



Countering Oppositional Political
Extremism through Attuned
Dialogue: Track, Attune, Limit

Everyday Extremism Scale

Deliverable No. 6.1

Everyday Extremism Scale

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Executive Summary

Overview

- Everyday extremism is defined as the normalisation of extreme acts in everyday life. Crucially, this normalisation poses a threat to society as it often results in the proliferation of acts that dehumanise individuals or groups.
- This report outlines the process for designing a scale for measuring everyday extremism. The development of this scale forms part of the deliverable of Work Package 6 (Attuning Public Dialogue and Narratives) in the OppAttune project. The primary aim of this WP is to identify, track and limit the psychological drivers of everyday extremism.
- The Everyday Extremism Scale is not designed for personal profiling or individual diagnosis but serves as a tool for measuring patterns of everyday extremism at a broader, societal level.

Method

- The process for developing the Everyday Extremism Scale involved seven distinct stages, namely: 1) data collection from Reddit and online news platforms; 2) data cleaning and identifying actions and themes, 3) a first round of ranking of actions amongst experts; 4) an initial data analysis exercise to reduce to a shorter list of actions; 5) a second round of ranking of actions amongst experts; 6) a second data analysis exercise to reduce the list to a final set of actions; and lastly 7) cognitive interviewing to assess respondents' understanding of the final set.

Outcome

- The Everyday Extremism Scale has been developed for use in the WIDE-Lens Survey that is a core objective of WP6. The scale will help determine drivers and predictors of everyday extremism on the one hand, as well as direct and indirect effects of everyday extremism on other social psychological variables.

Introduction

This report presents the Everyday Extremism Scale that was developed as part of Work Package 6 (WP6), to be used as a tool in the WiDE Lens Survey and Work Package 7 (WP7). Its primary propose is to measure inclinations towards extremist behaviour or ideology that occur in day-to-day life. Additionally, when implemented alongside other social psychological measurement tools, it is designed to aid in the investigations of the underlying factors that could predict such everyday extremist behaviour. Beyond the OppAttune project, it has the potential to be used by researchers and policymakers in order to understand how extremist tendencies in everyday life can affect broader social outcomes, such as political polarisation, increased support for authoritarian policies, and the deterioration of social cohesion.

Current trends in globalisation, technological advancements, and socio-political polarisation are reshaping the modern landscape, highlighting the need of staying vigilant against extremist narratives. Firstly, the interconnectedness brought about by globalisation has facilitated the movement of people, ideas, and culture across borders. Whilst enriching communities, this global exchange has given rise to xenophobic and racist sentiments which are becoming normalised through everyday interactions that may seem harmless but that have nonetheless a pervasive impact. Secondly, so too have technological advancements, particularly in social media, impacted modern societies everywhere around the globe. Undeniably, social media has become fertile ground for the widespread dissemination of misinformation and fake news that is fuelling divisive and extremist ideologies. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic saw a surge in conspiracy theories and anti-vaccine rhetoric, which, although communicated in everyday settings like social media or casual conversations, have had a profound and far-reaching impact. Lastly, increasing socio-political polarisation has deepened societal divisions, fostering the ideal environment for extremist ideologies to take root and spread. Corroborating this, case studies conducted within the OppAttune project to track extremist narratives identified key topics around which these narratives tend to converge. These topics include migration, protectionism, vaccination, climate change, and

silent narratives. In light of all this, we define such extremist behaviours, beliefs, or attitudes manifested in day-to-day activities as everyday extremism. More specifically, we define everyday extremism as those actions, beliefs, or attitudes that, while seemingly insignificant, contribute to the normalisation of extreme ideologies. It is worth noting that everyday extremism is not concerned with those objectively extremist actions that blatantly deviate from the norm and significantly disrupt social stability (e.g., violent acts). Rather, everyday extremism is concerned with the ways in which extremism is integrated into day-to-day activities without causing significant social disruption, yet still over time, gradually cause divisions and perpetuate extremist sentiments.

For the purposes of this deliverable, as part of Work Package 6 (WP6), our aim was to design a scale for measuring everyday extremism. To achieve this, we prioritised ensuring that our measure taps into the subtle manifestations of everyday extremism and that it is representative of actual experiences of the public (i.e., that the scale is ecologically valid, meaning that it can be applied in real-world contexts). We employed a multifaceted approach which included analysing data extracted from Reddit (reddit.com), Telegram (telegram.org), as well as online news sources. Notably, we coupled this with iterative expert ranking exercises to confirm that the scale items were conceptually related to everyday extremism. In the following we start by presenting the context for the development of the scale. We then proceed with a brief overview of the literature on scale development before detailing the processes we employed to develop our measure. We conclude with an outline of how the measure is to be implemented and its results interpreted.

From Theory to Practice in the Development of the Everyday Extremism Scale - Methodology

The process of developing the measure of everyday extremism involved seven distinct stages, briefly summarised as: 1) data collection from Reddit and online news platforms; 2) data cleaning and identifying actions and themes, 3) a first round of ranking of actions amongst experts; 4) an initial data analysis exercise to reduce to a shorter list of actions; 5) a second round of ranking of actions amongst experts; 6) a second data analysis exercise to reduce to a final set of actions; and lastly 7) cognitive interviewing to assess comprehension of the final set. The following provides an in-depth explanation of the data sources consulted, the procedures adopted, and the data analyses conducted.

