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Why does intellectuality weaken faith and sometimes foster it?

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Intellectuality and religiosity are controversial concepts in terms of their relationship. Numerous studies suggested that intelligence and exposure to higher education reduce religiosity. Others posited, religiosity is positively associated with these factors or is unresponsive to them. The author asserts a dynamic model to address this ambiguity. Individuals make a choice when they are young, between holding a certain belief or disbelief on the one hand, or being a skeptic on the other. Subsequent intellectual achievements strengthen the chosen paradigm and makes a person's belief or disbelief stable but increases or decreases the suspicious belief based upon the situation. Intellectual development distort the internal consistency of the "dogmatic map" and people react to this distortion in different ways to make the dogmatic map consistent again. Believers ignore the distortion in favor of dogma, in the hope of a future solution or re-organize their dogmas to fit their intellectual achievements. Skeptics generally abandon their dogmas they suspect and begin to establish an independent cognitive map. Across the study, this model was tested through in-depth interviews with 53 subjects. The findings suggested that, increasing or decreasing belief and therefore to some extent religiousness; is an enhancive or reductive reading of the initial choice made in favor of doubt.

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Introduction

"I had hard questions when young, like 'why God allows innocent people to suffer on earth?'... I became an atheist... When I was 28 and read the Qur'an, it was original. It gets you to ask questions and then gives answers and then creates more questions but a couple of passages later I would see an answer. (Dr. Jeffrey Lang, Professor of Mathematics at University of Kansas)

"I was happy with the fulfillment of my Christian life; on the other hand, I had intellectual doubts. Faith and reason began a war within me, and it kept escalating. I would cry out to God for answers, and none would come... When I finally discarded faith, things became more and more clear. (Daniel Edwin Barker, an American activist, Wisconsin)"

Lang and Barker both questioned their current states and eventually decided upon reverse paths. Why identical intellectual patterns lead Lang and Barker to different paths, and why did the same pattern cause Lang to lose his belief first and then return to religion? Before working on the problem, three issues need to be clarified. First, the notion of 'belief' and 'faith' will be used as synonyms and point out an acknowledgement of a creator or cognitive orientation to a transcendental spirituality. Present study suggests that, belief and disbelief are iso-structural paradigms in which an individual chooses to be in one or the other. Since these choices cannot be improved, they cannot be measured¹. Nevertheless, the strength of belief could be determined by the level of individual's trust or respect for religious rules (dogma), since dogma is an element of faith. Indeed, in 80% of the 136 religiosity scales collected by Hill and Hood (1999) from 1935 to 1995, the extent to which the participant believed in the scriptures was questioned. This study suggests that the mentioned issue of 'trust' is the initiator of decreases or increases in religiosity. Second, although the article appears to focus on intellectuals, our results showed that the proposed dynamic answering the title, is valid for all skeptics who is experiencing life², but it become more visible in intellectual skeptics. In order to take advantage of this visibility, subjects were selected as mentioned in the 'Method' section, with exceptions. 'Intellectuality' is a difficult concept to clarify, as other prevalent notions, however, this research has been prepared in response to the uncertainty posed by a literature which has been reviewed under the sub-heading 'Are intellectuals more religious?' This literature shows that researchers linked religiosity and intellectuality to each other under two subtopics: While the first topic addresses the relationship between education level and religiosity, the other emphasized high mental capacity by tracing successful scientists and IQ test results. Therefore, the sample of this study includes academicians, successful experts, and participants with high education levels. Third, the present study made a distinction between 'respect for religious rules' and 'participation in religious rituals'³ and deals with the prior because (a) there are plenty of intellectuals among our subjects who strongly believe that religious rules are faultless, although they have significantly reduced their participation in religious rituals⁴. The relationship of these individuals with their dogma is different from skeptics, but some of them attend rituals as less as some skeptics⁵. There is an immanent relationship between faith and worship (Rappaport, 1999, p. 30) but there are no statistical findings in the literature on how absolute this relationship is, meantime this relation also depends on the effects of environmental factors (Cohen and Parsons, 2010, p. 180). For example, many participants of this research cited their changing social life as the reason for the decrease in their participation in religious rituals. The social environment of their adulthood was not producing the aura of

old family circle that encourages participation in religious rituals. (b) This study brings together atheists and believers, those who worship and those who do not, in a single psycho-dynamic framework.

The dynamic that throws Lang and Parker to opposite poles is not fully clear. There is also another unclear dynamic that able to alienate especially intellectual believers from their religion. Wide-ranging body of research exist on the nature of secularization and religious radicalism. These concepts approach religious shifts from a sociological framework, except for some studies in the field of radicalism (see Williams, 2017; Rink and Sharma, 2018; Koomen and van der Pligt, 2016; Kruglanski et al., 2014; Trip et al., 2019). On the secularism side psychological explanations are even more scarce (see Dobbelaere, 1999). There are many inclusive studies on psychological basics of religious behavior (see prominent ones by Hood, 2009; Dennet, 2006; Shermer, 2003; Pyysiainen, 2003; Andresen et al., 2001) but there has been less literature focusing on the psycho-dynamics of religious shifts (see Rambo, 1993; Paloutzian et al., 1999; Perez and Vallieres, 2019 and prominent books which are also focusing on religious conversion and spiritual transformations by Paloutzian and Park, 2005, pp. 335–339; Hood et al., 2009, pp. 206–242) still they did not elaborate on the relationship between intellectuality and belief except these articles (by Shenhav et al., 2012; Gervais and Nor-enzayan, 2012; Kelemen and Rosset, 2009; Farias et al., 2017).

It is accepted that intellectuality is inversely related with religiousness in general. The first three of the last cited articles above explain this situation by associating the strong analytic mind to the tendency to disbelief. However, this study supports the fourth one and argues that, there is no imperative relation between high analytical abilities and disbelief, on the contrary, analytical abilities might also foster belief. How does this dichotomy emerge? On the surface, there are multiple and complex causes of the believer's attitude towards religious rules. However, present study reveals that, two permanent cognitive disposition lies at the basis of opposite attitudes. Some believers behave as if they have a meta-cognitive understanding on the essence of religious rules (dogma). When dogma is under threat, they use this feature as a reference point to cover it or transform it if needed, so that dogma does not lose its rule-making dominion on human life. However, for other believers, the validity of dogma cannot be confirmed in an intuitive or metaphysical way⁶. This fundamental difference is activated along with intellectual development and causes the dogmatic map, which has lost its integrity with new information, to be reconstructed in different ways.

The concept of 'dogmatic map' was originally created by combining the 'cognitive map'⁷ concept and the notion of 'dogma' by bringing together the inevitable pre-suppositions and the rational process of mind. Psychologist Daniel Gilbert proposed that understanding a statement must begin with an attempt to believe it. You must first know what the idea would mean if it were true. Only then can you decide whether to believe it or not (Kahneman, 2011, p. 81). Heidegger states "Science does not think" (Glazebrook, 2013). Kuhn (2015, p. 37) with his paradigms, Jung (1964) with his archetypes share the same view: Human beings cannot be conscious without having pre-suppositions. Kuhn (2015) convincingly showed that, science or everyday intellectual processes are not independent of these preliminary assumptions which frame them. In this regard, a dogmatic map is a cognitive pattern of learned and constructed cause-effect relations that inevitably are induced by religious beliefs.

Before defining the two cognitive styles that lead the inconsistent dogmatic map to balance, we will take a look at the general picture that makes this work legitimate.

Are intellectuals more irreligious?

It is often assumed that individuals who devote their lives to research would be less religious than the general population (Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle, 1997, p. 188). The Religious Landscape Study by Pew (2014) surveyed more than 35,000 Americans from all 50 states about their religious affiliations and found that educated people are less likely to believe in God. Hungerman (2014), Sherkat and Ellison (1999), Johnson (1997), and Arias-Vazquez (2012) fortify these findings. On the other hand, within the denominations, trends would be different. According to Pew, among Muslims, education made little difference and, for Evangelicals (Smith, 1998) religious members generally have higher education than the non-religious. Iannaccone (1998, p. 1474) states that, in numerous analyses, the effect of education is positive and statistically significant for church attendance.

The study of Sacerdote and Glaeser (2001) tried to solve this puzzle by showing that in the US, education appears to decrease religious belief but attendance to religious practice increases. Schwadel (2011) creates a more complex viewpoint; education negatively affects exclusivist religious viewpoints but not belief in God or the afterlife and while it is positively affected by religious participation, it is also positively associated with questioning the role of religion in society. Ganzach et al. (2013) fortify this complexity by submitting that education has a positive effect on religiosity when religious background (defined by; how often a parent of the participant attended church in the last 12 months) is strong and a negative effect when religious background is weak. These informations tells us that education or gaining knowledge somehow shifts one's position against faith and religious activity. What about intellectuality?

The more eminent scientists were less religious than others; only 32 percent of 'greater' scientists believed in God (Leuba, 1934) and according to Graffin and Provine (2007) only 20 percent of honorific scientists said so. Most of the others were completely naturalist. Poythress (1975) surveyed 234 college undergraduates and found that religious believers as a group were found to be significantly less intelligent and more authoritarian than religious skeptics. Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle (1997, p. 180) surveyed Nobel Prize laureates in the sciences, as well as those in literature, there was a remarkable degree of irreligiosity, in comparison to the populations from which they came. Kanazawa (2010) analyzed a large national sample and interviewed with young adults. At this interview, the "not religious at all" group had the highest IQ (103.09). Lynn et al. (2009) found that in a sample of 137 countries the correlation between national IQ and disbelief in God is 0.60. Most recently, a meta-analysis of 63 studies showed that there is a moderate negative relationship between intelligence and intrinsic religiosity (Zuckerman et al., 2013). This review found that the association was stronger for religious beliefs than religious behavior. Jack et al. (2016) showed that, religious and spiritual belief have been negatively associated with measures of analytic thinking.

The large literature above demonstrates that, high intellectuality and low religious orientations are overlapping, while keeping in mind that there are still genius strong believers among intellectuals. Rational thought is not unequivocally a distinctive feature of skeptics and strong analyticality do not describes only some atheists (Lindeman and Lipsanen, 2016, p. 190). M32, the subject who rearranged his dogma several times to protect his belief (see Appendix), had entered among the top 50 students in the university exam, in a country of 67 million (Turkey's population in the year of 2000). M35 is another believer and organizer of his dogma, graduated from a top-class university (METU) and F39 also same. These examples indicate that, a factor, other than mental abilities which have termed 'discernment'^{8c} influences the relationship of analytical thinkers with their religious beliefs.

