable to make a thorough, competent appraisal of the actual circumstances surrounding the activities of those representatives or to identify viable decision-making alternatives.[42] They neither have the right scale nor are qualified to operate it. E.J. Jung evokes the motif of the "intellectual enslavement of voters"[43] and remarks that the voter is almost always a non-political person,[44] most often lacks much knowledge of the facts,[45] and is rarely equipped with a sense of responsibility for the community. Voters' political ignorance is a constant variable in electoral processes, and this is true even in the era of internet-based communi-

[36] J. Brennan, *Against Democracy*, Princeton 2017, p. 24. For more details, see I. Somin, *Democracy and Political Ignorance: Why Smaller Government Is Smarter*, Stanford 2013. As stated by L. Bartels (*Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections*, "American Political Science Review" 1996, vol. 40(1), p. 194), political ignorance of the US citizens is one of the best-documented features of contemporary politics. Similarly idem, *The Irrational Electorate*, "Wilson Quarterly" 2008 (Autumn); B. Caplan, *Mit racjonalnego wyborcy. Dlaczego w demokracji wybiera się złe programy polityczne*, Wrocław 2017, p. 27.

[37] See S. Birch, *Full Participation: A Comparative Study of Compulsory Voting*, Tokyo–New York–Paris 2009; A. Lever, *Compulsory Voting: A Critical Perspective*, "British Journal of Political Science" 2010, vol. 40(4).

[38] Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, *Monolog, dialog czy kłótnia – Polaków rozmowy o polityce*, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2017/K_153_17.PDF (access: 20.6.2022), p. 1.

[39] V.L. Hutchinson, *Public Opinion and Democratic Accountability: How Citizens Learn about Politics*, Princeton 2005, p. 2.

[40] J. Forejohn, *Accountability and Authority: Toward a Theory of Political Accountability*, [in:] *Democracy, Accountability and Representation…*, p. 132.

[41] C.T. Borowiak, *Accountability and Democracy: The Pitfalls and Promise of Popular Control*, Oxford 2011, p. 12; S. Mainwaring, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[42] A.M. Goetz, R. Jenkins, *Reinventing Accountability: Making Democracy Work for Human Development*, London 2005, p. 18.

[43] E.J. Jung, *Władztwo miernot. Jego rozpad i zastąpienie przez Nowe Imperium*, Kraków 2019, p. 228.

[44] For an extensive discussion of the nature of "political character", see M. Karwat, *O statusie pojęcia „polityczności"*, "Studia Politologiczne" 2015, no. 37.

[45] E.J. Jung, *op. cit.*, p. 228. Similarly J. Forejohn, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

cation.[46] As B. Caplan puts it, the irrationality of the choices made is a derivative of the irrationality of the voters.[47] Voters' ignorance provides a good explanation for why MPs do not act to pursue voters' interests – they are simply not required to do so. Voters are not competent to pursue what they would need to do to protect their interests, and consequently their social needs are not satisfied.

Another mythical idea linked to the phenomenon of voter ignorance, or at least voter confusion, is that openness in public life, and digital communication in particular, can constitute a remedy for the lack of knowledge among the public regarding what those in power actually do. The rise of social media has changed the structural conditions of political communication, introducing an egalitarian relationship between the senders and receivers of political communication. Hearsay sits at the table alongside verified information,[48] and dilettantes have entered the public discourse, have come to dominate it, and have degraded it to their own level through their widespread appeal. As D. Runciman points out, democracy *à la* Twitter is not hobbled by personal knowledge of a subject.[49] The premise of the rationality of the will of the political collective, and of the public's capacity to articulate and enforce its will coherently, is debunked by the world of individualised, dispersed news.

The public discussion is centred on information that politicians and the media perceive to be important, making the informational asymmetry even more pronounced.[50] Voters are cognizant of the strategies political parties and the interest groups supporting them employ to obtain their support.[51] These may include issues whose very irrelevance makes them suitable for diverting public attention away from more pressing matters.[52] The mass media play a significant role in this process of influencing public perception among large social groups,[53] because, rather than remaining attentive observers, they have entered into political relationships that direct attention towards the followers of particular ideologies, and have created an intellectual environment tailored to the needs of their adherents.

