

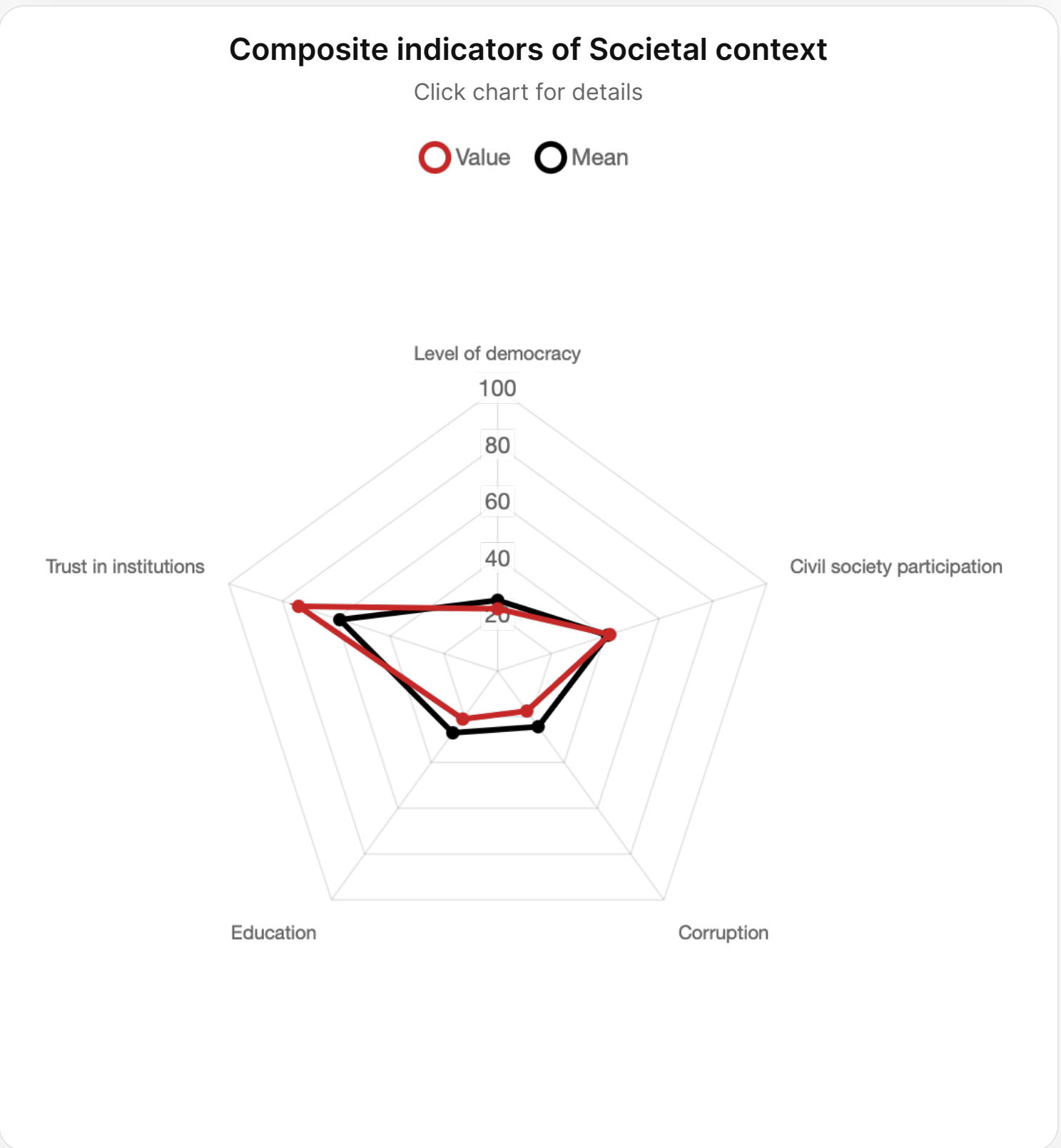
