

CURRICULUM VITAE: Robin Willardt

Address: Institute for Psychology
Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg
Pleichertorstraße 30, Level 2

Postal Address: Postadresse Pleicherwall 1, 97070, Würzburg
Germany

E-Mail: robin.willardt@uni-wuerzburg.de

Phone: +49 931 31-81572

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

January 2026 – present

Postdoctoral Researcher in the Department of Psychology V (Workgroup Prof. Hewig) at the Institute for Psychology at JMU Würzburg, Germany

August 2023 – August 2025

Postdoctoral Researcher (Visiting Fellow) in the lab of Prof. Harmon-Jones at the School of Psychology at UNSW Sydney, Australia

August 2022 – February 2023

Postdoctoral Researcher at the Chair of Organizational Behavior, ETH Zurich, Department of Management, Technology, and Economics, Switzerland

August 2017 – July 2022

Doctoral candidate at the Chair of Organizational Behavior, ETH Zurich, Department of Management, Technology, and Economics, Switzerland

Thesis topic: *Investigating the Psychological Consequences of Powerlessness and COVID-19: A Threat and Defense Approach*

EDUCATION

Doctor of Science, October 2022

ETH Zuerich

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Petra Schmid

Thesis Title: *Investigating the Psychological Consequences of Powerlessness and COVID-19: A Threat and Defense Approach*

Master of Science in Social Psychology (Research; graduated *cum laude*), July 2017

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Mark Rotteveel

Thesis Title: *Muscle Activation versus Visual Distance Change: Testing the Prerequisites of Approach and Avoidance Behavior*

Master Research Project, 2015-2016

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Supervisor: Dr. Richard Ronay

Master Thesis Title: *Serving Yourself or Serving the Group: Environmental and Personal Determinants of Different Leadership Styles*

Tasks: Developing own research idea, programming experiment, testing of participants, analyzing data, writing publishable research report

Bachelor of Science in Psychology, 2015

Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

Supervisor: Dr. Felix Goetz

Bachelor Thesis Title: *Cooperation vs. Competition: The Role of Group Interaction in Intergroup Perception*

Bachelor Research Internship, 2014-2015

Institute of Psychology, Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Germany

Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Fritz Strack, Doctoral Candidate Felix Goetz

Work Experience

2015 - 2016

Research Assistant

Faculty of Behavioral and Movement Sciences VU Amsterdam

Supervisor: Prof. Kilian Wawoe

Job description: reviewing scientific literature, collecting information about real world phenomenon (VW-emission scandal) over which article in popular science magazine was to be written, discussing possible structure and content of the article, writing the article in German

2014 – 2015

Research Assistant

Institute of Psychology, Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Germany

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Fritz Strack

Job description: reviewing literature, collecting data, data analysis, recruiting participants

Fellowships, Grants and Awards

- Postdoc.Mobility fellowship of the SNSF (Swiss National Science Foundation) for a 2 year postdoctoral research stay at UNSW (Australia) with Prof. Eddie Harmon-Jones 2022
- GDP Research Grant („Stipendium für die Förderung von Peer-Mentoring-Teams“) together with Dr. Mario Reutter 2021
- Lim Kim San Fellowship for PhD students 2020-21 (Singapore Management University)
- SPSP Registration Award for the annual SPSP Convention 2021
- Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences Travel Grant, 2019
- SNSF Mobility Grant for a 10-month research stay at the Division of Social Psychology at the Paris-Lodron-Universität Salzburg, 2019

Research

Publications

- Willardt, R.**, & Reutter, M. (2025). Seeing Danger Instead of Opportunity: Does Powerlessness Enhance Stimulus-Driven Attention Allocation Towards Threat-Related Stimuli? *Collabra: Psychology*, 11(1), 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.147496>
- Harmon-Jones, E., **Willardt, R.**, & Harmon-Jones, C. (2025). Discrete emotions of dissonance. *Motivation Science*, 11(4), 408-424. <https://doi.org/10.1037/mot0000389>
- Willardt, R.**, & Schmid, P. C. (2024). The threat of powerlessness: Consequences for affect and (social) cognition. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 111, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2023.104576>
- Jutzi, C. A., **Willardt, R.**, Klackl, J., Stollberg, J., Reiss, S., & Jonas, E. (2023). A Threat-and-Defense Perspective on the Psychological Dynamics Behind the Covid-19 Pandemic. *International Review of Social Psychology*, 36(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.5334/irsp.792>
- Azevedo, F., **Willardt, R.**, et al. (2023). Social and moral psychology of COVID-19 across 69 countries. *Scientific Data*, 10(1), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41597-023-02080-8>
- Pavlović, T., **Willardt, R.**, et al. (2022). Predicting attitudinal and behavioral responses to COVID-19 pandemic using machine learning. *PNAS nexus*, 1(3), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgac093>