Data Sources

Social media platforms. Within online social media platforms, individuals may feel more or less inclined to express their personal opinions that could otherwise lead to judgement in face-to-face interactions. Indeed, the anonymity provided by social media is one of the primary factors that contribute towards disinhibition. Disinhibition describes how individuals tend to say or do things online that they would otherwise not do in face-to-face interactions (Suler, 2004). Suler (2004) proposes two types of inhibition, benign inhibition and toxic inhibition. The former concerns cases in which individuals demonstrate positive online behaviours such as helping strangers, whilst the latter concern cases in which individuals display negative online behaviours such as harassment and verbal abuse. Toxic disinhibition is particularly problematic because it does not only enable the unaccountable expression of extremist views, but it also facilitates their spread and adoption. For this reason, we believe that social media offers an excellent opportunity to identify and understand extremist behaviour. Moreover, social media platforms typically feature diverse user bases, encompassing a broad range of demographics. Unlike in interviews and focus groups, where establishing a diverse pool of participants may prove to be more logistically challenging, online platforms offer a more efficient way for identifying a range of perspectives that are not

limited to a particular cultural context. Reddit (reddit.com) is one such globally popular online platform that we consulted in the development of the Everyday Extremism Scale. A key feature of Reddit is that it requires all users to adopt a pseudonym (username), therefore, all posts and comments are anonymised. Indeed, Reddit is gaining recognition as a source of valuable insight with its popularity steadily rising amongst social science researchers (for review see, Proferes et al., 2021).

Online news platform. Qualitative data derived from online news platforms has value because it reflects prevailing sentiments embedded within current trends. For the purposes of this deliverable, we consulted sources originating from four different countries, namely, Greece, Kosovo, Malta, and the United Kingdom. The type of content analysed included articles and opinion pieces but excluded multimedia content. For each country, we extracted data from three popular online news platforms. Table 1 details the sources analysed.

Table 1
List of countries and media sources examined

Country	Media Source	URL
Greece	efsyn	www.efsyn.gr
	Kathimerini	www.kathimerini.gr
	Ta Nea	www.tanea.gr
Kosovo	Prishtina Insight	www.prishtinainsight.com
	Koha	www.koha.net
	Nacionale	www.nacionale.com
Malta	Times of Malta	www.timesofmalta.com
	Malta Today	www.maltatoday.com
	The Independent	www.independent.com.mt
UK	The Guardian	www.theguardian.com
	The Times	www.thetimes.co.uk
	The Telegraph	www.telegraph.co.uk

Procedure

Data collection: Reddit. The investigation of Reddit posts and comments was carried out in two ways, that is (a) general, and (b) domain specific. On the one hand, the general condition entailed identifying posts and comments that describe some form of action or behaviour that was not tied to a particular domain. The keyword searches included: “activism”, “activist”, “raise awareness”, “advocacy”, and “how to”. These were selected on based on their apparent relevance to the concept of everyday extremism and their alignment with the public’s experiences. It is worth noting that for the general condition, keyword searches were not restricted to specific subreddits (i.e., topic communities). On the other hand, in the domain-specific condition, the same keyword searches as in the general condition were executed, however, searches were restricted to particular subreddits. The selected subreddits included: LGBTQI, anarchism, progun, abortion, Bernie Sanders, environment, climate, and vegan. We selected these subreddits based on the key topics that emerged from the OppAttune case studies, namely being, migration, protectionism, vaccination, climate change, and silent narratives. In order to facilitate data collection, the posts derived from all searches were systematically organised according to relevance. Posts and comments that were deemed worthy of analysis (as based on the keyword and subreddit searches) were extracted and stored in an Excel sheet together with their associated URL and date. Once searches were deemed to have reached saturation (218 posts/comments extracted, see Table A.1 for examples), data collection was terminated.

Data collection: Online news platforms. As informed by the key topics identified within the OppAttune project, news articles that were examined were restricted to specific keywords including: “extremist” and/or “extremism”; “activist” and/or “activism”; “migration”; “vaccination”; and “protectionist” and/or “protectionism”. To reduce the large volume of news articles, three news articles from each media source (12 sources), corresponding to each keyword (five keywords), and pertaining to the years 2021-2023 (three years) were chosen at random. This resulted in a final sample of 540 articles (135 articles per country, see Table A.3 for examples).

Identifying actions and themes: Reddit. Relevant actions within each post and comment extracted from the Reddit data were identified by taking note of verbs that denoted some form of activity associated with bringing about change (e.g., social, political, economic, or environmental change). Through this exercise, an initial total of 350 actions were identified, which were then grouped into ten themes. Table 2 lists examples of these actions and themes.

Identifying actions and themes: Online news platforms. Since news articles were chosen at random, we started by extracting excerpts that conveyed some form of action. A total of 148 excerpts were extracted (44 for Malta, 45 for Greece, 15 for Kosovo, and 44 for UK). Following this, the same exercise as was done with the Reddit data was carried out to identify relevant actions and themes. No new actions or themes that did not otherwise emerge from the Reddit data were identified.

Table 2
Themes and Actions

Theme	Example of Actions
Activism	Protest on streets Fake signature on petition
Acts of Violence	Physical assault (e.g., beating someone up) Armed revolution
Changing Lifestyle	Boycotting (e.g., not buying from certain businesses) Changing own and others' habits (e.g., not eating animal products; throwing away others' animal products)
Conversation/Engage	Call out others (e.g., comment on posts online, engage in conversations) Associate with like-minded people
Lobbying	Approach/lobby stakeholders at social events Make your voice heard with (lobby) government officials
Oppose/Non-Violent	Name and shame/mock the opposition Printing and posting signs/stickers/flyers everywhere
Organise/Get Organised	Plan meetups Organise local groups/unions/businesses
Social Media	Share posts on your website/social media Flood online comments
Spread Awareness/Support/Publicity	Seek donations and funding Express your support publicly

Data cleaning. This stage entailed reducing the list of 350 identified actions to a more manageable set by grouping and eliminating any duplicates and discarding actions that were deemed explicitly extremist on the one hand (e.g., committing acts of violence, armed revolution) or overly mundane and everyday on the other (e.g., conduct polite politics, invest in research). In doing so, the list was reduced to 113 actions categorised into eight themes (see Table 3 for examples of actions).