Unlike voters in general, the economic elite and special interest groups are able to identify their own needs, articulate them, and pressure the government to act on them. Additionally, because of the openness of their work and the tools

[46] J. Brennan, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

[47] B. Caplan, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[48] P. Rosanvallon, *Dobre rządy*, Warszawa 2018, p. 176. Similarly A. Applebaum, *Zmierzch demokracji. Zwodniczy powab autorytaryzmu*, Warszawa 2020, pp. 138–139.

[49] D. Runciman, *Jak kończy się demokracja*, Warszawa 2019, p. 155.

[50] E.L. Bernays, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[51] E.J. Jung, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

[52] *Ibidem*.

[53] For example, see E. Costas-Pérez, A. Solé-Ollé, P. Sorribas-Navarro, *Corruption Scandals, Voter Information, and Accountability*, "European Journal of Political Economy" 2012, vol. 28(4), p. 469 ff.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

at their disposal for influencing MPs, they can ensure that the regulations are in their favour,[54] a fact that has been proved empirically[55] – including by a study conducted by M. Gilens and B.I. Page. Statistically, when a majority of citizens disagree with economic elites or organized interest groups, they tend to lose.[56] Other studies demonstrate that the vast majority of low-income and low-status voters are effectively shut out of the political system, and that their opinions and attitudes are disregarded. W.D. Burnham and T. Ferguson draw attention to the fact that, in the US, the 2014 election results are comparable to those of the early 1900s, when voting was reserved for free white men.[57]

The above passage is more than a mere complaint about defects in the democratic process. The correlation between interest groups and the general public's negligible influence on election results is indicative of something considerably more serious, that is, the nature of the accountability relationship. Accountability is a generic feature of social relationships; it is not specific only to democracy, but applies to any arrangement in which power is delegated, where. the type of governance is determined by who actually performs the accounting. Both the United States and European nations have frequent experience of an oligarchization of their parliaments, in which the financial elite and small interest groups are able to achieve their own ends.[58] Such evidence undermines the credibility of theoretical deductions about the role of the people as the *de facto* sovereign and, in accountability theory, the principals of parliament and public authorities.[59] When theory is confronted with practice, popular

[54] On the relationship between business and the legal responsibility of MPs, see D. Dudek, *Biznes i (nie)odpowiedzialność konstytucyjna posła*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2014, vol. 22, p. 220 ff.

[55] H.K. Gerken, *Boden Lecture. The Real Problem with Citizens United: Campaign Finance, Dark Money, and Shadow Parties*, "Marquette Law Review" 2014, vol. 97(4), p. 905 ff. For instance, spending reported for the 2018 US Congressional election campaign was $5,725,183,133bn. See Open Secrets, *Cost of Election*, https://www.opensecrets.org/overview/cost.php (access: 20.8.2022).

[56] M. Gilens, B.I. Page, *Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens*, "Perspectives on Politics" 2014, vol. 12(3), pp. 575–576. Four hypotheses were considered: 1) legislation reflects Majoritarian Electoral Democracy; 2) legislation reflects Economic-Elite Domination; 3) legislation reflects Majoritarian Pluralism; 4) legislation reflects Biased Pluralism. In order to verify the research hypotheses, 1,779 cases were analysed by the US Congress over the course of 20 years (1981–2002). The link between campaign financing and the buying of political influence is contested by Y. Dawood (*Campaign Finance and American Democracy*, "Annual Review of Political Science" 2015, vol. 18, pp. 340–341). She refers to empirical studies, but – significantly – cites research published in 1988, i.e. 27 years before she published her research.

[57] W.D. Burnham, T. Ferguson, *Americans Are Sick to Death of Both Parties: Why Our Politics Is in Worse Shape Than We Thought*, 17.12.2014, https://medium.com/@tiglathpalasar/americans-are-sick-to-death-of-both-parties-why-our-politics-is-in-worse-shape-than-we-thought-b8ce5f1034c6 (access: 12.10.2022).

