Chapter 5
German Bundestag Survey on Intergenerational Justice in the Labour Market

Joerg Chet Tremmel and Patrick Wegner

5.1 The Point of Departure: Of Losers and Winners of the Income and Assets Development

Nowadays, most welfare transfer payments are made to the older generation, especially to cover pensions, nursing, and health costs. As far as distributive justice is concerned, redistributions among age groups are not unjust as such, because everybody ages. People usually experience both the state of youth and of old age during their lives, whereas they obviously keep their ethnicity and gender all life long. This distinguishes matters of intergenerational justice from gender justice or ethnic justice (Daniels 1988).

Let us assume that the young generation has only half as many voters as the old generation, so they can only rarely assert their interests at elections. It would be rash to claim that this is a generational injustice. After all, in 50 years, today's youth might be the majority and dominate the youth of 2060. Or, is it unjust that the old generation is normally wealthier than the young generation? Not necessarily. This is only the case if young people do not have a chance to be in the same situation when they grow older. Therefore, a comprehensive theory of generational justice has to focus on indirect comparisons, considering full life courses (Tremmel 2009, p. 28).

As long as the distribution of financial burdens and support does not change over time and each generation can expect to be treated in the same way as the previous or next generation, the generational contract is not unfair. However, recent studies

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show that today's young generation is at a disadvantage compared to their direct predecessor.

According to life-cycle analyses, the young cohorts of today cannot expect the same increases in income as their predecessors in their professional life. In 1986, the 25–40-year-olds used to earn 11.8% less than the 50–65-year-olds, whereas the difference today is 24.2% (Fig. 5.1).

The situation in France (Chauvel 2009) is even more severe than in Germany, but nevertheless young people in Germany are clearly in a worse position nowadays than young people 30 years ago. The main reasons for the shift in income curves are the higher unemployment rates, the rising number of fixed-term employment contracts, and the increase in unpaid internships of graduates over the past three decades (compared to the previous decades) (Blossfeld and Mills 2010; Klammer 2010; Chauvel 2010).
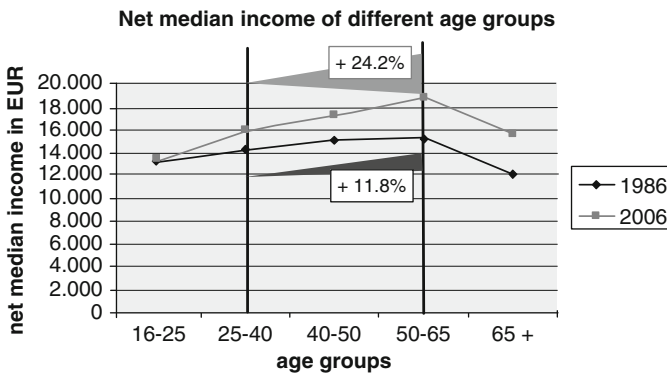
Net median income of different age groups

Fig. 5.1 Net median income of different age groups in Germany
Source: SOEP, persons in private households

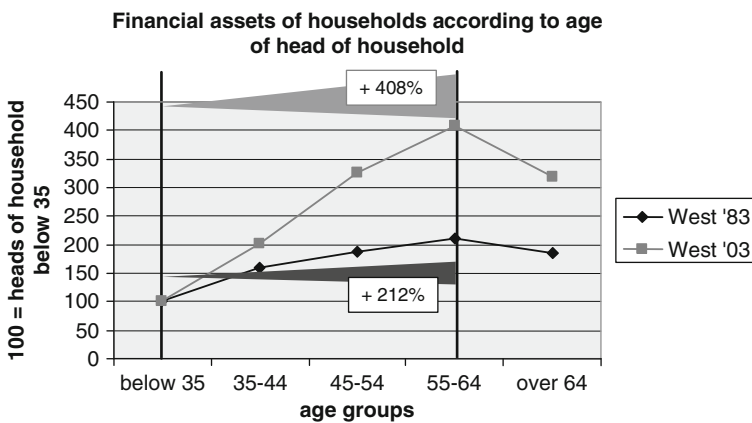**Financial assets of households according to age of head of household**

Fig. 5.2 Financial assets of households according to age of head of the household in Germany
Source: SOEP, persons in private households

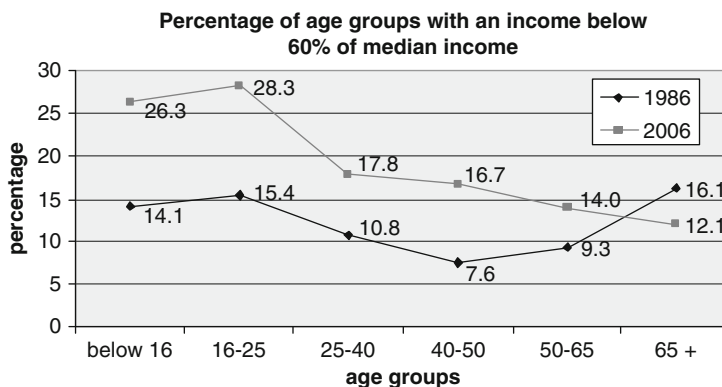**Percentage of age groups with an income below
60% of median income**

Fig. 5.3 Percentage of age group with an income below 60% of the median income in Germany
Source: SOEP, persons in private households

Compared to the distribution of income, the gap between young and old is even
greater when it comes to the distribution of assets, as Fig. 5.2 illustrates. In 1983,
the assets of 55–64-year-olds were roughly twice as high as those of persons below
35. In 2003, they were four times as high.

The relative poverty rates by age group also confirm the thesis that today's
young people are worse off than those 20 years ago (see Fig. 5.3). About 20 years
ago, 15.4% of 16–25-year-olds were poor, whereas now, 28.3% are. The graph also
reveals that in 2006 in all age groups – except those above 65 – the share of the
population with less than 60% of the median income increased.

In our view, a labour market is intergenerationally just if each age group (that is,
young, middle and old generations) has at least the same possibilities to fulfill their
needs as the predecessing group of people in the same age bracket. Young workers
today are worse off compared to young workers 30 years ago considering the legal
framework in the labour market, the forms of employment and their income. At the
same time, older employees also find it increasingly difficult to find employment if
they lose their job beyond the age of 55. Nevertheless, the disadvantages of the
young generation (the so-called precarious generation) in the labour market are
systemic and not comparable to the risk of old people not being (re-)employed due
to their lower work productivity, protective legislature and the appeal of early
retirement schemes.

As far as ecology, pensions and healthcare are concerned, generational justice is
being broadly discussed, but intergenerational justice in the labour market is an
underexposed issue. We believe that this is a negligence. The relevance of genera-
tional justice in the world of employment is statistically demonstrated by the rising
income gaps described above. The income gap is not only widening between
managers and blue-collar workers, but also between 30- and 55-year-olds. What
we need is a new generational contract between young and old employees in
companies. This is not being discussed at present, and the young generation is not
yet making any such claims during wage negotiations and legislative procedures.

On account of this surprising fact, we have conducted an empirical survey with the deputies of the 16th German Bundestag. The questionnaire measured the members' awareness of the topics of "generational justice in the world of employment" and "rush hour of life".

In the first part, the article discusses different notions of the term "generation". This definition is necessary in order to understand the concept of comparing generations on which the article is based. In the second part, the empirical findings of the survey with the members of the German parliament (Bundestag) are presented. Finally, the article offers a discussion of the results of the survey.

5.2   Specification of Variables – Bringing Theory Back In

Unlike other empirical studies, we intend to "bring theory back in" before we lay out the design and the results of our study. It is key to be aware of the different definitions of the term *generation* and of the different possibilities to compare generations. Otherwise the result is confusion, as is the case in many other studies comparing, for instance, "the young generation" with their "parents". For example, the definition of the term "generation" by the philosopher John Rawls changes during the course of his famous study "A Theory of Justice". At first, he addresses all people living at one moment of time, therefore using the term "generation" in a wide sense.[1] But when referring to his final justification of his theory of intergenerational justice, he starts using the family-related meaning of the term "generation".[2] Somewhat more sophisticated was the distinction of Russell et al. in their empirical study on perceptions of intergenerational justice in the field of climate change. They asked their sample to distinguish between "the next generation" and the "generation of 2100" when making their assessments (Russell et al. 2003). But these are not clearcut underlying concepts of the term "generation". We doubt that the respondents could really understand the questions posed by Russell's questionnaire.

