

# A Defence of Informational Structural Realism

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## Abstract

This is the revised version of an invited keynote lecture delivered at the 1st Australian Computing and Philosophy Conference (CAP@AU; the Australian National University in Canberra, 31 October – 2 November, 2003). The paper is divided into two parts. The first part defends an informational approach to structural realism. It does so in three steps. First, it is shown that, within the debate about structural realism (SR), epistemic (ESR) and ontic (OSR) structural realism are reconcilable. It follows that a version of OSR is defensible from a structuralist-friendly position. Second, it is argued that a version of OSR is also plausible, because not all relata (structured entities) are logically prior to relations (structures). Third, it is shown that a version of OSR is also applicable to both sub-observable (unobservable and instrumentally-only observable) and observable entities, by developing its ontology of structural objects in terms of informational objects. The outcome is informational structural realism, a version of OSR supporting the ontological commitment to a view of the world as the totality of informational objects dynamically interacting with each other. The paper has been discussed by several colleagues and, in the second half, ten objections that have been moved to the proposal are answered in order to clarify it further.

**Keywords:** Epistemic structural realism; informational ontology; levels of abstraction; ontic structural realism; structural realism.

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