May 2026

Dr. Irena Pietrzyk

born in Lublin (Poland)

Contact

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Research Interests

Educational inequalities, educational interventions, experimental methods

Professional Experience

Implementation of a large scale randomized controlled trial (RCT), survey development and data collection in large scale longitudinal surveys

Current Position (since 2021)

Researcher at the chair of Prof. Dr. Marita Jacob in a third-party funded project that experimentally evaluates a large scale educational intervention (*Zukunfts- und Berufspläne vor dem Abitur* [Future and career plans before high school graduation], ZuBAb)

Previous Positions

2021 – 2024	Guest Researcher at the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB) in the President's Research Group
2016 – 2020	Researcher at the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB) in the President's Research Group
2013 – 2016	Researcher at the International Center for Higher Education Research (INCHER), University of Kassel, Cooperation Project on Graduate Studies (KOAB)

Education

October 2024	Dissertation Defense: *Ambitionierte Bildungsentscheidungen von Personen mit Migrationshintergrund an hohen Bildungsetappen: Beschreiben, Erklären, Verändern* (Ambitious Educational Choices of Individuals with Migration Background at High Educational Levels: Describing, Explaining, and Altering)

	Thesis supervisors: Prof. Dr. Marita Jacob, Prof. Dr. Karsten Hank Third reviewer: Prof. Dr. Irena Kogan Final grade: *summa cum laude* (highest distinction)
2018 – 2024	PhD studies, University of Cologne (Sociology)
2011	Completion of studies in Psychology at the University of Münster, degree: Diploma (equivalent to a Master's degree), final grade: 1.0 (best possible).
2014	Completion of studies in Sociology, Political Science, and Psychology at the University of Münster, degree: Magistra Artium (equivalent to a Master's degree), final grade: 1.4

Third-party funds

~1.6 million euros	Project on the evaluation of a large scale educational intervention (2025 – 2027), funded by the Ministry for Culture and Research of North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany)

Publications

Tools

Pietrzyk, Irena/Jacob, Marita (2026). Disparity Visualiser. A Tool for Illustrating Group-Level Disparities in Experimental Findings. Zenodo.

Articles in Peer-Reviewed Journals (*SSCI-ranked, [+]shared first authorship)

Pietrzyk, Irena/Jacob, Marita (2026). Why Treatment Prevalence Matters: Overcoming a Blind Spot in Experimental Inequality Research. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie.*

*Erdmann, Melinda/**Pietrzyk, Irena**/Schneider, Juliana/Helbig, Marcel/Jacob, Marita (2025). Same but Different: Gender, Social Origin, and University Access. Results from a Field Experiment on Guidance Counseling. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*.

***Pietrzyk, Irena**/Erdmann, Melinda/Schneider, Juliana/ Helbig, Marcel/Jacob, Marita (2025). Guidance Counseling Can Reduce Inequality in University Enrollment in Germany: Results from a Randomized Controlled Trial. *Sociology of Education*.

***Pietrzyk, Irena**/Jacob, Marita/Erdmann, Melinda (2023): Who Benefits from Guidance Counseling? Insights on Native and Immigrant Students from Low Social Origins. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie.*

*[+]Neumeyer, Sebastian/**Pietrzyk, Irena** (2023): Done with a Degree? Immigration-specific Disparities among Holders of Bachelor's Degrees in the Transition to Graduate Studies in Germany. *Frontiers in Sociology.*

Pietrzyk, Irena/Helbig, Marcel (2023): To Benefit from an Educational Program, You Need to Participate: Participation Patterns in an Educational Intervention Promoting College Access. *Journal for Educational Research Online*.

*Erdmann, Melinda/Schneider, Juliana/**Pietrzyk, Irena**/Helbig, Marcel/Jacob, Marita (2023): The Impact of Guidance Counselling on Gender Segregation: Major Choice and Persistence in Higher Education. An Experimental Study. *Frontiers in Sociology*.

+Erdmann, Melinda/**Pietrzyk, Irena**/Helbig, Marcel/Jacob, Marita/Stuth, Stefan (2022): Können intensive Beratungsprogramme soziale Ungleichheit beim Übergang in die Hochschule reduzieren? Ergebnisse eines Feldexperiments [Do Intensive Counseling Programs Reduce Inequality in University Access? Results from a Field Experiment]. *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 48 (1). 137-162.

***Pietrzyk, Irena**/Erdmann, Melinda (2019): Investigating the Impact of Interventions on Educational Disparities: Estimating Average Treatment Effects (ATEs) is not Sufficient. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*.

*+Neumeyer, Sebastian/**Pietrzyk, Irena** (2019): Hochschulabsolvent/innen mit Migrationshintergrund am Übergang in die Promotion [Graduates with Migration Backgrounds at the Transition to PhD Programs]. *Soziale Welt*.

Work in Progress

Does High School Counseling Reduce Social Inequality in Higher Education in Germany? Long-Term Experimental Evidence on Persistence and Completion (together with J. Schneider, M. Erdmann, M. Jacob, and M. Helbig)

What's in a Name? Accurate Perception of Social Class Profiles of First Names (together with J. Schneider, M. Jacob, M. Helbig, and M. Erdmann)

Classed from the Start: Guidance Counselors' Implicit Associations Between Social Origin and Educational Pathways (together with J. Schneider, M. Jacob, M. Helbig, and M. Erdmann)

Handbook Articles

Pietrzyk, Irena/Reimer, David/Jacob, Marita (in press). Can Counselling and Career Guidance Reduce Socioeconomic Inequality in Educational Choices? Yes, it can! *Palgrave International Handbook on Career Guidance in Education*

PhD Thesis

Pietrzyk, Irena (2024): Ambitionierte Bildungsentscheidungen von Personen mit Migrationshintergrund an hohen Bildungsetappen: Beschreiben, Erklären, Verändern [Ambitious Educational Choices of Individuals with Migration Background at High Educational Levels: Describing, Explaining, and Altering].