"Generational justice" consists of the two words "generation" and "justice". "Justice" is definitely the more *difficult* one to define. However, the term "generation" is also *ambiguous*. In our empirical study, we use only the chronological-temporal definition for indirect comparisons (explained below). To justify this choice, we have to first look at the different methods of comparing generations as well as the common pitfalls.

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[1]For instance, Rawls (1971, p. 287): "But this calculus of advantages, which balances the losses of some against benefits to others, appears even less justified in the case of generations than among contemporaries." Or, on page 293: "We can now see that persons in different generations have duties and obligations to one another just as contemporaries do."

[2]For instance, Rawls (1971, p. 128): "For example, we may think of the parties as heads of families, and therefore as having a desire to further the welfare of their nearest descendants."

5.2.1 Family Generations

The etymological roots of the term "generation" (Latin: "generatio" = procreation, procreative capacity) refer to family relationships. Family generations are the members of a lineage (Kohli and Szydlik 2000, p. 11; Veith 2006, pp. 24–38). Therefore, they are also called "genealogical" generations. Kin relationships are not the same as cohorts and that is why the terms "children" and "parents" belong to a different context than the terms "older" and "younger" generation. After all, there are younger and older parents. Aunts and uncles can be younger than their nieces and nephews (Laslett and Fishkin 1992, p. 9).

Apart from the family-related meaning, the term "generation" has other meanings that cannot be explained by its etymological roots.

5.2.2 Societal Generations

The term "societal generation" refers to a group of people whose beliefs, attitudes or problems are homogenous.[3] In many cases, the members of the group have undergone similar political, economic, or cultural experiences[4] within a certain period of time (for instance, the "Flower-Power Generation", "Generation X", the "Generation of 89", the "Net Generation", the "Generation Internship", and the "Generation of 9/11").[5]

Only if there is a perception of peer personality, are neighbouring age groups regarded as a single generation (Bude 2000, p. 187). Such a collective generational identity can even exist among people of different origin, religion, or ethnicity. Paradoxically, such people feel close without even knowing each other. "Generations" in this sense that existed before World War II are also referred to as "historical generations". The term also plays an important role in the field of arts (e.g., the "Romanticists"), and literature ("Generation of 1898", or "Lost Generation"). In this context, age is not a decisive factor in a "societal generation". Normally, the age difference between its members is rarely more than 10 years. And yet, in arts and literature, 20-year-olds can belong to the same generation as 50-year-olds.

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[3]Synonyms are "social generations", "sociological generations", or "historic generations".

[4]Societal generations are sometimes divided into "political", "cultural", and "economic" generations (cf. Kohli and Szydlik 2000, pp. 8–10). See also Kohli (2006).

[5]Although some societal generations might have had an international impact, each country has still predominantly its own denominations for their generations. For the US, see Strauss and Howe (1991, 1993). For Germany, see Jureit and Wildt (2005).

5.2.3 Chronological Generations

Last, but not least, there are two chronological meanings of the term "generation".[6] They are common in English, German, and other languages:

Chronological-temporal. Firstly, "generation" can refer to an age group, i.e. the young, middle-aged, or old people in a society. In this sense, several generations always live at the same time. People below 30 are usually considered "the young generation", whereas those between 30 and 60 represent "the middle-aged generation". Seniors aged 60 and above are referred to as "the old generation".[7] Authors using this definition include Easterlin (1980, p. 7), de-Shalit (1995, p. 138) and Thomson (1992, p. 207).

Chronological-intertemporal. Secondly, the term "generation" can refer to everyone alive today. Used in that sense, there is only one generation at a time (Birnbacher 1988, p. 23). This definition is of special importance if non-overlapping generations with all the concomitant problems like no possibility for direct communication, no direct reciprocity, etc. are discussed.

The result of this analysis of the term "generation" is that only one of the three meanings of the term should be used in a study on intergenerational justice in the labour market: the chronological one. "Societal generations" as entities that are formed through shared values and experiences can be ruled out from the start. Unlike chronological or family generations, they cannot be clearly distinguished from each other. For example, speaking of the "Flower-Power Generation," it is not clear whether the term refers only to those who were between 20 and 30 in the year 1968 or if it includes those who were 18 or 35, too. Does the term only refer to the students of the year 1968, or does it include those who read the newspapers, occasionally took part in a demonstration, and were below 30 in the year 1968 (Landweer 1996, p. 89)?

Family generations are clearly distinguishable from each other. Does that mean that this meaning of the term "generation" can be used in a study on intergenerational justice in the labour market? Theoretically yes, but only at the cost of conceptual clarity. Assume, a researcher ponders the following formulation of a specific question when he designs his questionnaire. The two options are:

(a) Today, young people between 20 and 45 years of age have equal prospects in the labour market as the previous generation had at this age 30 years ago.
(b) Today, young people between 20 and 45 years of age have equal prospects in the labour market as their parents had.

The first statement uses only the temporal-chronological meaning of the term "generation" whereas the second statement mixes a temporal-chronological meaning with a family-related meaning ("parents"). The parents of the young people of

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[6]Synonyms are "demographic generation", "genetic generation".

[7]Further differentiations are often made, e.g., "young senior citizens" or "old senior citizens". To simplify matters, only three generations (young, middle-aged, old) shall be referred to hereinafter.

today might now be between 35 and 100 years old. The boundaries of this group are blurred. But generational justice theories require comparisons between clearly defined generations. Birth years are suitable criteria; attitudes and family lineages are not. Both the chronological-temporal as well as the chronological-intertemporal definitions allow for these comparisons. For this study on the current situation of the young generation in the world of employment, chronological-temporal comparisons are most suitable and will be used throughout the rest of the article.

5.2.4   Direct and Indirect Comparisons of Chronological Generations

Obviously, the concept of generational justice involves drawing comparisons between generations. However, this is often done improperly in the scientific (and all the more so in the public) debate. Basically, we must distinguish between direct and indirect comparisons (see Fig. 5.4).

   In the Lexis diagram, the vertical axis shows the age, and the horizontal axis shows the flow of time. The diagonal line that starts above the birth year of a certain cohort represents its life course. The cohort born in 1960 is symbolised by
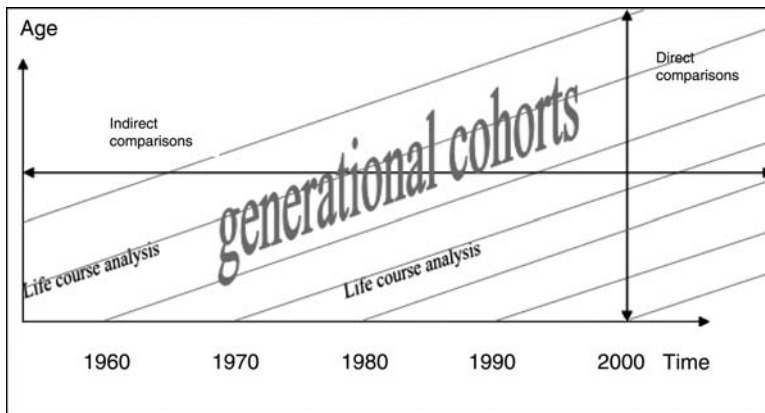
Fig. 5.4 Comparisons between generations in the Lexis-diagram
Source: *Lexis-diagram*[8]

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[8]The German demographer Wilhelm Lexis developed the diagram named after him in 1875.

the diagonal line that starts in that year; it is 10 years old in 1970, 20 years old in 1980, etc.