[58] Y. Mounk, *Lud kontra demokracja. Dlaczego nasza wolność jest w niebezpieczeństwie i jak ją ocalić*, Warszawa 2019, p. 128 ff.

[59] J.M. Carey, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

notions about democracy are revealed to be more an expression of ideas about the desired state of the relationship between the electors and the elected than a description of parliamentary reality. Representatives are not bound by the will and interests of the people they are deemed to represent, but rather by the expectations of those who appoint[60] or finance them. The will of representatives is formulated and presented to voters as their own during election campaign, but is not derived from the people. The form of representation in these categories ceases to be a reflection of societal intent, but is replaced with a new manner of representation that is more concerned with aesthetics than with sociological or political issues.[61]

Even so, those who are in power may genuinely assume that they have done everything possible to address the demands of the people, only to learn that those people did not actually want what they asked for.[62] Politicians are bombarded with messages from various political factions and lobbies, so it is extremely challenging for them to understand what voters' genuine intentions, preferences and interests are. In reality, we are dealing with a world of fictitious preferences, and responsiveness is about the anticipated reaction of voters rather than their actual response – which depends on a variety of factors. As the dynamics of electoral preferences show, voters frequently change their positions due to particular occurrences in various social contexts and across a wide range of social relationships. Their expectations are not necessarily internally consistent. The same group may, e.g., demand that both low taxes and a generous state social policy; the implementation of the EU Green Deal and cheap coal; the elimination of burning coal and gas in cookers and a stable supply of cheap heat in winter. MPs are unable to satisfy such unattainable social desires, which also makes their being held accountable impractical.

The ethical preferences of voters are also chimerical. In 1996, 91.8% of Italian voters considered corruption a very serious problem; 12 years later, in 2008, only 0.2% of Italian voters felt this way.[63] Although Italy remained a country with an elevated corruption index,[64] for voters corruption had become a commonplace and tolerated element of political relations.

Scholars of political relations are somewhat embarrassed to admit that there is little empirical proof of electoral accountability,[65] for it would mean there is no

[60] M.B. Vieira, D. Runciman, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[61] *Ibidem*, pp. 160–161.

[62] P.C. Schmitter, *The Ambiguous Virtues of Accountability*, [in:] *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*, eds. L. Diamond, L. Morlino, Baltimore 2005, p. 27.

[63] A. Vannucci, *The Controversial Legacy of 'Mani Pulite': A Critical Analysis of Italian Corruption and Anti-Corruption Policies*, "Bulletin of Italian Politics" 2009, vol. 1(2), p. 235.

[64] European Commission, *The Corruption Perception Index 2019: The EU Is the Best Performer in the World*, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2020/01/27-01-2020-the-corruption-perception-index-2019-the-eu-is-the-best-performer-in-the-world (access: 20.9.2022).

[65] A. Fumarola, *op. cit.*, p. 41 ff.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

rationale for treating elections as a form of accountability for those elected by the voters.[66] There is no reason why the *demos* should hold those in power accountable for *kratos*, because the latter do not pursue it for the common good.[67] Voters, in turn, are deprived of both the ability and the opportunity to review the decisions and actions of their representatives – especially since media coverage is hardly ever the product of journalism anymore, creating an illusion of accountability rather than offering the real thing.[68] The rise of populist tendencies and the emergence of new parties (which soon reveal themselves to be yet another facet of an intensifying oligarchy) takes place as the nominal sovereign finally becomes disillusioned with the notions of sovereignty, democratic participation, representation and accountability.[69] People in Western Europe have never had such a low opinion about their political system as they do today.[70] In the United States, confidence in Congress has been declared by 42% (1973), 41% (1986) and 7% (2014, 2022) of Americans.[71] In Western societies, more voters neither like nor trust their representatives as much as they did in previous decades.[72] Voters' frustration is accompanied by electoral fickleness in some contemporary European countries, including France, Italy and Greece. According to B. Manin, more and more citizens no longer identify with any existing political party.[73] Consequently, both candidates' and political parties' communicative electoral strategies benefit when they rely on vague, labile images that highlight political leaders' personality (or rather, an image of it).[74] The stage has been taken by experts in election polls and how to manipulate them, and by journalist-propagandists who seldom reflect the dilemmas concerning public relations.[75]