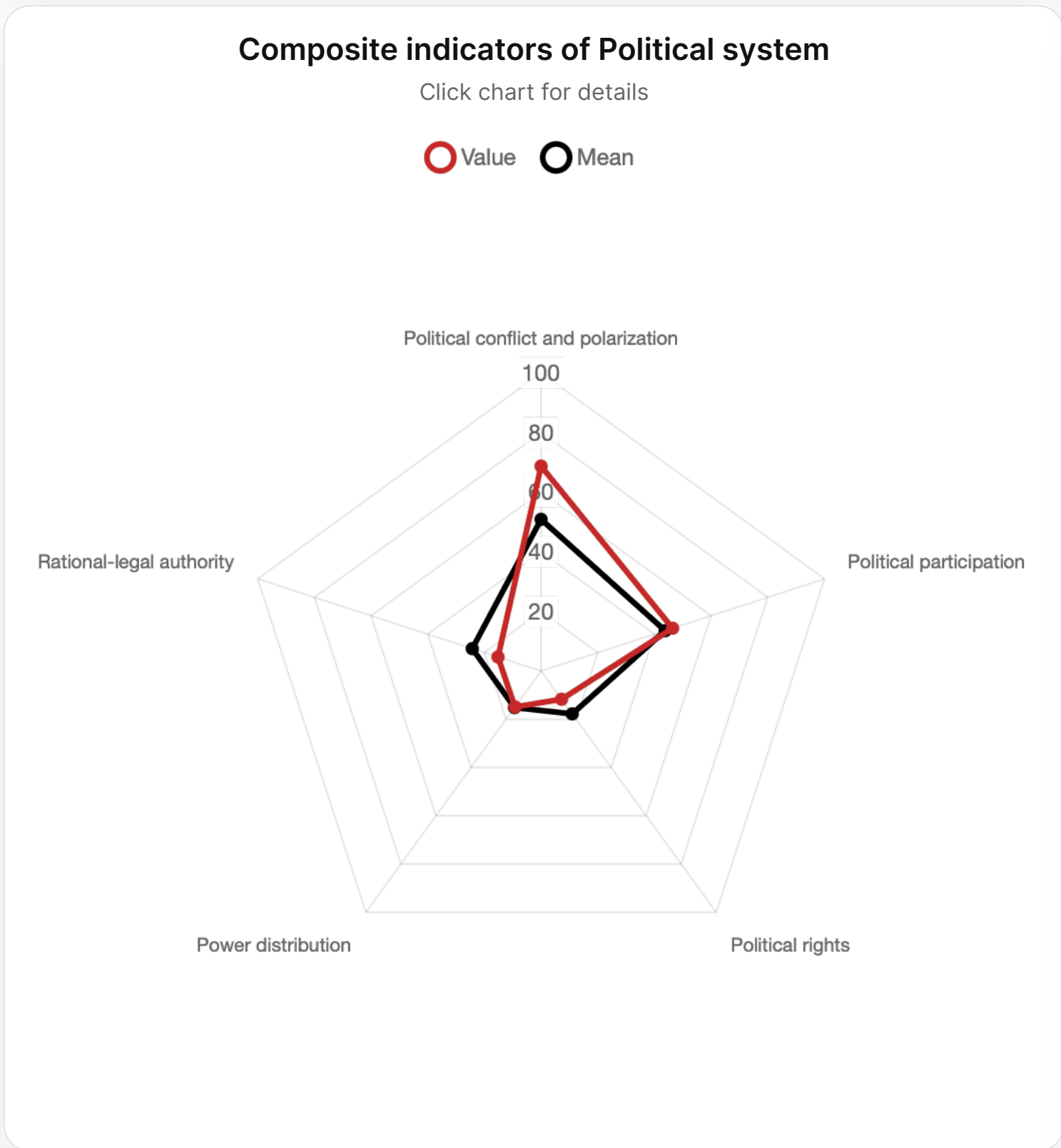
