

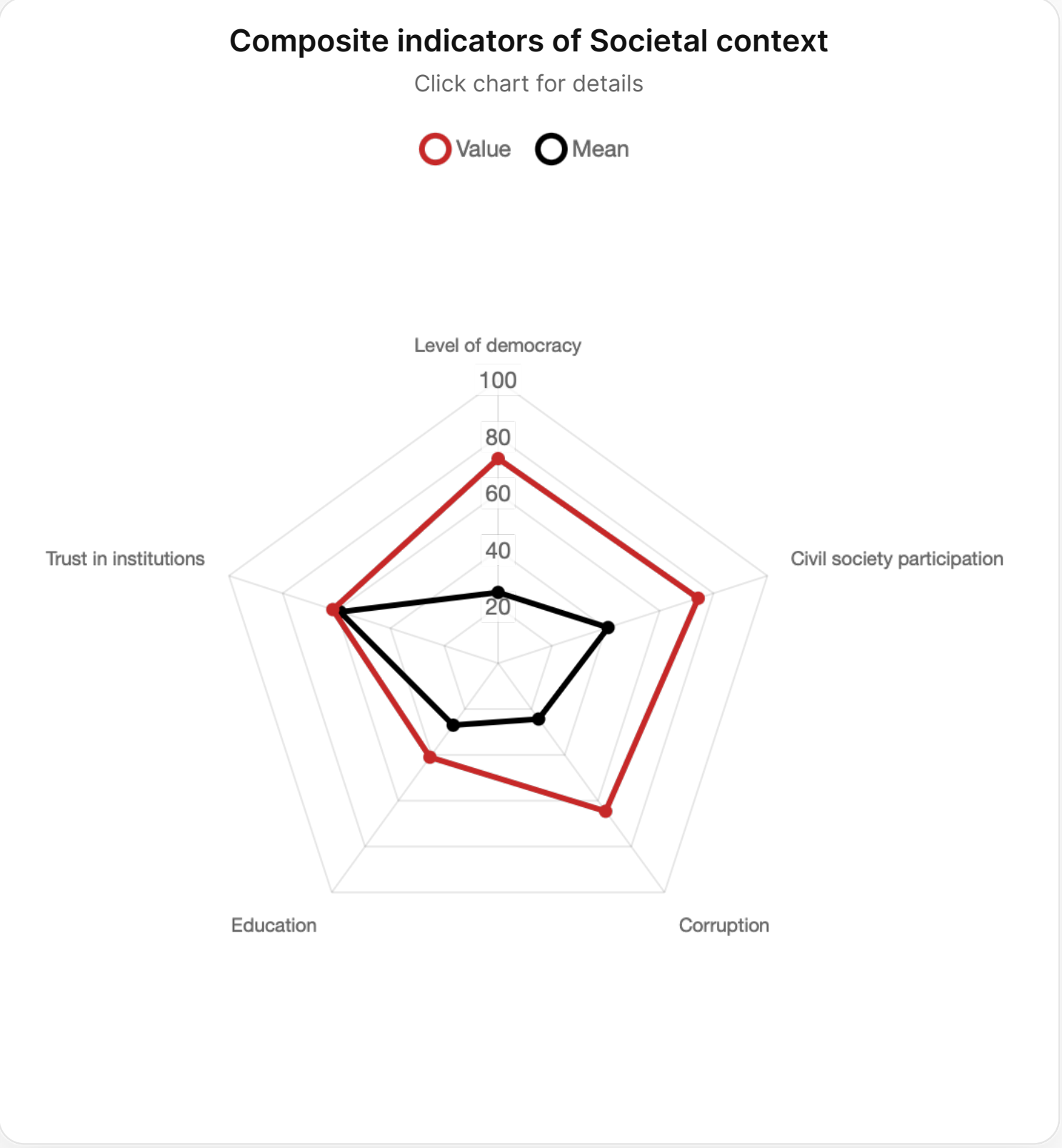
