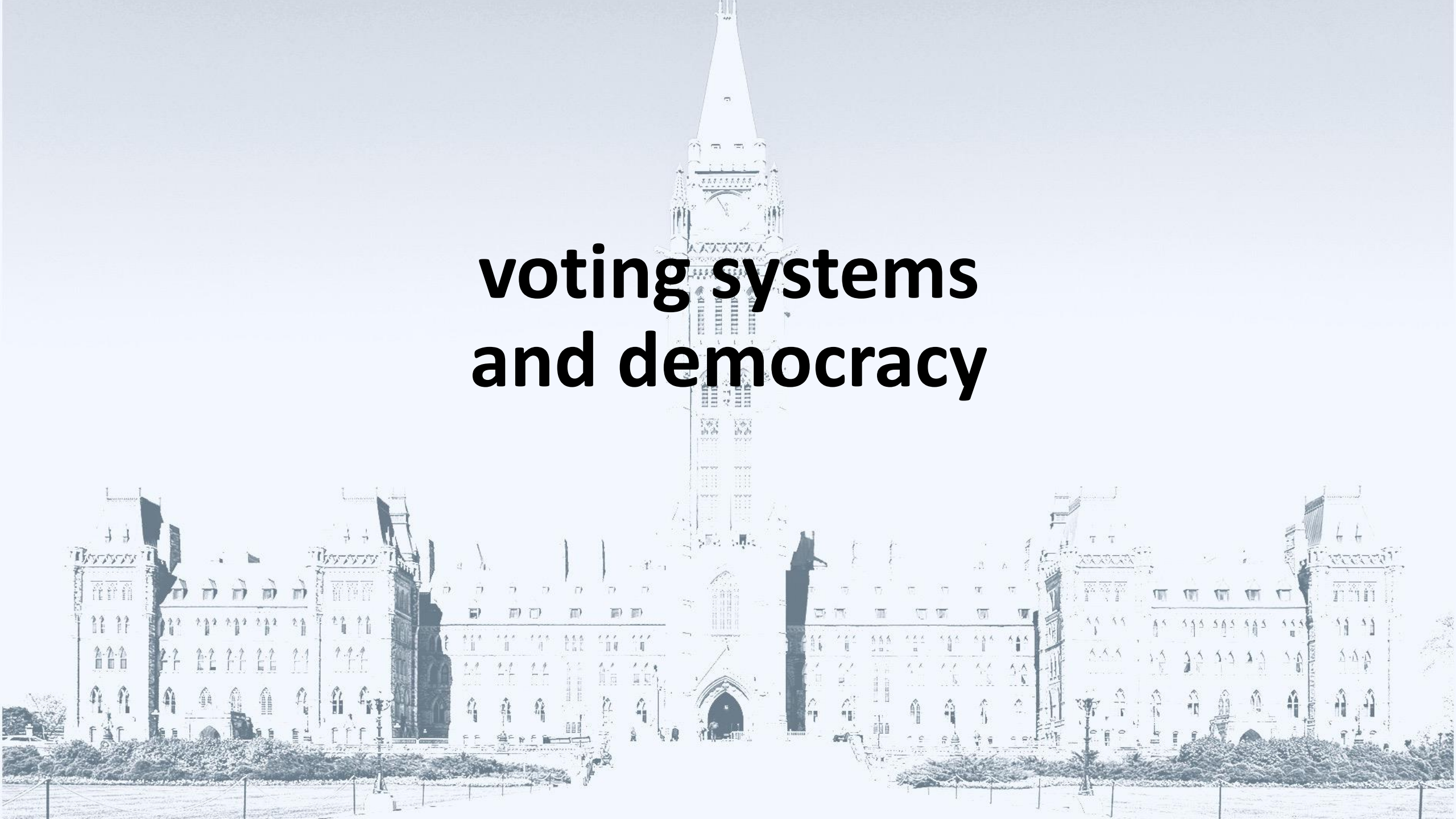


Peter Black

Mr. Black's degrees are in Economics and Political Science. He was a career civil servant providing policy analysis in the Saskatchewan and Canadian governments. In 2001, he became a member of Fair Vote Canada (FVC), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to bringing about a proportional representation (PR) system for provincial and federal elections. He served for several years on the Executive of the National Capital Region (NCR) Chapter of FVC and on the National Council. During the 2007 referendum on PR in Ontario, he coordinated the six-month "Yes" campaign in Ottawa. Peter was recently re-elected as a member of the Executive of the NCR Chapter.