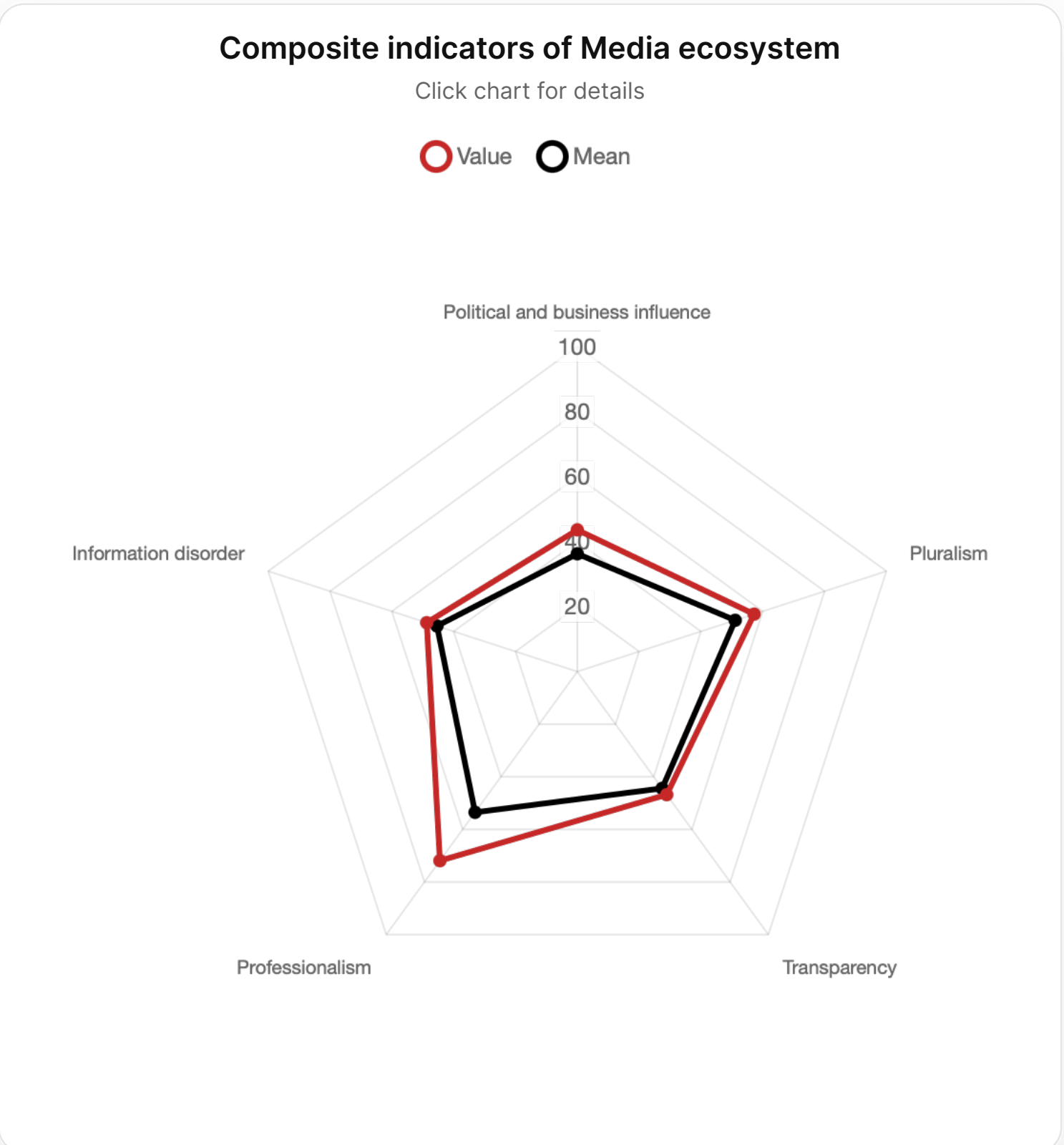
