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May 2025

Political Landscape of Georgia

Election Compass Georgia 2024



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Executive Summary

The 2024 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia were fiercely contested, with opposition figures, civil society groups, and ordinary citizens characterizing them as “existential.” Held amid a protracted political crisis triggered by the ruling Georgian Dream government’s controversial legislation—measures widely viewed as curbing civil rights and tightening an authoritarian grip—the elections took place in a polarized environment. Politicians ran on high-stakes platforms, leaving little room for substantive policy debates.

In response, Geocompass, a Voting Advice Application (VAA) built on the widely tested Kieskompas methodology, sought to fill this gap. The tool posed 32 policy questions across six thematic areas, placing users on left-right and conservative-liberal scales and helping them navigate Georgia’s fragmented ideological landscape. With more than 30,000 voters using Geocompass, the resulting data offer a valuable snapshot of where both voters and parties stand in an otherwise polarized political arena.

Key Findings: Ideological Leanings of Compass Users

- Individuals who completed the election compass are generally moderate or left-leaning liberals, mainly clustering around median scores on both economic and socio-cultural scales, with few occupying ideological extremes. With individual scores on economic and socio-cultural views correlating, those with right-wing economic preferences tend to have socio-culturally liberal attitudes, while those with left-leaning preferences tend to hold more conservative values.
- Women are slightly more liberal and left-leaning than men. Those aged 50 or over tend to be more conservative and left-leaning, clustering around the ideological center. Younger individuals (18–49) are somewhat more economically right-leaning. Tbilisi residents skew liberal-right economically, while other urban and rural populations lean more conservative and economically left. Higher levels of education are associated with more liberal socio-cultural views and right-leaning economic preferences.
- Compass users tend to support higher taxes on businesses that pollute the environment, favor minimum wage regulation, and prefer voluntary participation in the contributory pension system. In addition, they endorse stricter rules on foreigners entering Georgia and obtaining residence permits, though opinions on this issue are more neutral rather than extreme. They hold robust pro-Western, pro-NATO, and pro-EU preferences. In contrast, these individuals are polarized regarding targeted state-funded insurance and whether or not there should be harsher punishments to reduce crime.
- Across the six policy areas examined, voters generally exhibit left-leaning tendencies on healthcare, education, economic, and environmental issues, while clustering around the center or slightly liberal positions on judicial, foreign, and social policies.
- Healthcare and education show the most variation, with stronger leftist views among women, younger respondents, ethnic minorities, those with lower education, and rural residents. Economic preferences also tilt left, particularly among women, older individuals, ethnic minorities, rural dwellers, and less educated groups.
- Environmental policy stands out for being strongly left-leaning and the most polarized, with leftist preferences notably higher among men, older individuals (except the 35–49 cohort), ethnic minorities, rural residents, and those with lower educational attainment.
- Judicial views are near the ideological center but somewhat polarized, with men leaning more liberal and women, older respondents, and rural residents more conservative. Across foreign and security matters, people generally favor liberal positions, especially younger, urban, educated respondents, and women. Social issues are likewise liberal-leaning, but with lower polarization. Women, younger respondents, urbanites (notably in Tbilisi), ethnic minorities, and the highly educated hold more liberal views.

Key Findings:

Ideological Standing of Political Parties in Georgia

- Georgia's political parties form two major ideological clusters, with the socially conservative and economically left-leaning Georgian Dream and Alliance of Patriots lumped together, as opposed to the rest of the political spectrum broadly leaning towards the socio-culturally liberal standing. While liberal parties capture both left- and right-leaning opinions, there is an ideological vacuum in the Georgian political landscape for culturally conservative and economically right-leaning parties.
- The 2024 parliamentary elections saw closing ideological gaps between oppositional parties, with many joining their ranks to form informal electoral alliances, as the Georgian Dream government increased its electoral threshold to 5% and banned electoral blocks. Such ideological polarization further increased the distance between the ruling Georgian Dream and most other parties. Georgian Dream, previously positioned at the mid-point of the social conservative-liberal axis, transformed into a more conservative political entity. This transition completely changed the landscape of conservative left parties, with only the Alliance of Patriots surviving.
- The diminishing distance between ideologically close parties and the formation of electoral coalitions has led to a high level of convergence among all identified party clusters. The positions of parties within these clusters are also similar across different policy areas, apart from the economic dimension, which is the most heterogeneous.
- Out of analyzed 32 policy issues, parties have converged only on one issue: All parties (except one) oppose the idea that the construction of large hydropower plants need to be banned to protect the environment. Furthermore, statements on NATO membership and military neutrality, came short of being universally valence, with the exception of the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia who opposes NATO membership. Similarly, making the rules that regulate the presence of foreigners in Georgia more stringent came to be universally accepted. Two liberal right groups, Girchi and European Georgia, were against such measures.
- Compared to the 2020 compass, Georgian Dream's conservative turn was more consequential than any other shift on Georgia's political spectrum. The party's views moved by one point on a five-point scale, equal to about a 20% shift towards conservatism. The UNM also moved towards more socially conservative views, at about 0.6 points on a five-point scale.
- Lelo has consolidated its position in the center of the two-dimensional ideological space, with a slight shift towards conservative views, together with its coalition partner Citizens. The latter departed the right-liberal quadrant, leaving behind Girchi, the UNM and its coalition partners, European Georgia and Strategy Aghmashenebeli.

Key Findings:

Voter-Party Proximity in Georgia

- Most Election Compass respondents share relatively similar, moderately liberal socio-cultural views, while only Alliance of Patriots (AoP) and Georgian Dream (GD) supporters skew more conservative.
- On economic policy, respondents generally hold left-leaning preferences. However, GD, once closer to its voters on socio-cultural matters, has shifted toward a more conservative stance, creating a notable gap between the party and its largely centrist supporters.
- The United National Movement (UNM) also diverges from its base: the party maintains right-leaning economic and liberal socio-cultural positions, whereas its supporters are more leftist economically and somewhat more conservative socially.
- By contrast, Lelo, Citizens, and Ana Dolidze for the People demonstrate strong ideological convergence with their supporters, while parties such as Ahali, Droa, Girchi, Girchi—More Freedom, and European Georgia occupy distinctly right-wing economic positions that clash with their more left-leaning voter base.
- Strategy Aghmashenebeli, Labour Party, and Gakharia for Georgia closely match their supporters on socio-cultural issues but differ significantly on economic policy. The first is more right-leaning than most of its followers, whereas Labour and Gakharia for Georgia are more left-leaning than their predominantly center-right supporters. The Alliance of Patriots is more leftist and conservative than its backers, many of whom hold relatively centrist economic and socio-cultural views.
- Looking at how party positions on specific statements agree with those of supporting individuals, Ana Dolidze for the People shows the greatest alignment with its base, while Girchi exhibits the largest gap.
- For some parties (e.g., Gakharia for Georgia, Girchi More Freedom, Ana Dolidze for the People, Citizens, and Lelo), higher Propensity to Vote (PTV) correlates with smaller ideological distance, meaning stronger supporters align more closely with the party's core platform. In contrast, parties such as Georgian Dream, United National Movement, Ahali, and the Alliance of Patriots display a weaker relationship between PTV and ideological distance, meaning high favorability scores do not necessarily indicate closer ideological alignment.
- Overall, GD has seen a significant increase in its distance from its supporters, doubling the gap compared to 2020. While GD was previously the party most closely aligned with its supporters, by 2024, at least half of the parties were positioned closer to their support base. UNM (to a greater extent than others), Lelo, and Citizens have narrowed the gap with their supporters. In contrast, Strategy Aghmashenebeli, Alliance of Patriots, Girchi (due to attracting more economically left-leaning supporters), and European Georgia have seen an increase in voter-party distance.
- Individuals who lean left on economics but who are conservative on social issues are more likely to be politically unaffiliated, whereas those who hold socially liberal, pro-Western views, are less likely to lack a party affiliation. Age is also a significant predictor: older individuals are more apt to affiliate with a party than younger voters. These findings remain consistent across multiple model specifications and whether voter history is based on the 2020 parliamentary or 2021 local elections.

1.

Introduction

Few in Georgia trust political parties. According to the 2024 Caucasus Barometer survey, only around one in ten respondents said they fully or mostly trust them, while nearly half (46%) reported distrust, and about one-third (35%) were neutral.¹ Yet, in a representative democracy, political parties are vital agents of participatory, ideological, representative, and policy linkages.²

One key question is whether Georgia's parties provide such linkages. Regarding participation, most parties underperform, as none have democratic internal structures. This limits members' roles in intra-party decision-making.^{3,4} Younger Georgians feel especially excluded; only 7% reported having worked for a party or campaign in 2022.⁵ Representation—or creating a feedback loop—mainly occurs during elections. A 2018 NDI survey found that 28% of Georgians were contacted by a party representative in the contested 2018 presidential elections, compared to only 4% in the aftermath of the 2016 elections.

Another frequently cited drawback is the perceived lack of ideological or policy platforms. Until recently, Georgian parties were viewed largely as issue- or personality-based,⁶ with a few exceptions. The 2020 Election Compass confirmed this pattern among the two major parties,⁷ yet indicated more ideological diversity among minor parties.

The lead-up to the 2024 elections also did little to encourage policy debate. Controversial legislation introduced by the ruling Georgian Dream—namely, the so-called Foreign Agents law, changes to the tax code, and a draconian Law on Family Values—pushed Georgia closer to an illiberal, potentially authoritarian path.⁸ Furthermore, a polarized pre-election climate⁹ left minimal space for parties to highlight policy or ideological distinctions.

Despite this environment, the current report aims to document discernible differences in Georgia's political spectrum.

While the country's trajectory toward a pluralistic democracy remains uncertain, tracking these emerging ideological distinctions is valuable.

In this light, we explore four main questions: How do voters position themselves on key policy issues? Where do major political parties stand relative to those issues? How have certain party positions changed since 2020? And what is the voter-party proximity in ideological terms?

To answer these questions, we draw on data from Georgia Election Compass (Geocompass), a Voting Advice Application (VAA) platform. Geocompass enabled voters to gauge their ideological proximity to specific parties while also clarifying those parties' stances on key policy questions. The tool was operational during both the 2020 and 2024 parliamentary elections.

Built using the widely adopted Kieskompas methodology,¹⁰ the project's scientific team first devised 32 policy statements grouped into five thematic categories—healthcare and education, the judiciary, foreign policy and security, social and environmental issues, and economic development—then classified them along economic left-right and cultural liberal-conservative axes. Each party's position was coded using official documents, public statements, and media commentary. Finally, these codes were cross-referenced with party feedback.

Parties qualified for inclusion if they polled above 1% in at least two national surveys since May 2024, received 1% of the proportional vote in the 2020 parliamentary elections, or held seats in parliament or local government. In total, 14 parties were included in the tool (see Table 1.1). Although many ran as part of broader coalitions, each party's platform was coded and presented individually.

1 CRRC Georgia, "Caucasus Barometer Time Series Data. TRUPPS: Trust Towards Political Parties," 2024.

2 Russell J. Dalton, David M. Farrell, and Ian McAllister, *Political Parties and Democratic Linkage: How Parties Organize Democracy* (OUP Oxford, 2011).

3 კვაშილავა ბაკურ, *შიდაპარტიული დემოკრატია ქართულ პოლიტიკურ სისტემაში*, EECMD, 2021.

4 გერსამია მარიამ და სხვ., *შიდაპარტიული დემოკრატია საქართველოში* (თბილისი: ილია ჭავჭავაძის სახელობის ევროპული კვლევების და სამოქალაქო განათლების ცენტრი, 2020).

5 Rati Shubladze, David Sichinava, and Tamar Khoshtaria, *Generation of Independent Georgia: In Between Hopes and Uncertainties* (Tbilisi: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2023).








6 David Sichinava, *Elections, Political Parties and Social Change in Georgia* (2003-2016) (Indiana University Press, 2020).

7 Levan Kakhishvili et al., *Georgia's Political Landscape* (Tbilisi: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung South Caucasus Office, 2021).

8 Sonja Schiffrers, *The 2024 Elections in Georgia: Descent into Hegemonic Authoritarianism*, October 2024.

9 OSCE/ODIHR, *Georgia, Parliamentary Elections, 26 October 2024: Final Report* (Warsaw: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, December 2024).