Van Bavel, J., ... **Willardt, R.**, et al. (2022). National identity predicts public health support during a global pandemic. *Nature Communications*, 13(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-27668-9>

Willardt, R., Jutzi, C. A., Schmid, P. C., & Jonas, E. (2022). From threats to defenses: Theoretical and statistical suggestions to investigate and explain the psychological phenomena of COVID-19. In M.K. Miller (Ed.), *The social science of the COVID-19 pandemic: A call to action for researchers*. Oxford University Press.

Reiss, S., Franchina, V. *, Jutzi, C. *, **Willardt, R. ***, Jonas, E. (2020). From Anxiety to Action - Experience of Threat, Emotional States, Reactance and Action Preferences in the Early Days of COVID-19 Self-Isolation in Germany and Austria. *PLOS ONE*, 15(12), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0243193> *these authors contributed equally to this publication

Willardt, R.*, Jutzi, C. A.*, Schmid, P. C., & Jonas, E. (2020). Between conspiracy beliefs, ingroup bias, and system justification: How people use defense strategies to cope with the threat of COVID-19. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.578586> *shared first authorship

Conference Presentations

Oral Presentations

Willardt, R. & Schmid, P. C. (March 2024). The Threat of Powerlessness: Consequences for Affect and (Social) Cognition. Tagung experimentell arbeitender Psychologen (TeaP), Regensburg, Deutschland.

Willardt, R. & Schmid, P. C. (February 2022). Between Conspiracy Beliefs, Ingroup Bias, and System Justification: How People Use Defense Strategies to Cope With the Threat of COVID-19. Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), San Francisco, California, USA.

Willardt, R. & Schmid, P. C. (September 2019). Powerlessness and Threat Compensation. Presented at the 16th Congress of the Swiss Psychology Society (SPS), Bern, Switzerland.

Willardt, R. & Schmid, P. C. (July 2019). Anxiety, Threat-Defense, and Attentional Biases: The Consequences of Being Powerless. Presented at the roundtable discussion at the workshop "the Role of Power and Powerholders in Organizations: Building Bridges Between Psychology and Management", Zurich, Switzerland.

Posters

Willardt, R. & Reutter, M. (June 2025). Seeing Danger Instead of Opportunity: Does Powerlessness Enhance Stimulus-Driven Attention Allocation Towards Threat-Related Stimuli? Psychologie und Gehirn (PuG) Wuerzburg, Germany.

Willardt, R. & Schmid, P. C. (February 2020). Seeing Danger Instead of Opportunity: How powerlessness Enhances Bottom Up Attention Allocation Towards Threat Related Stimuli.

Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), New Orleans, Louisiana, USA.

Willardt, R. & Schmid, P. C. (February 2019). The Threat of Being Powerless: Becoming Conspiratorial and Biased as a Means to Cope with a Lack of Control. Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), Portland, Oregon, USA.

Symposium Chairs

Willardt, R. (March 2024). Social Psychology Symposium. Tagung experimentell arbeitender Psychologen (TeaP), Regensburg, Deutschland.

Supervision and Teaching

- Supervised honor students in the lab of Prof. Harmon-Jones at the School of Psychology at UNSW Sydney, Australia
- Supervised master theses for the Chair of Organizational Behavior at ETH Zurich MTEC Department
- Supervised bachelor theses in the Bachelor-Seminar (2020) of the Division of Social Psychology at the University of Salzburg
- Supervised research assistants at ETH Zurich
- Teaching Assistant for "Power and Leadership", seminar for masters' students and MAS students, ETH Zurich, Fall 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020
- Lecturer for "Methods in Management Research", seminar for PhD students at ETH Zurich MTEC Department

Skills

Languages

German (native), English (good), Latin (intermediate)

Software

Good knowledge: Qualtrics, LISREL, SPSS, R, Matlab, Brainvision Analyzer, MS Office

Basic knowledge: Inquisit, MPlus

Research Methods

Good knowledge: Electroencephalography

Basic knowledge: Electrocardiography, Eye Tracking

Service

Ad Hoc Journal Reviewer

- PLOS ONE
- Vaccine
- JESP
- EJSP
- F1000
- Frontiers in Psychology

Affiliations

- Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), 2018 – present
- German Psychological Society (DGPs), 2021 – present