As J. Schumpeter has written, instead of believing in the sovereign power of the people to hold their elected representatives to account, it makes more sense to hold that elections simply provide authorization to govern, voters' consent to

[66] See J.D. Fearon, *Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance*, [in:] *Democracy, Accountability and Representation…*, p. 57.

[67] See K. Walther, *Electoral Systems and Accountability: Challenges and Considerations for South Africa*, Auckland 2017, p. 60.

[68] G. Dimova, *Democracy Beyond Elections: Government Accountability in the Media Age*, London 2020, pp. 5, 31–33.

[69] On the importance of oligarchic influence in Indonesia, see G. Rodan, C. Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 29 ff.

[70] F. Zakaria, *Przyszłość wolności. Nieliberalna demokracja w Stanach Zjednoczonych i na świecie*, Warszawa 2018, p. 23.

[71] Gallup, *Confidence in Institutions*, https://news.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx (access: 8.9.2022).

[72] D. Runciman, *Jak kończy się demokracja…*, p. 16.

[73] B. Manin, *The Principles of Representative Government*, Cambridge 1997, p. 193.

[74] For more on policy personalisation, see M. Brenner, *Zjawisko personalizacji politycznej*, "Studia Politologiczne" 2010, no. 10, p. 117 ff.

[75] See B. Manin, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

those elected imposing a legal order and binding the people to it.[76] Through regular elections, citizens identify those whom they empower to make political decisions,[77] without having much influence on what follows from those decisions or what the motives of their representatives are. K. Strøm's thesis on the sovereign delegating authority to its representatives boils down to the same conclusion, despite its democratic adornment.[78] This gap between the illusion of accountability and reality is illustrated by the following quote from G. Brennan and A. Hamlin: "Voters are like fans at a football game: they can choose to cheer for one team or the other, but they cannot choose the result of the game, and no one individual's act of cheering has any significant effect on the result".[79]

CONCLUSIONS

This paper demonstrates the mythical nature of the will of the sovereign as expressed in political representation. In light of the studies and observations referred to, the collective notion of informed and collectively guided individuals capable of electing representatives as the foundation of an axionormative system is already being refuted – factually, not just theoretically. The vast body of literature devoted to the decomposition of the assumption of political representation under democratic systems[80] leads one to acknowledge, albeit uneasily, that the absolute foundation of a democratic system is rather a matter of narrative, or of belief (and a belief that is quite naive), where no one in power is actually willing (or required) to give an account of their accomplishments to their principal. Electoral accountability turns out to be a myth about a hero (a collective sovereign) endowed with superhuman powers (knowledge and authority) who rewards the good and punishes the bad (endowing them with a mandate to exercise power). The *sacrum* of supreme power – equated with the people – turns out to be an idea best left unverified, and not worth being taken seriously as an instrument for describing and analyzing political relations. This can

[76] J.A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, New York 2003, p. 250 ff.

[77] *Ibidem*, p. 269 ff.

[78] K. Strøm, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

[79] G. Brennan, A. Hamlin, *On Political Representation*, "British Journal of Political Science" 1999, vol. 29(1), p. 118.

