

4-2017

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Eileen DeLeo

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Unintended Consequences for TANF: An Incubator for Domestic Violence?

by

Eileen DeLeo

Undergraduate honors thesis under the direction of

Dr. Belinda Davis

Department of Political Science

Submitted to the LSU Roger Hadfield Ogden Honors College in partial fulfillment of  
the Upper Division Honors Program.

April, 2017

Louisiana State University  
& Agricultural and Mechanical College  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

## **Acknowledgments**

Firstly, I would like to most sincerely thank my mentor, Dr. Belinda Davis. Her input and guidance were instrumental in all stages of this project, from brainstorming to final revisions. She was instrumental in obtaining the CDC's PRAMS data set, and without her expertise, the project would not have been possible. I cannot adequately express how grateful I am for the countless hours she has spent guiding me throughout the composition of this thesis.

I am also very grateful to the CDC PRAMS team for allowing Dr. Davis and myself to view and use their datasets. Their research was an indispensable component of my quantitative analysis.

I would also like to thank Dr. Daniel Tirone and Dr. Brian Marks for serving on my thesis defense committee. I am indebted to them for taking the time to review my work and for their valuable commentaries on this thesis.

Lastly, I am very grateful to the LSU Ogden Honors College for facilitating this undergraduate research opportunity. The LSU Ogden Honors College's community of advisors and fellow students has been a source of continuous assistance and encouragement.

## **Introduction**

Government has long been successful in creating policies to achieve a desired behavior for large groups of people. Tax breaks may encourage organizations and individuals to invest newfound disposable income, or specialized scholarship programs may encourage retention of in-state students. Follow-up studies on these policies are important to ensure that these incentives encourage the intended behavior because while the policy may indeed be successful in achieving a certain goal, externalities of that goal may outweigh the benefits. For example, tax breaks, while increasing the disposable income of the organization or individual, may be used to pay off debt rather than for new investments or increased spending. Therefore, analysis of the unintended consequences of public assistance programs is beneficial for assessing whether the targeted behaviors of the state are creating favorable net outcomes, considering both the intended consequences and externalities created by the policy.

The goal of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is to encourage two-parent households as the optimal household for children. To this end, TANF state programs have introduced various marriage incentives including cash incentives, marriage counseling, and additional benefits for married couples. While maintaining two-parent households for children is certainly a goal of merit, these incentives have the potential for sustaining negative relationships between parents, including abusive relationships. This paper seeks to find a contributory relationship between cash incentives and domestic violence against women that may outweigh the intended benefits of a two-parent household for children. However, the results provide a contradictory observation. Single mothers are more likely to be victims of abuse, and married mothers are less likely to be victims of violence when they receive additional funding

## Literature Review

Reforms in child care and juvenile crime prosecution were instrumental in the origins of the mother's pension movement of the early 1900s. The philosophy of the home as the primary institution for child formation and reform incentivized payments known as widow's or mother's pensions. These payments, however, were not prioritized in government budgets until President Theodore Roosevelt's White House conference on the Care of Dependent Children which brought national attention to such payment programs. By the mid-1930s, this cause was supported by state programs in nearly every state in the US, albeit poorly funded (Bortz).

In 1935, however, a New Deal program, the Social Security Act of 1935, instituted the Aid to Dependent Children program, later changed to the Aid of Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. The program provided additional funds to families with a head of household who was unavailable for work. These funds were supplemental to the aforementioned state pension programs for mothers, but also ensured the continuance of these state programs by requiring continued fiscal participation by the states. States were also given the authority to deem eligibility for the federal program within their state. States often turned to creating restrictions that often excluded never-married and minority mothers until the civil rights movement (Blank and Blum). This was the predominating social welfare program for children until the United States Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 and created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. This program replaced the AFDC and provides federal cash assistance directly to preexisting state welfare programs (Page and Larner).

The major differences between AFDC and TANF include the funding amounts and the requirements for states. Firstly, the funding for AFDC was not capped whereas TANF has a fixed

grant for spending. Additionally, AFDC required matching in state funds for federal dollars whereas TANF requires state spend a percentage of their “historic” level and only match federal dollars for contingency funds. TANF also gives states more flexibility in determining the eligibility of the family for funds but also introduced a five-year limit on funds (Feijoo).

