





REVIEW ESSAY

Mapping the concept of fundamentalism: a scoping review

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Abstract

This scoping review of conceptualizations of fundamentalism scrutinizes the concept's domain of application, defining characteristics, and liability to bias. We find fundamentalism in four domains of application: Christianity, other Abrahamic religions, non-Abrahamic religions, and non-religious phenomena. The defining characteristics which we identify are organized into five categories: belief, behavior, emotion, goal, and structure. We find that different kinds of fundamentalisms are defined by different characteristics, with violent and oppressive behaviors, and political beliefs and goals being emphasized for non-Christian fundamentalisms. Additionally, we find that the locus of fundamentalism studies is the Global North. Based on these findings, we conclude that the concept is prone to bias. When conceptualizing fundamentalism, three considerations deserve attention: the mutual dependency between the domain of application and the specification of defining characteristics; the question of usefulness of scientific concepts; and the connection between conceptual ambiguity and the risk of bias in the study of fundamentalism.

Keywords: bias; conceptualisation; fundamentalism; social science concepts; scoping review

Introduction

Research on fundamentalism has a long and multidisciplinary history, including theology, history, (inter)religious studies, psychology, and sociology (Huff, 2008; Taylor, 2017; Williamson, 2020). While a demise in fundamentalism studies has been observed in some disciplines (Taylor, 2017), recent developments such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the takeover by the Taliban in Afghanistan, and the election of Donald Trump and renewed visibility of the religious Right in the United States, have prompted a revival in multidisciplinary scholarly interest in fundamentalism (Käsehage, 2021; Phillips and Kitchens, 2021; Ibrahimi, 2023; Atherstone and Jones, 2024). Despite the vast amount of research on fundamentalism, there is no

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agreement on the concept's boundaries, nor on its defining characteristics. Lastly, it is debated whether the concept fosters prejudice and therefore should be used at all for research. In other words, there are debates concerning the concept's domain of application, the concept's intension, and the legitimacy of its usage. This paper seeks to contribute to these debates by presenting the results of a scoping review on the uses and definition of the concept *fundamentalism*.

With regard to the *domain of application*, the concept's potential boundaries have been expanded since it originated in the United States in the 1920s, denoting a specific and conservative American Protestant movement (Watt, 2014). From the 1970s onwards, the term was increasingly applied to make sense of Islamic and Jewish movements (see Taylor, 2017, for an overview of the widening scope of the term; Watt, 2008). Many authors also apply the term to factions in non-Abrahamic religions, such as to Hinduism (Clarke, 2017) or Buddhism (e.g., Bartholomeusz and De Silva, 1998; Lehr, 2019). Marty and Appleby's seminal *Fundamentalism Project* (1991–1995) developed and theorized *fundamentalism* as a global comparative category. Nowadays, the term is also applied to nonreligious fundamentalisms, such as market fundamentalism (Stiglitz, 2009) and gender fundamentalism (Lasio *et al.*, 2019). The question is whether it makes sense for the concept *fundamentalism* to include such a broad range of phenomena. Some have criticized the broad usage of the concept as developed in the *Fundamentalism Project* and beyond (Watt, 2017). They have, for instance, argued that it is most valuable when applied with specificity and precision to American Protestant fundamentalism (Watt, 2014), that there is too much difference between fundamentalist movements for them to be subsumed under a single concept (Juergensmeyer, 1993; Wood, 2014; Watt, 2017), or that we should limit the notion to religious fundamentalisms in order to be analytically useful (Ruthven, 2007). Others have argued that the broad domain of application of the term is not problematic but can be useful for comparative research (Almond *et al.*, 2003). This shows that there is no consensus on what the concept's domain of application is. We present an overview of different domains of applications of the concept *fundamentalism*, and their distribution in recent research on fundamentalism. This helps to draw conclusions about what the domain of application of the concept *should* be.

This debate is closely connected to disputes concerning the *intension* of the concept. What are its defining features? In virtue of what does a movement or group qualify as fundamentalist? For example, some (e.g., Hood *et al.*, 2005) wonder whether dogmatism is indeed a defining characteristic of fundamentalism, as frequently suggested (Altemeyer and Hunsberger, 2005). Others debate whether militance is a characteristic feature of fundamentalism as suggested by Lustick (1988) but rejected by Antoun (2010). And Williamson (2020) observes that it has frequently remained unspecified exactly what is meant by characteristics such as anti-modern or militant, which makes it hard to determine whether they are indeed defining features. Stances vary on the question whether the lack of clarity regarding the intension of *fundamentalism* is problematic. Authors such as Williamson (2020) or Watt (2017) find the lack of clarity worrisome. To determine whether and why phenomena qualify as fundamentalist, we need clear criteria. Others allow for flexibility in our understanding of *fundamentalism*. They argue that it is a family resemblance concept. That is, different fundamentalisms share overlapping characteristics, none of which

are necessary and shared by all fundamentalisms (Almond *et al.*, 2003). They also allow for variety in how certain characteristics, such as anti-modernism and militancy, manifest themselves across different fundamentalisms. The family resemblance conception of *fundamentalism* that was popularized in the *Fundamentalism Project* has been criticized for being prone to various biases (see below for more detail). What we see as defining characteristics of fundamentalism, and how we specify these, will determine not only how we (mis)understand the phenomenon, but also which phenomena we classify as fundamentalist. This review aims to contribute to the debate about the intension of the concept of *fundamentalism* by giving an overview of allegedly defining characteristics of different types of fundamentalisms. Such an overview provides the groundwork for further normative debates about which of these characteristics *should* be included in a definition of fundamentalism, and how they *should* be specified.

These first two issues are tightly connected to the third point of contest: *whether the concept fosters prejudice in research*. The concept in its global scope as developed in the *Fundamentalism Project*, that is with a domain of application that includes religious movements from various traditions on a global scale, has been criticized for being derogatory and othering, as well as Western- and Christiancentric (Harding, 1991; Wood, 2014; Watt, 2017). Critics have worried that most researchers studying fundamentalism come from the Global North, and that their research questions and interests mirror concerns of a “Western” public, and policy makers (Watt, 2017). Scholars (e.g., Harding, 1991; Campo, 1995; Harris, 1998; Blankenship, 2014; Taylor, 2017; Watt, 2017) have also expressed their concern with the vague meaning of the concept and its building blocks which allow for the introduction of biases and unwarranted assumptions in the study of fundamentalism. To give some examples: Wood and Watt (2014) argue that the concept encodes Christian assumptions which leads to approaching and understanding other, non-Christian movements, through a Christian lens—thereby ignoring relevant differences and failing to perceive phenomena in their own right. Watt (2017) and Taylor (2017) worry that the term’s negative meaning in ordinary discourse (e.g., Harding, 1991) and scholars’ own opposition to and worries about fundamentalist movements color their approach to and study of these movements. This, as Williamson (2020) worries, leads to a disproportionate focus on violent fundamentalisms. Scholars of fundamentalism, moreover, seem to predominantly come from a Western and liberal background which, Watt (2017) worries, makes the concept *fundamentalism* complicit in the domination of the Global South by the Global North. By comparing characterizations of different types of fundamentalisms, and by recording descriptive characteristics of studies, it scrutinizes whether there is evidence warranting the worry about bias in fundamentalism studies.

