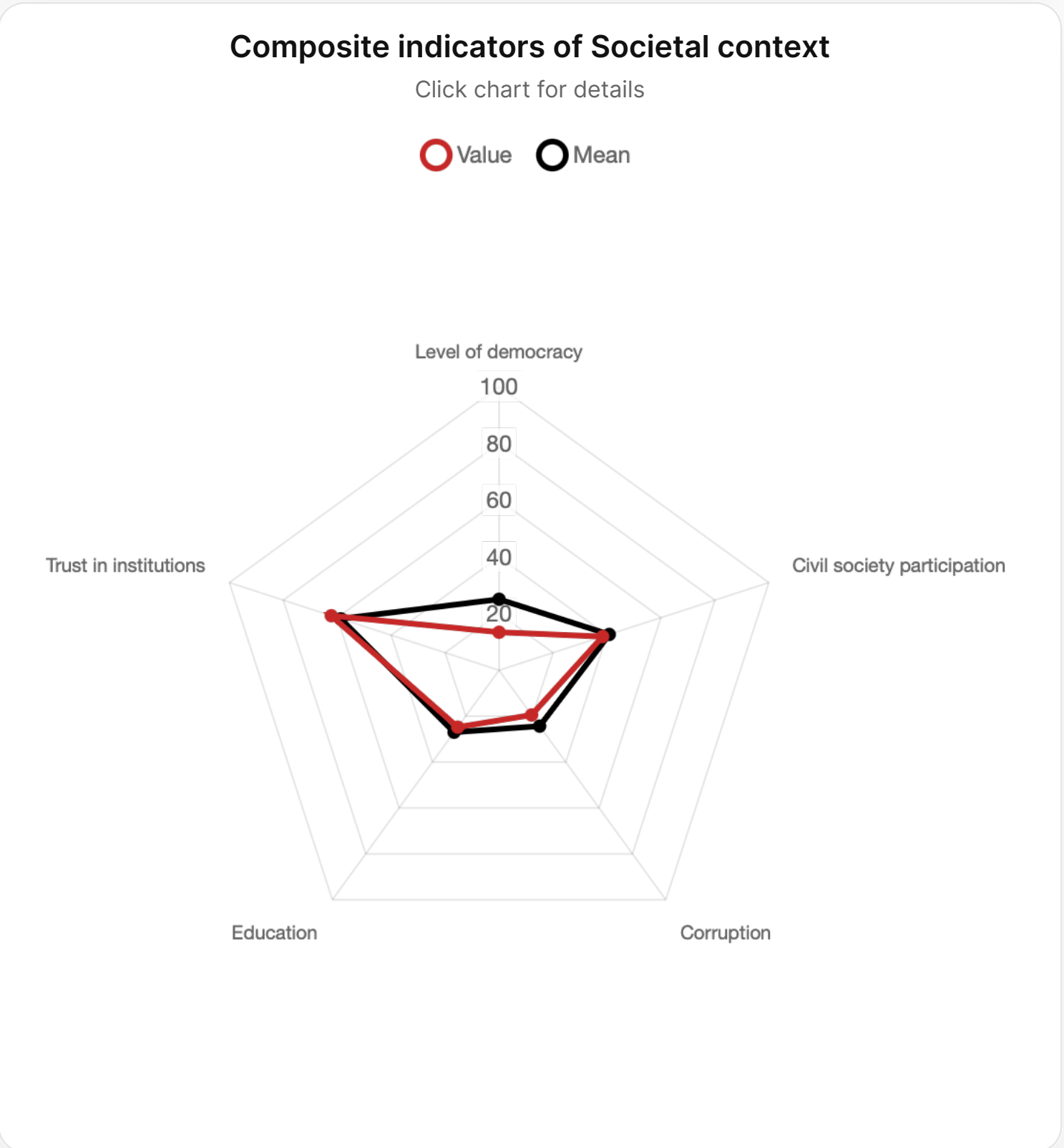
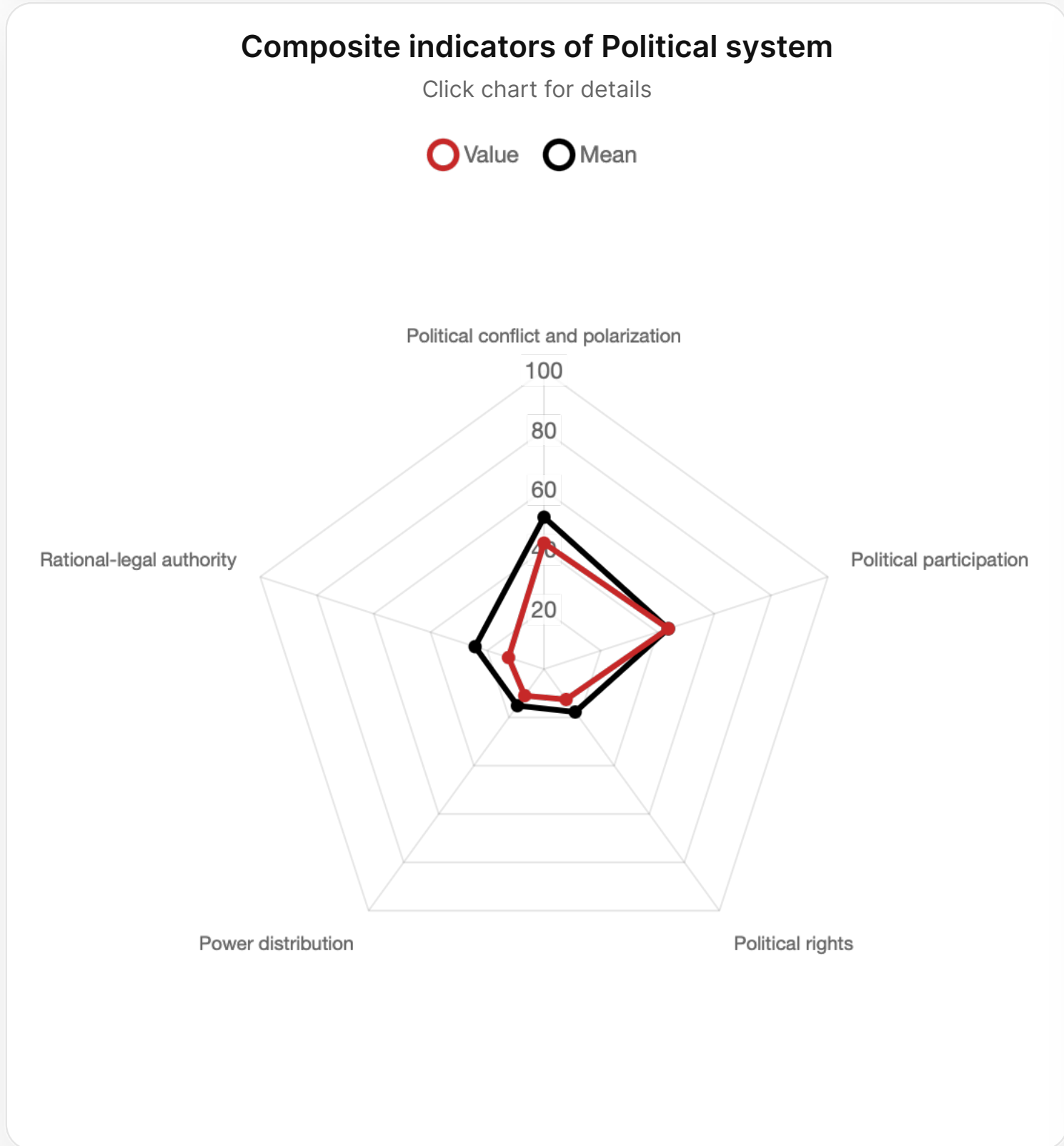
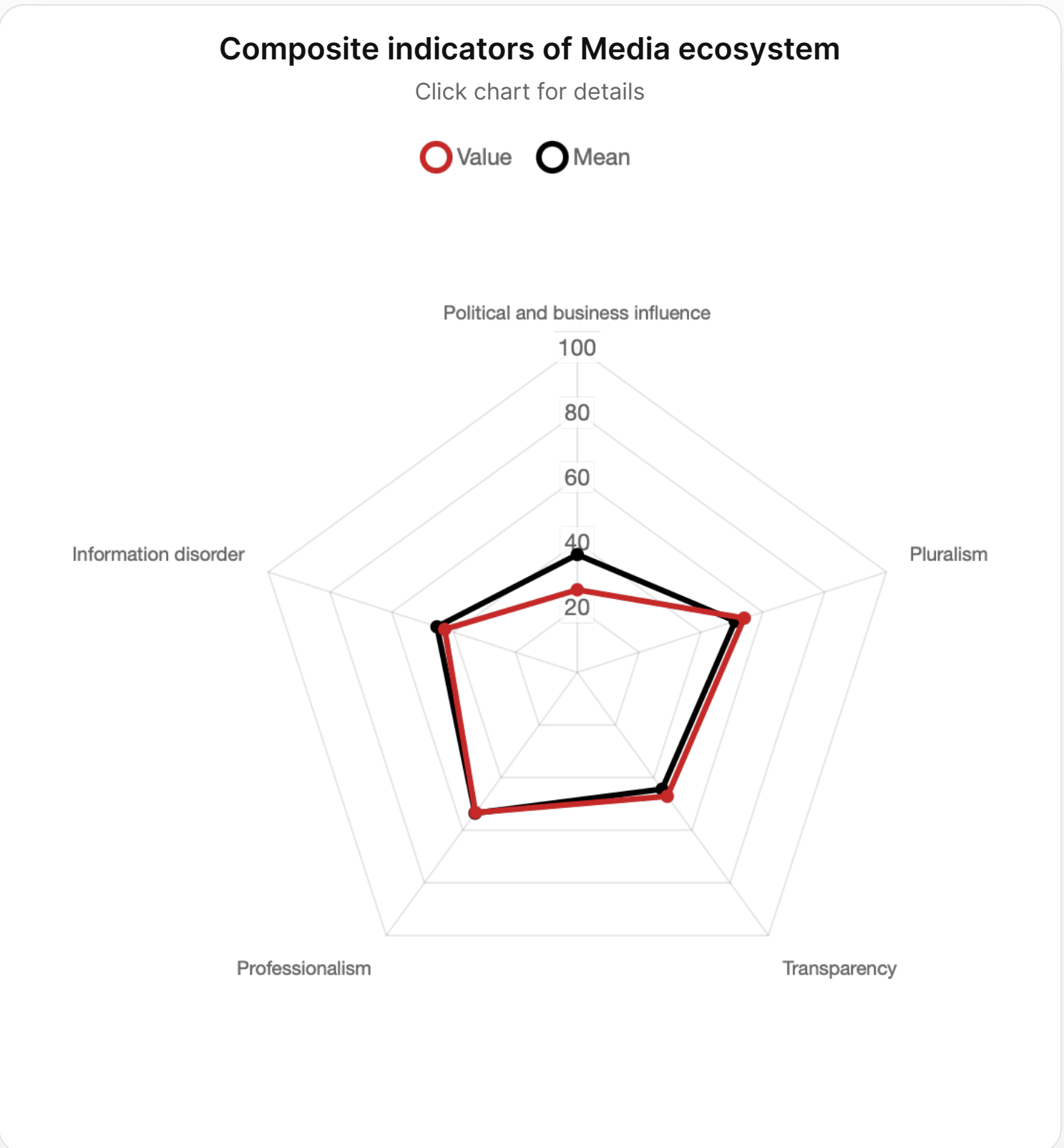
