Religious Studies (2022), 1–19
doi:10.1017/S0034412522000683

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

On defining 'fundamentalism'

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(Received 8 July 2022; revised 11 October 2022; accepted 12 October 2022)

Abstract

This article combines two things: it explores how one should undertake the project of defining 'fundamentalism' and, based on the ensuing desiderata, it actually provides such a definition. After a few preliminary comments on 'fundamentalism' and the value of defining it, five goals of definitions are distinguished and elucidated: accuracy, precision, fairness, clarity, and fecundity. After that, various kinds of definitions and their interrelations are spelled out. Finally, the author provides and defends a so-called explicative definition of 'fundamentalism' both in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions and in terms of stereotypical properties. On the basis of empirical literature and a scoping review, it is argued that a movement is fundamentalist if and only if it is (i) reactionary towards modern developments, (ii) itself modern, and (iii) based on a grand historical narrative. More specifically, a movement is fundamentalist if it exemplifies a large number of the following properties: (i) it is reactionary in its rejection of liberal ethics, science, or technological exploitation; (ii) it is modern in seeking certainty and control, embracing literalism and infallibility about particular scriptures, actively using media and technology, or making universal claims; and (iii) it presents a grand historical narrative in terms of paradise, fall, and redemption, or cosmic dualism.

Keywords: definition; family resemblance; fundamentalism; necessary and sufficient conditions; operationalization

Introduction

The aim of this article is to define 'fundamentalism', one of the main drivers of conflict in our world. The literature on fundamentalism is vast, comprising work from criminology, economics, law, philosophy, political theory, psychiatry, psychology, religious studies, sociology, and theology. One would expect that defining fundamentalism has received ample attention in the literature. As various scholars have pointed out, though, that is not the case: it is hard to find tenable definitions (Ben-Dor (1996), 240), we have little grip on the concept (Magid (2014), 70), fundamentalism is a fuzzy notion with much ambiguity (Barkun (2003), 60; Gierycz (2020), 1), the term has many meanings (Pfürtner (1997), 105; Segura (2016), 21), and a rigorous definition is desperately needed (Fischer (2006), 430). Such definitional frameworks are essential for clarity, since the word 'fundamentalism' is used in different senses in various disciplinary fields. It is needed for comparative studies, such as those on fundamentalisms in different religious or even secular

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412522000683 Published online by Cambridge University Press

movements, it is crucial for a fruitful interaction between theoretical, qualitative, and quantitative work, and it is pivotal for operationalizations that can then be used in empirical work.

Of course, the term 'fundamentalism' is contested. Some, for instance, have argued that it is pejorative. However, an earlier scoping review that I performed with others shows that the use of the term has actually increased over the last two decades.[1] Since there is good reason to think that the term will not go away, it is probably wiser to clean up the concept, be lucid about each of the conditions that one takes to be relevant for it, and show how its potential negative side effects, such as pejorativeness, can be overcome.

What is also lacking in the literature is careful reflection on the issue of how to undertake the project of defining 'fundamentalism'. Such meta-scrutiny involves paying attention to different kinds of definitions, the various aims that definitions can have, and desiderata that a viable definition would meet. This article will elaborate in detail on the project of defining 'fundamentalism' before actually providing such a definition.

The article is structured as follows. After a few preliminary comments, I distinguish five purposes that definitions can have: accuracy, precision, fairness, clarity, and fecundity. Subsequently, I list various kinds of definitions and explain how they relate to one another. Among other things, we shall see that one can define something in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions or in terms of a family resemblance, two approaches that are often considered to be mutually exclusive. Finally, I provide and defend one possible definition that seems to meet these desiderata. I call it an explicative definition of 'fundamentalism' both in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions and in terms of stereotypical properties, a definition that I therefore dub the 'BicFam' definition of 'fundamentalism'.

Preliminaries

Let us start with four preliminary comments to bring more focus to our main question and show the value of reflection on how to define 'fundamentalism'.

1. What is the definiendum here? 'Fundamentalist' as in the fundamentalist person, or 'fundamentalism' as in a fundamentalist movement, or 'fundamentalist' as in a characteristic of a person's beliefs or actions? I will focus on 'fundamentalism' as referring to a wide variety of movements – as we shall see, it arguably ranges from right-wing extremism and Hindu nationalism to Wahhabism and extreme environmentalism. This focus on fundamentalist movements rather than particular fundamentalists' beliefs or actions has three reasons. First, exactly what individuals within a fundamentalist movement believe and how they act may differ from person to person. Some beliefs and acts of individual fundamentalists may even conflict with those of the group. This phenomenon received ample attention in recent writings in social epistemology: groups such as the Roman Catholic Church or China's Communist Party may believe certain things and perform certain actions, even if many individual members believe and act otherwise. For instance, the Roman Catholic Church as an institute may believe in the virgin birth of Christ and discourage contra-conception, even if many Roman Catholics think and act otherwise.[2] Second, some beliefs, acts, symbols, and rituals cannot be embodied by a single person, but only by multiple members, such as the practice of female circumcision in various African fundamentalist movements. Third, to focus on individuals would fail to do justice to phenomena that are by their very nature interpersonal. Think of group dynamics regarding belief formation, such as indoctrination, or disagreement with members outside the group, like various responses by fundamentalists to the

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brutal killing of French teacher Samuel Patty in October 2020. Hence, our focus is on 'fundamentalism' as a movement.

Several scholars have defined 'fundamentalism' as beliefs or belief-systems of particular kinds.[3] This seems misguided. Fundamentalisms are movements that consist of individuals who jointly embrace particular beliefs and belief-systems, but also display certain emotions (e.g. anger or resentment), engage in various practices and rituals (e.g. ritual slaughtering), have certain intentions and conative states (e.g. intend to bring about a revolution or desire the Parousia of Christ), and work with symbols and material objects (swastikas, flags). Of course, beliefs and belief-systems are important to fundamentalism.[4] The point here is merely that we should not *reduce* fundamentalisms to belief-systems, since they consist of much more than that.