While several authors discussed and reviewed the ambiguity of the term *fundamentalism*, no systematic attempt has been made to map the existing meanings of the term in academic discourse.¹ This study fills this gap by systematically reviewing fundamentalism studies published between 1996 and 2020. This timespan has been selected because Marty and Appleby’s seminal *Fundamentalism Project* (1991–1995) solidified *fundamentalism* as a global comparative category that is frequently used for research. The scoping review provides an overview of the suggested domains of application of the term, as well as of the proposed conceptual building

blocks of *fundamentalism*. It also traces by whom the concept was used, and which types of fundamentalism receive most attention. Thereby, this review provides evidence that the worry of Westerncentric and liberal biases in the study of fundamentalism is warranted. While this paper does not answer the normative question whether, and if so how, the concept *fundamentalism* should be used in research, its results provide a firm basis to tackle such questions—as we argue in the discussion.

Methodology

Scoping review

(Semi-)systematic literature reviews, including scoping reviews, were primarily developed for life and health sciences. Their transparent and rigorous methods to select, assess, and synthesize empirical literature in an unbiased and complete manner are increasingly used for research in the social sciences and the humanities (Petticrew and Roberts, 2006; Polonioli, 2019). For our study, we conducted a scoping review. This type of review is suitable for definitional work, for mapping and clarifying concepts (Peters *et al.*, 2015). It allows for the inclusion of studies regardless of their study design. This enables us to broadly take stock of and explore uses and conceptualizations of the concept of fundamentalism. An additional benefit of scoping studies is that they have an iterative character: researchers can adjust the search terms and criteria for the selection of relevant studies as their familiarity with the literature increases (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005).²

Literature search

We conducted this scoping review in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) statement, specifically its extension for scoping reviews (<https://www.prisma-statement.org/scoping>; Tricco *et al.*, 2018). As fundamentalism research spans across various academic disciplines, we comprehensively searched the following bibliographic databases in collaboration with a librarian (A4): ATLA Religion Database (via Ebsco), PsycInfo (via Ebsco), Historical Abstracts (via Ebsco), Philosopher's Index (via Ovid), Scopus (via Elsevier), Web of Science Core Collection (via Clarivate), and the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (via ProQuest). We included publications from January 1, 1996, to November 10, 2020. Search terms included controlled terms as well as free text terms. The following terms were used: “fundamentalism,” “radicalism,” “extremism,” “terrorism.”³ We applied a filter to restrict the results to peer-reviewed publications and performed the search without language restrictions. Duplicate articles were excluded. For the full search strategies for all databases see appendix 1.

Selection process

We conducted the screening in the review program Rayyan QCRI (Ouzzani *et al.*, 2016) in line with the following selection criteria.⁴ Publications were included if they focused on fundamentalism, extremism, terrorism, or radicalism, and (a) aimed to explain or understand these phenomena; (b) and/or discuss or develop

these concepts; and/or (c) operationalize these concepts or develop measurements tools using these concepts. Publications were excluded if they (a) discussed literary fiction, movies, television shows, etc., or (b) concerned theoretical positions in controversies or debates. Other exclusion criteria were: (c) published before 1996; (d) studies not published in English, Dutch, German, French, or Spanish; (e) dissertations, book-reviews, editorials, conference proceedings, commentaries, or letters; (f) not peer reviewed.

First, A1 screened the titles and abstracts. She excluded publications if the title and abstract gave reason to think that they did not meet the inclusion criteria. She then conducted a full-text screening of publications included thus far, again assessing whether the publications met the inclusion criteria. At the outset of both rounds of screening A1, A2, and A3 tested the selection criteria by independently screening a limited number of publications (in total $n = 334$). They discussed differences regarding in- and exclusion decisions, which helped to clarify and consistently apply the in- and exclusion criteria. Ambiguous cases were always discussed by A1, A2, and A3. For the flowchart, see [Figure 1](#) (Page *et al.*, 2021).

Data extraction and analysis

General information about the included studies in the review is recorded in a data charting form (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005). Among other things, the field and the type of study are recorded. In addition, to get a grasp on the scope of the concept *fundamentalism*, the types of fundamentalism that form the focus of a publication are charted. And, to get information on the Western centrism and bias worry, we collected information on the geographic focus of empirical studies as well as the location of researchers. See appendix 2 for the full data charting form.

To analyze the meanings of the concept of *fundamentalism*, we conducted a directed qualitative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005), using the analysis program ATLAS.ti, version 22.2.0 (ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH). One author (A1) inductively developed the coding scheme. Initially, text passages that characterize or define fundamentalism were read to derive codes. A1 assigned codes to denote the kind of fundamentalism (e.g., “religious fundamentalism,” “Islamic fundamentalism,” “feminist fundamentalism”). In addition, codes for each characteristic or defining feature of fundamentalism (e.g., “scandalized or outraged attitude,” “justification of violence”) were assigned to each text passage. After analyzing 120 texts, we reached data saturation. A1 developed a coding scheme by comparing the initial codes, thereby deriving broader codes that encompassed various initial codes. The resulting coding scheme was discussed with A2 and A3. All documents were coded by A1 based on the coding scheme. New findings were discussed by A1, A2, and A3, and resulted in adjustments of the original coding scheme. The codes were grouped in meaningful clusters (e.g., codes denoting beliefs about religious matters were distinguished from beliefs about political matters) and sorted into five categories, which are discussed below. See appendix 3 for an overview of the code categories and clusters. To find patterns across various kinds of fundamentalism, we compared the relative importance of characteristic features across various kinds of fundamentalism by ranking the codes denoting characteristic or defining features for

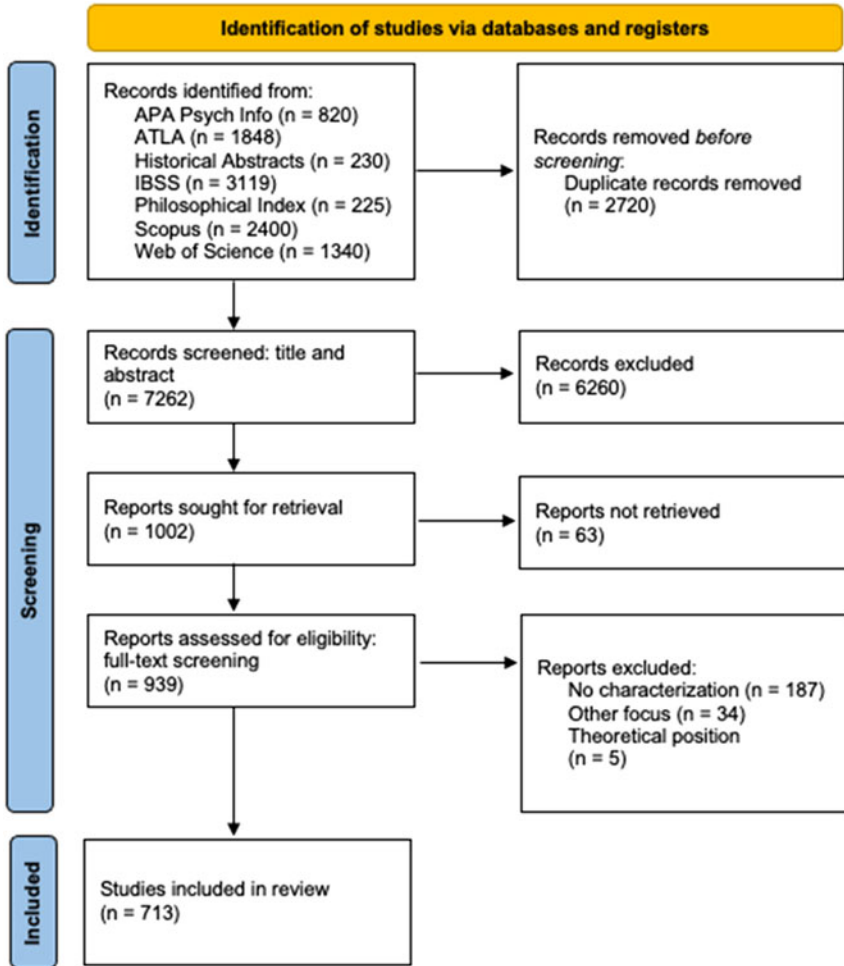


Figure 1. Flow diagram of scoping review process.

