

# Joseph A. Bulbulia

Professor, School of Psychological Sciences  
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Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

## Contact

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- EPIC Lab: <https://go-bayes.github.io/epic-lab/>

## Work

Years	Position
2020–	Professor of Psychology, Victoria University, New Zealand
2018–2020	Maclaurin Goodfellow Chair, School of Humanities, The University of Auckland
2000–2017	Lecturer → Senior Lecturer → Reader → Professor of Religion, Victoria University

## Specialisations

Causal Inference, Evolution of Religion, National Scale Panel Data Collection

## Education

Year	Degree
2001	Princeton University, PhD
1997	Princeton University, M.A.
1993	Harvard University, M.T.S.
1990	Holy Cross, A.B. (Phi Beta Kappa)

## Awards

Year	Award
2025	<b>William C. Bier Award:</b> APA Division 36 – Outstanding interdisciplinary work on issues of psychology of religion and related fields
2023	<b>Godin Prize:</b> International Association for the Psychology of Religion – Awarded once every four years for research excellence in the psychology of religion
2016	<b>Victoria University Research Excellence Award</b>
2000	<b>Faculty Fellowship,</b> Stevenson Hall: Princeton University
1996	<b>Mellon Fellowship:</b> Princeton University
1996	<b>Bowen Merit Award:</b> Princeton University
1990	<b>Flatly Award</b> (top philosophy graduate): Holy Cross

## Service/Appointments

Years	Role
2022–	Director, <a href="#">Centre for Applied Cross-Cultural Research</a> , Victoria University
2022–	Adjunct Professor of Psychology, <a href="#">University of Canterbury</a>
2020–	Director, <a href="#">EPIC Lab</a> , Victoria University
2018–	Research Associate, <a href="#">Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History</a>

Years	Role
2018–	Advisory Board: Templeton Religion Trust: Social Consequences of Religion Initiative
2018–2020	Maclaurin Goodfellow Chair, University of Auckland
2014–2024	Co-editor: <a href="#">Religion Brain &amp; Behavior</a>
2014–2016	President: <a href="#">International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion</a>
2012–2014	President Elect: International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion
2013–	Editorial Advisory Board: <a href="#">Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science</a>
2011–	Editorial Advisory Board: <a href="#">Journal of The Cognitive Science of Religion</a>
2011–	Senior Leadership Team: <a href="#">New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study</a>
2010–2012	Secretary General (elected): International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion
2010–2014	Editorial Advisory Board: Religion, Brain & Behavior
2010–2012	Advisor: The Adaptive Logic of Religious Belief and Behaviour Group
2012	Ernst Strugmann Forum: Cultural Evolution (Religion) Rapporteur
2008–2010	Steering committee, Cognitive Study of Religion Group, American Academy of Religion
2008–2010	Co-chair, Explanation, International Association for the History of Religions Conference, Toronto
2006–	Distinguished Fellow: Religion Cognition and Culture Group, Aarhus University
2006–2010	Executive Committee (elected): International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion
2006	Gaesteprofessor: Religion, Cognition, Culture Group, Aarhus University
1996–1999	Assistant Master, Stevenson Hall: Princeton University

## Software

1. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). **margot**: MARGinal Observational Treatment-effects. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10907724>
2. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). **boilerplate**: Managing and Compiling Manuscript Templates. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13370825>
3. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). **places-of-worship**: Global Places of Worship Database. <https://github.com/go-bayes/places-of-worship>
4. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). **causalworkshop**: Teaching Materials and Reproducible Code for Causal Inference Workshops. <https://github.com/go-bayes/causalworkshop>
5. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). **margo**: A Command-line Interface for Registering and Creating Reproducible Workflows in Causal Inference Studies Using Non-parametric Estimation. <https://github.com/go-bayes/margo>:G

