

The Syntagma System

Method, platform, community and cooperation — an order that deliberately does not fix itself, and precisely for that reason must be precise

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PURPOSE

Motto, manifesto, statement of principles, concept sketch and thesis paper say *what* Syntagma stands for. This paper says *how* it works: as a system — multi-track, branched, connected, feedback-coupled. It is operating order and building plan at once, open and forkable.

1 STARTING POINT: ISOLATED RESEARCH DOES NOT CARRY

Research that stays enclosed in its discipline answers only the questions the discipline itself can pose — and works past the real problems (health, environment, technology, living together). The Syntagma system is the organisational answer: **honest, fair, goal-directed collaboration across the disciplines** — transdisciplinary, not merely multidisciplinary. The difference is precisely definable: multidisciplinary places disciplines side by side; interdisciplinarity lets them cooperate at interfaces; transdisciplinarity works *across and beyond the disciplines* on a shared question and allows the disciplines themselves to change in the process (Nicolescu, 2002; Gibbons et al., 1994; Pohl & Hirsch Hadorn, 2007).

2 THE SYSTEM IMAGE: CONTROL LOOP, NOT LINE

Syntagma deliberately does not commit to a canon, a procedure or a hierarchy of disciplines — "we do everything differently, and not that either." So that this does not become arbitrariness, the system has a fixed form but no fixed content: the **control loop**.

question → relation → implementation → examination → feedback → new question
– in parallel on several tracks, with cross-connections between the tracks
(knotenwerk)

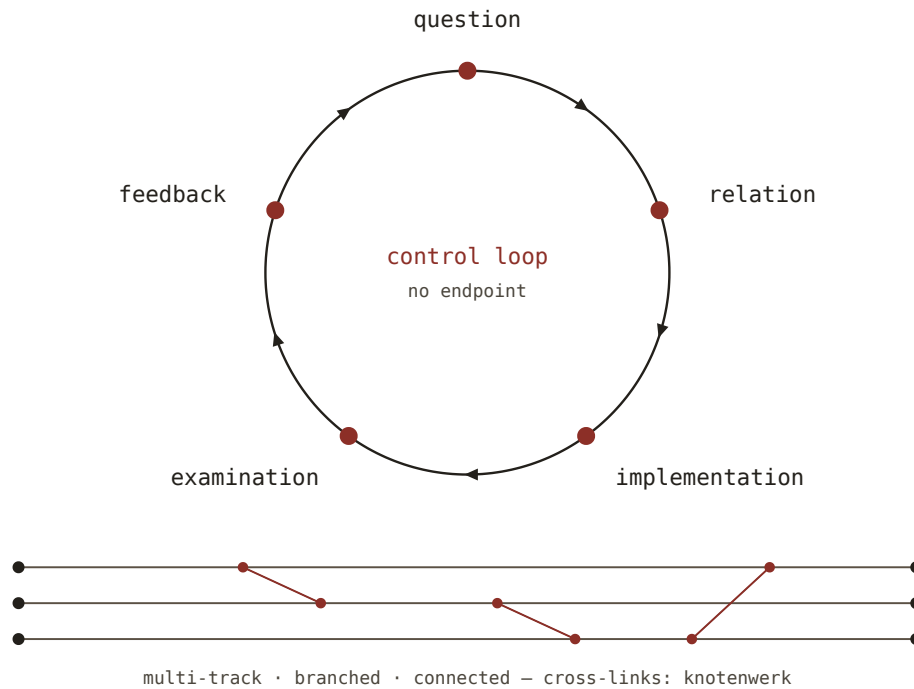


Fig. 1 – The control loop: fixed form, no fixed content; parallel on several tracks, cross-links via the knotenwerk.

Three properties are constitutive: **multi-track** (several questions run in parallel; no compulsion toward the one agenda), **branched and connected** (tracks may split and cross; the knotenwerk keeps the cross-connections explicit and consultable) and **feedback-coupled** (every result flows back into the loop as a measurement — theory and practice regulate each other as in a closed control loop, not as in a one-way street from "pure" to "applied" research).

Prioritisation happens, if at all, **through the goal**: the requirement and the desired output determine which discipline currently leads — with caution and on time. No discipline stands above another; leading is a function of the question, never a rank of the person or the field.

3 TRANSLATION BETWEEN THE DISCIPLINES

The main practical obstacle of transdisciplinary work is language: the same words carry different meanings in different fields, and every field holds knowledge locked inside its terminology. Science studies knows the working solutions: **trading zones** in which disciplines develop local in-between languages (Galison, 1997), and **boundary objects** that are intelligible in several worlds at once without dissolving into any one of them (Star & Griesemer, 1989). Syntagma builds both in systematically:

- **Work glossaries**: every work defines its load-bearing terms bilingually and across fields — translation is part of the work, not an afterthought.

- **Knotenwerk as boundary object:** the relations between findings are kept as explicit, machine-readable nodes — the same structure is readable for all fields.
- **Intelligibility as acceptance criterion:** a result only one's own discipline understands is unfinished. Traceability for non-specialists belongs to sign-off.