Table 3

Updated Themes and Actions

Theme	Example of Actions
Activism	Attend public demonstrations Block activities through sit-ins
Engagement	Associate with like-minded people Convert neighbours and friends
Lobby	Enlist politicians to the cause Establish an NGO
Opposition	Blackmail Become a whistle-blower
Organisation	Associate your cause with successful projects Develop a members database/list
Politics	Become active in local politics Email/write to politicians
Social Media	Anger troll Block those you oppose
Support	Build credibility Buy merchandise and wear it

Expert ranking. The reduced list of actions was subjected to two rounds of ranking in which experts were asked to rank the actions from the most extreme (smallest rank) to the most every day (largest rank). Both ranking exercises were hosted on Qualtrics and respondents comprised members that formed part of the OppAttune WP 6 (Attuning Public Dialogue and Narratives) research team, and psychologists within the Open University Culture and Social Psychology (CuSP) research group. Emails containing the Qualtrics links were distributed amongst all members of the OppAttune team and no monetary compensation was provided for participation. The first round of ranking took place between 14th November 2023 and 30th November 2023. A total of 29 respondents completed the first ranking exercise. One respondent provided rankings that were, on average, three standard deviations away from the mean (i.e., ranked an action low whereas the rest of the sample tended to rank the same action high, and vice versa). For this reason, this participant's responses were discarded, resulting in a final sample of 28 respondents. Data derived from this first round of ranking was subsequently analysed as outlined in the following. The second round of ranking took place between 11th December 2023 and 16th January 2024. A total of 39 respondents completed the second round. Two respondents provided rankings that were, on average, three standard deviations from the mean of the rest of the sample. For this reason, these outliers were removed from the dataset, resulting in a final sample of 37 respondents for the second ranking exercise. Data derived from this second round of ranking was then analysed as detailed in the following section.

Cognitive interviewing. The last stage involved conducting cognitive interviewing to evaluate participant comprehension of the final list of actions and to refine the wording of these actions wherever necessary. Four respondents who were unfamiliar with the scale and who had no prior knowledge of the objectives of the project were consulted for this task.

Data Analyses

First round of ranking. The mean for each action was calculated and sorted within each team from the lowest mean ranking to the highest mean ranking. Following this and

depending on how many actions were categorised within a theme, three or four actions that made qualitative sense for each theme were selected. For themes in which three actions were selected, the selection criteria included choosing the highest-ranking action, the lowest ranking action and the 50% ranked action. Conversely, for themes in which four actions were selected, our selection criteria included choosing the lowest ranked action, the 25% ranked action, the 75% ranked action, and the highest ranked action. It is important to note that for actions in which the mean was very close in value to other actions, preference was given to the action that made most qualitative sense and that gave a more detailed description (e.g., preference for selecting “gaslighting – question/deny the truth with an opposite version” over “blackmail” because the former provided a more specific explanation of an action when compared to the latter). Once the actions were selected, a series of paired sample t-tests were conducted to ascertain that the differences in mean ratings for the chosen items within each theme were statistically significant. This criterion determined whether we opted for three or four extracted actions within each theme.

Second round of ranking. Analyses at this stage comprised of the single sample Wilcoxon signed-rank test and principal component analysis (PCA). The single sample Wilcoxon signed-rank test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the expected median and the observed median, that is, to ensure that the respondents’ rankings did not deviate from a uniform distribution across all items. This analysis was carried out using the sampling distribution of the mean (i.e., calculating the mean rating of each action and proceeding to base the analysis on the mean of these means). Conversely, the PCA was carried out to reduce the list of actions to a final set of 12 most significant and representative actions. Notably, given our primary focus on a single underlying concept (everyday extremism), the factor analysis was restricted to one factor. In summary, by means of the PCA we were able to identify the 12 actions that are most related to everyday extremism. In the following, we present the results that emerged from both rounds of ranking, and show how, through the ranking exercises, the Everyday Extremism Scale was developed.

Results

First Round of Ranking

A series of paired sample t-tests was carried out to evaluate statistical significance between selected actions categorised within each theme (actions were selected as outlined previously in the methodology; when selecting three actions, the selection criteria included choosing the highest-ranking action, the lowest ranking action and the 50% ranked action. Conversely, when selecting four actions, the selection criteria included choosing the lowest ranked action, the 25% ranked action, the 75% ranked action, and the highest ranked action). The following are the results grouped for each theme:

Activism. Four actions were initially selected under the activism theme. The lowest ranked action selected (i.e., rated as the most extreme) was *storm an event*, the 25% ranked action selected was *fake signatures on a petition*, the 75% ranked action selected was *picket at strategic events or places*, and the highest ranked action selected (i.e., rated as the most everyday) was *attend public demonstrations*. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean of the lowest ranked action ($M = 3.96, SD = 2.25$) and the 25% ranked action ($M = 8.35, SD = 2.62$), $t(22) = -5.22, p < .001$. Regarding the difference between the 25% ranked action and the 75% ranked action, findings were not significant. For this reason, we discarded the 75% ranked action and maintained the 25% ranked action. The difference between the mean of the 25% ranked action ($M = 8.35, SD = 2.62$) and the highest ranked action was also significant ($M = 11.41, SD = 3.81$), $t(22) = -5.90, p < .001$.