voting systems and democracy

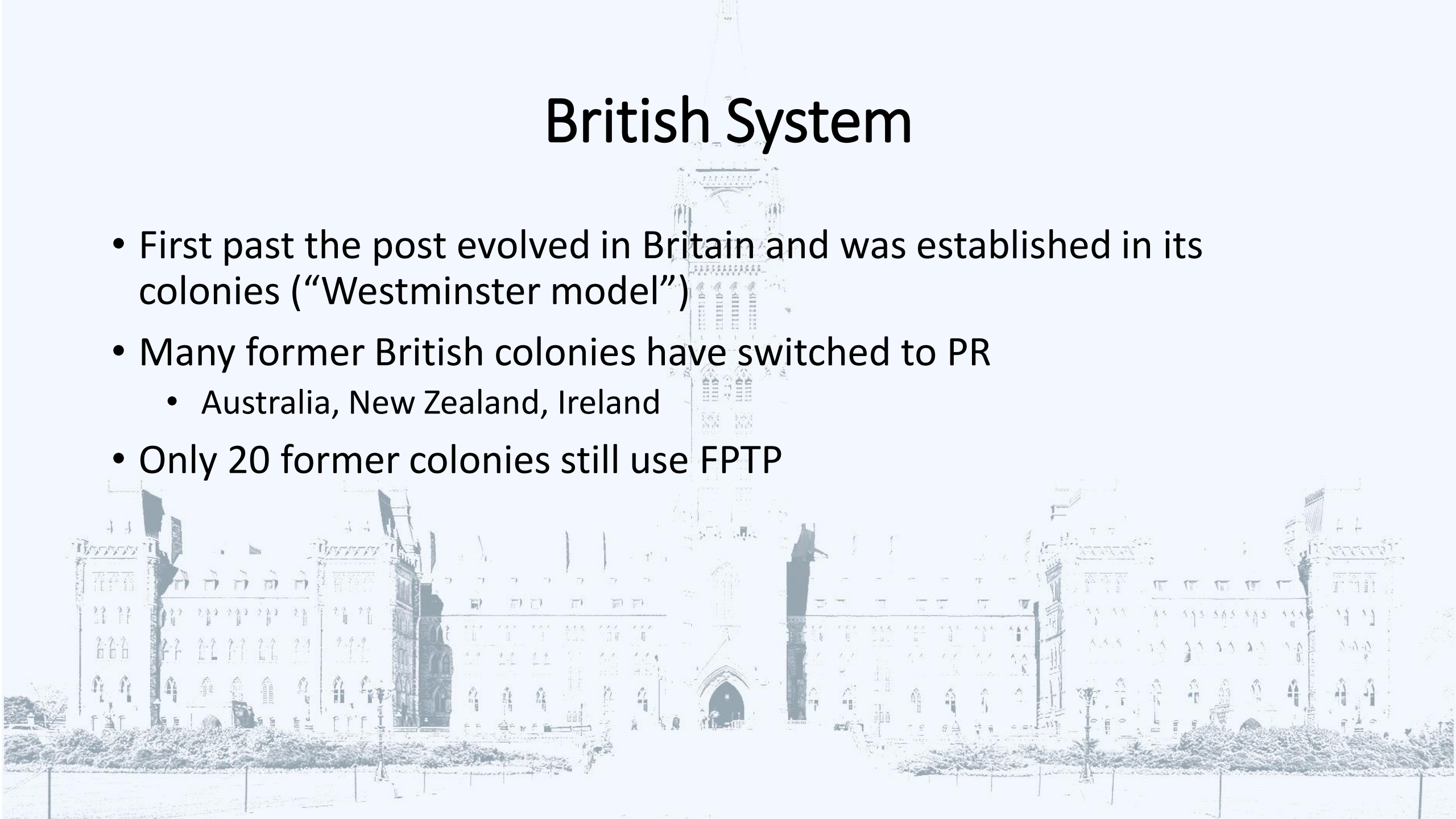
Voting Systems



- First-past-the post (FPTP)
 - candidate with most votes in riding wins seat in Parliament
 - party with most seats in Parliament forms government
- Proportional representation (PR)
 - party receives share of seats proportional to its share of votes
 - since parties rarely win majority of votes, they must form coalition with other party or parties to govern

British System

- First past the post evolved in Britain and was established in its colonies (“Westminster model”)
- Many former British colonies have switched to PR
 - Australia, New Zealand, Ireland
- Only 20 former colonies still use FPTP



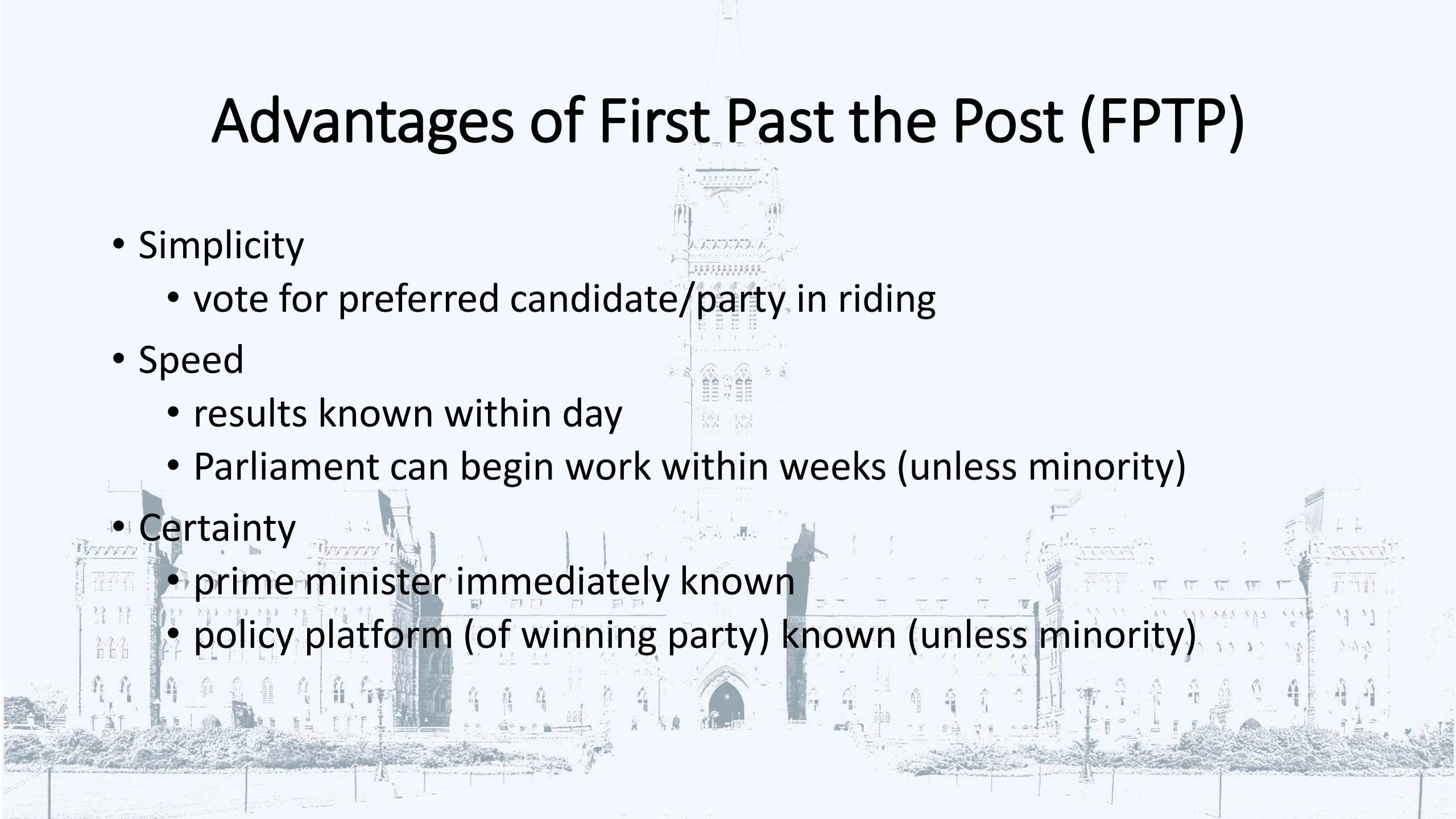
Proportional Representation in 90 countries and 80% of OECD