## Publications

1. Afzali, M. U., Badis, J. S., Khoso, P., Aqsa, G. e., Ahmed, M. S., Ali, A., Ali, A., Ali, Z. S., Arkilic, A., Azeem, T., Burhoum, H., Emamzadeh, Z., Haidary, Z., Hamid, N., Husain, I., Junaid, F. A., Khan, M., Mustapha-Koiki, A., Shawkat, F., Sulehry, R., Tamimi, M., Tanveer, S., Tasneem, S., Yogeeswaran, K., Sibley, C. G., Bulbulia, J. A., & Rasheed, A. A. (2025). Muslim diversity study: Quantitative protocol and practical insights on engaging New Zealand’s Muslim communities. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 54(2), 90–104
2. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Margot: MARGinal observational treatment-effects. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10907724>
3. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Boilerplate: Managing and compiling manuscript templates. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13370825>
4. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Places-of-worship: Global places of worship database. <https://github.com/go-bayes/places-of-worship>
5. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Causalworkshop: Teaching materials and reproducible code for causal inference workshops. <https://github.com/go-bayes/causalworkshop>
6. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Margo: A command-line interface for registering and creating reproducible workflows in causal inference studies using non-parametric estimation. <https://github.com/go-bayes/margo>

7. Bulbulia, J., Afzali, U., Rasheed, A. A., Troughton, G., Yogeeswaran, K., & Sibley, C. G. (2025). Beyond deficit narratives: Religious prejudice, meaning, and resilience in a national sample of New Zealand muslims. *Psychophysiology*, 62(6). [https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/m5aqu\\_v1](https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/m5aqu_v1)
8. Eisenbarth, H., D'Cruz, C., Bulbulia, J. A., & Thanni, B. (2025). Culturally diverse perceptions of EEG and neurofeedback research and how to address them to reduce sampling bias. *Psychophysiology*, 62(6). <https://doi.org/10.1111/psyp.70077>
9. Hissey, A., Eisenbarth, H., Hammond, M., Sibley, C. G., & Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Causal effect of psychopathy on partner well-being: A national longitudinal study. *Journal of Personality*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.70042>
10. Van Tongeren, D. R., Davis, D. E., Sibley, C. G., & Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Life loses some meaning after leaving religion. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000590>
11. Bulbulia, J. (2024). A half-irish exit. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 14(1), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599x.2024.2320523>
12. Bulbulia, J. (2024). A practical guide to causal inference in three-wave panel studies. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 14(1), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/uyg3d>
13. Bulbulia, J. A. (2024). Methods in causal inference. Part 2: Interaction, mediation, and time-varying treatments. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 6, e37. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ehs.2024.32>
14. Bulbulia, J. A. (2024). Methods in causal inference. Part 3: Measurement error and external validity threats. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 6, e38. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ehs.2024.33>
15. Bulbulia, J. A. (2024). Methods in causal inference. Part 4: Confounding in experiments. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 6, e39. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ehs.2024.34>
16. Bulbulia, J. A. (2024). Methods in causal inference. Part 1: Causal diagrams and confounding. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 6, e40. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ehs.2024.35>
17. Bulbulia, J. A., Davis, D. E., Rice, K. G., Sibley, C. G., & Troughton, G. (2024). The causal effects of religious service attendance on prosocial behaviours in New Zealand: A national longitudinal study. *Archive for the Psychology of Religion*, 46(3), 244–267. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00846724241302810>