2. How we define 'fundamentalism' matters for at least three reasons. First, one's definition of 'fundamentalism' obviously makes a difference to the scope of phenomena one will study. For instance, the seminal Fundamentalism Project (Marty and Appleby (1991–1995)) defined fundamentalism in such a way that it studied various kinds of non-Christian fundamentalism, but no non-religious or secular versions of fundamentalism, such as fascism and extreme environmentalism. A proper definition provides clarity about the scope of one's use of the term. Second, a definition can do more or less justice to the subtle but important distinctions between fundamentalism and closely related phenomena. Most scholars, for instance, agree that fundamentalism does not necessarily come with a disposition to violence, whereas extremism usually and terrorism always does.[5] Third, one definition can be more fruitful than another. Some, for instance, can be operationalized in order to be used in qualitative and quantitative research, whereas others cannot. Some are pejorative, whereas others are not, so that they do not impede personal contact with fundamentalists. Closely related to this, systematic definitions of 'fundamentalism' would improve consistency across studies.[6]
3. In defining 'fundamentalism', etymology is not decisive. As numerous scholars have pointed out, the term originated in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A Bible conference held in New York in 1895, for instance, claimed that there were five fundamentals to the Christian faith, core tenets that were non-negotiable, namely the inerrancy of the Bible, the divinity of Jesus Christ, his virgin birth, the substitutionary atonement of Christ, and his physical resurrection. Such Christian fundamentalism came with fierce opposition to biblical criticism and evolutionary theory (see Torrey et al. (1917)). Thus, 'fundamentalism' originally meant *Christian* fundamentalism. Yet, it does not follow that these traits are all necessary for fundamentalism. Harvey Cox is known for saying that fundamentalism was born in America but has its roots everywhere (see Cox (2009), 147). His idea is clearly that 'fundamentalism' has come to denote something much broader than what it originally designated. That etymology is not decisive for defining a term is true generally. The English verb *believe* derives from the German *belieben*, which, roughly, means 'to love'. Of course, it does not follow that belief inevitably comes with some sort of affection. The etymology of a word is historically important and can shed light of how a term came to mean what it means today, but it cannot be authoritative in determining the current meaning of a term. This is important for the project of defining fundamentalism, because some scholars have suggested that the word 'fundamentalism' should be reserved for Christian fundamentalism that interprets the Bible literally (e.g. Smart (1989), 594). If such a position is to be tenable, it should be for non-etymological reasons.

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4. In defining 'fundamentalism', one soon faces what has been called the *problem of the criterion*. This problem was first spelled out in epistemology: in providing an analysis of 'knowledge' the challenge was where to start. As Roderick Chisholm famously argued, there are three main options here (see Chisholm (1973), (1977)). First, one could start by answering the question 'What do we know?', or 'What is the extent of our knowledge?' One would thus start from particular cases of what one takes to be knowledge. Second, one could start by answering the question 'How do we know?', or 'What is the criterion for deciding whether something is a case of knowledge or not?' In that case, one would start with a particular account of knowledge. Which question one answers first might make a rather crucial difference to the account of knowledge one ends up with. The former approach is called 'particularism', the latter 'methodism'. A third and final approach would be that one can know the answer to the first question only if one knows the answer to the second one and vice versa and that we thus cannot provide an answer to either of them.

   This problem also applies to defining 'fundamentalism'. As we saw, some take it that only Christian literalism should count as fundamentalism and then try to come up with a definition. Others believe that it should also include other forms of religious fundamentalism, such as Islamic and Jewish fundamentalism. Still others take it that it should also cover non-religious phenomena, such as extreme environmentalism and neo-Nazism. And still others take it that it should even include movements like extreme capitalism (referred to as *market fundamentalism*), democratic fundamentalism, enlightenment fundamentalism, evolutionary fundamentalism, and gender fundamentalism.[7] Of course, which of these movements one includes as varieties of fundamentalism will make a crucial difference to one's definition of 'fundamentalism'. Alternatively, choosing a particular account of what fundamentalism is would rule in various movements and rule out others. This raises the question: is there a principled way – that is, a theoretically non-arbitrary way – to start with a particular answer to the one question rather than the other?

   As numerous philosophers have pointed out, there are more ways to solve the problem of the criterion than just the three distinguished by Chisholm (McCain (2020)).[8] I will use the method of so-called reflective equilibrium. This method, widely used in ethics and conceptual analysis, consists in working back and forth among our considered judgements about particular scenarios that are supposed to be cases of fundamentalism, general ideas about what makes a movement fundamentalist, and various desiderata that a definition of 'fundamentalism' ought to meet, revising each of these elements until we have reached an acceptable coherence among them.[9] This means that there *is* indeed a principled way to start: namely on both sides simultaneously and then work back and forth until we have been able to strike the right balance.

The purposes of a definition

Aristotle suggested that to define something is to give or state the *essence* of it.[10] That is surely a purpose of some definitions, but when we consider definitions more generally, it is clear that they can have a wide variety of purposes. Exactly what purpose one has in mind often makes a crucial difference to the ensuing definition. There seem to be five important purposes that are often acknowledged in the literature, partly on the basis of a priori considerations and partly on the basis of empirical comparisons (Gupta (2019)):

1. *Accuracy*. This is pivotal when it comes to definitions of natural kinds, such as water, atom, gold, and universe. These aim to capture the very essence of the thing in

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question, such as *Water is* H_2O. It seems this cannot be the primary purpose in defining 'fundamentalism'. After all, it is widely agreed that fundamentalism is a social construction: there is nothing carved at the joints of nature denoted by 'fundamentalism', in the way that there *is* something carved at the joints of nature when it comes to water and gold. 'Fundamentalism' seems to denote a whole gamut of different properties, some of which are more important than others.

We can nonetheless say something about those properties. When it comes to accuracy, any definition of 'fundamentalism' will have to be able to take on board movements like Wahhabism and Jihadism, the Amish, TULIP Calvinism, Hindutva nationalism, but also Maoist communism, left-wing environmentalism, and neo-Nazism. I will defend this broad understanding of 'fundamentalism' below. This means, among other things, that an accurate definition covers both secular and religious fundamentalism, and right-wing (or conservative) and left-wing (or progressive) fundamentalism. Not only should it rule these in, it should also rule out phenomena that are widely discarded in the literature as cases of fundamentalism, such as belief in conspiracy theories regarding Covid-19, mainstream Christianity and Islam, and ordinary patriotism (as in love for one's country and proper expressions thereof).

