

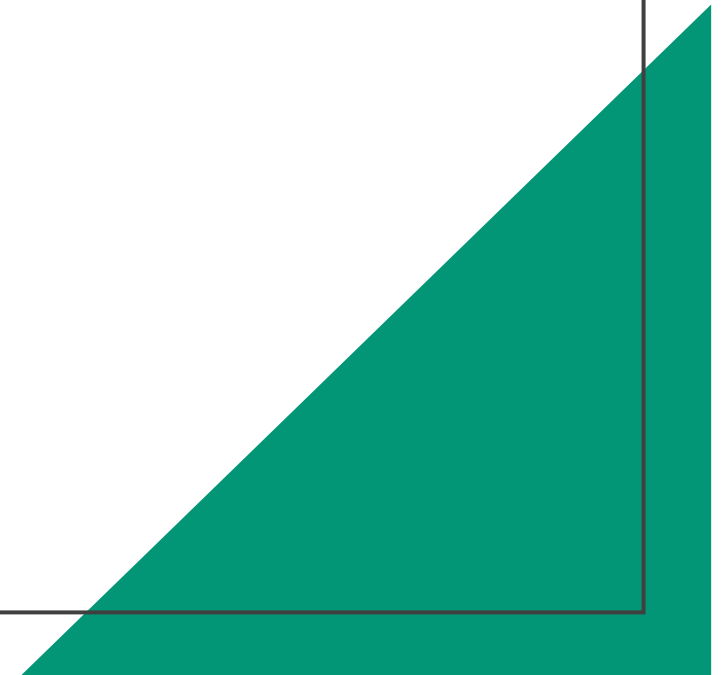
Cash transfers, household food insecurity and the subjective wellbeing of youth in Jordan

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First draft

ERF Policy Dialogue on Social Protection in Jordan

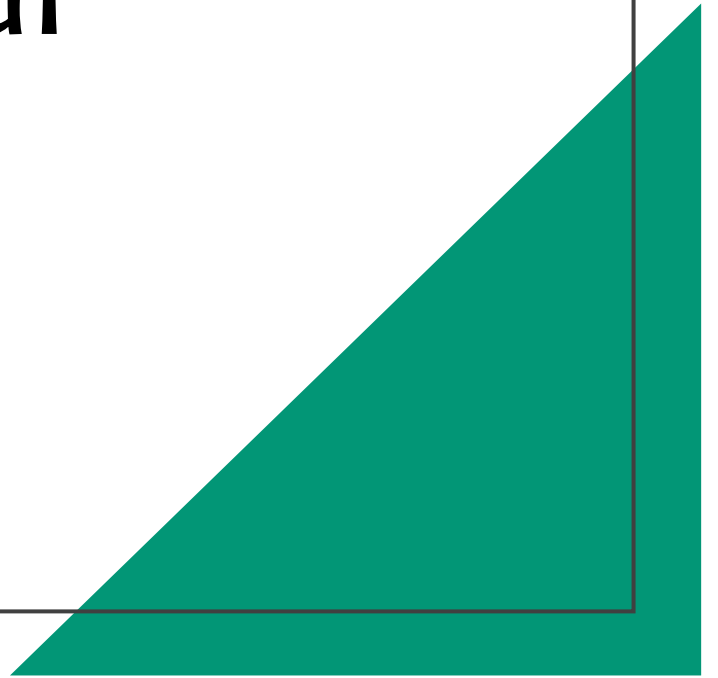
January 12, 2022



Outline

1. Rationale & conceptual framework
2. Cash transfer programs in Jordan
3. Methods
4. Preliminary results
 - Questions for discussion

Rationale & conceptual framework



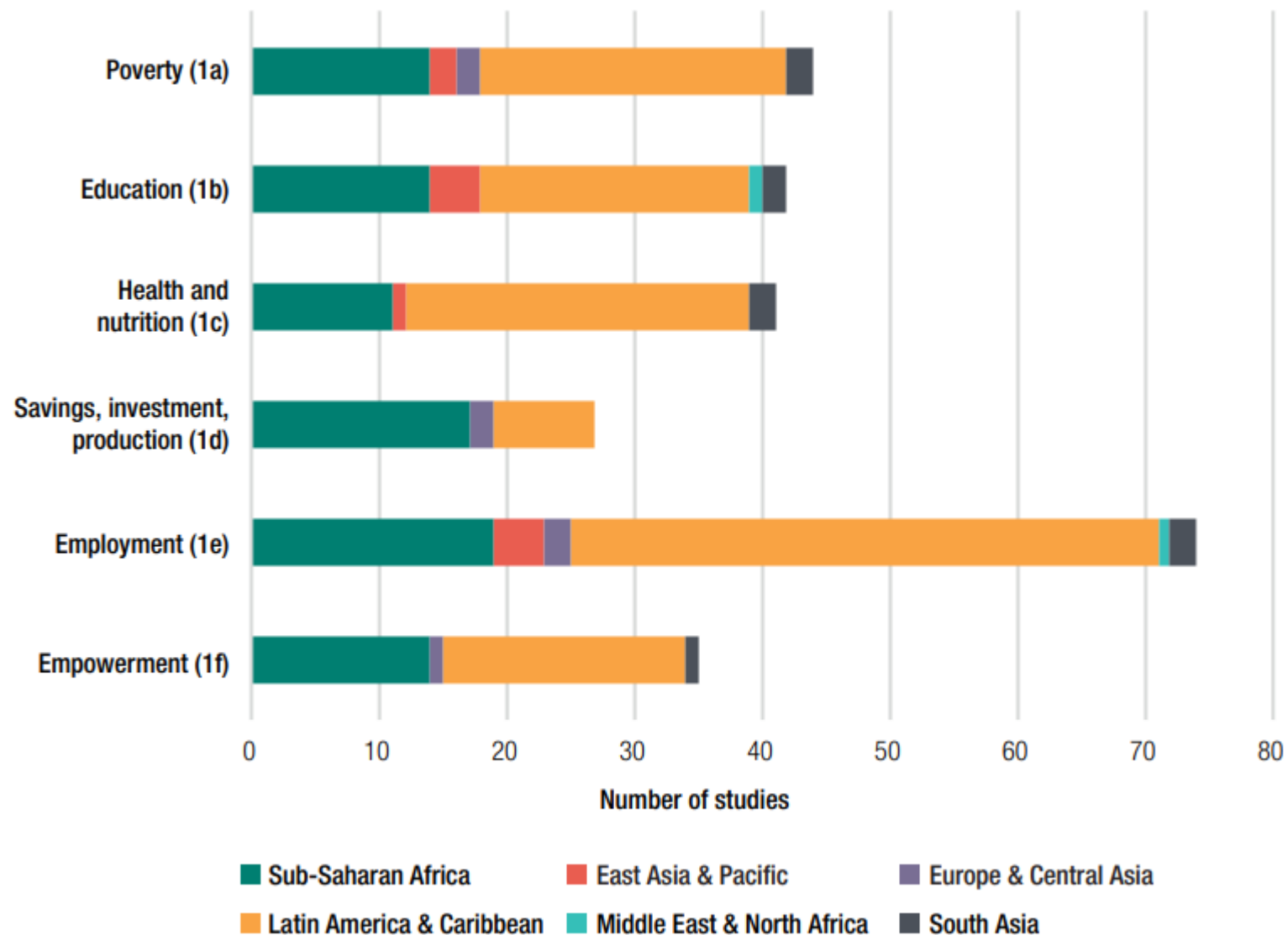
Limited evidence on cash transfers in the region

Geographical focus of cash transfer programmes: where does the evidence come from?



