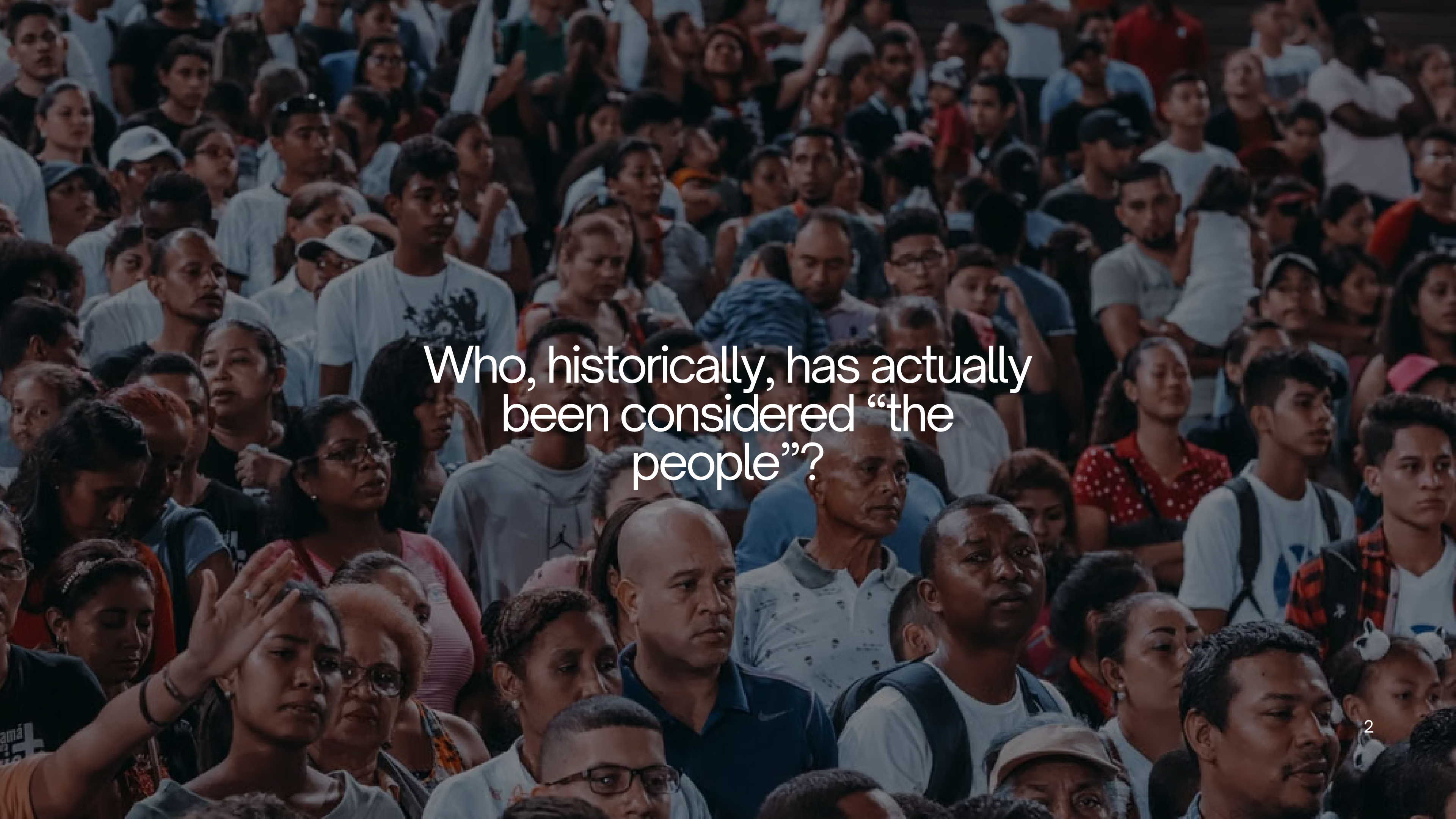


HISTORICAL CANADIAN
PERSPECTIVE

The Pros and Cons of a Democracy

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Who, historically, has actually
been considered “the
people”?

The greatest strength of democracy is that it creates a mechanism for political power to be challenged and redistributed. Its greatest weakness is that the system can still reproduce inequality if certain voices are excluded from meaningful participation.



ADVANTAGE #1

Democracy Creates Peaceful Political Change.

1

It allows governments to change without governments having to fall through violence or revolution.

2

Canada developed a parliamentary system where political leaders are accountable to elected representatives, and governments can lose power through elections rather than through political violence.

3

If citizens are dissatisfied with their government, they can organize, campaign, vote, protest, create political movements, or elect someone else.

Key Insight

This means that democracy doesn't require us to agree with our government in order to accept its legitimacy.



WEAKNESS #1

Democracy can be formally inclusive while remaining practically unequal.

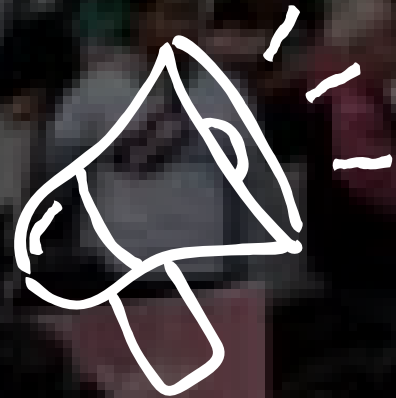
In *On Representative Government*, Mill argues that a truly equal democracy requires representation that does not simply allow the majority to dominate everyone else.

Canada's political institutions developed alongside a history of colonialism in which Indigenous peoples were not simply another voting bloc waiting to participate in Canadian democracy.

Historically, Canada could describe itself as democratic while simultaneously excluding entire communities from equal political power.

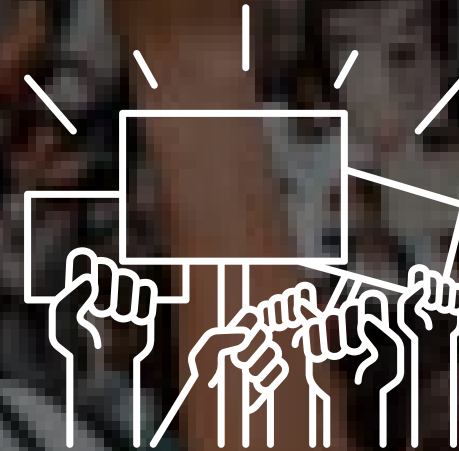
ADVANTAGE #2

Democracy can Expand its own Definition of Citizenship and Participation



Combatting Inequality

Democratic systems can create space for excluded groups to demand inclusion.



Democracy's Structure

A democracy is a system in which the definition of who gets a voice can itself be challenged.

So, Where does that leave us...?



It gives us a reason to take
democracy seriously.