each kind of fundamentalism (see appendix 4 which illustrated how the ranking of co-occurrences between code-clusters and kinds of fundamentalisms supported our search for comparative patterns). Given the fact that we were primarily interested in the content of definitions, and qualitative differences between definitions of different kinds of fundamentalism, we then compared the content of the codes denoting characteristic features across various kinds of fundamentalism.⁵

Descriptive results

General description

A total of 713 publications are included in this review of which 295 studies are empirical. Of these studies, most studies apply a quantitative methodology ($n = 247$).

In total, 43 studies apply a qualitative methodology, five studies apply mixed methods, and 418 publications are theoretical. Of these, 18 self-qualify as literature reviews and explicate their methodology. Most of the theoretical publications, however, do not explicate their method ($n = 400$).⁶ The topics and purposes of the publications vary widely, from literature reviews on the relation of religious fundamentalism to violence (e.g., Ahmed and Bashirov, 2020), to studies developing scales to measure religious fundamentalism (e.g., Altemeyer and Hunsberger, 2004; Williamson *et al.*, 2010), to studies comparing different fundamentalisms (e.g., Antoun, 2010), to cite only a few examples. When it comes to the geographic focus of the empirical studies, most collect and analyze data from the United States ($n = 159$), followed by Indonesia ($n = 19$), Germany ($n = 13$), Canada ($n = 12$), and Egypt ($n = 11$).

The bulk of the included publications are written in English ($n = 686$),⁷ and published by authors affiliated with U.S. universities ($n = 309$). Most of the publications that we analyzed come from the field of psychology ($n = 260$), followed by political science ($n = 65$), sociology ($n = 62$), and religious studies ($n = 54$). From 2001 onwards, the studies are relatively equally distributed over the timespan that was analyzed. See appendix 2 for a full overview of the descriptive data.

Domain of application of fundamentalism

Regarding the domain of application, we distinguish four categories of publications: (1) publications that use the term *fundamentalism* to denote and characterize Christian fundamentalism ($n = 126$), most often Christian Protestant fundamentalism; (2) publications that explicitly limit the domain of application to Abrahamic religious traditions ($n = 17$); (3) publications that use the concept of fundamentalism in its global sense, denoting and characterizing various types of religious fundamentalisms ($n = 478$), such as Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, or Sikh fundamentalism, in addition to Christian fundamentalisms; (4) publications that extend the scope of the concept beyond religious phenomena ($n = 87$), including, for instance, market fundamentalism and various types of political fundamentalism. In total, we identified 54 types of fundamentalism, of which 40 are nonreligious (see appendix 5).

Distribution of kinds of fundamentalism

Not all fundamentalisms receive equal attention. When it comes to religious types of fundamentalism, Christian and Islamic fundamentalisms are discussed the most ($n = 188$, $n = 175$), followed by Jewish and Hindu fundamentalism ($n = 60$, $n = 51$). When it comes to nonreligious types of fundamentalism, market fundamentalism is mentioned most ($n = 32$). Often, nonreligious fundamentalisms are discussed by a single or a very small number of publications. For a full overview, see appendix 5.

Defining characteristics of fundamentalism

In this section, we discuss the defining characteristics of the 54 types of fundamentalisms we identify. We map how each kind of fundamentalism is defined or characterized in the publications that we include in this review. As the amount of defining

characteristics presented in these publications is very large ($n = 321$), we organize them into five categories (subdivided in 30 clusters).

(A) The *belief category* contains creedal statements and the doxastic (from the Greek “doxa,” belief) attitudes of belief, disbelief, and suspension of belief that are typical for fundamentalism. We distinguish foundational beliefs, beliefs regarding in- and out-groups and their relationship, beliefs regarding political matters, beliefs regarding metaphysical matters,⁸ beliefs regarding ethical and normative matters, and beliefs regarding historical, social, and economic developments.

(B) The *behavior category* contains types and tokens of individual and group actions and omissions that are typical for fundamentalism. For this category, we distinguish behavior regarding knowing, thinking, and interpreting, behavior pertaining to group dynamics, behavior connected to political and metaphysical convictions or goals, ethical and normative behavior, and behavior in reaction to historical, social, institutional, and economic developments.

(C) The *emotional category* contains affects, passions, and emotions that are typical for fundamentalism. Again, we distinguish emotions that bear on processes of knowing, thinking, and interpreting, that pertain to group dynamics, political, metaphysical, and ethical/normative matters, and emotions that are elicited by historical, social, and economic developments.

(D) The *goal category* contains goals and desires that are typical for and motivate fundamentalists. Also with regards to the goals and desires, different themes could be distinguished: cognitive, social and group-related, political, metaphysical, and ethical/normative goals and desires, as well as goals that pertain to broader historical, social, institutional, and economic developments and changes.

(E) The *structural category* refers to the group structures that bear on typically fundamentalist cognition and group organization. It also contains characteristic ways of institutionalizing metaphysical and ethical/normative principles, as well as characteristics that highlight fundamentalists’ relation to the wider political structures in which they are embedded. In addition, this category contains characterizations of fundamentalism that highlight its connection to broad structural historical, social, institutional, and economic developments.

In what follows, for each category we discuss trends and recurrent elements in the characterizations and definitions of *fundamentalism*. We start with discussing Christian Protestant fundamentalism given that the term originated in the Christian Protestant tradition (see Huff, 2008) and is therefore often seen as a starting point for analyzing other religious revivalist movement that resist modernity (Watt, 2017). We then point to continuities and discontinuities with other kinds of religious fundamentalisms, and with nonreligious fundamentalisms.

Elements of Christian Protestant fundamentalism

(A) Beliefs

Most authors discussing Christian Protestant fundamentalisms cite foundational beliefs as defining characteristics, that is beliefs that are seen as more fundamental and secure than, and as serving as a basis for, other beliefs. Most prominently foundational beliefs concern the existence of an absolute and universal truth to be found

in the Bible, which was revealed, which is infallible and prescriptive (e.g., Percy, 1996; Bosman, 2008), and must be interpreted literally (e.g., Priest, 2004; Bendroth, 2014, 2016). Interestingly, there is no agreement on what “literalism” means. Schiller (1997, 42), for examples, states that among fundamentalists, there is “strong tendency to interpret everything in the Bible literally.” Others, however, limit literalism to a selection of basic doctrines such as “such as virgin birth, bodily resurrection, and the return of Jesus” (Streib, 2001, 238). These beliefs align with the rejection of some sciences, especially evolution theory (Stockwell, 2006; Bendroth, 2012). Scholars also draw attention to the fact that fundamentalist beliefs are held strongly and understood as absolute, not allowing for doubt or criticism (e.g., Bendroth, 2012).