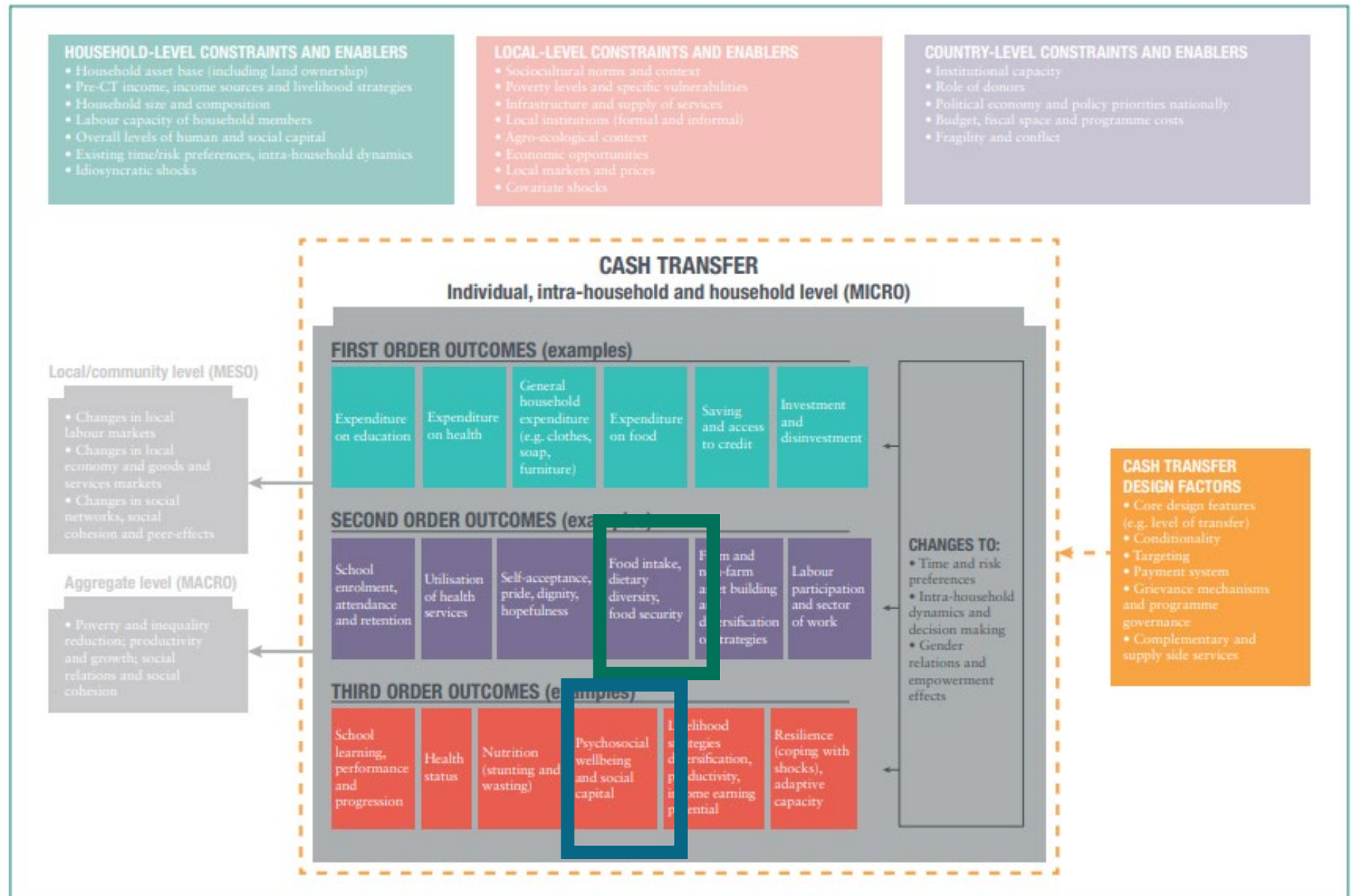
Lack of evidence in specific domains in MENA region

- Youth are an understudied population in cash transfer literature
- Can cash transfers ameliorate some of the challenges of transition to adulthood in the region?



Conceptual framework

Bastagli (2016)- Cash transfers:
What does the evidence say? (ODI)



Cash transfers and food insecurity

- Bastagli et al. (2016) review found 31 studies reporting impacts on food expenditure
 - 22 found a statistically significant increase
 - 8 found no effect
 - 2 found a decrease in food expenditure
- In the MENA region, cash transfers led to significant improvements in food security in Raqqa Governorate in Syria (Falb et al. 2020) and among Syrian refugees in Lebanon (Jamaluddine et al. 2020)

