



Northwestern | INSTITUTE FOR POLICY RESEARCH

YEAR IN REVIEW  
2021-22

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Photo by Nicole Jones

**On the cover, clockwise from top left:**

IPR statistician **Elizabeth Tipton** discusses ways to improve education research methods with graduate students.

Photo by Monika Wnuk

IPR developmental psychologist **Mesmin Destin** shares his research at TedxChicago 2022 on which factors shape the experiences and outcomes of students from diverse backgrounds.

Photo by Angela Estrella Mejia

A teacher works with a student during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Photo by iStock

IPR sociologist **Andy Papachristos** presents opening remarks during the Center for Neighborhood Engaged Research & Science's (Corners) first symposium on December 18, 2021, examining lessons learned and the future of a promising violence reduction strategy.

Photo by Rob Hart

IPR political scientist **Chloe Thurston** works with a Northwestern undergraduate student who was part of the Summer Undergraduate Research Assistants (SURA) program to evaluate how the use of specific forces during the 1960s civil rights movements impacted towns years later.

Photo by Monika Wnuk

Across 2021–22, our faculty, students, and staff continued to tackle many critical social issues in methodologically rigorous ways, providing actionable insights to policymakers and the public.

Their research inquiries covered many topics, such as examining the long-term impact of school shootings, tracking global water insecurity to reveal “invisible” experiences, quantifying the toll of police violence on Black women’s health, revealing how mentoring and tutoring can stem pandemic learning loss, and identifying how “political sectarianism” could undermine government.

IPR’s 160-plus faculty experts continued to garner awards and recognition. Psychologist **Alice Eagly**, economist **Kirabo Jackson**, and health disparities scholar **Melissa Simon** were elected to three of the most prestigious U.S. national academies. Sociologist **Andrew Papachristos** and law professor **Kimberly Yuracko** received Guggenheim awards. Psychologists **Edith Chen**, **Greg Miller**, and **Daniel Mroczek** with former postdoctoral fellows **Eric Finegood** and **Alexa Freedman** co-authored *JAMA Health Forum*’s 2021 top article. Eight faculty were recognized for their outstanding teaching and mentoring of undergraduates. Others provided policy advice on reparations, gun violence, food insecurity, prescription drugs, and more.

Of course, our Institute would not be where it is today without our talented research staff and graduate and undergraduate research assistants, all of whom we thank for their many contributions to furthering IPR research initiatives.

One of the most heartening developments over the year for me has been a long-awaited return to fully in-person meetings, events, classes, and most importantly, research collaboration. It is that face-to-face probing question or chat that so often spurs our research into exciting, new directions.

If you are on Northwestern’s Evanston campus, I hope you will drop by to experience our stimulating interdisciplinary discussions at our weekly colloquia or other events. In the meantime, please enjoy this review of our 2021–22 research and accomplishments—and go to our website for more.

*Diane*

Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach  
Margaret Walker Alexander Professor and IPR Director

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# RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

MORE THAN HALF OF  
FELLOWS PUBLISHED IN THE

## TOP 5%

OF SCHOLARLY JOURNALS  
IN 2021, INCLUDING:

AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW  
ANNUAL REVIEW OF PSYCHOLOGY  
COGNITION  
DEMOGRAPHY  
FOOD POLICY  
JAMA  
NATURE HUMAN BEHAVIOUR  
PERSPECTIVES ON POLITICS

*“The current partisan political climate where people are so focused on their own side winning and seeing the win for the other side as a disaster for the country—that it makes it very hard to work with the other side when that’s the perspective.”*

—Laurel Harbridge-Yong

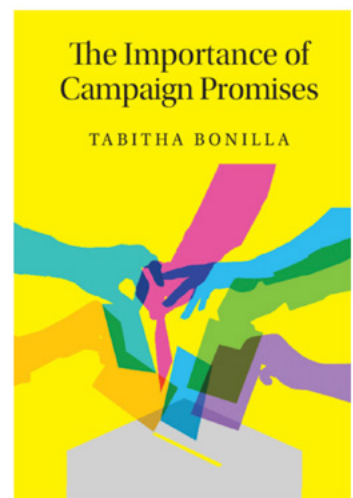
## THE STATE OF BIPARTISANSHIP

For over a decade, Americans’ approval of the way Congress handles its job has been well below 50%, and animosity between Republicans and Democrats leaders seems to never have been higher. Despite this, IPR political scientist **Laurel Harbridge-Yong**, an expert on partisan conflict and cooperation, finds in her research on Congress between 1973 and 2004 that bipartisan agreement still took place when it came to passing legislation. But Harbridge-Yong says one of the long-term implications of the lack of bipartisanship among members of Congress is that it makes it difficult to work together. “It’s seeing the other side as the enemy and not just a set of policy differences,” she said.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CAMPAIGN PROMISES

In her book, *The Importance of Campaign Promises* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), IPR social policy expert **Tabitha Bonilla** examines what campaign promises signal and how voters use promises to evaluate candidates. She finds that voters notice how committed candidates are to policy issues based on their language and hold candidates accountable for their promises.