Comparisons can either be drawn between generations at a certain point in time or between certain age groups. This fundamental difference shall be illustrated by a two-generation model. The two hatched grey generations are compared respectively (see Figs. 5.5 and 5.6a, b).

The *direct* comparison (here: vertical) is between today's "young" and "old", for example comparing the percentage of members of the old (60+ years old) and young (0–30 years old) generation who live on social security at a certain point in time (e.g., in the year 2010).

In terms of *indirect* comparisons, Fig. 5.6b might be used to show how the share of young persons on social security in 2010 compares with that in 1980 – when today's older generation was young. Figure 5.6a shows this for today's and tomorrow's old generation.

Fig. 5.5 Direct comparisons between generations. The indirect comparison (here: diagonal) compares the old with the old (see Fig. 5.6a) or the young with the young (see Fig. 5.6b)
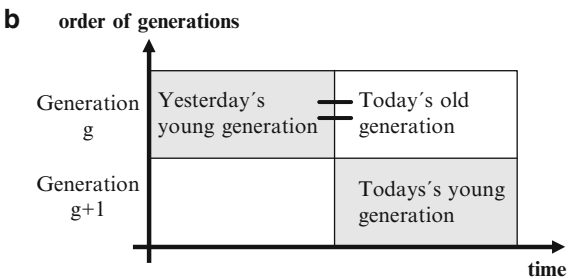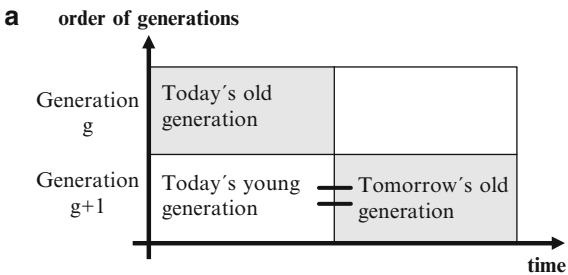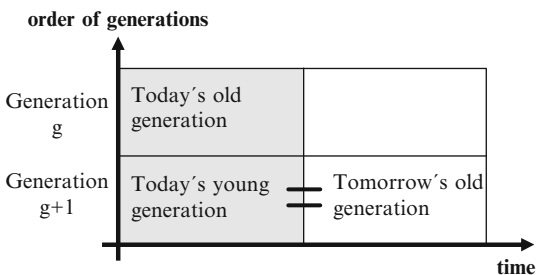
Fig. 5.6 (**a**) Indirect comparisons between generations (old/old). (**b**) Indirect comparisons between generations (young/young)

Direct comparisons would produce statements like: "Older employees in the public service receive higher salaries, profit from a significantly higher level of dismissals protection, have more vacations and work fewer hours per week than their younger colleagues even though they are doing the same work."

Unfortunately, the scientific debate on generational politics has failed for a long time to clearly distinguish both between these four meanings of the term "generation" and between the different ways of comparing them. This, in turn, produced ambiguities in questionnaires on intergenerational justice and intergenerational relations.

5.3 Description of the Survey

5.3.1 Aims of the Survey

The survey conducted with the deputies of the 16th German Bundestag was planned and conducted as exploratory research. Its first aim was to provide an overview of the knowledge and the awareness of the deputies with regard to questions of intergenerational justice in the labour market. Its second aim was to assess their willingness to support legislative initiatives in this thematic context. A number of widely discussed suggestions for reforms, aiming at enhancing the situation of young employees and career starters in the working environment, were included in the survey in order to find out how far the deputies see them as effective and approve them. The attitude of the political class towards issues and measures plays an important role in determining how quickly the public discussion will result in new laws for generational justice.

5.3.2 The Design of the Survey

The combination of a four-point scale and a "don't know" option (that is visually divided from the rest of the options) was chosen over a five-point scale in order to avoid the tendency of always checking the middle of the scale resulting from time pressure or disinterest.

The questionnaire is divided into five parts (see annex 1). The first part serves as a general introduction to the topic and evaluates the context in which intergenerational justice is seen by the deputies. The second part is divided into a part dealing with the "rush hour of life" and another part dealing with the topic "young generation and entry to the labour market". This division makes comparisons between the two main topics possible while guaranteeing a higher consistency of each part. The fourth part deals with possible reform steps for advancing generational justice

in the working environment and for straightening out the rush hour of life. The fifth part surveys personal statistics like age and gender.

5.3.3   Methodology of the Survey

The German-speaking survey was implemented as a postal written study in the first weeks of March 2009. The 612 deputies of the German Bundestag were contacted with individual cover letters signed by hand by the authors.

The letters included information on the topic, as well as a self-addressed prepaid envelope. The time predetermined for returning the envelopes was set to 2 weeks (a few questionnaires handed in later were still accepted). The letters were delivered simultaneously to the German Bundestag at the beginning of a sitting week in order to ensure that the deputies would be present when the questionnaire arrives. An e-mail reminder was sent out at the end of the first week, asking the deputies for their support and including a questionnaire that could be filled in electronically and submitted via e-mail.

5.4   Analysis

5.4.1   Response Rate

The response rate of the survey was relatively low at 11%. In the scope of written surveys with an elite group, the rate is still acceptable and a sample of 67 questionnaires allows for adequate and reliable results of the analysis of the survey, considering the small size of the population.

Since some deputies gave us notice that they would not participate in the survey, we could draw some conclusions about the reasons.

One of the main reasons for a rejection was the workload of the deputies. With several questionnaires coming in daily, many deputies have a general no-participation policy regarding surveys. According to some answers we got, there seems to be a high number of surveys that students of political science try to conduct with deputies in the scope of their final thesis. This seems to lead to a general unwillingness of the deputies to take part in surveys if they are not especially interested or the survey sticks out among the others. We suppose that our survey had a relatively high response rate in comparison to other studies conducted with deputies due to it being carried out by a scientific foundation with an official letterhead and the fact that a donation was made for each participating deputy.

5.4.2   Sample Composition

Since the demographic details of the German Bundestag are known, we were in the fortunate position of being able to check how far the sample mirrored the population the survey was aimed at.

The sample featured a mean age of 49 years, which is nearly consistent with the mean age of 50 years for the Bundestag in its 16th period. Nevertheless, there are differences between the sample and the population. The age pattern is presented below in Figs. 5.7a, b.
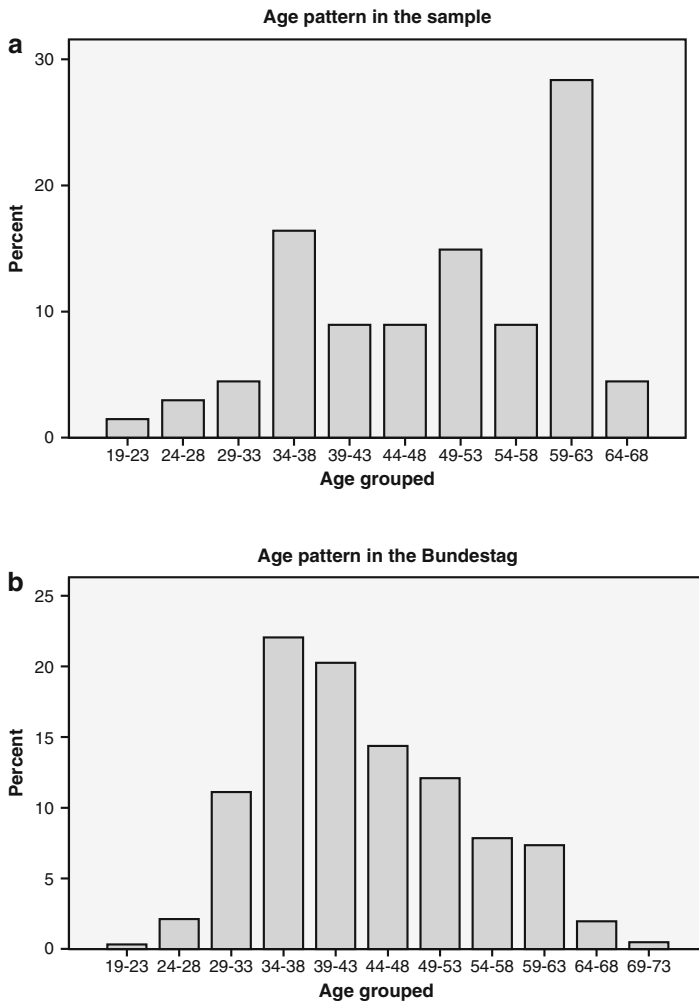

Fig. 5.7 (**a**) and (**b**): Age patterns of the sample and the population of the survey
Source: Own calculations, webpage of the German Bundestag

The group of oldest deputies is significantly overrepresented in the sample while deputies between 29 and 48 years of age are underrepresented. The participation of the youngest deputies – those less than 30 years old – equates closely with the actual proportions in the Bundestag. A reason for the comparatively low participation of the middle generations could be that they are less affected by questions of generational justice at first glance, since the concept tends to evoke comparisons between old and young generations in public opinion. This could also be the reason for the high participation rate of older deputies.