TANF’s primary goals are to provide temporary financial assistance and to promote traditional two-parent families for children. The TANF program breaks down this goal into four main purposes. Firstly, children should remain in and “be cared for in their own homes” (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)). The last three purposes focus on the creation of a home for that child with a self-sufficient, two-parent household with no out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

To this end, some states offer additional incentives or larger monetary packages for two-parent households. For example, the West Virginia TANF program offered a monthly marriage bonus for married parents of shared children. An additional 10% for each package was offered beginning in 1996, and then beginning in 2001, a substantially larger \$100 monthly marriage bonus replaced the 10% plan (West Virginia, TANF) (Ooms, Bouchet and Parke). Given the median TANF benefit of \$377, an additional \$100 benefit was a significant increase (Stanley, Floyd and Hill). West Virginia also introduced a premarital education incentive program in 2012 by offering a discount on marriage licenses for the completion of a premarital education course. The goal of the program is to decrease the divorce rate and keep couples married (West Virginia Premarital Education Incentive Program). Other TANF state programs incentivize marriage with a variety of different methods illustrated in the chart below. Private or religious marriage programs that receive state assistance have been omitted (Ooms, Bouchet and Parke).

The columns are as follows:

- “CASH” indicates that the state offers direct cash incentives to couples who marry or stay married.
- “TWO-FAMILY” shows states who have a separate program two-parent households.
- “EDUC” specifies states that offer either education, counseling, or workshops focused on marriage building or healthy relationships. Some states offer these services to married or engaged couples, and other states additionally offer high school education programs.
- “PARTN. DISC.” designates states for which in a two-parent household, the income of one parent is disregarded for a period of time to determine public assistance.
- “WORK” indicates that the state has overturned any of a variety of employment eligibility requirements for TANF benefits, making the eligibility more contingent on wealth rather than income.
- “MILT” specifies states that have marriage incentive programs targeted for military families.
- “LISCENSE DISC.” indicates states that offer a discount on marriage licenses, provided the couple completes a specified certified marriage preparation course.
- “OTHER” designates all other special state marriage incentives not mentioned.

	CASH	TWO-FAMILY	EDUC.	PARTN. DISC.	WORK	MILIT.	LICENSE DISC.	OTHER
AL		X	X	X	X			
AK					X	X		
AZ			X		X			
AR			X		X			
CA	X		X		X			
CO					X			
CT		X			X			
DE	X				X			
DC			X					

<b>FL</b>		X	X		X			X
<b>GA</b>		X			X			
<b>HI</b>		X			X	X		
<b>ID</b>					X			
<b>IL</b>		X			X			
<b>IN</b>		X			X			
<b>IA</b>					X			
<b>KS</b>					X	X		
<b>KY</b>					X	X		
<b>LA</b>			X		X			
<b>ME</b>				X				
<b>MD</b>		X			X		X	X
<b>MA</b>					X			
<b>MI</b>	X		X		X			X
<b>MN</b>		X	X		X		X	
<b>MS</b>			X	X	X			
<b>MO</b>			X		X	X		
<b>MT</b>			X		X			
<b>NE</b>		X	X		X			
<b>NV</b>		X			X			
<b>NH</b>			X		X			
<b>NJ</b>	X	X	X		X			
<b>NM</b>			X		X			
<b>NY</b>			X		X	X		
<b>NC</b>					X	X		
<b>ND</b>		X		X				
<b>OH</b>			X		X			
<b>OK</b>			X	X	X	X	X	
<b>OR</b>					X			
<b>PA</b>			X		X			
<b>RI</b>		X			X			
<b>SC</b>			X		X	X		
<b>SD</b>		X	X					
<b>TN</b>		X	X	X			X	
<b>TX</b>			X	X	X	X		
<b>UT</b>		X	X		X			
<b>VT</b>					X			X
<b>VA</b>		X	X		X			
<b>WA</b>		X			X			
<b>WV</b>	X				X			
<b>WI</b>					X			



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**WY**

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**X**

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The benefits associated with the creation and maintenance of two-parent families for children are widely accepted. Single parenthood greatly increases the propensity that children will live in poverty, and two-parent households usually increase resources available for child-rearing. Policies that keep families together should, in theory, improve parenting rather than supplementing its effectiveness (Reeves and Howard).

While the intent of these policies is to ensure a better environment for children, the concern rises as to whether a two-parent household is always best for all the parties involved. A possible unintended consequence of this policy is the entrapment of a parent in a domestically abusive relationship for the sake of the monetary gain of residing with an abusive partner. If true, a thorough understanding of unanticipated consequences will be essential for analyzing the effects this particular policy.

The law of unintended consequences is an often-encountered phenomenon in everyday life. When an action does not produce an anticipated result, it can be difficult to determine the error or lapse in judgment that was made. Not all unanticipated results are negative, however. For example, Adam Smith's "invisible hand" is an economic principle that describes how individuals seeking personal interests can unintentionally take part in promoting the public good (Norton). Nevertheless, the more popular connotation of unintended consequences implies that a negative externality has resulted from an otherwise intended action. This is not to be confused with an intentional negative externality of an action.