Food insecurity and wellbeing

Global evidence on association

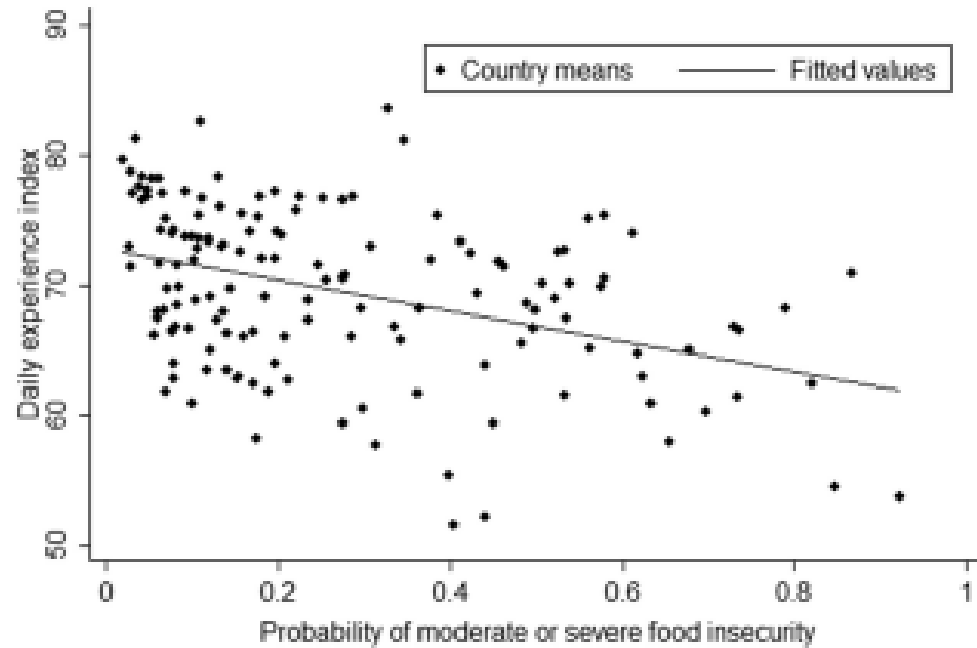
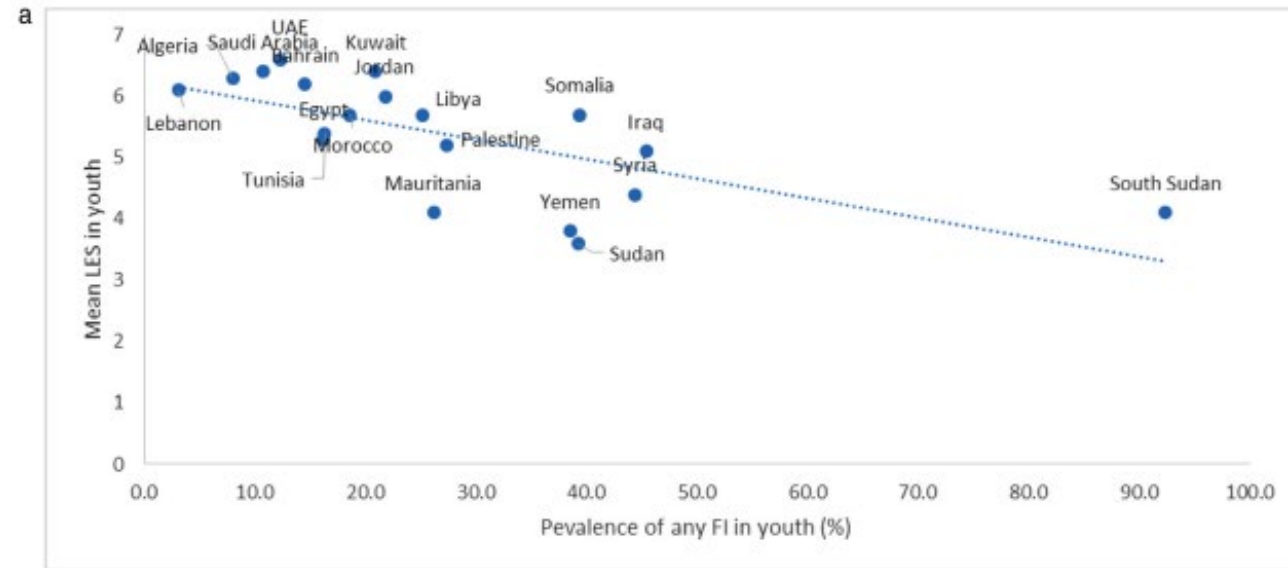


FIGURE 1 Plot of daily experience index compared with probability of moderate or severe food insecurity for countries.

Frongillo et al. (2019)-Food Insecurity Is More Strongly Associated with Poor Subjective Well-Being in More-Developed Countries than in Less-Developed Countries

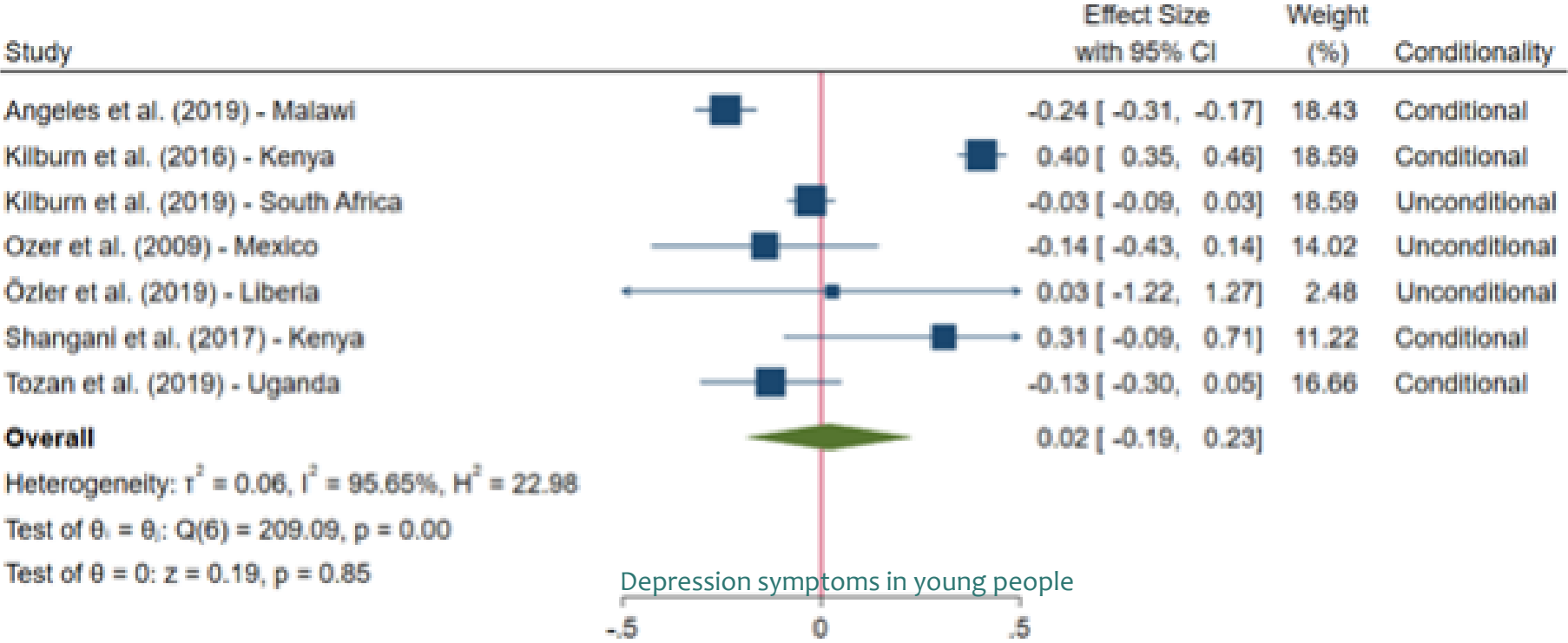
Focusing on Arab countries

F. Asfahani et al. / Journal of Adolescent Health 64 (2019) 70–78



Asfahani et al (2019)-Food Insecurity and Subjective Wellbeing Among Arab Youth Living in Varying Contexts of Political Instability

Cash transfers and wellbeing: Mixed evidence



Random-effects REML model

Figure 2 Forest plot comparing studies which used Cohen's d to assess the effect of cash transfers on depressive symptoms in young people. While the effect size is negative, reflecting a positive impact of the CT on reducing depression is non-significant.