Other allegedly definitional beliefs concern historical developments which are believed to have a religious meaning. Most frequently authors describe fundamentalist movements as believing in a perfect and lost past which must be re-instantiated (e.g., Bendroth, 2016). Often scholars highlight the belief that there is an ongoing cosmic struggle between good and evil (e.g., Bendroth, 2016), and that fundamentalists have a millennialist and apocalyptic understanding of history (e.g., Bendroth, 2016). Many scholars point to Protestant fundamentalists’ particular understanding of the nature and structure of reality and religious matters, for example, their belief in a strict distinction between good and evil (e.g., Clarke, 2014; Gregg, 2016), and in resurrection, virgin birth, or creation science (e.g., Geffré, 2002; Barkun, 2004).

Beliefs regarding ethical and normative, and political matters are seen as characteristic as well, most prominently anti-modern beliefs and conservative values. Anti-modernism can have a political dimension and converge with opposition to secularism or pluralism. However, it mostly has an ideological and normative component. Watt (2014, 28), for example, writes that for fundamentalists, “modern age was a time of lawlessness, sexual licentiousness, and cultural decline.” Other characteristic beliefs concern gender differences and roles (e.g., Bendroth, 2012; Ault, 2013). Lastly, various authors see certain group-related beliefs—such as that the own group is special, “chosen,” has a special relationship with God, or are the single “true believers”—as definitional (e.g., Jones, 2011, 2016).

(B) Behaviors

Behaviors related to knowing, thinking, and interpreting—such as their literal, selective, and intolerant manner of interpretation (Almond *et al.*, 2003; Ruthven, 2007) and their defensive and adversarial thinking style (e.g., Priest, 2004, 207)—are taken to be characteristics of Christian Protestant fundamentalists. They are described as demanding that individual behavior is guided by the holy scriptures in order to qualify as moral behavior (e.g., Stjernfelt, 2009) and as rigidly following their moral code and norms (e.g., Munson, 2003). Other characteristic behaviors are proselytizing and evangelism (e.g., Bendroth, 2016), behaviors linked to historical developments such as selective modernization, their use of technology, and “traditioning” (i.e., selectively holding on to tradition and making it relevant today, see Antoun, 2010). Many authors characterize Christian fundamentalists by reference to behaviors that create or enforce the in- and outgroup dichotomy (e.g., Watt, 2014), such as behaving in a separatist manner toward outgroups, and enforcing this separatism and isolationism by building parallel institutions (e.g., Bendroth, 2012). Christian

fundamentalists are often characterized as militant (Edwards, 2015), where militancy sometimes refers to the defense of certain beliefs (e.g., Bosman, 2008), a stance toward religious opponents (e.g., Bendroth, 2016), or the strict requirement of total subjection to faith (e.g., Nipkow, 2017). However, quietist aspects are described as well (although less), an aspect that fits well with separatist and isolationist tendencies (e.g., Priest, 2004).

(C) Emotions

Overall, emotions receive little attention as definitional characteristic. When discussed, emotions relating to historical developments, like feeling uncertain and threatened by “modern” social, economic, and ideological developments (e.g., Beier, 2006; Bendroth, 2012), or experiencing a sense of urgency (e.g., Bendroth, 2016), are seen as characteristic. Christian fundamentalists are, according to some, also typified by feeling threatened by an outgroup (e.g., Nipkow, 2017). With regards to metaphysical and religious matters, the experience of being “born again” is sometimes seen as characteristic for Protestant fundamentalism (e.g., Haynes, 2009), as is religious zeal and the strong emotional attachment to their belief-system (e.g., Deifelt, 2005). Furthermore, some authors portray Protestant fundamentalists as going hand in hand with a scandalized and outraged attitude (e.g., Bosman, 2008; Adloff, 2010), and a deep-seated fear of moral decline (e.g., Schneider, 2002).

(D) Goals and desires

Protestant fundamentalists are characterized in terms of their wish to preserve and purify their faith (e.g., Watt, 2014), to hold on to the fundamentals of their religion which lay in the past (e.g., Antoun, 2010), and to achieve salvation (e.g., Stockwell, 2006; Crawford, 2014). Such goals and desires pertain to fundamentalists’ metaphysical and religious commitments, and are connected to allegedly characteristic moral, historical, and political goals: their longing for moral and social purity by holding on and returning to their “core values” (e.g., Ammerman, 2003; Losurdo, 2004). Relatedly, they are depicted as striving for the establishment of God’s reign on earth, which often goes together with traditioning (Antoun, 2010). Sometimes, their wish to (re-)gain political power to model society on the basis of the scripture is seen as characteristic (e.g., Bendroth, 2005; Crawford, 2014). Allegedly characteristic group-related goals are: preserving their (group-)identity (e.g., Donohue, 2004; Jones, 2016), providing and experiencing a sense of security (e.g., Segura, 2016), and exercising control (Watt, 2014). Christian fundamentalists are also characterized by reference to their search for certainty regarding their beliefs (e.g., Nagata, 2001; Bartoszek and Deal, 2016), and to define the true tenets of the religion (e.g., Pierce, 2006).

(E) Structural elements

Protestant fundamentalism’s relation to broader historical developments,—specifically their reaction to social, economic, and intellectual changes (think of secularization and the perceived marginalization of religion, theological developments, the rise of evolutionary theory, etc., see e.g. Crawford, 2014; Rouse, 2021)—is seen as characteristic. These processes are often subsumed under the term “modernity.” It is

highlighted that such processes are perceived as a threat or crisis (e.g., Madan, 1997; Clouse, 2009). Several scholars argue that religious fundamentalism is a function of—rather than a reaction to—modernity (Bendroth, 2014). While oftentimes scholars do not specify their understanding of modernity, those who do associate different meanings with it. It is associated with democratic principles (e.g., Deifelt, 2005), sociological developments that bring uncertainty (e.g., Streib, 2001), and an “assault of meaningfulness” (Bosworth, 2006). Moreover, it is widely thought that the way fundamentalist groups are structured is characteristic. The trans-denominational nature of Protestant fundamentalism is highlighted (e.g., Bendroth, 2005), as well as their hierarchical structures. These hierarchies determine the epistemic structure of the movement: leadership figures have the authority over interpreting the Bible (e.g., Schiller, 1997).

(Dis-)continuities with other religious fundamentalisms

(A) Beliefs

In line with Protestant fundamentalism, religious fundamentalisms are defined in terms of foundational beliefs—the belief in the absolute truth of the infallible scripture, which must be read literally (e.g., Pratt, 2007; Gierycz, 2020)⁹—and metaphysical beliefs—the belief in a strict distinction between good and evil (e.g., Almond *et al.*, 2003; Giedrojć, 2010; Gierycz, 2020), and specific religious creeds, the content of which vary between the different fundamentalisms. While religious fundamentalisms are commonly characterized in terms of beliefs regarding historical developments (e.g., Antoun, 2010), there are differences between religious fundamentalisms. Millennialism and redemption are highlighted for Abrahamic fundamentalisms. Jewish fundamentalism is frequently described as a messianic movement, emphasizing the occurrent redemption process (Stockwell, 2006). The belief in an idealized past is strongly emphasized for Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist fundamentalists, and connected to their political goals and actions (e.g., Abbott, 1996; Seneviratne, 2003; Ferrero, 2013). When it comes to group-related beliefs, all religious fundamentalisms—but especially Jewish and Hindu fundamentalism (e.g., Donohue, 2004; Ahmed and Bashirov, 2020)—are depicted as believing in their own superiority or chosen-ness, while holding other groups in low regard (e.g., Stockwell, 2006). To give an example, as Haynes (2003, 331) writes, that “Hindu fundamentalism is rooted in cultural chauvinism” and Stockwell (2006, 17) writes that fundamentalist Jews “believe that they are God’s assistants, and that their task is the repair of the world.” For all religious fundamentalisms the religiopolitical nature of their beliefs is highlighted, especially the belief that secularism should be rejected (e.g., Gregg, 2018). This can be expressed in more concrete beliefs, such as various anti-democratic beliefs (e.g., Pfürtner, 1997). Islamic and to a slightly lesser extent Jewish fundamentalisms are depicted as believing that violence is justified to achieve religiopolitical goals (e.g., Gregg, 2018). Many authors characterize fundamentalisms by certain normative and ethical beliefs, such as their opposition to ideological modernism or gender equality (e.g., Frosh, 1997), or the belief in their moral superiority (e.g., Pratt, 2010). For Islamic fundamentalists, scholars highlight anti-Western attitude in its moral codes and values (e.g., Stockwell, 2006).¹⁰

(B) Behaviors

As for Christian fundamentalism, religious fundamentalisms are characterized in terms of behaviors regarding knowing, thinking, and interpreting (literalism in textual interpretation, selectively interpreting, dogmatic, dualistic, and adversarial thinking, and the suppression of doubt, e.g., Deifelt, 2005; Abi-Hashem, 2013; Pratt, 2015; Nipkow, 2017), metaphysical convictions and historical developments (such as selective modernization and traditioning, e.g., Antoun, 2010), in- and outgroup relations (most prominently: defensiveness, exclusivism, intolerance, hostility, and oppression, e.g., Donohue, 2004; Antoun, 2010), and ethical and political matters (e.g., Munson, 2003; Kratochwil, 2005). Certain behaviors are more pronounced in the characterization of some fundamentalisms: oppressive behavior is strongly emphasized for Islamic fundamentalism (e.g., Noor, 2007). Yateem (2014, 103), among others, associates Islam with practices with the “aim of imposing a certain specific cultural identity and way of life.” Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist fundamentalism are more commonly characterized as militants, using violence or terrorism (e.g., Kuruvachira, 2005; Clarke, 2017). One interesting difference between Christian and other religious fundamentalisms, especially Islamic fundamentalism, is how the characteristic of militance is understood. To illustrate: Cooper characterizes Islamic fundamentalism as “militant activism of divine violence” (2008, 29) and Khashan (1997, 12) describes the militancy of fundamentalists as the employment of “violence as a recipe for change towards the ‘right path’.” On the other hand, Bendroth (2005) associates Christian Protestant fundamentalist militancy with being oppositional reaction to perceiving of “themselves as a beleaguered minority in a hostile world” (5–6), while Brenneman (2015, 81) understands militancy to be related to fundamentalists’ “expressions of Christianity.” For Hindu and Buddhist fundamentalism, exclusivist and hostile behavior toward outgroups is comparatively strongly accentuated. As Kudriashova (2003, 14) writes, Buddhist and Hindu fundamentalism “are manifested primarily in the form of cultural exclusivity and nationalism” (see also Nagata, 2001, e.g.). For Jewish fundamentalism, on the other hand, isolationism, closedness, and group-cohesiveness are highlighted more often than for other fundamentalisms (e.g., Magid, 2014). Certain behaviors in reaction to historical developments are limited to specific fundamentalisms, such as settlement policy for Jewish fundamentalists (Heilman, 2005).

(C) Emotions

Again, emotions receive relatively little attention. When discussed, religious fundamentalism is characterized in terms of fear and uncertainty brought about by modern, social, economic, and ideological developments (e.g., Herriot, 2007). For Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu fundamentalisms, grievances—such as a sense of injustice due to discrimination, Western colonization, oppression and dominance, and the feeling of political powerlessness—are highlighted (e.g., Nagata, 2001; Weismann, 2009). Also, outgroup-related feelings are described as characteristic, like feeling threatened, victimized, and humiliated by members of the outgroup, and as feeling hostile toward outgroups (e.g., Pratt, 2007; Lawrie, 2008). This is comparatively pronounced for Hindu fundamentalism (e.g., Marx, 2001). Religious fundamentalists are depicted as being afraid of losing their group identity due to historical and structural

developments (e.g., Krüger, 2006). Islamic and Jewish fundamentalists are depicted as rejecting and feeling hostile toward the (secular) government (e.g., Garrison, 2003; Aran *et al.*, 2008), more so than other fundamentalists. Munson (2003, 698), for example, observes that Jewish fundamentalism rejects Zionism, which, among some fundamentalists at least, leads to the refusal to “have anything to do with the government of Israel,” and Fox (2009, 284) notes that “Islamic fundamentalists reject modern states as inherently secular and corrupt.” Additionally, a scandalized and outraged attitude, and a deep-seated fear of moral decline (e.g., Antoun, 2010), is ascribed to fundamentalists. Moreover, the fear of declining faith is often highlighted (e.g., Appleby, 2002). Sometimes religious fundamentalists are characterized by their fear of cognitive uncertainty or the influence of prejudice on their thinking (e.g., Summers, 2006; Lawrie, 2008).

(D) Goals and desires

Religious fundamentalisms, like Protestant fundamentalism, are characterized by their desire to re-instantiate an idealized “lost golden age,” which is the foundation of traditions that must be upheld, and which shape the political, moral, and social ambitions (e.g., Denmark, 2008). This is especially emphasized for Hindu and Islamic fundamentalism (e.g., Robinson, 2001). Religious fundamentalism is also described in terms of social goals—the preservation of group-identity, providing a sense of security, exercising social control (e.g., Abi-Hashem, 2013; Reid Meloy, 2018), and religious goals—the purification of faith by upholding or returning to the fundamentals of religion and the rooting out of evil (e.g., Frosh, 1997; Gregg, 2016). The goal of salvation is emphasized for Abrahamic fundamentalisms (e.g., Baurmann *et al.*, 2014). Cognitive goals—especially the search for certainty, purity of understanding, and truth (e.g., Antoun, 2001; Krüger, 2006)—are similar across religious fundamentalisms. Ethical goals that are allegedly characteristic for all religious fundamentalisms, but particularly emphasized for Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism (e.g., Khan, 2007; Dupret and Gutron, 2020), concern the prevention of moral decay and the purification of faith and morality by returning to their core values (e.g., Antoun, 2010). Another recurrent theme is the fundamentalists’ search for authenticity (e.g., Antoun, 2010). For non-Christian religious fundamentalisms, more so than for Christian fundamentalists, political goals are described, such as the remodeling of society based on sacred scriptures, the fundamentalists’ moral code, and divine laws, and the retaining of political power and religious influence (e.g., Lobo, 2009). Clarke (2014, 164), for example, describes the conviction of Islamic fundamentalists that “cultural renovation and creation of an Islamic society are required to build an Islamic state capable of restoring the power of Islam.” Muslim fundamentalists are in addition described as having the establishment of justice as a political goal (e.g., Stockwell, 2006). Moreover, for Islamic (and to a lesser extent for Hindu) fundamentalists, the global scope of their religiopolitical aims is viewed as characteristic (e.g., Robinson, 2001; Garrison, 2003). When it comes to Jewish fundamentalist contexts, the most prominent political goals concern territorial issues (e.g., Gitay, 2008).