18. Bulbulia, J. A., & Kempthorne, J. (2024). Pre-registration for the effect of spirituality on multi-dimensional well-being. <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/EMQ5T>
19. Bulbulia, J., Davis, D. E., Park, C. L., Rice, K. G., Troughton, G., Van Tongeren, D. R., & Sibley, C. G. (2024). Religious attendance and well-being: Which causal questions can we answer? *Archive for the Psychology of Religion*, 46(3), 244–267. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/e2cwt>
20. Bulbulia, J., & Hine, D. (2024). An invitation to causal inference in environmental psychology. *PLOS ONE*, 19(5), e0303845. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/tbjx8>
21. Gokhale, C., Bulbulia, J., & Frean, M. (2024). Collective narratives catalyse cooperation. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.25455/WGTN.25100171>
22. Kempthorne, J., Yogeeswaran, K., Sibley, C. G., & Bulbulia, J. A. (2024). The anatomy of prejudice during pandemic lockdowns: Evidence from a national panel study. *PLOS ONE*, 19(5), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0303845>
23. Rice, K. G., Wang, Q., Wetstone, H., Bulbulia, J. A., Sibley, C. G., & Davis, D. E. (2024). The even shorter almost perfect scale: Psychometric evaluation and cross-national implications for psychological outcomes. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 106(5), 609–624. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223891.2024.2310010>
24. Rosa, P. A. de la, Cowden, R. G., Bulbulia, J. A., Sibley, C. G., & VanderWeele, T. J. (2024). Effects of screen-based leisure time on 24 subsequent health and wellbeing outcomes: A longitudinal outcome-wide analysis. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 19(5), e0303845. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12529-024-10307-0>
25. Sibley, C., Stronge, S., Lilly, K., Yogeeswaran, K., Van Tongeren, D., Milfont, T., Zubelevitch, E., Bulbulia, J., Wilson, M., Overall, N., & Osborne, D. (2024). Comparative reliability of 108 scales and their short-form counterparts. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 53(2), 244–267. <https://doi.org/10.63146/001c.138416>
26. Bulbulia, J. (2023). Selection bias understood through sequential causal diagrams. *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 36(4), 866–878. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/cjgey>
27. Bulbulia, J. (2023). Measurement error bias in causal inference. *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 36(4), 866–878. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/jq78d>
28. Bulbulia, J. A. (2023). Understanding the relationship between science and religion using bayes' theorem. *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 36(4), 866–878. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09539468231187772>

29. Bulbulia, J. A., Afzali, M. U., Yogeeswaran, K., & Sibley, C. G. (2023). Long-term causal effects of far-right terrorism in New Zealand. *PNAS Nexus*, 2(8), 291–306. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgad242>
30. Bulbulia, J. A., Eisenbarth, H., Sibley, C. G., Hammond, M., & Hissey, A. (2023). Validation of a new psychopathy questionnaire. <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/3AJXM>
31. Bulbulia, J. A., Troughton, G., Highland, B. R., & Sibley, C. G. (2023). A national-scale typology of orientations to religion poses new challenges for the cultural evolutionary study of religious groups. In M. Gelfand (Ed.) *Religion and its evolution* (pp. 23–35). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032628042-3>
32. Cristofori, I., Hoogeveen, S., Rohr, D., Bulbulia, J., Shaver, J., Sosis, R., & Wildman, W. J. (2023). Introducing our new editors. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 13(1), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599x.2023.2173715>
33. Hammond, M., Eisenbarth, H., Bulbulia, J. A., Zubielevitch, E., Sibley, C. G., & Hissey, A. (2023). Psychopathy, relationship satisfaction and professional success over time. <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/5ZFN7>
34. Hoogeveen, S., Altay, S., Bendixen, T., Berniūnas, R., Bulbulia, J., Cheshin, A., Gentili, C., Georgescu, R., Haaf, J. M., Hagel, K., Kavanagh, C. M., Levy, N. L., McKay, R., Neely-Prado, A., Qiu, L., Rabelo, A. L. A., Ramsay, J. E., Ross, R. M., Turpin, H., Wuyts, R., Xygalatas, D., & Elk, M. van. (2023). Does she still love and feel hungry? Afterlife continuity beliefs and religion across 24 countries. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 35(1), 156–174. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/tvycp>
35. Shanaah, S., Yogeeswaran, K., Greaves, L., Bulbulia, J. A., Osborne, D., Afzali, M. U., & Sibley, C. G. (2023). Hate begets warmth? The impact of an anti-Muslim terrorist attack on public attitudes toward Muslims. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 35(1), 156–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2021.1877673>
36. Sheehan, O., Watts, J., Gray, R. D., Bulbulia, J. A., Claessens, S., Ringen, E. J., & Atkinson, Q. D. (2023). Coevolution of religious and political authority in Austronesian societies. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 7(1), 38–45. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01471-y>
37. Bulbulia, J. A. (2022). A workflow for causal inference in cross-cultural psychology. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 13(3), 291–306. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599x.2022.2070245>

