

Joseph A. Bulbulia

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

Service/Appointments

Years	Role
2022–	Director, Centre for Applied Cross-Cultural Research , Victoria University
2022–	Adjunct Professor of Psychology, University of Canterbury
2020–	Director, Lab , Victoria University
2018–	Research Associate, Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History

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: Religion Brain & Behavior
2014–2016	President: International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion
2012–2014	President Elect: International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion
2013–	Editorial Advisory Board: Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science
2011–	Editorial Advisory Board: Journal of The Cognitive Science of Religion
2011–	Senior Leadership Team: New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study
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>

Publications

1. Bulbulia, J. A., Davis, D. E., Park, C. L., Rice, K. G., Troughton, G., Van Tongeren, D. R., & Sibley, C. G. (2026). Target trial emulation shows that supported causal effects of religious attendance on well-being are selective. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 8, e16. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ehs.2026.10043>
2. 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>
3. Cowden, R. G., Fung, E. N., Davis, D. E., Rosa, P. A. de la, Sibley, C. G., Worthington Jr, E. L., VanderWeele, T. J., & Bulbulia, J. A. (2026). Causal estimates of multidimensional well-being under hypothetical forgiveness shift scenarios: Longitudinal evidence from a national panel in New Zealand. *SSM-Mental Health*, 100619
4. 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
5. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Margot: MARGinal observational treatment-effects. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10907724>

6. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Boilerplate: Managing and compiling manuscript templates. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13370825>
7. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Places-of-worship: Global places of worship database. <https://github.com/go-bayes/places-of-worship>
8. Bulbulia, J. A. (2025). Causalworkshop: Teaching materials and reproducible code for causal inference workshops. <https://github.com/go-bayes/causalworkshop>
9. 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>
10. 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
11. 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>
12. 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>
13. 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>
14. Bulbulia, J. (2024). A half-irish exit. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 14(1), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599x.2024.2320523>
15. 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>
16. 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>

17. 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>
18. 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>
19. 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>
20. 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>
21. 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>
22. 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>
23. Gokhale, C., Bulbulia, J., & Frean, M. (2024). Collective narratives catalyse cooperation. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.25455/WGTN.25100171>
24. Kempthorne, J., Yogeewaran, 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>
25. McLaughlin, A. T., Davis, D. E., Lee, Y., Woo, H. C., Coleman, J., Bulbulia, J. A., Osborne, D., & Sibley, C. G. (2024). Are there potential costs for humility in a pluralistic democracy? A longitudinal investigation of immigrants in the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1401182. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1401182>
26. 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>

27. 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>
28. Sibley, C., Stronge, S., Lilly, K., Yogeeswaran, K., Van Tongeren, D., Milfont, T., Zubielevitch, 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>
29. Troughton, G., & Bulbulia, J. A. (2024). Christianity in New Zealand: Key statistics and trends. In M. Nichols (Ed.) *Strengthening the church in New Zealand* (pp. 3–17). New Zealand Christian Network
30. 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>
31. 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>
32. 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>
33. Bulbulia, J. A. (2023). On the problem of treatment-confounder feedback in longitudinal psychology. <https://psyarxiv.com/tjnvh/>
34. 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>
35. 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>
36. 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>
37. 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>

38. 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>
39. 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/tvyqcp>
40. Shanaah, S., Yogeewaran, 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>
41. 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>
42. 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>
43. Byrne, H. K. G., Yogeewaran, K., Dorahy, M. J., Gale, J., Afzali, M. U., Bulbulia, J. A., & Sibley, C. G. (2022). Psychological impact of far-right terrorism against Muslim minorities on national distress, community, and wellbeing. *Scientific Reports*, *12*(1), 1620. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-05678-x>
44. 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>
45. 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>

46. Hoogeveen, S., Sarafoglou, A., Aczel, B., Aditya, Y., Alayan, A. J., Allen, P. J., Altay, S., Alzahawi, S., Amir, Y., Anthony, F.-V., Bulbulia, J. A., & others. (2022). A many-analysts approach to the relation between religiosity and well-being. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 1–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2022.2070255>
47. 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
48. 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>
49. Sosis, R., Wildman, W. J., Bulbulia, J. A., & Shaver, J. (2022). A changing of the guard. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 12(3), 233–234
50. 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>
51. Bulbulia, J. A., & Johnson, D. (2021). Can evolution make sense of fear? Lessons from Bonhoeffer and Darwin. *The Bonhoeffer Legacy: An International Journal*, 7(1–2), 59–79
52. Bulbulia, J. A., Wildman, W. J., Sosis, R., & Schjoedt, U. (2021). Announcing a new type of manuscript submission: The “retake.” *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 11(1), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2021.1876333>
53. Cristofori, I., Zhong, W., Cohen-Zimmerman, S., Bulbulia, J. A., Gordon, B., Krueger, F., & Grafman, J. (2021). Brain networks involved in the influence of religion on empathy in male Vietnam war veterans. *Scientific Reports*, 11(1), 1–13
54. Deak, C. K., Hammond, M. D., Sibley, C. G., & Bulbulia, J. A. (2021). Individuals’ number of children is associated with benevolent sexism. *PLoS ONE*, 16(5), e0252194

55. 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>
56. Highland, B., Worthington, E. L., Davis, D. E., Sibley, C. G., & Bulbulia, J. A. (2021). National longitudinal evidence for growth in subjective well-being from spiritual beliefs. *Journal of Health Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13591053211009280>
57. 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>
58. Schjoedt, U., Wildman, W. J., Sosis, R., & Bulbulia, J. A. (2021). Celebrating the uninvited. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, *11*(2), 121–122
59. Stronge, S., Bulbulia, J. A., Davis, D. E., & Sibley, C. G. (2021). Religion and the development of character: Personality changes before and after religious conversion and deconversion. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *12*(5), 801–811
60. 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>
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66. 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>
67. 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>
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69. 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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72. 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>

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