Robert Merton popularized and gave distinct definition to this idea with his 1936 essay "The Unanticipated Consequences of Social Action." Firstly, consequences are more easily analyzed for purposeful decisions rather than behavior that fails to make a distinct choice between

clearly defined alternatives. That is, “formally organized” behavior with a clear objective and method makes easier analysis of the consequences. Unintended consequences, however, should not be confused with the result of some other force, but rather, the behavior outlined in the method of the actor should be responsible for the unanticipated results. Therein lies the difficulty of separating the counterfactual from the truth of the pure consequences of the actor’s behavior. Even then, determining whether these consequences align with the original intended purpose of the behavior can be difficult due to the tendency of “the horseman who, on being thrown from his steed declared that he was ‘simply dismounting’” (Merton).

For behavior in which unanticipated consequences are the direct result, there are several explanations that Merton offers. Firstly and most obviously, lack of accurate information can prevent a decision maker from choosing a method that best yields the intended results. Additionally, previously successful behavior is not a guarantee of future success, an easily made logical fallacy. And even if some results are correctly anticipated, perhaps long-term results may have been neglected in the analysis in favor of the more pressing and immediate effects. Even still, principled behavior may prevent an actor from engaging in the best course of behavior should it be known. Lastly, Merton suggests even the act predicting the result of one’s behavior tends “to change the initial course of developments” (Merton). That is, the anticipation of some problem or consequence drives the creation of solutions to prevent the hypothetical from ever occurring. When this is successful, it can be said that the failure of the original problem to occur was unanticipated.

Another dimension of unintended consequences to consider is that the possibility of alternative consequence may have been a foreseeable possibility, but the cause of action was still chosen. While Merton even clarified that his purposeful action does not presuppose rationality on the part of the actor, rationality will be assumed for the simplicity of the following argument. If in

selecting an option an additional undesirable consequence is still foreseeable, the result should be considered a weak unintended consequence. Situations in which the method was too complex too even predict the possibility of an alternative result would be considered a strong unintended consequence (Linares). This distinction is important because a rational actor may still choose a method that can foreseeably lead to unintended results if the actor believes that their intended result is still probable.

An interesting example of negative unintended consequences in TANF is the result of family cap programs. Family cap programs are intended to prevent mothers from abusing cash assistance by denying additional benefits for children born more than nine months after the mother begins receiving public assistance. Many states chose to implement a family cap, including New Jersey, with the goal of changing the fertility behaviors of mothers on assistance. While the birth rates decreased under the family cap, there was also an increased usage of contraceptive sterilizations, contraception drug use, and abortions, with variations in effects among different races (Jagannathan and Camasso). Alternatively, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) offered tax credits to families with children, encouraging increased 1990s birth rates. Because the policy greatly restricted eligibility to parents, the “pro-natalist policy tool” increased birth rates, particularly for minority families (Baughman and Dickert-Conlin).

The focus of this paper, TANF marriage incentives, may be leading to unintended consequences in domestic violence rates. The decision of a victim to remain in an abusive relationship is a complex one. The likelihood of remaining often increases with the length of the relationship and the level of emotional attachment but also increases with other factors such as financial dependence, fear of retaliation, and low education levels. In fact, increased access to financial resources for a victim is strongly positively correlated with leaving an abusive

relationship (Bell and Naugle). If the financial assistance eligibility is dependent on remaining within the abusive relationship, however, programs like TANF marriage incentives would fail to incentivize the leave decision.

Victims typically fall into three theories of stay/leave decisions: learned helplessness, psychological entrapment, and investment theory. The learned helplessness model, similar to depression, suggests that a victim mentally reinforces their powerless role through both the abuse of their partner and traditional learned gender roles. That is, the victim may feel responsible for fixing the relationship or may believe that they are unable to change their situation because the behavior of their partner and their perceived roles leaves them feeling more so guilty than victimized. This scenario often features women who suffer from clinical depression and have little problem-solving skills. On the other hand, psychological entrapment describes women who have invested a great deal of resources and emotion into a relationship, increasing the costs of leaving. To leave the partner and abandon relationship building would be to invalidate the investment of time and emotion that the victim put into attempting to repair their relationship. The third theory, the investment model, begins with a methodical cost and benefit analysis of staying and leaving for the victim. Then, the victim must develop a coping strategy to deal with the costs and benefits. The victim may adapt maladaptive coping skills that blame herself for the issues in the relationship or counteract with violence against the partner. Alternatively, the partner could choose to leave the relationship, achieving a more sustainable level of coping (Bell and Naugle).

The three models of stay/leave decisions are only further complicated by the intersectionality of poverty and abuse. Studies have linked financial stress with abuse rates, and women in poverty are far more likely to suffer abuse than wealthy or middle-class women. Seeking financial independence from the partner, however, can backfire. When women seek employment

independent of their abusive partner, the loss of power for the partner increases the likelihood of renewed or increased violence and/or abuse (Renzetti).