Her book draws on historical presidential debates and a series of experimental surveys about gun control to assess voters’ reactions to campaign promises. She details that not only do voters understand the difference between a general policy stance and a specific promise to take action, but also that voters judge candidates more harshly if they do not follow through on their promises.





## MIGRATION AND FAMILY PLANNING

Can migrating to a very different society affect a woman's contraceptive use? A study by IPR sociologist **Julia Behrman** and her colleagues shows that it can. They find women from West and Central African countries who migrated to France came to use contraceptives in ways that are more similar to French women's than to their former countrywomen's. The study adds to scholarship about why migrants change their fertility plans.

## HEADSTRONG GIRLS AND DEPENDENT BOYS EARN LESS THAN THEIR PEERS AS ADULTS

Can your behavior as a child influence your income as an adult? Research by IPR economist **Ofer Malamud** and Robert Kaestner of the University of Chicago discovered that it can.

The study reveals that women who were characterized as headstrong and men who were considered dependent as children earned less than their peers in early adulthood. The findings suggest that children who exhibit behaviors that do not conform to gender norms and stereotypes are later penalized in the job market.

Children scored high for being dependent if they demanded a lot of attention or clung to adults, and they scored high for being headstrong if they argued too much or had a strong temper and lost it easily.

To conduct the study, the researchers used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, which includes 4- to 12-year-olds' emotional and



## ILLINOIS CHILDCARE FUNDING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted childcare, and the federal government provided billions in direct relief aid to stabilize childcare programs. To understand if funds were given out equitably, IPR developmental psychologist **Terri Sabol** and a group of student researchers analyzed 8,158 private childcare programs in 757 eligible neighborhoods, out of a total of 1,393 neighborhoods in Illinois. They find Illinois did equitably grant funding to childcare programs during the pandemic. Sabol is continuing to study how the pandemic changed childcare with IPR Director and economist **Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach**.



behavioral problems as reported by their parents. The researchers focused on children born between 1981 and 1990, examining their adult earnings between the ages of 24 and 30.

"It seemed to fit the perception that women are penalized for being assertive and ambitious—stereotypes that are often associated with men," Malamud said.



## HOW BLACK LIVES MATTER SHAPED CHILDREN’S RACIAL IDENTITY

In 2014, Black Lives Matter (BLM) became a political movement after the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, that would go on to shift public conversations about race.

According to a study in *Developmental Psychology* by IPR developmental psychologist **Onnie Rogers**, the BLM movement, which continues to inform the way people think about race, has shaped how second- to eighth-grade students understand their own racial identity.

The research finds that in 2016, compared with 2014, students ranked their racial identity as

more important and had a greater awareness of their own racial identity existing within a system of structural racism, mentioning BLM, policing, and protesting.

“We were surprised to see the clear and systematic changes in the content of children’s racial identities in relation to Black Lives Matter-related themes,” Rogers said about the study. “It just became so clear that children were paying attention to how the broader conversation about race and racism had changed, and they were drawing on these social narratives to make sense of their own racial identities.”

### A FEW KEY FIGURES

6,244

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA MENTIONS

259

IPR FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS

36

FACULTY IN THE TOP 2% OF MOST-CITED RESEARCHERS

IN THEIR CAREERS/FIELDS FOR 2020

13

CARNEGIE, GUGGENHEIM, MACARTHUR, AND YIDAN PRIZE AWARD WINNERS

2010 – 2022

41

NATIONAL ACADEMY MEMBERSHIPS

2010 – 2022

174

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES BY FELLOWS

2021 – 2022

394

IPR WORKING PAPERS

2010 – 2022

99

BOOKS PUBLISHED

2010 – 2022

Figures are as of September 2022, unless indicated otherwise above.



Flickr, Hajee

## THE LASTING MARK OF SHOOTINGS

Mass shootings have been on the rise in the United States. In the wake of these tragedies, IPR faculty experts investigate their short- and long-term costs.

IPR economists **Molly Schnell** and **Hannes Schwandt** examine how exposure to a school shooting affects students in the short- and long-term. They find that two years after a school shooting, students who experienced one were more likely to miss school, be chronically absent, and repeat a grade compared to their peers. Long term, these students were less likely to graduate high school or to attend and graduate from college. By their mid-20s, they were also less likely to be employed and earned less than their peers, which could add up to \$115,500 in lost wages during their lives.

Another study by political scientist and IPR associate **Ana Arjona** and her colleagues explores voter turnout and voting patterns in U.S. presidential elections between 1980 and 2016 in counties with a school shooting. In the 117 counties identified, voter turnout did not change, but the shootings increased support for the Democratic Party, whose members tend to be more supportive of gun control measures.

So what can be done to prevent shootings? IPR associates demographer **Lori Post** and sociologist **Maryann Mason** studied the 1994 Federal Assault Weapons Ban's impact. They show it prevented 11 mass shootings in public places from 1994–2004 and estimate that keeping the ban in place until 2019 would have prevented 30 shootings in public that killed 339 people and injured 1,139.

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## DISRUPTING RACISM

Research shows that talking about race and acknowledging people's different lived experiences reduces racial bias and racism.