Considering gender statistics, there was an overrepresentation of female deputies in the sample with the 16th Bundestag having a 32% proportion of women while the sample has a 40% proportion. As shown later, this overrepresentation could have some influence on the results of the survey. A reason for this female overrepresentation could be that the rush hour of life concept mentioned in the cover letter is linked to topics traditionally labelled as "female" like the compatibility of family and career.

5.4.3 General Assessment of the Importance of Generational Justice

The first part was meant to offer a general overview of how the deputies assess generational justice. How important is generational justice for politics from the point of view of deputies in comparison to other concepts of justice like international, social and gender justice? Unsurprisingly, social justice was rated as the most important concept with a mean of 3.6 on a scale from 1 (no importance) to 4 (high importance). Since social justice is dominating political debates in important policy areas like labour politics, this result could be anticipated. What we did not anticipate was that generational justice would end up in a very close third place (3.0) with almost identical results to gender justice (3.1). This is also surprising taking into account the overrepresentation of female deputies, which could have led to an up valuation of gender justice. International justice comes in fourth with a mean importance of 2.5, which reflects that this concept has comparatively little importance in the scope of domestic politics which still focuses on nation states. The results are presented below in Figs. 5.8a, b.

As a second step, the deputies were asked to rate different policy fields according to their importance for generational justice (scale 1–4). Financial politics came in first, followed by education and pension politics, which tied in second place (see Fig. 5.9). The lead position of financial politics reflects the results of another survey (Tremmel et al. 2009, p. 10) that analysed the contexts in which the term "generational justice" was used in parliamentary debates. In our study, environmental politics came in fourth place tying with youth and family politics. This result is surprising if we consider that climate change has potentially the most devastating implications on the lives of future generations.
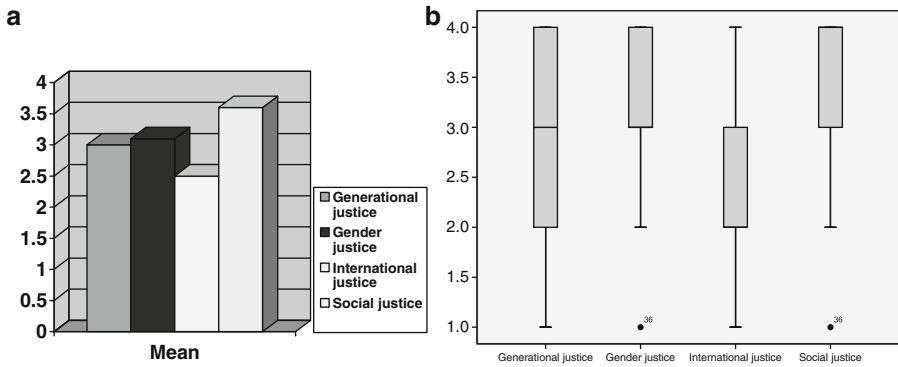
Fig. 5.8 (**a**) and (**b**): Mean and boxplot results of item 1: "In your opinion, which role have the following types of justice played so far in the political discourse?"
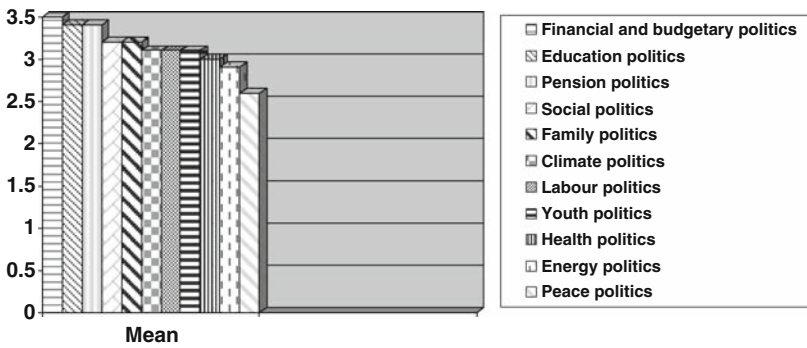

Fig. 5.9 Item: "How do you assess the importance of the following political fields within the scope of generationally just politics?"

Generally, all policy fields received a high mean ranking with the exception of peace policy coming in at 2.6. This shows that this particular policy field is not generally associated with generational justice, despite the lasting negative effects inner state wars have on the life chances of future generations in the states affected.

The last four questions of the first part present statements concerning generational justice which summarise the core problems of generational justice in our society, one example being a short time-frame in decision-making which disregards long-term consequences. These items verbatim address the concept of generational justice, thus they were placed at the beginning to avoid the possibility that their results *could be* influenced by other items detailing problems of generational justice. Overall, our society is seen as neutral concerning generational justice (2.5
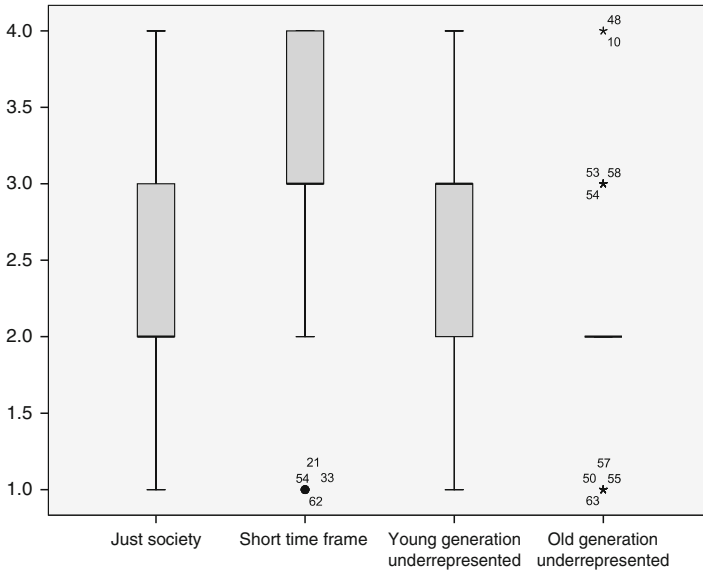
Fig. 5.10 Boxplot results for the following items. How strongly do you *agree* with the following statements? All in all we live in a generationally just society. The time horizon of politics is currently too short-term oriented to meet the requirements of generational justice. The interests of the young generation are currently not adequately represented within politics. The interests of the older generation are currently not adequately represented within politics

mean on a 1–4 scale). The problem of a short time-frame is acknowledged (3 mean) while a strong discrepancy in the representation of young and old generations is not seen. There is even a very slight correlation (0.065) of seeing both older people and younger people as underrepresented. For the boxplot results, see Fig. 5.10.