Zimmerman (2021)- The impact of cash transfers on mental health in children and young people in low-income and middle-income countries: a systematic review and metaanalysis- BMJ global health

Objectives

- (1) Examine the household-level correlates of receiving different types of cash transfers among households containing youth;
- (2) Quantify the prevalence of food insecurity and poor subjective wellbeing among Jordanian and Syrian refugee youth;
- (3) Analyze the predictors of subjective wellbeing among youth in Jordan; and
- (4) Analyze the degree to which the relationship between cash transfers and subjective wellbeing is mediated by food insecurity

Cash transfer programs in Jordan



Jordanians

- National Aid Fund (NAF), which consists of seven programs for Jordanian citizens
 - Recurring aid program targeted to vulnerable population groups and a temporary aid program targeted towards families with transient circumstances (Kawar, Nimeh, and Kool forthcoming).
 - Cover approximately 100,000 individuals combined
 - Eligibility based on means testing.
 - Assistance ranges from 40-200 JD (56 – 280 USD) monthly depending on the eligibility category and number of household members who receive aid (Kawar, Nimeh, and Kool forthcoming).
- The NAF also includes three emergency financial aid programs and Takmeely program that provides quarterly assistance to the working pool

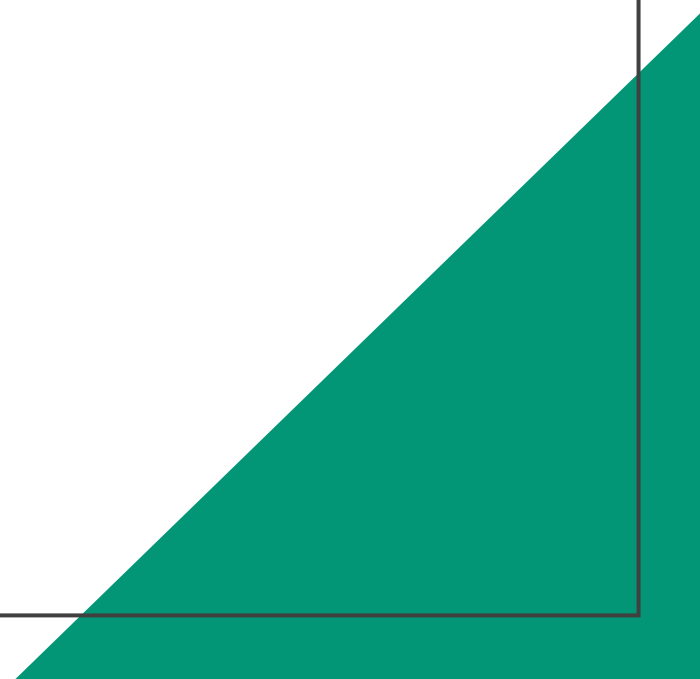
Syrians

- World Food Programme (WFP) assistance
 - Provided based on vulnerability to food insecurity assessed through proxy means test
 - Covers approx 490,000 Syrian refugees as of September 2020: 120,000 in Zaatari and Azraq camps and 370,000 in host communities
 - Amounts from 23 JOD (USD 32) or 15 JOD (USD 21) as of September 2020
 - In 2017, shifted to “choice” modality of either (unrestricted) cash or restricted vouchers. Outside camps, beneficiaries can either withdraw the cash from ATMs or use the WFP card at contracted shops → money may not all be spent on food

Syrians II

- UNHCR multi-purpose cash assistance
 - Provided based on vulnerability assessed through means test
 - Covers approx 30,000 Syrian households
 - Household amounts from 80 JOD (USD 112) to 155 JOD (USD 217) as of 2017
 - In 2020, 85% of Syrian households receiving the multi-purpose assistance reported spending some of the money on food
- UNICEF *Hajati* program
 - Aims to support school retention among vulnerable children attending double-shift schools
 - Households receive 10 monthly payments of 20 JOD (USD 28) for each child aged 6-15, up to four children
 - Scaled down to 10,000 children nationally in 2017/8
 - Cash is unrestricted and unconditional

Methods



The Survey of Young People in Jordan (SYPJ)

- Nationally representative of Jordanian and Syrian youth aged 16-30.
- N=4,538 young people residing in 2,854 households.
 - Jordanian=2,781 Jordanian youth in 1,791 households
 - Syrian= 1,757 Syrian youth in 1,069 households
- Individual youth response rate was 64.2%

unicef 
for every child



**Youth Transitions to Adulthood in Jordan:
High Aspirations, Challenging
Realities**

November 2021

Measures: Receipt of cash assistance

Syrian-headed households

- (1) No assistance;
- (2) WFP assistance only;
- (3) UNHCR or UNICEF assistance only;
- (4) UNHCR and WFP assistance;
- (5) UNICEF and WFP assistance;
- (6) all three forms of assistance.

Jordanian-headed households

- (1) No assistance/pension;
- (2) Pension;
- (3) Social assistance;
- (4) Both pension and social assistance.

Measures: Outcomes

Food insecurity

- Eight-item Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)
- Household level food insecurity in the past 12 months
- A score was generated by assigning 1 point to each positive response (scores ranged from 0 to 8).
- Household food insecurity was then categorized as follows: (0–3) food secure, (4–6) moderately food insecure, and (7–8) severely food insecure.

