

# Joseph A. Bulbulia

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## 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. Chvaja, R., Shaver, J. H., & Bulbulia, J. A. (2026). Investigating the causal effects of religiosity on childbearing among U.S. Adolescents using a three-wave longitudinal design. *Scientific Reports*, 16, 4255. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-34358-9>
2. 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., Yogeewaran, 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
3. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Margot: MARGinal observational treatment-effects. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10907724>
4. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Boilerplate: Managing and compiling manuscript templates. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13370825>
5. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Places-of-worship: Global places of worship database. <https://github.com/go-bayes/places-of-worship>
6. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Causalworkshop: Teaching materials and reproducible code for causal inference workshops. <https://github.com/go-bayes/causalworkshop>

7. 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>
8. 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)
9. 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>
10. 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>
11. 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>
12. Bulbulia, J. (2024). A half-irish exit. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 14(1), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599x.2024.2320523>
13. 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>
14. 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>
15. 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>
16. 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>
17. 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>

18. 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>
19. 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>
20. 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>
21. 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>
22. Gokhale, C., Bulbulia, J., & Frean, M. (2024). Collective narratives catalyse cooperation. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.25455/WGTN.25100171>
23. 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>
24. 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>
25. 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>
26. 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>
27. 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>

28. 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>
29. 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>
30. 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>
31. 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>
32. 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>
33. 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>
34. 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>
35. 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>
36. 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>

37. 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>
38. 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>
39. 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>
40. 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>
41. 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
42. 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>
43. 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>
44. 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>



45. 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>
46. 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>
47. 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>
48. 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>
49. 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>
50. 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>
51. 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>
52. 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>

53. 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>
54. 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>
55. 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>
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57. 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>
58. 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>
59. 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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61. 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>
62. Bulbulia, J. A., Troughton, G., Highland, B. R., & Sibley, C. G. (2019). A national-scale typology of orientations to religion poses new challenges for the cultural evolutionary study of religious groups. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 10(3), 239–251. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599x.2019.1678516>
63. Bulbulia, J., Wildman, W. J., Schjoedt, U., & Sosis, R. (2019). In praise of descriptive research. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 9(3), 219–220. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599x.2019.1631630>
64. 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. Mogan, R., Bulbulia, J., & Fischer, R. (2019). Joint action enhances cohesion and positive affect, but suppresses aspects of creativity when combined with shared goals. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 2790. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02790>
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