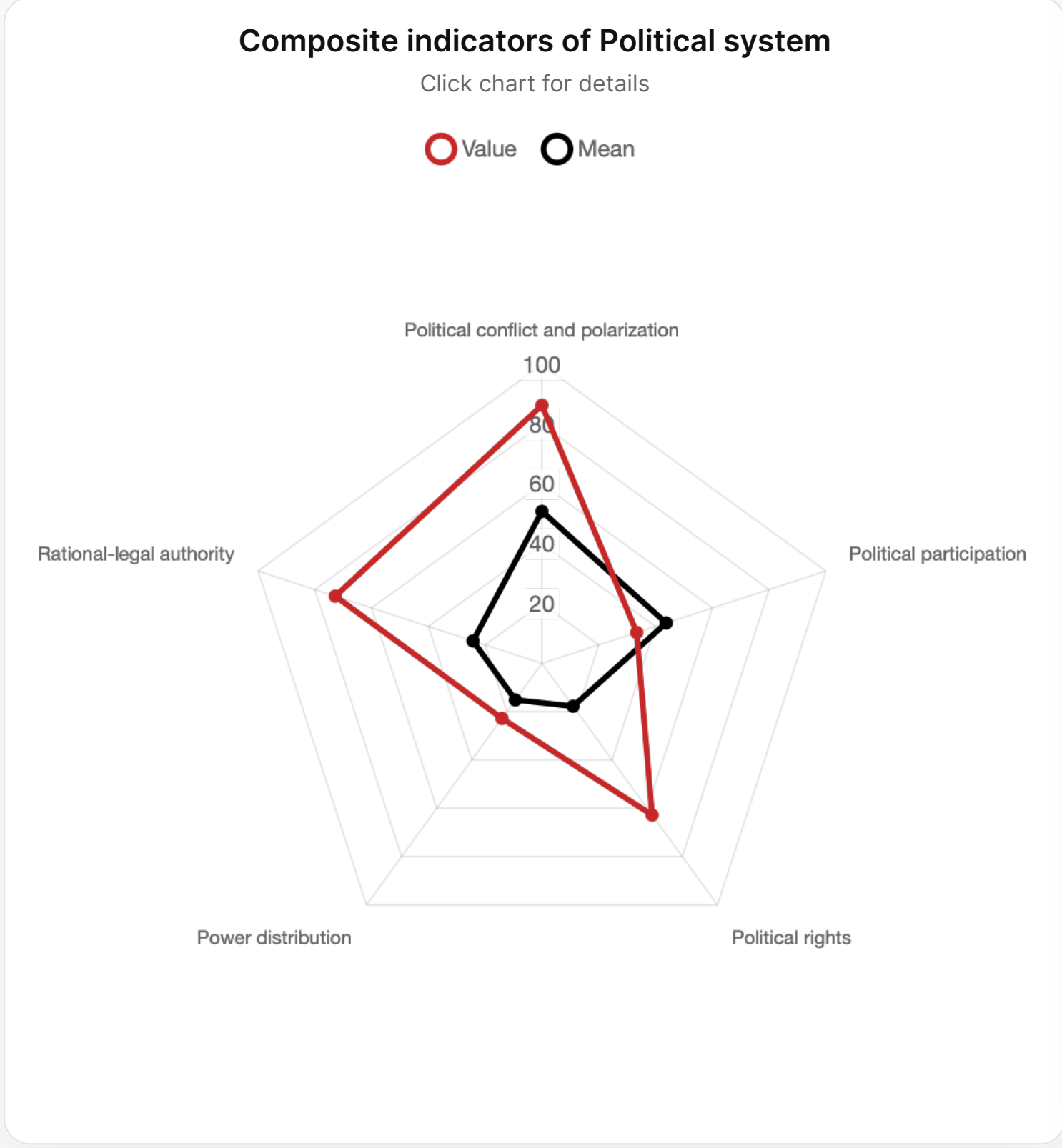