10 Kieskompas, "About Kieskompas" (<https://www.kieskompas.nl/en/about-us/>, 2025).

#	Political party	Logo
1	Ahali (Coalition for Changes)	
2	Alliance of Patriots of Georgia	
3	Citizens (Strong Georgia)	
4	Droa! (Coalition for Changes)	
5	European Georgia (Unity-National Movement)	
6	For People (Strong Georgia)	
7	Gakharia for Georgia	
8	Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia	
9	Georgian Labour Party	
10	Girchi - More Freedom (Coalition for Changes)	
11	Girchi	
12	Lelo (Strong Georgia)	
13	Strategy Agmashenebeli (Unity-National Movement)	
14	Unity - National Movement (Unity-National Movement)	

Between October 4, 2024 (when the tool went online) and election day, 33,719 users fully completed the questionnaire (overall, 59,000 users utilized the tool) - a number that far exceeded participation in the 2020 Election Compass.¹¹ Data were weighted to reflect demographic cross-sections of the Georgian population as per the 2014 national census.

This report relies on two main data sources: coded party positions on policy issues, and user responses to questions in the VAA. While the latter reflect only the views of tool users (and not those of the broader Georgian populace), they nonetheless offer a useful snapshot of the country's ideological and political diversity.

The report proceeds as follows: first, we analyze the ideological profiles of Georgian voters who used Geocompass, focusing on their preferences regarding both individual statements and overarching policy areas. We then examine the ideological and policy positions of political parties, highlighting shifts since the 2020 elections. A subsequent chapter delves into voter-party proximity. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the study's key findings.

The project was supported by the European Union (EU), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF), the Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBS), the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), and the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (Rondeli Foundation). Kieskompass, a company based at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, provided methodological supervision and IT security services. A team of Georgian social scientists and economists devised and coded the statements used in the tool: Giorgi Papava – Academic and Coding Team Leader, Lead Economist at International School of Economics at TSU (ISET); Davit Keshelava – Academic and Coding Team Member, Researcher at International School of Economics at TSU (ISET); Levan Tevdoradze, Academic and Coding Team Member, Senior Researcher, Researcher at International School of Economics at TSU (ISET); Davit Sichinava - Academic and Coding Team Member, Adjunct Research Professor, Carleton University (Ottawa, Canada); Rati Shubladze, Academic and Coding Team Member, Head of the Sociology Programme at Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA); Giorgi Jokhadze - Academic and Coding Team Member, Researcher, Chavchavadze Center.

¹¹ Overall, 59,000 users accessed the tool between October 4-26, 2024. In comparison, 38,000 individuals accessed the Compass tool in 2020, with 19,005 users completing the questionnaire.

2.

A Snapshot of the Georgian Electorate

2.1. Ideological orientation of compass users: left-right vs conservative-liberal

Individuals who completed the election compass are generally moderate or left-leaning liberals, mainly clustered around median scores on both economic and socio-cultural scales, with few occupying ideological extremes. Slight yet detectable differences exist across gender, geographic, and education groups.

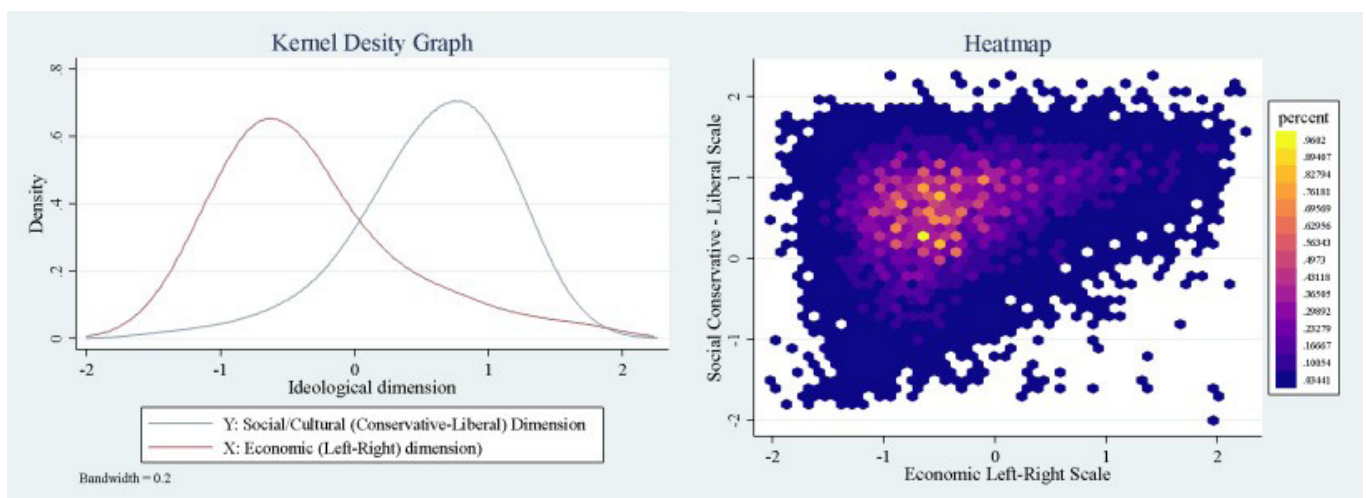
In the analysis below, political positions across ideological dimensions are measured on a five-point scale. This scale ranges from -2, indicating left-wing and conservative views, to +2, corresponding to right-wing and socially liberal attitudes. A caveat is needed on how to interpret these dimensions. Labels “economically left-right” and “socio-culturally conservative-liberal” reflect how these terms are understood in the Georgian context and do not necessarily follow classical definitions. For instance, in the conservative-liberal divide, stances on foreign policy and personal liberty characterize opposite poles of this ideological axis. To capture the current divide in the foreign policy dimension, pro-Western attitudes are labeled as “liberal,” while pro-Russian or sovereignist leanings are considered “conservative.”

Respondents who participated in the Compass survey tend to be socio-culturally liberal (mean = 0.58; sd = 0.58) and on average, economically leftist (mean = 0.35; sd. = 0.71). The distribution of voters’ policy preferences on both dimensions does not indicate the existence of strong ideological extremes (Figure 2.1). Instead, the majority of voters are concentrated around the median positions on both economic and socio-cultural scales, indicating the prevalence of moderate positions. Again, results do not represent the Georgian electorate, as respondents are self-selected users of Compass and tend to be younger, more urban and educated.

Another way to visualize the distribution of policy preferences is by examining the heatmap, which shows the magnitude of respondents’ preferences across the two ideological dimensions (Figure 2.1). The data from Election Compass illustrates that while opinions on both dimensions are scattered across vast areas, more individuals are concentrated at the intersection of liberal and leftist views.

*Distribution of voter preferences across two ideological dimensions (from economically left to right and from socio-culturally conservative to liberal) among Compass users**

Fig. 2.1



Source: Election Compass Georgia

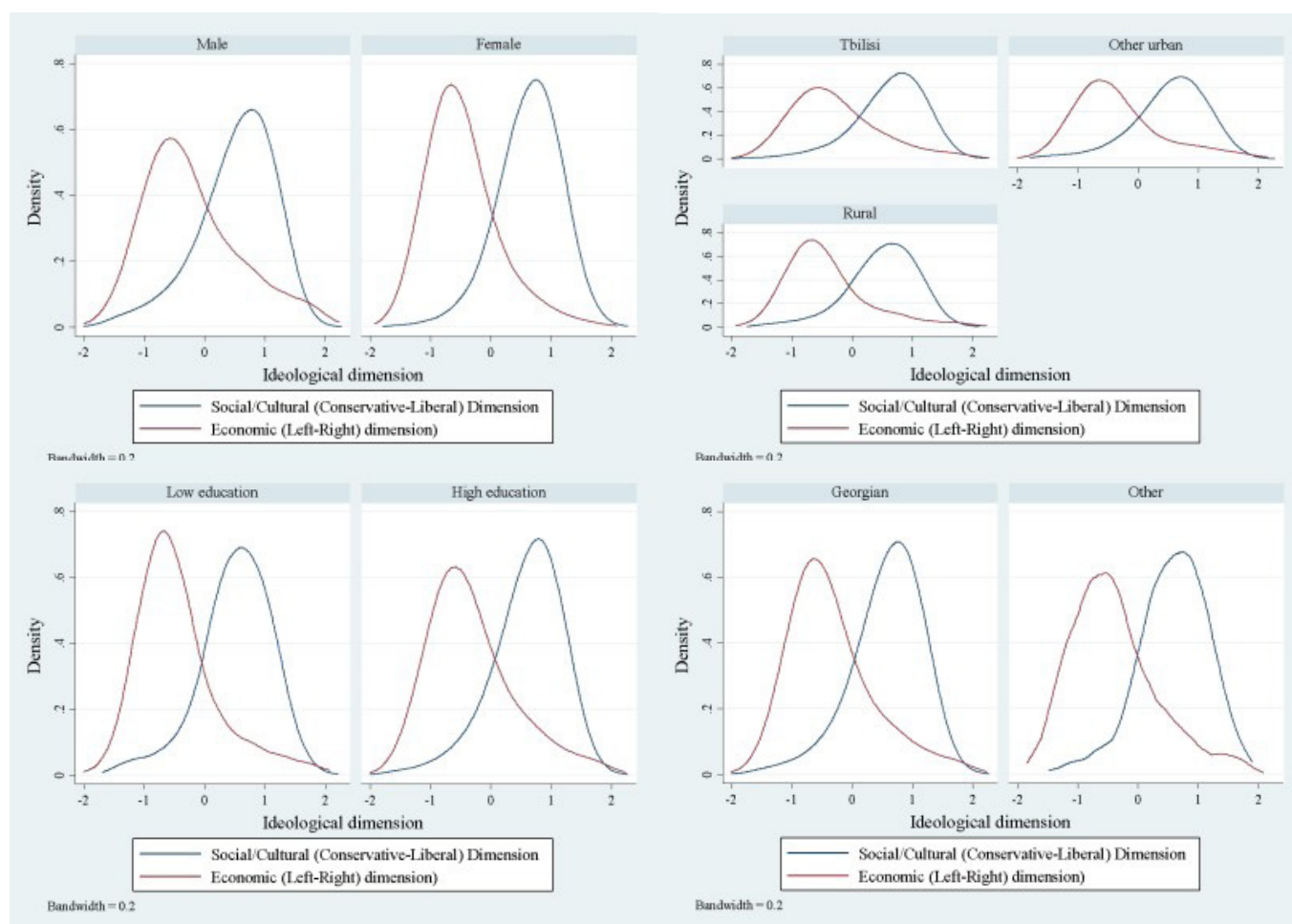
Note: Kernel density is a measure of the probability distribution of a variable.

Two ideological dimensions are positively correlated, yet the association is weak ($r = 0.33$), suggesting that those with right-leaning economic preferences tend to have socio-culturally liberal attitudes, while those with left-leaning preferences tend to hold more conservative values.

This also reflects the existing ideological landscape in the country. Policy-wise, culturally conservative political parties (Georgian Dream, Alliance of Patriots) support economically left-leaning policies. Conversely, economic policies of culturally liberal parties (Akhali, Girchi, Girchi – More Freedom, Droa, European Georgia) lean towards the right of the ideological axis.

Distribution of voter preferences across two ideological dimensions by gender, settlement type, level of educational attainment, and ethnicity

Fig. 2.2



Source: Election Compass Georgia

The distribution of political preferences is largely consistent across demographic groups, generally leaning economically left and socio-culturally liberal (Figure 2.2). However, distinct variations exist. Women typically show stronger left-wing and liberal orientations than males. Tbilisi residents lean socio-culturally liberal and economically right-wing, while those from other urban and rural areas are comparatively more conservative and economically left-leaning. Higher education correlates with slightly more

liberal socio-cultural attitudes and economically right-wing preferences (Table 2.1).