[80] E. Burke, *Przemówienie do elektorów w Bristolu*, [in:] *Odwołanie od nowych do starych wigów*, Kraków 2015, p. 121 (critique of the position: M. Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, Oxford 2000, p. 129). For the entirety of Burke's theory on political representation, see H.F. Pitkin, *op. cit.*, especially p. 168 ff.; J.S. Fishkin, *The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy*, New Haven 1995, pp. 32–33; W. Włoch, A. Tarnowska, A. Bień-Kacała, *Asymetria władzy, czyli delegacja prawodawcza w demokracji reprezentatywnej. Studium filozoficzno-prawne*, Toruń 2022, p. 15 ff.; P.A. Gibbons, *Ideas of Political Representation in Parliament 1660–1832*, Oxford 1914, p. 20 ff.; B. Manin, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

lead not only to false conclusions but also to corrective measures that are doomed to failure. A metaphor or a myth is of little use in describing social reality. As argued by B. Morel,[81] the most fundamental errors in human history share comparable conditions and characteristics, including the apparent logic of the assumptions made at a given time. These are inevitably accompanied by institutional and social tenacity in their application, and by an aversion to any signals proving them untrue. At least in academic analysis, the figurative but basically mythical image of representative government should not be impervious to such signals, for they can serve as a starting point for a debate over the real applicability of the political representation theory developed at the end of the 18th century and still embraced by legal doctrine today.

REFERENCES

Literature

Applebaum A., *Zmierzch demokracji. Zwodniczy powab autorytaryzmu*, Warszawa 2020.

Bamforth N., *Accountability of and to the Legislature*, [in:] *Accountability in the Contemporary Constitution*, eds. N. Bamforthe, P. Leylan, Oxford 2013.

Barcz J., *Parlament a Unia Europejska. Analiza prawna na przykładzie doświadczeń Austrii (wraz z podstawowymi dokumentami)*, Warszawa 1999.

Bartels L., *The Irrational Electorate*, "Wilson Quarterly" 2008 (Autumn).

Bartels L., *Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections*, "American Political Science Review" 1996, vol. 40(1), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/2111700**.

Bergman T., Müller W.C., Strøm K., Blomgren M., *Democratic Delegation and Accountability: Cross-National Pattern*, [in:] *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies*, eds. K. Strøm, W.C. Müller, T. Bergman, Oxford 2003, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/019829784X.003.0004**.

Bernays E.L., *Propaganda*, Wrocław 2020.

Birch S., *Full Participation: A Comparative Study of Compulsory Voting*, Tokyo–New York–Paris 2009, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9780719077623.001.0001**.

Borowiak C.T., *Accountability and Democracy: The Pitfalls and Promise of Popular Control*, Oxford 2011, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199778256.001.0001**.

Bovens M., Schillemans T., Goodin R.E., *Public Accountability*, [in:] *The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability*, eds. M. Bovens, T. Schillemans, R.E. Goodin, Oxford 2014, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199641253.013.0012**.

Brennan J., *Against Democracy*, Princeton 2017, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvc77mcz**.

Brennan G., Hamlin A., *On Political Representation*, "British Journal of Political Science" 1999, vol. 29(1), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123499000058**.

Brenner M., *Zjawisko personalizacji politycznej*, "Studia Politologiczne" 2010, no. 10.

Burke E., *Przemówienie do elektorów w Bristolu*, [in:] *Odwołanie od nowych do starych wigów*, Kraków 2015.

[81] C. Morel, *Décisions absurdes*, Paris 2002. On Morel's theory, see J. De Berlaymont, *Absurd Decisions (Christian Morel)*, 2.1.2016, https://johannesdeberlaymont.com/2016/01/02/absurd-decisions-christian-morel (access: 28.9.2022).

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

Caplan B., *Mit racjonalnego wyborcy. Dlaczego w demokracji wybiera się złe programy polityczne*, Wrocław 2017.

Carey J.M., *Legislative Voting and Accountability*, Cambridge 2009.

Ceglarska A., *Law as a Fable: The Issue of Myth in the Interpretation of Law*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2021, vol. 30(2), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.17951/sil.2021.30.2.49-61**.

Costas-Pérez E., Solé-Ollé A., Sorribas-Navarro P., *Corruption Scandals, Voter Information, and Accountability*, "European Journal of Political Economy" 2012, vol. 28(4), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2012.05.007**.

