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

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



“ 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

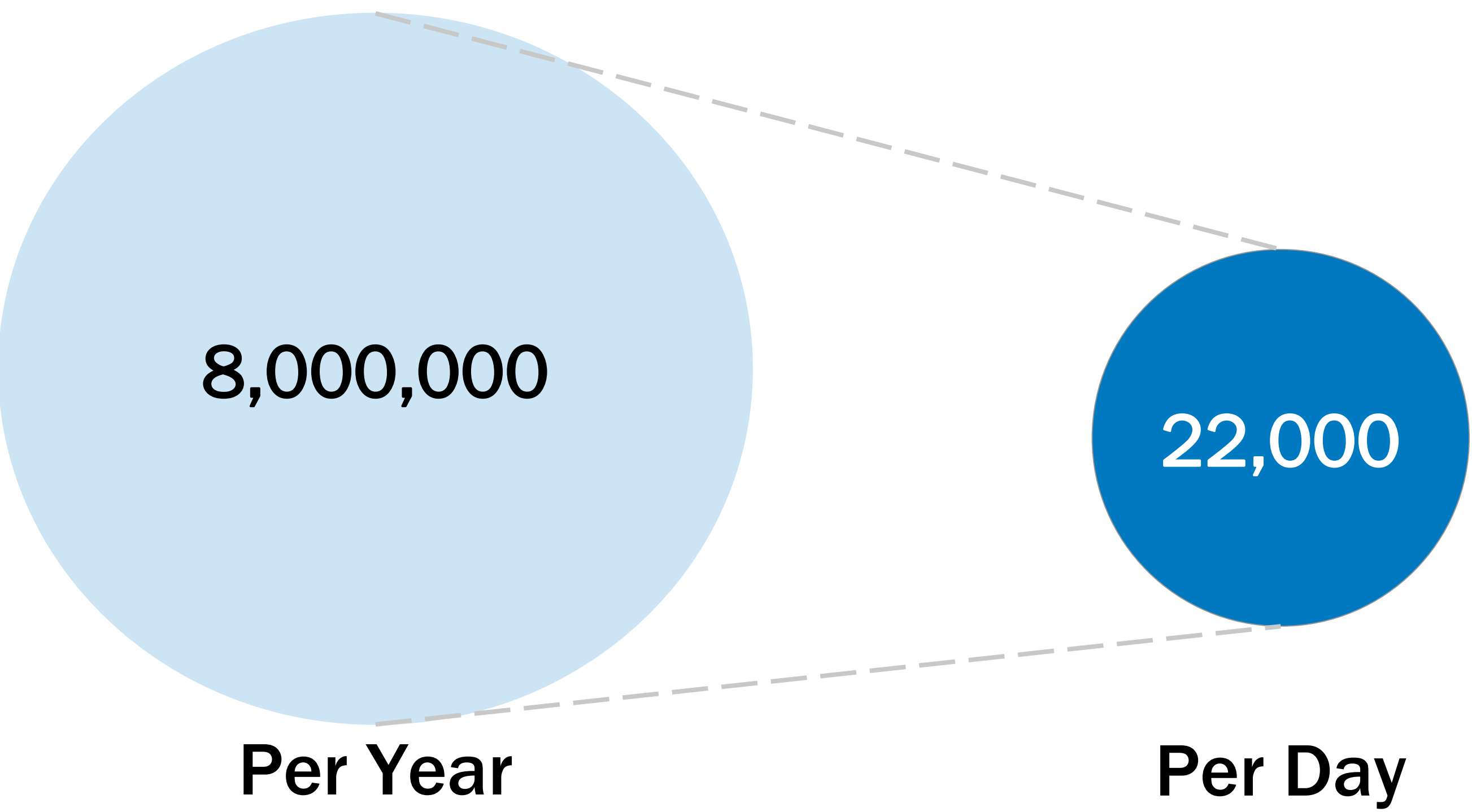
SHOULD I HELP THE POOR?

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?