TANF marriage incentives, like the other factors described, can be described in the context of each of these models. For women who have developed learned helplessness, women who are receiving financial support contingent on their marriage may not have the problem-solving skills to devise financial plans outside of the marriage to provide for themselves and their children. Women with a sense of psychological entrapment may see TANF marriage incentives as another benefit to her investment within the relationship, increasing the costs of leaving. And lastly, victims in the investment model with additional marital financial benefits find it more difficult to steer away from maladaptive coping mechanisms. Therefore, TANF marriage incentives largely falls into the behavioral economics and delay discounting principles, given that it will incentivize the stay decision and that the victim is familiar and comfortable with the TANF benefits that the relationship provides.

### **Hypothesis**

This thesis proposes that the TANF marriage incentives of West Virginia are positively correlated with increases in domestic abuse. This suggests that the largest predictive values of abuse should be married women in the years with the \$100 cash bonus and there should be no statistical difference between abuse rates for married and unmarried women during the years when direct monetary incentives for TANF were not offered.

### **Methods and Data**

Data was obtained from the CDC Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) data set for West Virginia. PRAMS collects annual state-specific data on experiences before, during, and after pregnancy. The question set for West Virginia included questions on

abuse, marital status, public assistance, paternal education, and maternal education. By confining the data set to those on public assistance, the sample of 2,962 mothers questioned presumably were recipients of TANF funds. The rates of abuse were compared for married vs unmarried women for the following years: when no additional marital incentive was offered from 1993 to 1996, when a 10% marriage bonus was offered from 1997 to 2000, and when a flat \$100 bonus was offered from 2001 to 2003. These years are marked as 0, 1, and 2, respectively, increasing in number similar to the increasing assistance packages for married families.

West Virginia was chosen to test the relationship between marriage incentives and abuse because the incentive was clearly defined and was offered at two different, measurable levels. Other states did offer marriage incentives, but oftentimes the increased wellbeing of the family was difficult to distinguish from other incentives in the program. Regardless, it is important to note West Virginia's abuse rates relative to other states prior to the implementation of marriage incentives. The following table displays the ratios of abuse rates for those on assistance in various states to abuse rates for the whole state. The left column shows the overall percentage of abuse for the state. The middle column shows the abuse rate for those on public assistance. The far-right column is the ratio of the abuse rate given public assistance to the overall abuse rate for the state. West Virginia's ratio is very close that of the average for all of the states surveyed.

	<b>Abuse (%)</b>	<b>abuse assistance (%)</b>	<b>ratio</b>
<b>AK</b>	8.01	5.89	0.735331
<b>AL</b>	7.26	5.71	0.786501
<b>AR</b>	9.07	7.59	0.836825
<b>CO</b>	4.39	3.62	0.824601
<b>FL</b>	6.39	5.23	0.818466
<b>GA</b>	5.90	5.82	0.986441
<b>HI</b>	5.44	5.16	0.948529
<b>IL</b>	5.28	4.33	0.820076
<b>LA</b>	7.99	6.71	0.8398

<b>MD</b>	4.80	4.72	0.983333
<b>ME</b>	3.77	2.21	0.586207
<b>MI</b>	5.21	3.54	0.679463
<b>MN</b>	6.48	3.93	0.606481
<b>MS</b>	7.56	6.2	0.820106
<b>NC</b>	5.51	4.39	0.796733
<b>NE</b>	6.21	5.05	0.813205
<b>NJ</b>	4.36	4.06	0.931193
<b>NM</b>	9.02	7.15	0.792683
<b>NY</b>	4.34	3.22	0.741935
<b>OH</b>	6.99	5.33	0.762518
<b>OK</b>	7.22	5.75	0.796399
<b>OR</b>	4.69	3.3	0.703625
<b>RI</b>	4.36	3.09	0.708716
<b>SC</b>	7.16	5.91	0.825419
<b>UT</b>	4.46	3.7	0.829596
<b>VT</b>	3.49	2.34	0.670487
<b>WA</b>	6.38	4.51	0.706897
<b>WV</b>	7.51	5.34	0.711052
		<b>AVERAGE</b>	0.787951

In addition to marital status and level of marriage bonus, the model included controls for maternal education and paternal education, found in the PRAMS data. Education levels are represented by 1 for zero to eight years of education, 2 for nine to eleven years of education, 3 for twelve years of education, 4 for thirteen to fifteen years of education, and 5 for sixteen or more years of education.

The relative proportions of the PRAMS variables within the sample are shown in the table below. There were slightly more married than unmarried mothers, and the proportion of women with higher levels of education were larger than that of men. Lastly, the proportion of abuse is much lower than that of no abuse. However, the questions listed in the PRAMS data set were limited to that of physical violence and does not include emotional abuse.