4 ROLES: GENERALISTS AND SPECIALISTS

The system needs both and ranks neither: **specialists** bring the depth without which findings are not load-bearing; **generalists** bring the cross-connections without which findings never meet. Research on collective problem-solving shows that cognitively diverse groups outperform homogeneous expert groups under broad conditions (Hong & Page, 2004) — diversity of approaches is not a weakness of the system, it is its engine. **Relation work** — connecting, translating, putting into relation — counts at Syntagma as an independent, recognised research contribution, not as auxiliary service.

5 THEORY AND PRACTICE: THE CLOSED LOOP

Theory without practice remains assertion; practice without theory remains anecdote. The system couples both hard: every theory names what would defeat it (falsifiability as standard, see the thesis paper); every implementation produces measurements that flow back into theory. Two building principles apply with surgical, engineering-grade precision:

- **Traceability:** every statement has a named source or a named uncertainty; generatively produced references count as unverified until the primary source confirms them. The path from question to finding is documented and walkable.
- **Reproducibility:** works carry version states, checksums and open formats; tools are open source; data and methods are enclosed. What cannot be reproduced is marked as provisional — not hidden.

Precision is no opposite of the openness "from absurd to calculated": the entry may be absurd — the examination never is.

6 PLATFORM ARCHITECTURE: MODULAR AND PORTABLE

The technical platform follows the same principles as the research: minimal structure, open interfaces, no lock-in — every module replaceable, portable and forkable.

IDENTITY

Domain, mark, motto — belongs to Syntagma itself, not to a carrier person or platform. First building block of the spin-out.

CORPUS

Works, register, knotenwerk — statically generated, openly licensed, with checksums; runs on any web space.

TOOLS

Open-source instruments (AGPL); the whole platform builds from one command; no third-party dependencies in the delivered state.

DISCOURSE

Repository and discussion spaces on EU-sovereign, portable infrastructure — growing with the community, movable without loss.

BODY

From private start-up phase to a non-profit structure; funding transparent, RETURN under exploration. Modules stay independent of the current carrier form.

7 COMMUNITY BUILDING: STAGES, NOT HURDLES

1. **Now:** give research input (question, finding, objection — informally), spread the works, propose topics. No account, no prerequisite.
2. **With the spin-out:** open repository and discourse space — contribute to the corpus by contribution, translation, examination; maintain the knotenwerk together.
3. **With the body:** membership in the non-profit association, a say in the order itself — rules stay minimal and set by the participants (Ostrom, 1990).

At every stage: the argument decides — not origin, title or length of belonging.

8 PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATIONS

Isolated, Syntagma too would be almost pointless. Cooperation is welcome — with individuals, groups, institutes, companies and administrations — but under clear rules, the same for all:

- **Honest:** interests are disclosed; hidden agendas end the collaboration.
- **Fair:** contributions are named and attributed; results of joint work stay openly accessible.
- **Goal-directed:** cooperation serves the shared question, not capture. Cooperation yes — dependence no: no partner obtains disposition over identity, corpus or infrastructure.

- **Limited:** no collaboration with military, weapons or defence industry; no partnership that puts paywalls before results.

9 SYSTEM MAP

The documents interlock: **statement** (the entry) → **motto and manifesto** (sentence and principles) → **stance and discourse** (values, limits, dispute culture) → **statement of principles** (the standpoints with sources) → **concept sketch** (the historical thesis) → **thesis paper** (the usage order) → this **system paper** (the operation) → **platform paper** (the infrastructure). Each document is v0.x: the loop runs over the order itself as well — examination and feedback included.

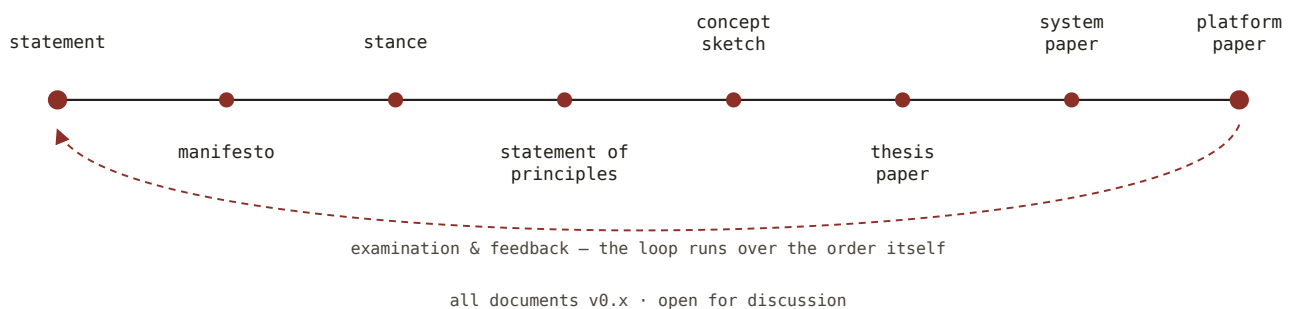


Fig. 2 – System map: the documents interlock; the loop runs over the order itself.

→ FURTHER

The technical realisation of this system as infrastructure: [platform paper "The Syntagma Platform"](#).

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