Albania Algeria Angola Argentina Armenia Aruba Australia Austria Belgium Benin
Bolivia Bosnia and Herzegovina Brazil Bulgaria Burkina Faso Burundi Cambodia
Cape Verde Chile Columbia Costa Rica Croatia Cyprus Czech Republic Denmark
Dominion Republic East Timor El Salvador Equatorial Guinea Estonia European
Union Faroe Islands Fiji Finland Germany Greece Greenland Guatemala Guinea-
Bissau Guyana Honduras Hungary Iceland Indonesia Ireland Israel Italy Kazakhstan
Kosovo Kyrgyzstan Latvia Lebanon Lesotho Liechtenstein Luxemburg Macedonia
Malta Moldova Montenegro Mozambique Namibia Netherlands New Zealand
Nepal Northern Ireland Norway Paraguay Peru Poland Portugal Romania Rwanda
San Marino Sao Tome and Principe Serbia Sint Maarten Slovakia Slovenia South
Africa Spain Sri Lanka Suriname Sweden Switzerland Taiwan Togo Tunisia Turkey
Japan Ukraine Uruguay

First Past the Post

- Horse race
 - winner is whichever horse(candidate) **first passes the post** in each constituency election (plurality of votes)
- For centuries in Europe, two party contest = majority rule (i.e., democratic)
 - whichever party wins most constituencies
- In Canada, only two parties until 1933 - CCF (New Democratic Party)
- Now have 6 parties supported by at least 5% of voters

Advantages of First Past the Post (FPTP)



- Simplicity
 - vote for preferred candidate/party in riding
- Speed
 - results known within day
 - Parliament can begin work within weeks (unless minority)
- Certainty
 - prime minister immediately known
 - policy platform (of winning party) known (unless minority)

Disadvantages of FPTP

- “Minority rule” - party usually needs only 37-40 percent of popular vote to win majority of seats
 - only two elections since WWII with majority
- Unstable governments – 5 minority parliaments in last 17 years
 - minority governments often call snap elections based on polls (2019, 2021)
- Discriminates in favour of bigger parties
 - break-even point – 30% of national vote

Disadvantages of FPTP

- 2015 election – seats won under each system

<u>PARTY</u>	<u>% of VOTE</u>	<u>FPTP</u>	<u>PROPORTIONAL</u>	<u>DIFFERENCE</u>
		(seats)	(seats)	(seats)
Liberal	40	184	134	+50
Conservative	32	99	108	-9
NDP	20	44	67	-23
BLOQ	5	4	16	-12
Green	3	1	11	-10

Majority requires 170 seats

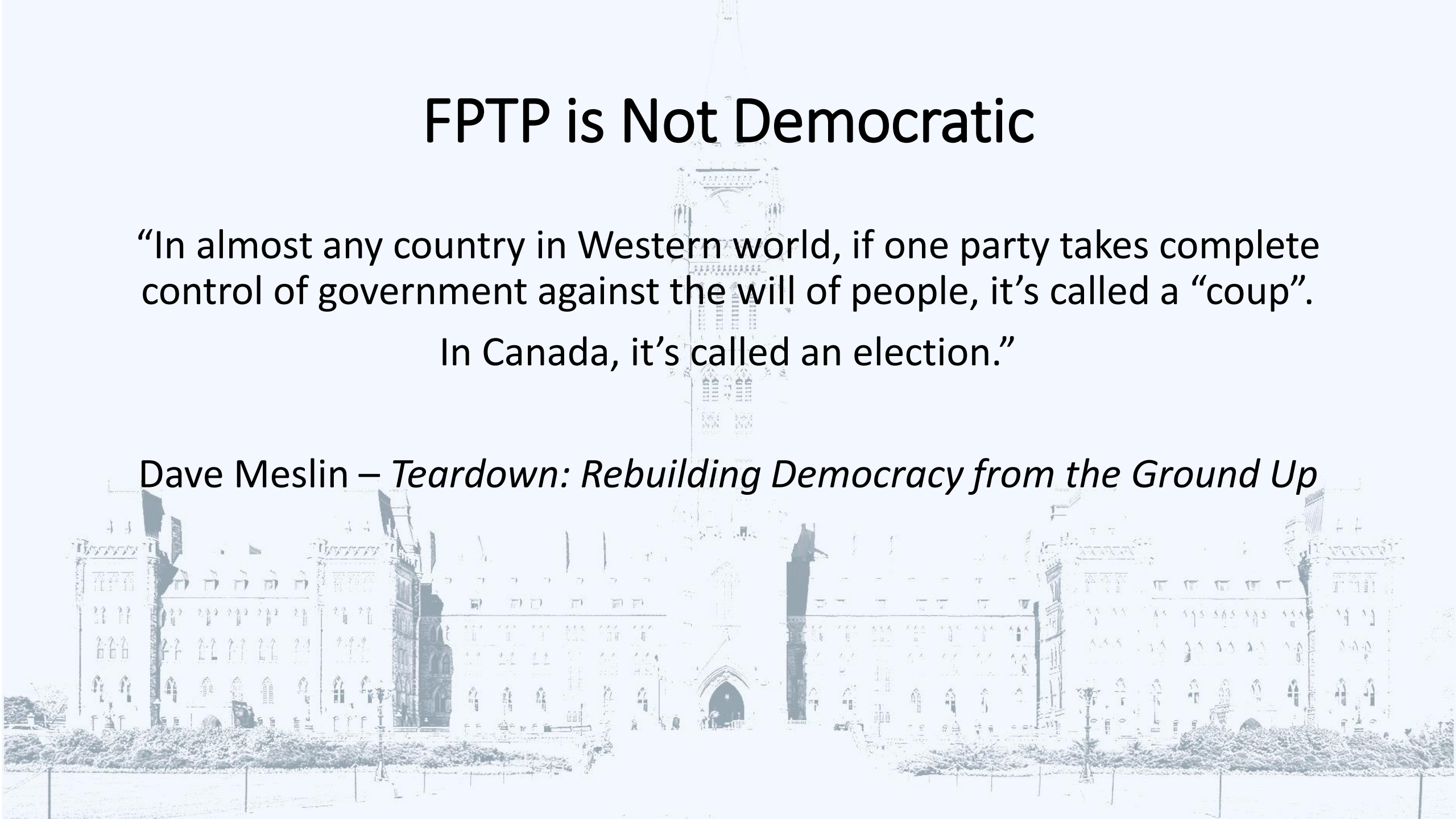
Differences don't fully cancel – rounding errors

FPTP is Not Democratic

“In almost any country in Western world, if one party takes complete control of government against the will of people, it’s called a “coup”.

In Canada, it’s called an election.”