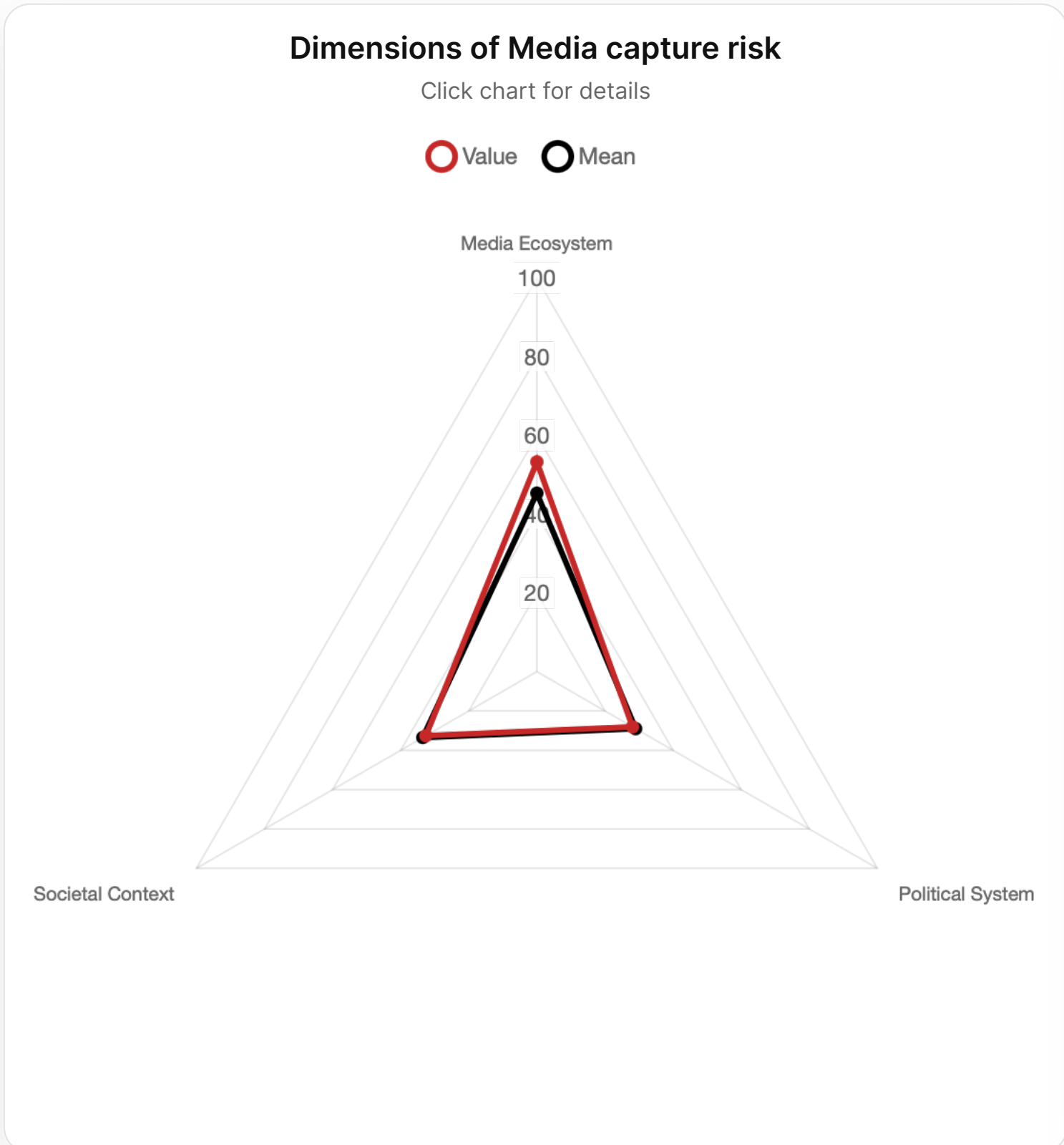
Slovenia



