

## Abstract

In this paper, I engage the topic of epistemic conservatism, the view that the mere fact that we already believe something can make it rational to believe it going forward, and argue for a novel version of the view which is made available when we reject a largely unexamined background assumption about the nature of rational norms. Conservatism is often defended for the way it allows our rational behavior to reflect our cognitive constraints - the costs of changing our beliefs and the limitations of our memory. But standard versions of the view, which take the fact that we already believe something to *count in favor* of that belief, face serious objections. I argue that the shortcomings of standard versions of conservatism stem from a widespread commitment in epistemology to the existence of *static* norms connecting our beliefs to the considerations that count in favor of them - those that suggest an agent is irrational whenever they do not believe what is supported by those considerations. I argue that rejecting this assumption opens the door to a new understanding of the relationship between rationality and our reasons for belief, and to a *dynamic* version of conservatism which justifies doxastic inertia through norms on the processes of consideration by which we update our beliefs rather than norms on beliefs themselves. This model, I argue, both captures the canonical virtues of the conservative picture and avoid the costs of standard versions of the view.