

# Sabrina Gado

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER

Experimental Clinical Psychology, Julius-Maximilians-University of Würzburg, Marcusstraße 9-11, 97070 Würzburg, Germany

☎ +49 931 31-83948 | ✉ mail@sabrinagado.de | 🏠 sabrinagado.de

Postdoctoral researcher in social and affective neuroscience, driven by the goal of studying social behavior where it truly happens—in natural, dynamic, and emotionally meaningful contexts. My research bridges psychology and technology to explore how people navigate real-life social situations, using mobile psychophysiological sensors and eye trackers, as well as immersive virtual reality. By moving beyond the lab and into the wild, I aim to explore the mechanisms underlying the development and maintenance of maladaptive social tendencies.

## Education

### Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

PHD, NEUROSCIENCE, PRIMARY SUPERVISOR: PROF. MATTHIAS GAMER

Würzburg, Germany

2021–2025

### Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

BSc & MSc, PSYCHOLOGY

Würzburg, Germany

2015–2020

### University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt

BSc, BUSINESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Würzburg, Germany

2018–2022

## Research

### Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Experimental Clinical Psychology

RESEARCHER (AKADEMISCHE RÄTIN)

- Investigating the development and maintenance of (mal)adaptive social behavior

Würzburg, Germany

06/2025–Present

### Universität Bielefeld, Biological Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

- Investigating the influence of childhood maltreatment on social behavior

Bielefeld, Germany

11/2024–03/2025

### Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Experimental Clinical Psychology

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

- Investigated social approach and avoidance behavior in naturalistic settings
- Employed advanced biopsychological research methods in the lab with stationary eye-tracking and concurrent physiological measurements
- Enhanced ecological validity by the use of immersive virtual reality and field research with unobstrusive mobile eye-tracking and sensors

Würzburg, Germany

11/2021–05/2025

### University of British Columbia, Brain, Attention, & Reality (BAR) Lab

VISITING RESEARCHER

- Investigated dyadic interactions with a focus on automated identification of behaviors and the analysis of dynamics unfolding in dyads
- Piloted a cross-country study on the effects of gaze on uninvolved pedestrians

Vancouver, Canada

06/2024–07/2024

### Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO, NeuroLab

GRADUATE RESEARCHER

- Implemented experimental paradigms and machine learning algorithms to identify cognitive and affective states
- Gained experience with EEG, fNIRS and physiological measurements

Stuttgart, Germany

09/2020–02/2022

### Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Work and Organizational Psychology

GRADUATE RESEARCHER

- Conducted a meta-analysis on the effect of learning goals on behavior in occupational contexts
- Investigated the acceptance of AI in the field of psychology and designed an online training to foster the acceptance of AI

Würzburg, Germany

10/2018–02/2020

## Teaching

(MAL)ADAPTIVE SOCIAL BEHAVIOR - A TRANSLATIONAL PERSPECTIVE (MSc CLIN. PSYCHOLOGY, MSc TRANSL. NEUROSCIENCE)

2025

- Introduction to translational research on alterations of social processes, e.g. in autism, social anxiety, schizophrenia, as well as psychopathology, integrating findings from animal studies, subclinical research, and patient studies.

EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH METHODS (BSc PSYCHOLOGY)

2022, 2025

- Instructed a small group of students on how to plan, execute, analyze, and present their first psychological experiment

THESES

2021–Present

- Supervised 3 internships, 11 Bachelor's theses, and 3 Master's theses

## Other Experiences

COORDINATION OF A TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH TRAINING GROUP	12/2022–05/2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Organized and hosted weekly scientific exchange meetings where the PhD students and external guest speakers presented their work</li><li>Organized workshops and the yearly summer school for the PhD students to expand their knowledge and skill set</li></ul>	
WUERTUAL REALITY XR MEETING	04/2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Organized and hosted the inaugural “Wuertual Reality” meeting with 126 participants</li><li>Provided a platform for the presentation and discussion of current XR research</li></ul>	

## Memberships

EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE NEUROSCIENCE	2024–Present
GERMAN PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY (DGPs), DIVISION OF BIOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROPSYCHOLOGY	2022–Present
GERMAN ALPINE CLUB (DAV)	2018–Present

## Awards

Summer School, RTG 2660	Marktbreit, Germany
AWARD FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL (500 €)	2022
Summer School, RTG 2660	Kloster Schöntal, Germany
POSTER AWARD (500 €)	2023
Summer School, RTG 2660	Burg Rothenfels, Germany
TALK AWARD (500 €)	2024
7th Science Conference of the Center of Mental Health at the University Clinic Würzburg	Würzburg, Germany
POSTER AWARD (200 €)	2023
15th European Meeting on Human Fear Conditioning	Heeze, Netherlands
POSTER AWARD	2024