5.4.4   The Rush Hour of Life

The second part of the questionnaire focuses on the problems of the rush hour of life. The first question refers to the compatibility of family and working life for the young generation of today in indirect comparison with the former generation. The deputies assessed the compatibility and were asked to offer reasons for their assessment. Generally, the deputies gave the opinion that the compatibility of family and career has become more manageable nowadays with 64% saying that it is somewhat easier or easier to arrange family and careers nowadays in comparison to the situation 30 years ago. Overall, 48% of the sample offered reasons for their assessment of the situation. Better *daycare facilities* and *gender equality* were the two reasons most often given for better compatibility. The figures were 50 and

37.5%, respectively. On the other hand, higher requirements towards flexibility and an achievement-oriented society were given by 15.6% as reasons for a lower compatibility.

The following item battery consisted of questions mainly relating to the problems of the rush hour of life and the values of today's young generation regarding family life. Generally, the awareness of the deputies for the issues described in the questions was high. The items relating to problems experienced by the young generation had a mean between 2.2 and 3.5 on a 1–4 scale.[9] The item, *The respective school diplomas and university degrees offer less career prospects today than 30 years ago,* received by far the lowest approval of 2.2. All other problem items were rated with 2.6 upwards, most of them being above 3. The low approval of 2.2 for the diploma question contradicts standard views in the relevant literature.[10] *The item "The requirements on mobility and professiona flexibility have increased in the last 30 years" received the highest approval with 3.5.*

The variances of the answers were, generally, relatively low with values between 0.3 and 0.9. The large majority of the items had a variance between 0.4 and 0.7. This reflects a tendency to tick the less extreme approval or disapproval levels, being "slight disapproval" and "slight approval".

It should be mentioned that concrete problems described in the items received an average approval of 2.98.

5.4.5 Young Generation and Entry to the Labour Market

The third part of the questionnaire analysed the problems that the young generation is confronted with when trying to start a working career. The questions mainly focus on the phase between graduation and entry into the labour market. A few questions are related to job satisfaction as well as the general situation of the young generation in the labour market.

As a start, the perceived level to which insecurities in the labour market had risen for age groups and gender groups within the last 30 years was evaluated (see Fig. 5.11a, b).

The graphs show the results for each item on a scale of 1–4 as well as the boxplots. As can be seen, the deputies think the insecurities for all groups have risen within the last 30 years. Young and old employees are at the fore with high means of 3.36 and 3.28, respectively. At the same time, MPs do not see rising insecurity for male employees even though the dismissal rate in the current economic crisis affects male employees in Germany disproportionately. In May 2009, there were 224.211 additional unemployed males in comparison to May 2008, while the number of female unemployed workers shrunk by 49.410 (Bundesagentur für

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[9]For the evaluation, all items were recoded in a way that high numbers indicate high awareness of generational justice issues.

[10]Cf. Chauvel (2010).

Fig. 5.11 (**a**) and (**b**): Mean and boxplot results for the following items: How much has the uncertainty of labour market conditions in Germany increased for the following groups in the last 30 years? Young employees. Old employees. Male employees. Female employees
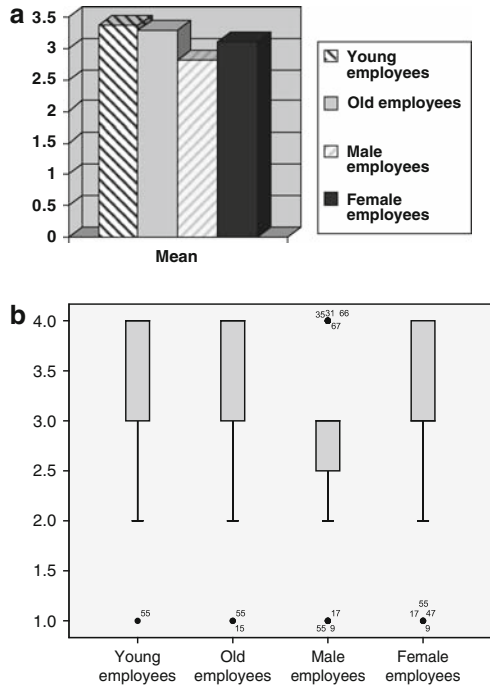
Arbeit 2009, p. 50). The equally high numbers for young and old employees create a dilemma in the field of generational justice in the working environment, since both are affected by rising uncertainty. Current numbers show, nevertheless, that the young generation is affected disproportionately by dismissals. In Germany, the number of unemployed in the age group under 25 increased three times as much as the number in older age groups between May 2008 and May 2009 (Bundesagentur für Arbeit 2009, p. 50; Blossfeld and Mills 2010).

The deputies were asked to assess if employees can compensate financial losses in periods of early unemployment or negligible employment in the course of their careers. The findings of Chauvel clearly suggest that those periods of unemployment and negligible employment do leave their marks (cf. Chauvel 2010). On a range from 1 to 4, with four meaning a full compensation, the itemhad a mean of 2.2 with a large majority of 50% opting for "partly" compensation.

The following item battery can roughly be divided into items referring to problems the young generation faces in the labour market and items referring to statutes and laws regulating the labour market and employment. The questionnaire section on the labour market contains more items referring to laws and statutes than the rush hour of life part. There were some differences in the approval rating of items referring to legal aspects and items referring to problems. While the items referring to laws received a mean approval of 2.4, the approval of problem description items had an average mean of 2.93. Considering the tendency to opt
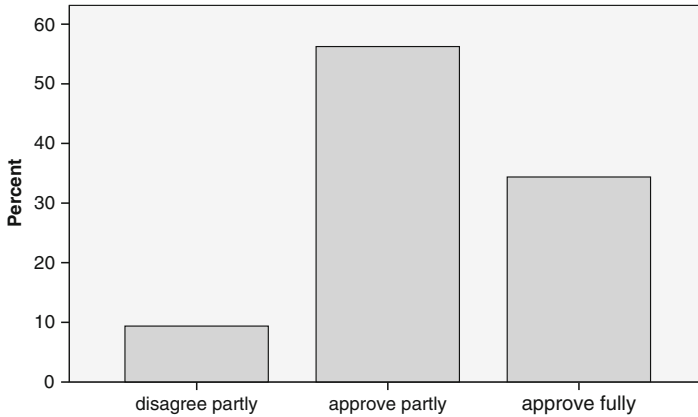
Fig. 5.12 Results of following item: In the period of family formation, the need for an adequate income is the highest since children have to be provided for and expensive purchases have to be made

for the middle of the scale (categories 2 and 3) that can be observed with the majority of the items, this difference of 0.5 *is* of relevance. The problem awareness item which received the highest approval rating was the statement: *In the period of family formation, the need for an adequate income is the highest since children have to be provided for and expensive purchases have to be made*. The item met a 54% of slight, and a 32% of full approval with no person fully disagreeing with the statement, making it one of the items with the highest approval rating in the questionnaire (Fig. 5.12).

Another item, stating that young people often have to sign part-time contracts even if they want to work full-time, also met a high mean approval of 3.1, while 44% approved slightly and 37%, fully. This means that two of the main problems of young employees (lack of financial assets and involuntary part-time employment) are met with high awareness by the deputies.

The item with the lowest mean approval of 2 was the statement: *Due to the increase of the pensionable age, positions are filled for a greater length of time, which intensifies the unemployment of the young generation*.

As Fig. 5.13 suggests, the variance in this case was higher than with most of the items, reaching 0.8. The answers considering problem awareness had a variance between 0.6 and 0.85. The item addressing the need for income of the young age group presented above was an exception with a low variance of 0.4.