Explanations for the problematic

There have been conceptual attempts to explore the relationship between intellectuality and religiosity. Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle's description (1997) among them are remarkable; the situation was stable in the early days of science; the trouble arose later when science seemed to be disagreeing with genesis about the origins of the world and evolution. This explanation which is for the social level seems suitable for the individual level as well.

In Christian countries, high atheism rates are observed among 16–29 years old: 70% in the UK and 91% in Czech Republic. In Estonia, between 70% and 80% of young adults say they have no religious affiliation. 59% of young people in the UK have never attended religious services (Sherwood, 2018). But older adults around the world are still more religious (Pew, 2018). Since the doctrine of Christianity has not changed in the last 30 years, this situation supports the viewpoint of Beit-Hallahmi and maybe means that Christianity cannot afford the spirit of the age. Indeed, millennials are leaving religion but embracing spirituality (Newman, 2015). In the interviews of present work, readers will observe how some intellectuals reinterpret the dogmas of their religion. They will do it not to lose their faith. In this regard, the essence (re-adjustability) of the dogma should be an important factor in the attitude of the intellectual towards religion.

Rambo (1993) focused on individual transitions from one religion to another or from disbelief to belief and vice versa. He touched on the role of intellectuality in changing religion but did not explain in detail how. A few studies mentioned below, explain the inversely proportional relationship between intellectuality and religiousness by presenting evidences that analytic thinking distracts people from religion. Shenhav et al. (2012) published a paper indicating that inducing a mindset that favors intuition, increases self-reported belief in God. In response to this, Gervais and Norenzayan (2012) showed that orienting people to think analytically reduced their tendency to believe in God. Kelemen and Rosset (2009) supported this finding by stating that manipulations, which inhibit analytical thinking, increase the tendency to think teleologically.

The author argues that experimental inductions (priming effects) which activate analytic processing like Rodin's 'The Thinker' (Gervais and Norenzayan, 2012) do not reduce intuition. Instead, such priming effects alters the manifestations of intuitive flux (belief) temporarily. Such effects might be valid for the majority but exceptional cases in these studies has not been brought to the fore. Are there any subjects that have not been affected by these inductions?

A respectable amount of the subjects in present study welcomed the question with an ironic smile when the interviewer asked, "Do you believe in God?" Of course, they believe! and no force could change it. Also, all of the atheists were in such a certain state. The author thinks that aforementioned processes in the studies above revealed the nature of intuition. Is intuition oriented towards an unsuspected God, or is it oriented towards a suspicious God? As Farias et al. (2017, p. 1) stated, these studies suffer from the use of a culturally limited sample (mostly North American university students). I suspect that the scales of these studies measured mostly the skeptics. To clarify this uncertainty, first of all, undoubted and doubtful believers will be distinguished theoretically. The first group was called 'knowers' and the second called 'skeptics' (who is in doubt).

Knowing, doubt, and disbelief

This study is based on two paradigms (belief and disbelief) and identify two different cognitive style (knowing and doubt) embedded in belief paradigm. If the individual preferred the belief paradigm, then he chooses to be a doubter (skeptical) or an

undoubted believer (knowing). Individuals make their choices when they are still young, and then often confirm their choices throughout their lives.

Children under the age of 10 tend to believe in a supreme presence and intelligent design. They assume everything in the world is created for a purpose (Barrett, 2012). Later, people enter their youth by making a choice. Caldwell-Harris et al. (2011) asked 42 atheists, "At what age did you come to the belief that God did not exist?" 42% of them stated, they converted before the age of 15. Vetter and Green (1931) found that 75% of the attendants had converted to atheism before 24. Seven of the eight atheists interviewed in this study stated that they were atheists before the age of 20. In the same breath, most of the skeptics involved in this study stated that they have been aware of their attitudes since an early age.

People also live for confirming their pre-existing beliefs or hypotheses, whether they are actually true or not (Scott, 1993; Nickerson, 1998; Oswald and Grosjean, 2004)⁹. Human beings seem to have an infinite capacity to self-deception (Rambo, 1993). The certain believer confirms his certainty, an atheist confirms himself as a god and a skeptic confirms his doubt. It is noteworthy that Subject M23 presents material phenomenas as evidence of God's existence while the same phenomenas would appear ordinary, even banal, to a skeptic or an atheist. This is self-validation from a knowing state of mind. **Interviewer:** *Do you believe by seeking evidence or without doing such verification?* **M23:** *... consider the mortality of humans ... consider the greening of a tree. While there are such clear evidences, it is the weakness of faith still searches for that evidence. M23 is also aware of the skeptic or atheist state of mind. He still thinks that they cannot see the relation between the ordinary things and God. A skeptic confirms or denies his belief with his rational mind. Skeptic Subject M21 says, "As I can't prove an abstract being through my limited rational mind, I have said to myself, 'What happens if I believe? What happens if I don't believe?' I have rationally tried to juxtapose the advantages and disadvantages, then preferred to believe by arriving at the conclusion that believing is a more rational thing to do."*

Atheists inevitably become free from doubt; still, there could be skeptics among believers. Not to believe in God, is to believe in everything¹⁰; or not to believe in God, is being a 'god' in which the whole existence lies within his self. For an atheist, the sole reference point which he could prove the 'existence' by using it, is himself, and this individual cannot doubt his own existence while he doubts, as Descartes (2017) pointed out. According to belief-disbelief concept of this study, an atheist does not discuss the image of God. He has a new god and it is himself.¹¹

Atheist refers: 'I'¹² decide if God exist. So, if 'I' decide, it should not exist. If the existence of something depends on my assumption, that thing cannot be transcendent than 'I'. The atheist subject 'M15' says: "How come existence comes into being from nothing? ... God is a possible explanation for this question, however there may be another explanation ... For me, there is no difference between those two explanations." On the other hand, skeptics (also believers) believe in the existence of some 'Thing' which transcends the individual-Self. This 'Thing' has to be transcendent than 'I' because 'I' wants to belong to a unity by disappearing in that 'Thing'. 'I' do that by giving self-sacrifice. Martyrdom is a sacrifice, why would I do that? Sacrifice is an evidence that unification with the 'Thing' will not occur on a lateral space.

In the in-depth interviews with 275 natural and social scientists at 21 top U.S. research universities (Ecklund and Long, 2011), most of the interviewees who said they did not believe in God, also claimed they were spiritually oriented. These scientists reflected the following features in their speeches: (a) had an

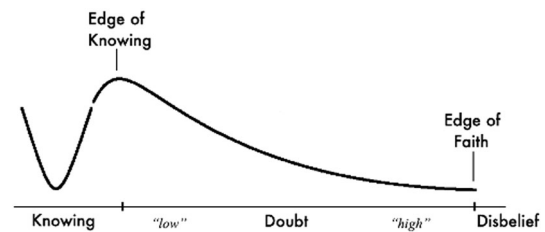


Fig. 1 Illustration of belief and disbelief paradigms. Two cognitive styles (knowing & doubt) are embedded in the former paradigm.

astonishment regarding the universe [Contrary to this view, Richard Dawkins (2005), as an atheist, bases the concept of 'strangeness' on the fact that our minds have not evolved with extremely rare or inaccessible phenomena. He tries to explain that, the strangeness of something is the work of our position in the universe as opposed to emanating from the supremacy or inaccessibility of that thing.], (b) were engaged in an attempt to search for a meaning of the universe that transcends its image, (c) experienced a desire to belong to the integrity of the universe in a way that had not yet happened, and (d) possessed a desire to give to unpaid charity for society. Each of these orientations are reflections of the need to belong to a transcendent cause, and this makes it right for us to take these individuals into the dimension of doubt. From the perspective of the present study, most of them believe in God in some way.

If the individual 'knows' the God without any doubt, his case reflects C.G. Jung's response to the speaker in the interview series named 'Face to Face' in 1959:

Speaker: *Did you believe in God?*

Jung: *Oh yes.*

Speaker: *Do you now believe in God?*

Jung: *Now!?! (...he thinks..) Difficult to answer. I know.. (he smiles) I don't need to believe. I know.*

Metaphorically, the one who falls into the pit of 'knowing' (see Fig. 1) is at the eye of a hurricane or at the bottom of a whirlpool. Just beyond the cognitive chaos that starts at the limen of the vortex, belongs an absolute certainty created by that chaos, wrapped by it, and has even become an inseparable element of it. These depictions also apply to atheists, except the notion of 'insight'. Insight is used in this study closely with the notion of 'knowing'. While 'knowing' expresses the situation, 'insight' expresses the ability to know. 'Knowing' is a supraliminal cognitive state. It arises from an expansion of the conscious-Ego carried towards the unconsciousness. This expansion creates its own footprint on the conscious. One dimension of this expansion should be related to the divine, according to Jung (2006, p. 215): God is always man-made¹³. Aforementioned footprint was named as 'discernment' in this study. This is called '*feraset*' in Arabic and it means to be able to distinguish from right and wrong. This footprint, with Jung's expression (2006), is similar to the wash ashore contents of the unconscious sea. Discernment is only an image of insight, and it constitutes a reference point for dogma's accuracy. Those who have discernment, the knowing group, may transform the interpretation of the fundamental suppositions (dogma) of their dogmatic map, so that it matches the newly added scientific informations. They dare transform their dogma because they feel that the new interpretation is compatible with the wishes of God. However, the doubtful believers cannot perform this, or they show insufficient performance. M21, who is a clear skeptic, denies the supraliminal cognition by stating, "I believe that those who say that they would

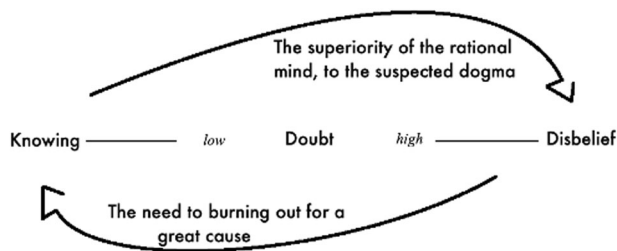


Fig. 2 Two opposing impulses. These impulses indicated by two arrows, contribute to the change of the skeptic’s respect to his dogma.

not seek any evidence while believing, have weaker faiths. I believe that such people are hypocrites. Doesn’t the Holly Qur’an say ‘Don’t you ever contemplate? Don’t you ever think?’ But knowers like M2 reject this claim: “I have never been a person who needed evidence to have faith ... I know the existence of God without any evidence.” Sceptics get their dogma from their traditions as believers do but they cannot confirm it in an intuitive way. When a confirmation needed, they prefer not to touch to culturally presented forms. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to be examined later.