One of the first places to shape the way children think about race is the home. IPR psychologist **Sylvia Perry** shows that 8- to 12-year-old children's anti-Black attitudes decreased after watching videos of Black and White children engaging in interracial interactions and

discussing the problematic elements with their parents afterward.

She also discovered that parents who held more nuanced conversations about subtle racism or daily microaggressions were more effective at reducing bias in their children, versus parents who only felt comfortable discussing overt racism.

“The kinds of people who actually do dig in and confront that or signal to their kids that there's something wrong with [subtle racism], their kids are learning more,” Perry said. “They're getting more benefits.”

Parents can start conversations with children in preschool as they begin to notice racial differences—by celebrating them rather than pretending they do not exist. Older kids, she says, can have more nuanced conversations about the history of racism in America, racial events in the news, and what it means to be anti-racist.



iStock



## DISTINGUISHING TRUTH FROM LIES

IPR researchers explore what drives people to believe in untruths and how misinformation and disinformation have affected us.

Psychologist **David Rapp** finds that when people read incorrect information, even about trivial subjects they already know, they often become confused and remember the inaccuracies. Repeating false information—such as that the 2020 election was fraudulent—can lead to building memories for the information.

People are more likely to believe the content they take in that reflects the same emotions they presently feel, according to communication and policy scholar **Erik Nisbet**.

Do biased news sources lead to people believing misinformation and disinformation?

Media scholar **Stephanie Edgerly** is concerned that accusations of biased reporting can backfire, leading people to lose trust in all sources of media.

Media, technology, and society researcher **Pablo Boczkowski**'s research shows that people view news reporting today as biased and polarized,



and they are especially distrustful of news circulated via social media.

In terms of the role misinformation and disinformation play in our politics, political scientist **James Druckman** sees “a mutually reinforcing relationship” between disinformation and polarization but cautions, “I would be hesitant to place all the blame for political ills on misinformation,” he said.

Fact-checking is a very limited tool, Edgerly and Nisbet observe, to combat misinformation. Rapp and Edgerly recommend journalists and scientists be more transparent about their work.

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## POLICE VIOLENCE LINKED TO POOR HEALTH AMONG BLACK WOMEN



It is well known that Black women experience disproportionately high rates of preterm delivery and cardiovascular disease. New research suggests that one contributor to these inequities may be the stress created by police violence occurring in Black women's neighborhoods.

A multidisciplinary team of IPR researchers, led by former IPR postdoctoral fellow **Alexa Freedman**, links police violence to higher rates of cardiovascular disease and preterm delivery among Black women, suggesting that the consequences of police misconduct may begin in utero and have long-lasting impacts.

The researchers, who in addition to Freedman included IPR sociologist **Andrew Papachristos**, IPR health psychologist **Greg Miller**, and professor of obstetrics and gynecology and IPR associate **Ann Borders**, calculated the frequency of excessive force complaints against Chicago police by neighborhood and then linked them to the electronic health records of nearly 68,000 pregnant patients and over 6,700 healthy adults without cardiovascular disease in those same neighborhoods.

Black women were 1.19 times as likely to have their babies prematurely and 1.42 times as likely to develop cardiovascular disease when they lived in neighborhoods where complaints about excessive use of police force were more common.

“It's long been clear that excessive police force in the neighborhood is a potent and persistent stressor for Black residents of Chicago,” Miller said about the findings. “These studies extend knowledge by suggesting there may be consequences for women's reproductive and cardiovascular health.”

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R. Hart

Morton Schapiro (left) and the U.S. Under Secretary of Education, James Kvaal, discuss some of higher education's top headlines.

## COLLEGE ACCESS AND SUCCESS

Financial aid and student debt, support for first-generation students, inequities in college access, measurement of returns to higher education, and research-to-practice pipelines. These were but a few of the topics covered in a wide-ranging discussion by some of the nation's top higher education researchers, leaders, and thinkers at Northwestern University on May 10.

The "College Access and Success" symposium was held as a tribute to **Morton Schapiro**, Northwestern professor, president emeritus, and IPR fellow, whose tenure as president concluded this fall.

As one of the nation's leading experts on the economics of higher education, Schapiro has addressed many of these issues from the field in his work on college financing and affordability and on trends in educational costs and student aid. Many of the symposium panelists also spoke to his scholarly influence on their own research.

"I thank Morty for being a pathbreaker and trailblazer and allowing economics of education and the economics of higher education to

flourish," said the University of Virginia's Sarah Turner, one of the symposium's panelists.

The two panels on higher education research and practice set up the fireside chat between two higher education leaders—Schapiro and the U.S. Under Secretary of Education James Kvaal. They covered ground on some of higher education's top headlines—student debt and debt forgiveness, and equity and inclusion, among others.

"You transform your life and the life of your family," Schapiro said about college for low-income students. "So, when people say it doesn't matter where you go to school, or even if you go to school, they should just look at the data."

IPR Director **Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach** said, "It was a spectacular set of all-star discussions, and I couldn't think of a better way to celebrate Morty's tireless efforts as a scholar and as a university president to promote college access." She organized the event with University Provost Kathleen Hagerty and David Figlio, who is now provost at the University of Rochester.