2. *Precision*. A definition is more precise to the extent that, for instance, it indicates the exact boundaries of the definiendum. This is a challenge because some concepts, including 'fundamentalism', may by their very nature be ambiguous. This is not surprising, because certain phenomena are inevitably vague: mountains, valleys, and rivers do not have clear boundaries and any proper description or definition of them would take that into account. Similarly, there may be certain ambiguities or vaguenesses about fundamentalism even if we were to know everything one can possibly know about them.
3. *Fairness*. This purpose is often overlooked, but a definition may aim at doing justice to the individuals or groups involved. There is, then, also a moral purpose to definitions. An example of a definition that may not be fair is one that implies that fundamentalism comes with various epistemic vices, such as closed-mindedness, dogmatism, intellectual pride, cowardice, conformity, wishful thinking, rigidity, obtuseness, gullibility, imperviousness to evidence, and overconfidence.[11] Such definitions have actually been offered in the literature (Glock and Stark (1966), 333; Krüger (2006); Pohl (2014)). If one's definition implies that it is part and parcel of fundamentalism that it comes with epistemic vices, then that may fail to do justice to the individuals involved. If it is *true* for fundamentalist movements, it may still do injustice to some of the individuals involved. If it is true even for them, then, of course, no such injustice is involved, but it might distort other purposes of definitions (see 'Fecundity' below). *Mutatis mutandis*, the same applies to definitions of 'fundamentalism' found in the literature that imply that they are authoritarian or irrational (Almond et al. (1995), 405–408).
4. *Clarity*. In other words, how lucid and understandable are the words we use to identify a particular phenomenon? And how much insight does the definition provide? Correctly singling out a particular phenomenon or entity will do if the only purpose is accuracy, but it will not suffice when it comes to clarity: in that case, the definition should actually *inform us about* that phenomenon and identify distinctive essences, conditions, features, or properties.
5. *Fecundity*. A definition may be accurate, precise, fair, and clear, and yet not fruitful, because it cannot do any work in research. A definition that is pejorative – whether that is accurate or not – may impede research, because potential subjects may refuse to participate in qualitative research and it may trigger biases in researchers or lead

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to tunnel vision.[12] A definition that meets all the other purposes but cannot be operationalized may be useless for particular projects.

Let me be explicit that a proper definition should meet all these five desiderata. This is a challenge, for in aiming at all five, one will necessarily have to balance them. If, as I will argue, fundamentalism has vague boundaries in the sense that some cases are clearly cases of fundamentalism whereas others are not – and that is not due to limitations in what we know about those cases, but inherent in the very concept of fundamentalism – then being accurate implies such ambiguity and such ambiguity comes, of course, at the loss of precision. Also, a definition that is *not* fair, because it builds in pejorative elements, such as the exemplification of epistemic vices, may be more fruitful in some ways – it may, for instance, be easier to identify fundamentalist movements or fundamentalist ways of thinking (even though, as we saw, it may also impede research in various ways).

Kinds of definitions

One can give different kinds of definitions. In fact, one can pursue each kind of definition that I distinguish here for 'fundamentalism'. Yet, as we will see, doing so is hardly worthwhile for most kinds of definition. The purpose of this section, then, is to identify the kind of definition that can be fruitfully employed in research on fundamentalism.[13]

Nominal and real definitions

The first distinction that comes to mind when we explore different kinds of definition is that between nominal and real definitions, as introduced by John Locke (1689). A nominal definition aims to capture our use and the meaning of a term, whereas a real definition aims to capture the nature of the phenomenon that the word refers to. Thus, a real definition of 'water' would be 'H_2O'. That, after all, is its atomic structure. Something else may run through our rivers at some point, but then it is no longer water. A nominal definition of 'water' would be something like: a transparent, odourless, and colourless liquid that fills our oceans, seas, rivers, and lakes and that is the basis of the fluids of living organisms. Of course, nominal and real definitions may say two rather different things about the same object and yet both be entirely true – because they try to capture something different about it, namely our use of a term and the object's real nature.

When it comes to 'fundamentalism', should we seek a nominal or a real definition? I suggest both. As I said, it is implausible to think that there is something out there cut at the joints of nature that we refer to by 'fundamentalism', so that providing merely a real definition seems problematic. On the other hand, our use of 'fundamentalism' is often sloppy – some people use the term to refer to any view they deem irrational and outdated. Our definition should improve on and tighten our use of it and do so by shedding light on real properties of fundamentalism.

Dictionary definitions

One may wonder why we cannot simply use a dictionary definition. It roughly gives the meaning of a word, what I called a nominal definition. That this will not do, should be clear even from comparing only a few dictionary definitions. According to Merriam-Webster, fundamentalism is 'a movement or attitude stressing strict and literal adherence to a set of basic principles', the Oxford English Dictionary describes it as 'a form of religion, especially Islam or Protestant Christianity, that upholds belief in the strict, literal interpretation of scripture', the Cambridge Dictionary defines it as `the belief

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in old and traditional forms of religion, or the belief that what is written in a holy book, such as the Christian Bible, is completely true', and the Free Dictionary defines 'fundamentalism' as 'a usually religious movement or point of view characterized by a return to fundamental principles, by rigid adherence to those principles, and often by intolerance of other views and opposition to secularism'. Various problems are manifest straight away. First, there is simply too much disagreement among these definitions. Only the Free Dictionary mentions the opposition to secularism, Merriam-Webster and the Free Dictionary mention principles whereas the other two refer to holy scriptures, and Merriam-Webster, the Oxford English Dictionary, and the Cambridge Dictionary do *not* allow for non-religious fundamentalism, whereas the Free Dictionary does. Second, it is not obvious how each of these definitions is to be understood: do they provide sufficient conditions, necessary conditions, a combination of necessary and sufficient conditions, stereotypical properties? Clearly, then, arbitrarily choosing one of these definitions will not do.

Ostensive definitions

Another kind is an ostensive definition, which defines by pointing to particular phenomena. Thus, one can suggest that by 'fundamentalism', one means things like *these* and then point to the Jewish Gush Emunim movement, Wahhabism within Sunni Islam, and the movements that were brought about by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwaler and his Sikh followers in India. Ostensive definitions may in a sense dig deeper than dictionary definitions because they are empirically richer. This may well work for various phenomena like proper names for people or names for animals. Yet, it does *not* seem to work well in the case of fundamentalism. After all, one can hardly physically point to a fundamentalist movement as a whole. One can only point to things like people, books, institutions, rituals, symbols, rules, and so on. Clearly, fundamentalist movements are much more than that. Moreover, not everything involved in particular people, books, institutions, acts, and so on is constitutive for fundamentalism. Finally, as I pointed out, fundamentalism comes in many guises and ever new kinds of fundamentalism show up in the course of history. Thus, in order to define fundamentalism properly, one would have to say that a movement is fundamentalist just in case it sufficiently resembles *this* movement or *these* movements. But what is it sufficiently to resemble a particular movement? We would need careful theoretical reflection in order to make this clear and an ostensive definition as such does not provide that.