(E) Structural elements

Like Christian fundamentalism, other religious fundamentalisms are characterized in relation to historical developments. They are described as a reaction to social, economic, and intellectual changes—think of secularization and the perceived marginalization of religion; theological developments; and developments such as globalization, Western influences, or certain forms of political organization that have been subsumed under the notion *modernity* (e.g., Eisenstadt, 1999; Euben, 1999; Marx, 2001; Appleby, 2002; Ang, 2005; Gregg, 2016). But different types of religious fundamentalisms vary in exactly what they react to. Islamic fundamentalism is described as a reaction to Western dominance, Westernization, and globalization (e.g., Munson, 2008). Nationalist aspects are highlighted for Hindu and Buddhist fundamentalisms.¹¹ Ahmed and Bashirov (2020, 253), for example, state that “Hindu fundamentalism is generally understood as a manifestation of a chauvinistic and majoritarian nationalism.” And Foxeus (2013, 68), discussing fundamentalist Buddhism, states that it is “characterized by a nationalism based on religious identity which must be protected against foreign influences.” While for most religious fundamentalisms the (global) structures and developments that gave rise to fundamentalism are highlighted, Jewish fundamentalism is described as a reaction to specific developments. For example, Jewish fundamentalism in the United States has been depicted as a reaction to the allegedly exaggerated assimilation that threatens Jewish identity (e.g., Magid, 2014), whereas events such as the six-day war are seen as perpetuating Jewish fundamentalism in Israel (e.g., Munson, 2008). The social structure of religious fundamentalisms, especially of Islamic fundamentalisms, is described as hierarchical (e.g., Baurmann *et al.*, 2014). In addition, the importance of group-identity and -membership, and strong group cohesion has been emphasized especially for Hindu and Buddhist fundamentalism (e.g., Randeree, 2016). When it comes to their relationship with political structures, non-Christian fundamentalisms, and especially Jewish and Islamic fundamentalists are portrayed as rejecting (and often confronting) their governmental institution as it is not based on religious principles and divine laws (e.g., Nagata, 2001). Finally, structures determining with whom the authority of interpretation lies have been emphasized (e.g., Milligan, 2005).

(Dis-)continuities with nonreligious fundamentalisms

Forty nonreligious fundamentalisms were identified in 107 publications. These nonreligious fundamentalisms are diverse, ranging from political fundamentalisms, such as Stalinist ($n = 2$), Maoist ($n = 2$), or Chavist ($n = 1$) fundamentalisms, to economic fundamentalisms—mostly market ($n = 32$) but also capital ($n = 2$) and Keynesian fundamentalism ($n = 1$)—to psychoanalytical fundamentalism ($n = 5$), and feminist fundamentalism ($n = 3$).

The concept *fundamentalism* is loosely applied to such phenomena. Many authors characterize nonreligious fundamentalisms in terms of characteristic beliefs and behaviors regarding knowing, thinking, and interpreting. Take market fundamentalism as an example. Market fundamentalism is characterized in terms of beliefs resembling religious fundamentalisms. It is said that the laws advocated by market fundamentalism resemble divine laws or are grounded in the natural order (e.g.,

Baker, 2010). Market fundamentalists are described as believing in an absolute and universal truth, such as in the truth of social Darwinism (e.g., Giroux, 2006). McDonough (2013) even described it market fundamentalism as being scripturalist. Additionally, it has been described as mirroring religious fundamentalists' historical beliefs: by believing in a "lost golden age" (Hopewell, 2017).

Behaviors regarding knowing, thinking, and interpreting are cited as defining characteristics of market fundamentalism, such as dualistic and dogmatic thinking, and as being uncompromising. They are seen as practicing a rigid moralism (e.g., Leonard, 2004). Other behaviors that are viewed as characteristic are specific for market fundamentalism, such as omissions of actions to decrease global inequality, the opposition of labor unions or the enabling of competition, and the reduction of state influence on the economy (e.g., Leonard, 2004). Lastly, market fundamentalists are also characterized by reference to specific goals: to bring about economic growth and profit (e.g., Giroux, 2006).

Other nonreligious fundamentalisms share few characteristics with religious fundamentalisms. Take academic fundamentalism, which is defined as "the attitude that a vital core of enlightenment exists and has been handed down to us, and that come hell or high water that core will be passed by us, undiluted, to our pupils, so that they can know the undying truth" (Chiszar, 1998, 510), and hardly shares any characteristics with other types of fundamentalism. Another example of nonreligious fundamentalism which shares few characteristics with religious fundamentalism is feminist fundamentalism. Feminist fundamentalists have been described in terms of holding on to an absolute and universal truth—the "uncompromising commitment to the equality of the sexes" (Case, 2012, 48), and as holding this belief with a high level of credence. Moreover, they are described as uncompromisingly committing to their belief (Case, 2009, 107). Definitional components of feminist fundamentalism in terms of specific actions, affections, goals, and organization are absent: it is almost entirely spelled out in terms of the beliefs with which it comes.

Discussion

We presented the result of a scoping review of the scientific usage of *fundamentalism* between 1996 and 2020. Based on our analysis of 713 publications, we see that most scholars apply *fundamentalism* to religious phenomena, followed by scholars limiting the domain of application to Christian fundamentalism. Only very few publications explicitly limit it to Abrahamic fundamentalisms. A significant number of publications ($n = 107$) include nonreligious phenomena in the domain of application. Our findings confirm that there is disagreement on the *domain of application* of the concept *fundamentalism* in the academic usage since 1995, but that most scholars restrict it to religious phenomena.

We furthermore gave an overview of allegedly defining characteristics of different fundamentalisms, thereby contributing to the debate on the concept's *intension*. First, we show that the defining characteristics can be organized into five categories—the belief, behavior, emotion, goal, and structural category—which indicated that fundamentalism is multidimensional. Additionally, this review shows that all kinds of fundamentalism are conceptualized in terms of beliefs, and behaviors and structures are also frequently used as defining characteristic. Meanwhile, emotions and goals receive less attention.