Differences between means of ideological dimensions by respondents' gender, settlement type, level of educational attainment, and ethnicity

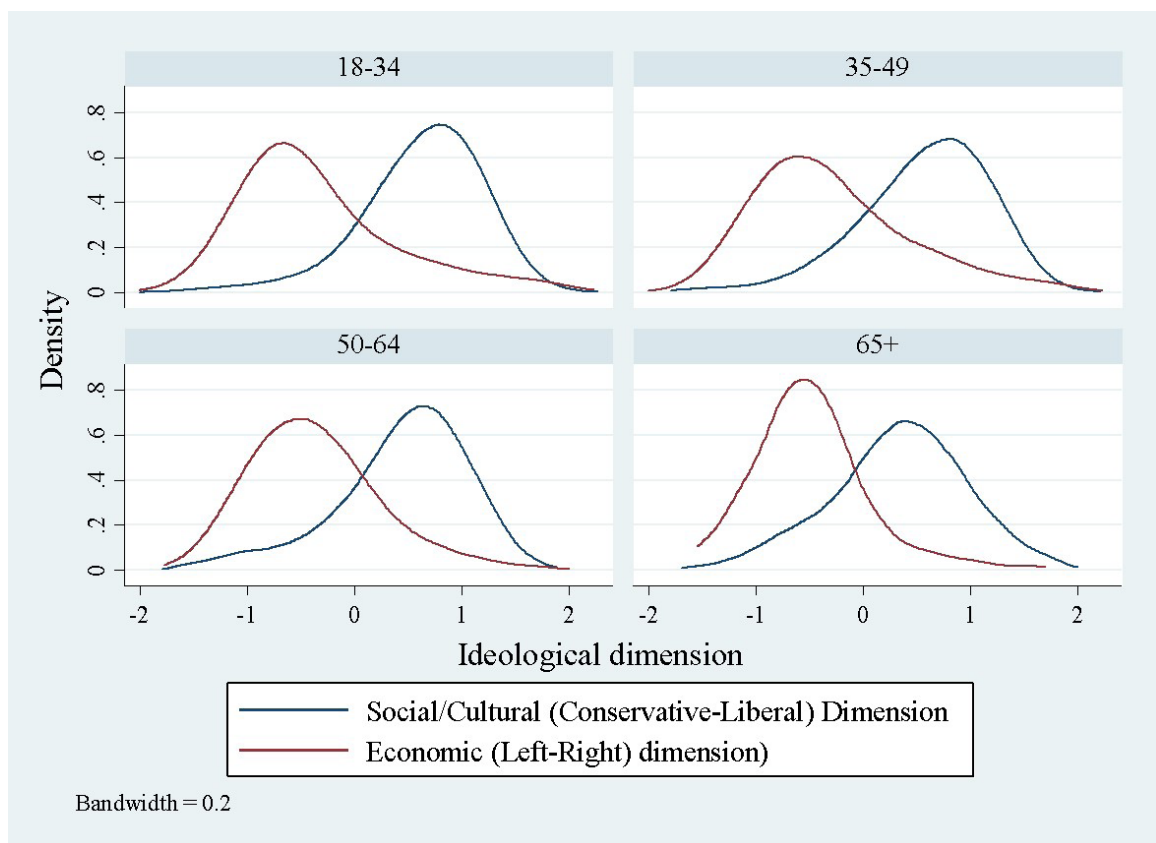
Tab. 2.1

Base	Comparison Group	Liberal-Conservative	Right-Left
Female	Male	0.11	-0.26
Tbilisi	Other Urban and Rural	0.12	0.11
Higher Education	Lower Education	0.08	0.13
Ethnically non-Georgian	Georgian	0.00	-0.06

When examining ideological preferences by age, respondents aged 50 and above are generally less liberal, more conservative, and positioned closer to the ideological center (Figure 2.3). Despite the overall left-leaning economic profile, younger respondents (ages 18–49) show a higher prevalence of economically right-wing preferences, placing them more center-right relative to the broader population. Older voters consistently lean towards more conservative and economically leftist positions.

Distribution of voter preferences across two ideological dimensions by age groups.

Fig. 2.3



Source: Election Compass Georgia

2.2. User Preferences by Individual Statements

Looking at individual statements rather than compound indexes characterizing the ideological divide, compass users tend to support higher taxes on businesses that pollute the environment, favor minimum wage regulation, and prefer voluntary participation in the contributory pension system. In addition, they endorse stricter rules on foreigners entering Georgia and obtaining residence permits, though opinions on this issue are more neutral rather than extreme. They hold robust pro-Western, pro-NATO, and pro-EU preferences. In contrast, these individuals are polarized regarding targeted state-funded insurance and whether or not there should be harsher punishments to reduce crime.

This section analyzes responses to individual statements on a 5-point scale, where 1 means “Strongly Disagree,” 5 corresponds to “Strongly Agree,” and 3 represents a neutral position. Table 2.2 summarizes the top two most agreed-upon statements in each of the four ideological directions. The analysis below makes use of the Esteban and Ray (1994) polarization index, where values close to zero indicate perfect agreement.¹²

The government should establish a minimum wage threshold, below which employers should not pay their employees

Tab. 2.2

Ideological Direction	Statement	Average Score	Standard Deviation	Esteban-Ray Polarization Index
Economically Left	Businesses that pollute the environment must pay additional taxes to the state budget	4.33	0.9	0.07
	The government should establish a minimum wage threshold	4.00	1.28	0.15
Economically Right	Participation in the funded pension system should be voluntary	4.20	0.94	0.09
	State-funded insurance should be only for those who need it the most	3.09	1.32	0.22
Socio-Culturally Conservative	Rules regulating foreigners entering Georgia and obtaining a residence permit should be made stricter	3.61	1.24	0.17
	In order to reduce the level of crime, punishments should be more severe	3.50	1.26	0.19
Socio-Culturally Liberal	Georgia should try to join NATO, even if it does not happen in the near future	4.31	1.02	0.09
	Georgia should maintain a pro-Western stance, even if it harms relations with Russia	4.26	1.07	0.11

Source: Election Compass Georgia

In **healthcare and education**, respondents exhibit a predominantly left-leaning economic stance, strongly supporting universal healthcare and drug price regulation. There is also broad support for providing free meals to students in public schools. There is no clear consensus on privatizing educational institutions or making all levels of public education free, though opinions slightly lean toward economically leftist positions.

On **judicial and law enforcement issues**, there is strong support for vetting judges, however, compass users remain polarized on establishing stricter punitive measures to reduce crime and the legalization of soft narcotics, with a slight tendency toward favoring harsher punishments and opposing legalization.

Regarding **foreign policy and security** matters, individuals who filled out the compass questionnaire hold strongly pro-NATO and pro-EU views. Most respondents reject the idea that EU integration threatens national identity and disagree with claims that Western-funded activist organizations act against Georgia’s national interests. Pro-Western values receive stronger support in this area than in any other policy domain. Respondents also express concerns about cooperation with China, and favor stricter regulations on foreign nationals entering Georgia, acquiring residence permits, and purchasing agricultural land.

¹² To calculate Esteban and Ray polarization index, we transformed answers into three dimensions: (1) strongly disagree or disagree, (2) neutral, and (3) strongly agree or agree. The index ranges from 0 to infinity, with 0 indicating a perfectly homogeneous opinion (no polarization). There is no fixed upper bound, as the index increases with greater polarization, depending on income distribution and group structure. Appendix 1 includes a table presenting statements along with their ideological direction, average score, standard deviation, and the Esteban and Ray Polarization Index, which measures the extent of agreement or disagreement.

On **social issues**, there is a strong preference for fully protecting the freedom of assembly and expression for LGBTQ+ individuals. Most respondents agree that the government should not restrict freedom of speech in the name of protecting religious beliefs. Views remain split on whether political parties should be obligated to include a certain quota of women in their electoral rolls.

Looking at **environmental and economic policies**, respondents broadly support taxing businesses that pollute the environment. Views on banning large hydropower plants are highly polarized, with no clear consensus. Economic policy preferences indicate strong support for government intervention, particularly regarding the introduction of a minimum wage and increased funding for agriculture. Respondents also generally prefer to make the contributory pension system voluntary. Moreover, there is no consensus on regulating interest rates, however, respondents tend to lean economically left, implementing progressive taxation (leaning economically to the left), and limiting state-funded insurance to only those in the greatest need (firmly positioned at the ideological center).

In sum, the most contentious issues include gender quotas, mandatory military service, interest rate regulation, the legalization of soft narcotics, progressive taxation, targeted social insurance, and education funding. In contrast, the highest levels of consensus are found in support for EU integration, a pro-Western geopolitical stance, NATO membership, the voluntary nature of the pension system, and the taxation of businesses that contribute to pollution.

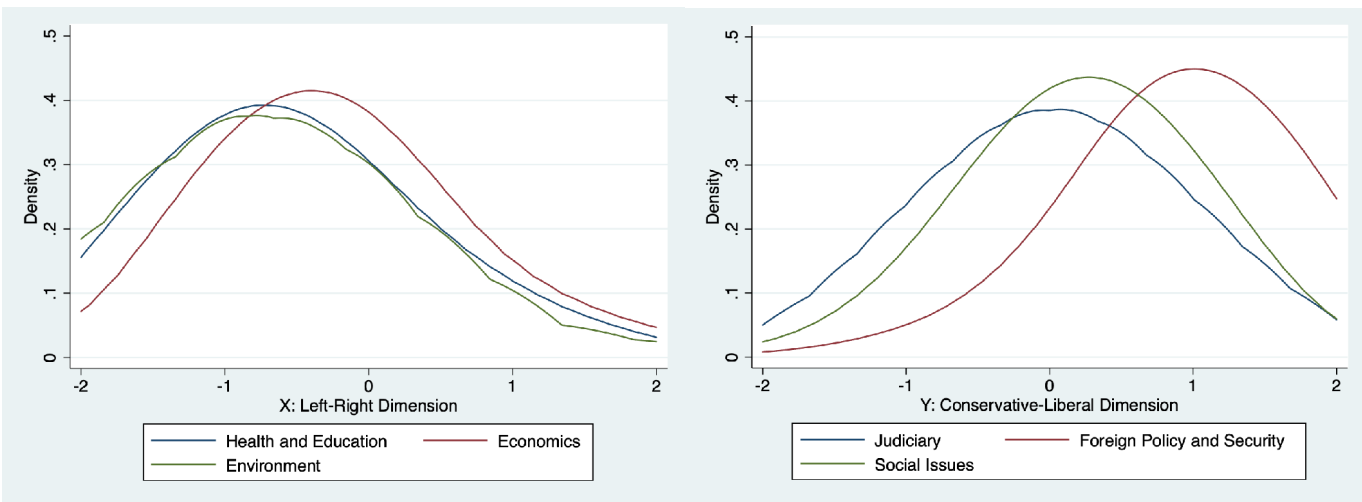
2.3. Individual Attitudes towards Key Policy Themes

In this section, we present summary scores for six key policy themes – specifically, health and education, judiciary, foreign policy and security, social issues, environment, and economics. While certain issues generate broad agreement, others remain deeply polarized, reflecting diverse socio-economic and cultural perspectives. This section analyzes voter responses to a range of policy statements, positioning them along ideological dimensions and assessing the extent of agreement or division. Scores on individual statements are averaged by thematic group and use the same scale, with 1 representing an economically left-wing and socio-culturally conservative view, and 5 standing for the opposite economically right-wing and socio-culturally liberal orientation.

Figure 2.4 shows voter preferences across key policy dimensions. Statements related to healthcare and education, environment, and economics predominantly contribute to voter positioning along the economic left-right axis. Conversely, the judiciary, social issues, and foreign policy and security statements shape positioning on the socio-cultural conservative-liberal axis. Social issues and foreign policy dimensions clearly lean liberal, with foreign policy displaying the strongest liberal orientation. Judiciary-related opinions show considerable polarization, resulting in a mean value near the center with high variance. Detailed distributions by dimension are available in Appendices 2–7.

Kernel Density: Distribution of voter preferences across ideological dimensions for different policy areas

Fig. 2.4



Source: Election Compass Georgia, authors' calculations

Individuals' preferences regarding healthcare and education lean slightly to the left (mean = 2.48). Attitudes in this thematic group, however, are the most diverse (figure 2.5; standard deviation = 0.84). Women show stronger left-leaning preferences regarding healthcare and education policies compared to men. Support for leftist positions in these areas varies across age groups, with the 18–34 cohort displaying stronger left-leaning tendencies than those aged 35–49 and 50–64. The highest level of support for leftist positions is observed among those aged 65 and older. Support for leftist policies for healthcare and education is more pronounced among ethnic minorities, individuals with lower levels of education, and residents of rural areas.¹³

Regarding economic policy, voter preferences also lean left (mean = 2.78; standard deviation = 0.79). Support for left-wing economic positions is more prevalent among women, older individuals, ethnic minorities, rural residents, and those with lower educational attainment.