Stipulative, descriptive, explicative definitions

More helpful are *stipulative* and *descriptive* definitions. Stipulative definitions, unsurprisingly, stipulate the meaning of a term: they impart a particular meaning, whether or not that meaning actually agrees with prior uses of the term in ordinary language or the scientific literature. Alternatively, one might provide a descriptive definition, that is, spell out the meaning of a term but in doing so stay faithful to actual usage in the relevant domain (like daily life or science). Such faithfulness comes in different guises: a definition is *extensionally adequate* if there are there are no actual counterexamples to it, it is *intensionally adequate* if there are no possible counterexamples to it, and it is *sense adequate* (or *analytic*) just in case it endows the defined term with the right sense.

In this article, I will seek a definition of 'fundamentalism' that is partly stipulative and partly descriptive. Such definitions are often called *explicative*. Explicative definitions are often given as improvements of existing but imperfect concepts. I pursue an explicative definition for two reasons. On the one hand, a definition of 'fundamentalism' would

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need to be useful to the existing scholarly debate on fundamentalism. It therefore needs to stay close to existing uses and existing meanings. On the other hand, it will be stipulative in some regards, because the concept can be tightened and further explicated, thereby fine-tuning our use of the term.[14]

Biconditional definitions

Even explicative definitions come in two different kinds, though. There are at least two rather different ones: biconditional definitions and definitions in terms of a family resemblance. Biconditional definitions provide individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions. Well known is the analysis of knowledge in terms of justified true belief that meets an anti-luck condition. In other words, a cognitive subject *S* knows that some proposition *p* is true if and only if (i) *p* is actually true, (ii) *S* believes that *p* is true, (iii) *S* has justification for believing that *p* is true, (iv) it is *not* a matter of luck (in a difficult-to-specify sense) that *S* believes truly that *p* (Shope (1983)).

It is hard to find definitions in the fundamentalism literature that are explicitly phrased in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. Sometimes, it seems that the author merely provides necessary conditions, for instance when Michael Baurmann elucidates his use of 'fundamentalism':

> I understand by 'fundamentalism' belief-systems which display at least the following three attributes: 1. They propagate the supreme value of salvation goods over worldly goods . . . 2. Fundamentalists claim that their view is certain and that there is no room for doubt . . . 3. Fundamentalism includes Manichaeism and intolerance: the world is clearly divided into the good and the evil and there is a huge difference between them. (Baurmann (2007), 157–158)

Others provide both necessary and sufficient conditions, like Luca Ozzano: a fundamentalist movement is

> a more or less coherent array of groups and organizations which, grounding its ideology on a selective re-interpretation of sacred texts, acts in the public sphere in order to make as suitable as possible to its worldview lifestyles, laws and institutions, taking a dialectic stance towards modernity and opposing other segments of society, identified as unyielding rivals. (Ozzano (2017), 133)

Whether definitions in terms of necessary, sufficient, or both necessary and sufficient conditions will do, depends, among other things, on how broadly we understand 'fundamentalism'. On a broad understanding, which also includes such movements as extreme environmentalism, Hindutva nationalism, and neo-Nazism, such necessary or sufficient conditions are hard to identify, as these movements are partly simply too different from one another. Some fundamentalist movements appeal to infallible holy scriptures (e.g. Wahhabism), others do not (e.g. Neo-Nazism, even though it may hold certain scriptures, such as Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, in high regard), some fundamentalist movements believe in the superiority of their own ethnicity (Hindutva fundamentalism), others do not (e.g. TULIP Calvinism), some fundamentalist movements ascribe fewer rights to women (e.g. the Hutterites), others do not (e.g. environmental fundamentalism), and so on. Nor would any of these conditions be sufficient for 'fundamentalism'. Literalism and infallibility are as such not sufficient for fundamentalism; some people were literalists long before there were any fundamentalists. Nor is ascribing fewer rights to women; one may just be highly conservative about gender roles. Nor is ascribing fewer rights to people

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of other races; one may just be a racist. Below, I will argue that there is good reason to embrace such a broad understanding of 'fundamentalism'.

Family resemblance definitions

Another route is to pursue a definition in terms of a *family resemblance*.[15] This notion was canonized by Ludwig Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). He calls it 'family likeness' or 'Familienähnlichkeit'. The core idea is that some things are *not* related by having features or conditions in common (necessary and sufficient conditions), but by overlapping similarities none of which they all share, in the same complex way as families are constituted. Alleged examples that he gives are games and numbers: the things called 'games' (and something similar goes for 'numbers') do not all have something in common. In fact, some items on the list of games may have nothing in common with certain other items on the list and yet all be games (Wittgenstein (1953), sections 66–69). Others have added further alleged examples to the list, such as 'fascism' (according to Eco (1995)) and 'art' (according to Weitz (1956)). I will pursue a definition both in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions and in terms of a family resemblance. I realize that that may sound contradictory, but I will show below how the two can go well together.

The BicFam definition of 'fundamentalism'

That fundamentalism should be understood in terms of a family resemblance is not new. Only a few have gone on, though, actually to provide an analysis of fundamentalism in terms of a family resemblance.[16] And nobody has suggested that this can be combined with a definition in terms of both necessary and sufficient conditions. Since my definition combines Biconditional ('Bic') necessary and sufficient conditions with an analysis in terms of a family resemblance ('Fam'), I call it the 'BicFam' definition.[17] In defending this definition I am not suggesting that this is the one and only proper definition of 'fundamentalism'. Some other definitions can be equally sound. Yet, I give this definition to show how the desiderata that we formulated above can be met for a definition of 'fundamentalism'.

As I pointed out, 'fundamentalism' originally denoted the early twentieth-century Protestant movement that defended literalism and infallibility about the Bible, the irreconcilability of science and much of the Christian faith, and traditional gender roles. Fundamentalism in this narrow sense is often referred to as 'historic fundamentalism' (Wood and Watt (2014)). Now, Islamic fundamentalism, such as Wahhabism and Jihadism, as well as Jewish fundamentalism, such as the Kach movement or Haredi Judaism, have *mutatis mutandis* defended the exact same things: literalism and infallibilism about holy scriptures, an alleged clash with science, and traditional views on issues regarding gender and sexuality. In fact, these traits are not even restricted to the Abrahamic religions; we find them in, say, the Hindu Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and some nationalist Sinhala Buddhists as well. Of course, these are movements within different religions and the specifics therefore differ. However, the general traits themselves are so remarkably similar that it would be problematic to treat them as a different phenomenon. It would seem more *accurate* to treat them all as varieties of fundamentalism. It would also seem *fairer* to treat similar phenomena among different religions similarly. Finally, doing so seems more *fruitful* because it permits us to see the numerous similarities between fundamentalisms in various religions while being attentive to differences among them.

