Abstract
This article examines the patterns of moral reflection of trainee primary school teachers. Exploratory empirical research indicates that trainee teachers’ patterns of moral reflection do not correspond with the distinction in moral orientations current in practical philosophical literature. Trainee teachers distinguish between a teleological moral orientation and a utilitarian, deontological moral orientation. In this paper the combination of utilitarianism and deontology is substantiated with the aid of the rule-utilitarianism of the ethicist Richard Hare. Finally we look into moral reflection in teacher training.

Keywords:
moral reflection; moral education; ethics; teleology; deontology; utilitarianism

1. Introduction

As a rule research into normative actions focuses on attitudes and behavioral patterns. The present study is an exception to this rule in that it relates to thought patterns. What we are looking for are the structures of moral reflection of students doing Catholic primary teacher training courses, hereafter referred to as trainee teachers. In so doing we look at the structure rather than the contents of moral reflection. In other words, it is not a matter of what trainee teachers are thinking, but how they think: Is there any particular pattern in their manner of moral reflection? Is their moral consciousness modelled on a particular pattern? In fact, is the moral consciousness of trainee teachers uniform or pluriform, homogeneous or heterogeneous?

In our society one observes the phenomenon of divergent, even conflicting values and norms and moral reflection on these. Habermas explains moral plurality with reference to cultural changes that have occurred in the symbolic reproduction of the life world at the levels of culture, of
society and of personality. According to him these changes form part of a long-term process of rationalisation and modernisation. A distinctive development in this process is increasing differentiation of society into multiple systems and institutions that are becoming more and more independent of each other. At the same time there is a process of cultural colonisation by the economic and political systems. The coherence of systems and institutions goes by the board, leading to a fragmentation of meaning and interpretation. What remains is a multiplicity of compartmentalised activities based on compartmentalised roles in compartmentalised systems and institutions (Habermas, 1988, pp. II-229 ff.). As a result of the social differentiation process individuals participate in various social contexts simultaneously, each of which directs a specific moral appeal to the participants. The ordinary consciousness becomes fragmented (Habermas, p. II-521; cf. Zwart, 1993, p. 148). The divergent moral appeals can cause moral conflict, not only between individuals but also within the person (Zwart, p. 152). 4 Dealing with conflicting moral appeals is one of the challenges facing present-day trainee teachers, for in our time it is not sufficient to invoke certain values. Teachers must be able to reflect on conflicting moral appeals. Because of the process of social differentiation we would expect trainee teachers to have a differentiated moral consciousness and diverse moral orientations. The question is, how is this moral reflection structured? What moral orientations exist in the minds of trainee teachers?

According to Habermas the debate in practical philosophy can be traced to three moral orientations: Aristotelian ethics, utilitarianism and Kantian moral theory. These give rise to ethical, pragmatic and moral problems, on the basis of which he defines three moral criteria: the good, the purposive and the just. 5 In practical philosophy these moral orientations have been worked out in teleological, utilitarian and deontological theories respectively (Habermas, 1993, pp. 1 ff.; 1991, pp. 100 ff.). We would expect to find the same typological distinction in our empirical study of the moral consciousness of trainee teachers. But if we do not find three moral orientations, we would expect trainee teachers to identify two moral orientations, since in practical philosophy there is usually a typological distinction between two paradigms: teleology and deontology. 6 Normally utilitarianism is classed with teleological theories (Frankena, 1973, p. 11, p. 39; Rawls, 1994, p. 63; Krämer, 1992, p. 31; cf. Hare, 1997, p. 147).

On this basis we defined the following research problems: