

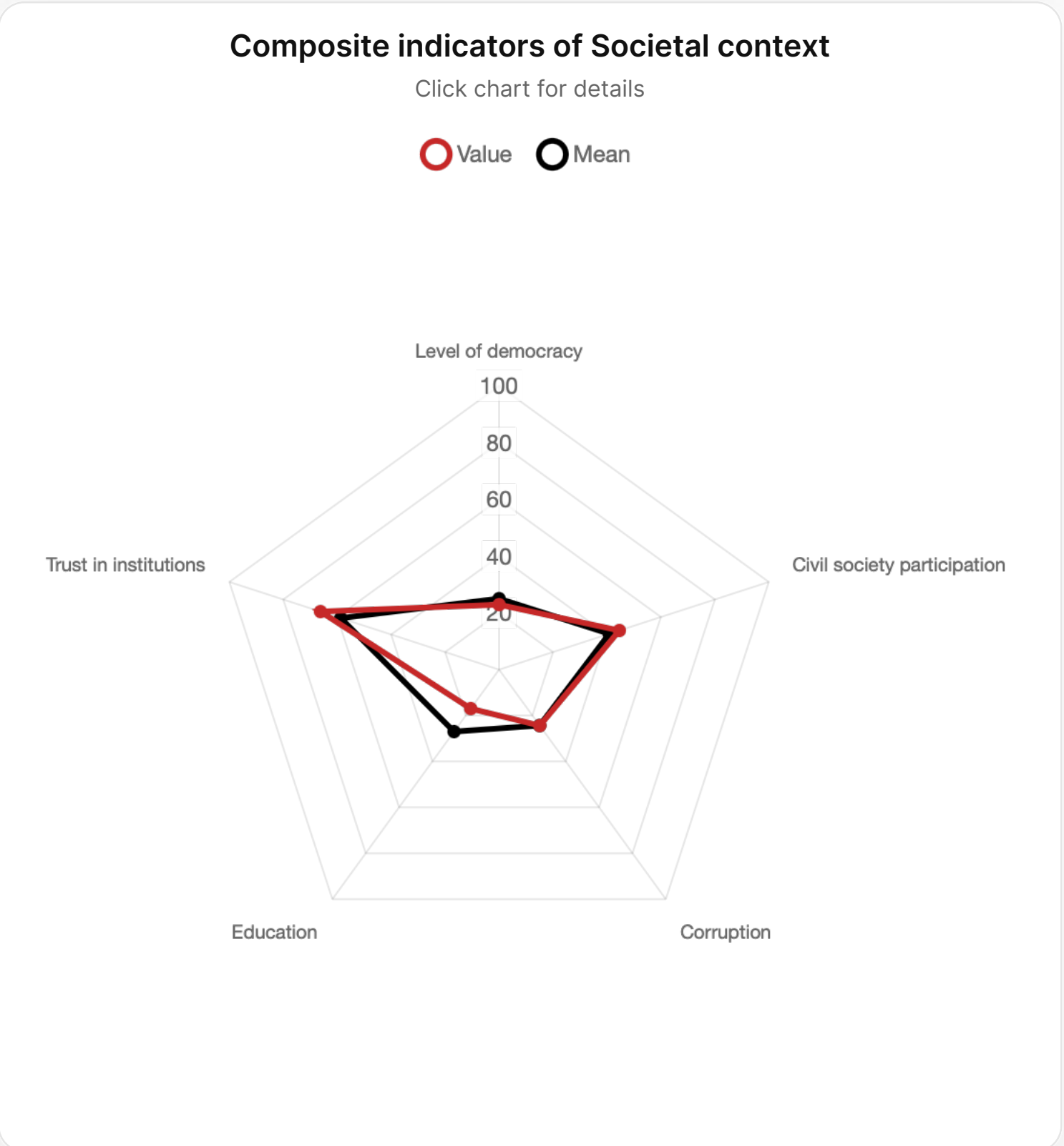
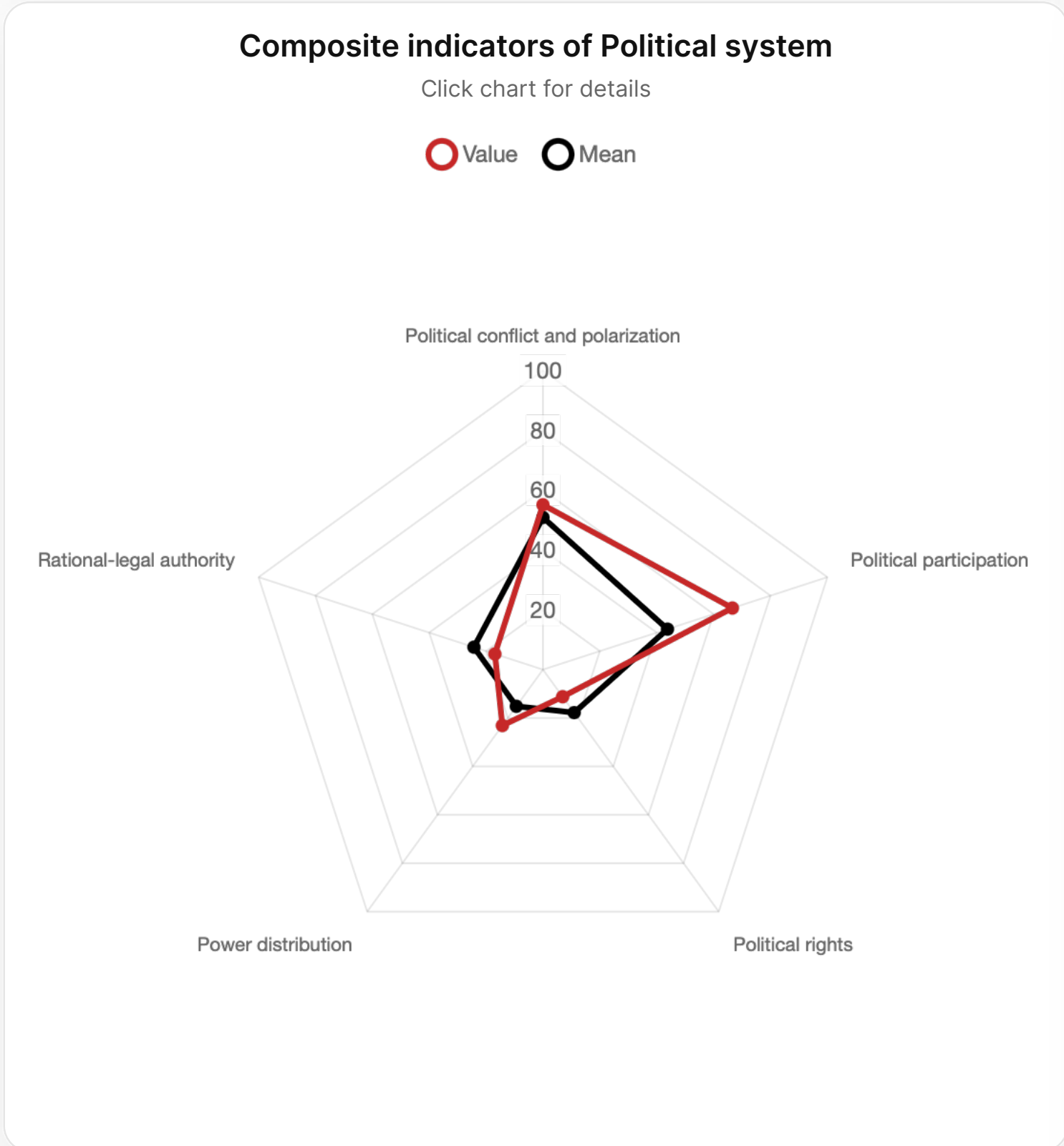
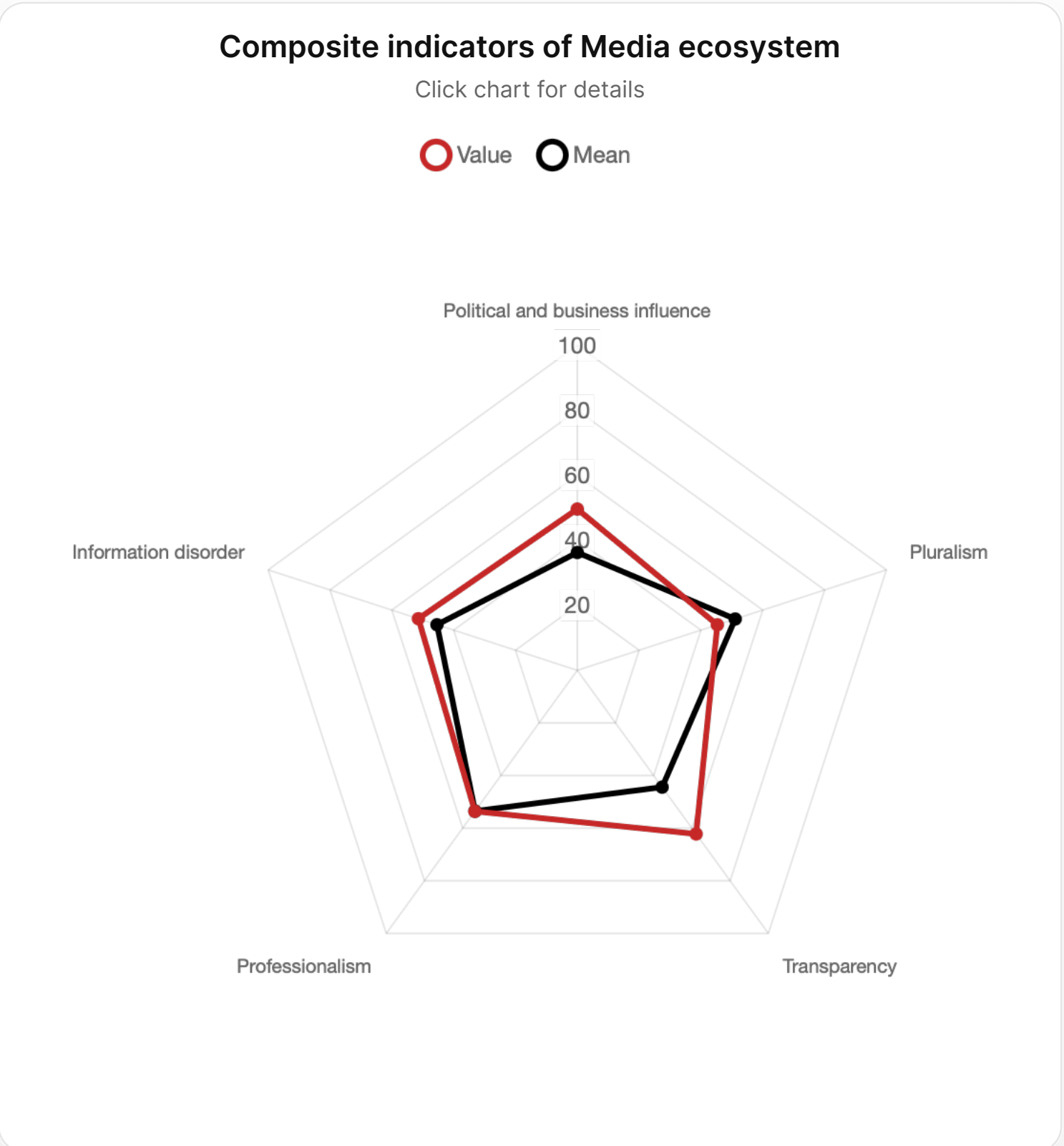
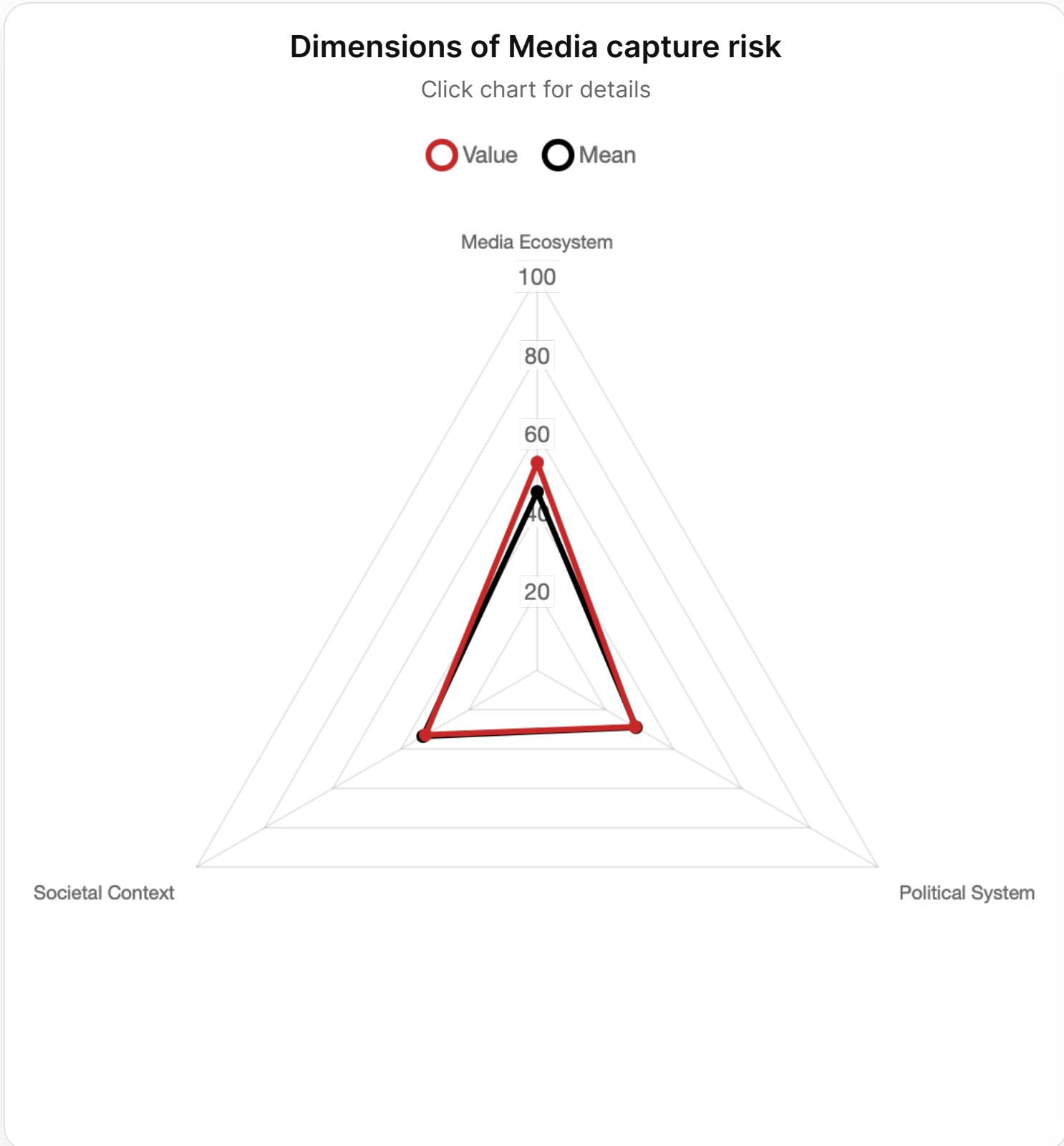
Cyprus