38. Eisenbarth, H., Hart, C. M., Zubielevitch, E., Keilor, T., Wilson, M. S., Bulbulia, J. A., Sibley, C. G., & Sedikides, C. (2022). Aspects of psychopathic personality relate to lower subjective and objective professional success. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 186, 111340. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2021.111340>
39. Hoogeveen, S., Haaf, J. M., Bulbulia, J. A., Ross, R. M., McKay, R., Altay, S., Bendixen, T., Berniūnas, R., Cheshin, A., Gentili, C., Georgescu, R., Gervais, W. M., Hagel, K., Kavanagh, C. M., Levy, N., Neely-Prado, A., Qiu, L., Rabelo, A. L. A., Ramsay, J. E., Rutjens, B. T., Turpin, H., Uzarevic, F., Wuyts, R., Xygalatas, D., & Elk, M. van. (2022). The Einstein effect provides global evidence for scientific source credibility effects and the influence of religiosity. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 6(4), 523–535. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01273-8>
40. Marques, M. D., Sibley, C. G., Wilson, M. S., Bulbulia, J. A., Osborne, D., Yogeeswaran, K., Lee, C. H. J., Duck, I. M., Douglas, K. M., & Cichocka, A. (2022). Psychological predictors of COVID-19 vaccination in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 51(1), 10–27
41. Piven, S. D., Fischer, R., Shaver, J. H., Mogan, R., Karl, J. A., Kesberg, R., Richardson, A., Singh, P., Tewari, S., & Bulbulia, J. (2022). Kiwi diwali: A longitudinal investigation of perceived social connection following a civic religious ritual. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 12(3), 235–253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599x.2021.2006288>
42. Beheim, B., Atkinson, Q. D., Bulbulia, J. A., Gervais, W. M., Gray, R. D., Henrich, J., Lang, M., Monroe, M. W., Muthukrishna, M., Norenzayan, A., Purzycki, B. G., Shariff, A., Slingerland, E., Spicer, R., & Willard, A. K. (2021). Treatment of missing data determined conclusions regarding moralizing gods. *Nature*, 595(7866), E29–E34. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03655-4>
43. Ejova, A., Krátký, J., Klocová, E. K., Kundt, R., Cigán, J., Kotherová, S., Bulbulia, J., & Gray, R. D. (2021). The awe-prosociality relationship: Evidence for the role of context. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 11(3), 294–311. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599x.2021.1940254>
44. Lilly, K. J., Zubielevitch, E., Hobbs, M., Milfont, T. L., Cho, C., Barlow, F., Overall, N., Satherley, N., Costa Marques, M. da, Sibley, C. G., Bulbulia, J. A., Osborne, D., & Yogeeswaran, K. (2021). New Zealand attitudes and values study. <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/75SNB>



45. Van Tongeren, D. R., DeWall, C. N., Chen, Z., Sibley, C. G., & Bulbulia, J. A. (2021). Religious residue: Cross-cultural evidence that religious psychology and behavior persist following deidentification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 120(2), 484–503. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000288>
46. Zubielevitch, E., Eisenbarth, H., Hissey, A., Sibley, C. G., Hammond, M., & Bulbulia, J. A. (2021). Does psychopathy predict partners' professional success? <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/43KNV>
47. Bulbulia, J. A., Piven, S. D., Barlow, F. K., Davis, D. E., Greaves, L. M., Highland, B., Houkamau, C. A., Milfont, T. L., Osborne, D., Overall, N. C., Shaver, J. H., Troughton, G., Wilson, M., Yogeeswaran, K., & Sibley, C. G. (2020). Longitudinal mediators of early pandemic distress. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.09.15.20194829>
48. Bulbulia, J., Barlow, F., Davis, D. E., Greaves, L., Highland, B., Houkamau, C., Milfont, T. L., Osborne, D., Piven, S., Shaver, J., Troughton, G., Wilson, M., Yogeeswaran, K., & Sibley, C. G. (2020). The bittersweet dynamics of psychological distress and relief during New Zealand's COVID-19 lockdown clarify avoidable mental health burdens. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/2m7re>
49. Bulbulia, J., Piven, S., Barlow, F., Davis, D. E., Greaves, L., Highland, B., Houkamau, C., Milfont, T. L., Osborne, D., Shaver, J., Troughton, G., Wilson, M., Yogeeswaran, K., & Sibley, C. G. (2020). Mechanisms of COVID-19 mental-health burden. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/cswde>
50. Bulbulia, J., Piven, S., Greaves, L., Osborne, D., Troughton, G., Yogeeswaran, K., & Sibley, C. G. (2020). Longitudinal study of pandemic and natural disaster distress. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/erfhp>
51. Cohen-Zimmerman, S., Cristofori, I., Zhong, W., Bulbulia, J., Krueger, F., Gordon, B., & Grafman, J. (2020). Neural underpinning of a personal relationship with god and sense of control: A lesion-mapping study. *Cognitive, Affective, & Behavioral Neuroscience*, 20, 575–587. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13415-020-00787-4>
52. Ejova, A., Milojev, P., Worthington, E. L., Bulbulia, J., & Sibley, C. G. (2020). The big six personality traits and mental distress: Dynamic modeling in a population panel study reveals bidirectional relationships involving neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 46(9), 1287–1302. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167219895349>

