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What we ought to do about extreme poverty: Shifting matters from morality to policy

Lee, Mark

University of Calgary

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WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO ABOUT EXTREME POVERTY: SHIFTING MATTERS FROM MORALITY TO POLICY



“ $\frac{1}{2}$ of the world’s population lives on less than **\$2.50 / day**. More than **1.3 bn** live in extreme poverty – less than **\$1.25 / day**.
- UN Development Program, 2015 ”

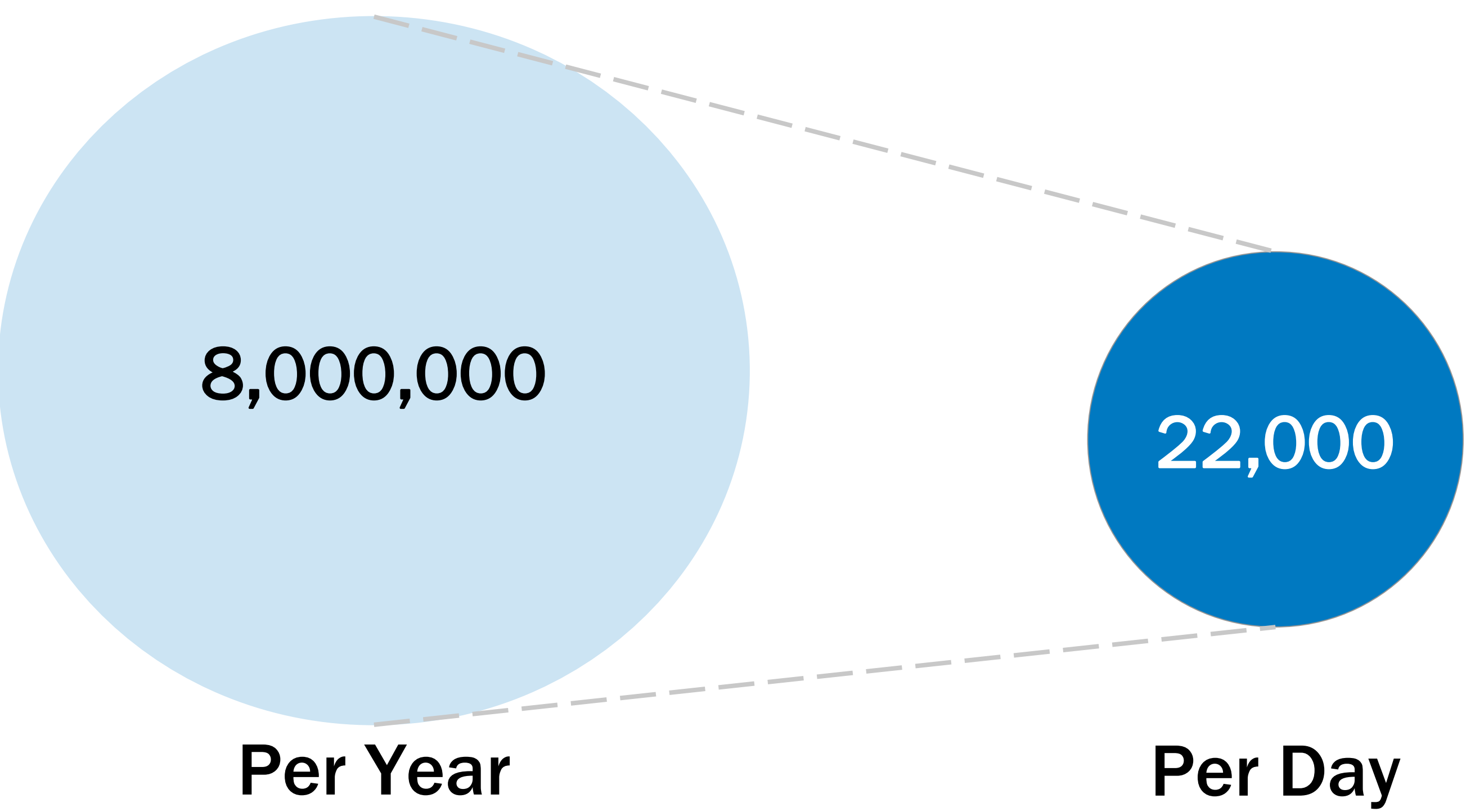
SHOULD I HELP THE POOR?