Items relating to legal issues had an even higher variance between 0.6 and 1.0. The higher variances suggest that the labour market is a more controversial field than the rush hour of life, which confirms our presumptions that there would be some differences between the rush hour of life and labour market sections. However, this is not mirrored by differences in the awareness levels of problems connected with the rush hour of life or the labour market problems of
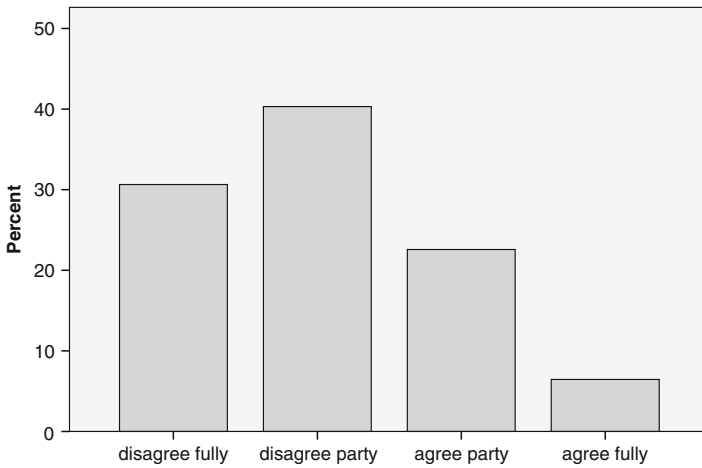
Fig. 5.13 Results of following item: Due to the increase of the pensionable age, positions are filled for a greater length of time, which intensifies the unemployment of the young generation

generational justice. The means for the items addressing problems were relatively equal with 2.93 for the labour market and 2.98 for the rush hour. As a consequence, the labour market items are more suitable for measuring awareness for generational justice problems since they are more controversial and thus provoke clearer reactions.

5.4.6 Institutional Reforms and Measures

The last part of the questionnaire asked the deputies to rate different legal initiatives and existing laws which were adopted either to counter problems of generational injustice in the labour market or to straighten out the rush hour of life. The first bloc asked for approval or disapproval of initiatives which aim at institutionalizing generational justice. The proposed measures and their approval levels can be found in Fig. 5.14.

As a second step, the deputies were offered *concrete* reform steps below the constitutional level. We selected a number of measures often named in scientific articles on the topic or discussed in public. The deputies were asked how far they see the measures fit to ensure that the interests of the younger generation in the labour market are taken into consideration or, respectively, to straighten out the rush hour of life. Again, the deputies were presented a scale from 1 (not at all) to 4 (completely). For the complete results, see Figs. 5.15a, b below. Percentages in the result bars not reaching a 100% were missing answers in figure a or "cannot say" answers in figure b. For the full text of the items, please refer to the questionnaire (annex 1).
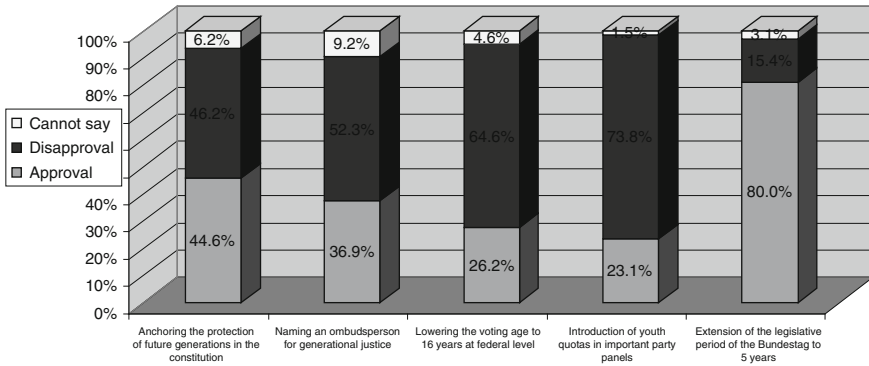
Fig. 5.14 Approval level of discussed institutional reform measures to enhance intergenerational justice in Germany
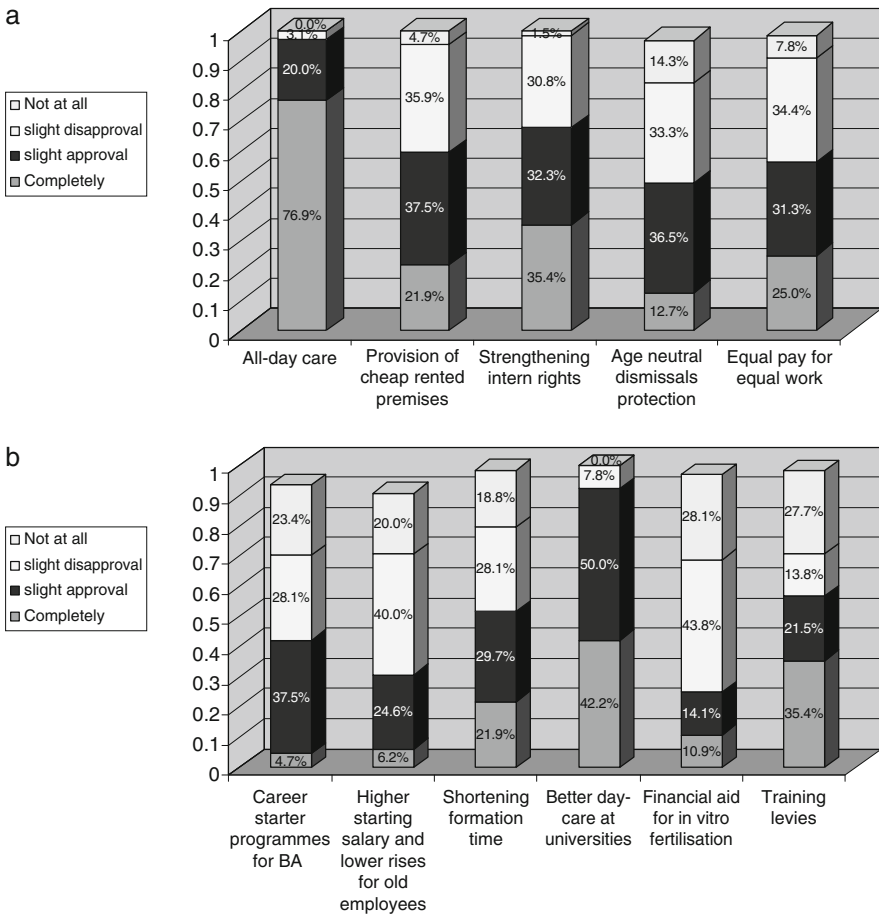
Fig. 5.15 a, b Approval levels of measures to enhance intergenerational justice in Germany

1. All in all we live in a generationally just society.
2. The time horizon of politics is currently too short-term oriented to meet the requirements of generational justice.
3. The requirements on mobility and professional flexibility have increased in the last 30 years.
4. Many employees run through periods of limited or negligible employment and unemployment respectively in the first five years of their professional career. To what degree are those employees usually able to compensate such a financial loss later in the working life?
5. Young people are increasingly being confronted with a lack of prospects on the labour market.
6. Career starters first have to complete several internships.
7. Today the young generation has equal prospects on the labour market as the previous generation had in their youth
8. Today young people are more often affected by unemployment than young people 30 years ago.
9. The pressure of competition in the labour market has not increased in the last 30 years.
10. Today young people often have to take up temporary or part-time contracts although they would prefer to take up full-time contracts.
11. The respective school diplomas and university degrees offer less career prospects today than 30 years ago.

Fig. 5.16 Items used for the GJAI

5.4.7 Indexing Awareness for Generational Justice

Measuring the awareness for generational justice is a difficult task, considering that it spans several topics and is *connected to* other problems like gender equality and social justice. In the scope of an exploratory study – usually used to survey the basic data for further research – the indexing of attributes is not common. Nevertheless, there are a number of items spread over the questionnaire used for the survey that are adequate for measuring the awareness for problems of generational justice. As described above, indirect comparisons are the most relevant from a generational justice perspective, so most items make indirect comparisons. These items were used to assemble the Generational Justice Awareness Index (GJAI) for measuring the awareness of the deputies for problems of intergenerational justice on a scale from 1 (low) to 4 (high). The items used for indexing can be found in Fig. 5.16.