Cotterrell R., *Why Must Legal Ideas Be Interpreted Sociologically?*, "Journal of Law and Society" 1998, vol. 25(2), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6478.00086**.

Davies A.C.L., *Accountability: A Public Law Analysis of Government by Contract*, Oxford 2001, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198299486.001.0001**.

Dawood Y., *Campaign Finance and American Democracy*, "Annual Review of Political Science" 2015, vol. 18, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-010814-104523**.

Dimova G., *Democracy Beyond Elections: Government Accountability in the Media Age*, London 2020, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25294-6**.

Dowdle M.W., *Public Accountability: Conceptual, Historical, and Epistemic Mappings*, [in:] *Public Accountability: Designs, Dilemmas and Experiences*, ed. M.W. Dowdle, Cambridge 2006.

Dudek D., *Biznes i (nie)odpowiedzialność konstytucyjna posła*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2014, vol. 22, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.17951/sil.2014.22.219**.

Durkheim E., *Elementarne formy życia religijnego*, Warszawa 1990.

Durkheim E., Mauss M., *O niektórych pierwotnych formach klasyfikacji. Przyczynek do badań nad wyobrażeniami zbiorowymi*, [in:] *Socjologia i antropologia*, ed. M. Mauss, Warszawa 2001.

Eatwell R., Goodwin M., *Narodowy populizm. Zamach na demokrację liberalną*, Katowice 2020.

Fearon J.D., *Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance*, [in:] *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*, eds. A. Przeworski, S.C. Stokes, B. Manin, Cambridge 1999, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139175104.003**.

Filipowicz F., *Mit i spektakl władzy*, Warszawa 1988.

Fishkin J.S., *The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy*, New Haven 1995.

Forejohn J., *Accountability and Authority: Toward a Theory of Political Accountability*, [in:] *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*, eds. A. Przeworski, S.C. Stokes, B. Manin, Cambridge 1999, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139175104.005**.

Fumarola A., *The Contexts of Electoral Accountability: Electoral Integrity Performance Voting in 23 Democracies*, "Government and Opposition" 2020, vol. 55(1), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2018.13**.

Gerken H.K., *Boden Lecture. The Real Problem with Citizens United: Campaign Finance, Dark Money, and Shadow Parties*, "Marquette Law Review" 2014, vol. 97(4).

Gibbons P.A., *Ideas of Political Representation in Parliament 1660–1832*, Oxford 1914.

Gilens M., Page B.I., *Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens*, "Perspectives on Politics" 2014, vol. 12(3), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592714001595**.

Goetz A.M., Jenkins R., *Reinventing Accountability: Making Democracy Work for Human Development*, London 2005, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230500143**.

Hellwig T., Samuels D., *Electoral Accountability and the Variety of Democratic Regimes*, "British Journal of Political Science" 2008, vol. 38(1), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123408000045**.

Hobolt S., Tilley J., Banducci S., *Clarity of Responsibility: How Government Cohesion Conditions Performance Voting*, "European Journal of Political Research" 2013, vol. 52(2), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2012.02072.x**.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