The concept of ‘doubt’ refers to the cognitive preference by which a skeptic tries to prove his dogma¹⁴ by using his logical mind. However, the knowing individual accepts his dogma or the essence of it as it is, and basically attempts to prove his mind to his dogma. Sceptics may be contented to doubt the religious rules because they may not want to surrender to these rules when rules contradict with their desires. For example, the deist M53 was asked about the difference of God he believes from the God of theists. He said, “Let’s say that there are things the person wants to do, but according to God it is bad, there is a conflict, there should not be such.” These desires can be defined by the ‘Shadow’ in Jungian psychology, by ‘ID’ in Freudian psychology, by ‘nefs-i emmare’ in Islam mysticism or by ‘physical needs’ in terms of Maslow. In this case, a skeptic believes, but cannot be sure that ‘what he believes’ is ‘what he must believe’. When interviewer asked deist M53: “How did you get to this point?” M53 answers: “... I started to think that something divine should not be so controversial... If something (he means Qur’an) is universal ... it should always be open and obvious.” A knower would answer M53 as follows: “Why do you trust your mind so much when judging the Qur’an?” Divine is complicated to M53 because, he doesn’t have a kind of meta-theory (insight) that helping him to choose the right theory among other alternatives or to make these possibilities consistent with each other.

Descartes (Popkin, 2003, p. 148) emphasizes the relation of doubt to belief and points out the ultimate doubt:

“Unless one were willing to pursue the possibility of raising doubts to the end, one could never hope to discover any truth untainted by doubt or uncertainty.”

According to Descartes, doubt is always about faith, even though strong skeptics may not be aware. So, when the individual reaches the end of doubt (Edge of Faith and Edge of Knowing, in Fig. 1), either finds a ‘god’ or a ‘God’.

The skeptic is certain of his reason because he may confirm it by his own suspicion, but the dogma is behind a curtain. As Legare et al. (2012) points out, this view is implied by the assumption that scientific explanations prevail against supernatural ones due to their superiority at providing empirically testable explanations. This certainty creates a gravitation pull that directs the skeptic to his mind, and this exertion of force has been identified as “The superiority of the rational mind to the suspected dogma” (see Fig. 2). A skeptic may not have a dogma to

put his hearth and soul for the sake, but he still has the deepest need of humankind: to endeavor for the sake of a great cause. According to Maslow (1971) when other needs are satisfied, the individual connects his Ego to an entity that is greater than his being or beyond the material world. This fundamental need is deeply held; while other needs are still being felt and answered. If the skeptic has begun to feel the need of ‘burning out for a great cause’ sufficiently (see Fig. 2), he may begin to construct his personal dogmatic map in a way that confirms his dogma. Because, the dogma that was previously suspected is more valuable now. Thereby, a coherent dogmatic map would start to appear again, as it did for Subject F7: “I did not grow up in a family that fulfilled religious rituals... I have started reading the Qur’an when I became middle aged and I have started realizing that each one of the religious rituals had their own logic in terms of their personal and social outcomes.”

Dynamics of the dogmatic map. Dogmatic map consists of two parts: (a) Dogma and (b) Information Sets. There is also a (c) Deeper Dogma (see Table 1) which is not part of the dogmatic map, but its character (there is a God versus I am the god) and the relationship the believer establishes with it (I know the God versus I believe in God without knowing It¹⁵) affect the interaction between dogma and information sets.

In the case of knowers, deeper dogma serves as a reference point for which parts of dogma can be re-considered to adapt to the changes in the information set. In other respect, it also serves as a reference point for clarifying, which parts of the dogma are untouchable. The topics contained in the Qur’an can be addressed under three groups (Rahman, 2009): (a) Belief Principles, includes principles that should be believed (akaid), principles of worship (eibada) and moral issues (akhlaq). (b) Principles of Civil Order, includes prohibited and criminal offenses and penalties to be applied (ukubad) and governing relations between man and man and man and state (mueamala). There are also ontological and metaphysical issues that can be dealt with under the title of (c) Nature. Cosmogony, creation, space and earth are among them.

During the interviews it was observed that, subjects considered to be knowers, avoided interfering with the issues included by group ‘a’ and ‘b’ but they have been very liberal in addressing the issues related to ‘Nature’. M32 is a good example for this situation. He stated that he had a few doubts about the principles of the Qur’an on matters such as marriage and inheritance, he could not resolve these doubts completely yet but suspended them. On the other hand, when asked about his view of ‘evolution’, he made brave reinterpretations as seen in Appendix.

Current dogmatic maps are subject to creative destruction if there is an information entry into the system, because new information needs to be added and it often does not fit the existing map. For example, the knowledge that ‘man was created from clay’¹⁶ is the primitive interpretation of Surah Ar-Rahman 14th/Quran, and in this form, it is an Islamic dogma. For the individual with little knowledge, this dogma becomes his dogmatic map, explains the truth while demonstrating how he should relate to the world. Intellectual acquisitions must be integrated appropriately into this prototype. For example, if there is convincing evidence that ‘man may have evolved from primates’, this information at first glance, is incompatible with the dogma above. When such loss of internal consistency appears in the dogmatic map the person experiences a cognitive conflict. According to Festinger (1957), such mismatches causes a tension between what is actually happening and what it supposed to occur. In order to solve this conflict, the dogma and the new information set should be integrated into each other.

Table 1 Parts of the Dogmatic map.

D O G M A T I C M A P^a has weak internal consistency for skeptics			
	Deeper dogma	Dogma for knowers and skeptics. Axioms for atheists	Information set
Knower	There is a God <i>insight</i>	(a) Usually, culturally obtained, (b) some parts of it are instinctively in-violable while some others violable, (c) when needed ^b violable ones would re-considered by new information sets under insight supervision.	Fictionalized by dogma
Skeptic	There is a God	(a) Only, culturally obtained, (b) no attempt to violate any part or re-consider when needed ^b because it is something suspected and the replaced one will not be different.	Mostly fictionalized by axioms other than dogma
Atheist	I am the god	(a) Usually, originally obtained, (b) any part of it can be abandoned when needed or re-considered by new information sets.	Fictionalized by axioms

^aPresent study prefer to use the concept of 'Cognitive Map' for atheists.
^bIntellectual individuals have higher needs to re-fictionalize their dogma, axioms and information sets, because they are more exposed to new information that is not compatible with existing dogma and axioms.

The integration process of supernatural and natural explanations into a single explanation is defined as 'integrated thinking'¹⁷ by Legare et al. (2012). Ashforth (2002) gives an example from Africa which unprotected sex is regarded as a proximate cause of AIDS whereas witchcraft is regarded as the ultimate cause (e.g., witches are believed to be capable of putting an AIDS-infected person in your path). "Supernatural AIDS" notion is a reaction to the information people receive from AIDS education programs indicating that witchcraft does not cause AIDS, enabling them to maintain witchcraft as an explanatory system for illness and misfortune generally (Legare et al., 2012). Since dogma is a simple proposition (witchcraft leads to AIDS) in this example, its position in the cause chain could have been changed easily. However, dogma can be complicated like the 10th versicle of Surah of Luqman. In this case a knower may re-organize the original wording of the verse to eliminate the contradiction when needed.

Interviewer asked atheist **M34** if he could give examples to the contradictions he found in the Qur'an and **M34** said: "It is said in the Qur'an that 'mountains are nailed as pillars to the surface in order to prevent tremors on earth' but today, geology science proves that the mountains float over the magma layer." Traditional Qur'anic scripts translates the 10th versicle of Luqman, as **M34** described. On the other hand, Prof. Okuyan (2016) re-considers the versicle: "The word mountain in Arabic is not expressed with the word used in this versicle. The mountain means 'al jabal' but here, the word 'revasiye' has been used. The word 'revasi' means actually 'weights' and 'pressures.' So, the meaning is 'Allah implemented heavy pressures on earth.'" The force of gravity might have been mentioned here, while in the previous versicle it is implied that how objects in space are far away from each other.

Re-organizing dogma is one of the techniques to resolve the conflict. Another way is to re-evaluate the information set by (a) *distorting it in a way that does not conflict with current dogma* (there is no example for this option in this article) or (b) by *re-conceiving it under the light of the current dogma*. Subject **M52** did the latter. He reconsidered the contingency of illegitimate relationships and consequences of the punishment imposed on these relationships by Qur'an. In his initial consideration, the punishment seemed heavy to him, but in his later consideration, he found that the sentence imposed in the Qur'an was directed towards illegitimate industries that dominate the public sphere rather than the individual, because there should be four witnesses according to Qur'an who saw the adultery and this is a difficult condition. **M52** did not discuss the dogma, did not reject it or did not ignore the resulting conflict, but began to see the information set targeted by dogma from a new perspective. His previous point of view was based on one of the concepts proposed by Kahneman (2011, p. 245), 'the inside view' which is not

supported by statistical data or probabilities. His latter perspective is based on 'the outside view' which includes the expanding consequences of punishment in time and space. According to our theory, the operation performed by **M52** requires discernment because it is cognitively exhausting, there is a need for reason to endure it.

If the dogmatic map cannot be re-constructed easily, and (a) if the individual has discernment, then *the resulting conflict would be ignored in favor of the current dogma*, in the hope of a future solution. However, if the individual is a skeptic (b) then *the resulting conflict generally appears as a suspicion towards the current dogma*. When dogma contradicts the scientific knowledge, scientific knowledge has an advantage through evidence but there is no insight to support dogma. Some skeptics of this study went through a similar process and became deists. At this stage, the dogmatic map begins to decompose into two segments, as a "suspected dogma" and "relatively independent cognitive map". Such intellectuals generally augment their suspicion by reaffirming it. The dogmatic map may lose its internal consistency completely or this process might reverse to create a stable dogmatic map again. In this case, it is an issue about what extent the dogmas of the new stable map are compatible with the norms of the society or to what extent they are fed by discernment. Let us examine this systematically:

Skeptic **M31** got a new information. He says: "I have been reading on archeology for the last year. When I was studying the myths, I saw that the Biblical Flood has been considered by many different societies such as the Sumerians, the Egyptians and the like." This information reduced the internal consistency of his dogmatic map because he has created three new dogmatic options for **M31** (see Table 2) that allows him to doubt his former belief (dogma): 'Biblical Flood story was written in the Qur'an by God through the prophet'. Now he needs to re-build his dogmatic map in a consistent manner by selecting one of these options. Options of **M31** are, if Biblical Flood happened (1a) 'Different societies such as the Sumerians, the Egyptians, etc., took the story from previous civilizations, while the Qur'an took it from God' This option was suggested by the interviewer during the chat: "I think that the Biblical Flood might have taken place 70,000 years ago" This proposal explains why the biblical flood is present in all cultures and thus helps to preserve the argument that the Qur'an is not the subject of another source, but is still the word of God. (1b) 'The Qur'an took the story from previous civilizations.' On the other hand, if Biblical Flood did not happen (2) "Societies which lived with their fears created the Biblical Flood story (Noah saved the creatures and humankind) as an image of help." **M31** has stated the last option during the interview: "I started to think, the stories that the monotheist religions tell, have been derived

Table 2 Dogmatic options that appear for M31 when new information is available.