Population: 1.4m

Country media capture risk overall (value - %): 41.8

Media capture risk average across countries (mean - %): 38.3



Country Overview

Cyprus displays medium risk levels of media capture, specifically in the media ecosystem dimension. The country is structured as a democratic republic with formal sovereignty over the whole island, though effective government control extends only to the southern region. While political rights and civil liberties are broadly respected, ongoing concerns persist regarding the medial dimension and its relationship with political powers.

Cyprus has a small media market with a limited audience and a variety of outlets across broadcasting, print, radio, and digital sectors. Television remains the dominant medium, with eight private channels and one public broadcaster, alongside a growing presence of hybrid TV platforms. The radio sector is smaller and includes public, private, and community stations. Digital news consumption has expanded in recent years, leading most traditional media organizations to develop online editions. The print sector comprises several daily and weekly newspapers, two of the four largest of which are affiliated with political parties. Media ownership in both print and digital sectors shows a degree of concentration, as highlighted also by the pluralism composite indicator, which shows medium risk levels related to this dimension. Even higher scores are linked to transparency, for which Cyprus accounts for the highest one across all the countries considered. Transparency shows risks particularly regarding ownership, that frequently overlaps with other business interests, including political involvement. Moreover editorial decision-making is influenced by political affiliations and relationships between media owners and political actors, as confirmed by the score of the political and business influence indicator. To that extent, it is paramount to note that the government appoints the board of directors of the public broadcaster.

The media ecosystem features reflect the country's political and societal dimensions. In fact, Cyprus is a presidential democracy in which political competition is strongly shaped by the unresolved occupation of the island, known as the “Cyprus problem”, which continues to structure party positions and public debate. In fact, the northern part of the island is regarded as an Occupied territory of The Republic of Cyprus under the control of Türkiye. Political polarization is also reflected in intra-group divisions.

Political participation shows high risk levels of media capture, the highest amongst all the countries considered: recent years have seen growing voter apathy alongside constraints on civic activism, including the dispersal of anti-corruption protests and a 2024 attack on an anti-racism organization. At the same time, authorities have introduced measures to enhance participation, such as citizen engagement platforms, a lowered voting age, and automatic voter registration, though their effects remain to be evaluated. On the other hand, Cyprus scores low levels of media capture related to political rights, though recent declines have been observed in civil liberties and press freedom, including cases of journalist harassment. Gender equality remains a relatively strong area following the criminalization of conversion practices in 2023, while concerns persist regarding legal protections against domestic and gender-based violence. Representation remains broadly inclusive, but uneven accountability and protection for migrant and refugee communities raise questions about power distribution and the effective enforcement of the rule of law.

Despite persistent structural challenges, Cyprus has undertaken comprehensive education and training reforms over the past decade, signaling a clear policy commitment to system modernization. Progress in early childhood education participation, the gradual lowering of the compulsory school age, and one of the highest tertiary attainment rates in the EU represent important strengths. These features determine the lowest risk level related to education according to Cyprus' indicator.

Trust in institutions varies across social groups. Migrant and refugee communities show lower confidence in law enforcement due to perceived shortcomings in accountability for violence, while European court findings on discriminatory judicial handling of gender-based violence cases have affected perceptions of the justice system. Harassment of journalists and media bias further contribute to weakened trust in oversight institutions. Rising voter apathy and political disengagement suggest broader skepticism toward political institutions and democratic processes.

In conclusion, Cyprus exhibits a relatively stable democratic framework. However, political polarization, limitations on political and civic participation, media ownership concentration, and declining institutional trust are areas highlighting medium levels of risk.