The pivotal question, though, is whether we should understand 'fundamentalism' even more broadly, so that it also includes neo-Nazism and fascism, radical neo-Marxism, extreme environmentalism, or maybe even so-called market fundamentalism. Such *global fundamentalism* is controversial as a concept: it is not at all uncommon in the

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fundamentalism literature to apply the term solely to religious movements (see various contributions to Wood and Watt (2014)). Undoubtedly the most famous example of this is Scott Appleby, who argues that fundamentalism boils down to a religious response to modernism. Says Appleby: 'Fundamentalist movements are the historical counterattacks mounted from these threatened religious traditions, seeking to hold ground against this spreading secular "contamination" and even to regain ground by taking advantage of the weaknesses of modernization' (Almond et al. (1995), 403).[18] Others, such as J. S. Krüger, have followed suit: 'What I shall understand by "fundamentalism" is something else than mere "conservatism", "traditionalism" or "orthodoxy" but rather: *the selective combination of traditional and modern/'post-modern' cultural and religious elements to protect and promote collective identity and interests in contemporary society*' (Krüger (2006), 888). Malise Ruthven also falls into this category when he says: 'put at its broadest, it [fundamentalism] may be described as a religious way of being that manifests itself in a strategy by which beleaguered believers attempt to preserve their distinctive identities as individuals or groups in the face of modernity and secularization' (Ruthven (2004), 6). Maybe 'religious way of being' also applies to environmental extremism and fascism, but 'attempt to preserve their distinctive identities as individuals or groups in the face of modernity and secularization' clearly does not.

I suggest that understanding 'fundamentalism' more broadly than these authors have been doing, so that it includes such movements as fascism, neo-Nazism, and environmental extremism, can nonetheless be worthwhile. There are at least three reasons for that:

1. First, there are so many crucial similarities between religious and non-religious fundamentalist movements that one would not do full justice to the desideratum of *accuracy* if one were to confine fundamentalism to religious fundamentalism. Take neo-Nazism and fascism. They provide an historical narrative in terms of an original paradisaical state (Europe's allegedly being populated merely by Caucasians), a fall (mass-immigration, multi-culturalism, the rise of Judaism and more recently Islam), and a redemption story (ideas about how to make Europe return to its cultural, ethnic, and religious roots). Their views on gender and sexuality are rather traditional. They embrace some sort of cosmic dualism in which the free, white world fights against the dangers of multiculturalism and nowadays often also identity politics. Even practically they share various attributes with religious fundamentalisms: they embrace symbols and perform rituals to strengthen their ideals and identity, and have firm ideas about who is inside the group and who is outside. This is not to deny that there may be important differences. For example, neo-Nazism does not treat certain texts as infallible, although some writings are treated as close to infallible, such as Anders Breivik's (2011) manifesto *A European Declaration of Independence*. Broader definitions of 'fundamentalism' are able to take these striking similarities on board.

   Moreover, one would not lose anything by way of *precision*, because one could still define '*religious* fundamentalism' in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions such as literalism and infallibility about holy scriptures. According to Sathianathan Clarke, for instance, religious fundamentalism is a communal mind-set steeped in a revealed Word-vision, corroborated by a definitive ethical system of world-ways for human living, and calibrated by an aggressive movement that labors towards the goal that such a global order will govern the social, political, economic, cultural, and religious lives of all human beings. (Clarke (2017), 154)[19]

   This definition may well be accurate, because it is confined to *religious* fundamentalism. In fact, that numerous authors are treating 'religious fundamentalism' as their definiendum (Krüger (2006); Ozzano (2017)) strongly suggests that they take it that there is also *non-religious* fundamentalism.

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2. A second reason is that sometimes there is *no clear separation* between the religious and the non-religious versions of a particular fundamentalist movement. Take Hindu fundamentalism, as embodied by the Hindutva organization RSS and ideologically supported by Indian prime minister Narendra Modi. It is widely agreed that this movement has both religious and ethnonationalist elements.[20] Depending on the context, the one can come more to the fore than the other or vice versa. The idea that movements are fundamentalist only if they are religious at their core does not do justice to the complex relation of religious and non-religious elements in various fundamentalist movements.
3. A third reason to work with a broader definition that includes non-religious fundamentalisms is that it may be more fruitful because it generates more interesting hypotheses. Take the recent and widely document rise of the far-right (see Wodak et al. (2013); Mudde (2019)). A definition of 'fundamentalism' that includes non-religious forms of fundamentalism, like neo-Nazism, naturally leads to thought-provoking hypotheses like:

   H_1: Religious and non-religious fundamentalisms have the same affective motivators, like the fear of the other infringing one's personal domain.
   H_2: Religious and non-religious fundamentalisms share the same traits of modernity, such as a search for certainty and control in an uncertain world.
   H_3: There are generally no significant psychological differences between religious and non-religious fundamentalists.
   H_4: The conative state that leads to the appeal to infallible holy scriptures in fundamentalist religious movements is present but satisfied differently in non-religious fundamentalist movements.
   H_5: Fundamentalist movements, including non-religious ones, are a radicalized and extreme version of a more moderate and mainstream non-fundamentalist equivalent that is as influential as the fundamentalist movement in question.

Of course, these issues can also be explored with different understandings of 'fundamentalism', but the definition that I have provided naturally leads to such hypotheses.

Now that it is clear why it is worthwhile to understand 'fundamentalism' more broadly, exactly what are the necessary and sufficient conditions and stereotypical properties (SP's) that we can identify? In the remainder of this section, I suggest that there are three individually necessary (NC) and jointly sufficient conditions, but that they are so imprecise that, even though they are accurate, they will not do to provide a truly explicative definition. One that *will* do spells out each of these conditions in terms of various stereotypical properties that are jointly so rich that the resulting definition is truly informative.

A careful study of the vast body of literature on fundamentalism, including a systematic scoping review that I carried out in another study on 'fundamentalism' in the literature of the last twenty-five years,[21] gives us good reason to think that there are three main conditions that all fundamentalist movements meet. This is backed up by extensive empirical work on movements like early twentieth-century American Protestantism, Wahhabism, Jihadism, much contemporary Trump-supporting American evangelical fundamentalism, the Italian Catholic movement Comunione e Liberazione, environmental extremism, TULIP Calvinism, Jewish fundamentalism, neo-Nazism and fascism, Hindu nationalism, nationalist Sinhala Buddhism, and numerous other fundamentalisms that have been studied extensively (Denemark (2008), 579; Jones (2010), 220).