Attitudes towards judicial policies are relatively more polarized (standard deviation = 0.81), with respondents generally positioned near the center of the ideological spectrum (mean = 3.03). While men exhibit slightly more liberal tendencies on judicial matters, women are generally more conservative. A conservative stance on judicial issues is more common among older respondents, ethnic minorities, individuals with lower education levels, and rural residents.

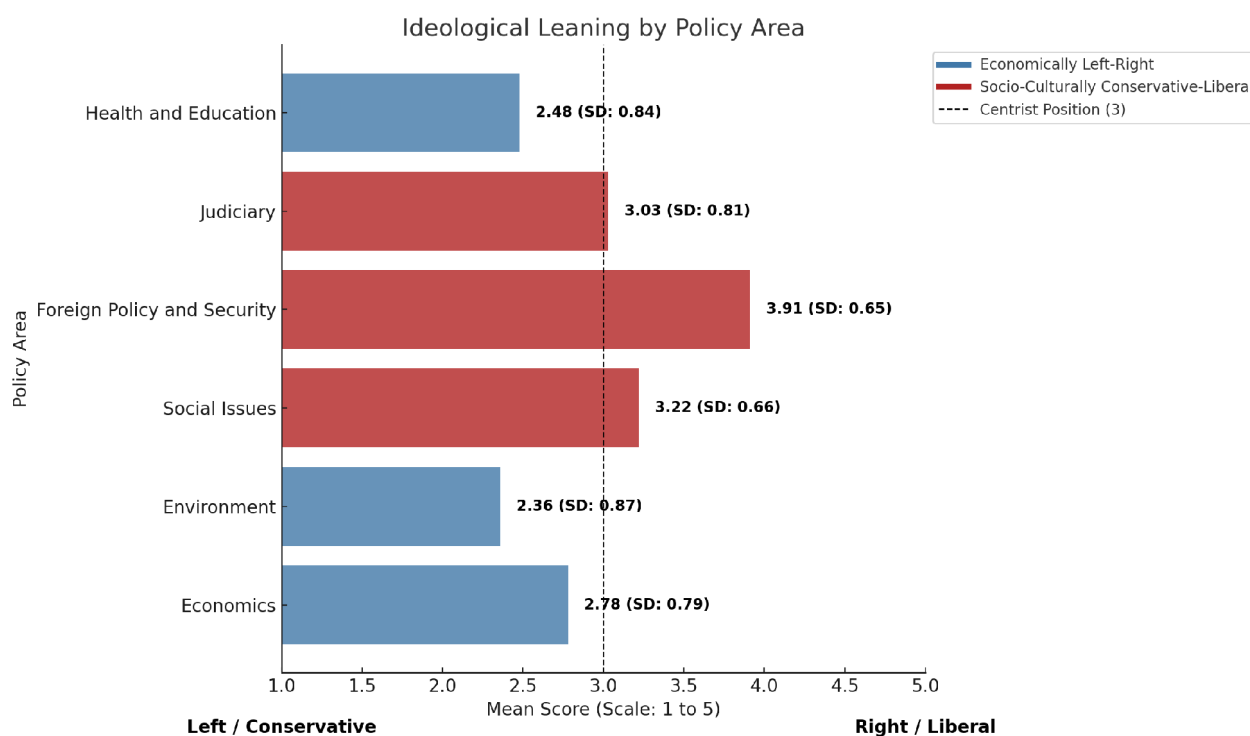
Foreign policy and security preferences reveal a consistent inclination toward liberal positions across the electorate, despite demographic variations. Despite this tendency, liberal views are slightly stronger among women, younger individuals, ethnic Georgians, urban residents, and those with higher education.

A similar trend is observed for social issues, where compass users generally lean towards liberal positions (mean = 3.22), with a relatively low degree of polarization (standard deviation = 0.66). Women tend to hold more liberal views than men, while liberal tendencies are more pronounced among younger respondents, urban residents (especially those in Tbilisi), ethnic minorities, and individuals with higher levels of education.

Regarding environmental policy, voters exhibit a distinctly left-leaning stance (mean = 2.36), coupled with the highest level of polarization among all policy areas (standard deviation = 0.87). More pronounced leftist views are observed among men, older respondents (except those aged 18–34, who lean further left than the 35–49 cohort), ethnic minorities, rural residents, and those with lower educational attainment.

Average ideological scores per thematic group

Fig. 2.5



Source: Election Compass Georgia, authors' calculations

¹³ Detailed scores across the demographic groups are presented in Appendix 8.

3.

Political landscape in Georgia: parties, ideologies, and policies

The period from 2022 to 2024 in Georgian political life was marked by constant political crises, ongoing mass demonstrations, and deepening confrontations between the ruling Georgian Dream party and mainstream opposition forces. The peak of the political crisis occurred during the spring and summer of 2024, following the introduction of the “foreign influence law,” often dubbed the “Foreign Agents’ Law” or the “Russian-style Law” by political opposition and civil society groups.¹⁴ The protests and political confrontation soon escalated into the largest mass protest in Georgia’s recent history, accompanied by violence, crackdowns on demonstrations, arrests of protesters, and attacks against those who took part in the protest.¹⁵ Significant developments in the foreign policy dimension also strained the Georgian government’s relationships with both the EU and the United States.¹⁶

This context is important to consider when examining the political landscape in Georgia prior to the elections, and the context in which political actors were competing. The Georgian political party system, traditionally described as lacking clearly formulated and distinguished public policy preferences and coherent ideological stances, became even less policy-specific and issue-oriented during this period.¹⁷ Increasing political stakes and animosity between political actors heightened polarization and transformed the 2024 elections into a zero-sum game.¹⁸ The pre-electoral period was marked by an increased emphasis on the importance of winning the election, with base mobilization strategies focusing more on negative consequences if a particular political actor were to win.¹⁹

In this context, policy-oriented debates were overshadowed. Political parties neglected the importance of electoral platforms en masse, with many never publishing them or doing so just a few weeks before the elections. For example, during the analysis and coding process, the Election

Compass team was able to access only a limited number of political programs or platforms from a few parties out of 14. Additionally, some parties submitted partially complete questionnaires. Hence, the next chapters dealing with party groupings and the prevalence or underrepresentation of ideological positions should be considered in light of these circumstances.

3.1. Georgia’s political landscape

The political landscape of Georgia is divided into two uneven groups, with the majority of political parties occupying the socio-culturally liberal upper half of the compass, while the lower quadrant is occupied only by Georgian Dream and the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia (Figure 3.1). The lower-right quadrant of the compass is blank, meaning that none of the evaluated political parties fit into the culturally conservative and economically right-wing dimension. In contrast, the upper half is heavily saturated with political parties. Georgian voters had a wide range of choices among the socio-culturally liberal parties, nearly evenly split into the left and right sides of the economic spectrum.

This marks a significant shift compared to findings and party groupings from the Election Compass for Georgia’s 2020 parliamentary elections (detailed in the relevant chapter). A potential explanation for this change is the intensified political polarization beginning in 2023, characterized by heightened confrontation between the ruling Georgian Dream party and the predominantly pro-Western opposition. Consequently, pro-Western parties have consolidated their positions, while Georgian Dream has moved toward more conservative and anti-Western stances, absorbing voters from conservative factions.

¹⁴ Open Society Foundations, “The Troubling March of “Foreign Agents” Laws”, 2024, <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/the-troubling-march-of-foreign-agents-laws>, accessed on 28 January 2025.

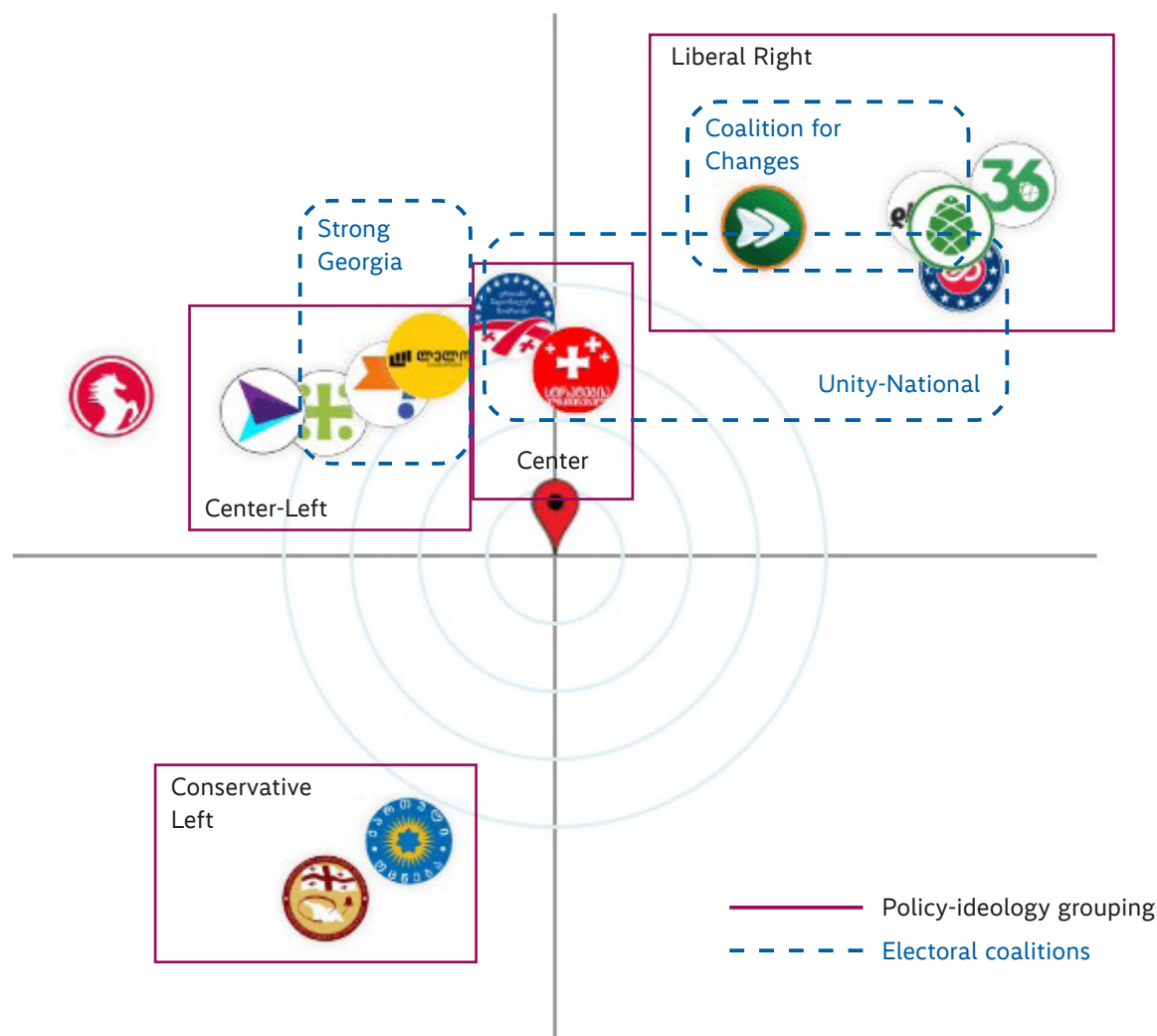
¹⁵ Gurcov, Nichita & Shubladze, Rati. “Georgia: An “existential” election”, Election watch, ACLED, 2024, <https://acleddata.com/2024/10/21/georgia-an-existential-election/>, accessed on 28 January 2025.

¹⁶ Samkharadze, Nino. “The New Geopolitical Position of Georgia After the Elections: How Grey Is the ‘Grey Zone?’” GIP, 2024, <https://gip.ge/the-new-geopolitical-position-of-georgia-after-the-elections-how-grey-is-the-grey-zone/>, accessed on 28 January 2025.

¹⁷ Kakhishvili, Levan. “The socializing effects of Georgian parties’ membership in European political party federations”, GIP, 2018, https://gip.ge/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Party-Socialization_Eng_2018.pdf, accessed on 28 January 2025.

¹⁸ Malerius, Stephan. “Polarise and Rule!” Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2024, <https://www.kas.de/en/web/auslandsinformationen/artikel/detail/-/content/polarisiere-und-herrsche>, accessed on 28 January 2025.