Engagement. Three actions were selected under the engagement theme. The lowest ranked action selected was *flood comments section online*, the 50% ranked action selected was *support allied politicians publicly*, and the highest ranked action selected was *share upcoming events for others to attend*. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean of the lowest ranked action ($M = 3.75, SD = 3.69$) and the 50% ranked action ($M =$

6.63, $SD = 3.29$), $t(23) = -2.78$, $p = .005$. There was also a statistically significant difference between the mean of the 50% ranked action ($M = 6.63$, $SD = 3.29$) and the highest ranked action was significant ($M = 9.38$, $SD = 3.35$), $t(23) = -3.07$, $p = .003$.

Lobby. Three actions were selected under the lobby theme. The lowest ranked action selected was *lobby government officials*, the 50% ranked action selected was *establish an NGO*, and the highest ranked action selected was *develop affiliations with researchers/universities/industry*. There was no statistically significant difference between the mean of the lowest ranked action and the 50% ranked action. For this reason, we opted to select the action closest to the 50% ranked action, which was *team up with journalists*. There was a statistically significant difference between the lowest ranked action ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 2.94$) and the 50% ranked action ($M = 6.50$, $SD = 2.89$), $t(21) = -2.00$, $p = .30$. There was also a statistically significant difference between the mean of the 50% ranked action ($M = 6.50$, $SD = 2.89$) and the highest ranked action ($M = 9.27$, $SD = 2.59$), $t(21) = -1.05$, $p = .002$.

Opposition. Four actions were selected under the opposition theme. The lowest ranked action selected was *gaslighting (question/deny the truth with an opposite version)*, the 25% ranked action selected was *undermine the opposition personally*, the 75% ranked action selected was *submit allegations of misconduct*, and the highest ranked action selected was *call out those responsible*. There was a statistically significant difference between all the selected actions; between the mean of the lowest ranked action ($M = 5.52$, $SD = 3.07$) and the 25% ranked action ($M = 7.48$, $SD = 3.56$), $t(24) = -2.20$, $p = .019$; between the mean of the 25% ranked action ($M = 7.48$, $SD = 3.56$), and the 75% ranked action ($M = 10.60$, $SD = 4.12$), $t(24) = -2.85$, $p = .004$; and lastly between the mean of the 75% ranked action ($M = 10.60$, $SD = 4.12$) and the highest ranked action ($M = 12.68$, $SD = 4.13$), $t(24) = -2.04$, $p = .026$.

Organisation. Two actions were selected under the organisation theme. The lowest ranked action selected was *organise campaigns*, whereas the highest ranked action selected was *develop a members database list*. There was a statistically significant difference between

the mean of the lowest ranked action ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 2.03$) and the highest ranked action ($M = 6.91$, $SD = 1.62$), $t(22) = -6.35$, $p < .001$.

Politics. Two actions were selected under the politics theme. The lowest ranked action selected was *become active in local politics*, whereas the highest ranked action selected was *vote for candidates that endorse particular reform and action*. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean of the lowest ranked action ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 2.79$) and the highest ranked action ($M = 8.29$, $SD = 2.28$), $t(20) = -4.46$, $p < .001$.

Social media. Four actions were selected under the social media theme. The lowest ranked action selected was *angel troll*, the 25% ranked action selected was *public shaming/criticism (e.g., through social media)*, the 75% ranked action selected was *publicly endorse (e.g., through social media)*, and the highest ranked action selected was *like and share content (actively promote/publish content)*. There were statistically significant differences between all the selected actions; between the mean of the lowest ranked action ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 3.73$) and the 25% ranked action ($M = 7.17$, $SD = 3.74$), $t(23) = -2.92$, $p = .004$; between the mean of the 25% ranked action ($M = 7.17$, $SD = 3.74$), and the 75% ranked action ($M = 14.17$, $SD = 3.21$), $t(23) = -8.69$, $p < .001$; and lastly between the mean of the 75% ranked action ($M = 14.17$, $SD = 3.21$) and the highest ranked action ($M = 16.67$, $SD = 4.05$), $t(23) = -2.01$, $p = .028$.

Support. Three actions were selected under the support theme. The lowest ranked action selected was *organise a street party (public events)*, the 50% ranked action selected was *post stickers/signs/posters in public places*, and the highest ranked action selected was *donate money and time to the cause*. There was a statistically significant difference between the mean of the lowest ranked action ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 2.66$) and the 50% ranked action ($M = 8.05$, $SD = 4.19$), $t(21) = -3.73$, $p < .001$. There was also a statistically significant difference between the mean of the 50% ranked action ($M = 8.05$, $SD = 4.19$) and the highest ranked action was significant ($M = 11.41$, $SD = 3.81$), $t(21) = -2.58$, $p = .009$.

In summary, through this first round of data analysis, the initial list of 113 actions was reduced to a more manageable set of 25 actions categorised in eight themes (see Table 4). Within each theme, there were statistically significant differences between the mean ranking of all of the chosen actions.

Table 4

First Ranking Exercise Reduced List of 25 Actions Categorised Under 8 Themes

Theme	Action	Average (Rating)	StdDev (Rating)
Activism	Storm an event	3.96	2.25
Activism	Fake signatures on a petition	8.35	2.62
Activism	Attend public demonstrations	13.13	2.26
Engagement	Flood comments sections online	3.75	3.69
Engagement	Support allied politicians publicly	6.63	3.29
Engagement	Share upcoming events for others to attend	9.38	3.35
Lobby	Lobby government officials	4.55	2.94
Lobby	Team up with journalists	6.50	2.89
Lobby	Develop affiliations with researchers/universities/industry	9.27	2.59
Opposition	Gaslighting (question/deny the truth with an opposite version)	5.52	3.07
Opposition	Undermine the opposition personally	7.48	3.47
Opposition	Submit (false) allegations of misconduct	10.60	4.12
Opposition	Call out those responsible	12.68	4.13
Organisation	Organise campaigns	3.70	2.03
Organisation	Develop a members database/list	6.91	1.62
Politics	Become active in local politics	4.10	2.79
Politics	Vote for candidates that endorse particular reform and action	8.29	2.28
Social media	Anger troll	4.25	3.73