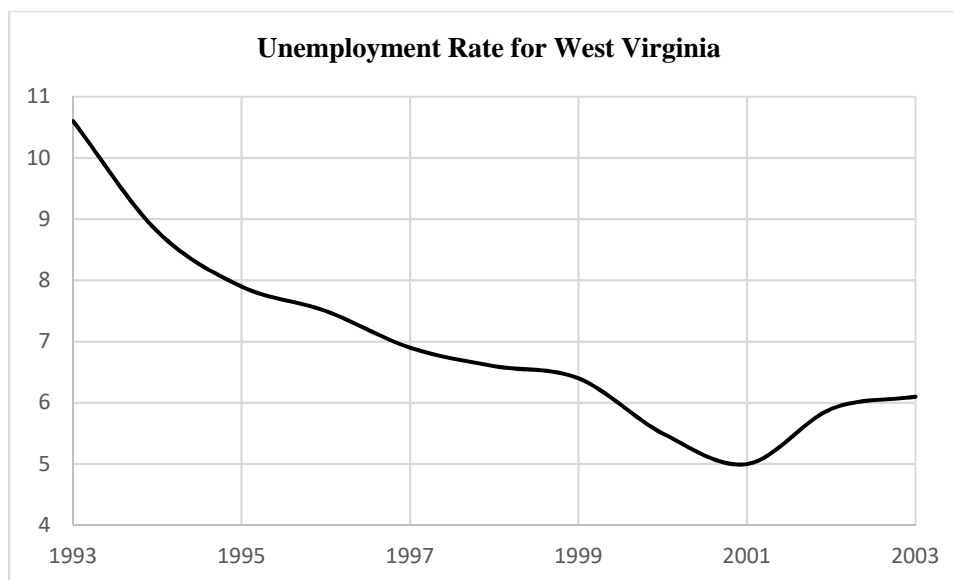
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Proportions</b>
Unmarried	0.4484

Married	0.5516
<b>Paternal Educ.</b>	
1	0.1221
2	0.2870
3	0.4842
4	0.0796
5	0.0271
<b>Maternal Educ.</b>	
1	0.0483
2	0.3038
3	0.4752
4	0.1457
5	0.0270
<b>Abuse</b>	
<b>No abuse</b>	0.8850
<b>Abuse</b>	0.1115

The model also controls for West Virginia unemployment data that was obtained from the Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED) publications. Unemployment, inversely correlated with inflation rates, is therefore inversely proportional to the purchasing power of the dollar. This control accounts for the specific economic climate of West Virginia, which affects the purchasing power of the bonuses offered to the married families on TANF. The median value of unemployment for the state was used for the calculations. The weakness of this control is that unemployment rates fail to account for discouraged workers, which if included, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the status of employment in the state.

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Linearized Std. Err.</b>	<b>95% Conf. Interval</b>	
<b>Unemployment</b>	6.273443	0.003661	6.266265	6.280621





The data was analyzed using a logistical regression model with STATA software. A binary response model (BRM) was necessary to analyze a non-latent binary dependent variable of abuse. Traditional linear regression models rely on the assumptions of normal distribution of the error term and homoscedasticity, unrealistic for the discrete dependent variable of abuse or no abuse. Alternatively, the logit model relies on assumptions of a standard logistic distribution for the error term, possible for discrete dependent variables, and therefore, appropriate for this study (Long).

## Results

The overall model was statistically significant with an f-value of 4.69 and  $P > F = 0.0001$ . The test of the overall model rejects the null, indicating a model statistically significant from a model without the applied restraints and interaction variables.

Number of observations	=	2962
Population size	=	32408.82
Design df	=	2926
F (6, 2921)	=	4.69
Prob > F	=	0.0001