While the first two items measure the awareness of generational justice directly, the other items are measuring the awareness through related problems. Thus, there are second variables falsifying the index to a certain degree. The items included are mainly items from the labour market part of the questionnaire, since they include less of third variables and are generally better suited to measure awareness for generational justice. In terms of reliability, the item battery used for indexing scored a Cronbach's α of .686, which is a bit low considering that a battery should have a value of about 0.7. One of the reasons for this comparably low value is that some items also measure other variables. Furthermore, generational justice has not yet been fully operationalised for empirical research, and hence, adequate items for measurement still have to be developed. Thus, there remain contradictions in the awareness of generational justice. For this reason, items were not weighted in the scope of indexing.

The results of the indexing can be seen in Figs. 5.17 and 5.18.

The GJAI for the sample had a mean of 2.88 with a variance of 0.188. The index is measured on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 as the lowest and 4 as the highest score.
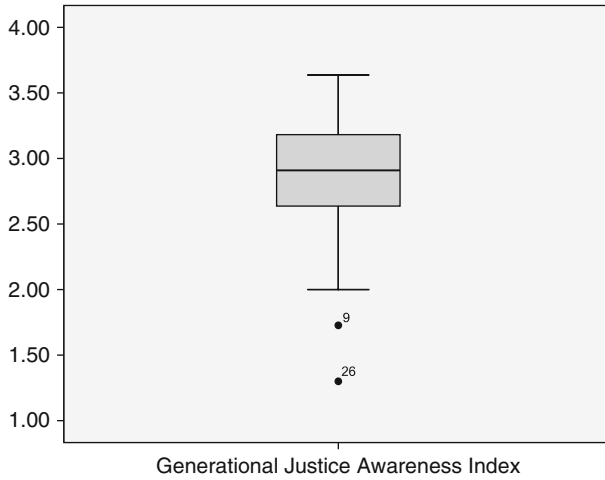
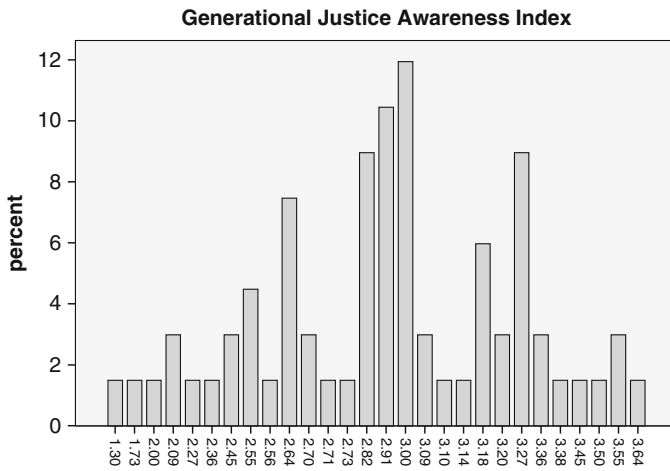**Fig. 5.17** Boxplot of the GJAI

Fig. 5.18 Statistical distribution of GJAI

We can, therefore, talk of a still limited but nevertheless measurable awareness for generational justice. According to our 1–4 scale, every value above 2.5 would hint at a "real" awareness of generational justice. The median of the sample is 2.90. This is a number of some importance in this context, since the median voter is theoretically decisive in majority decisions, such as votes in parliament. The limits of the index described above should be taken into consideration though when working with these figures.

Item	Correlation
	* = significant on 0.05 level ** = significant on 0.01 level
1. How much has the uncertainty of labour market conditions in Germany increased for old employees in the last 30 years?	R = 0.362**
2. Many employees run through periods of limited or negligible employment and unemployment respectively in the first five years of their professional career. To what degree are those employees usually able to compensate such a financial loss later in the working life?	R = –0.276*
3. Age privileges concerning dismissal protection discriminate against young people.	R = –0.237
4. Support of training levies from companies that do not train.	R = 0.219*
5. Support for strengthening the rights of interns.	R = 0.232

Fig. 5.19 Items correlating with the age of respondents (two-tailed Spearman test)

5.4.8 Outside Variable Influences: Age and Gender

Since generational justice has a strong age connotation, a correlation between certain questions and the age of the respondent, or perhaps even a correlation between age and generational justice awareness in general, would not have been surprising (Bonoli 2010). However, the correlations of answering patterns with the age were low and irrelevant for most items. The correlations were measured with a two-tailed Spearman Test. Figure 5.19 shows the items with a significant or a comparably high correlation with the age of the respondents.

A correlation with items 1 and 3 was hardly surprising since older people are directly affected or addressed by them. On the other hand, there was support for measures to straighten out the rush hour of life in items 4 and 5 from older respondents who are not affected by the problems presented by these items. One has to keep in mind, though, that even the highest correlations listed here are still low and of limited statistical significance.

In the light of the presented findings, it is not surprising that the GJAI also did not correlate significantly with the age of the respondents. There is only an irrelevant correlation of 0.003.

As already hinted at above, gender was a more relevant factor in the survey and had some influence on a number of items. Again, the items influenced through the variable "gender" are listed below. The significance of the correlation was visualized through boxplots and measured through a one-way ANOVA test. Figure 5.20 lists the ANOVA results for the significance of the correlation. The lower the significance the higher the correlation, the direction of the correlation is indicated in parentheses.

Some of the items with a high correlation refer to topics socially labelled as "female" or directly addressing gender, which explains some of the correlations. Nevertheless, the correlations with other items hint at a higher awareness for problems of generational justice among female deputies and a higher support for certain measures to tackle those problems. There are some fairly significant

Item	Correlation
1. The interests of the young generation are currently not adequately represented within politics.	Sig.: 0.044 [negative]
2. Low birth rates are largely caused by the double burden of career and family in younger days.	Sig.: 0.016 [negative]
3. Usually companies adequately consider the familial needs of their employees.	Sig.: 0.020 [negative]
4. How much has the uncertainty of labour market conditions in Germany increased for young employees in the last 30 years?	Sig.: 0.035 [positive]
5. How much has the uncertainty of labour market conditions in Germany increased for female employees in the last 30 years?	Sig.: 0.001 [positive]
6. Many employees run through periods of limited or negligible employment and unemployment respectively in the first five years of their professional career. To what degree are those employees usually able to compensate such a financial loss later in the working life?	Sig.: 0.049 [negative]
7. Young people are increasingly being confronted with a lack of prospects on the labour market.	Sig.: 0.003 [positive]
8. Career starters first have to complete several internships.	Sig.: 0.004 [positive]
9. Today the young generation has equal prospects on the labour market as the previous generation had in their youth.	Sig.: 0.028 [negative]
10. Age privileges concerning dismissal protection discriminate against young people.	Sig.: 0.006 [negative]
11. Current legal regulations do not adequately protect school and university graduates from the exploitation by pseudo-internships.	Sig.: 0.015 [positive]
12. Approval of provision of low priced rented premises for young couples.	Sig.: 0.026 [positive]
13. Approval of strengthening the rights of interns.	Sig.: 0.004 [positive]
14. Approval of shortening school education, years of study and periods of training.	Sig.: 0.007 [negative]
15. Approval of training levies from companies that do not train.	Sig.: 0.016 [positive]

Fig. 5.20 Items correlating with the gender of respondents (ANOVA Test)

correlations for some topics concerning the rights of interns and the problematic situation of young employees in the labour market (items 5, 6, and 11 in Fig. 5.20). Furthermore, 5 of 13 items included in the generational justice index are correlated with gender (items 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 in Fig. 5.20). Consequently, there is some correlation between the GJAI and gender as shown in Fig. 5.21.
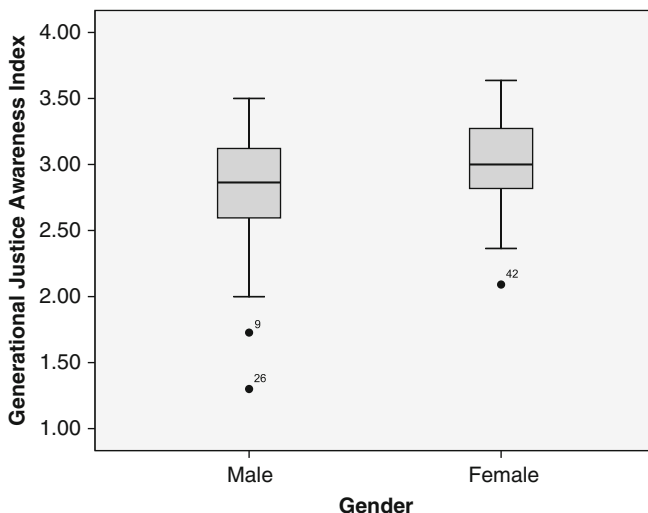
Fig. 5.21 Boxplot of the correlation of gender and the GJAI

The correlation has a significance of 0.032, which ANOVA considers sufficient (significance below 0.05 needed). The mean of the male sample lies at 2.79 while the mean for the female sample lies at 3.02 and has a lower variance.