	Dogma or Axiom	Information set
Previous state of M31		
0 Biblical Flood happened.	Biblical Flood story was written in the Qur'an by God through the prophet Muhammed.	Biblical Flood is mentioned in all scriptures.
M31 After studying the myths		
1 Biblical Flood happened.	(a) Different societies such as the Sumerians, the Egyptians, etc. took the story from previous civilizations, while the Qur'an took it from God. (b) The Qur'an took the story from previous civilizations	The Biblical Flood exists in both religious books and stories of all ancient civilizations.
2 Biblical Flood did not happen.	Societies which lived with their fears created the Biblical Flood story (prophet Noah saved the creatures and humankind) as an image of help.	

from the previous stories. I started to understand that the societies which lived with their fears created an image of help.”

Which one will **M31** choose? If he chooses ‘1a’ dogma will be protected. If he chooses ‘1b’ dogma will be protected but will lost its sanctuary. If he chooses ‘2’ then dogma is completely wrong. **M31** could have chosen option ‘1a’ which have been suggested by the interviewer, but he explained why he did not choose: “... however it does not explain why every society living nearby water sources have the story of the Biblical Flood.” However, a knower may bring new defenses against this claim: ‘Perhaps most ancient civilizations were by the river, or maybe those who were in touch with the river are grasping better what the flood is.’ As it turns out, this is an endless debate because it is based on justifications which built on two main approaches; to be knower or being in doubt towards the dogma. **M31** does not prefer the interviewer’s recommendations because he cannot find a probabilistic difference between that option and the others. Nevertheless, we observed that **M31** is prone to rejecting dogma by choosing option ‘2’ rather than re-considering the dogma by choosing option ‘1a’ instead. Naturally Qur’an is not inspired to him and was not inspired to anyone either except the prophet, however knowers tend to choose the option ‘1a’ systematically.

This study claims that dogma and axiom concepts have internal consistency. The concept of ‘Deeper Dogma’ indicates a singular assumption, but dogma and axiom concepts are sets of assumptions. Their internal consistency means that the assumptions they contain do not contradict with each other. The internal consistency of the dogmatic map means that, it is not based on more than one founder assumption set. The dogmatic map without internal consistency has at least two constitutive sets of assumptions as dogmas and originally obtained axioms.

The ‘Information set’ could be a cluster of cause–effect relations in which every relation has been induced by a dogma or an axiom as a constituent assumption. For example, according to the Qur’an, alcohol is bad and prohibited¹⁸. Let us assume that an information set based on this dogma consists of two cause–effect relations: (1) Drinking alcohol kills brain cells (O’Connor, 2004) and (2) alcohol is a reason for many crimes (Bennet and Holloway, 2005, p. 12). If an information that contradicts dogma, added into this set like (3) drinking wine about a glass per day offers some benefits (Sobel, 2019), a conflict arises: This can be resolved in four ways: (a) The conflict ignored in favor of the dogma by a knower. (b) The information set is re-read by a believer; **Old set:** Alcohol is completely harmful. **New set-a:** Total harm of alcohol is more than its total benefits. **New set-b:** Even if it is completely useful to human body, it is still completely bad because God has forbidden it¹⁹. The ‘New set-b’ is an example of how information can be read through two different paradigms. The value or goodness-badness of things has an intrinsic resource²⁰ as well as extrinsic (Hood and Bloom, 2008).

(c) The skeptic begins to suspect dogma and perhaps acquires a new moral judgment (axiom) like ‘social drinking is acceptable’. (d) Dogma is re-considered by a knower. This example is related to ‘ukubad’, the ban on alcohol in Islam is clear, so it is almost impossible to re-consider 90th/Surah Al-Ma’idah.

Other theoretical implications. It is plausible to assume that strong skeptics would feel the aforementioned Maslowian need as a strong negative feeling²¹ or a kind of dissatisfaction. Because they cannot endeavor for a great cause and yet they are not the ‘great cause’ like an atheist. The existence of this need depends on the existence of the external subject in which the individual wants to be exhausted. In this respect, it is theoretically expected that atheists do not feel this pain like knowers. Indeed, Buggle et al. (2000) found depression scores to be lowest for strong Christians, followed by convinced atheists, whereas moderate believers were most likely to be depressed (Schnell, 2015, p. 273). These informations also support us for the idea that belief and disbelief are exclusive paradigms. As a matter of fact, the atheists **M22**, **M30**, and **M34** declared that they used to be afraid of the afterlife, but now there was no trace of fear and they have no unrest. A large number of atheists who write about existential crisis on the forum of the Richard Dawkins Foundation (2013, May 5) gave similar statements with our subjects. But these statements contradict the statistics: Suicide cases have a significant prevalence among atheists (Stack, 1983; Stack and Lester, 1991; Kanita et al., 2005; Wu et al., 2015). In atheists, the ‘need to burn out for a great cause’ seems to have turned into the ‘need to explain the unknown’. Based on the discussions in the forum above, the author thinks that some atheists are able to develop cognitive mechanisms which prevent them from returning to existential questions and to focus on the right points in the external world. But some of them are unsuccessful. Study of Schnell and Keenan (2011) with 102 atheists supports the argument that there are two different groups in terms of having success with existential crisis. They have identified two independent meaning subsystems: “Low-commitment” type was characterized by low meaningfulness, and a high frequency of crises of meaning and “Broad-commitment” type atheists exhibited higher levels of meaningfulness and rare crises of meaning.

While believers resolve all possible unknowns with the image of God, atheists seem to be divided into those who successfully compensate unknowns or who cannot. Those who cannot, are likely to be responsible for high suicide rates. An atheist, nick named “Merrick” in his 30s asked on the web site (2013, May 5), “I am consumed by the terror of death and the meaninglessness is casts on my entire life and everything I love. I’m wondering how other atheists find a way to move forward...” Merrick has existential dread and each of the atheist authors who gave advice

to Merrick in Appendix (under the 'Forum' title), seems to deal with the situation well.

Daniel Edwin's paradigmatic leap²² towards atheism may be facilitated by the fact that he had a dogma that is not worth to living for. But this may not be the only cause for such a jump. Rambo (1993, pp. 48–55) determined various catalysts for the crises that ignite the conversions. Outstanding ones are following: mystical experiences, near-death experiences, severe illness and healing, 'is that all there is?', desire for transcendence, altered state of consciousness, etc. Present study meets the 'desire for transcendence' factor with the concept of 'the need to burning out for a great cause'. This factor is one of the two opposing forces that manipulate skeptics on their path.

A personality trait may also make conversions easier. Individuals prone to be un-doubted, are prone to great devotions. Great devotion means, "I am renouncing from myself, for the sake of something that is not yet covered by my individuality". But the power of having consent for pain, can rapidly turn into the power to abandon the Maslowian need for self-actualization. It is logical to argue that, individuals who can give up this need could be strong skeptics and get ready to be an atheist. Zuckerman et al. (2013) discussed this idea, and stated that intelligent people are less likely to conform; therefore, they are more likely to resist religious dogmas. The unfulfilled need to explain the unknown would create a sense of dissatisfaction during stages of crises in atheists. It would not be easy to bear it. As Jeffrey Lang experienced, the paradigmatic shifts from disbelief to the pit of knowing, would emerge, because the individual-god could not explain the unknown. He would then search for what he wants to burn out for. Because he cannot not burn out for himself except for suicide.

Is there an 'Insight'? The notion of 'discernment' which separates the knowing believer and the skeptic, is based on the theoretic existence of an 'absolute knowledge'. Although this information has various projections, it actually emerges from a singular source. We have the right to make this assumption because, first, there is an absolute truth (God) for those who belong to the belief paradigm and second, some people act or believe as if there is an absolute way of knowing it (God). According to the central limit theorem, people are normally distributed in terms of many features. It means, this absolute knowledge can be intuited or represented by some of the believers.

On the other side, skeptics reject a metaphysical source that converges people cognitively. Deist M49 expresses this idea as follows: "*Metaphysics is more than one for me... Is there any God? (He believes there is). When we say yes, everything we attribute to It is an imposition, is a bad suspicion. There is anger, arrogance, selfishness and fantasy in it.*" According to M49 trueness cannot emanate from human because man does not have a metaphysical connection (insight) with God. Whereas, according to a knower, the reason for this is that man has broken ties with the God.

Atheists perceive religion as an externality produced by culture. They cannot or do not perceive a supraliminal source for religious thought. Atheist M30 declared that before becoming an atheist, he could not understand "*why people care so much about religion?*" All rituals appear to have no benefit to society. This questioning led M30 to abandon his religion. His ability to ask this means that he never had any kind of insight. That is, people do not believe for a benefit, people believe in just because they believe (Primmer, 2018). M30 has attended the Dhikr rituals of Muslims, the rituals of Christians and the rituals of Assyrians. He concluded that "*All of them play a game in their own way*". This statement brings to mind the aphorism of Nietzsche (2017), "Those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by

those who could not hear the music." But M30 interprets this sentence from his point of view, arguing that music is created by those who can hear. At the end of his interview, M30 opened a picture of a cartoon on his cell phone. In the cartoon, a group of people are walking with their umbrellas in the rain. One of them closes his umbrella, and the sun starts shining only on his face. The participant means to say, "Have you opened your umbrella because it was raining, or has it started to rain because you have opened your umbrella".

The study

Fifty-three persons participated in the study; of those 21 were academicians from Hitit University and Erciyes University in Turkey. The remaining 29 participants were engineers, public servants, doctors, or businessmen and 3 of them were students. There were 46 male and 7 female subjects. A structured interview was conducted with each participant face to face; 49 of 53 have been used directly in the article and placed in Appendix. The mean age of Appendix was: 39.3 and the age range was: 21–63 (SD = 10.51).

Method. This study aimed at working with intellectual individuals and achieved this in some manner, but the study did not bear the cost of defining intellectuals precisely, due to the fact that high intellectuality is not a prerequisite for the development of the dogmatic map, but it nourishes the process. Satisfactory results from interviews confirmed this decision.