## Skills

PROGRAMMING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Experiments: PsychoPy (level: proficient), Unreal Engine 5 (level: competent)</li><li>Data analysis and visualization: Python (level: proficient), R (level: competent)</li></ul>
LANGUAGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>English (level: C1, advanced)</li><li>German (level: C2, native speaker)</li></ul>
INTEREST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Research: Social and affective neuroscience, naturalistic research, technology acceptance, artificial intelligence and machine learning</li><li>Leisure: (Classical) music, (road) cycling, triathlon</li></ul>

## PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

1. Gado, S., Stegmann, Y., & Gamer, M. (2025). Voluntary and reflexive mechanisms of visual attention: An investigation of the robustness of the social attention bias. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xhp0001341>
2. Gado, S., & Gamer, M. (2025). Studying the influence of single social interactions on approach and avoidance behavior: A multimodal investigation in immersive virtual reality. *Behavior Research Methods*, 57(157). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-025-02627-0>
3. Gado, S., Teigeler, J., Kümpel, K., Schindler, M., & Gamer, M. (2025). The effect of social anxiety on social attention in naturalistic situations. *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, 38(3), 326–342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2024.2424919>
4. Lingelbach, K., Gado, S., Wirzberger, M., & Vukelić, M. (2023). Workload-dependent hemispheric asymmetries during the emotion-cognition interaction: A close-to-naturalistic fNIRS study. *Frontiers in Neuroergonomics*, 4. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnrgo.2023.1273810>
5. Gado, S., Lingelbach, K., Wirzberger, M., & Vukelić, M. (2023). Decoding mental effort in a quasi-realistic scenario: A feasibility study on multimodal data fusion and classification. *Sensors*, 23(14). <https://doi.org/10.3390/s23146546>
6. Gado, S., Kempen, R., Lingelbach, K., & Bipp, T. (2022). Artificial intelligence in psychology: How can we enable psychology students to accept and use artificial intelligence? *Psychology Learning & Teaching*, 21(1), 37–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14757257211037149>

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

1. Gado, S., Gamer, M., Iffland, B., Neuner, F., & Lonsdorf, T. (2025). Under scrutiny: Developing virtual social encounters for a reversal learning paradigm. 16. *European Meeting on Human Fear Conditioning*. [Poster]
2. Gado, S., & Gamer, M. (2025). A multimodal social conditioning study in virtual reality showing fast adaptation to affective social learning experiences. 67. *Tagung Experimentell Arbeitender Psycholog\*innen (TeaP)*. [Talk]
3. Gado, S., Teigeler, J., & Gamer, M. (2024). How and when social anxiety manifests: A meta-analysis investigating the effects of social anxiety on subjective distress, autonomic and endocrine measures in different experimental settings. 64. *SPR Annual Meeting*. [Poster]
4. Gado, S., & Gamer, M. (2024). Studying the influence of single social interactions on approach and avoidance behavior - a multimodal investigation in immersive virtual reality. 49. *Annual Conference «Psychologie Und Gehirn»*. [Poster]
5. Gado, S., & Gamer, M. (2024). How do people adapt to social learning experiences? A multimodal social conditioning study in virtual reality. 7. *Bi-Annual ESCAN Meeting*. [Talk]
6. Gado, S., & Gamer, M. (2024). Studying the influence of single social interactions on approach and avoidance behavior - a multimodal investigation in immersive virtual reality. 15. *European Meeting on Human Fear Conditioning*. [Poster]
7. Gado, S., Teigeler, J., & Gamer, M. (2023). Socially anxious avoid gaze, don't they? The effect of gaze camouflage and social anxiety on attention and autonomic measures in naturalistic social situations. 48. *Annual Conference «Psychologie Und Gehirn»*. [Poster]
8. Gado, S., Lingelbach, K., & Vukelić, M. (2022). Classifying cognitive load in a quasi-realistic scenario based on multimodal neurophysiological data. 47. *Annual Conference «Psychologie Und Gehirn»*. [Poster]

9. Gado, S., Lingelbach, K., Bui, M., Rieger, J. W., & Vukelić, M. (2021). Real-time feedback of subjective affect and working memory load based on neurophysiological activity. In C. Stephanidis, M. Antona, & S. Ntoa (Eds.), *HCI International 2021 - Late Breaking Posters* (pp. 80–87). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-90179-0\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-90179-0_11)  
[Poster]
10. Gado, S., Kempen, R., & Bipp, T. (2021). Development and validation of an online training on artificial intelligence for psychology students. *12. Tagung Der Fachgruppen Arbeits-, Organisations- Und Wirtschaftspsychologie Sowie Ingenieurspsychologie Der DGPs.*  
[Talk]