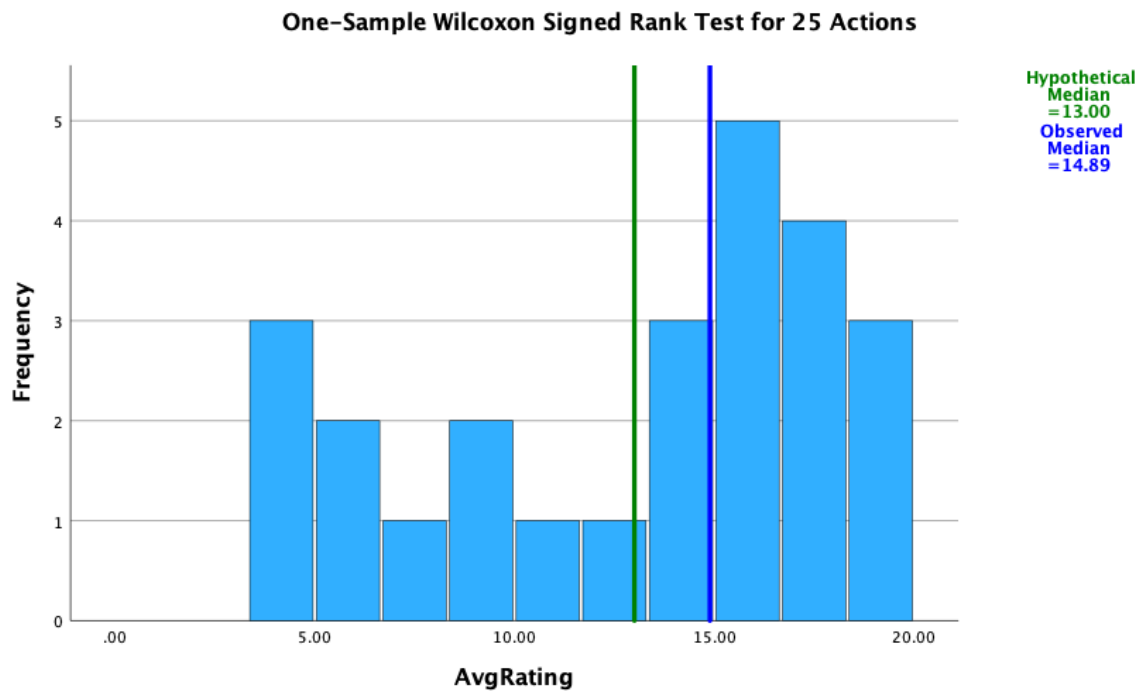
Social media	Public shaming/criticism (e.g., through social media)	7.17	3.74
Social media	Block those you oppose	9.92	3.75
Social media	Publicly endorse (e.g., through social media)	14.17	3.21
Social media	Like & Share content (Actively Promote/Publish Content)	16.67	4.05
Support	Organise a street party (public events)	4.00	2.65
Support	Post stickers/signs/posters in public places	8.05	4.19
Support	Donate money and time to the cause	11.41	3.81

Second Round of Ranking

As outlined previously, we carried out a single sample Wilcoxon signed-rank test of the sampling distribution of the mean. Results were non-significant, implying that there was no difference between the hypothesised median of 13.00 (25/2) and the observed median of 14.89, $Z = 161.50$, $p = .979$ (see Figure 1A). This implies that the ranking of the actions aligned with the anticipated order, thus providing evidence that the scale (25 ranked actions) is robust.

Figure 1A

Graphical Illustration of the One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test (25 Actions)



Note. Wilcoxon signed-rank test was conducted to ensure that the respondents' rankings did not deviate from a uniform distribution across all items. The graph illustrates that the hypothetical median did not deviate significantly from the observed median. This signifies that the ranking of the 25 actions aligned with the anticipated order, therefore, there was consensus amongst the respondents regarding the ranking of the items.

Following this, we carried out a principal component analysis on a single factor to reduce the list of 25 actions to a smaller final set. Results showed that the single factor extracted explained 19.81% of the variance. With reference to the 12 actions that loaded most strongly, six loaded negatively (loadings < -0.40) and six loaded positively (loadings > 0.50) (see Table 5). On the one hand, the six that loaded negatively were items that had a median that was greater than the hypothesized median (midpoint, 13) and described actions that promoted one's view. On the other hand, the six that loaded positively were items that had a median that was less than the hypothesized median (midpoint, 13) and described actions that undermined the opposition.

Table 5*Second Ranking Exercise Reduced List of 25 Actions and Factor Loadings of the Final List of 12 Actions*