53. Ejova, A., Milojev, P., Worthington, E. L., Sibley, C. G., & Bulbulia, J. (2020). Church attendance buffers against longer-term mental distress. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 11(2), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599x.2020.1831580>
54. Fraser, G., Bulbulia, J., Greaves, L. M., Wilson, M. S., & Sibley, C. G. (2020). Coding responses to an open-ended gender measure in a New Zealand national sample. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 57(8), 979–986. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2019.1687640>
55. Fraser, G., Huang, Y., Robinson, K., Wilson, M. S., Bulbulia, J. A., & Sibley, C. G. (2020). New Zealand pet owners' demographic characteristics, personality, and health and wellbeing: More than just a fluff piece. *Anthrozoös*, 33(4), 561–578. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08927936.2020.1771060>
56. Grafman, J., Cristofori, I., Zhong, W., & Bulbulia, J. (2020). The neural basis of religious cognition. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 29(2), 126–133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721419898183>
57. Greaves, L. M., Rasheed, A., D'Souza, S., Shackleton, N., Oldfield, L. D., Sibley, C. G., Milne, B., & Bulbulia, J. (2020). Comparative study of attitudes to religious groups in New Zealand reveals muslim-specific prejudice. *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, 15(2), 260–279. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1177083x.2020.1733032>
58. Shaver, J. H., Power, E. A., Purzycki, B. G., Watts, J., Sear, R., Shenk, M. K., Sosis, R., & Bulbulia, J. A. (2020). Church attendance and alloparenting: An analysis of fertility, social support and child development among english mothers. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 375(1805), 20190428. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2019.0428>
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60. Singh, P., Tewari, S., Kesberg, R., Karl, J. A., Bulbulia, J., & Fischer, R. (2020). Time investments in rituals are associated with social bonding, affect and subjective health: A longitudinal study of Diwali in two Indian communities. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 375(1805), 20190430. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2019.0430>

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63. Hawi, D., Osborne, D., Bulbulia, J. A., & Sibley, C. G. (2019). Terrorism anxiety and attitudes toward Muslims. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 48(1), 80–89. <https://www.psychology.org.nz/journal-archive/Hawi-80-89.pdf>
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66. Schjoedt, U., Wildman, W. J., Sosis, R., & Bulbulia, J. (2019). Vikings, virtual reality, and supernatural agents in predictive minds. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 9(1), 1–1. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599x.2019.1558595>
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69. Bulbulia, J. (2018). *Are contemporary christian New Zealanders committed to peace?* <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198747871.013.6>
70. Gervais, W. M., Elk, M. van, Xygalatas, D., McKay, R. T., Aveyard, M., Buchtel, E. E., Dar-Nimrod, I., Klocová, E. K., Ramsay, J. E., Riekk, T., Svedholm-Häkkinen, A. M., & Bulbulia, J. A. (2018). Analytic atheism: A cross-culturally weak and fickle phenomenon? *Judgment and Decision Making*, 13(3), 268–274

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