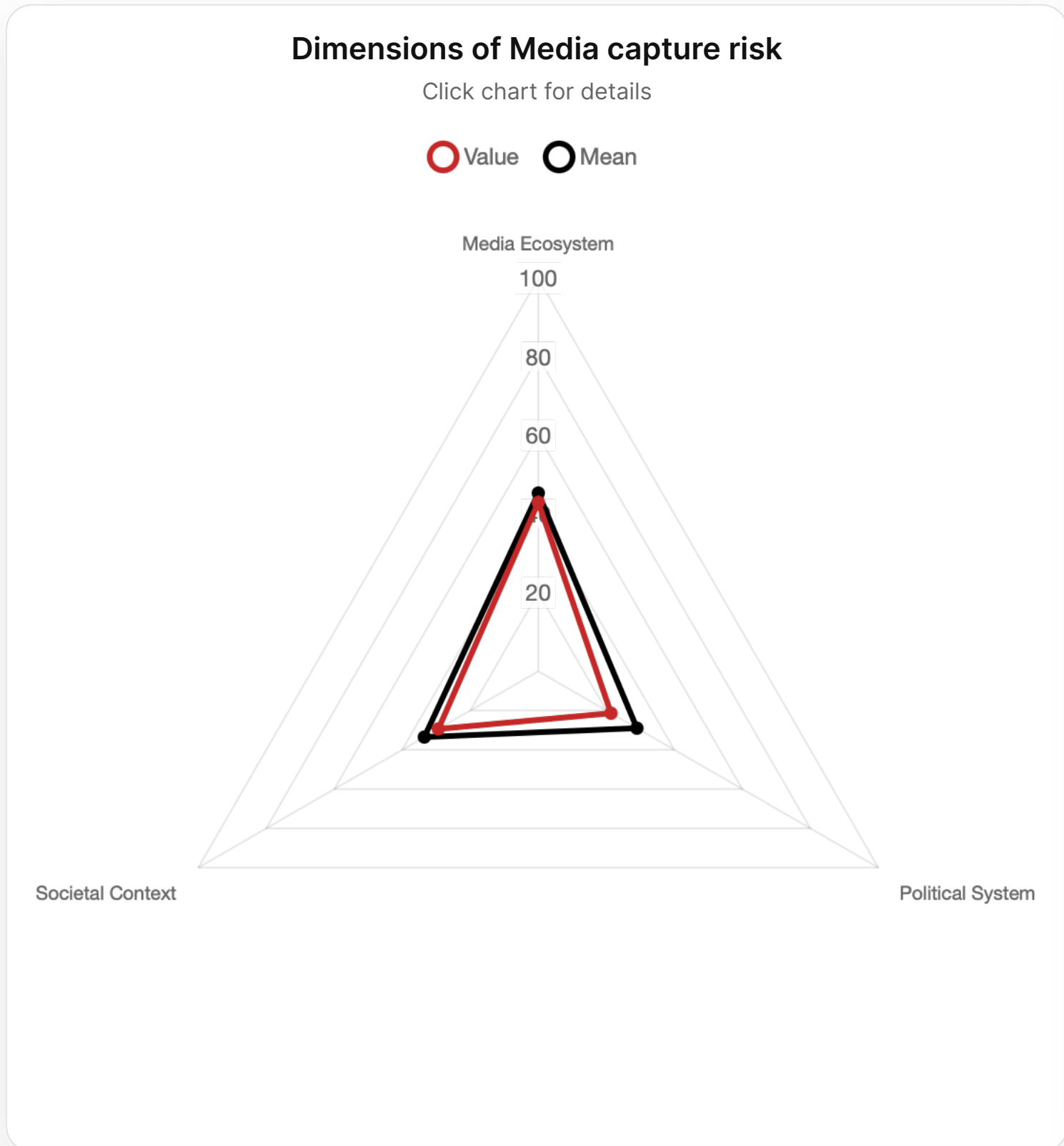


Czech Republic



Population: 10.5m
Country media capture risk overall (value - %): 34.2
Media capture risk average across countries (mean - %): 38.3



Country Overview

Czech Republic is characterized by medium levels of risk across all three dimensions, specifically the media ecosystem, with the political and societal ones showing lower scores than the average.