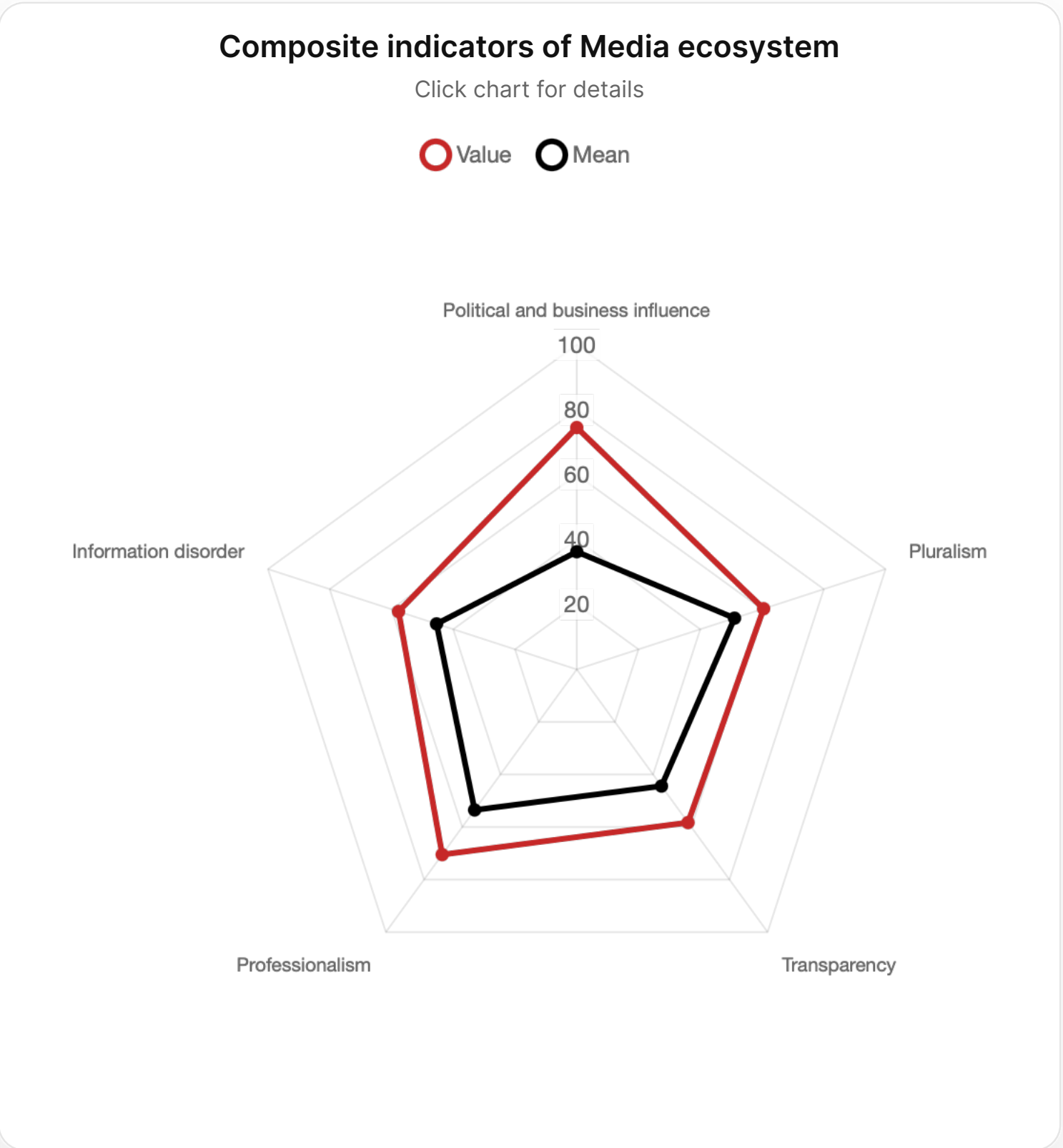
