

Dilemma or False Dilemma: A Sequence of Steps to Avoid the Trolley

Justus Schollmeyer

University of Bremen, Germany
justusschollmeyer@gmail.com

Abstract. This paper explores the concept of false dilemmas, which are problems that seem to have only two bad options but have at least one hidden third option. However, whether such an option exists cannot be known unless an alleged dilemma is properly tested. To conduct such a test, Altshuller's Algorithm for Solving Inventive Problems (ARIZ-85C), a method for finding creative solutions to dilemmatic problems, is being applied to the famous trolley dilemma. The trolley dilemma is a moral dilemma where people must choose between killing one person or five people by a runaway trolley. The paper shows that the trolley dilemma is a false dilemma that can be solved without any deaths by using the steps defined by ARIZ-85C. It also reports the results of a survey that tested the perceived morality of this solution compared to the standard options. The overwhelming majority of survey respondents opted for the third option. Overall, the paper argues that the sequence of steps of ARIZ-85C can be used as a tool to expose and solve false dilemmas in various domains.

Keywords: Trolley Problem, Trolley Dilemma, ARIZ, Ethical Decision Making, Creative Problem Solving.