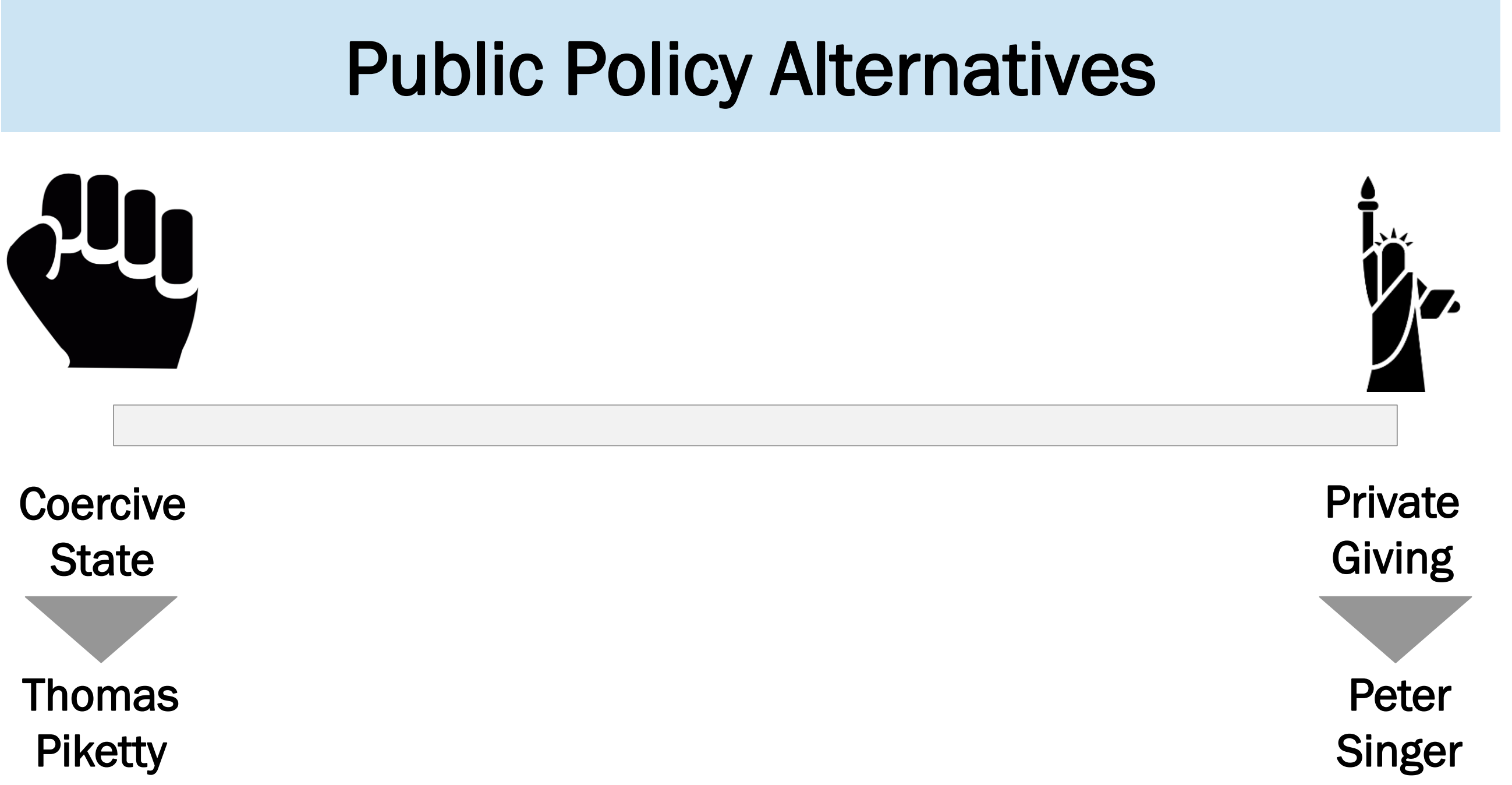
If giving to people in extreme poverty is morally obligatory... is this a sufficient reason to legally enforce it a certain amount of charitable giving?

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POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES

Two Schools of Thought



Analyzing the Alternatives

Progressive Taxation	“Charitable” Giving
<div><div></div><div>Guaranteed effectiveness</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>Liberty preserving</div></div>
<div><div></div><div>Liberty impeding</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>Private giving can be “more efficient”</div></div>
<div><div></div><div>Based on distributive justice theory</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>Insufficient motivation</div></div>

A PROSPECTIVE FRAMEWORK TO WEIGH POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES



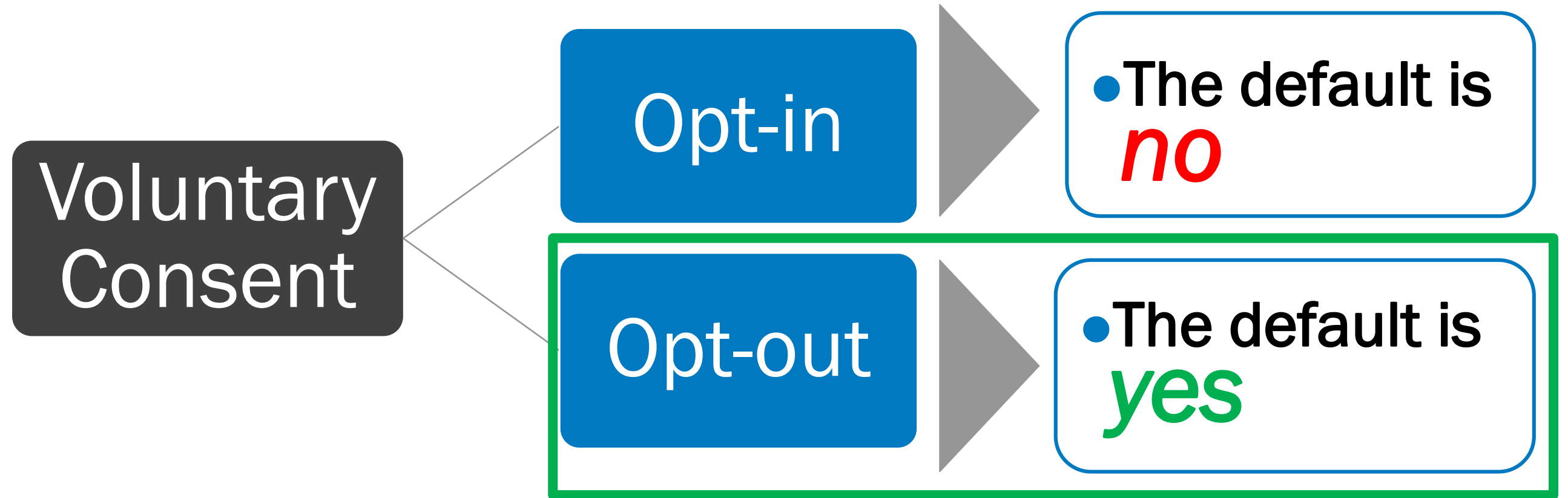
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MY SOLUTION: LIBERTARIAN MORALISM