Dave Meslin – *Teardown: Rebuilding Democracy from the Ground Up*



Proportional Representation



- Fairness
 - every vote is equal - helps elect representative
 - party's power in parliament (share of seats) reflects its voter support
- Since party rarely wins majority of votes/seats, coalitions are necessary
- Coalitions and legislation reflects majority of voters – fully democratic
- Watch *Borgen* (Denmark) on Netflix

Types of Proportional Representation



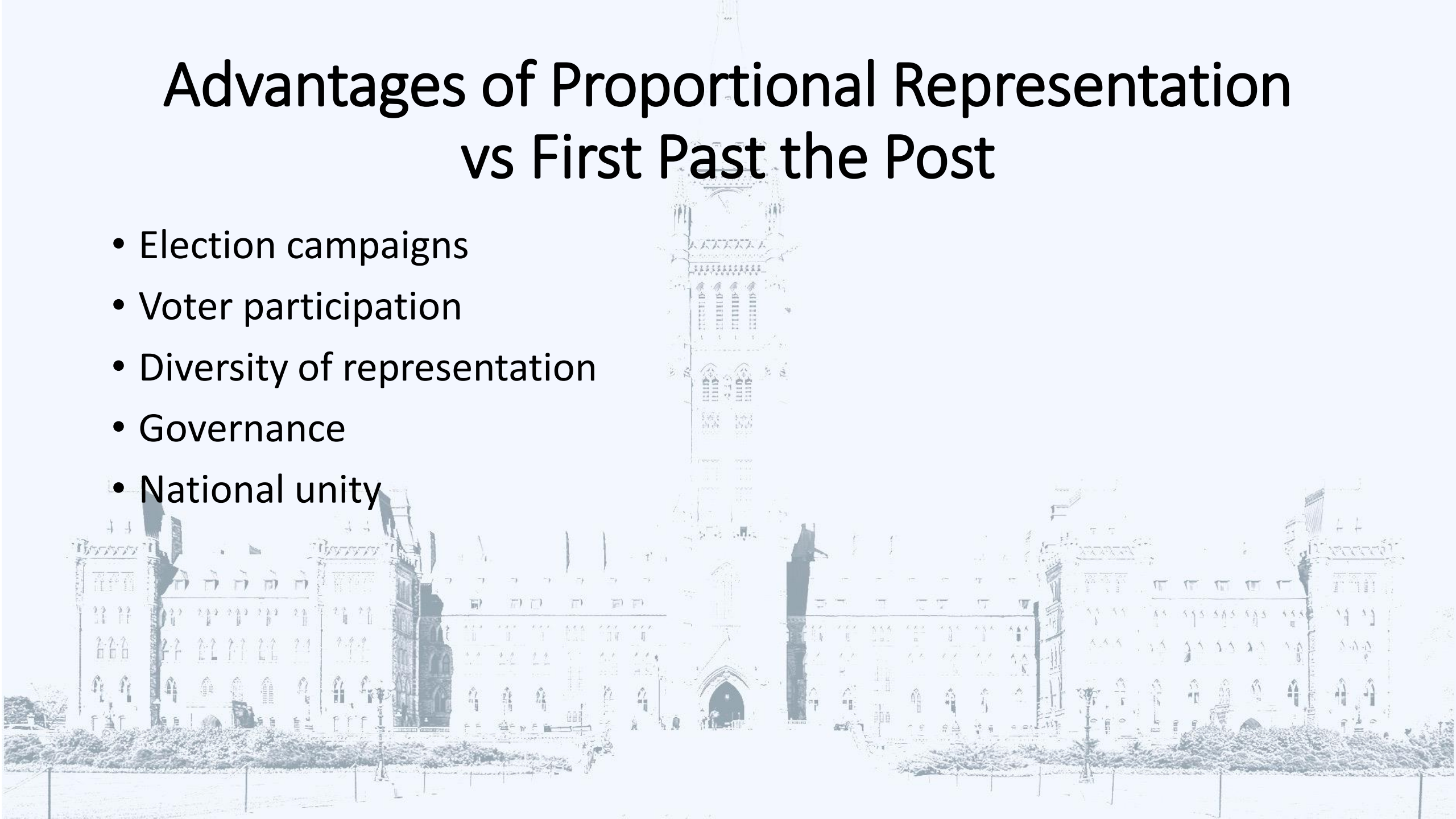
- Party list
- Single Transferable Vote (STV)
- Mixed Member (smr) Proportional (MMP) – recommended by
 - Law Commission of Canada (2004)
 - Ontario Citizen’s Assembly (2007)
 - Parliamentary Committee (2016)

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

- Voter has two votes – constituency rep (FPTP) and party list rep (PR)
- Parliament would represent each constituency, in addition to seats allocated to maintain proportionality based on second vote
- “Compensatory” reps based on lists established by each party in convention before election
- To provide room for PR list reps, either expand House of Commons or increase riding size (fewer ridings)

Advantages of Proportional Representation vs First Past the Post

- Election campaigns
- Voter participation
- Diversity of representation
- Governance
- National unity