¹⁹ OSCE/ODIHR. “Georgia, Parliamentary Elections, 26 October 2024: Final Report.” Warsaw: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, December 2024, https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/1/6/584029_0.pdf, accessed on 22 February 2025.



Source: Election Compass Georgia, authors' calculations

3.2. Party groupings: policy preferences vs. electoral coalitions

Prior to the 2024 parliamentary elections, most Georgian political parties could be split into four major clusters: Conservative Left, Center-Left, Center, and Liberal Right (Figure 3.2). Out of 14 parties, only the Labour Party was not grouped into any of the identified clusters and is omitted from the analysis below. Another important finding of Election Compass is that the aforementioned grouping largely mirrors the final electoral alliances formed by parties for the 2024 elections.²⁰ Additionally, all these three coalitions passed the 5% threshold and gained parliamentary seats, according to official CEC results.²¹

Three out of four center-left parties ran on the same list, while the fourth, "Gakharia for Georgia" nearly joined the coalition toward the end of the pre-electoral campaign.²² The center parties—United National Movement and Strategy Agmashenebeli—also ran under the same electoral list. Later, they were joined by a somewhat unlikely party from a different policy-ideology grouping: European Georgia. This occurred following internal disputes within European Georgia during the middle of the pre-electoral campaign, resulting in a split of the party.²³ The liberal right cluster was represented by the Coalition for Changes, which included Akhali, Droa, and Girchi – More Freedom. Another Girchi, a party with very similar ideological positions but a different political agenda and strategy, ran separately.

20 For the 2024 elections, the formation of electoral blocs by individual parties was restricted. This resulted in a situation where, if political parties formed partnerships, they were not allowed to maintain their party identity but were instead forced to run on the same list as the same political entity. This fact complicated the formation of electoral alliances.

21 <https://cesko.ge/en/siakhleebi/pres-relizebi/singleview/11035242-tsentrulurma-saarchevno-komisiam-sakartvelos-parlamentis-2024-tslis-26-oktombris-archevnebi-sheajama>, accessed on 30 January 2025.

22 <https://civil.ge/archives/624874>, accessed on 28 January 2025.

23 <https://civil.ge/archives/621000>, accessed on 28 January 2025.

The conservative left, represented by two parties, is generally isolated from the rest of the political spectrum analyzed within the study. In terms of policy opinions, both the Georgian Dream and the Alliance of Patriots share similar views on most topics. They are not positioned on opposite sides of the center on 26 out of 32 issues, indicating high levels of convergence.²⁴ Conservative left parties exhibit either complete convergence or a tendency towards convergence in most dimensions, except for the economy. Interestingly, this mirrors the results of Election Compass Georgia 2020, where left parties showed more convergence on the socio-cultural axis but were split on economic issues.²⁵

Issue convergence and issue divergence by policy area within ideological party groups

Tab. 3.1

Policy Area	Party grouping in terms of ideological proximity							
	Conservative Left		Center-Left		Center		Liberal-Right	
	Number of issues on-which party positions		Number of issues on-which party positions		Number of issues on-which party positions		Number of issues on-which party positions	
	converge	diverge	converge	diverge	converge	diverge	converge	diverge
Healthcare and Education	7	0	5	2	4	3	5	2
Judiciary	2	1	2	1	3	0	2	1
Foreign Policy and Security	5	3	8	0	7	1	7	1
Social and Environmental issues	9	0	9	0	9	0	6	3
Economy	3	2	3	2	3	2	5	0
Total	26	6	27	5	26	6	25	7

Color codes: Complete convergence in a given policy area; tendency towards convergence; no tendency towards either direction.

Source: Election Compass Georgia and Authors' calculations

The center-left includes parties that run on the same list or nearly joined ranks for the 2024 parliamentary elections. These parties have converging positions on 27 out of 32 policy issues. Moreover, total convergence is observed in foreign policy, security, and social and environmental issues. However, the economy remains the most divisive dimension.

In the Center, both the United National Movement and Strategy Aghmashenebeli ran on the same list, and naturally, they are aligned on 26 out of 32 policy issues. The highest level of divergence occurs in healthcare and education, as well as economic issues. In healthcare, Strategy Aghmashenebeli tends to lean more left-wing compared to the United National Movement. As for the economy, differences occur on a handful of issues, but no coherent pattern of divergence is observed.

The liberal right predominantly consists of United National Movement splinter parties and political groups. The gradual shift of the United National Movement to the center, compared to the last Electoral Compass 2020 study, can be partially attributed to the migration of many liberal-right-leaning politicians to these political entities. Three out of five parties from the liberal right ran under the same banner for the 2024 elections, naturally resulting in higher levels of convergence. Additionally, liberal right parties are the most consistent across all policy areas, with a tendency towards convergence dominating. The only relatively contested area is the dimension of social and environmental issues, where Akhali has more center-leaning positions compared to other parties.

²⁴ If a party has a neutral position, it is still counted as convergence. Therefore, there are stricter requirements for divergence. Additionally, the same was done in those rare cases when "Refuse to answer" options are indicated.

²⁵ Kakhishvili, L., Keshelava, D., Papava, G., & Sichinava, D. (2021). Georgia's Political Landscape. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/georgien/18417-20220419.pdf>, accessed on 30 January 2025.

Overall, when comparing the four clusters of parties, there is only one issue among the 32 statements on which the positions of all four groups converge: everyone disagrees with the claim that to protect the environment, the construction of large hydropower plants should be banned.²⁶

Policy issues on which the positions of the four party groups are closest to convergence

Tab. 3.2

Policy Issue	Policy Area	Party grouping in terms of ideological proximity			
		Conservative Left	Center-Left	Center	Liberal-Right
In order to protect the environment, the construction of large hydropower plants should be banned	Social and Environmental issues	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Georgia should try to join NATO even if it does not happen in the near future	Foreign Policy and Security	Split opinion	Agree	Agree	Agree
Georgia should declare military neutrality	Foreign Policy and Security	Split opinion	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Rules regulating foreigners entering Georgia and obtaining residence permits should be made stricter	Social and Environmental issues	Agree	Agree	Agree	Split opinion
The rich should pay a larger share of their income to the state budget	Social and Environmental issues	Split opinion	Disagree (Gakharia - Neutral)	Disagree	Disagree

Source: Election Compass Georgia and Authors' calculations

Four other statements came close to consensus, with only one group or even just one party diverging from the converging positions of the others. For example, within the realm of foreign policy and security, dissenting opinions are observed from the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia. This party disagrees with the idea that Georgia should try to join NATO and at the same time, they agree that Georgia should declare military neutrality. Another party from this group, Georgian Dream, has the opposite view of the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia.

The unison of opinions is further disrupted by the positions of Girchi and European Georgia regarding making the rules stricter for foreigners entering Georgia and obtaining residence permits. However, the rationale for agreeing parties differs in the latter case. For the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia, the reason for stricter rules is to deter migrants from the Middle East; for Georgian Dream, it is to address loopholes in the existing legislation; while for most other parties, the aim is to prevent the mass influx of Russian nationals following the start of Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Lastly, while most parties from the left do not support the idea that the rich should pay a larger share of their income to the state budget, only the conservative-left Alliance of Patriots of Georgia believes this is necessary. Gakharia for Georgia, from the center-left, has no clear position on this issue.

²⁶ Curiously, only Labour party, not included in none of the party groupings, fully agree with this statement.

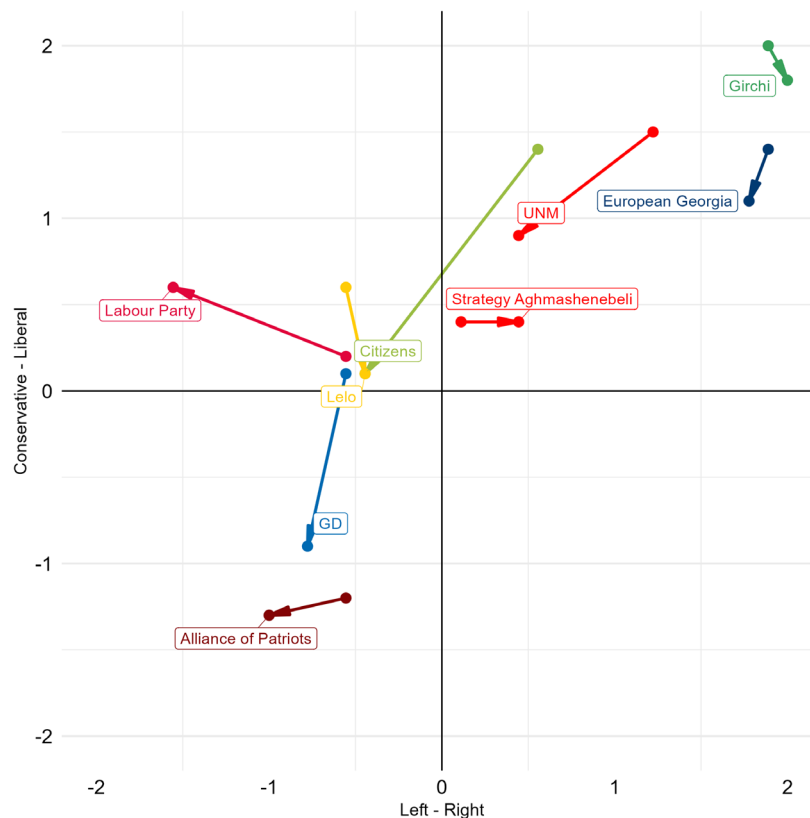
4. Ideological Realignment among Georgian Political Parties

Ahead of the 2024 parliamentary elections, most established Georgian parties have veered toward a left-conservative ideological stance (see Figure 4.1). The two notable exceptions are the Labour Party, which has adopted slightly more socially liberal positions and shifted left on the economy, and Strategy Aghmashenebeli, which has essentially remained unchanged in its social views. Meanwhile, Girchi, Lelo, and Strategy Aghmashenebeli have moved further to the right on the left-right axis.

To capture shifts in party platforms over time, we examined 19 statements evaluated in both 2020 and 2024. This amounted to 19 of the 32 statements asked in 2024: five on social and environmental issues, four each on economics, foreign policy/security, and healthcare/education, and two on the judiciary. The analysis below focuses on shifts only for statements present in both years.²⁷

Issue convergence and issue divergence by policy area within ideological party groups

Fig. 4.1



Source: Election Compass Georgia 2020 and 2024, Authors' calculations

²⁷ Some statements were reverse-coded to standardize them across left-right and conservative-liberal dimensions. Political party positions on allowing agricultural land ownership for foreigners was reverse coded in 2020, to match the updated phrasing in 2024.

The compass measures positions on two dimensions—left-right and conservative-liberal—using a five-point scale; with -2 corresponding to the extreme poles of left-wing and conservative views, while +2 coincides with the opposite pole of economically right-wing and socially liberal views. Each party was placed on this scale based on its mean score for each year. The shifts presented below are absolute differences between the 2020 and the 2024 scores.

The 2020 compass covered 16 political groups, with the number of groups reducing to 14 in 2024. Only nine appear in both waves, excluding major opposition parties like Ahali and For Georgia. Additionally, Girchi and European Georgia underwent major changes, with some founders establishing splinter groups.

Georgian Dream's conservative turn was more consequential than any other shift along Georgia's political spectrum. The party's views moved by one scale point, equal to about a 20% shift towards conservatism. The UNM also moved towards more socially conservative views, at about 0.6 points on a five-point scale.

Citizens showed the most pronounced change, shifting 1.3 points more conservatively. Similarly, the party's positions on the left-right dimension have shifted towards the left by one scale point (with dimensions measured on a five-point scale).

The Labour Party remained broadly left-liberal. Its position moved slightly but continued to stand out on the left-leaning and somewhat liberal side. On the left-conservative side, the Alliance of Patriots maintained its traditional stance, moving slightly more left on economic issues.

Lelo has consolidated its position in the center of the two-dimensional ideological space, with a slight shift towards conservative views, together with its coalition partner Citizens. The latter departed the right-liberal quadrant, leaving behind Girchi, the UNM and its coalition partners, European Georgia and Strategy Aghmashenebeli. Notably, since many political parties in 2024 ran as a part of a larger coalition, this explains a certain convergence between the views in 2024 of coalition partners Lelo and Citizens, as well as the UNM and Strategy Aghmashenebeli.