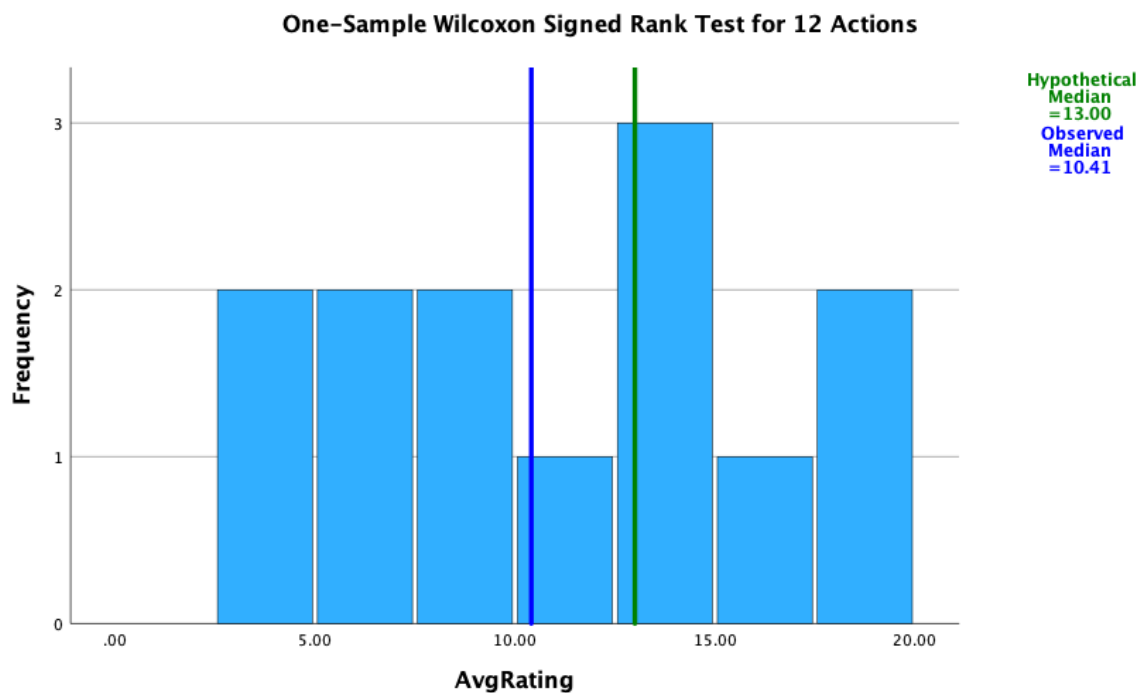
Action	Average (Rating)	Median (Rating)	StdDev (Rating)	Factor Loading
Submit (false) allegations of misconduct	4.81	2	5.74	0.673
Fake signatures on a petition	4.92	3	4.84	
Gaslighting (questions/deny the truth with an opposite version)	5.62	4	4.86	0.775
Storm an event	4.30	4	3.44	0.459
Anger troll	6.62	5	4.77	0.759
Public shaming/criticism (e.g. social media)	7.84	7	5.18	0.516
Undermine the opposition personally	8.46	7	6.14	0.595
Flood comments section online	9.86	8	5.69	
Block those you oppose	10.41	9	5.75	
Lobby government officials	12.86	11	5.90	
Call out those responsible	14.24	13	4.77	
Develop a members' database/list	14.89	14	4.36	
Team up with journalists	14.76	15	4.65	
Organise public events	15.59	16	5.24	
Publicly endorse (e.g. social media)	16.24	16	6.58	-0.491
Actively promote/publish content	16.78	17	5.53	-0.448
Become active in local politics	17.24	17	5.04	-0.486
Organise campaigns	15.57	17	5.72	
Post stickers/signs/posters in public places	16.19	17	5.81	-0.56
Attend public demonstrations	17.35	18	5.34	
Donate money and time to the cause	17.24	18	6.17	
Support allied politicians publicly	16.51	18	4.81	

Develop affiliations with researchers/university/industry	18.59	19	5.03	
Share upcoming events for others to attend	18.76	21	5.72	-0.72
Vote for candidates that endorse particular reform and action	19.32	21	6.38	-0.448

In a final step of our analysis, we retained only these 12 actions and implemented another single sample Wilcoxon signed-rank test on the sampling distribution of the mean. Findings were non-significant, implying that there was no difference between the hypothesised median of 13.00 and the observed median of 10.41 ($Z = 28.00, p = .221$), thus, providing evidence that the scale of 12 actions is robust (see Figure 1B). Moreover, an analysis on the internal consistency of the 12 retained items revealed a Cronbach alpha of .822, suggesting very good reliability (Cortina, 1993).

Figure 1B

Graphical Illustration of the One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test (12 Actions)



Note. Wilcoxon signed-rank test was conducted to ensure that the respondents' rankings did not deviate from a uniform distribution across all items. The graphs illustrates that the hypothetical median did not deviate significantly from the observed median. This signifies that that the ranking of the 12 actions aligned with the anticipated order.

Cognitive Interviewing

As noted earlier, cognitive interviewing was undertaken to ensure understanding of the final list of 12 actions and to amend the wording of these actions where necessary. The general comments were as follows:

- a) the terms "gaslighting" and "anger troll" were poorly understood by two of the respondents;
- b) even though "storm an event" was understood by all, some found it more fitting for it to be changed to "disrupt an event";

c) regarding “actively promote/publish content”, two respondents brought to question whether such content is made by oneself or others. Therefore, it was recommended to clarify whether this action described creating, publishing, and promoting content, or simply sharing others’ content;

d) some respondents felt that “actively promote/publish content” may be considered as a broad action encompassing both “publicly endorse (e.g., social media)” and “share upcoming events for others to attend”. Regarding “actively promote/publish content” and “publicly endorse (e.g., social media)”, feedback received was that by promoting and publishing content one may be endorsing. Regarding “actively promote/publish content” and “share upcoming events for others to attend”, the feedback was that sharing upcoming events is a way of promoting.

In light of these findings, the wording of some actions was refined to more accurately convey their intended meaning (see Table 6).

