



STANRZECZY

CALL FOR PAPERS

ORTHODOXY

Thematic issue of *State of Affairs* edited by Dr Łukasz Koźuchowski (University of Warsaw), Dr Filip Sylwestrowicz (Higher Baptist Theological Seminary), and Filip Łapiński (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Łazarski University)

Deadline for abstract submissions: 15 September 2026

“Orthodoxy” is a robust concept across a wide range of disciplines. In this issue, we are primarily interested in it as a category that allows us to examine the social mechanisms by which what is considered legitimate is produced, perpetuated, and challenged. The question of orthodoxy is therefore a question of the boundaries of a community, of the canons of knowledge and practice, of institutional authority, of symbolic power, and of the ways in which we distinguish between beliefs correct and erroneous, acceptable and excluded, as well as self-evident and contested.

Although the concept of orthodoxy is most often associated with a religious context, it is also a useful analytical category relating to the canons of beliefs and practices considered appropriate in other contexts. For the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the ancient Greek word *doxa* refers to the experience of a community that regards its own cultural and moral rules and practices as self-evident, equating their inherently subjective and arbitrary structure with an objective world order. An orthodox belief, on the other hand, emerges when the earlier *doxa* is accepted with “an awareness and recognition of the possibility [of the existence] of different or antagonistic views” (Bourdieu 1977: 164); it becomes a discursive and reflexive belief.

In heterodoxy, a given practice or belief is often contested, which makes heterodoxy and orthodoxy objectively opposed concepts (Bourdieu 1991: 128). In this sense, the relationship between *doxa*, orthodoxy, and heterodoxy describes the

dynamics of discursive and non-discursive ways of maintaining and acquiring symbolic power, as well as of defining what “can be thought,” what expresses the dominant ideology in a given field, and what constructs ideologies that challenge it.

Understood in this way, orthodoxy becomes a category that allows us to examine the fields of science, politics, culture, art, education, and public debate. We can speak of orthodoxies in various fields of knowledge, which are often challenged by new movements and research that question existing paradigms and their limitations. The tenets of particular movements in literature and art can be regarded as specific forms of orthodoxy, provided they have developed their own canon and established forms of expression. The concept of orthodoxy has also permeated the language of public debate, where it most often refers to a form of attack on a contested consensus or an attempt to expose the process by which knowledge is produced by the classes wielding symbolic power in social life.

At the same time, the etymology of the term remains, of course, equally significant. For Plato, who lived in the 4th century B.C., *doxa* is a belief held by people regardless of its rational basis, while *orthodoxa* (“true judgment”) is a belief that has a rational justification. The term “orthodoxy,” however, acquired the meaning that remains most popular to this day in second-century Christianity - it was seen as a term denoting the beliefs and practices characteristic of the community of Christ’s followers. At that time, orthodoxy was understood by definition as the opposite of heresy - a term used to describe views condemned by successive church councils. Early Christianity was grappling with a crisis of authority, rapidly emerging movements with diverse interpretations of the truths of the still-emerging faith, and the need to clarify its theological framework. The tools that early Christian communities used to clarify their understanding of orthodoxy were the canon of Scripture, apostolic succession, and the so-called apostolic rule of faith (Pelikan 1971: 108–120; Ratzinger 2011: 112). As the history of Christianity unfolded, the challenges of the new era compelled a constant renegotiation and clarification of the understanding of theological and ecclesiastical orthodoxy in relation to the views and

movements gradually identified as heretical in the internal discourse of the early Church; in this context, there are competing perspectives on orthodoxy: one views it as prior to heresy, while the other sees it as taking shape in an indispensable relation to heresy and ultimately defined a posteriori through its own victory (Jorgensen 2017: 1–5).

Today, the very concept of orthodoxy is understood differently by various branches of Christianity (Quinn, Davidson 1976), which emphasize intellectual obedience to the Church's Magisterium embodied in the person of the Bishop of Rome in the Catholic Church, doctrinal adherence to confessional documents in the post-Reformation Protestant churches or to the fundamental truths of Christianity in the later-formed Evangelical churches. Differences also exist in the internal attitude of the institution and its faithful toward their own orthodoxy. These range from attempts to faithfully uphold it as a received deposit of faith, to the expressed need for magisterial clarification in the face of new intellectual challenges, or the dynamic reinterpretation of Church doctrine in the spirit of cultural changes.

Vol. 1(18)/2020 of *State of Affairs*, published a few years ago, was dedicated to exploring the term “heresy,” resulting in an interesting and multifaceted collection of analyses of social and political discourse, theoretical reflections on the clash between religious and scientific worldviews, and literary texts. Now we also wish to examine the dialectical opposite of heresy - orthodoxy, considering the various ways it is understood and applied (in both formal and informal senses) in religious, philosophical, cultural, and political discourses, as well as in discourses concerning paradigms in the social sciences and humanities. We are interested in both texts analyzing contemporary issues and articles devoted to historical topics, whether they provide a broad overview of events or focus on case studies.

We invite you to submit papers on this topic in the following thematic areas:

- orthodoxy/doxa/heterodoxy as analytical tools in sociology and other social sciences and the humanities (including approaches based on the theory of social fields and symbolic power);

- mechanisms of producing, reproducing, and challenging the canon (of knowledge, norms, and orthopraxy) in institutions, authorities, education, sanctions, rituals and others;
- orthodoxy and heterodoxy in the dynamics of discourse and symbolic power in the fields of culture, religion, science, and politics;
- orthodoxy as a category in public debate and non-religious discourses – metaphors, rhetoric, and disputes over consensus;
- the original understanding of orthodoxy in the history of Christian theology;
- orthodoxy in religious traditions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and others) and disputes over the boundaries of community in a pluralistic context.

/// We are accepting submissions **by 15 September 2026**. Submissions should include the title, an abstract of no more than 500 words, the author's full name, institutional affiliation, and email address. Please send them to: sekretarz@stanrzeczy.edu.pl.

/// **By 30 September 2026**, the Editorial Board will notify authors of the acceptance or rejection of their article proposals.

/// **By 31 January 2027**, we will be accepting manuscripts not exceeding 1.5 publication pages (60,000 characters with spaces), edited in accordance with the journal's technical requirements.

/// The issue is scheduled to be published in 2027.

Please direct any questions to sekretarz@stanrzeczy.edu.pl.

Submission languages: Polish, English

/// Bibliography

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