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Why be moral?
In defense of a Kohlbergian approach

Orlando Lourenço

Abstract

This article revolves around the “Why be moral?” question, a fundamental ethical question raised by Kohlberg and Ryncarz (1990) in the field of moral development. The study is in three parts. In the first part, *Introduction*, I refer to this fundamental ethical question and the questions related to it. In the second part, I compare Kohlberg’s response to that question and the questions related to it with those given, implicitly or explicitly, by other relevant figures of developmental psychology. Contrary to other developmental psychologists, I argue that, for several reasons, Kohlberg’s response to the why be moral question is more complete and deeper than that presented by the relevant developmental figures analyzed in this article. Despite this, I recognize that, as far as the other questions associated with the why be moral question are concerned, all those figures made important contributions to a better understanding of one’s moral functioning, and that some of them explored moral issues, which, to some extent, were overlooked by Kohlberg. In the third part, *Final Words*, I summarize the main ideas of the paper and enumerate several reasons why Kohlberg’s answer to the why be moral question is the most complete and deepest one among those presented so far in the field of moral development.

**Key-words:** Morality; development; why be moral; Kohlberg

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