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NC_1: Reactionary

Fundamentalism responds to modern developments.[22] It is not a free-standing, sovereign movement, but one that sets its agenda in reaction to other, modern developments. This means that there is a time-index to the definition: fundamentalist movements can only be found in modern times, typically since the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. There are a couple of accounts of fundamentalism in the literature that do not have such a time index (Denemark (2008), 579; Jones (2010), 220). Adding it, however, is conceptually useful for it contributes to distinguishing fundamentalism from its conceptual neighbours, such as extremism, fanaticism, and radicalism, that – it is widely thought – do not have such a time-index. There are various elements in modernity with its secularity, relativism, globalization, and postcolonialism that fundamentalist movements react against. Putting a bit of flesh to the bones, we can distinguish three stereotypical properties here:

SP_{1a}: Rejection of liberal ethics
Fundamentalist movements tend to acknowledge fewer rights for certain groups of people: women, homosexuals, people of other faiths, persons of other races. Conservative Calvinists prohibit women from ordination as deacon, elder, or minister. Hindu fundamentalism in India despises the idea that Muslims have the same rights as Hindus. Neo-Nazism rejects the universality of human rights parlance, in particular modern-day feminism and the idea that Jews are equal citizens.

SP_{1b}: Rejection of science
Fundamentalist movements tend to be sceptical of science. At least, they usually treat with suspicion those fields of science that conflict with their main tenets, research like evolutionary biology, big bang cosmology, biomedical ethics, and in some cases climate studies. This is true for a large number of fundamentalist movements, such as TULIP Calvinism, American evangelicalism, and Wahhabism. However, this stereotypical property is also a clear example of how family resemblances work. After all, left-wing extremism clearly does not have this property. On the contrary, it wholeheartedly embraces climate studies. In fact, there seems not a single field in science that it categorically rejects.

SP_{1c}: Rejection of technological exploitation
Instead, what some left-wing radicals and fundamentalists, such as extreme environmentalists, reject about modernity is its almost unlimited use of technology: its systematic employment and exploitation of the natural world in particular. Deforestation, pollution of the oceans, the drastic reduction in biodiversity, and global climate change because of carbon dioxide emission are all direct consequences of the modern controlling and manipulating of the world we live in.

Of course, fundamentalism's reactionary nature implies not only the rejection of various elements of modernity, but also the active pursuit of, for instance, the restoration of true religion in the face of what they think of as the erosion and marginalization of religion.

Let me stress that $SP1_{a-c}$ are all stereotypical properties and that something can thus well be a fundamentalist movement even if one of these properties is not exemplified. For example, a liberal movement may be fundamentalist even though it will not reject, say, liberal ethics.

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NC_2: Modern

Not only do they respond to modern developments, there is also, as various authors have pointed out (Krüger (2006), 886), paradoxically something particularly modern about fundamentalisms themselves. Or, as Susan Harding puts it, 'fundamentalists were in fact always fully inside modernity' (Harding (2000), 270). It is matter of extensive debate how we should construe modernity. According to Charles Taylor, who has offered probably one of the most influential accounts of modernity, it is civilization with a distinct culture, one that includes a focus on the individual and a radical search certainty and control (e.g. Taylor (1989); Taylor (1995)). Fundamentalisms have properties that are modernist and this constitutes a second necessary condition. Exactly what that amounts to depends on the variety of fundamentalism in question, though:

SP_{2a}: Certainty and control
Fundamentalism seeks certainty and control in an uncertain world. Ever since Descartes' famous doubt experiment in his *Meditations*, modern philosophers have been in search for an indubitable foundation – something about which we could not possibly be mistaken – to found all our knowledge on. Descartes thought that this foundation was provided by the fact that if one thinks, one must exist (*cogito ergo sum*), together with the fact that a perfectly omnibenevolent God would not deceive us by our senses. Fundamentalists have sought such certainty elsewhere: holy scriptures and, less often, personal revelations to their leaders – the latter is true for various evangelical, charismatic, and mysticist movements.

SP_{2b}: Literalism and infallibility
The search for certainty and control is one thing, the way these things are obtained another. Fundamentalisms tend to confer total authority on certain texts, such as the Qur'an, the Shari'a, the Old and New Testaments, the Halakha, the Talmud, and the Granth Sahib. These are claimed to be completely historically accurate and infallible. Moreover, they ought to be read literally – otherwise, one still would lack certainty. A well-known example of this is, of course, creationist readings of Genesis 1–3. All this implies a firm rejection of modern hermeneutics, which acknowledges multiple layers of meaning only some of which are literal and which claims to identify large numbers of textual and historical mistakes in these scriptures.

SP_{2c}: Active use of media and technology
Another way in which fundamentalist movements are particularly modern is that they are remarkably good at making use of (social) media and technology. This may be due to the missionary drive that many fundamentalist movements have: they aim to strengthen internal bonds, convince outsiders, and gain converts. A well-known example is ISIS's PR strategy, which has made elaborate use of high-quality (and highly immoral) execution videos.

SP_{2d}: Universal claim
A final way in which fundamentalist movements are often particularly modern is to be understood in contrast to both pre-modern and post-modern stances. The claims made by fundamentalists are not local or tribal nor are they subjective or relative; they are thought to be universal and absolute. This is true for the ethics they embrace, the rules and regulations that govern their conception of the good life, their diagnosis of what is wrong the world, and their soteriology. In the end, those who do not belong to the group can only save themselves and the world by

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joining that particular fundamentalist group. They are right, everyone else is wrong; it is not a matter of perspective or equally valid ways of life that can coexist.

NC_3: A grand historical narrative

A final necessary condition is that fundamentalisms embrace a grand, overarching historical narrative about the world that assigns a particular place to humans and value to their lives. Again, that is as such rather vague. The two following stereotypical properties show how this is typically spelled out:

SP_{3a}: Paradise, fall, and redemption
The narrative differs in its details, but it often has this structure. The idea is that there once was (these are historical claims) a perfect, paradisaical state, which was lost due to human error, and that we now ought to bring back the original and perfectly good state. This is, of course, true for Wahhabism: there was a good state by way of the Caliphate, that was destroyed by human sin, and we now ought to bring the Caliphate back. And it at least partly true for TULIP Calvinism: Adam and Eve lived blissfully in the Garden of Eden, but then fell into sin by violating God's commandments, leading to their expulsion from paradise, and God will one day restore perfect creation. It also applies to secular fundamentalisms, though. Neo-Nazism takes it that Europe was once populated by Caucasians and that with mass immigration everything went wrong; Europe needs to become white again. Similarly for environmental extremism: the world, before the Industrial Revolution and other similar human activities, was balanced and unpolluted, but since then things have gone down the drain, and we now ought to bring back the original good state in nature (some extremists add: with whatever means available).