Nevertheless, efforts were made to ensure that most of the subjects had the following criterias: (a) to have an intelligence above average and (b) to make considerable amount of reading. Snowball sampling method was used, and subjects were picked on the general opinion of their friends about whether they met these criterias or not. The opinions of two or three friend were taken for each selected subject. If these opinions were matched, the subject was accepted to the study. According to Barabasi (2014) due to the dynamics of 'six degrees of seperation', almost everybody (especially intellectuals) knows someone intellectual. The researcher told the first man: "Who's the smartest and most-reading friend you ever know?" This question was applied to each subject in the row. The CV of each subject, projects they worked on, the level of their reading and their education level were questioned during the interview, but in order to protect their identity, most of this information had to be kept confidential. It was determined that 37 of the 53 participants were in the first 30 thousand people in the university exam they attended before the age of 20. This means 37 of them have entered the qualified universities of the country. The last criteria were (c) keeping the age between 30 and 55 years as far as possible. The lower limit was about 30, because at this age, the individual was expected to reach an adequate level of knowledge and life experience. So, the effect of an individual's intellectual gains on his religious tendencies could be measured. Also, the development process of individual's personality was expected to be completed. The higher limit of age was 55, because it was assumed that individuals beyond this age would be more inclined to spirituality (as they were closer to death) and the data set was not wanted to be divided into two segments. Since it was understood that even primitive intellectual achievements or some life experience was sufficient to observe religious shifts, a downward age limit was not sought for some subjects. Due to this, there are two individuals over 55 years old and six individuals below 30 years old.

The scale and data collection. The researcher spoke face to face with the subjects and asked them whether they believe in God or

not. The second question was “How did your religiosity changed over time? For example, were you more religious in the past, or now you are more religious?” Those who declared faith, generally began to distinguish between their participation in rituals and the power of their belief in God during the interview process, like Subject **M20**: “I used to pray five times a day, now I only attend Friday prayers. It is a matter of fact that there is a decrease in my participation into the rituals however my faith in my heart is stable...” Subject **M21** started talking whit this declaration: “I am less religious now in terms of my participation into the rituals. In terms of my faith in my heart I can say that there is an increase in that aspect.” According to the general impression of the researcher, the subjects understood the ‘strong respect for religious rules’ with the concept of ‘strong faith’. The researcher adapted to this situation to ensure sample integrity and began to ask ‘how their participation in rituals and their beliefs changed over time’ to the subjects who did not declare this distinction.

Based on the explanations made in the introduction section, the researcher focused on the belief part and asked the reason for the increase or decrease of their faith. The answers to these questions were not directed to any domain and were naturally divided into two: The change in the increase or decrease was either (a) the result of a change in the social network of the subjects or (b) was a result of the intellectual gains they acquired over time. The interviewer focused on the second cause because this study deals with mental and intuitive activities of individuals rather than social, despite these two types of activities cannot be completely separated from each other. Individuals were encouraged to talk about the relationship between their intellectual acquisitions and their religiosity. These additional questions were frequently used during the chat: (a) How did your picture of God change? (b) Have you been in doubt about any knowledge or principles in the Qur’an or about such traditional religious rules? How did you deal with such conflicts? (c) Do you believe without evidence or is evidence necessary? (d) What do you think about the theory of evolution? The answers in Appendix are largely the result of these series of questions. Also, atheists were asked why and how they abandoned their faith in God. Most of the atheist participants had declared that they believed God in the past. They were also asked how they explained the problem of existence (Why existence exist?). Some of them were asked whether they felt a spiritual emptiness or not. Some subjects were returned during the research period. The available demographic information from the interviews is shown in Table 5, Appendix.

The analysis

Under this heading present theoretical discussion will be tested by referring more to our subjects and by taking an analytical attitude. Soon, we will examine the various attitudes that believers took when reconstructing their dogmatic maps, but first, we will try to distinguish knowers and skeptics in a more objective manner.

Distinguishing the certain from doubtful. In the later stage of the study, 17 believers were returned, and the following statement was addressed to them:

“When I encounter any situation or idea that is not related to the basic principles of my religion, if I have not learned about the subject from a fiqh (Islamic law) book or a cleric (imam) who I trust and if it is not possible to make a comparison with a related situation, I would have a firm and keen sense about whether that situation or idea is in accordance with God’s approval.”

Table 3 Subjects objectively separated.

Knowers		Skeptics			
5	4	3	2	1	
M27		M35	M33	M29	[A]
M32		F39			
M40		F50		F42	
	M16 M24	M2	M49 ^a	M25 M43 ^a M45 ^a M53 ^a	[B]

Toned figures are those who re-constructed their dogma.
M25 and **F42** are subjects who re-constructed their dogma without ‘discernment’
^aDeist subjects.

They were asked to choose the option which suits them from a likert scale: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree. Positive answers given to this question correspond to the concepts of “insight” and “discernment” defined by present study. Therefore, answers of ‘I agree’ (4) and ‘I strongly agree’ (5) are placed under the knowing region in Table 3.

Nine of the 17 believers (subjects at the [A] section of Table 3) were asked in the interviews, ‘what did they do when encountered suspected situations in the Qur’an’. Those who declared that they have re-constructed their dogmas are shown with shaded images (**M27**, **M32**, **M40**, and **F39**). **F42** and **M25** did this indirectly. In the same case, **M29** and **F50** ignored the contradiction and did not touch the dogma, while **M33** and **M35** confirmed the contradiction but suspended the problematic. This table support the idea that, those who have ‘insight’, have the courage to regulate their dogma, despite we do not have enough observations. However, this does not mean that every insight owner will regulate his dogma in the event of a conflict. The knowing person should prefer it and should have sufficient intellectual knowledge and ability.

Due to the natural development of the conversation, the subjects at the [B] section were not asked ‘what did they do when encountered suspected situations in the Qur’an’. In any case, deist subjects in the Table 3 ignore the Qur’an altogether. It is noteworthy that the deists showed low insight levels. Another subject that is noteworthy in this group is **M25** and is structurally similar to **F42**. These two subjects represent the minority who are attempted to regulate their dogma even though they do not have insight. This issue is detailed under the sub-heading ‘Reconsidering dogma without discernment’ of ‘The analysis’ section.

The reader who goes to Appendix, will find that **M29**, **M33**, **M35**, and **F50** are strong believers and are not like a typical skeptic at all. In our opinion they are also knowers, but because they both scored low on the questionnaire and refrained from attempting dogmas, this brings up a number of options that cannot be clarified here due to the insufficient data set: (a) The relevant statement have measured the tendency to use insight and the presence of insight together. (b) Some knowers may prefer not to use it even if they have insight, like detailed under the sub-headings ‘Some believers do not touch their dogma’ and ‘Some believers ignore the conflict in favor of the dogma’ of ‘The analysis’ section. (c) Intellectual knowledge may be an important prerequisite.

The data in Table 1 also provides us other instruments on how we can systematically distinguish a knower and a skeptic. If the

person avoids touching his dogma when needed, but instead get a dogma-independent assumption to support his new information set, he is a skeptic. If the person is re-transcribing the information set to stabilize his dogmatic map; re-considering his dogma (the restrictive force of the dogma on individual's life should not be reduced), ignoring the contradiction or delaying the solution, then he is possibly a knower.

Dealing with a broken dogmatic map. Dogmatic dynamic, in its simplest sense, is a function of the relationship between dogma (d) and information (I). If the individual attributes the editable nature of the dogma to its deficiency (because, since the dogma representing the truth cannot be wrong, it cannot be edited), or because of any other reason we could not stated, a conflict may not appear, even if new information (nI) is incompatible with dogma, because the individual does not relate these two types of information. If the individual tends to relate sacred and secular information sets, the inevitable conflict can be overcome by ignoring it or by reorganizing dogma alone, reorganizing new information alone, or both. In the new case, the dogma remains either as it is (d₀) or changes (d₁). Regardless of dogma, new information can be preserved as it is (nI₀) or changes (nI₁). Present research has shown that the relationship between these two factors is accompanied by two more cognitive situationalities. These are (1) whether there is a reduction in the restrictive character (dogma limits the requests of the ID) of the 'd' factor on life, while undergoing change; and (2) to what extent the individual can satisfy (not feel) the "need to burn out for a great cause" after the change in dogmatic map. The combination of two main factors (d & nI) and three cognitive situationalities reveals five different types of cognitive processing, as seen in Table 4. The information needed by the model was obtained from the subjects in Table 4. Estimates for the remaining subjects are more controversial due to insufficient interview data. For these estimates, please see Table 5 in Appendix. Below, each 'Cognitive Processing Type' in Table 4 is examined under the subtitles, through examples.

When the integrity of the dogmatic map is broken, the intellectual has to choose one of the cognitive processing type. The fact that individuals consistently choose the one that belong to the 'knower' or 'skeptic' group, means that an intuitive bias is involved. During the interview with M31, we witnessed the traces of this consistency. Let us look at the function of the auxiliary factors in the table. Does the level of suspicion of dogma distinguish a typical skeptic and a knower? A knower who is strongly struck by the theory of evolution may be skeptical of a classic Qur'anic script. It is not easy to distinguish individuals with objective scales. However, we can theoretically assume that skeptics cannot satisfy their high level Maslowian needs. How else can we explain the fact that skeptics that are leaving religion but embracing spirituality (Newman, 2015)? The factor in the far-left column in Table 4 sheds light on this situation. This factor is also useful for separating a knower and a skeptic that reconsider their dogmas. The change in Dogma's restrictive character must also be monitored to separate these two types. When examining the examples below, note that, knowers try to maintain the dominant or restrictive position of the dogma on their life, no matter what strategy they are implementing, but the skeptics do not.

Skeptics ignore the dogma and confirm their suspicions. It is not accidental that a skeptic started to doubt the dogma rather than choosing one of the other alternatives while reconstructing his dogmatic map, which has lost its integrity. It has been mentioned that, it is due to a specific attitude that was acquired at an

Table 4 Cognitive processing types used to balance the dogmatic map.

Satisfaction level of 'burning out for a great cause'	Main factors ^a		Interaction between (dm) and (nI)	Cognitive processing type	Restrictive character of dogma	Available examples	Freq.
	dm	I					
Knower High	d ₀	I	There is no	Do not associate the (dm) and (nI)	Remain constant	M18, M19, M29, M37, M38	4
High	d ₀	I	There is, and continues	Ignore the conflict	Remain constant	M17, M20, M32, M33, M35, M36	6
High	d ₁	I	Before re-consideration	Re-consideration of dogma	Remain constant or increase	M27, M32, F39, M40	4
Skeptic Moderate or low	d ₀	I	Before abandonment of dogma	Ignore the (d ₀) & confirm the suspicion	Remain constant	M1, M4, M5, F7, M9, M10, M13, M21, M43, M45, F46, M49, M53	13
Moderate or low	d ₁	I	Before re-consideration	Re-consideration of dogma without discernment	Decrease	M25, F42	2

d: dogma, I: Information set, nI: New Information Set, dm: stands for the 'initial state of the dogmatic map'; consists of (d) and (I).
^aAmong the states of main factors (d₀, d₁, I, and nI₀), the shaded ones are 'in use', the clear one is 'out of use'.
 This table does not include situations (nI₁), where the new information (nI) is arranged to match the dogma.

early age. **F46** believes in a kind of creator and explains how she was ready for being a skeptic and how she has confirmed her doubts and rejected the entire Qur'an: "I had it (doubt) in my childhood ... I was thinking like 'Why would I be effected by this (hell)? ... I even started praying (namaz) at that time (around 25 years old) but there was a thought in me, do we really believe? ... I researched a little, read a book ... but I came back with a lot of questions.'" We understand how inclined the **M49** to question God when he was still in high school (he was studying religion), a small trigger rolled him down: One day his friend stumble in the courtyard of their village and fell to the ground. **M49** said involuntarily: "Friend don't be upset, only Allah don't fall or gets up" (This is a traditional saying in Turkish that emphasizes only God do not have any weakness). His friend said, 'How do you know?' **M49** is stating after many years to the interviewer: "Man! What kind of question is this?" He is adding, "You know there is a story about the bear with squeezed nose. Think of me as that bear... I had been busy with this statement for a long time". He still believes in God but rejected Qur'an.