5.

Ideological Realignment among Georgian Political Parties

This section examines voters' alignment with political parties based on their ideological preferences across two dimensions: economic (left-right) and socio-cultural (conservative-liberal). It also assesses the ideological distance between supporters and political parties and explores the characteristics of unaffiliated voters. The analysis is derived from a subset of respondents who opted to complete an additional questionnaire (12,421 respondents). This supplementary survey allowed participants to indicate their voting intentions for the upcoming parliamentary elections and/or recall their vote choice in the previous 2020 parliamentary and 2021 local elections. However, this sub-sample is subject to a self-selection bias, as participation was contingent on respondents' willingness to engage with an extended version of the survey, potentially influencing the representativeness of the findings.

5.1 Individuals' Ideological Beliefs and Party Preferences

Across all political parties, party supporters participating in the Election Compass generally hold relatively similar socio-cultural liberal views, with the notable exceptions of Alliance of Patriots and Georgian Dream (GD) supporters, who express more conservative views. Regarding economic policy, the majority of Election Compass respondents align with left-leaning positions.

The Kernel density graphs indicate that GD supporters largely align with the party's position on the left-right economic spectrum, but are notably less conservative than the party itself on socio-cultural issues. Notably, GD was previously more aligned with its potential voters on socio-cultural issues (e.g. 2020 Parliamentary election). As the party has shifted toward a more conservative stance, while its potential voters have remained near the middle of the spectrum, a significant ideological mismatch has emerged between the party and its base.

The Kernel density graphs below illustrate the distribution of party supporter preferences across two ideological dimensions—economic (left-right) and socio-cultural (conservative-liberal)—based on party preferences. To analyze the propensity to vote (PTV), the vote propensity variable was recoded into a binary format, distinguishing between voters who are “not likely to vote for a party” and those “likely to vote for a party.” A respondent is categorized as “likely to vote for a

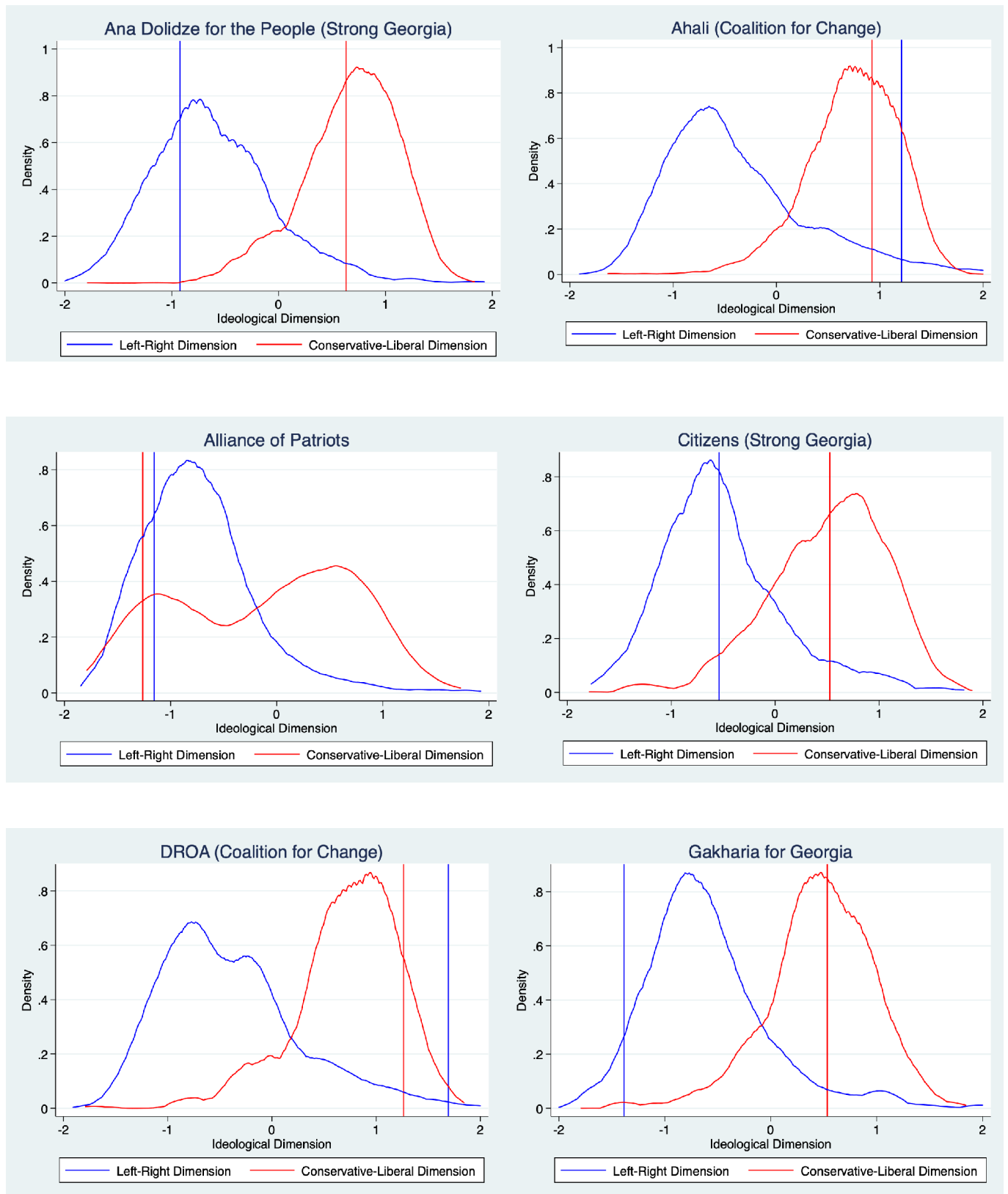
political party” if their PTV score for that party is the highest among all political options and exceeds 5; otherwise, they are presumed not to be voting for a party.

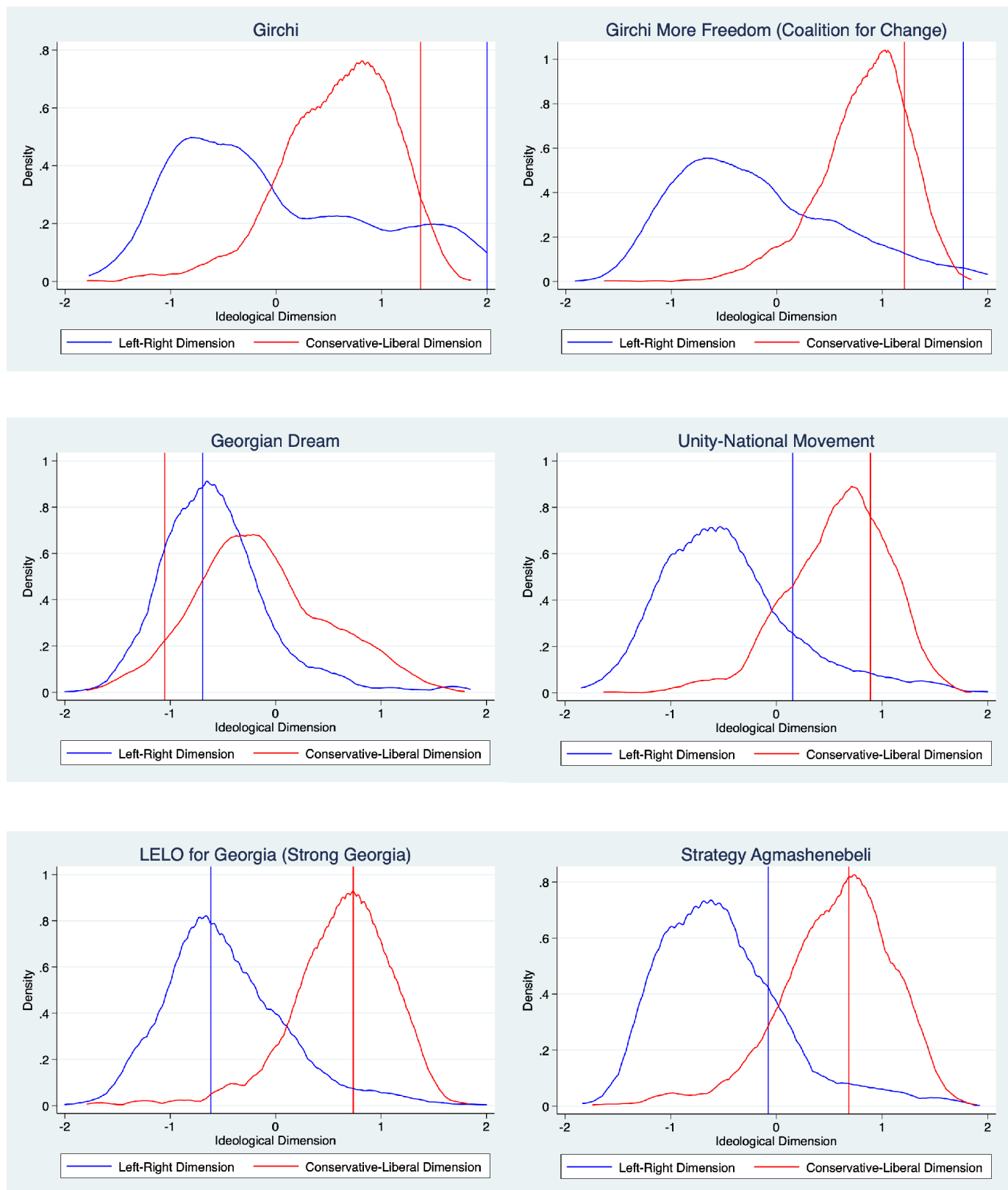
Figure 5.1 presents the distribution of likely voters across the two policy dimensions for selected political parties. Table 5.1 provides the percentage of supporters who hold more left-leaning/conservative views compared to their preferred political party. In addition, Appendix 9 offers a similar Kernel density distribution, utilizing self-reported voting intentions instead of PTV to identify party preference, while Appendix 10 contains corresponding analyses using heatmaps (again employing PTV).

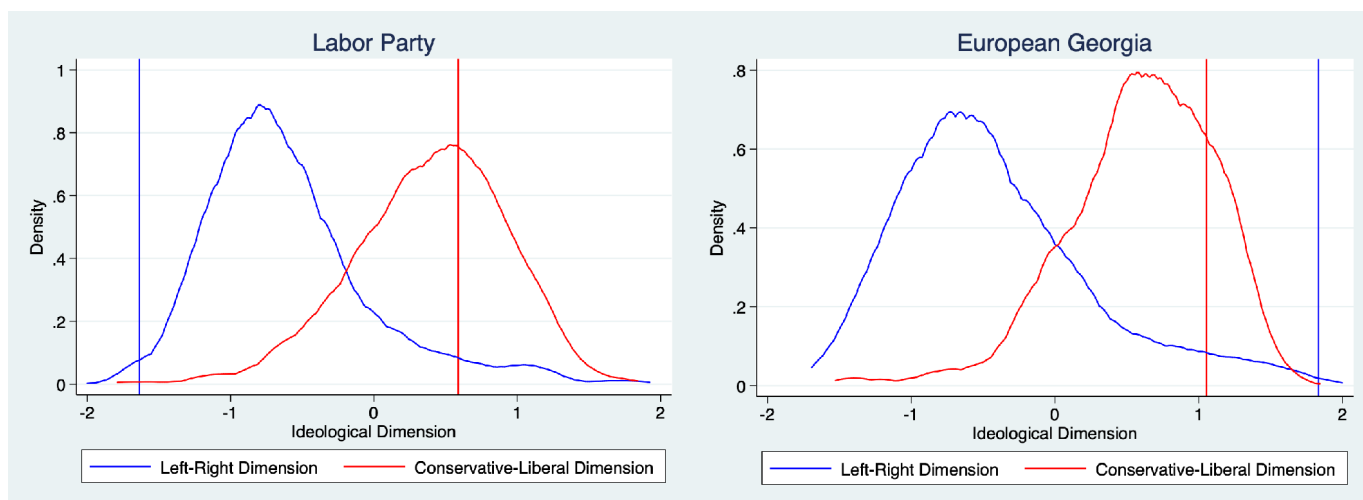
A divergence is observed between the ideological positioning of the United National Movement (UNM) and the views of its likely supporters. While UNM as a party advocates right-leaning socio-economic policies, its potential voters display a more leftist orientation. Specifically, 78.8% of UNM supporters hold more left-wing economic views than the party itself, while 65.9% express less liberal socio-cultural views than UNM's official stance. This discrepancy may suggest that voters prioritize leadership characteristics and broader party identity over specific policy positions when making electoral decisions.