Table 6*Changes to the Wording of the Actions*

Original Wording	Updated Wording
Gaslighting (questions/deny the truth with an opposite version)	Deny the opposition's version, even if true, and claim the opposite, even if false (i.e. gaslighting)
Anger troll	Comment, criticise and/or harass (e.g. social media trolling) to provoke angry responses from the opposition that put them in a bad light, regardless of the content
Submit (false) allegations of misconduct	Submit allegations of misconduct about the opposition, even if these are untrue
Undermine the opposition personally	Undermine the opposition personally
Public shaming/criticism (e.g. social media)	Publicly shame and criticise the opposition
Storm an event	Disrupt a formally organised event to draw attention
Actively promote/publish content	Actively promote and publish your personal views
Vote for candidates that endorse particular reform and action	Vote for candidates who support action that is in line with your views
Become active in local politics	Become active in local politics
Publicly endorse (e.g. social media)	Provide public endorsement to politicians, institutions and/or influencers whose views align with yours
Post stickers/signs/posters in public places	Post stickers, signs, and posters in public places
Share upcoming events for others to attend	Promote events for others to attend

Scaling, Scoring, and Application of the Everyday Extremism Scale

As part of the objectives of WP6, we have designed a scale aimed at measuring everyday extremism. In the following we detail the method of scaling, scoring and interpreting the scores, and outline its intended application in the research endeavours of the OppAttune project.

Scaling Method

Typically in a scale, respondents are asked to indicate their extent of agreement or disagreement with a series of items using a graded agree-disagree scale (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011). Such scales may be as small as two- or three-point scales, however, owing to the fact that these have been linked to lower reliability, five- to seven-point Likert scales have been generally preferred. In Likert scaling, which is perhaps the most widely adopted scaling tool, latent individual scores are then calculated by aggregating scores from all items, usually by summation or an average (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011). Whilst this has its advantages, namely, that it has consistently yielded high reliability, the procedure has nevertheless attracted controversy (Tanujaya et al., 2022; Tóth et al., 2020). An important feature of Likert scaling is that it treats each item equally, meaning that there is no weighting based on the extremity of items.

As part of the method for creating the everyday extremism scale, we asked experts to rank actions ranging from the most extreme to the most every day. For this reason, and unlike Likert scaling, the actions/items do not contribute equally to the measurement of everyday extremism. Rather, some items are more extreme than everyday, and vice-versa. Put simply, even though all actions in the everyday extremism scale are aimed at capturing the same concept (everyday extremism), they are not fundamentally describing the same intensity. Owing to this, we adopted Thurstone's scaling method (1928), as this has been shown to deliver better outcomes when capturing perceived intensity or agreement (Drasgow et al.,

2010). According to Thurnstone (1928), each item on a scale represents a specific point on a continuum of attitudes or preferences. For instance, items might range from strong opposition to strong support for a particular issue. In a similar vein, actions in our scale range from the most everyday to the most extreme. Accordingly, it becomes possible to assign weights to each of the 12 actions on the scale of everyday extremism. These weights range from +1 (least everyday extremist) to +12 (most everyday extremist). For each item, respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they believe an action is acceptable using a five-point scale ranging from 0 (not acceptable) to 4 (fully acceptable) (see Table 7).

Table 7
Everyday Extremism Scale

	Rate the extent to which you believe each of the following actions is acceptable					Weighting
	Not Acceptable				Fully Acceptable	
Deny the opposition's version, even if true, and claim the opposite, even if false (i.e. gaslighting)	0	1	2	3	4	+12
Comment, criticise and/or harass (e.g. social media trolling) to provoke angry responses from the opposition that put them in a bad light, regardless of the content	0	1	2	3	4	+11

Submit allegations of misconduct about the opposition, even if these are untrue	0	1	2	3	4	+10
Undermine the opposition personally	0	1	2	3	4	+9
Publicly shame and criticise the opposition	0	1	2	3	4	+8
Disrupt a formally organised event to draw attention	0	1	2	3	4	+7
Actively promote and publish your personal views	0	1	2	3	4	+1
Vote for candidates who support action that is in line with your views	0	1	2	3	4	+2
Become active in local politics	0	1	2	3	4	+3
Provide public endorsement to politicians, institutions and/or influencers whose views	0	1	2	3	4	+4

align with yours						
Post stickers, signs, and posters in public places	0	1	2	3	4	+5
Promote events for others to attend	0	1	2	3	4	+6

Scoring and Interpretation

The Everyday Extremism Scale is useful for both qualitative and quantitative research. With regards to the former, we advocate its use in qualitative interviews and/or focus groups in a manner that allows participants to consider their views on some issue and how to promote them, as well as others’ views and how to engage with them. For this purpose, we recommend the presentation of two flash cards to participants that distinguish items pertaining to the promotion of one’s own views from those targeting others’ views. For each flashcard, we recommend asking participants to: “Draw a line under the action beyond which you find behaviour to be unacceptable”. This is understood in a literal sense, that is, asking participants to mark a line under the statement that best represents their personal limits regarding how far they are willing to go. We then recommend following this exercise up with questions pertaining to why they drew the line where they did, whether they think this applies to them alone or whether this line should also apply to others, and what differences do the items above the line demonstrate from those below the line. These questions are expected to generate qualitative data concerning everyday extremism and limits individuals impose on themselves and others regarding freedom of expression and action with regards to politicised topics.

The Everyday Extremism Scale is also useful in quantitative research. We recommend administration of the full scale for data gathering purposes, that should be followed by a validation of the instrument for further statistical use. We recommend that any quantitative

data analysis should start with a Confirmatory Factor Analysis that should be undertaken on the full dataset for which the Everyday Extremism Scale is to be used. We then recommend an analysis of items in terms of the best fitting model that CFA output stands to reveal, which should be adopted for further analysis. It is important, however, to retain symmetry in the distributions of items on each side of the scale, that is, if a decision to eliminate an item from those pertaining to one's own views is made on the basis of improving fit, then a similarly weighted item from the other side of the scale distribution pertaining to others' views should also be identified for removal. A score for everyday extremism is then calculated by multiplying the given score of each action (on the five-point scale) with its corresponding weight. The weighting of items should be applied after the selection of the final set of items that are adopted for analysis following CFA. We recommend that CFA is restricted to a single factor, such that it corresponds with the methodology adopted in generating the longer versions of the scale. We also caution against future use of restricted sets of items that may be reported in the academic literature, as the models that fit the data best are prone to biases resulting from data gathering procedures, particularly in the use of samples that are derived from non-probabilistic, non-representative and non-randomly generated datasets. For this reason, a new validation exercise of the instrument is recommended anytime the Everyday Extremism Scale is required for statistical analysis with a new dataset. Individuals with a higher score are those who endorse more everyday extremist actions, whereas individuals with a lower score represent those who endorse everyday extremist actions relatively less than others.