Dogma is also a value judgment and particularly strong skeptics compare or judge the dogma with their own value judgments, because there is no hierarchical difference between the dogma and their own value judgments. For example, Subject **M45** who is a deist, explaining why he rejected Qur'an and he refers to verses about law of inheritance: "The superiority of the man is always spoken... women have less rights. I: For example, inheritance? S: Yes..." Conversely, a typical believer explains this issue as follows: Men are religiously responsible for maintaining the house, but women are not, therefore their share is high. Typical believer is in search of a context that would justify the dogma, the typical skeptic does not seek it.

In another example, the skeptic **M4** who thinks that God exists, believes that Qur'an was written by Muhammed (have not revealed by God). By doing so, the subject reduces the value of dogma. This thought would lessen the contradiction that the individual will experience if he does not comply with the requirements of the Qur'an. Elsewhere in the conversation, skeptic **M4** describes how 'cognitive maps' replaced 'dogmatic maps' in his life: "By religion, people want to provide an explanation for uncertainties, and I guess I have lost my sense of uncertainty to a certain degree regarding the things that happen in life as I read and learned more."

Almost everyone had the idea that destiny is unfair to them, but skeptics put a distance with God because of this idea. **M13** indirectly stated that he had lost some part of his appreciation for the fact that the law of God is complete and fair. The skeptic **M21** also declared such distrust of God's justice: "Yes, there had been cases where I have questioned my faith in the past ... When I compare the outcomes of my actions and other peoples' actions and their outcomes, I feel the injustice." **M31**, **M13** and **M21** evaluated the emergent conflict and set up a new dogmatic map in which their dogma's influence declined.

As skeptics shifting, their perception of God changes. Subject **M9** declared a shift from 'Edge of faith' to 'Edge of knowing' in the frame of Fig. 1 but in this process, his traditional God evolved into an original form, a less intrusive character. The author suspects that the imagination of God in the skeptics would evolve into forms that would reduce God's constraint on the individual. **M9** declared that, his intellectual readings have strengthened the following idea: "There is something (metaphysical) within the humans and also within the society that can not be explained, which does not belong to this universe.' He didn't think so, when he was young. The subject has added value to the dogma as a result of his intellectual gains. Our theory makes him a skeptic. This subject is one of the few subjects which identified that his belief grown stronger over time. Other obvious examples are **M5** and **F7**.

Subject **M5** would be almost an atheist, but he returned back at the age of 35, saying: "My years before I solved the problematic of evil, were internally conflicted and were full of interrogations."

Subject **M25** said: "In the past, I used to think that Allah was intervening into everything at every moment willingly, He was punishing those who were supposed to be punished or He was rewarding others... Then I realized that there are established laws of the world and of the universe and those laws run through within Sunnatullah (in the way that Allah has set the rules in the beginning of everything). Allah does not send special calamities for anyone, for example. Allah does not specifically destroy a nation (This conception requires a different reading of the incidents in the Qur'an including calamities)." Here again God evolved into a less intrusive character. **M9**, **M25** and other skeptics in the present study seems to have shifted towards an image of the Passive-Unemotional God from a Positive-Authoritative God which Schaap-Jonker et al. (2017, p. 206) presented these two types.

The 'knowing' group of intellectuals could have a concept of God that differed from the average of society like Subject **M40**, but this re-evaluation does not reduce the value of God or dogma. **M40** reconsiders his dogma to protect his faith and says; "Qur'an says that 'God has breathed his own soul into man' (9th/Surah As-Sajdah/Quran). I think, this discourse is incompletely understood by most people. Man is from God, but God can be decrease? If so, what is human?"

Some believers do not associate the new information with dogmatic map. Theoretically, a knowing person could derive original rules with the help of his discernment however, in our survey, strong believers who possibly belong to the knowing class are more conservative in this regard. Some of them like **M38** did not even compare the scientific knowledge with the content in the Qur'an, because such a comparison sometimes proves the existence of a suspicion. Since there is no comparison, the rearrangement of dogma is not come into question. In this new situation, it can be argued that, when approached analytically, there is a gap between the acquired information and the dogma however, that is not the case for these believers. As the Subject **M37** said; "The verses of the Qur'an do not have the purpose of producing scientific knowledge but sometimes it brings examples for people to ponder."

Subject **M29** is acting like **M37** and **M38** when he was asked about the 10th versicle of Surah of Lokman. He explains, "I don't force myself to understand every verse because my reasoning can not understand everything. We wouldn't be human if we knew everything. As humans, we just try to understand. Also, the scientific knowledge is not correct all the time. It is not even certain that the ground floats above the magma. Science is a discipline that develops by falsifying itself. Religion comes up with the claim of having certain truth. On the contrary science says, 'the things that I just told you, are not certain'. You cannot refute a system that claims accuracy (religion), by a system that does not claim accuracy (science).

M19 says, "Why is pork forbidden? Allah announced it as forbidden. That is all. I don't want to question this; I would like to blindly believe in this." Subject **M18** also behaved similarly, see in Appendix.

Some believers ignore the conflict in favor of the dogma. If knowing believers are not intellectual enough to reform the basics of their dogmatic map, or if they do not have enough time, they would ignore the conflict in favor of the current dogma, in the hope of a future solution.

The interviewer asked to Subject **M36**, if he had any doubts on any section of the Qur'an. **M36** said: "Yes, sometimes it happens. If I am unable to solve the matter, I postpone it because you see

differet things when you look at the same thing with different information. For instance, you can't understand engineering books with the mathematics that you have learned in the elementary school, to do that you need to know the complex numbers theory."

Subject **M35** talks about the same problematic: *"There are some sections in the Qur'an that I cannot understand. In this case I say; 'What is meant here is not the thing that appears to me with my limited capacity of perception or my corrupt feelings in my heart and I put the subject into a different folder to re-open it in the future. If it is not possible for God to say something wrong, and if you believe in God but if you see a contradiction in the situation, then it means you have misunderstood."*

Subjects **M17**, **M33**, **M20** and **M32** made similar statements on the problematic, see in Appendix.

During the interviews, it has been seen that, in considerable number of cases, the basics of dogmatic map were re-read in favor of the acquired knowledge, by intellectual believers. This group was more knowledgeable than other believers:

Some believers reconsidering their dogma. Subject **M27** talks about the evidence brought by the theory of evolution, *"When the Qur'an is read superficially, it is understood that Prophet Adam was created from clay as if the invisible hands of God created Adam as a statue and breathed a soul into him. However, this is not the case..."* Have a look at the data of the interview with Subject **M27**. 'initial' cases correspond to the subject's past and 'altered' cases correspond to the subject's current state:

Secular Knowledge—*initial*: People born as individuals who resemble to each other.

Secular Knowledge—*altered*: Bone remnants that spread over millions of years shows that man has evolved.

Dogma—*initial*: God created Adam from clay. As traditionally understood, Adam was built by God as a statue and revived when the soul was blown into it²³.

Dogma—*altered*: Adam—in the framework of the rules designed by God—evolved through the earth. When the creature reaches enough complexity, the soul that gives him consciousness projected on his neuronal pattern. This phenomenon also depicts Adam and Eve's expulsion from the heaven.

In this example, the basics of the dogmatic map was reconsidered by **M27** to ensure the compliance with the scientific information obtained and this effort preserved the existence and power of God. It is determined that those who have sufficient scientific and theologic knowledge and possibly those who are 'knowing' are interfere with the basics of their dogmatic maps. As to Subject **F39** the theory of evolution and the Qur'an could come together: *"There are multiple verses in the Qur'an about creation. God says with one of them: 'We know all sorts of creating' (79th/ Surah Yasin/Qur'an)"* **F39** claims that in this verse, God implied evolution as a kind of creation.

Subject **M32** reinterpreted 38th and 39th verses of Surah Al-Qiyameh/Qur'an, which is traditionally thought to describe 'how the human was born in the mother's womb as a male or a female', and says, *"Allah says that; we have created breeding sexual creatures from asexual creatures"*. With this new interpretation, **M32** emphasizes that the Qur'an supports the theory of evolution. However, traditional translations do not interpret the mentioned Surah in this way. **M32** does not just edit the dogma, but also reconsider the information set to suit this main idea. According to him, evolution takes place through robust design, just like the space vehicles that we have sent to Mars, you can not intervene into the vehicle after sending it, the vehicle needs to solve the unexpected situations by itself. Just like that, God has

programmed humans in a way that they are adapted to the changes which span millions of years on earth.