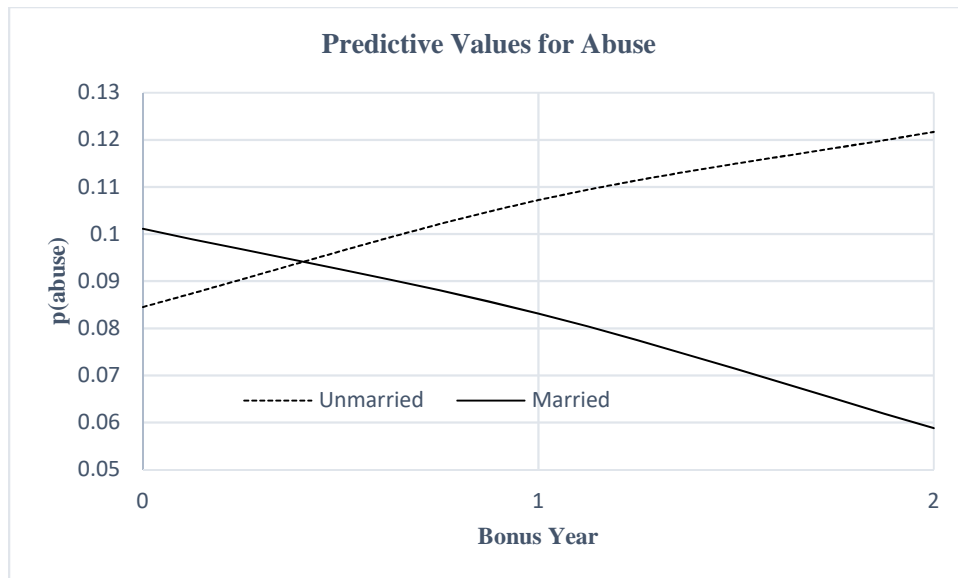
The following table displays the coefficients for each of the variables within the model. The interaction term of “marbonus” and the control variable “PAT\_ED” were both negative and

significant. That is, increases in bonuses for married couples and paternal education are significantly and negatively correlated with abuse. However, coefficients within the logit model are not readily interpretable in terms of the magnitude of their effect.

<b>abuse</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>Linearized Std. Err.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>P &gt;  t </b>	<b>95% Conf. Interval</b>	
<b>married</b>	0.2257114	0.3494457	0.65	0.518	-0.459473	0.9108958
<b>bonusyr</b>	0.0764372	0.2214082	0.35	0.730	-0.3576945	0.5105688
<b>marbonus</b>	-0.5080174	0.2514578	-2.02	0.043	-1.00107	-0.0149652
<b>MAT_ED</b>	-0.0827128	0.1056578	-0.78	0.434	-0.2898841	0.1244584
<b>PAT_ED</b>	-0.3277772	0.1121245	-2.92	0.003	-0.5476282	-0.1079262
<b>unemp</b>	-0.0884119	0.1645928	-0.54	0.591	-0.4111413	0.2343176
<b>_cons</b>	-0.3998057	1.203006	-0.33	0.740	-2.758631	1.959019

Rather relying on the estimated coefficient terms, predictive values were generated for assessing the probability of abuse given the varying constraints of the model. The probability of abuse for unmarried women increased throughout the bonus years, whereas the probability of abuse for married women decreased in both of the bonus periods. Graphs illustrating the confidence intervals for each predictive value are available in the appendix.

<b>p(abuse unmarried)</b>					
<b>bonusyr</b>	Mean	Linearized Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]		
<b>0</b>	0.0845133	0.0001381	0.0842404	0.0847862	
<b>1</b>	0.107212	0.000034	0.1071445	0.1072796	
<b>2</b>	0.1216582	0.0000456	0.121568	0.1217484	
<b>p(abuse married)</b>					
<b>bonusyr</b>	Mean	Linearized Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]		
<b>0</b>	0.101096	0.0000621	0.1009738	0.1012182	
<b>1</b>	0.083126	0.0000183	0.0830899	0.0831621	
<b>2</b>	0.0588132	0.0000009	0.0588112	0.0588141	



A time counter dummy variable was added to the model, but ultimately removed, because the variable did not have substantive effects on the dependent variables of interest. This variable's coefficient would have captured the various year to year events that could have skewed the results. Additionally, the model was also run using a "singleratio" variable that captured the ratio of single to married individuals in the PRAMS dataset. Inclusion of this variable was an attempt to adjust for the disproportionately smaller married group, but the variable was unable to account for any demographic shift between married and single. The addition of this variable also did not have substantive effects on the dependent variables of interest, but however, a copy of this model's results is located in the appendix. Confidence in the original model's specifications is strengthened because both of these checks did not alter the conclusions of the original model.

## Discussion

Abuse rates for married women did not significantly increase relative to abuse rates for single women. In fact, from the years of the 10% increase to the extra \$100, married women on TANF experienced a decrease in the probability of abuse, and overall, married women are less likely to experience abuse than unmarried women, given their larger financial assistance packages.

That is, with a marriage incentive, probability of abuse was higher for unmarried women, although not statistically significant, and the additional funds for married women decrease instances of abuse.

Explaining the level of abuse for unmarried mothers requires a reminder of the increasing trend of unmarried couples living together. Simply because a mother is unmarried does not imply that she is living independently of a partner. While facing similar challenges to that of married parents, unmarried mothers living with their partners must meet the challenges of rearing and financially supporting children without the added benefit of state programs that traditionally favor married couples. The TANF cash marriage incentives in West Virginia are no exception to the favor given to married parents.

