This project focuses on justice between age groups and generation and bases on data of EVS project. This dimension of justice has become one of the major issues of contemporary societies. In the twenty-first century, class conflict seems to be defunct and its place taken over by generational conflict. There are moreover other cleavages that are usually categorized as “new” dimensions of inequality, for example, gender, ethnicity, race. And question is raised to what extent have the new intergenerational conflicts really crowded out traditional intragenerational ones?

Issues of justice play an important role in adjudicating conflicts and legitimizing their solutions along all these cleavages. The contemporary history of the conflict dates from the institutionalization of age-based social security. In all modern societies, the elderly are the main recipients of public income transfer programs, while children, even when taking child allowances and the costs of schooling into account, are to a large part financed privately by their parents. Such unequal allocation of public resources among age groups may be considered “unfair” or ineffective if, for example, its outcome is that one group is consistently worse off than another.

There are three basic principles by which distributive outcomes are justified: need, merit or desert (usually based on work performance), and equality (usually based on citizenship status). Their salience varies between countries, between groups of persons, and between the parts of the welfare state, but together they seem to exhaust most of the conceptual and empirical space of distributive justice. For the specific topic of justice between age groups and generations, it is first of all necessary to analytically separate these three dimensions. The conflict between generations may be caused by different understanding of role of state in the public distribution. This is a key question of this project.