Are you looking for a reading list on social protection for your July 4th or Summer holiday? Here is a select compilation of materials out this calendar year and spanning ten themes.

**COVID-19**

Let’s start with data trackers: the ILO has its 4th edition of the social protection monitor; WFP is tracking school meals around the world; the IMF has a dedicated policy tracker; a database of measures is hosted at Oxford; and our global social protection response paper (v.11) comes with the accompanying Excel file. What about literature? The OECD examines structural and new issues in social protection; Lustig and Tommasi discuss social protection and Covid in the LAC region; the SPACE initiative has a strategy decision matrix, a delivery system decision matrix, a set of pros/cons with various options for expansion; Bassier et al examine how South Africa repurposed its social assistance system to support informal workers; Robalino unbundles the protecting lives vs jobs conundrum; and Brown et al show that 96% of housing in African doesn’t meet global Covid standards.

**Saving lives, health, and mental wellbeing**

In Brazil, Oliveira Alves et al found that that an increase in the duration of high Bolsa CCT coverage (of 70% or more) is associated with a fall in suicide rates. In the US, Rambotti estimated that an increase in SNAP participation by a standard deviation could have reduced suicides and saved the lives of approximately 31,600 people; in Indonesia, Hensel finds that cash reduced suicides by 18% of the mean suicide rate; Ridley et al shows that cash can reduce mental illness by between 0.1-0.17 standard deviations pending on design; Owusu-Addo et al articulate the transmission channels through which cash transfers can affect the social determinants of health; De Brauw and Peterman present new evidence from El Salvador’s cash transfers showing impacts on maternal health at the time of birth; Roelen et al review the state of the evidence on graduation programs and early childhood development; Thomas et al found that social protection interventions had the best outcomes for orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS; Pescarini et al show that in Brazil, receiving Bolsa cash transfers before diagnosis led to better leprosy treatment adherence; and in Ethiopia, Hirvonen et al estimate that only 10-22% of PSNP families receive health programs.

**Education, gender and adolescence**

In Mali, Lees et al find that cash transfers had limited effects on women’s agency to challenge male authority and control over sexual and financial matters; a cross-country review by Baranov et al finds that cash reduces intimate partner violence (physical and emotional); Pozuelo et al conclude that cash transfers exhibit mixed effects on adolescents’ health and social outcomes; in Tanzania, TASAF et al estimate that cash transfers have limited effects in helping...
young people make safe and healthy transitions into adulthood; Li and Sekhri report a decline in children’s primary school enrollment due to India’s NREGA program; a paper on cash in Bolivia by Canelas and Nino-Zarazua shows that transfers increased school enrollment, but had no effects on child labor; in Peru, Sanchez et al found that the Juntos program affects cognitive skills among children of 0-4 years of age, but not those in the 5-8 age cohort.

**Food security and nutrition**
Daidone et al show that beneficiaries of cash transfers in Lesotho increased consumption and diversified diets; new findings by Chakrabarti et al from Zambia find that cash transfers enhance food security, but had no impact on child malnutrition; in Burkina Faso, Gross et al estimate that food assistance improves nutrition as measured by body mass indexes; and Chowdhury et al show that under Bangladesh’s Food Friendly Program, only 86% of beneficiaries receive the full amount of rice (60kg).

**Climate, energy and the environment**
In Indonesia, Ferraro and Simorangkir estimate that cash transfers reduced tree cover losses by 30% (and the economic value from reduced carbon emissions alone could cover for cash implementation costs); Nawaz and Iqbal show that Pakistan’s cash transfers increase the use of modern fuels, but also boost the share of fuel in household expenses; a report by McGregor and Girardeau examines how cash transfers help low-income households afford and connect to energy, and not just compensate for energy subsidy reductions; a new paper by Solórzano and Cárdenes discusses social protection and climate change, with a focus on Latin America and the Caribbean;

Garg et al show that in Mexico, a 1-degree Celsius increase in temperature raises homicide risk by 2.1%, but cash transfers reduce such effect by 50-67%; and Vaughan Bowen et al have a new book setting out a framework for adaptive social protection.

**Fragility and displacement**
Phadera et al examined how the Iraqi PDS mitigated the loss of welfare induced by forced displacement; in the Central African Republic, Alik-Lagrange et al estimate that public works increased monthly earnings by 10%; in Kenya’s refugee camps, Delius and Sterck show that mobile cash transfers increased businesses’ revenues; Jaspars et al discuss power dynamics around humanitarian assistance in Somalia; and Chaaban et al show that the effects of a large cash transfer on Syrian refugees in Lebanon faded away within 4 to 10 months after program discontinuation.

**Economic effects**
Jayachandran summarizes the effects of cash transfers on small-scale entrepreneurship in Mexico, Kenya, Uganda, and Central America; in Lesotho, by Prifti et al document that cash transfers increase farm profitability, but impacts are limited to ‘viable’ recipients with land and labor capacity; and Sabates-Wheeler et al examine the (limited) long-run effects of the PSNP on ‘graduation’ of beneficiaries over a decade of implementation.
**Political economy and trust**

Conover et al find that in Colombia, cash transfers increase political participation by women as well as votes for incumbent politicians; in the same country, García and Cuartas estimate that formal cash transfers augmented the probability of getting informal support by about 10 percentage points; Hickey and Seekings examine the transnational politics of cash transfers; Ghorpade and Justino explored how in Pakistan the BISP cash transfer program improved attitudes towards the state; in South Africa, Nnaem et al show that cash transfers can help generate citizens’ agency; Lavers et al examine the political economy of local-level implementation of safety nets in Ethiopia’s Oromiya and Afar regions; and Nowack and Schodereron contrast the effects universal vs means-tested programs on social and institutional trust.

**Design**

Ozler summarizes the evidence on different cash transfer design options; Gazeaud evaluates the performance of proxy means text in Tanzania and finds that inherent errors result in a 5 to 27% reduction in the method’s predictive performance; in Kenya, Heinrich and Knowles how that hard and soft conditions yield similar effects, with harder conditions also generating some negative unintended consequences (fines decreased non-food consumption); Bergstrom and Dodds argue that in Mexico conditionalities on children’s school enrollment offer an unexplored targeting benefit over unconditional transfers; Bastagli et al produced a great UNICEF-OxID report compiling key issues and features on universal child-benefits; Gentilini et al offers a 360-degree tour of evidence and practices on universal basic income; Aizer et al present evidence on long-term effects of US public work schemes in 1940s; and Homonoff and Somerville estimate the costs of eligibility recertification for the US SNAP program.

**Delivery**

A report by GIZ and ADB unbundles the risks and opportunities with artificial intelligence in social protection; Muralidharan et al identify three lessons emerging from evaluating Aadhaar in Jharkhand’s public distribution system; Barca and Chirchir have a crisp paper on building an integrated and digital social protection information systems; Shiferaw estimates that in California, the adoption of the electronic transfers under the SNAP program bolstered applications by eligible beneficiaries; a paper by Alinaghi ascertains that M-PESA has had a positive impact on people’s financial health; Nishtar discusses how Pakistan’s emergency Ehsaas cash program is shifting the payment ecosystem from cash-based to digital; and Dreze and Khera warn about the risks for social protection that an over-reliance on technology can entail.

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This compilation draws from the 22 weekly links editions published in 2020. These and the overall 152 editions available here.