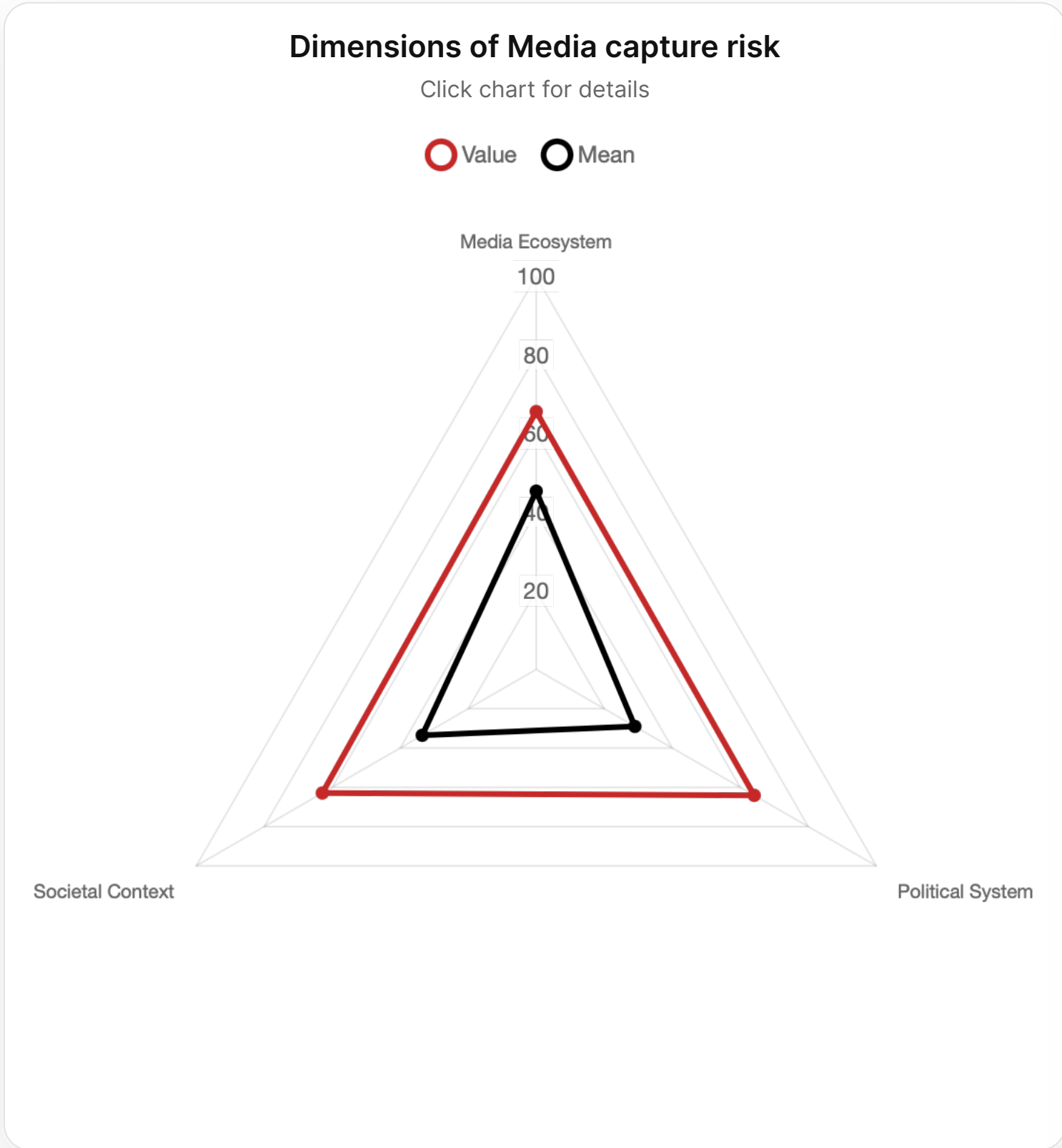
Türkiye