Application in the OppAttune Project

The Everyday Extremism Scale has been developed for use in the WIDE-Lens Survey that is a core objective of Work Package 6 (WP6). The scale will help determine drivers and predictors of everyday extremism on the one hand, as well as direct and indirect effects of everyday extremism on other social psychological variables.

Conclusion

Everyday extremism concerns the often-unnoticed incorporation of extreme views and behaviours into daily life. It involves individual actions and interactions that cumulatively contribute to a broader extremist culture. Acknowledging and understanding the threat that Everyday extremism poses is crucial for the development of targeted interventions and measures that address the root causes of extremism in daily life. As part of the objectives of WP6, we have developed a scale for Everyday Extremism Scale for use in the WIDE-Lens. Since the concept of everyday extremism is relatively new and lacks formal definition, we have chosen to adopt an inductive approach to develop the Everyday Extremism Scale. In particular, we consulted data from Reddit and online news sources to determine the items suitable for the scale. After two rounds of expert rankings, we finalised a scale of 12 items loading onto a single factor of everyday extremism. Half of the items described actions that promote one's own views, while the other half described that undermine the opposition. It is important to note that the Everyday Extremism Scale does not serve to profile individuals but rather to identify and investigate trends within a general population. Implementing the scale in this way allows for targeted interventions that address widespread social issues rather than targeting particular individuals or social groups.

The benefit of the scale is not limited to the OppAttune project. We believe the scale would be especially valuable for researchers and policymakers wishing to understand the wider social consequences of extremist behaviours and ideologies that manifest in daily life. Crucially, such consequences include the rise of increasingly divided societies where meaningful conversations deteriorates into exchanges that normalise hostility and dehumanise others. Moreover, we believe that a major strength of the Everyday Extremism Scale is that it can be employed in either quantitative or qualitative methodologies. From a quantitative standpoint, it can be used to compute an index for comparative purposes and analyse variability relative to the effects exercised by other variables. Conversely, from a qualitative perspective, it can be effectively employed in interviews or focus groups to facilitate constructive discussion that allow for a more nuanced understanding of the subject matter. For instance, one could engage in meaningful discussion by asking participants to indicate where they would draw the line that political agents should not cross. Overall, we

believe that the Everyday Extremism Scale holds significant potential in effectively understanding the characteristics of everyday extremism, and ultimately, how to best attune to and limit it.

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Appendix

Table A.1

Examples of Posts and Comments Extracted from Reddit with their Associated URL Link

Post/Comment	URL Link
100% causing the everyday person grief isn't the way to go. Invalidate the spaces of the rich and powerful and make their lives miserable.	https://www.reddit.com/r/facepalm/comments/143o013/climate_activists_spraypaint_private_jet_orange/
Personally, will no longer vote for any candidate that does not endorse democratic reform and stronger climate action.	https://www.reddit.com/r/CanadaPolitics/comments/14sol9n/if_youre_not_terrified_youre_not_paying_attention/
There's a difference between a protest and a direct act of self defense. You protest civil issues to get a population to vote in accordance with your policy prescriptions. If the activists are acting in defence of themselves, and ostensibly the rest of humanity, then they should be committing acts of violence against the individuals that are perpetuating the cause of climate change.	https://www.reddit.com/r/Destiny/comments/153yi37/what_is_good_activism/
Activism doesn't have to be disruptive. Plan meetups, organize local groups. Go to hangouts, ask to put up posters for meetups. Collaborate with the community. Keep your goals feasible; encourage others to do the same & the effect will multiply if the message is compelling	https://www.reddit.com/r/Destiny/comments/153yi37/what_is_good_activism/
I feel like the best approach for individual activists now is to engage 1on1 with people as much as possible and walk them through what the problem is and who/what to vote for to help it.	https://www.reddit.com/r/Destiny/comments/153yi37/what_is_good_activism/

Note. Actions in bold

Table A.2

Example Excerpts from Online News Sources

Keyword	Country	Media	URL	Excerpt
Migration	Malta	Malta Today	https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/ewropej/116395/eu-slammed-for-libya-migration-policy-migrants-returned-to-torture-centres	EU-funded reports have produced evidence of harm towards migrants
Vaccination	UK	The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/08/end-mass-jabs-and-live-with-covid-says-ex-head-of-vaccine-taskforce	Report that the former chairman of the UK's vaccine taskforce has said covid should be 'treated like flu'
Protectionism	UK	The Times	https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-times-view-on-the-far-right-in-europe-radicalism-resurgent-20h3xwnpx	A 'The Times' view piece on the macro-politics of the far-right in Europe
Activism	Kosovo	prishtina Insight	https://prishtinainsight.com/kosovars-protest-in-red-over-violence-against-women/	The slogan, “How many more killed women?” was written on the buildings.
Immigration	Greece	Efsyn	https://www.efsyn.gr/kosmos/eyropi/325955-eyropi-oikologiki-diethnis-kai-pyriniki	Opinion piece on Macron's programmatic statements

Note. Actions in bold.