Population: 2.1m

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

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



Country Overview

Slovenia is characterized by a medium risk of media capture across all three dimensions, with a tendency to high risk in the media ecosystem one. Between 2019 and 2024, the country experienced declines in several rights-related indicators, including freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and social group equality, as well as in judicial autonomy. Recent developments, however, indicate early signs of recovery from this period of democratic contraction, particularly through reforms aimed at strengthening public media independence and addressing hate crimes. To understand this Slovenia's levels of risk, it is paramount to analyze each dimension. The country's media market is small, diverse, and highly concentrated, with complex ownership structures and significant cross-media concentration, as the composite indicator of pluralism shows. Such a factor is particularly high in the radio sector, followed by magazines and audiovisual services, with one major actor (Media24) and associated networks exerting substantial influence across multiple media segments, including daily newspapers. Alongside the limited ownership, the transparency composite indicator shows an overall medium risk.

The media landscape includes a strong public service broadcaster, *RTV Slovenija*, and one major broadcaster: *Pro plus* (with *POP TV* and *KANAL A*), a range of print and online newspapers, and non-profit investigative outlets that contribute to media pluralism. However, the media system has been shaped by periods of intense political pressure, particularly during the 2020-2022 government, when systematic efforts targeted critical journalism through smear campaigns, funding pressures, strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs), and political influence over public media governance. These features are part of a broader trend, specifically linked to the composite indicator of both political and business influence and professionalism, with the latter being the second highest after Hungary, hence highlighting a high risk of media capture in this context. In fact, journalistic working conditions have deteriorated, marked by declining employment, increased reliance on freelance and precarious contracts, and the absence of effective safeguards against managerial or political interference in editorial decisions. There are no binding mechanisms to ensure editorial autonomy or social security protections for journalists in cases of ownership or editorial changes. To this extent, public media institutions, including *RTV Slovenija* and the national press agency *STA*, have faced financial and political pressures, drawing criticism from EU institutions and international organizations. Overall, especially professionalism is facing a great deterioration, subject both to ideological influences and material pressures. While subsequent reforms and referendums have aimed to depoliticize public media governance, financial sustainability remains a challenge. As a result, media credibility is generally low, except for the public broadcaster, and news fatigue is becoming more prevalent. On the other hand, efforts to improve the journalistic professional standards are not insignificant, as the 2024 bill to secure protection from SLAPP lawsuits shows or the *RTV* provision of standardization of employment.

The constraints on Slovenia's media ecosystem are deeply influenced by the country's political and societal dimensions. Electoral administration has faced scrutiny during the 2024 European Parliament elections and referendums. While no wrongdoing was confirmed, institutional capacity constraints were acknowledged. Governance challenges were further underscored by corruption-related cases involving senior officials, reinforcing concerns about accountability and institutional integrity. These events, alongside with the efforts to strengthen institutional independence, including advancing legislation aligned with the European Media Freedom Act and the Digital Services Act, comply with the low risk represented by the rational and legal authority indicator low score. At the same time, the expansion of police surveillance powers under the so-called “Šutar Law” has prompted criticism: the primary concern is that these expanded surveillance prerogatives could be misused against any individual, group, or organization, essentially signalling an “authoritarianization” of politics, which already figures as highly polarized, probably influenced by Solvenia's societal fragmentation between many minority groups.

Overall, Slovenia combines strong formal democratic institutions with recent challenges related to trust in institutions, and political and societal participation, albeit showing fair levels of democracy. The media environment is diverse but structurally constrained by high ownership concentration, complex ownership transparency, financial pressures, and periods of political interference, particularly affecting public service media and journalistic autonomy.