Editorship

Erdmann, Melinda/Schneider, Juliana/**Pietrzyk, Irena**/Helbig, Marcel/Jacob, Marita (2025): Auf dem Weg zur Hochschulbildung. Beiträge aus Wissenschaft und Praxis aus NRW [On the Way to Higher Education. Contributions from Science and Practice in North Rhine-Westphalia.] Münster, Germany: Waxmann Verlag.

Articles in Edited Volumes

+Schneider, Juliana/**Pietrzyk, Irena**/Erdmann, Melinda/Helbig, Marcel/Jacob, Marita (2025): Individuelle Beratung als Schlüssel zur Chancengleichheit beim Hochschulzugang? Eine experimentelle Studie zu ihrer Wirkung auf verschiedene Ungleichheitsdimensionen [Does Counseling Foster Equal Opportunities in University Access? An Experimental Study on its Effects on Various Dimensions of Inequality]. In: Melinda Erdmann et al. (Editors), *Auf dem Weg zur Hochschulbildung. Beiträge aus Wissenschaft und Praxis aus NRW* [On the Way to Higher Education. Contributions from Science and Practice in North Rhine-Westphalia]. Münster, Germany: Waxmann Verlag.

Pietrzyk, Irena/Neumeyer, Sebastian (2024): Der bemerkenswerte Bildungsaufstieg von Studierenden mit Migrationshintergrund: ein Streben nach Statusmaximierung [The Remarkable Educational Mobility of Students with a Migration Background: A Striving for Status Maximization]. In: Christina Möller, Frerk Blome and Julia Reuter (Eds.), *Sozialer Aufstieg durch Bildung? Theoretische Zugänge, empirische Einsichten* [Social Upward Mobility Through Education? Theoretical Approaches, Empirical Insights]. pp. 122 – 143. Weinheim, Germany: Beltz-Juventa.

+Erdmann, Melinda/Helbig, Marcel/**Pietrzyk, Irena** (2023): Plädoyer für eine neue methodische Übereinkunft: Zum Potential von randomisiert-kontrollierten Studien in der Evaluation von Schulentwicklungsprogrammen [Pleading for a New Methodological Agreement on the Potential of Randomized Controlled Trials in the Evaluation of School Development Programs]. *Die Deutsche Schule*, 115(3), 247 – 261.

Data Sets

Erdmann, Melinda/Pietrzyk, Irena/Helbig, Marcel/Jacob, Marita/Schneider, Juliana/Stuth, Stefan (2021): Zukunfts- und Berufspläne vor dem Abitur (ZuBAb) [Future and Career Plans before High School Graduation].

Discussion Papers and Reports

+Erdmann, Melinda/**Pietrzyk, Irena**/Schneider, Juliana/Helbig, Marcel/Jacob, Marita/Allmendinger, Jutta (2022): Bildungsungleichheit nach der Hochschulreife – das lässt sich ändern. Eine Untersuchung der Wirksamkeit eines intensiven Beratungsprogramms 1,5 Jahre nach dem Abitur [Educational Inequality after High School Graduation Can Be Reduced. A Study of the Effectiveness of an Intensive Counseling Program 1.5 Years After High School Graduation], *WZB Discussion Paper*, P 2022-002, Berlin, Germany: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung.

+Erdmann, Melinda/**Pietrzyk, Irena**/Helbig, Marcel/Jacob, Marita/Stuth, Stefan (2022): Do Intensive Guidance Programs Reduce Social Inequality in the Transition to Higher Education in Germany? Experimental Evidence From the ZuBAb Study 0.5 Years After High School Graduation, *WZB Discussion Paper*, P 2022-001, Berlin, Germany: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung.

Pietrzyk, Irena/Allmendinger, Jutta/Erdmann, Melinda/Helbig, Marcel/Jacob, Marita/Stuth, Stefan (2019): Future and Career Plans Before High School Graduation (ZuBAb): Background, Research Questions and Research Design. *WZB Discussion Paper,* P 2019–004. Berlin, Germany: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung.

Transfer Publications

Pietrzyk, Irena/Neumeyer, Sebastian/Erdmann, Melinda (2024): Unerwartete Role Models. Jugendliche mit Migrationshintergrund können zu Vorbildern in Sachen Bildung werden [Unexpected Role Models. Young Persons With a Migration Background Can Be Role Models in Education], *WZB-Mitteilungen*. Berlin, Germany: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung

[+]Erdmann, Melinda/**Pietrzyk, Irena** (2022): NRW-Talentscouting: „Ein starkes Instrument zur Stärkung der Bildungsgerechtigkeit. *Campus Schulmanagement* [NRW-Talentscouting: "A Powerful Tool for Promoting Educational Equity"].

Erdmann, Melinda/Helbig, Marcel/Jacob, Marita/**Pietrzyk, Irena**/Schneider, Juliana/Allmendinger, Jutta (2022): Soziale Ungleichheit beim Hochschulzugang verringern. Intensive Beratung fördert die Passung zwischen Potenzialen und Bildungsentscheidungen [Reducing Social Inequalities in University Access. Intensive Counseling Promotes Better Match Between Students' Potential and their Educational Choices], *WZBrief Bildung 45*, Berlin, Germany: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung.

Reviewer

American Journal of Sociology, European Sociological Review (3x), Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, Social Inclusion, Sociology of Education, Zeitschrift für Soziologie, European Journal of Psychology of Education, 2025 Annual Conference of the European Consortium for Sociological Research (ECSR).