For married parents, however, the larger increases in public assistance lowered the probability of abuse, rather than mirroring the increasing trends of abuse of unmarried women. The addition of the \$100 bonus for married couples was accompanied by the onset of the early 2000s recession. Given this increasingly difficult economic climate, one may expect that, given the correlation between financial stress and domestic violence, abuse for married women would have continued increasing alongside that for unmarried women. But, this significant increase in income may have broken a threshold in lowering fiscal tension within some violent homes.

## **Conclusion**

Although contrary to the expected outcome, abuse rates for married women decreased, rather than increasing with large marriage incentives. Perhaps rather than marriage incentives playing a role in the stay/leave decision of abused women, these public assistance packages alleviated financial stress of the home, decreasing instances of abuse. While the TANF program was not intended as a program to fight domestic violence, is not the purpose of a two-parent home

for children best supplemented with efforts to ensure the home is a safe and non-violent one? These findings suggest the need for further study on the role of increased financial support to families as part of an effort to reduce violence in the home.

However, this study was very limited in scope, limited to poor women who had recently given birth in West Virginia, and generalizing these findings could be dangerous. The findings only showed that increased funds decreased the probability of abuse in married homes. Frequency of abuse as related to married vs unmarried women, new mothers vs established families, and number of children could have skewed the results of this study.

However, this study provided statistically significant results and given the skewed nature of the samples, perhaps a more comprehensive study could better question if and how financial strain alleviation projects could reduce domestic violence rates. That is, if financial relief was so strongly correlated with reduced violence rates within even such a small subset of the population, it would be important to investigate if the trend might be true for the population at large. A study that asks about both abuse and comprehensive questions about the financial situation of a family would be helpful in determining if there is a strong correlation between public assistance and decreased domestic violence. The study would need to control for single vs. married parents, number of children, and children's ages alongside the various other controls used for this thesis. Additionally, it would be important to determine whether reduced financial strain decreases domestic violence by incentivizing women to leave their abusers or by reducing the frequency of violence in those homes. Although increased resources in the home increases the benefit of staying in a violent relationship, perhaps the decreased pressure and anxiety empowers women to overcome the learned helplessness that prevents many women from leaving their violent partners.

Ideally, a follow-up survey conducted by the TANF program itself would have certified that the sample did receive additional marriage incentives and would have included more women than those who had recently given birth. However, such a survey was not conducted, so PRAMS was the best available information for this group. Given that West Virginia's abuse levels for poor women relative to overall abuse levels is fairly consistent with that of the other states surveyed, the applicability of this study to different states is not definitive, but promising.

## Appendix

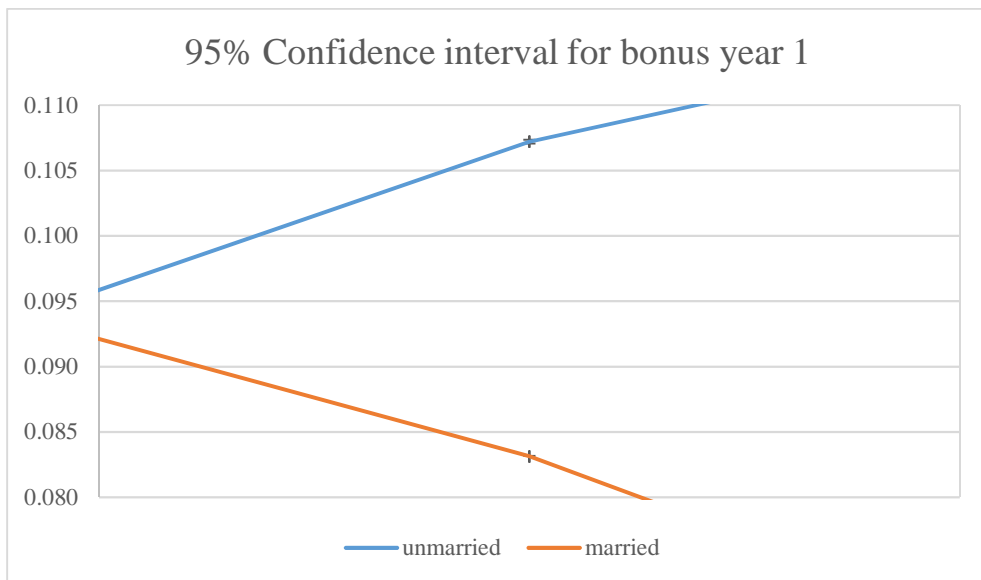
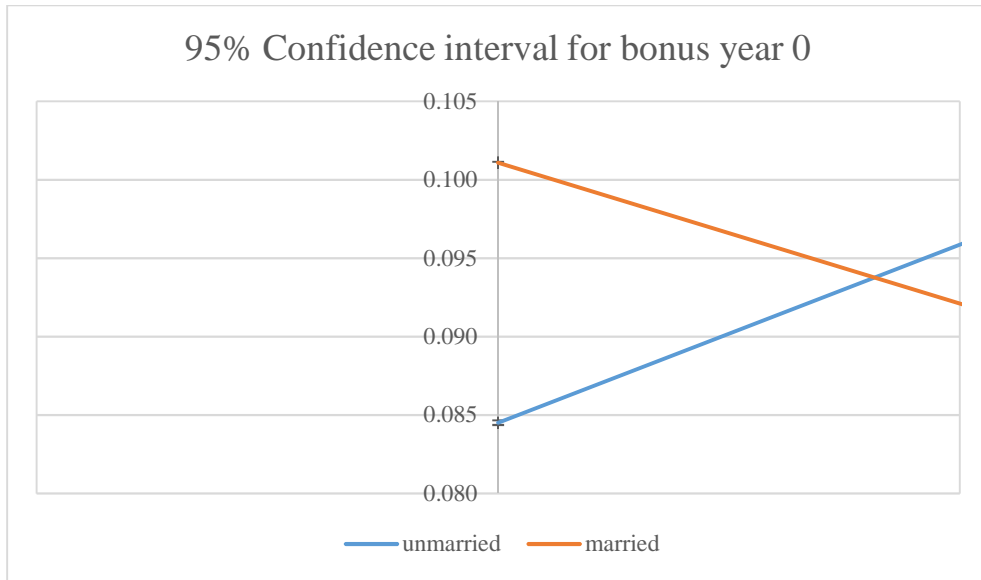
### Model with singleratio