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.

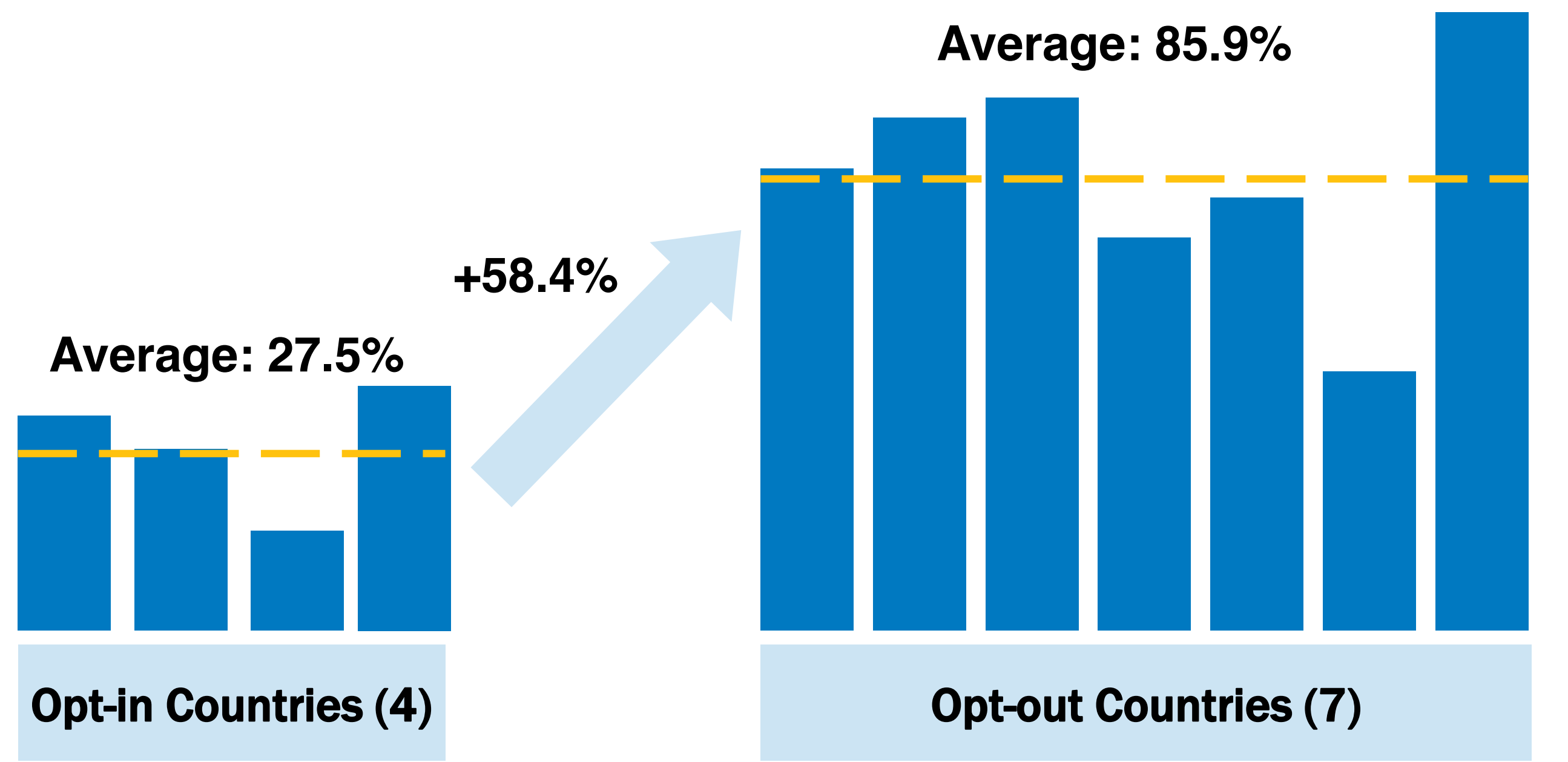


CASE STUDIES

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

Opt- in (Germany)	Opt-out (Austria)
12.0%	99.9%

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



CONTACT

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