Subject **M40** refers to the alternative interpretation of the Zulkarneyn verses of Surah Al-Kehf in Qur'an, see in Appendix. He implies that, new interpretations became possible with the developments in scientific knowledge: *"These verses, classically tells the Zulkarneyn's journey on earth. But there is an updated and powerful thesis argue that Zulkarneyn went on a space journey through solar apex (Türe, 2004). The word used to describe the behavior of the sun in the verse is different from the word used for 'east and west' in other parts of the Qur'an. When it is understood that sun also follows an orbit in the milky way galaxy, this extraordinary usage of the word 'east and west' has gained new meanings."*

Skeptics do not touch their dogma. Contrary to what **M27** or **F39** did, skeptics refrained from interfering with the dogma at the time of conflict, because the secular knowledge they have confirmed with their rational minds dominates the dogma which they could not verify with insight. That is why skeptics tend to construct a cognitive map that is relatively independent of their dogma, instead of overhauling it. **M49** is a deist and regarding the provisions in the Qur'an, he says: *"... did Allah said these things or not? I do not know brother; it is impossible for me to know."*

Subject **M1** which is a skeptic, did not try to address the contingencies of the slavery and concubinage institutions, but instead preferred to distance himself from these verses of the Qur'an. **M1** argues that the order of the Qur'an could not reach the ideal order (prosperous society) which he had compiled from non-Qur'anic sources. The subject, of course, makes this comparison with his rational mind. Unlike **M1** but on the same topic, a believer **M32** said, *"There are places in the Qur'an that I haven't exactly solved. For example, the institution of concubinage. The Qur'an says; 'women who you get from the enemy as a booty are yours, they are halal (permissible for you)'²⁴"* The subject here implies that he is judging such freedom, but he does not attribute his dissatisfaction to the lack of dogma. **M32** states that such permissions are situational: *"Some topics are highly case-specific and some revolutions were made little by little, you know..."* Than he points out another controversial issue: *"In the verses on inheritance, the sum of the total shares is greater than '1'. This is a mathematical mistake however; we may have misunderstood the verse, or it may have an inner meaning."*

M10 does not doubt the foundations of his religion but, he explains the mistakes he observed in the life of Muslims who was religious superficially, with dogmas in which these muslims exposed. He believes that the original form of Islam has disappeared. This belief reduced his participation into the rituals of the congregations. Strong skeptics such as **M43**, **M45** and **M53** have not even come close to the effort to reconsider the verses of the Qur'an with a positive light, in the process of shifting from theism to deism. After **M43** realize the contradictions between the Nusayris and the Sunnis when he was very young, he just thought they were both on the wrong track. He did not make a positive effort towards one of these beliefs.

Reconsidering dogma without discernment. If re-considering of the dogma does not occur in the presence of a 'discernment', a consistent dogmatic map appears but possibly located away from the point where discernment holders are located. Subject **M25** re-organized the basics of his dogmatic map thanks to his studies on the principles of Islam as a theolog, and finally marched on a path where he has abandoned a specific worship that Muslim societies have an agreement on its indispensability. This

behavior seems different from the behavior of the person who does not comply with the dogma but affirms it.

We have mentioned before that believers except skeptics, avoided interfering with the issues-related belief and civil order principles in Qur'an. As above, issues where dogma is reconsidered are generally related to nature. But there are exceptions. When Subject F42 was asked what she thought of 228th/Surah al-Baqarah²⁵, stated that she is able to consider the Qur'an historically when faced with such kind of contradictions: "... when the verses came in the 7th century, men were joining the war, all the livelihood was on them, yes in that environment, men was one degree superior because they took over the livelihood.. but.. conditions may change."

Let us assume that there are two basic assumptions that accompany this explanation: (a) The people of 7th century and the people of 21st century are biologically identical. (b) The social identities of men and women of the 7th and 21st century is not identical. The third assumption is created by F42. (c) This verse was solely sent for the social identity of men and women. Last assumption selectively narrows the meaning of dogma. This attempt theoretically makes the individual a knowing or a (sinner) skeptic. How could we understand the difference? The reader who visits Appendix may think that F50 and F42 give similar answers, but the situation is different when we go into details. The F50 has argued that dogma has the flexibility to suit different time periods in history and has not touched it, but F42 interfered with the meaning of dogma by injecting an extra assumption. This study divide believer's attempts to reconsider the dogma into two categories: (a) Insight-induced reconsideration. 'Knowers' do that. (b) Reconsideration without insight. 'Rare skeptics' do that. Most skeptics do not touch the dogma. According to present study, the proof of 'reconsidering without insight' is that the restrictive effect of dogma on the individual's life is reduced. We have pointed out that how this reduction have happened for M25. Prayer or meditation suppresses ID's desires. Based on the arrangement of F42, we can argue that dogma now restricts F42's benefits less. Claiming that dogma was sent to social identity, F42 may now request an equivalent amount of goods with his brother in inheritance. According to 11th Surah an-Nisa/Qur'an, the son is inherited as much as the share of two daughters.

What is told about the believer's dogmatic map—but not skeptics²⁶—basically rests on Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance. However, the contingency described above is a contribution of present study to the relevant theory.

Deep reflections

"I'm far from You, because I'm so close to You. You're my eyes. Therefore, I can't see You." (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi is calling out to God.)

There is a deeper problematic: If skeptics do not have insight which allows them to 'be sure', how come they need a given superior order? Seeking to belong to a greater cause (Ecklund and Long, 2011) is a sign for this will. In appendix; the skeptic Subject M1 stated that he wishes to fill a meaning gap. Likewise, why did M5 not stop asking for how God gives permission to kill innocent children? The other skeptic M21 notices he cannot prove anything abstract but also does not give up trying to prove it. Besides, strong believers like M2, M20, or M23 declares that they are embedded in the proof. Anything is a proof for them. Skeptics believe in God because when they rejected 'god' they inevitably accepted God.

Deist M53 says: "I am not looking at things like an atheist."

Interviewer stating: "Yes, you believe in a creator." M53: "My answer was clearly yes until a few years ago, now it is yes as a

heart, but after seeing that it is not possible to prove it (without insight it is really not), defending the opposite is the same (as atheists do). I think atheism is also a religion, it is better to be on a limbo state, in between." He thinks that he is on a limbo state, but actually he is not. It is a contradiction that he believes in God, but he states that it is impossible to prove it, as someone who only believes based on evidence (not insight) and as someone who consider atheists and undoubted believers equal. We can solve this contradiction by defining skeptics as follows:

A skeptic is an individual who has given up being a 'god' but have no—or weak—supraliminal access to 'God'.

A sphere metaphor could be used to explain the difference between skeptics and knowing believers. Skeptics feel the existence of the Sphere. They can touch it but those who 'know' can penetrate into the Sphere. On the other hand, belief and disbelief exclude each other, atheists become spheres. When an atheist rejects to be a 'god', a paradigm shift occurs, and an inevitable 'God' image appears at out of his own self. That means, there is a transcendent 'I' than me. If we read it backwards when a believer rejects 'God', a paradigm shift occurs and the person inevitably becomes the only reference point that regulates the chaotic outer universe, while according to Edinger (1986, p. 7) and Guenon (2004, p. 36) the image of G-god is inevitable. Edge Of Faith is such a line that two paradigms (belief versus disbelief) on opposite sides invalidate each other. If one of these paradigms is true, then the other should be wrong because they also cover each other as well. This situation can be described as follows:

"The dimension that surrounds your dimension (which you exist in), is the dimension that surrounded by your dimension."

This thought is alien for the reasonable mind, it envisages two universes, but they are not hierarchical to each other or there is no dialectic between them, instead, each universe exists in the absence of other or mediately creates the other. Klein Bottle²⁷

would help us to understand:  The tubular structure con-

tained by the big bubble is the big bubble itself. When you dissect a Klein Bottle into halves along its plane of symmetry, you get two mirror images of Mobius Strips. The two sides of this strip create two spaces that are equivalent but also mutually exclusive. Whereas Bonahon (2009, p. 95) points out that a Mobius Strip is a surface with boundary, a Klein Bottle has no boundary.

If belief and disbelief are two mutually exclusive paradigms, this means there is nothing but G(g)od. Then, the individual's sense of Self (consciousness) is simply the way in which God knows himself, as Koninck (1994) cited from Aristoteles; God is the thought thinking itself. What surrounds you, is surrounded by you. The 'Ena'l-Hakk' (I am the god) discourse of Hallac-ı Mansur would refer to this state of being. Did Hallac, declared himself as 'god'? According to Massignon (2006, pp. 183–184), Hallac's personality has been lost (fena) during the speech of Ena'l Hakk, so that Allah pronounces 'Ena'l Hakk', indirectly with Hallac's mouth. Sufi saint Yunus says in his poem (Demirli, 2015), "The Yunus is not the one who says, his Self says it"²⁸. The defined situation is not valid only in the context of faith. Yalom (1980, p. 116) identified two opposed modes of defence mechanism against fear of death, "Human being affirm his autonomy by 'standing out from nature' or seeks safety by 'merging with another force'. Either he becomes his own father, or he remains the eternal son, as Fromm described man as either 'longing for submission or lusting for power.'"

The devotee believer completes his self-actualization process (or a part of it) by disappearing in the body of God. The atheist

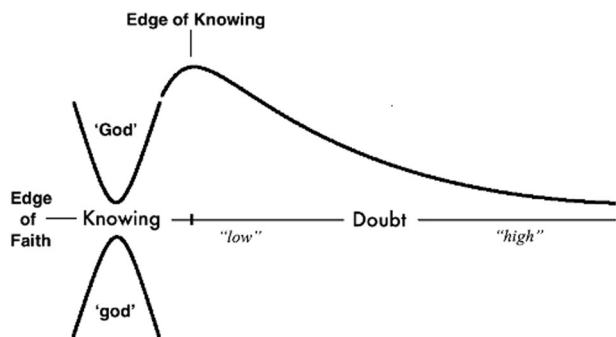


Fig. 3 Illustration of two mutually exclusive paradigms. The part above the horizon belongs to the paradigm of belief, below the horizon belongs to disbelief.

rejects this process and reaches the right of being a god until his death. In the system established in Fig. 3, the externality of the 'God' field creates doubt, but the 'god' field does not have an externality because the image of 'god' is at its own terminus point, it has completed itself, so no one can follow it, and it cannot help anyone to advance.

As theoretically predicted, some of the believers (knowers) and atheists, showed similar tendencies of being doubtless. When the atheist Subject M30 asked 'what he thought of God', he carefully selected his every word and said with great confidence: "I know that there is no creator." When atheist M34 was asked whether 'he had any doubts about his mental state', he spoke with confidence; "No. I don't have any doubts. I already came from that side. I was a person who knew Islam well and lived in it." Other atheists such as M44 or F51 have also made very certain statements. Accordingly, in a cross-cultural study on deconversion conducted by Streib et al. (2009) participants who opted for non-religious worldviews were assigned even higher stages of faith than religious people (Perez and Vallieres, 2019, p. 3). On the other hand, M38 was a believer in a certain aspect. When he was asked whether 'he had any doubts about any topic in the Qur'an', he said with strong glory: "Why should I doubt it? Why not believe without evidence?" Another strong believer M2 said that he knew God's existence without evidence and M23 emphasized that the existence (universe) is evidence of God.

In this case 'knowers' use their rational mind when needed, to make their 'dogmatic map' compatible with deeper dogma. 'Atheists' use it for building cause - effect chains and 'skeptics' use their mind to test their dogma and mediate dogmatic map. Though intelligent individuals who prefer atheism find no solution to the problem of obscurity, they create a chain of justified rationalizations until the point where consciousness will lose its traces. This area of uncertainty is the godship hinterland of the atheists and creates a compensating space for them to overcome the existential isolation.

