NORMS AND RATIONALITY

Many theories have argued in favour of the normative character of rationality. Actually, it is plausible admit that rationality is normative in two different senses. By one side, it is clear there is a huge amount of entities that are said to be rational or irrational: beliefs, preferences, desires, actions and so on. This is an important point, but there is something additional: When we acting in a rational fashion we acting in conformity with an all system of regulations and prescriptions. These regulations can come from different sources. A list very incomplete could include the rules of the logic, some of the axioms of the decision theory, the moral prescriptions and, even, the popular wisdom. All of them constitute the system of norms that we call rationality. Like any other system of rules, the norms that are part of rationality set up a notion of what is right to do and what is wrong to do, of what it should be done and what it should not be done. And inside of what is right to do, it is contained, not like an additional prescription but like an implicit assumption, to follow the norms of such a system of rules. Therefore, the existence of a bundle of norms of rationality presupposes the idea that is right to act in accordance with these rules. This is the second, and most important, sense in which rationality is normative.

In this paper I want to shed some light about some of the problems that this sense introduce to any conception of rationality. In this sense, I hold, according to a line of thinkers that includes some authors like Kant, Sellars and even Robert Brandom, that rationality is, actually, a normative issue. Notwithstanding, I criticize the classical notion of norm and develop a different conception of what implies to follow a rule as well.

With this objective in mind, I distinguish between two accounts of rules, namely: regulism and regularism. According to regulism, the norms should be understood like rules of thumb that could be expressed in a propositional way. The problem with this point of view resides in the fact that follow a rule is something that can be done correct or incorrectly. In consequence, the application of a rule seems to require a sort of meta-rule by which could be define appropriately the correct applications of the norm. However, if the only one kind of rules accepted by this model are the rules that can be expressed in a propositional way, then this process will repeat without end giving space to an scepticism about the same possibility of follow rules.

Unlike of the regulism, the regularism propose to resolve the sort of problems that smother the regulism) that the social practices will be the primary form of recognizing of the rules. In this manner, any theory concerns with figure out the origin, justification and peculiarities of the normative dimension is forced to take account of the normative constraints implicit inside of social practices. This is my principal aim in this dissertation.