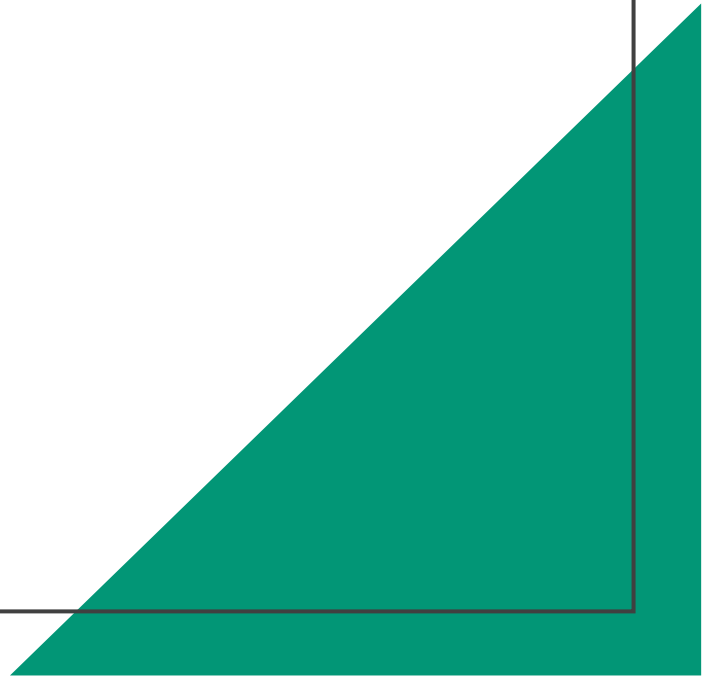
Subjective wellbeing

- World Health Organization WHO-5 wellbeing index.
- The scale consists of 5, positively-phrased statements about the respondent's emotional state over the past 2 weeks
- Total score is then summed and multiplied by four to generate a scale out of 100, in which 100 represents maximal wellbeing (Topp et al. 2015).
- Cut of point 50 as poor subjective wellbeing.

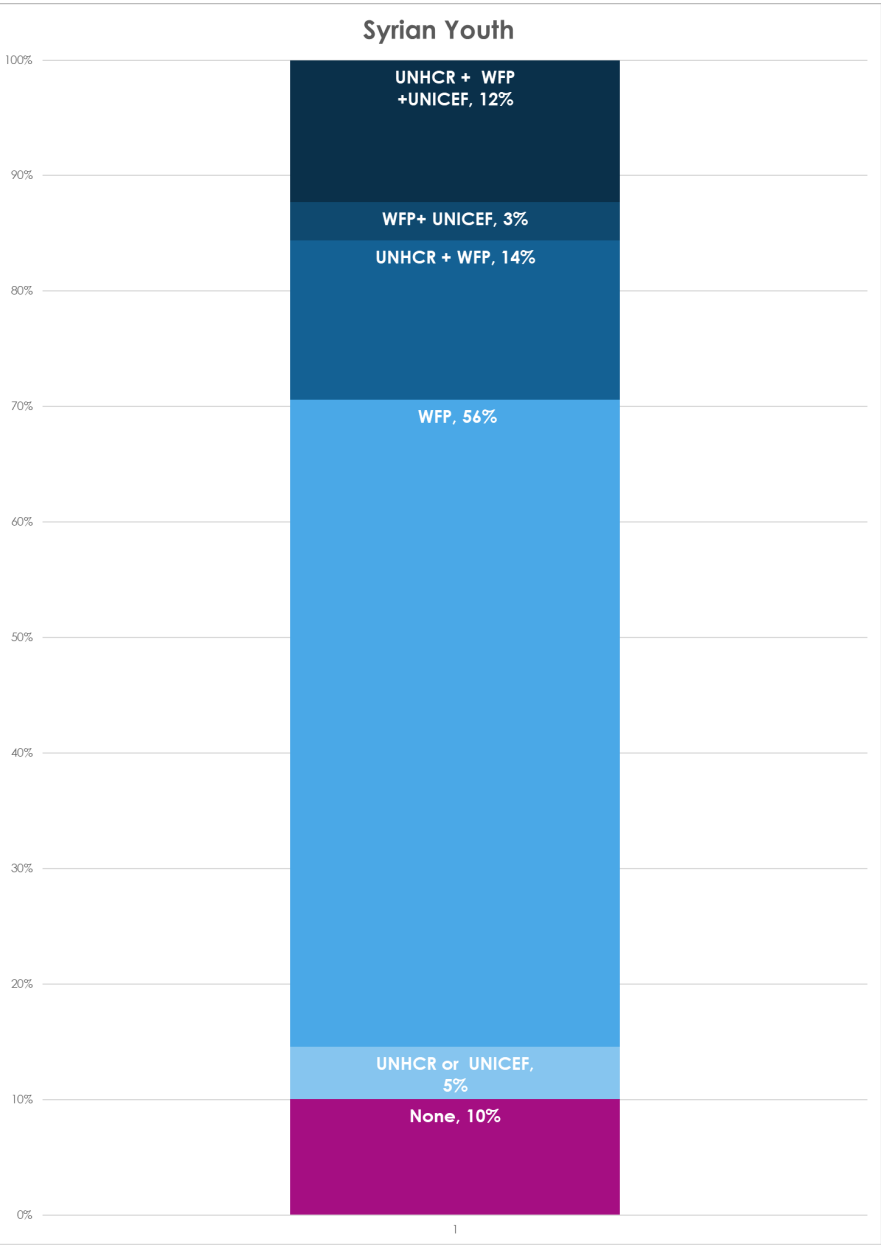
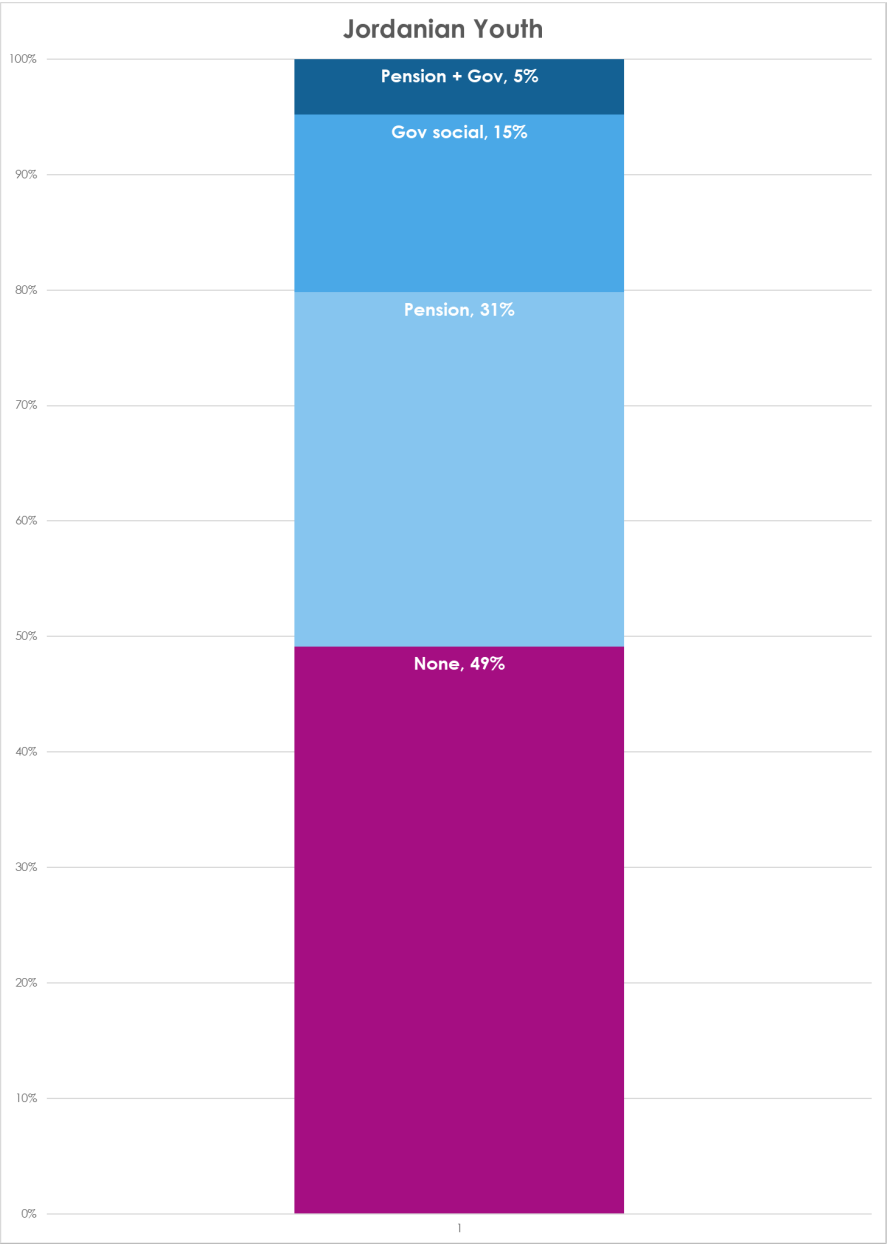
Analysis