Election Campaigns

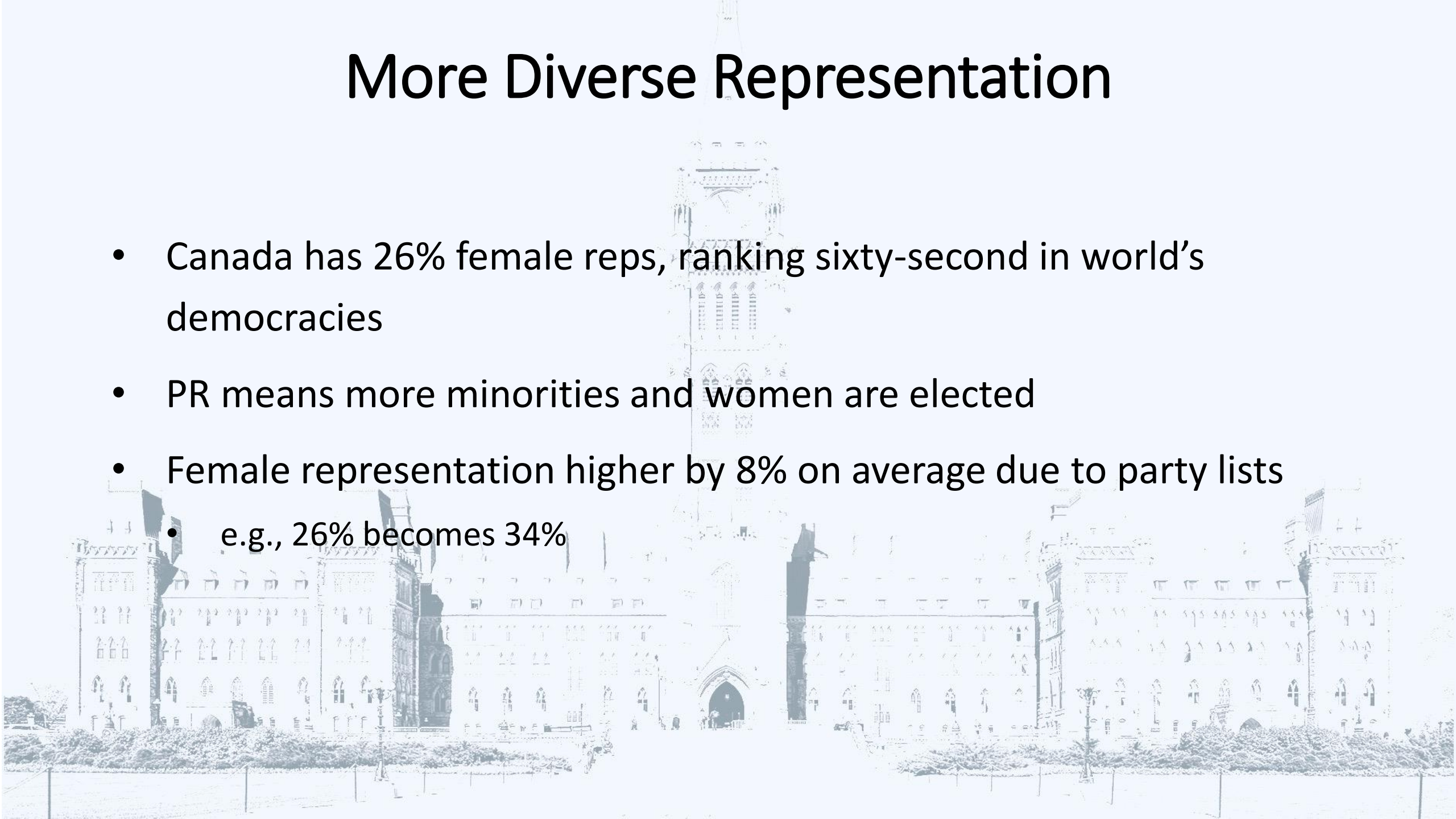
- FPTP
 - snap elections based on polls
 - very polarized – seek to demonize other parties
 - parties ignore some regions (Alberta, Quebec) and are regionally imbalanced in terms of representation and policy
- PR
 - little incentive for snap elections if small increase in opinion polls
 - more civil campaigns – may need to form coalition after election
 - parties are more balanced, with representation from every region

Voter Participation

- FPTP - Canadian votes, 1867-2019
 - winning candidates - 31% (effective votes)
 - losing candidates – 49%
 - surplus – 20% (not needed by winning candidate)
 - 69% of votes were of no consequence (“wasted votes”)
- PR
 - every vote helps elect someone – greater voter satisfaction
 - no need to vote strategically - you get what you vote for
 - higher voter turnout – 7.5% on average, 12% for youth

More Diverse Representation

- Canada has 26% female reps, ranking sixty-second in world's democracies
- PR means more minorities and women are elected
- Female representation higher by 8% on average due to party lists
 - e.g., 26% becomes 34%

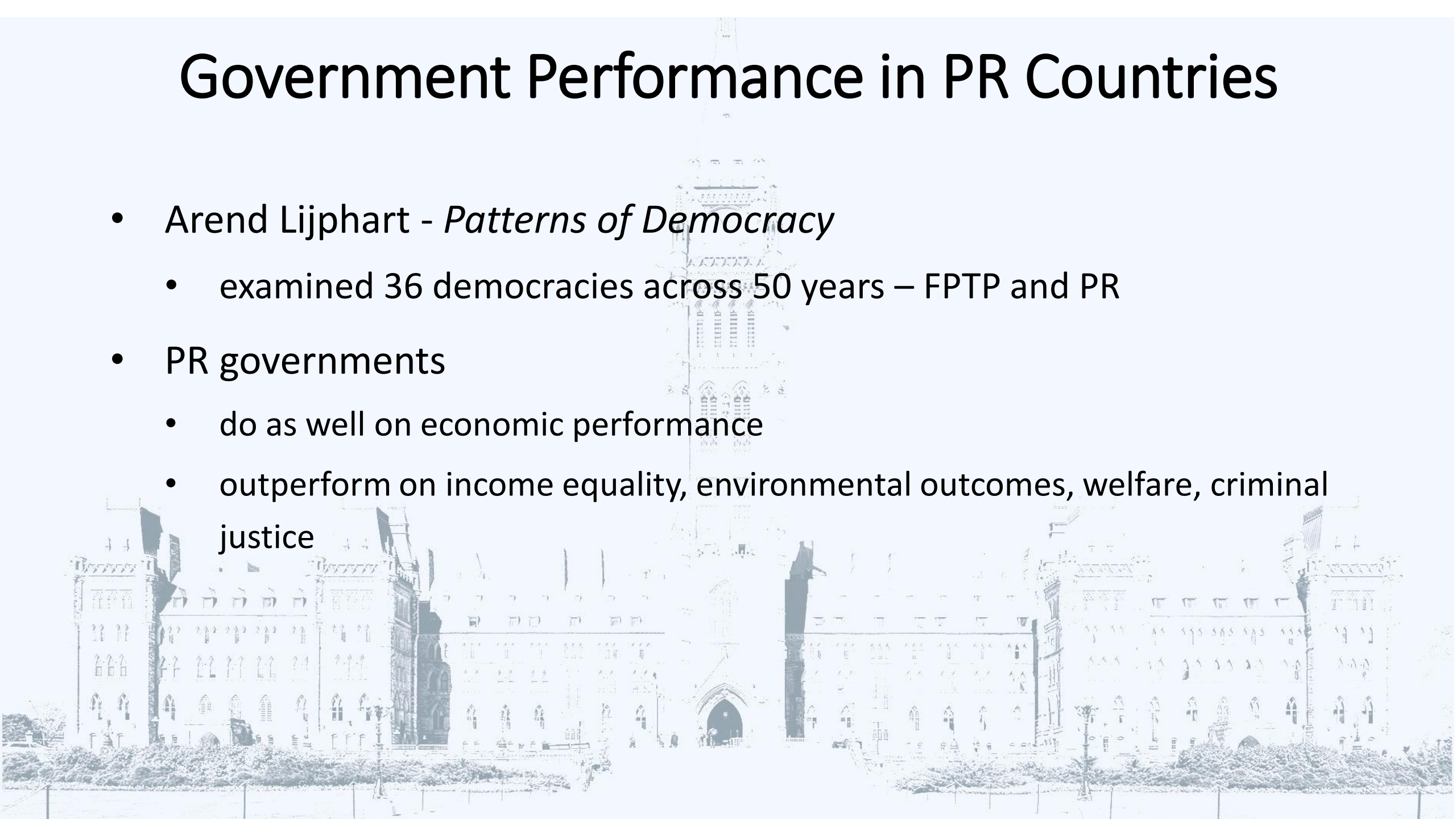


Good Governance

- FPTP
 - policies, laws, budgets reflect wishes of only minority of voters
 - policy lurch – winning party often undoes much of predecessor's policies and programs
- PR
 - since governing coalitions reflect majority of voters, legislation reflects wishes of majority of electorate
 - leads to better policy that is less likely to be reversed later on
 - greater focus on longer term issues – climate change, inequality
 - higher caliber Cabinets – top Liberals (2/3) plus top NDP (1/3)