Hogan J., *Election and Representation*, Cork 1945.
Hutchinson V.L., *Public Opinion and Democratic Accountability: How Citizens Learn about Politics*, Princeton 2005.
Jung E.J., *Władztwo miernot. Jego rozpad i zastąpienie przez Nowe Imperium*, Kraków 2019.
Karwat M., *O statusie pojęcia „polityczności"*, "Studia Politologiczne" 2015, no. 37.
Key V.O., *The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting, 1936–1960*, Cambridge 1968.
Kruk M., Kubuj K., Laskowska M., Zaleśny J., Godlewski M., Olszówka M., *Representational Mandate in the Polish Deputies' Practice*, Warsaw 2013.
Kwiatkowska E., *Mit zbiorowy, społeczny, indywidualny? Kilka uwag o możliwości pojęcia mitu indywidualnego w socjologii*, "Prace Kulturoznawcze" 2010, vol. 11.
Lever A., *Compulsory Voting: A Critical Perspective*, "British Journal of Political Science" 2010, vol. 40(4), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123410000050**.
Lundell K., *Accountability and Patterns of Alternation in Pluralitarian, Majoriatarian and Consensus Democracies*, "Government and Opposition" 2011, vol. 46(2), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2010.01334.x**.
Maistre J. de, *Studium suwerenności*, [in:] *O rewolucji, suwerenności i konstytucji politycznej. Wybór pism*, Kraków 2019.
Mainwaring S., *Introduction: Democratic Accountability in Latin America*, [in:] *Democratic Accountability in Latin America*, eds. S. Mainwaring, C. Welna, Oxford 2005.
Manin B., *The Principles of Representative Government*, Cambridge 1997.
Manin B., Przeworski A., Stokes S.C., *Introduction*, [in:] *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*, eds. A. Przeworski, S.C. Stokes, B. Manin, Cambridge 1999.
Maurras C., *Przyszłość inteligencji i inne pisma*, Dębogóra 2020.
Morel C., *Décisions absurdes*, Paris 2002.
Mounk Y., *Lud kontra demokracja. Dlaczego nasza wolność jest w niebezpieczeństwie i jak ją ocalić*, Warszawa 2019.
Oliver D., *Accountability and the Foundations of British Democracy – the Public Interest and Public Service Principles*, [in:] *Accountability in the Contemporary Constitution*, eds. N. Bamforthe, P. Leyland, Oxford 2013, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199670024.003.0012**.
Orłowski W., *Stare i nowe problemy procesu ustawodawczego*, [in:] *Konstytucja w państwie demokratycznym*, eds. S. Patyra, M. Sadowski, K. Urbaniak, Poznań 2017.
Palumbo A., *Introduction*, [in:] *Political Accountability*, eds. R. Bellamy, A. Palumbo, Farnham 2010.
Patyra S., *Konsultacje społeczne w procesie przygotowywania rządowych projektów ustaw – zarys problemu*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2014, vol. 22, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.17951/sil.2014.22.0.497**.
Pettit P., *Three Conceptions of Democratic Control*, [in:] *Political Accountability*, eds. R. Bellamy, A. Palumbo, Farnham 2010.
Pitkin H.F., *The Concept of Representation*, Los Angeles 1967.
Powell Jr. G.B., *Wybory jako narzędzie demokracji. Koncepcje większościowe i proporcjonalne*, Warszawa 2006.
Rodan G., Hughes C., *The Politics of Accountability in Southeast Asia: The Dominance of Moral Ideologies*, Oxford 2014, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198703532.001.0001**.
Rosanvallon P., *Dobre rządy*, Warszawa 2018.
Runciman D., *Jak kończy się demokracja*, Warszawa 2019.
Runciman D., *The Paradox of Political Representation*, "Journal of Political Philosophy" 2007, vol. 15(1), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9760.2007.00266.x**.
Schedler A., Diamond L., Plattner M.F. (eds.), *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*, Boulder 1999, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/9781685854133**.

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

Schmitter P.C., *The Ambiguous Virtues of Accountability*, [in:] *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*, eds. L. Diamond, L. Morlino, Baltimore 2005.

Schmitter P.C., Karl T.L., *What Democracy Is… and Is Not*, "Journal of Democracy" 1991, vol. 2(3), **DOI: https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1991.0033**.

Schumpeter J.A., *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, New York 2003.

Somin I., *Democracy and Political Ignorance: Why Smaller Government Is Smarter*, Stanford 2013.

Strøm K., *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies*, [in:] *Political Accountability*, eds. R. Bellamy, A. Palumbo, Farnham 2010.

Szymanek J., *Reprezentacja i mandat parlamentarny*, Warszawa 2013.

Szymanek J., *Reprezentacja polityczna: interpretacja pojęcia*, [in:] *Ustroje: historia i współczesność. Polska – Europa – Ameryka Łacińska. Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana Profesorowi Jackowi Czajowskiemu*, eds. M. Grzybowski, G. Kuca, P. Mikuli, Kraków 2013.