Second, our review shows that, while the conceptualizations of different kinds of fundamentalisms overlap, there are also significant differences. To begin with, we find overlap between defining characteristics of Christian and other religious fundamentalisms, such as the prominent role of foundational beliefs; behaviors, such as literal interpretations of sacred texts (although, as shown in the analysis section, what authors mean by literalism may differ); goals such as traditioning and the re-instantiation of an idealized past; and group structures, such as strict hierarchies. Differences in the characterization of religious fundamentalisms concern, for example, the content of religious, religiopolitical, and ethical beliefs; the specific political methods and group-related behavior; and certain context-sensitive goals and desires. While religious fundamentalists are characterized by reference to broad structural developments, there is a great variation with regards to the specific developments to which various fundamentalisms respond. Other differences between conceptualizations of different kinds of fundamentalism are, for example, that Islamic fundamentalisms are more frequently characterized in terms of violence, and Hindu and Buddhist fundamentalisms more frequently by reference to nationalistic and ethnic concerns and goals.

Third, when zooming in on how certain characteristic elements are understood, we also encounter differences. These can occur between different conceptualization of the same type of fundamentalism, for example, Christian Protestant fundamentalism as shown by different interpretations of literalism or militancy (see Williamson, 2020 for a similar point), but they also occur between conceptualizations of different kinds of fundamentalism which brings us to the last debate this review contributed to.

This debate concerns the question whether the concept *fosters prejudice* in the study of those phenomena we call “fundamentalist.” Did we find evidence that confirms the worry of bias in the study of fundamentalism? First, we found that by far most of the authors of the publications we reviewed are affiliated with universities in the Global North. While overrepresentation of knowledge production institutions located in the global north might not be unique for fundamentalism studies, we still think this finding is worth reporting as empirical (e.g., Duarte *et al.*, 2015) and theoretical studies (e.g., Anderson, 1995; Elgin, 2017) have shown that diversity along many dimensions benefits nuanced scholarship and has a bigger chance of counteracting bias. Therefore, while biasing effects of the accumulation of epistemic power in the global north most likely is not a problem unique for fundamentalism studies, these effects nevertheless merit attention. Future research should further scrutinize the (lack of) diversity in fundamentalism studies, and the potential and actual effect of power distribution on the field of fundamentalism studies.

Second, we found that, while Islamic fundamentalism is discussed almost as much as Christian fundamentalism, most of the qualitative and quantitative data for the empirical studies are collected in Christian majority countries, most prominently in the United States, or secular majority countries. It might be the case that scholars doing empirical research on Islamic fundamentalism prefer the concept of *Islamism*. In that case, it is necessary to scrutinize the precise conceptual relations between *fundamentalism* and *Islamism*, to evaluate the reasons for preferring the latter concept over the former, and the question whether both concepts pick out the same phenomenon, and if not, how they differ.

Third, we found variations in spelling out allegedly defining characteristics for different kinds of fundamentalism. Take the example of militancy. For Islamic fundamentalism it is often understood in terms of violence, whereas militancy for Christian Protestant fundamentalism is understood rather as a manner of holding and defining certain beliefs against opponents. This confirms the analysis by Williamson (2020) and Crawford (2014). In addition, we find that for non-Christian fundamentalisms their political beliefs and goals, as well as their willingness to use violence to achieve them, are emphasized more than for Christian fundamentalisms. This finding provides some warrant for the worry of, among others, Campo (1995) and Watt (2010, 2017) that the widening of the concept's domain of application was motivated by political developments that were seen as threatening to Western scholars and politicians. It should be noted, however, that many scholars studying Islamic movements do not utilize the concept of *fundamentalism* but speak of *Islamism* instead, a concept that we—in line with our inclusion and exclusion criteria—excluded from this review.¹²

Two additional observations are worth noting. First, we find that scholars sometimes fail to clearly distinguish the concept of *fundamentalism* from those of *extremism*, *terrorism*, and *radicalization* (see Barkun, 2004). For example: Inbar (1996) uses the concepts of *extremism* and *Islamic fundamentalism* almost interchangeably; Pratt (2007) links *fundamentalism* to extremist violence; Butko (2006) associates *Islamic fundamentalism* with terrorism; and Dupret and Gutro (2020) conceptually link *fundamentalism* to *radicalization*. This shows the necessity to clarify such conceptual relations, which would also contribute to the clarification of these concepts (for a discussion, see e.g., Striegher, 2015; Borum, 2017; Bötticher, 2017; Sardoč, 2020). Second, we observe that different disciplines tend toward different conceptualizations of fundamentalism. Psychologists, for example, often refer to Altemeyer and Hunsberger's definition of fundamentalism, whereas scholars from the fields of international relation or religious studies frequently adhere to the conceptualization of the *Fundamentalism Project*. This prompts the question whether scholars utilizing Altemeyer and Hunsberger's psychological definition, and scholars endorsing the family resemblance conception of the *Fundamentalism Project* study the same empirical phenomena (see Hutchinson, 2024 for a similar point). To improve transdisciplinary exchange and foster a multidisciplinary understanding of the phenomena that fundamentalism studies study, future research should scrutinize disciplinary differences in conceptualizing and approaching the phenomenon.

Conclusion

This review has contributed to debates concerning the concept's domain of application, the concept's intension, and the legitimacy of its usage. By providing an overview and categorization of its definitional characteristics, it shows that fundamentalism is treated as a multidimensional phenomenon in the literature. It also shows that the domain of application of the concept *fundamentalism* extends from Christian to other religious movements, and secular phenomena. The review also shows that there are significant differences between the characterizations of different kinds of fundamentalisms. Lastly, it cites reasons to worry about bias in fundamentalism studies.

How can the descriptive results help to answer the normative questions about whether and how we should use the concept *fundamentalism* for research? And how can these insights help in addressing and assessing the criticisms of *fundamentalism* as global comparative concept as developed in the *Fundamentalism Project*? Overall, we see a tight connection between the debates on the concept's domain of application, intension, and danger of prejudice and bias. We point to three considerations that deserve attention in conceptualizing *fundamentalism*.

1. *The mutual dependence between the domain of application and the specifications of defining characteristics:* This review confirms the observation that scholars disagree about how they understand specific building blocks, and that specifications of building blocks can vary across different types of fundamentalisms. The domain of application of *fundamentalism* depends on how the building blocks are specified. If, for example, the belief in a sacred and revealed scripture is taken to be a defining characteristic of fundamentalism, then it makes sense to restrict the domain of application to Abrahamic fundamentalisms. Vice versa, the concepts intension depends on how the extension is specified. If we start by settling the concepts extension to a certain type of movements in Abrahamic religions, then it makes sense to qualify the belief in a sacred and revealed scripture as a core or defining characteristic. If we start out with a broader extension, for example, by including various secular political movements, then it makes less sense to conceptualize fundamentalism in terms of a sacred and revealed scripture.
2. *The usefulness of scientific concepts:* Considerations regarding the domain of application and the specification of conceptual building blocks depend on one's understanding of *useful* scientific concepts. What counts as useful is a matter of debate. If one values specificity, precision, and non-ambiguity in scientific concepts, then the domain of application will most likely be more restrictive. For example, if the building block "reaction to modernity" is specified as reaction to a liberal and progressive theological position and movement in the United States (called "modernism," see Williamson, 2020), then it makes little sense to speak of Islamic or Jewish fundamentalism, as *fundamentalism* is defined in relation to inner-religious and -cultural dynamics specific for Christian Protestantism in the United States at a specific time. If one's understanding of usefulness of scientific concepts allows for certain degrees of vagueness and ambiguity, for example, because vagueness and ambiguity facilitates a broader, comparative application of *fundamentalism* as a lens for research, one is more likely to adhere to a broader understanding of "modernity" in terms of globalization, Western influences, and new forms of political organization. Such understanding allows for, for example, the inclusion of Islamic or Hindu fundamentalism.
3. *The connection between conceptual ambiguity and the risk of bias in the study of fundamentalism:* Vagueness and ambiguity increase the risk of prejudice and bias to be introduced in the study of fundamentalism. Almond *et al.* (1995) argue that extending the domain of application of *fundamentalism* to religious movements on a global scale generates interesting research questions—and is thereby useful. To make this extension possible, they allow for more vagueness

