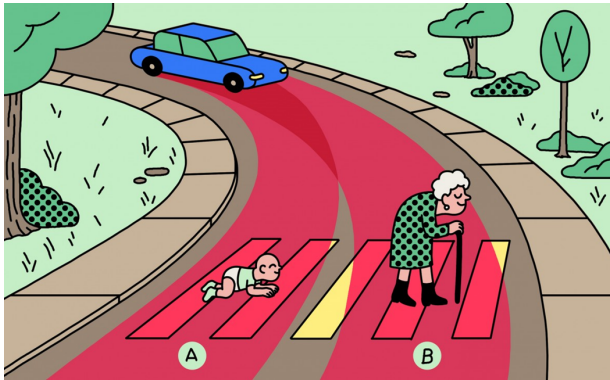# Ethics of Self-driving Cars

In the upcoming lecture, we will discuss the following (fictive) proposal for a Swiss National Referendum:

Any autonomous car that operates on Swiss public roads has to implement a means to handle situations where an accident with human casualties cannot be avoided. In such situations, the car should establish all reasonable options, make a random decision which of these options to use, and apply it.

Please prepare yourself for the discussion: What is the core issue with self-driving cars? What are potential arguments in favor/against the proposed Referendum? How has the discussion evolved over time?

Once you are prepared, please fill out the Quizzes Question in Moodle.

This is a very hard decision to do, because it involved morality. The good thing about self- driving cars is, that they might reduce congestion and drive more environmentally friendly, but how do you program morality? Of course you can use a model to train an algorithm and the car can make decisions based on that. But is my morality the same as yours? Would the person training the model react differently, if he knew everything about the involved people and had to make a decision on who has do die in a crash? Would it be different, if the circumstances weren't clear?

However the person reacts, it would be an instinctual panicked move with no forethought or malice, so it would be understood as a simple reaction. But what if a developer were to instruct the car to make the same move, would it be the same or a deliberate decision?

So with that said, the current state of technology doesn't allow self-driving cars, therefore there aren't any arguments in favor of that. At least in my opinion. We are not in a situation where we need to find a solution ASAP. I see the needed adoptions as an arguments against self-driving cars. The majority of cars need to be self-driving for the system to work as intende