

## *In Defence of Individual Rationality*

**Abstract:** Common-sense (or folk) psychology holds that (generally) we do what we do for the reasons we have. This common-sense approach is embodied in claims like “I went to the kitchen because I wanted a drink” or “She took a coat because she thought it might rain and she hoped to stay dry”. However, the veracity of these common-sense psychological explanations has been challenged by experimental evidence (primarily from behavioural economics and social psychology) which appears to show that individuals are systematically irrational – that often we do not do what we do because of the reasons we have. Recently, some of the same experimental evidence has also been used to level a somewhat different challenge at the common-sense view, arguing that the overarching aim of reasoning is not to deliver better or more logical decisions for individual reasoners, but to improve group decision making or to protect an individual’s sense of self. This paper explores the range of challenges that experimental work has been taken to raise for the common-sense approach and suggests some potential responses. Overall, I argue that the experimental evidence should not (currently) lead us to a rejection of individual rationality.