General discussion

On the macrolevel, this article has constructed an inclusive model for 'belief' and 'disbelief' and also separated the individual's faith into two cognitive forms through the meta-cognitive concept of 'insight' and discussed in which ways the individual can re-evaluate his dogma through the acquired knowledge.

On the microlevel, this article claims to have an answer to the core problem: 'Why people become less or more religious depending on changes to their intellectual status?' To answer this question, present study posits some basic lines of investigation, based on our interviews: Primarily, intellectual

achievement does not change the strength of every believer's faith. This fixed group of believers was called 'knowers' in the present study. Knowers seem to use a supraliminal ability which was called as 'insight'. When knowers encounter an information that threatens the integrity of their dogmatic maps, they do two basic things if they cannot reconcile the information to the existing dogma: (a) They ignore incompatibility (see M20, M33, M35, and M36 have suspended their conflict in the hope of further solution and M18, M19, M29, and M38 did not even feel the need to think about dogma, due to their strong belief, not because they cannot). (b) They reconstruct their dogma (see M32, M27 and M12 rearranged their dogma into harmony with new information). The cognitive tension occurred in the first case compensates by the feeling of certainty that 'insight' offers in favor of dogma. In the second case, there is the tension caused by reviewing the dogma, because a mistake can remove the believer from the religion²⁹. Instead of taking this risk, skeptics are left with their freedom to construct their own cognitive maps. However, knowers overcome this tension with the discernment provided by insight. By the help of discernment, they can sense whether their attempt is in accordance with God's will.

Skeptic believers, subjects of the core problem, seem to have no insight. When they encounter information that threatens the integrity of their dogmatic map, if they cannot match the information to the existing dogma, and if they do not feel the need of 'burning out for a great cause' sufficiently, they start to doubt the dogma (see M13, M31, M10, M1, M4, and M45) because, while dogmatic maps are subject to creative destruction, the ability of the skeptic's independent prototype maps, to adapt to the newly acquired information, is superior to the substitutive maps which would be established by the current dogma, while the dogma was not re-read³⁰. This causes the dogmatic map to be rebuilt in a way that loses its internal consistency³¹. This loss of consistency creates a cognitive conflict and the elimination of this conflict could be possible with a greater suspicion towards dogma. In this process, dogma gradually loses its credibility and the contradiction between the cognitive map (which gets increasingly independent) and dogma is reduced. Finally, a consistent cognitive map would be constructed, induced by different and more personal pre-acceptances than the dogma or the traditions. If the skeptic feel the need of 'burning out for a great cause' sufficiently, this feeling will support the value of dogma and they may tend to act like knowers and become more open to information that justify their dogma [see, F7, M9, and M5 (since the age of 35)].

The information summarized under the title of literature shows that intellectuality and acquired education generally lead individuals to move away from religion. Then, we can ask the second core question: 'Why people generally became less religious depending on the change of their intellectual status?' or 'Why most of the skeptics change their religious status from weak skepticism to strong skepticism?' In the beginning, when the skeptic was young, the dogmatic map corresponds to dogma, like the early childhood, the individual is dependent on adults when deciding whether an action is right or wrong (Bee and Boyd, 2009, p. 677). When skeptics develop intellectually, the dogmatic map begins to contain information sets and these sets generally verify their doubt. The skeptic was already in doubt with his dogma when he was at his starting point, but he did not know it yet. In the beginning, the doubts of these individuals had not yet manifested in a broad cognitive construct. Among us, there are potential skeptics or atheists who are not distinctly a skeptic or an atheist because they haven't had enough life experience yet. Belief and intellectuality belong to different spaces, but when they collide, intellectuality reveals the basic belief status. The externality

of intelligence is not to abandon God. The individual grappling with his intellect is faced with either being with God, querying to his God or being a god, so to speak.

In this respect, our findings call for the re-evaluation of the standard theoretical assumption that analytic thinking distracts people from religion, or an intuitive mind increases belief in God. Instead, we suggest the following: Believers use two different types of cognitive attitude and use a uniform analytical mind, albeit at very different levels. Different levels of analytical abilities reveal or partially hide one of the two intuitive attitudes that were originally chosen. If the individual's attitude is skeptical, high analytical capacity will further weaken the individual's belief³².

Regardless of how religious the skeptics or the knowers are, according to our interviews, they maintained their attitude towards their dogma for a lifetime. This investigation brings us closer to the inference that, two different attitudes are immanent in the believer such as being introverted or extroverted. Now then, although this claim has not been tested, we might also argue that the dynamics of dogmatic map is valid for believers belonging to different religions and cultures.

It should not be forgotten that the mentioned forms of beliefs are sit on a broad spectrum. When faced with new information, although they behave similarly when incorporating it into their dogmatic maps, the two skeptics or two knowers can be located far away from each other in terms of the strength of their beliefs or other scales of religiousness. But it can be easily foreseeing that most of the knowers will be religious than most skeptics in many ways.

Limitations. Study endeavors to delineate a framework rather than prove it. Number of subjects may be insufficient for a stronger level of confidence or, for that matter, clarity. The findings are derived from a society dominated by Islam. However, the cognitive bases of the theorem are human-specific, so while its mechanism is independent of religions, the results it contributes should be dependent. Study did not attempt to deal with the level of religiosity directly. Rather, it was concerned with in which form the believer believed. This form was determined based on how the individual behaves towards his dogma. Belief has many other phenomena, such as the level of participation in rituals, this study has not benefited from them.

In this study, all possible methods which would used by believers in dealing with a contradiction in the dogmatic map have not been examined and classified. The hypothesis symbolized in Fig. 2, explaining why skeptics would get closer to religion has also not been tested. These two issues can be resolved with the help of a larger sample set and by a more systematic approach. This study has ceased to be more systematic with the concern of dealing with the subject in a broad way. Study proposed two forms of belief and brought strong evidence to these two types, but did not develop a scale to more precisely determine whether a believer is a knower or a skeptic. Such scale can be easily developed by acting on the theoretical infrastructure presented. We have suggested that the 'insight' is a kind of intuition, shared by individuals who keep their behavior towards their dogma in a way that preserves their respect for their deeper dogma. This invisible factor is the natural weakness of an empirical study, attempts trying to make this concept visible are weak in this study.

Data availability

All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this published article in Appendix section.

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Notes

- 1 Consider the Peter Drucker's quote (Janjua, 2018) in reverse: "If you can't measure it, you can't improve it".
- 2 e.g. Subjects M43, M45, and M53 became deists by primitive readings at their young ages (see in Appendix).
- 3 Many subjects also made this distinction spontaneously in the interviews.
- 4 Subjects M14, M20, M28, M29, M32, M35, F39 are among them (see in Appendix).
- 5 e.g. F39 and M35 who are strong believers in terms of their certainty towards their dogma, but rarely practice basic Islamic rituals. On the other hand, M21 who is a clear skeptic, performs more prayers than M35. Besides, M53 who is a strong skeptic, still fasting regularly.
- 6 Individuals are either not aware of these tendencies they have or cannot express it fully.
- 7 The 'cognitive map' has a spatial context in psychology literature. Whereas, in this study, it refers to the cognitive explanation patterns of the individual on nature and all movements of life. Besides, Tolman (1948) define a cognitive map (mental model) as a type of mental representation which serves an individual to acquire, code and decode information about the the external world.
- 8 'Discernment' (so insight) is not an acquired attitude or an ability. It is innate. This term has been elaborated under title of 'Knowing, Doubt and Disbelief'.
- 9 Confirmation bias.
- 10 The expression of G. K. Chesterton was re-interpreted: "When men choose not to believe in God, they do not thereafter believe in nothing, they then become capable of believing in anything".
- 11 The tragedy of Zarathustra: Nietzsche himself became god because his God had died (Jung, 2006, p. 214). Empirically the Self cannot be distinguished from the God-image (Edinger, 1986, p. 7).
- 12 Towards the 24th month of their lives, people begin to distinguish the 'knowing Self [I] and the 'known Self [me] (Winston, 2004, p. 180).
- 13 "I am as the presumption of my subjects (worshippers)" [Hadith Qudsi (sacred)—God's words that conveyed to Hz. Muhammad].
- 14 that he is not sure if it is representing 'God's wishes.
- 15 I am not the god, so there is inevitably a God (see the title 'Deep Reflections' for details).
- 16 "He created man from clay like that of earthenware" (14th/Surah Ar-Rahman/Quran).
- 17 Present study contributes this literature in the following ways: (a) How is the conflict resolved by options other than integration. (b) How integration is carried out by two types of believers, despite skeptics rarely do that. (c) Why skeptics generally do not go for such integrations.
- 18 90th/Surah Al-Ma'idah/Quran
- 19 The 'forbidden apple' in heaven was not harmful but was a gateway that led human to a new form of cognizance (paradigm) and this form gave human the ability to deny the God.
- 20 Any dogmatic and axiomatic structure has a latent assumption about what is good and what is bad.
- 21 Van Gogh, at the age of 37, when he committed suicide, made a painting named "Prisoners Exercising (After Doré)" (Michel, 1999). In the picture, 37 prisoners which look like each other walks on a—vicious—circle, each of them represents Gogh as if he trapped in himself.
- 22 Possibly the nature of the dogma is also responsible for it.
- 23 "... We have certainly created you, [O Mankind], and given you [human] form..." (11th/Surah Al-A'raf/Quran) or (14th/Surah Ar-Rahman/Quran).
- 24 "It is prohibited to you to marry married women, war captives who are at your disposal are exceptional" (24th/Surah An-Nisa/Qur'an).
- 25 Men have a degree over women [in responsibility and authority] (228th/Surah al-Baqarah/Qur'an).
- 26 The first two basic conditions of Festinger's theory (1957) makes his individual a 'knower': (a) The belief must be sincere and held with one's "whole heart" (b) and closely related, the person must be committed to this belief.
- 27 Sufi saint Yunus says: "I lost Joseph in the region of Canaan; Joseph is found, Canaan is lost (reached Joseph but not Canaan)".
- 28 In Turkish: "Yunus değil bunu diyen, kendülüğüdür (Self) söyleyen".
- 29 "The person who explained the Qur'an with his own view, has definitely made a mistake, even if his meaning is true" (İmam-ı Nesai). "Whoever gives meaning to the Qur'an without competence, will see the punishment in hell" (Tirmizi). [The six hadith books of prophet Muhammad's sayings.] Paradoxically, knowing believers dare to that in some extent.
- 30 because, if it were to be read again, a dogma would be obtained that was different from the old one but still suspicious.

- 31 Please check Subject **M25** and **F42** for exceptions; it was thought that, they have rearranged their dogma without insight.
- 32 In this study, it has been suggested that belief cannot be weakened, but its images; the trust in dogma or participation in rituals may decrease.

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Competing interests

The author declares no competing interests.

Additional information

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