SP_{3b}: Cosmic dualism
Another element in the grand narrative is that there is now a struggle or battle of cosmic proportions:[23] good and evil are waging war against one another and we have to choose which side we are on.[24] This confers meaning to even the tiniest action. Michael Ignatieff speaks about 'a desire to give ultimate meaning to time and history through ever-escalating acts of violence which culminate in a final battle between good and evil' (Ignatieff (2001)) God and his people may be on the one side and Satan and his minions on the other, but one can equally well cash out this battle in terms of white Western democratic civilization versus multicultural globalism, or green policy versus destructive merciless capitalism. This cosmic dualism is frequently phrased eschatologically, in terms of millennialism, messianism, or apocalypticism.

The narrative that I just described differs from non-fundamentalist narratives in various ways. Let me highlight just one of them. Fundamentalism does not merely believe in a future perfect state – mainstream Christianity and Islam, for instance, do so as well – but actually involves an attempt to realize eschatological hope about that perfect state in the temporal world and the conviction that we can and ought to do so. Mainstream Christianity, for instance, believes that only God in the *eschaton* will fully restore humanity and separate good from evil, whereas various religious as well as secular political fundamentalist movements take it that we can and should do so ourselves here and now (John Paul II (1991), no. 25; Gierycz (2020)).[25]

All this is, of course, not to deny that there are other properties that many fundamentalist movements have. There is, for instance, the concept of election, one's being the

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chosen people, the beloved country, or the redeemer nation.[26] To say that many fundamentalist movements have this property, though, is not to say that it is *constitutive* of fundamentalism. Stereotypical properties are properties that make fundamentalism somehow *stand out*. One reason not to include this in our list is that many mainstream religions like Christianity and Judaism in particular embrace some kind of election (or even predestination) theory without being fundamentalist.

Another kind of property of fundamentalist movements has to do not so much with their content (e.g. challenging modern liberal ethics) but with their form, that is, the attitudes with which they come (e.g. how fundamentalists think and how they defend their beliefs). What they have in mind are such attitudes and thinking styles as oversimplification, dualistic and uncritical thinking, and mind control (Krüger (2006)). In reply, let me say that I agree that this is often characteristic of fundamentalist movements.[27] The reason I have not included it here, though, is that most of these attitudes and thinking styles may be *characteristic* of but are not truly *distinctive* of fundamentalism; we equally find them in closely related but distinct phenomena, such as numerous conspiratorial movements, cults, and extremist and terrorist groups.

Note that none of the nine stereotypical properties SP_{1a}–SP_{3b} in the family resemblance is *sufficient* for something's being a fundamentalist movement. Only some science sceptics are fundamentalists, for instance, and all traditionalists and conservatives are sceptical of modern, liberal ethics. Nor is any of them *necessary* for something's being a fundamentalism. We saw that many religious fundamentalisms reject various branches of science, but not the modern use of technology in ruling the earth; environmentalist fundamentalists reject the latter, but often wholeheartedly embrace modern, liberal ethics.

A final virtue of the BicFam definition of 'fundamentalism' is that it leaves sufficient room for boundary cases, thereby meeting the desideratum of accuracy. It rules in TULIP Calvinism, Wahhabism, neo-Nazism, and the environmental radical left, but what about so-called market fundamentalism or gender fundamentalism? Such movements, whatever exactly they amount to, exemplify a number of stereotypical properties but also lack a large number of them. The definition that I have spelled out here gives the desired result: these are surely not typical cases, but given the similarities, it is probably best to treat them as boundary cases.

Conclusion and epilogue

In this article, I have argued that in defining 'fundamentalism', it is best to seek an explicative definition both in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions and in terms of a family resemblance that aims at accuracy, precision, fairness, clarity, and fecundity. As it turned out, there is good reason to think that such a definition would rule in not only non-Christian varieties of religious fundamentalism, but also non-religious kinds of fundamentalism, such as fascism and environmental extremism. I believe that the definition I gave meets these criteria. It can be summarized as follows:

> The BicFam Definition of 'fundamentalism'
> A movement is *fundamentalist* if and only if (i) it is reactionary towards modern developments, (ii) it is itself modern, and (iii) it is based on a grand historical narrative. More specifically, a movement is fundamentalist if it exemplifies a large number of the following properties: (i) it is reactionary in its rejection of liberal ethics, science, or technological exploitation, (ii) it is modern in seeking certainty and control, embracing literalism and infallibility about particular scriptures, actively using media and technology, or making universal claims, and (iii) it presents a grand historical narrative in terms of paradise, fall, and redemption, or cosmic dualism.[28]

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Again, this is not to say that this is the only definition one could give. Multiple, equally sound definitions can be given. I have zoomed in on this one to show how a definition can meet the desiderata that were formulated in this article. As far as I can see, the definition I gave is accurate and precise, fair (since it is non-pejorative), clear (as it provides insight into fundamentalism while doing justice to the ambiguities that are in the nature of the beast), and fruitful (as it can be used in research on fundamentalism).[29] The stereotypical properties, I believe, make it sufficiently informative.

In condition (ii) I speak of a 'large number'. We saw that a movement is fundamentalist only if it meets the three necessary conditions, but this does not hold for the stereotypical properties: enough of them will do, none of them are necessary. But what is this large number and what is enough? Let me stress that I have remained intentionally vague here. This is because I believe scholars hold different views on what counts as enough. Some may think that if a movement exemplifies a single property from each category it is thereby fundamentalist, others that it is a boundary case, and yet others that it is not a case of fundamentalism at all. I agree that this is an important conversation, but rather than seeking to settle that debate here, I have tried to provide a framework that can take different views on board. My account in terms of stereotypical properties can then provide a starting point for those who disagree about what each of them considers to be a large enough number of stereotypical properties and why.

Of course, fundamentalist movements often have further properties, such as organizational characteristics like authoritarian structures.[30] I have not included them here, though, as most of them are not truly distinctive of fundamentalism; various terrorist, fanaticist, and extremist movements share the same properties.