- Household and youth-level covariates.
 - At the household level: sex, age, and labor force status of the household head (out of labor force/employed/unemployed), region of residence (Middle, North, South), location (urban/rural/camp for Syrians), and wealth quintile as derived from an asset index, household size, presence of a child under age 5, presence of school aged children (age 6-18) and presence of an elderly member.
 - At youth level: sex, age, education level (less than basic, basic (10th grade), secondary, higher education), current school status, labor force status and disability, using the broad and medium disability definitions derived from the UN-Washington Group measure (UN-Washington Group on Disability Statistics 2009).
- Descriptive analysis
 - Household correlates of receiving assistance and food insecurity.
 - Correlates of youth subjective wellbeing.
- Multivariate analysis
 - Multivariable regression models (OLS) to identify independent variables associated with WHO-5, clustering for household. Using Variance Inflation factor analysis we tested for multicollinearity
 - Variables with theoretical rationale for inclusion were retained for multivariable analysis.
 - Additional analyses for discussion.....

Preliminary results



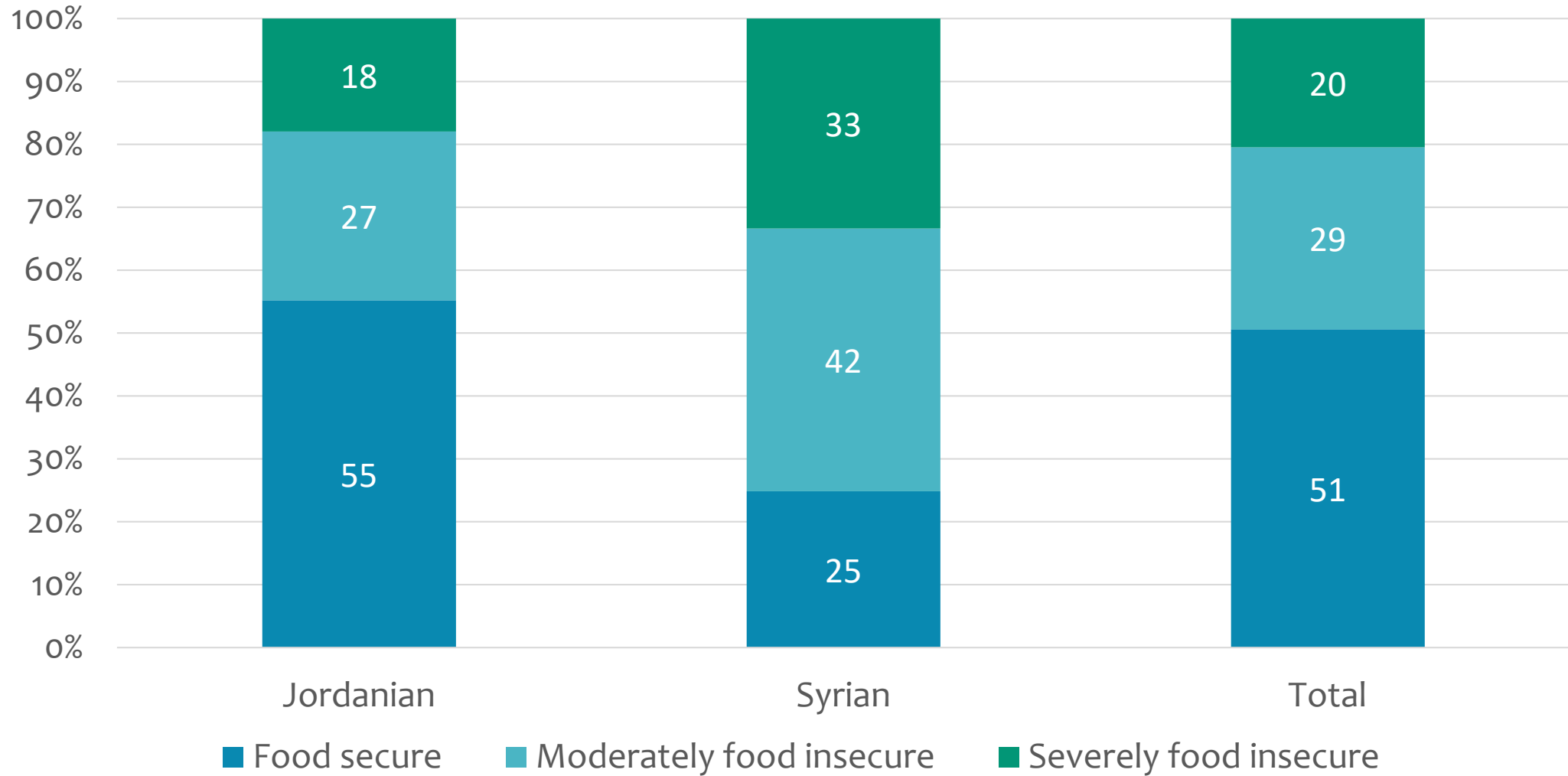
Assistance at the level of the household



