



# Decision Making: Towards an Evolutionary Psychology of Rationality

*Mauro Maldonato*

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## **Decision Making: Towards an Evolutionary Psychology of Rationality** Mauro Maldonato

Since the dawn of time human beings have had to make decisions. Wise or foolish, thoughtful or instinctive, altruistic or selfish, decision-making – from the most simple to the most complex – enables people to confront and overcome constant environmental challenges. Yet, despite the momentousness of decision-making in adaptability terms, men and women ignore the actual process that takes place in their minds when, for example, they invest in the stock market, buy a car, trust a person they just met, or simply decide to go to the movies. While some decisions are taken in a few seconds (when we act impulsively without time to evaluate the process), other decisions require considerable cognitive effort and accurate cost-benefit analysis. But is it only the optimal decision that deserves to be called rational? If this is the case, how then can we explain the wisdom of our instincts, of our emotions, of our ‘sixth sense’? Moreover, what is the role of subjectivity, free will, desire, culture in the decision-making process? ... Research on decision-making has had a long and controversial history. The idea of a perfect rationality has more recently given way to the idea of a rationality conscious of its incompleteness – to a process that cannot be expressed or conceived in logical or rational terms. In this ground-breaking book, Mauro Maldonato reinterprets the secular controversy about the nature of human decision-making in light of recent discoveries in cognitive neurosciences and new research (neuroeconomics and neuroethics). At the end of this literary excursion along a stunning archipelago of rationality, morality, emotion and consciousness, the reader is provided with the means to view and assess personal decision-making and resultant action in a completely different way – a way that impacts positively on human interaction and psychological wholeness.

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