Government Performance in PR Countries

- Arend Lijphart - *Patterns of Democracy*
 - examined 36 democracies across 50 years – FPTP and PR
- PR governments
 - do as well on economic performance
 - outperform on income equality, environmental outcomes, welfare, criminal justice



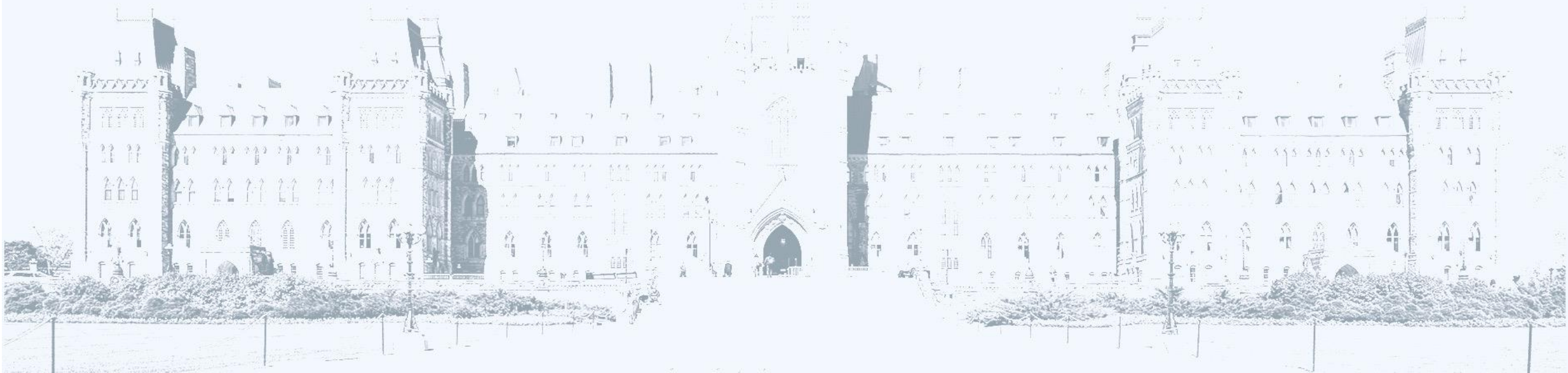
National Unity

- FPTP creates regional imbalances and tensions
 - Liberal cabinets - prairie voters under-represented
 - Conservative cabinets - Quebec voters under-represented
- Under FPTP, Canada experienced two traumatic separatist referenda
 - Party Quebecois received only 42 and 45% of vote in Quebec elections
 - under PR, would have needed support of second party



Disadvantages of FPTP

- Donald Trump elected in 2016
 - Hillary Clinton won 51.6 percent of popular vote
- Brexit referendum in 2016
 - PM David Cameron received only 37 percent of vote in 2015 election



Disadvantages of PR

- More complicated voting system
 - voters must review party lists and/or rank several candidates
- Slower outcome
 - might take weeks for coalition to be formed
- Uncertainty
 - prime minister likely known but not certain - leader of party with most votes usually chosen as PM
 - policy platform has to be negotiated over days or weeks

Proportional Representation



- Every vote would help elect someone
- More people would vote
- Parties would campaign in every province, be more regionally diverse
- More women and minorities would get elected
- Parties wouldn't demonize each other in elections or in parliament
- More stable governments – fewer elections
- Legislation would reflect wishes of majority of voters
- Deeper societal issues would be addressed – health care, inequality

Citizens Assembly on Electoral Reform

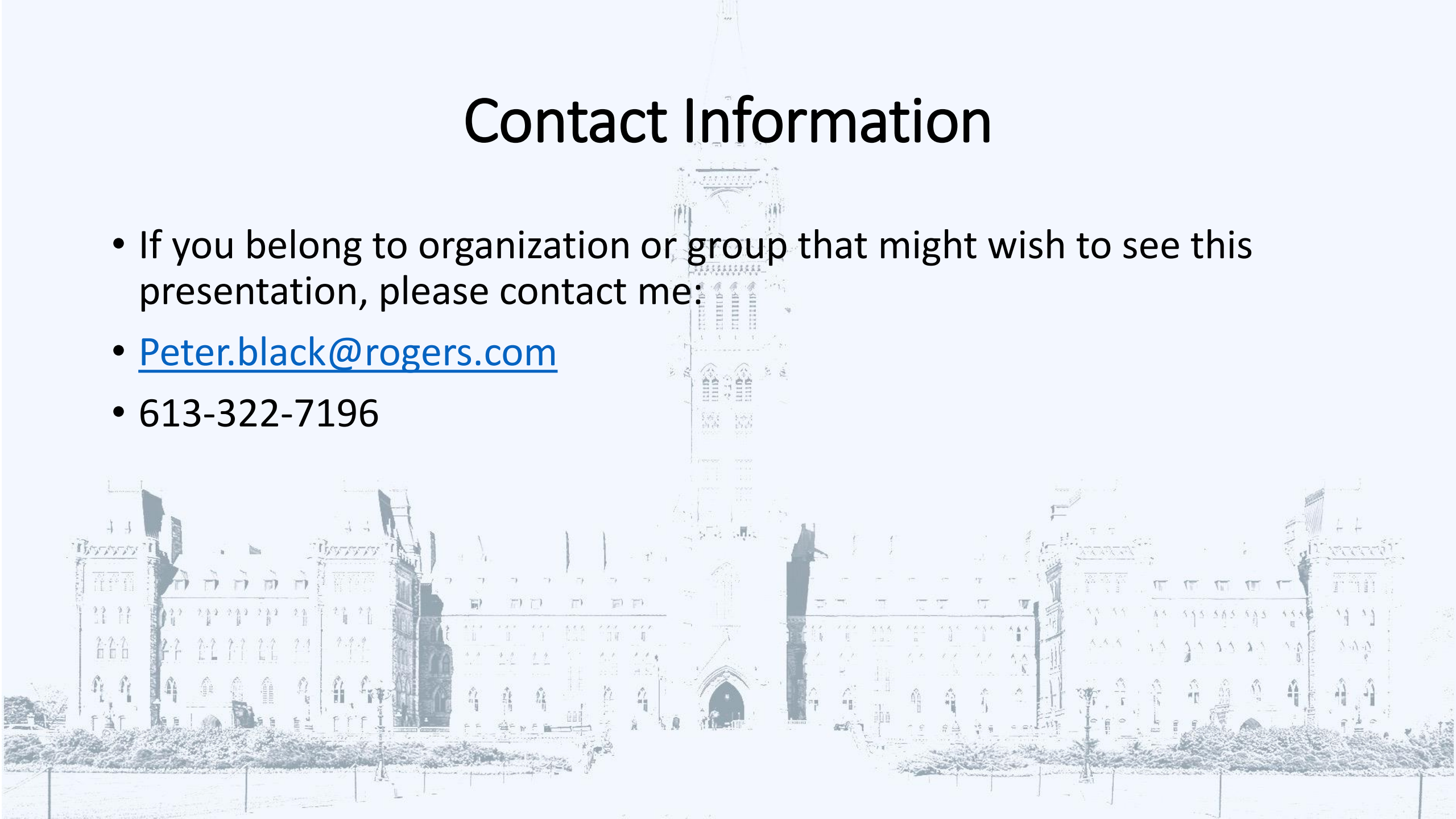
- Canadians never voted on their voting system – Britain imposed it on us – but they should have a choice
- CA is temporary body formed from randomly selected citizens to study, hear experts, deliberate over months and make recommendations
 - remove issue from politicians - conflict of interest
- British Columbia used CA several times on electoral reform (STV). 58% of voters supported STV but “threshold” to win was 60%.
- 2007 Ontario CA recommended MMP. In referendum, only 37% supported PR, likely because Premier ignored all CA recommendations for public education campaign