Characteristics of households receiving assistance

	Jordanians						Syrians							
	N	No Pension or Gov	Pension	Gov social assistance	Pension and Gov	P-value	N	None	UNHCR or UNICEF	WFP	UNHCR and WFP	WFP+ UNICEF	UNHCR + WFP +UNICEF	P-value
Sex household head (%)	1,779					0.061	1,052							0.098
Male		51%	30%	15%	5%			10%	5%	57%	11%	3%	15%	
Female		34%	37%	23%	6%			10%	4%	54%	25%	4%	3%	
Age of household head (%)	1,779					<0.001	1,052							0.044
20-29		80%	6%	14%	1%			36%	8%	46%	6%	0%	4%	
30-39		75%	7%	17%	1%			14%	2%	58%	13%	2%	11%	
40-49		48%	30%	13%	8%			2%	3%	57%	23%	5%	10%	
50-59		38%	40%	18%	3%			5%	5%	58%	11%	2%	20%	
60-69		29%	52%	8%	10%			4%	5%	54%	10%	10%	18%	
70 plus		53%	25%	21%	1%			1%	5%	87%	7%	0%	0%	
Location (%)	1,779						1,052							
Urban		51%	28%	16%	4%	0.001		10%	3%	53%	16%	4%	14%	0.067
Rural		38%	43%	10%	9%			9%	5%	53%	11%	0%	22%	
Camp		---	---	---	---			12%	11%	71%	5%	1%	0%	
Wealth quintile (%)	1,769													
Poorest		65%	10%	23%	2%	<0.001	1,052	11%	7%	56%	16%	4%	7%	0.032
2		40%	22%	33%	5%			4%	2%	48%	14%	4%	28%	
3		56%	21%	17%	6%			17%	1%	72%	8%	0%	1%	
4		46%	40%	7%	7%			26%	0%	66%	8%	0%	0%	
Richest		41%	50%	4%	4%			100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Food insecurity (3 categories) (%)	1,756						1,042							
Food secure		47%	39%	9%	6%	<0.001		16%	3%	44%	14%	6%	16%	0.497
Moderately food insecure		50%	21%	24%	4%			10%	7%	61%	13%	2%	7%	
Severely food insecure		54%	22%	21%	2%			6%	2%	57%	14%	4%	16%	

Prevalence of food insecurity



Prevalence of poor subjective wellbeing

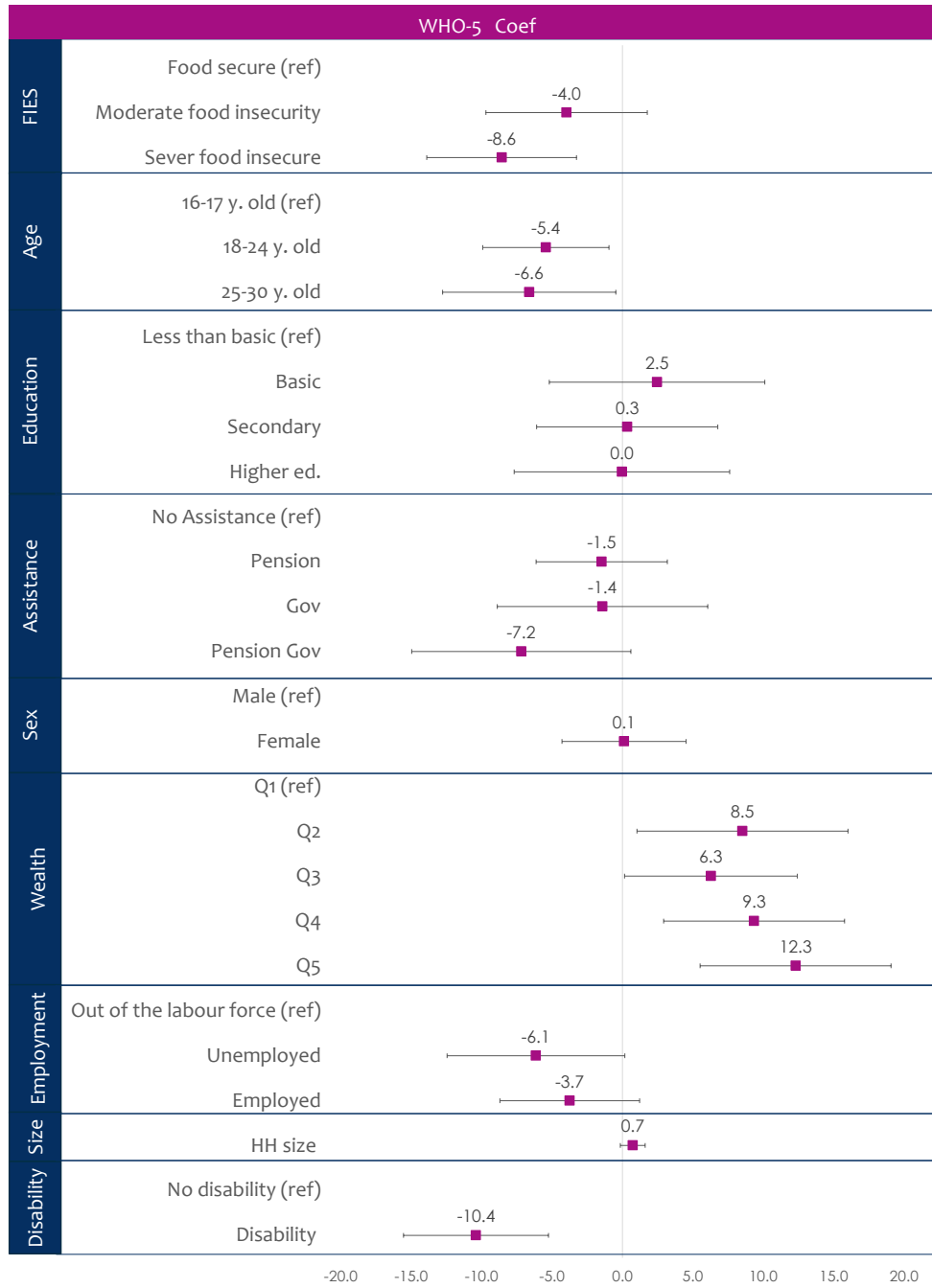
	WHO 5						
	Youth Jordanian			Youth Syrian			
	n	Not poor	Poor	Pn	Not poor	Poor	P
Overall (%)		61%	39%			48%	52%
Sex (%)	2,781				1,757		
Male		62%	38%	0.650		48%	52%
Female		60%	40%			48%	52%
Age group (%)	2,781				1,757		
16-17		69%	31%	0.046		67%	33%
18-24		60%	40%			41%	59%
25-30		56%	44%			34%	66%
Location (%)	2,781				1,757		
Urban		61%	39%	0.628		44%	56%
Rural		62%	38%			76%	24%
Camp						48%	52%
Wealth	2,767				1,738		
Poorest		48%	53%	0.001		46%	54%
2		57%	44%			50%	50%
3		57%	43%			48%	52%
4		66%	34%			66%	34%
Richest		71%	29%			100%	0%
Currently in School (%)	2,779			0.812	1,739		<0.001
Not in school		61%	39%			38%	62%
In school		68%	32%			72%	28%
Medium disability	2,781				1,757		0.274
no		62%	38%	0.014		47%	53%
yes		32%	68%			67%	33%