Number of observations	=	2962
Population size	=	32408.82
Design df	=	2926
F (7, 2920)	=	4.03
Prob > F	=	0.0002

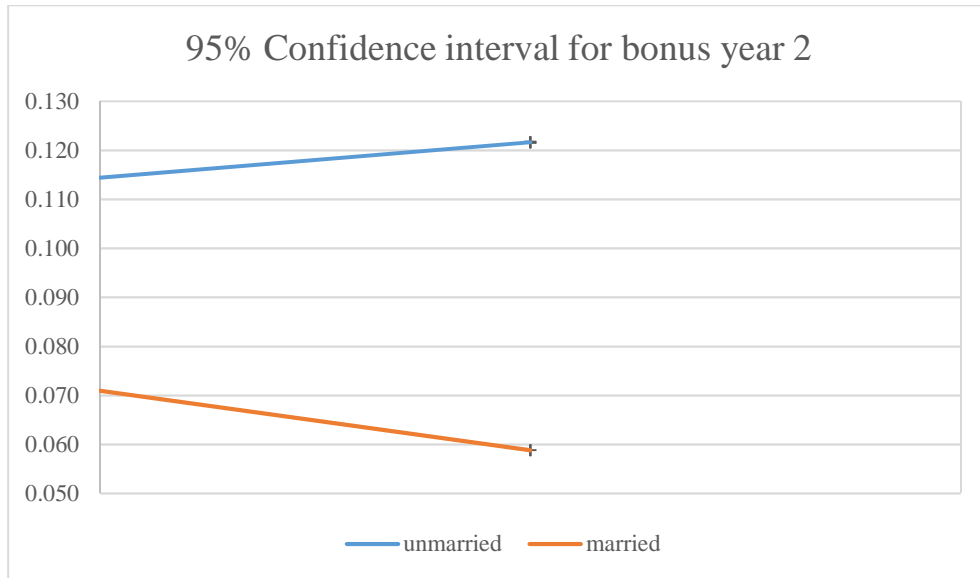
abuse	Coefficient	Linearized Std. Err.	t	P >  t	95% Conf. Interval	
married	0.2277579	0.3494141	0.65	0.515	-0.457365	0.9128803
bonusyr	0.1249112	0.2421533	0.52	0.606	-0.349897	0.5997194
marbonus	-0.5096237	0.2511627	-2.03	0.043	-1.002097	-0.0171501
MAT_ED	-0.0827709	0.1056579	-0.78	0.433	-0.2899424	0.1244005
PAT_ED	-0.3265998	0.1119088	-2.92	0.004	-0.5460277	-0.1071719
unemp	-0.1054267	0.1733009	-0.61	0.543	-0.4452308	0.2343775
singleratio	-1.743423	3.547131	-0.49	0.623	-8.698549	5.211702
_cons	0.6594417	2.55075	0.26	0.796	-4.342005	5.660888

### Confidence intervals

The confidence intervals for the predictive values of abuse are visible as the small error bars surrounding each axis intercept or point of interest. The confidence intervals are very small and require viewing within close proximity. Values for the confidence intervals are available in the results section.







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