and ambiguity in the specification of the building blocks. Critics of the concept *fundamentalism* have argued that the concept only *appears* to be useful—to scholars and an audience with a Western and liberal background (see Watt, 2017). In fact, however, the concept, due to its ambiguity, is not useful but misrepresents and misunderstands certain phenomena by applying the lens of fundamentalism (see Wood, 2014; Watt, 2017; Williamson, 2020 for similar points). This increases the risk for bias. Ambiguity and vagueness are all the riskier given the overwhelming representation of scholars affiliated to universities from the Global North, and given the fact that data were mostly collected in the Global North, in Christian majority countries. Also given the strong focus on Islamic fundamentalism, and its association with violence provides reasons to be on the lookout for biases in the study of fundamentalism.

Overall, we conclude that any conceptualization of *fundamentalism* requires a careful deliberation between the concept's domain of application, its intension, and its usefulness. Based on the above, we draw two lessons for future research on *fundamentalism*. First, to avoid ambiguities and the related danger of unwarranted assumptions and misrepresentations (especially when it comes to global fundamentalism as theorized in the Fundamentalism Project, see Watt, 2017; Williamson, 2020), scholars should specify how they use the building blocks of *fundamentalism*, and as well as how broad the domain of application of *fundamentalism* is, on their view. Second, for transparency reasons, to avoid bias, and to facilitate debate on how to use the concept of *fundamentalism* for research, scholars who endorse the concept should make explicit why they find it useful. At the same time, it should be noted that more theoretical work is required to determine what makes concepts useful in the social sciences and the humanities. We hope that making these deliberations explicit can help to mitigate the danger of bias, prejudice, and misrepresentation in fundamentalism studies.

Supplementary material. The supplementary material for this article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048324000385>.

Data. This research was preregistered with the Open Science Foundation (<https://osf.io/prereg/>). Following the PRISMA-P checklist, we preregistered the data-searching and -selection process, including search platforms, search-terms, and inclusion and exclusion criteria. We also preregistered our method for analysis. In accordance with the nature of a scoping review, and the qualitative data-analysis, changes in the method of analysis occurred as the researchers got more familiar with the literature under review. All changes in the method of analysis including an explanation of these changes, an overview of all codes that were used, and a description of our interpretation of the inclusion and exclusion criteria will be made available with the pre-registration form on the website of the Open Science Foundation.

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Notes

1. For example, Emerson and Hartman's (2006) critical review of influential definitions and conceptualizations of "fundamentalism" does not proceed systematically. Nor does Orekhovskaya *et al.*'s (2019) analysis of the conceptual features of religious fundamentalism, or Watt's (2008, 2010) critical discussions of the meaning of the terms "Islamic fundamentalism" and "Jewish fundamentalism." Taylor (2017) reviews the academic discourse on fundamentalism but does not detail its conceptualizations. Phillips and Kitchens (2021) mainly focus on the psychological conceptualizations and operationalizations of *fundamentalism*.
2. See this link for the preregistration of the scoping review, the review protocol, and further documentation: https://osf.io/2muj3/?view_only=6fa9e637c6b64ed1b1378d0c8a7c7ad0
3. Due to the overlap between the fields of terrorism, radicalization, extremism, and fundamentalism studies, the terms "terrorism," "radicalization," and "extremism" were search terms if they occurred in connection with "fundamentalism."
4. A detailed explanation of the interpretation of the inclusion and exclusion criteria can be found via this link. https://osf.io/2muj3/?view_only=6fa9e637c6b64ed1b1378d0c8a7c7ad0
5. Making use of the code co-occurrence function in Atlas.ti, we extracted the co-occurrence of all the codes denoting characteristic or defining features of fundamentalism for each type of fundamentalism (see appendix 4 for an illustration and a more detailed explanation).
6. Only the method explicitly stated was recorded. When authors did not themselves record their method, they were classified as theoretical studies, with the specification that they do not explicate their method. Most of such studies seem to be based on narrative literature reviews, without making that explicit or transparent how the review was conducted.
7. It should be noted that we did not restrict our literature searches to certain languages (see appendix 1). However, in the screening procedure we excluded publications that were not published in English, Dutch, German, French, or Spanish (our exclusion criterion b). In total, 492 of the 7,262 studies that we screened in total were excluded on the basis of this criterion. Of the texts excluded under the criterion b, 113 were written in Portuguese, 108 in Italian, 83 in Russian, 42 in Polish, 22 in Chinese, 17 in Arabic, followed by smaller amounts of publications in languages such as Croatian, Japanese, and even Azerbaijani.
8. By "metaphysical" we mean the nature and structure of reality. A specific kind of metaphysical convictions are religious convictions. Examples of nonreligious metaphysical convictions are the belief that the market is the most basic organizing principle, or beliefs about the nature of gender, or about human nature.
9. In comparison with Abrahamic fundamentalisms, this dimension is less emphasized for Buddhist and Hindu fundamentalism. When discussed in relation to these fundamentalisms, the meaning of scripturalism is extended to include "constructed" foundational doctrines (e.g., Keddie, 1998).
10. As one reviewer thoughtfully pointed out, an anti-Western attitude might qualify as a belief or, alternatively, as a behavior. We classify the element "anti-Western attitude" as a belief because, according to our interpretation, this is how most scholars understand the anti-Westernism of fundamentalists. Garrison (2003, 48), for example, speaks of an anti-Western theology, while Inbar (1996, 201) speaks of an anti-Western *Weltanschauung*. However, as we discuss elsewhere (Kindermann *et al.* forthcoming), how to classify certain defining elements can be challenging due to (a) ambiguities in the texts we analyze, (b) ambiguities in reality to the systematic co-occurrence of phenomena, and (c) lack of evidence. In addition, certain themes occur across the five dimensions. For example, scholars frequently speak of anti-Western attitudes, theologies, or *Weltanschauungen*, but also emphasize the historical and structural developments that prompt such beliefs, such as Western influences and colonialism. We further develop these recurring themes elsewhere (Kindermann *et al.*, forthcoming).
11. Some authors do the same for Islamic fundamentalism (e.g., Clarke, 2017), while others highlight its global triumphant aspirations (e.g., Cesari, 2016).
12. In the first round of screening—the title and abstract screening—336 articles were excluded for using the concept *Islamism* instead of *fundamentalism*. Given that we are interested in definitions and uses of the concept *fundamentalism*, we decided to exclude publications that use a different conceptual repertoire. However, as an anonymous reviewer pointed out, this means that many publications of leading contemporary scholars

on Islamic movements are not included in our review. Our review therefore does not allow any conclusions about the risk of bias and prejudice in the scholarship on Islamic movements in general.

13. References with an asterisk are included in the scoping review. For a full overview of included publications, see appendix 2.

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