

04 — Orders of objection — a public classification standard

An engineer weighs loads before addressing them. For political objections, the same rule applies — provided the weighing is applied publicly, consistently, and without exception.

An engineer does not weigh every load equally. A gust of wind, first order, elastic, transient, receives no redesign. A permanent dead load, second order, plastic, enduring, does. A buckling load, third order, approaching failure, prevails over all else. The same logic applies to political objections — not to ignore criticism, but to sort criticism before it is addressed.

The trick lies in the fact that the classification itself occurs publicly. Not as a judgment behind closed doors, but as a published protocol. This compels links-with-inertia to elevate their argument to a higher order, or to publicly accept that they reside within the first order — which erodes their braking weight without a substantive argument ever having been refuted.

The decision tree

Four orders, four treatments

First order — interest, emotion, incident, symptom

An objection that defends a personal, organisational, or sectoral interest of the submitter. Structural analogy: elastic response, disappears after loading. Treatment: acknowledge, classify, do not refute on substance. The submitter may elevate the objection to the second or third order by providing additional motivation — without such motivation, it remains in the first order.

Second order — institutional, procedural, discipline-bound

An objection bound to a specific institution, procedure, or field of expertise. Structural analogy: plastic response, permanent but manageable. Treatment: recognise as a legitimate institutional interest, include in the negotiation table, provide for compensation or transitional arrangements. No design adjustment of the primary structure.

Third order — constructive, design criticism, structural

An objection identifying a design flaw that would arise in the same manner for other objectors as well. Structural analogy: approaching failure limit, requires design adjustment. Treatment: substantive weighing by the design team, public indication of whether the design shall be adjusted, and, in the case of a well-founded objection, a public design change with gratitude to the objector.

Fourth order — fundamental

An objection that touches upon the foundations upon which every democracy rests: popular sovereignty, human rights, the rule of law. Structural analogy: the foundations themselves. Treatment: no negotiation. The objection automatically becomes part of the legitimacy test — referendum, constitutional second reading, treaty review. If Nova Democratia does not pass this test, it does not deserve implementation. That is the self-imposed foundation check.

To classify a second-order objection as first-order even once for reasons of political inconvenience breaks the system. The engineering character is the source of credibility.

The Objection Register

Each published response to an objection follows a fixed format: objection number, objector, date, order, motivation for classification, treatment, status. Objections are included in a continuous public register, searchable by order, objector, and core field. Those opposed to Nova Democratia can see in which box their argument falls. Anyone wishing to elevate their argument may provide additional motivation — the register remains open.

The protocol only works if it is applied publicly, consistently, and without exception. A safety factor that is sometimes one and a half and sometimes eight tenths is no longer a safety factor. A classification protocol that is applied selectively is no longer a protocol, but opportunistic argumentation. The next instalment shows the protocol in action through twenty real Dutch objections.

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