Population: 87.9m

Country media capture risk overall (value - %): 64.6

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



Country Overview

Türkiye exhibits the highest risk of media capture among all countries analysed, with values significantly above the average across all dimensions and especially within the political system and media system, where structural vulnerabilities are most acute. According to the European Commission's 2024 Türkiye Report, the country's political, economic, and institutional situation has deteriorated sharply within the framework of the EU accession process; negotiations have remained frozen since 2018, largely due to the erosion of the rule of law, fundamental rights, and democratic governance documented in the report. At the same time, increasing restrictions on civil liberties have created an environment in which the media system is “being called into question” , which highlights the growing pressure on independent journalism and the shrinking space for pluralistic debate. A key episode exemplifying this democratic backsliding occurred in late March 2025, when Ekrem İmamoğlu, the opposition mayor of Istanbul, was arrested together with around 100 associates – a development that triggered widespread protests and nationwide concern. The event also intensified an already-existing repressive mechanism targeting freedom of expression, started with the 2016 coup d'état attempt, with direct spillover effects on the media landscape, further reinforcing the conditions for media capture and weakening the country's informational checks and balances.

All indicators assessing Türkiye's media system display risk levels significantly above the European average, confirming a structural environment particularly exposed to media capture. The most critical dimension is the Political and Business Influence indicator, with estimates suggesting that around 90% of national media outlets are under direct or indirect governmental influence. These structural vulnerabilities are reinforced by persistent legal and administrative pressures, including recurrent judicial proceedings, investigations, and sanctions targeting journalists and media organisations, alongside widespread online censorship and other restrictive practices. Regulatory bodies such as RTÜK (Radio and Television Supreme Council) and BİK (Press Advertisement Agency) often operate in line with political priorities, through sanctions, licence decisions, and the selective distribution of public advertising, further deepening the dependency of media outlets on political power.

Transparency and professionalism are also undermined by opaque ownership structures and a highly concentrated market, where pro-government conglomerates dominate the television, print, and radio sectors. At the same time, the economic fragility of the media industry persists, with precarious working conditions for journalists and a widespread crisis among local outlets, weakening the diversity and autonomy of the information landscape (MPM). As a consequence, citizens often turn to a limited number of oppositional mainstream media – such as *NOW TV*, *Halk TV*, *Tele1*, *Sözcü*, and international services like *BBC Turkish*, *VOA Turkish*, and *Deutsche Welle Turkish* – to access alternative perspectives, even though these outlets remain economically dependent on their ownership patterns and revenue models and operate within a restrictive and heavily pressured environment. In contrast, Türkiye hosts a vast number of alternative and digitally native independent media outlets, including many regional initiatives, such as *T24*, *Fayn Studio*, *Aposto*, *Kısa Dalga*, *Oksijen*, *Medyascope*, *Diken*, *Kapsül*, *Karınca*, *Vesaire*, and *Munzir Media*. It is important to consider that most of these outlets operate under conditions of severe economic precarity, as they rely on volunteer labour and attempt to sustain themselves through foundations, crowdfunding, subscriptions, and other non-commercial income strategies.

Türkiye's political system continues to show serious restrictions on political rights, with concentrated executive power, limited checks and balances, and persistent pressure on opposition actors. In contrast, political participation presents lower risk levels than the European average, mainly due to high and stable electoral turnout. However, this participation occurs in a context that is not fully democratic, as unequal media access, political pressures, and episodes of removal or suspension of elected representatives continue to undermine the integrity of local governance.

Türkiye's social context is marked by a low level of democracy, with persistent weaknesses in the rule of law, rights protection, and civic space. Trust in institutions, while appearing moderate overall, is highly polarised: it varies sharply by political orientation, with government supporters expressing much higher confidence than opposition-aligned citizens.

Türkiye presents the highest risk of media capture, shaped by a polarised political environment and weakened democratic institutions. The media system is characterised by intense political and business influence, legal and administrative pressures, opaque ownership, and economic fragility, all of which limit pluralism and undermine editorial independence. While civic engagement remains high, it occurs in a context where institutional trust is politically segmented and democratic safeguards are eroded.