I take the BicFam definition to be a first step in mapping a conceptual terrain that, in the literature, has often been somewhat muddled. A subsequent step would be to clarify the exact relation between fundamentalism and closely connected phenomena that seem nonetheless crucially distinct, things like extremism, radicalization, absolutism, fanaticism, terrorism, militantism, orthodoxy, scripturalism, traditionalism, nationalism, zelotism, traditional conservatism, authoritarianism, ideology, rationalism, apocalypticism, patriarchism, sexism, and misogynism. It would also be illuminating to map conceptually the relations of fundamentalism to what are in a sense its opposites, phenomena like secularism, pre-modernism and post-modernism, relativism, liberalism, humanism, pluralism, moderatism, multiculturalism, and feminism. This is important, for as we saw with modernism, fundamentalism paradoxically radically distances itself from modernism and is at the same time itself modernist – the relation then is certainly not straightforward.

If what I have argued is correct, then fundamentalisms jointly constitute a family, one that is bigger than quite a few scholars in the field have acknowledged. It has core members and distant relatives. I hope that the notes on how to go about defining 'fundamentalism' in this article and the BicFam definition that I provided show how a definition that can meet the desiderata will be a fruitful starting point for coming to understand better each member as well as the intriguing family as a whole.

Acknowledgements. For their helpful comments on earlier versions of this article, I would like to thank Benjamin Anderson, Imane Amara, Maria Bouwman, Anne Dijk, Daan Dijk, Scott Gustafson, Rahel Kellich, Nora Kindermann, Clyde Missier, Ruth Tietjen, René van Woudenberg, and two anonymous reviewers for this journal. I thank Rahel Kellich for carefully copy-editing the manuscript.

Financial support. Work on this article was made possible by the project EXTREME (Extreme Beliefs: The Epistemology and Ethics of Fundamentalism), which has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (Grant agreement No. 851613) and from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412522000683 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Notes

1. See Kindermann et al. (unpublished manuscript).
2. For a recent exposition of this idea, see, for instance, Lackey (2020).
3. (Altemeyer and Hunsberger (2005), 379), define 'fundamentalism' as a *belief*, (Barton (2009), 439), and (Baurmann (2007), 157), as a *belief-system*. Taylor & Horgan (2010) initially define 'fundamentalism' in terms of behaviour rather than belief, but in the ensuing discussion they focus almost entirely on belief.
4. In fact, I have defended elsewhere that they are crucial to understanding fundamentalism. See Kindermann et al. (unpublished manuscript); Peels (2020); Peels and Kindermann (2023); Peels and Lagewaard (2023).
5. This is, of course, compatible with various ways of indirectly supporting violence, such as the way American evangelical Christians have supported George W. Bush's policy in Middle Eastern countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. Clarke (2017) draws attention to this.
6. This is also pointed out by Ackerman and Burnham (2019) for the closely related field of terrorism.
7. See, for instance, Favre and De Gourdon (2007) (for democratic fundamentalism), Jeremiah (2013) (for enlightenment fundamentalism), Porter (2000) (for evolutionary fundamentalism), and Lasio et al. (2019) (for gender fundamentalism).
8. Among these further ways to solve the problem are explanatory particularism and applied evidentialism.
9. Fort his method, see, for instance, Scanlon (1998), (2002); Schroeter (2004); Cappelen et al. (2016).
10. See book II of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*.
11. For work on these epistemic vices, see, for instance, Cassam (2019); Kidd et al. (2020).
12. That a definition of 'fundamentalism' should not be pejorative is also rightly pointed out by Krüger (2006), 888: 'It [fundamentalism] needs to be understood clearly and sympathetically, and non-judgmentally yet unsentimentally, with reference to predisposing, precipitating and perpetuating causes and conditions, symptoms, and results and sequelae.'
13. Here, I have been inspired by Robinson (1950) and Gupta (2019).
14. What I do in this article, then, can rightly be considered an instance of conceptual engineering (cf. Burgess et al. (2020)).
15. There is a tension in the very idea of a family resemblance definition as the very point of a family resemblance analysis is that the phenomena analysed in terms of family resemblances do not have an essence that can be captured by a definition. Since there may be looser understandings of definition, though, and since use of the phrase 'family resemblance definition' is quite widespread in the literature, I will use it here.
16. Among those who did are Marty and Appleby (1991); Almond et al. (1995), *Idem* (2003), 90–115; Pfürtner (1997), 107–118; Droogers (2005).
17. Indeed, fundamentalism is a big family. The name Bicfam refers to the *formal* side of the definition. Alternatively, one could refer to its material side by making it refer to reactiveness, modernity, and historical narratives (see below).
18. See also Almond et al. (2003), 90–115. Their entire classification is confined to religious fundamentalist movements.
19. To be clear: he speaks of 'Word-vision', not 'world-vision', as a term of art.
20. Battaglia (2017) argues that the political dimension is more important that the religious dimension.
21. See Kindermann et al. (unpublished manuscript).
22. In general, see Almond et al. (2003); Heywood (2012). For the reactionary nature of neo-Hindu fundamentalism, see Battaglia (2017).
23. This is often referred to as *Moral Manicheism*. See, for example Almond et al. (2003), 95. This seems misguided to me: Manicheism taught that there is good in evil and vice versa, and that good and evil are two equally powerful sources in the cosmos, two things that fundamentalists avidly deny.
24. Thus also Almond et al. (1995), 406; Clarke (2017), 50.
25. As one of the reviewers for this article pointed out, this may in fact also show the risk of fundamentalism in some contemporary liberal understandings of politics in the Western world. Some of these take it that a perfectly free and democratic state of equality can and should be established in our lifetime, partly by way of science. Various authors have drawn attention to this (e.g. Sowell (2007), 25–30) and some have called this liberal secular process the 'immanentization' of hope (Gierycz (2020), 10). Relatedly, others have argued that Marxism and Islamism are quite similar in thinking that a perfect state of equality can be established by us on earth (e.g. Gray (2003), 1–4).
26. This is listed as one of the nine characteristics of fundamentalist movements by Almond et al. (1995), 405–408.
27. Even though I have argued elsewhere that reality is complex in that (i) this holds for groups, not necessarily for individuals, and that (ii) even for groups it does not always hold. See Peels and Kindermann (2023); Peels and Lagewaard (2023).
28. The disjunctions in this definition are, of course, inclusive.

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29. I will not operationalize my definition of 'fundamentalism' here, but let me point out that it *is* operationalizable. For instance, similar to Altemeyer and Hunsberger's (2004) fundamentalism scale, one can rephrase the conditions and stereotypical properties as propositional statements and then invite subjects to rate them with −4 indicating strong disagreement, +4 indicating strong agreement, and 0 indicating neutrality.
30. Some of these properties are listed by Almond et al. (2003), 97–115.

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Cite this article: Peels R (2022). On defining 'fundamentalism'. *Religious Studies* 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412522000683

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412522000683 Published online by Cambridge University Press