The Case of Wang Yue

- On Oct. 13, 2011, a Chinese two-year old by the name of Wang Yue was hit by a van.
- The driver paused after hitting Wang, and then left her bleeding in the streets. Within 7 minutes, 18 passers-by skirted her body, ignoring her.
- She was later rushed to the hospital, but it was too late. She had died.



Children die...



- Does it really matter that they’re **far away** and you’re not walking by them on the street? Peter Singer argues it does not make a **morally relevant difference**.

THE POLITICAL QUESTION

Granting that we do have a moral obligation to make charitable donations, what role should the state play in encouraging people to live up to their moral obligations?

If giving to people in extreme poverty is morally obligatory... is this a sufficient reason to legally enforce it a certain amount of charitable giving?

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POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES

Two Schools of Thought

Public Policy Alternatives



Coercive
State
Thomas
Piketty



Private
Giving
Peter
Singer

Analyzing the Alternatives

Progressive Taxation

- Guaranteed effectiveness
- Liberty impeding
- Based on distributive justice theory

“Charitable” Giving

- Liberty preserving
- Private giving can be “more efficient”
- Insufficient motivation

A PROSPECTIVE FRAMEWORK TO WEIGH POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES

Liberty
Preserving

Effectiveness

Cost

Civic Values

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

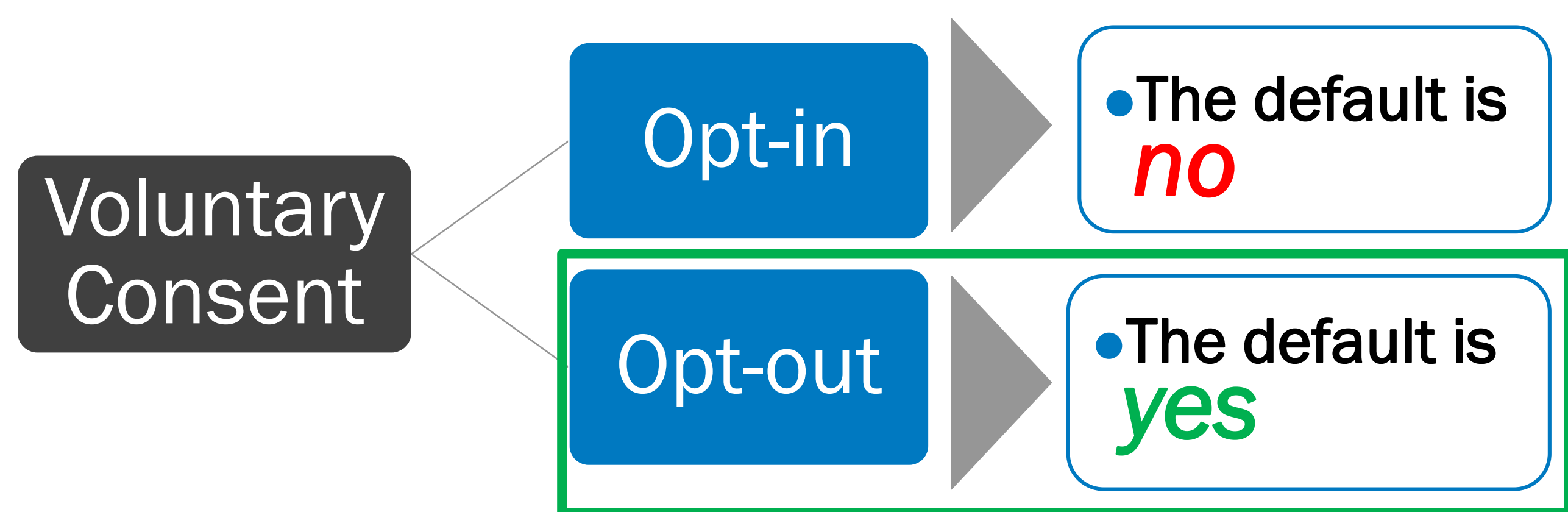
Dr. David Dick, Assistant Professor in Philosophy, University of Calgary
Dr. Allen Habib, Assistant Professor in Philosophy, University of Calgary
Haskayne School of Business – Canadian Centre for Advanced Leadership