Further Information/action

- <https://Fairvote.ca/declaration>
- **We demand the following basic democratic rights:**
- to cast an equal, effective vote and be represented fairly in our legislatures, regardless of political beliefs or place of residence;
- to be governed by fairly elected legislatures in which share of seats held by each party closely reflects popular vote;
- to be subject to laws legitimately approved by majority of elected legislators representing majority of voters

Contact Information

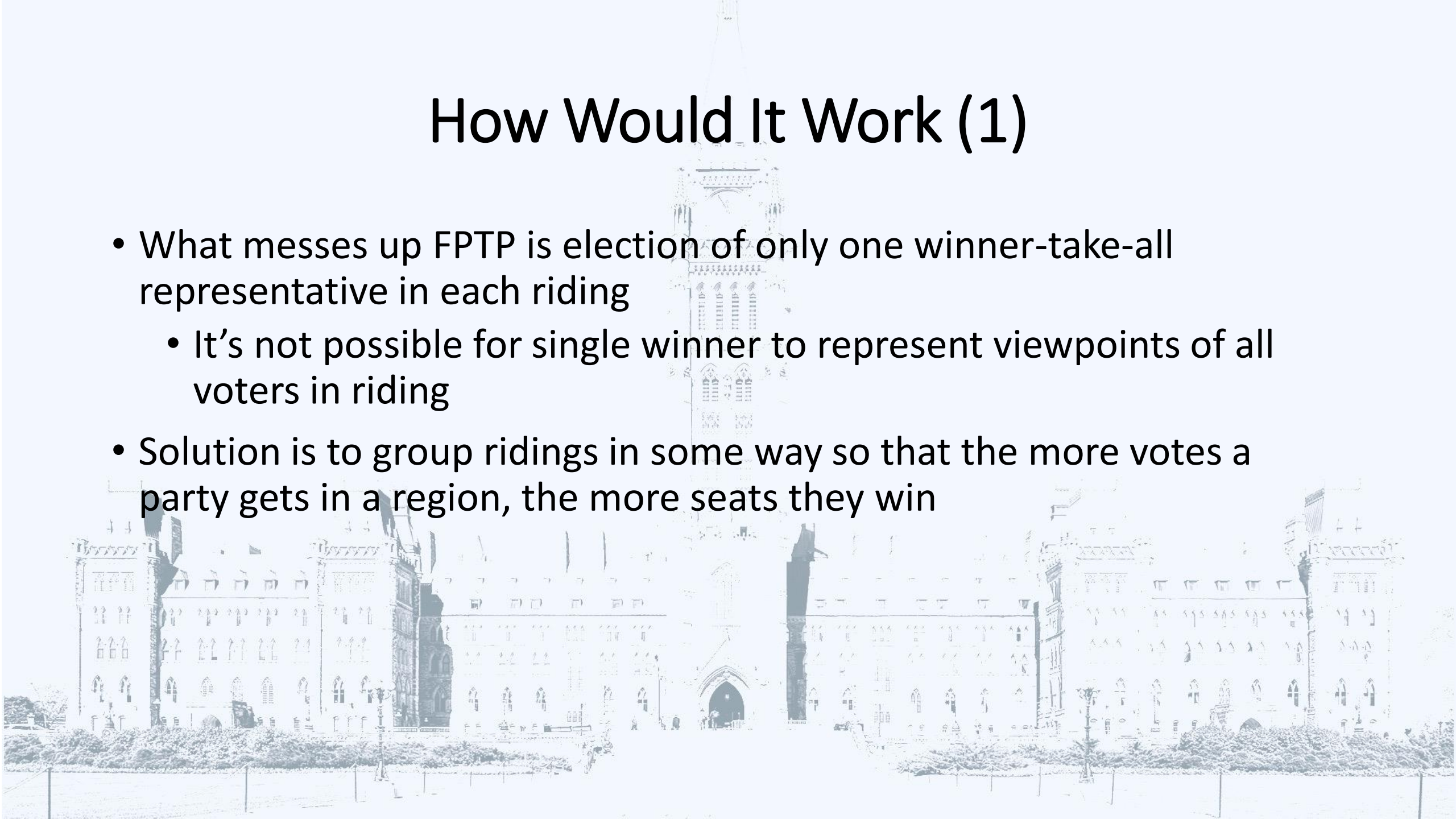
- If you belong to organization or group that might wish to see this presentation, please contact me:
- Peter.black@rogers.com
- 613-322-7196



Slides for Q and A

How Would It Work (1)

