Dr. Sabrina **Gado**

Postdoctoral Researcher

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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 — *Würzburg, Germany*

PhD, Neuroscience, Primary Supervisor: Prof. Matthias Gamer — *2021–2025*

Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg — *Würzburg, Germany*

BSc & MSc, Psychology — *2015–2020*

University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt — *Würzburg, Germany*

BSc, Business Information Systems — *2018–2022*

Research

Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Experimental Clinical Psychology — *Würzburg, Germany*

Researcher (Akademische Rätin) — *06/2025–Present*

Universität Bielefeld, Biological Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience — *Bielefeld, Germany*

Research Associate — *11/2024–03/2025*

University of British Columbia, Brain, Attention, & Reality (BAR) Lab — *Vancouver, Canada*

Visiting Researcher — *06/2024–07/2024*

Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Experimental Clinical Psychology — *Würzburg, Germany*

Research Associate — *11/2021–05/2025*

Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO, NeuroLab — *Stuttgart, Germany*

Graduate Researcher — *09/2020–02/2022*

Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Work and Organizational Psychology — *Würzburg, Germany*

Graduate Researcher — *10/2018–02/2020*

Teaching

Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

MSc Clinical Psychology, Psychotherapy and Clinical Neuroscience

- Project Seminar: Simulation of Psychotherapeutic Interactions in VR using LLMs
- Seminar: (Mal)adaptive social behavior - A translational perspective
- Supervision of Master Theses

BSc Psychology

- Group Work: Experimental Research Methods
- Supervision of Internships and Bachelor Theses

Other Experiences

Coordination of a Translational Research Training Group — *12/2022–05/2023*

Organization of the Wuertual Reality XR Meeting — *04/2023 & 10/2025*

Skills & Interests

Research Interests

- Social and affective neuroscience, naturalistic research, immersive virtual reality, technology acceptance, artificial intelligence and machine learning

Programming

- Experiments: PsychoPy (level: proficient), Unreal Engine 5 (level: competent)
- Data wrangling, analysis and visualization: Python (level: proficient), R (level: competent)

Language

- English (level: C1, advanced)
- German (level: C2, native speaker)

Awards

Research Training Group 2660, Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg *2022–2024*

- Award for research proposal (500 €)
- Poster award (500 €)
- Talk award (500 €)

7th Science Conference of the Center of Mental Health at the University Clinic Würzburg *2023*

- Poster award (200 €)

15th European Meeting on Human Fear Conditioning *2024*

- Poster award

Institute of Psychology, Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg *2025*

- Karl Marbe Award (750 €)

Memberships

European Society for Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience *2024–Present*

German Psychological Society (DGPs), Division of Biological Psychology and Neuropsychology *2022–Present*

Publications

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