Szymanek J., *Reprezentacja polityczna w ujęciu doktryny francuskiej*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2014, vol. 22, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.17951/sil.2014.22.135**.

Vannucci A., *The Controversial Legacy of 'Mani Pulite': A Critical Analysis of Italian Corruption and Anti-Corruption Policies*, "Bulletin of Italian Politics" 2009, vol. 1(2).

Vieira M.B., Runciman D., *Reprezentacja*, Warszawa 2011.

Walther K., *Electoral Systems and Accountability: Challenges and Considerations for South Africa*, Auckland 2017.

Wawrzyniak J., *O niektórych osobliwościach Konstytucji V Republiki Francuskiej*, "Studia Iuridica Lublinensia" 2014, vol. 22, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.17951/sil.2014.22.0.149**.

Włoch W., Tarnowska A., Bień-Kacała A., *Asymetria władzy, czyli delegacja prawodawcza w demokracji reprezentatywnej. Studium filozoficzno-prawne*, Toruń 2022.

Young M., *Inclusion and Democracy*, Oxford 2000.

Zakaria F., *Przyszłość wolności. Nieliberalna demokracja w Stanach Zjednoczonych i na świecie*, Warszawa 2018.

Zalesny J., Goncharov V., *Ontological Core of the Social Concept of Global Constitutionalism: A Socio-Philosophical Analysis of Content and Evolution*, "Future Human Image" 2019, vol. 12, **DOI: https://doi.org/10.29202/fhi/12/12**.

Online sources

Burnham W.D., Ferguson T., *Americans Are Sick to Death of Both Parties: Why Our Politics Is in Worse Shape Than We Thought*, 17.12.2014, https://medium.com/@tiglathpalasar/americans-are-sick-to-death-of-both-parties-why-our-politics-is-in-worse-shape-than-we-thought-b8ce5f1034c6 (access: 12.10.2022).

Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, *Monolog, dialog czy kłótnia – Polaków rozmowy o polityce*, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2017/K_153_17.PDF (access: 20.6.2022).

De Berlaymont J., *Absurd Decisions (Christian Morel)*, 2.1.2016, https://johannesdeberlaymont.com/2016/01/02/absurd-decisions-christian-morel (access: 28.9.2022).

European Commission, *The Corruption Perception Index 2019: The EU Is the Best Performer in the World*, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2020/01/27-01-2020-the-corruption-perception-index-2019-the-eu-is-the-best-performer-in-the-world (access: 20.9.2022).

Gallup, *Confidence in Institutions*, https://news.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx (access: 8.9.2022).

Open Secrets, *Cost of Election*, https://www.opensecrets.org/overview/cost.php (access: 20.8.2022).

Pobrane z czasopisma Studia Iuridica Lublinensia **http://studiaiuridica.umcs.pl**
Data: 26/11/2026 01:28:57

ABSTRAKT

W artykule przedstawiono badania naukowe dotyczące założeń dotyczących rozliczalności wyborczej oraz spostrzeżenia koncepcyjne. Główną hipotezą jest wykazanie iluzorycznego charakteru rozliczalności za sprawowanie władzy po zakończeniu procesu wyborczego. Analizie poddano charakter i wartość epistemiczną rozliczalności wyborczej jako mitu – tworu budującego obraz rzeczywistości politycznej. Badania są poparte dowodami empirycznymi ze współczesnych badań społecznych. Celem artykułu jest pokazanie, że pojęcia reprezentacji i rozliczalności w stosunkach politycznych są konstruktami mitycznymi. Pozwala to lepiej zrozumieć błędne oczekiwania, do jakich one prowadzą. Przeprowadzone badania mają charakter międzynarodowy i wpisują się w ogólnoświatowe rozważania nad reprezentacją polityczną.

Słowa kluczowe: rozliczalność wyborcza; proces wyborczy; reprezentacja; rzeczywistość polityczna

UMCS