Bivariate association

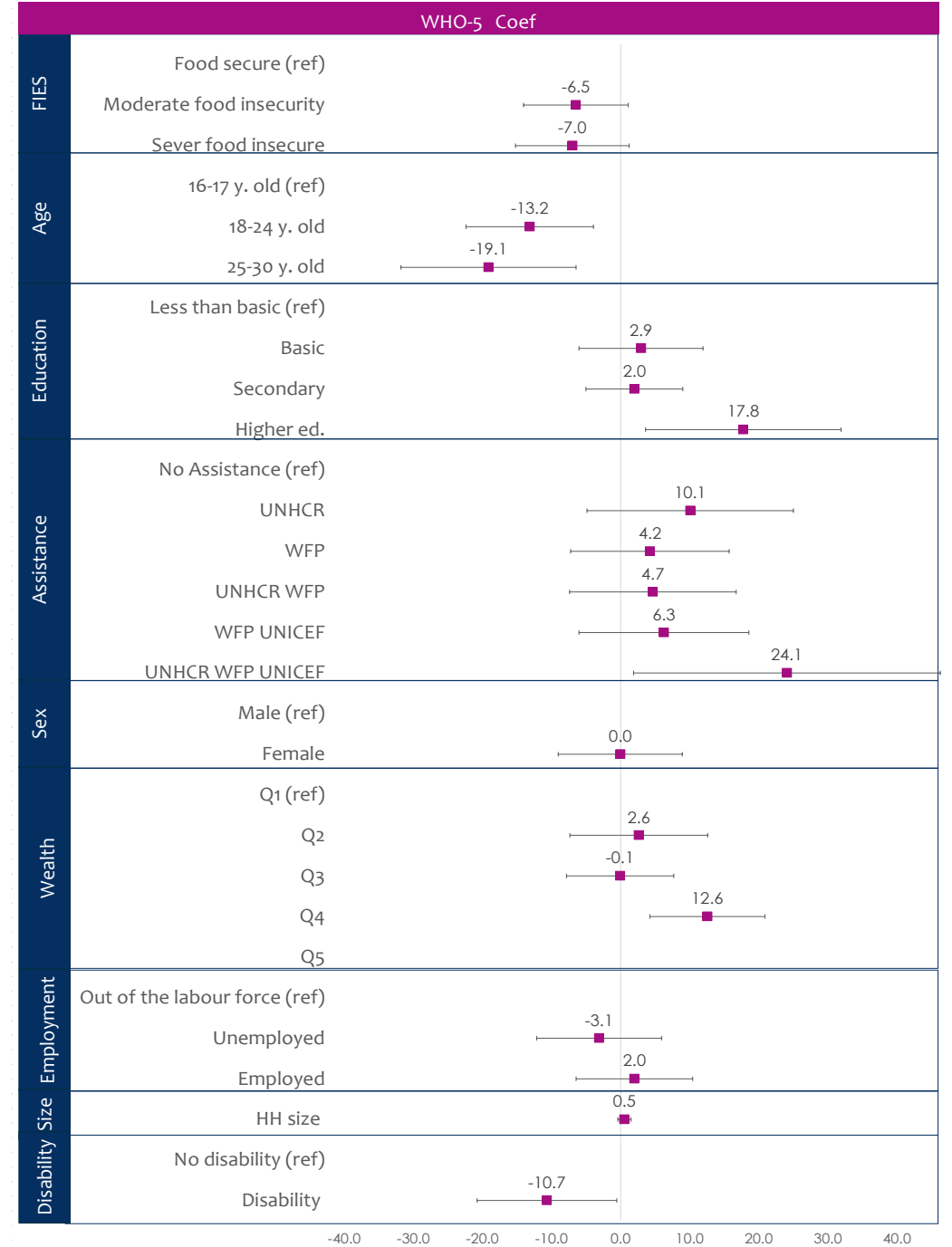
	(1) Jordanians	(2)	(3) Syrians	(4)
Transfers Jordanians (ref:none)				
Pension	2.221 (-2.836 - 7.278)	1.156 (-3.956 - 6.267)		
Social assistance	-2.466 (-11.30 - 6.362)	-0.420 (-9.017 - 8.178)		
Both	-3.890 (-12.09 - 4.310)	-5.125 (-13.49 - 3.240)		
Transfers Syrians (ref:none)				
UNHCR			12.91 (-4.606 - 30.42)	13.48 (-4.189 - 31.15)
WFP			9.552 (-3.140 - 22.24)	10.28 (-2.136 - 22.70)
UNHCR & WFP			11.35* (-1.110 - 23.80)	11.31* (-0.800 - 23.43)
WFP & UNICEF			10.64 (-3.157 - 24.43)	11.01 (-2.945 - 24.97)
UNHCR, WFP & UNICEF			31.41** (6.275 - 56.54)	31.54** (5.469 - 57.60)
FIES (ref: food secure)				
Moderately food insecure		-5.230* (-11.29 - 0.835)		-6.537 (-15.64 - 2.571)
Severely food insecure		-11.63*** (-16.75 - -6.511)		-9.888* (-20.11 - 0.330)
Constant	55.43*** (52.85 - 58.01)	59.19*** (55.94 - 62.44)	38.02*** (26.73 - 49.31)	43.82*** (31.65 - 55.98)
Observations	2,781	2,737	1,735	1,724
R-squared	0.005	0.030	0.071	0.086
Robust ci in parentheses				

Multivariate models for WHO-5

Jordanian Youth



Syrian Youth



Questions for discussion

Categorization of transfers

- Categorization of assistance for Syrians – aggregate further?
- Keep or remove category of Jordanian households receiving contributory pensions

Other variables

- Wealth index for Syrians - calculate separately from Jordanians?

Mediation relationship – how to approach empirically?

- Path analysis (limitation with cross sectional data) - no convergence with SEM model
- Propensity Score Matching? Between food in/secure households receiving assistance? Between those receiving assistance and (poorer) households that are not? Latter likely not feasible for Syrians.