Until 2008, Czech Republic was held up as an example of a post-communist country whose media market thrived in terms of plurality, good practice and journalistic culture. However, the recession started a process that deflected this trend. Czech media landscape is now characterized by three major trends: the significant concentration of large media groups (*Czech News Centre*, *Mafra*, *Economia*) owned by major economic players; the rise of new independent media, which have carved out a place for themselves in this landscape (*HlidacíPes*, *Deník M*); and the strong presence of respected public media (*Česká Televize* and *Český Rozhlas*). Such market contraction is perfectly quantified by the country's level of risk pertaining to pluralism composite indicator. For instance, the newspaper sector has seen more decline in circulation, and the closure of several print editions, including *Lidové noviny*, the oldest Czech newspaper, founded in 1893. Digital markets are likewise marked by a high degree of concentration, largely dominated by *Alphabet* and *Meta*. Although this global duopoly faces some competition from local players such as *Seznam*, it has increasingly drawn the scrutiny of online publishers. Despite an overall rise in advertising expenditure in 2025, many media organizations and publishers continue to struggle financially. A critical score for Czech's media, though, is the one pertaining to transparency: in fact, although the legal framework is robust, there are only a few regulations, and the information gathered through the standard procedures is intended only for the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting, and is made public just afterwards by other means.

Today's Czechia media ecosystem is better explainable when looking at its historical background. After the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia, in the 1992 Velvet Divorce, the country transitioned from communism, due to growing elite-driven demands for decentralization and discrepancies in economic development. Czech political competition has since moved beyond its traditional left-right structure, with populist and anti-establishment parties gaining ground. After the 2025 parliamentary elections, although the *ANO* party emerged as the largest political force, it did not form a governing coalition. Instead, a centre-right coalition composed of parties such as *SPOLU*, *STAN*, and the *Pirates* formed the government, led by Prime Minister Vít Rakušan, while Andrej Babiš remains a key opposition figure.

Concerns regarding the relationship between media ownership and political influence have been prominent in recent years, critics have accused Babiš of using *MF Dnes* and *Lidové noviny*, newspapers he owned prior to 2023, to advance his political and business interests. However, Babiš divested these holdings between 2023 and 2024, in line with regulatory and EU-related requirements, thereby reducing direct conflicts of interest, although broader concerns about the political influence of economically powerful media owners persist. Nevertheless, media independence from politics and business is sound, as the pertaining indicator shows. This latter feature is broadly linked to the fair level of democracy that the country shows, supported by functioning institutional checks and accountability mechanisms. While corruption remains a concern, enforcement mechanisms and judicial processes are generally effective, and several investigations involving political and economic actors have been pursued in recent years. Rather than being linked to a single prominent case, these developments reflect a broader pattern of institutional capacity to address corruption. This is a clear example of a strong rational and legal authority whose corresponding indicator in our data shows low levels of risk. Nevertheless, while rule of law is generally upheld in civil and criminal matters, and discrimination is officially prohibited, Roma communities continue to face significant challenges, including barriers in the labor market and occasional threats or violence from right-wing groups.

In conclusion, Czech Republic's contraction and concentration of the media market, combined with financial pressures and limited transparency mechanisms, constitute the main sources of risk of media capture. From a political perspective, the country maintains a fair level of democratic performance, supported by functioning institutional checks and a comparatively strong rational-legal authority. Although concerns regarding politically connected media ownership have emerged in recent years, recent divestments have reduced some direct conflicts of interest, the overall indicator for political and business influence remains moderate rather than critical. Overall, the Czech case reflects a context in which democratic institutions remain robust, yet structural transformations in the media market and economic concentration generate medium-level vulnerabilities that warrant continued monitoring.