MY SOLUTION:

LIBERTARIAN MORALISM

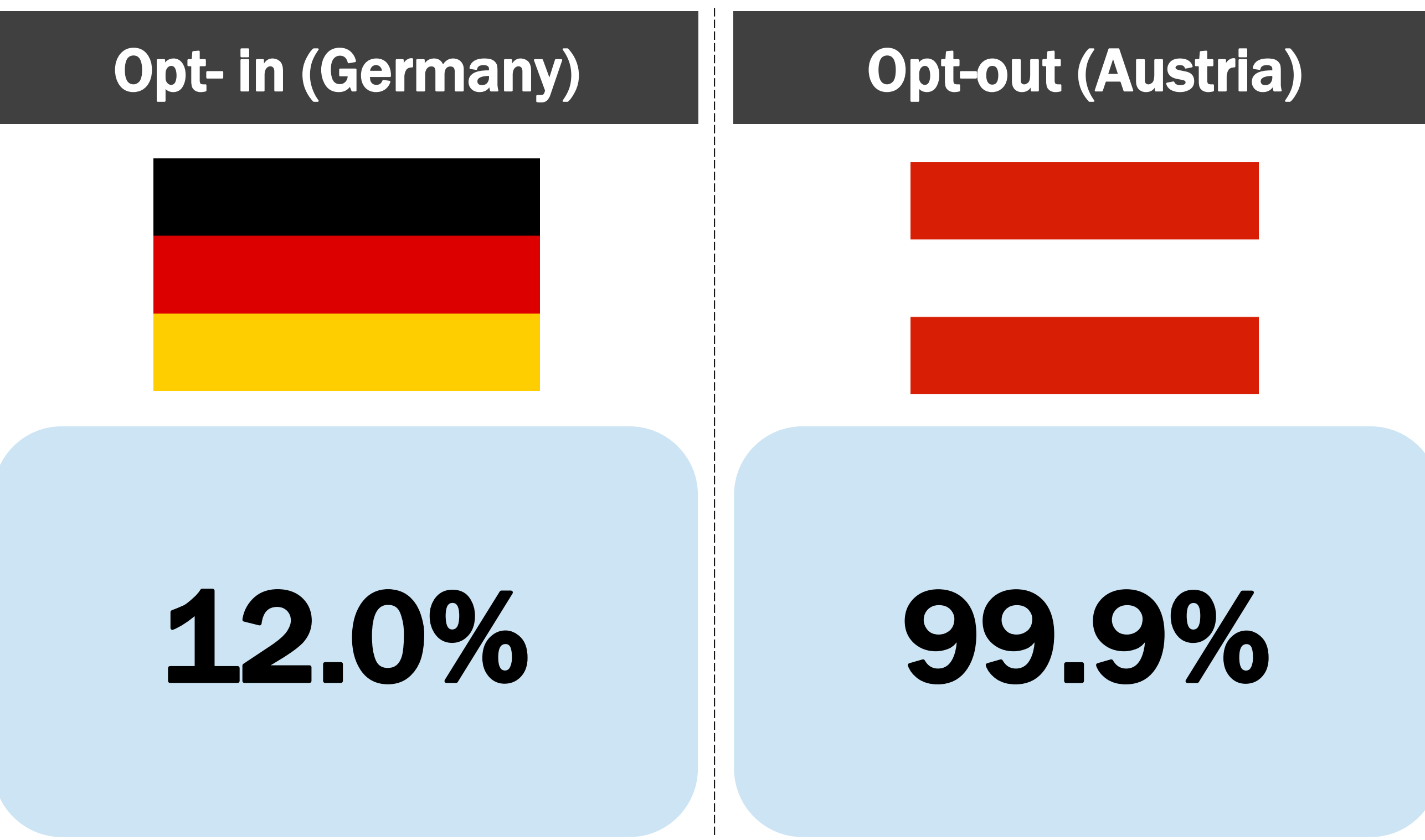
Convert charitable giving to from an “opt-in” to an “opt-out system to the extend we rid of extreme poverty.

- Default settings drive our cultural norms and can have significant influence over our day-day decisions. Often, we forget to question them.
- The “opt-out” clause preserves liberty insofar it provides one the freedom to ultimately make her own decision.