5.5 Conclusions and Outlook

We were surprised that the level of awareness of generational justice in the world of employment is rather *strong* among members of the German Bundestag. According to official publications of the German government, age discrimination is solely understood as discrimination against older employees, *not* against younger ones. But when concrete problems of the young generations were mentioned, the approval rates of the deputies were quite high. Unfortunately, this does not always seem to lead to a readiness for legislative actions to change the grievances. On a general level, legislation to counter these problems is supported, especially in areas where there is a consensus in the society, for example, enhancing daycare and strengthening intern rights. But for other important issues like introducing age-neutral regulations of the dismissal protection, or raising the salaries for young employees while capping the salaries for older employees, there was no clear support. Furthermore, only seven deputies (about 10% of the sample) came forward with their own suggestions concerning reforms for the sake of generational justice. As soon as the issues became more controversial, the readiness to pay *lip-service* to generational justice seems to be higher than the readiness to take decisive legislative action.

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Annex 1: Questionnaire of the German Bundestag Survey on Intergenerational Justice in the Labour Market

Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations

SURVEY: GENERATIONAL JUSTICE IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Please fill in the questionnaire and send it back to us using the enclosed stamp addressed envelope or via fax (06171-952566) by 14th of March 2009.

1. In your opinion, which role have the following types of justice played so far in the political discourse?

	large	moderate	small	none	don´t know
	4	3	2	1	0
Generational justice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gender justice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
International justice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social justice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. How do you assess the importance of the following political fields within the scope of generationally just politics?

	very high	high	low	very low	don´t know
	4	3	2	1	0
Youth policy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fiscal and budgetary policy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Labour policy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family policy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health policy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ecological policy (without energy policy)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Energy policy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Educational policy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pension policy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Welfare policy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Policy of peace	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. How strongly do you agree with the following statements?

	++ fully	+	-	-- not at all	don´t know
	4	3	2	1	0
All in all we live in a generationally just society.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The time frame of politics is currently too short-term oriented to meet the requirements of generational justice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The interests of the young generation are currently not adequately represented within politics.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The interests of the older generation are currently not adequately represented within politics.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Subject area: rush-hour of life

4. How do you assess the compatibility between work and family for the current young generation in comparison with the generation that was young 30 years ago?

easier ☐   slightly easier ☐   similar ☐   slightly more difficult ☐   more difficult ☐   don´t know ☐

Why? _____

1

5. How strongly do you <u>agree</u> with the following statements?	++ fully 4	+ 3	- 2	-- not at all 1	don't know 0
Low birth rates are largely caused by the double burden of career and family in younger days.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The introduction of parent's money on January 1st 2007 will in the long run result in an increase of birth rates in Germany.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Long training and study periods of young people reduce the time frame for forming a family.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Many young people hold the opinion that children limit their freedom.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The current young generation is financially dependent on their parents for a longer period than they were 30 years ago.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It has a negative effect on the career prospects of younger people if they work part-time due to family commitments.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is easier for the current young generation to maintain solid relationships than for previous generations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The introduction of the Bachelor/Master system for graduate degrees will increase the birth rates in the long run.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traditional family values are honoured by the young generation in the same way as they were by the previous generation 30 years ago.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The requirements on mobility and professional flexibility have increased in the last 30 years.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The currently existing care programmes for children between 1 and 5 years are adequate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The respective school diplomas and university degrees offer less career prospects today than 30 years ago.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The career in the life of young people today holds a higher importance than it did 30 years ago.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Usually companies adequately consider the familial needs of their employees.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The transition period between training or school graduation and the entrance into the first permanent position has not extended noticeably in the last 30 years.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Subject area: Young generation and entry to the labour market

6. How much has the uncertainty of labour market conditions in Germany increased for the following groups in the last 30 years?

	strongly 4	noticeably 3	mildly 2	not at all 1	don't know 0
Young employees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Old employees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Male employees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Female employees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Many employees run through periods of limited or negligible employment and unemployment respectively in the first five years of their professional career. To what degree are those employees usually able to compensate such a financial loss later in the working life?

fully	largely	partly	not at all	don´t know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. How strongly do you <u>agree</u> with the following statements?

	++ fully 4	+ 3	- 2	-- not at all 1	don´t know 0
Young people are increasingly being confronted with a lack of prospects on the labour market.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The rule of seniority, i.e. the increase of payment with increasing age, is reasonable and therefore should be maintained.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The current labour law does not provide a fair balance to the interests of young and old employees.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Career starters first have to complete several internships.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Today the young generation has equal prospects on the labour market as the previous generation had in their youth.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A longer staff membership in the company justifies the payment of higher incomes to those employees (rule of ancienneté).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In the period of family formation the need for an adequate income is the highest since children have to be provided for and expensive purchases have to be made.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Today young people are more often affected by unemployment than young people 30 years ago.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Age privileges concerning dismissal protection discriminate against young people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Current legal regulations do not adequately protect school and university graduates from the exploitation by pseudo-internships.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The pressure of competition in the labour market has not increased in the last 30 years.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Today young people often have to take up temporary or part-time contracts although they would prefer to take up full-time contracts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The trade unions today have not tackled the problems of younger employees sufficiently.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Due to the increase of the pensionable age all positions are filled for a greater length of time which intensifies the unemployment of the young generation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Subject area: Institutional Reforms and Measures

9. Which institutional reforms that promote generational justice would you support?

	yes	no	don´t know
Anchoring the protection of future generations in the constitution.	☐	☐	☐
Naming an ombudsperson for generational justice.	☐	☐	☐
Lowering the voting age to 16 years at federal level.	☐	☐	☐
Introduction of youth quotas in important party panels.	☐	☐	☐
Extension of the legislative period of the Bundestag to 5 years.	☐	☐	☐

3

10. Please mark how strongly you regard the following measures as applicable to considering more the needs of young employees and career starters and to ease the rush hour of life.

	++ fully 4	+ 3	- 2	-- not at all 1	don´t know 0
All-day care for children below 3 years.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provision of low priced rented premises for young couples.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strengthening the rights of interns.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Age-neutral regulations of the dismissal protection.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Equal wages for equal work, regardless of age.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Career starter programmes for BA graduates at public employers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Higher starting salaries and lower salary rises for older employees for some years.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shortening school education, years of study and periods of training.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Creation of better care programmes at universities in order to promote earlier parenthood.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Financial aid for in vitro fertilisation by the state in order to promote later parenthood.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Training levies from companies that do not train.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other measures you consider applicable:

_____

_____

Desired birthday

11. Imagine you might choose the time in which you are born. You are completely free in your choice of era, but you have to spend your life in the chosen era. Your place of origin remains the same, but you do not know which will be your social class or gender.

Set your desired year of birth: _____

Why have you chosen this era? (short phrase or headwords)

_____

_____

Demographic Information

12. Finally we ask you for some demographic information which has to be surveyed for the analysis of this questionnaire. Of course data will be treated anonymously.

Gender: male ☐   female ☐

Year of birth:_____

We thank you for taking your time to answer our questions.