The aim of this edition is to analyse religious radicalisation in its current form, to shed light on its motives, goals, patterns and strategies, and to discuss theoretical and practical approaches to address fundamentalist trends. Fundamentalism is a central topic whose relevance reaches far beyond the domain of religion. It describes a staunch adherence to selected principles or beliefs, closed off to change and without willingness to enter into discussions, dialogue or compromise. Fundamentalism is a concomitant of the modern age. It is a reaction to the uncertainties arising from the changing tides in the personal, societal and cultural sphere and an attempt to overcome them by “drawing on sacrosanct traditions or artificially immunised certainties” (Thomas Meyer).

In current practice, various religious groups express and defend this stance and their unassailable assertions by citing alleged original principles and truths to a degree that causes disconcertment even among traditional proponents of the same religion. They pursue a radical regression to certain archetypes of religious identity and practice, declare them to be the only legitimate form of religiosity and are often relentless in its propagation. There is also a growing overlap between religious fundamentalism and nationalist, right-wing populist movements. The ideological basis for both reveals a number of common elements: anti-liberalism, anti-pluralism, and in part anti-democratic inclinations. What defines both populism and fundamentalism is that they are, at their core, reactionary in establishing a narrow interpretation of history as a revolutionary programme. Both want to preserve a societal model for the future that has been overhauled by modern progress. Change is perceived as a threat: shifting gender roles threaten notions of masculinity, the discourse on gender threatens gender relations, LGBTQI rights threaten the order of creation, etc.