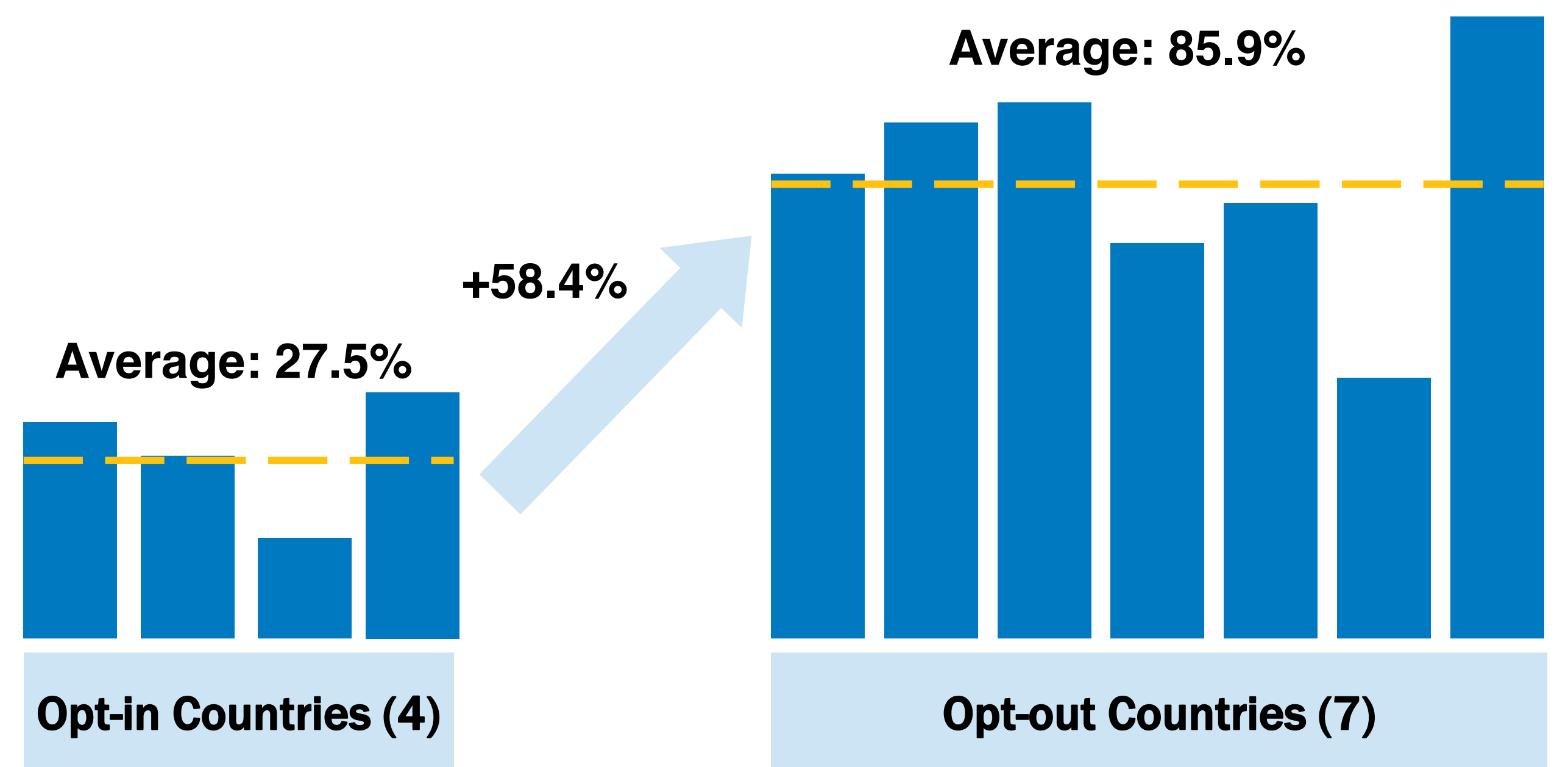


CASE STUDIES

- Despite cultural and socioeconomic parallels, there is a stark contrast between Germany and Austria in the consent of organ donations



- Countries that employed ‘opt-in’ systems had 58.4% more of its population donate blood than countries that employed ‘opt-out’ systems



CONTACT

For more information on this study, please contact:
Mark Lee
markshlee4@gmail.com