- What messes up FPTP is election of only one winner-take-all representative in each riding
 - It's not possible for single winner to represent viewpoints of all voters in riding
- Solution is to group ridings in some way so that the more votes a party gets in a region, the more seats they win



How Would It Work (2)

- Imagine a regrouping of existing seven ridings in Ottawa into single multi-member district
 - every citizen gets one vote, helping to elect a candidate or party district-wide
 - pretty much everyone would help elect candidate of their choice
 - result would be proportional to how Ottawa residents voted, to extent possible in district of this size
- Under FPTP in 2021 in National Capital Region, Liberals won 10 of 11 seats, Conservatives 1 and other parties zero. That's NOT how we voted.
- With PR, would have elected 5 Liberals, 3 Conservatives, 2 NDP, and one BQ

2015 Federal Election

- Trudeau repeatedly promised it would be last election under FPTP
- Trudeau favoured ranked ballot, which would favour Liberals
 - NDP would rank Lib candidate second choice, as would Conservative
 - retains all other problems of FPTP – plurality winners, non-majority governments
- Parliamentary Committee held hearings and in 2016 recommended MMP for Canada to be voted on in referendum (94% supported PR).
- Government's response - there wasn't enough public support for change of such magnitude

2007 Ontario Referendum on MMP

- Required voter support - 60% provincially and 50% in half of all ridings
- Minimal public education campaign over 5-month period (May – October 10)
 - didn't mail report summary to households, as recommended
 - didn't provide part-time resource officer in each riding, as recommended
 - directed Elections Ontario (EO) to conduct public education campaign
 - EO didn't start until 3 months later – appointed information officers who wouldn't describe benefits of MMP when asked in public meetings
 - August – reports no longer available – “too biased”
 - late September, 47% knew nothing about proposal, 41% knew only “a little”
 - yet, 37.5% voted for PR. With full education, majority support very likely

Israel and Italy



- Israel

- chose PR at beginning because they didn't want to concentrate power and wanted to provide more consensus in light of Arabs in Knesset (citizens of Israel)
- however, with 9 parties (only 5 in Canada), hard to form a stable coalition/cabinet – frequent elections

- Italy

- has had PR during various periods. When it was PR, it held elections no more frequently than Canada
- however, they often change cabinets

Party List

- Political parties establish candidate lists
 - e.g., Ontario Liberal Party Convention - delegates vote for favourite candidate and winners are placed on list in rank order based on votes received
 - during election, voter can choose Liberal party list or another list
 - candidates on list are elected depending on number of votes received
- If list is “open”, voter can vote for specific candidate on list
- If list is “closed”, voter votes for total list
- Examples:
 - Ireland, with “open” lists
 - Israel, with “closed” lists

Single Transferable Vote (STV)

- Multi-member constituencies (e.g., 5 representatives to be elected)
- Party list system – “open” list
- Voters have one vote but can rank individual candidates on party list
- During count, if voter’s first preferred candidate is not elected, voter’s second preference is “transferred” to support his second choice
- In this way, almost every vote counts
 - Scotland, Australian states

Single Transferable Vote - Example

- Conservative voter faced with Conservative “open” list of 5 candidates in 5-member constituency
 - as if Ottawa Centre, Ottawa West Nepean, etc. were combined
- Voter gets one vote but ranks candidates – gives Alice his first preference and Bob his second
- All votes are counted in first “round” where candidate needs 20,000 votes to win (total votes of 100,000 cast divided by 5 candidates)
- In first count of ballots, Alice is last in the poll (i.e., receives fewest votes) and is eliminated from contest. The votes for her, however, are then redistributed.
- Thus, ballot of voter who gave Alice a first preference is now re-examined by Returning Officer to see what was voter's 2nd preference. That 2nd preference is then added to Bob's total. And on it goes through enough rounds to complete the election.
- Alice is defeated but Bob might win, while voter's vote not lost

Disadvantages of FPTP

- Votes needed to elect Member of Parliament – 2015 election

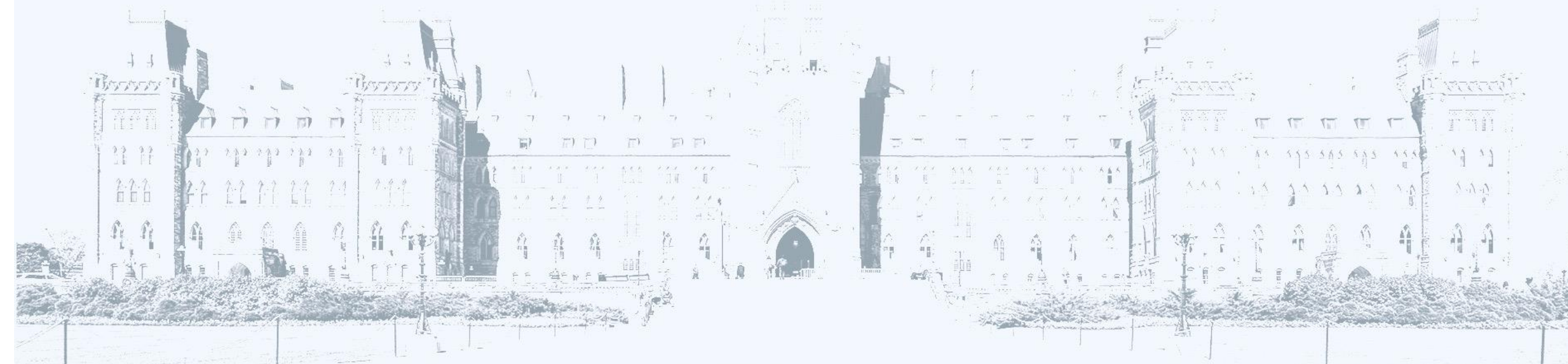
<u>PARTY</u>	<u>VOTES</u> (million)	<u>SEATS</u>	<u>VOTES PER SEAT</u>
• Liberal	6.9	184	37,500
• Conservative	5.6	99	56,600
• NDP	3.5	44	79,500
• BLOQ	0.8	4	200,000



Disadvantages of FPTP

- 2015 election -

	% of vote	% of seats
• Lib	39	54
• Con	32	29
• NDP	20	13



FVC Position on Referenda

- FVC supports CAs rather than referenda to seek citizen's views on electoral systems
- Referenda often biased towards status quo:
 - “Yes” side must demonstrate case against status quo while “No” side can capitalize on uncertainty and anxiety, sow fear and confusion
- Extending franchise is issue of rights – e.g., women's franchise
- Referenda unworthy process to determine voters' rights
 - Citizens have right to have their vote count