Political parties such as Lelo, Citizens, and Ana Dolidze for the People exhibit ideological positions that closely align with their likely supporters on both economic (left-right) and socio-cultural (conservative-liberal) issues. Parties such as Ahali, Droa, Girchi More Freedom, European Georgia, and Girchi exhibit a significant ideological mismatch with their supporters for both economic (left-right) and socio-cultural (conservative-liberal) issues, with the disparity being particularly pronounced in economic policy. These parties adopt distinctly right-wing economic positions, whereas their supporters tend to lean further to the left. The proportion of supporters holding more left-leaning economic views than their preferred party is exceptionally high, nearing 100% in all cases: Ahali (92.0%), Girchi (98.2%), Girchi More Freedom (98.4%), Droa (99%), and European Georgia (99.4%). Regarding socio-cultural issues, these parties also tend to be more liberal than their supporters, though the gap is less extreme compared to economic policy. The percentage of supporters with more conservative socio-cultural views than their respective parties ranges from 73% for European Georgia to a more pronounced 94.7% for Girchi.

Three parties (Strategy Aghmashenebeli, Labour Party, and Gakharia for Georgia) closely align with their supporters on socio-cultural issues. However, in terms of economic policy, they diverge significantly from their base. Gakharia for Georgia and the Labour Party have adopted a more left-wing economic stance than their supporters, with 93.5% and 98.4% of them holding more right-wing economic views than these parties, respectively. Conversely, Strategy Aghmashenebeli takes a more right-leaning economic position, with 77.4% of its supporters identifying as more left-wing than the party. Lastly, the Alliance of Patriots positions itself as more left-wing and conservative compared to its supporters across both ideological dimensions. A significant portion of its supporter base holds more centrist views, with 81.7% of likely voters being less left-wing and 90.4% being less conservative than the party itself.







Source: Election Compass Georgia

Note: Distribution shows the ideological position of individuals. Vertical line indicates the ideological position of a political party

Voter and party preferences across two ideological dimensions

Tab. 5.1

	Economically Left-Right Dimension		Cultural Conservative-Liberal Dimension	
	Percentage of party voters whose ideological stance is positioned to the left of their party's ideology	Average position of the political party	Percentage of party voters whose ideological stance is positioned to the left of their party's ideology	Average position of the political party
Labour Party	1.6%	-1.6	53.5%	0.6
Gakharia for Georgia	6.5%	-1.4	50.8%	0.5
Alliance of Patriots	18.3%	-1.2	9.6%	-1.3
Ana Dolidze for the People	35.0%	-0.9	38.7%	0.6
Georgian Dream	43.1%	-0.7	6.8%	-1.1
Lelo	43.4%	-0.6	47.7%	0.7
Citizens	56.2%	-0.5	36.2%	0.5
Strategy Aghmashenebeli	77.4%	-0.1	47.6%	0.7
United National Movement	78.8%	0.2	65.9%	0.9
Ahali	92.0%	0.9	81.1%	1.2
Girchi	98.2%	2.0	94.7%	1.4
Girchi More Freedom	98.4%	1.8	76.8%	1.2
Droa	99.0%	1.7	84.8%	1.3
European Georgia	99.4%	1.8	73.0%	1.1

Source: Election Compass Georgia

The patterns remain largely consistent when voter intention (based on respondents explicitly stating which party they intend to vote for) is used instead of PTV (which assesses party support on a 1–10 scale). However, using voter intention reduces the number of observations significantly, as fewer respondents answered this question. Two notable differences emerge: Supporters of the Alliance of Patriots, identified through voting intention exhibit notably more conservative views compared to those identified through PTV, making them more aligned with the party’s ideological stance. Girchi supporters hold more right-wing economic views compared to those identified through PTV, bringing them closer to—though still somewhat distant from—the party’s economic position.²⁸

5.2. Voters’ Ideological Distance from Party Position

Examining the ideological distance between voters and their preferred political parties provides insight into the coherence of voting choices in Georgia. The “Distance” variable in the Election Compass Georgia dataset measures the Euclidean distance between respondents’ ideological positions and those of their chosen party, incorporating both economic (left-right) and socio-cultural (conservative-liberal) dimensions. This variable ranges from 0 (complete alignment) to 6.49 (maximum divergence) across all political parties.

The histograms in Figure 5.2 illustrate the distribution of supporters for select political parties²⁹ based on their ideological distance from these parties in a two-dimensional ideological space. In addition, Table 5.2 reports the percentage of ideological agreement between supporters and their preferred party.

Voter and party preferences across two ideological dimensions

Tab. 5.2

	Average Distance	Percentage of Agreement	Average Distance by Age Categories		
			18-35	35+	50+
Ana Dolidze for the People	0.78	90.2	0.80	0.75	0.69
Lelo	0.79	90.1	0.81	0.77	0.74
United National Movement	0.95	88.2	1.02	0.88	0.87
Citizens	0.96	88.0	0.97	0.94	0.92
Gakharia for Georgia	0.96	87.9	0.94	1.02	0.97
Strategy Aghmashenebeli	1.10	86.3	1.12	1.07	1.02
Georgian Dream	1.36	83.0	1.42	1.28	1.17
Labour Party	1.51	81.1	1.49	1.57	1.51
Ahali	1.59	80.1	1.62	1.55	1.69
Aliance of Patriots	1.84	77.0	1.88	1.77	1.65
Girchi More Freedom	1.99	75.2	1.98	2.01	2.24
Droa	2.20	72.4	2.21	2.20	2.29
European Georgia	2.30	71.2	2.29	2.32	2.42
Girchi	2.31	71.1	2.26	2.53	3.23

Source: Election Compass Georgia

Among all parties, *Ana Dolidze for the People* has the smallest ideological distance from its supporters, with an average distance of 0.78 and an agreement rate of 90.2%. This suggests strong ideological alignment between the party and its voter base. Similarly, *Gakharia for Georgia*, *Citizens*, and *Lelo* exhibit a trend where higher Propensity to Vote (PTV) scores correspond to lower ideological distances, indicating that their most supportive respondents also share similar ideological views.

²⁸ The same patterns are observed in the heatmaps in Appendix 10.

²⁹ It is assumed that a person “votes for a political party” if his/her voting propensity to this party is the highest among all of the political parties and exceeds 5. Please see section 6.1 for more details.

On the other extreme, *Girchi* exhibits the greatest ideological distance from its supporters, with an average distance of 2.31 and an agreement rate of 71.1%. Interestingly, while respondents who rate the party with the highest PTV score (10) are ideologically very close to its position, those giving slightly lower scores (e.g., 9 or 8) remain significantly more distant. This pattern is less pronounced for other right-wing parties, but overall, their ideological gaps remain relatively large.

Georgian Dream falls in between, with an average ideological distance of 1.36 and an agreement rate of 83%. While it does not exhibit the strongest alignment with respondents, its ideological distance is moderate compared to other parties. However, its PTV trends are mixed, as higher likability does not always correspond to a lower ideological distance.

A clear pattern emerges when comparing ideological distances across political parties. Economically right-wing parties such as *Girchi*, *European Georgia*, *Droa*, *Girchi More Freedom*, and *Ahali*, as well as socio-culturally conservative parties like the *Alliance of Patriots*, tend to exhibit larger ideological distances from their supporters. This reflects the broader ideological leanings of respondents in the *Georgian Election Compass*, who tend to be more economically left-wing and socio-culturally liberal. In contrast, parties that align more closely with these prevailing tendencies—those that are both economically left-wing and socio-culturally liberal—tend to have smaller ideological gaps with their supporters.

For some parties, ideological distance and Propensity to Vote (PTV) scores follow a clear pattern: the higher the support, the closer the ideological alignment. This trend is particularly evident for *Gakharia for Georgia*, *Girchi More Freedom*, *Ana Dolidze for the People*, *Citizens*, and *Lelo*, where respondents who rate these parties more favorably tend to be ideologically closer to them. In contrast, for *Georgian Dream*, *United National Movement*, *Ahali*, and the *Alliance of Patriots*, the relationship between PTV scores and ideological distance is less consistent, suggesting that higher likability does not always translate into stronger ideological alignment.

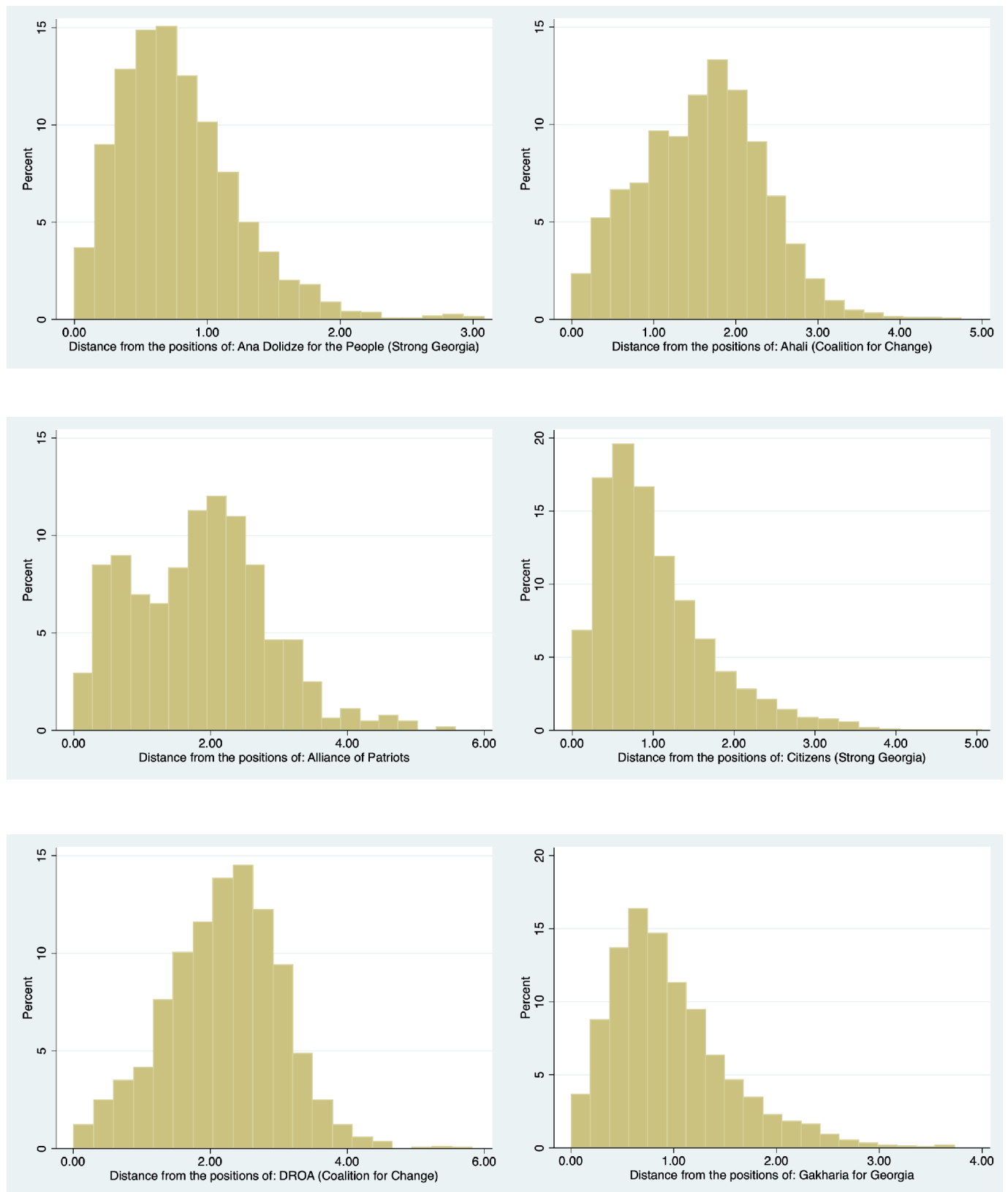
Generally, younger individuals (18-35) tend to have a slightly higher ideological distance compared to older age groups, suggesting that political preferences shift with age. However, different political parties exhibit different patterns:

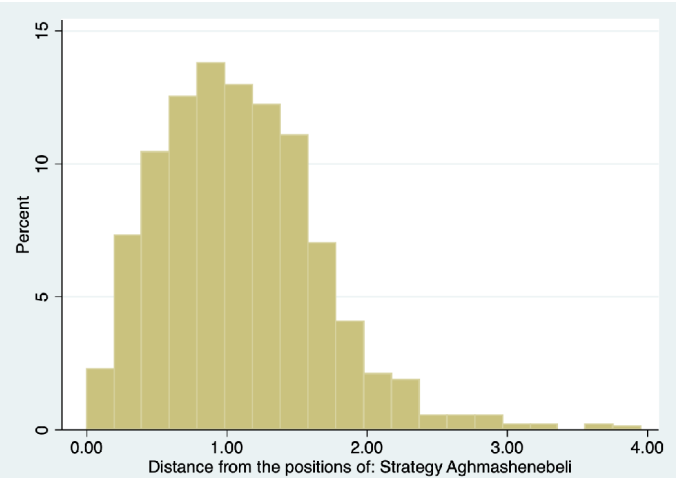
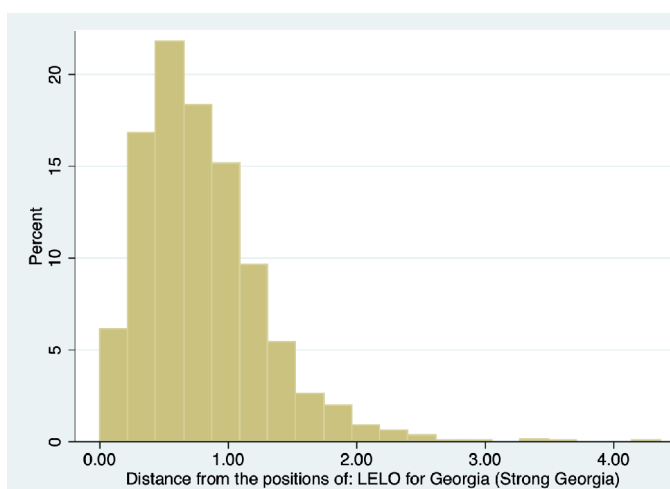
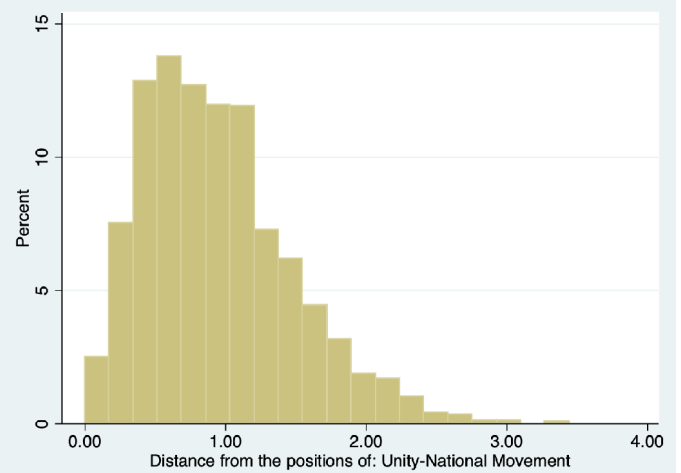
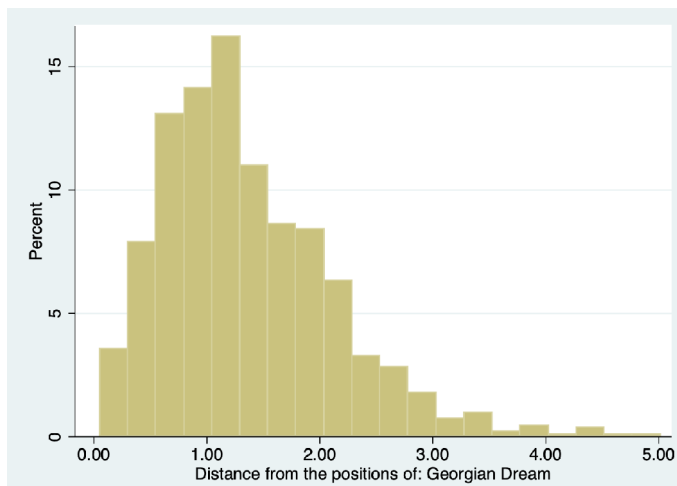
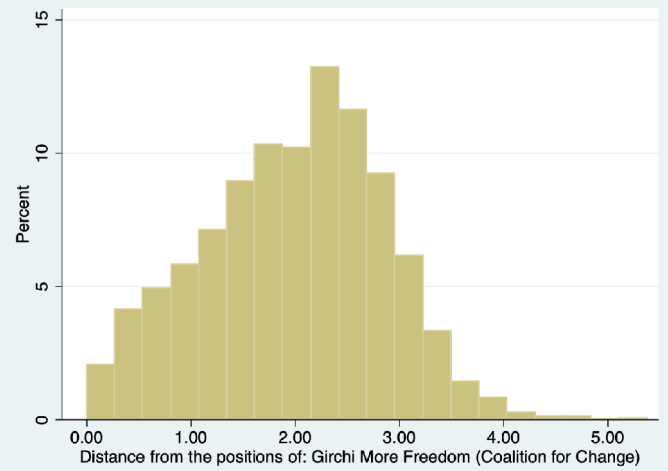
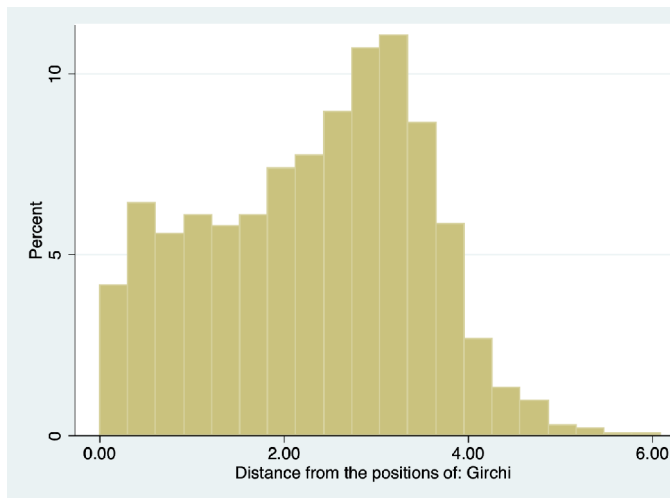
→ For *Lelo*, *Citizens*, *Ana Dolidze for the People*, and *Strategy Aghmashenebeli*, there is a slight trend where the ideological distance between supporters and party positions decreases with age. This trend is more pronounced for the *United National Movement*. This can be explained by the tendency of older respondents to be more economically left-wing, which aligns more closely with these parties.

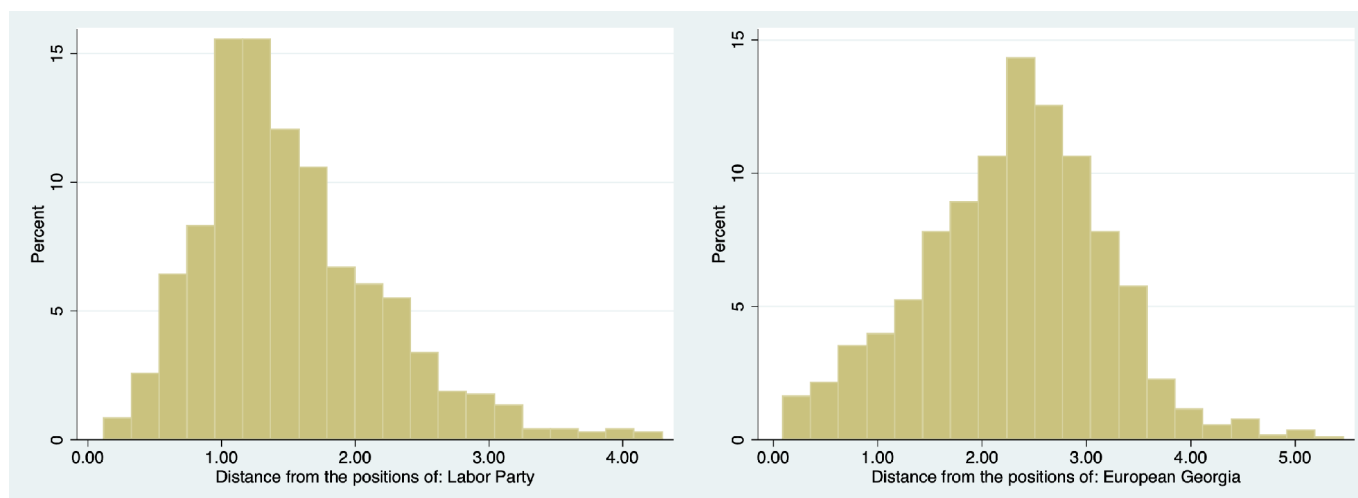
→ A similar pattern—where older individuals have less ideological distance from party positions—is observed with the *Alliance of Patriots* and *Georgian Dream*. However, in these cases, the pattern can be attributed to the fact that older respondents tend to be more culturally conservative, which is aligned closer with these parties.

→ A different pattern emerges for another group of parties, including *Girchi*, *Girchi – More Freedom*, and *European Georgia* (with DROA showing this pattern only in the 18-35 and 50+ age categories). Here, younger supporters tend to be more economically right-wing than older supporters, which better aligns their views with these parties.

→ Notably, the largest discrepancy in ideological distance between party positions and supporter views was found in *Girchi*. Among the 18-35 age group, the party distance was 2.26, increasing to 2.53 for those aged 35+ and reaching 3.23 for those 50 and older.







Source: Election Compass Georgia

5.3. Ideological Realignment of Election Compass Respondents

Despite differences in the statements included in the 2024 Georgian Election Compass compared to 2020, tracking the evolution of party-voter proximity remains valuable. Compass respondents who support Georgian Dream (GD) largely maintained their socio-cultural and economic positions from 2020 to 2024, though their economic distribution has become more dispersed rather than concentrated. However, as GD itself has shifted toward a more socio-culturally conservative and economically leftist stance, the gap between the party and its supporters has widened significantly.

In contrast, respondents supporting the United National Movement (UNM) exhibit a similar distribution to 2020 but with a more concentrated pattern, while the party itself has moved from a right-wing economic stance toward the center, bringing it closer to its supporter base. Respondents supporting European Georgia have shifted further left economically while maintaining their socio-cultural stance.

Girchi's supporters remain liberal; however, both Girchi and Girchi More Freedom now attract a more diverse base, including a higher share of left-leaning supporters compared to 2020. The distribution of Lelo's supporters remains similar, but the party has moved closer to its supporters. Respondents supporting Strategy Aghmashenebeli have become more socio-culturally liberal, aligning with the party's shift. Supporters of the Labour Party retain similar views, but the party itself has become significantly more left-wing economically and slightly more liberal socially.

Respondents supporting Citizens have also moved left economically and become more socially liberal, reducing the gap between the party and its supporters. Meanwhile, supporters of the Alliance of Patriots have shifted left economically and toward a more socially liberal stance, with a less concentrated distribution.

5.4. Unaffiliated Voters

This section provides a regression analysis to examine the association of respondents' ideological profiles and demographic characteristics of unaffiliated voters. Unaffiliated voters are defined as those who did not report voting for any particular party in the previous parliamentary elections. To explore the underlying structure of voter preferences, a factor analysis was performed to identify key dimensions that explain variation in policy positions. These factors were then included in the regression model alongside demographic variables.

Two distinct factors emerged from the analysis. The first factor represents a combination of left-wing economic views and conservative social values. It includes support for government intervention in regulating drug prices, stricter immigration and residency policies for foreigners, increased agricultural funding, universal free healthcare and education, progressive taxation, and minimum wage policies. It also includes restrictions on large hydropower projects for environmental reasons, taxation of polluting businesses, free school meals, gender quotas in electoral rolls, state ownership of universities, bans on foreign ownership of agricultural land, regulating loan interest rates, and opposing the legalization of soft narcotics.

The second factor captures liberal and pro-Western social views. It reflects opposition to restricting Western-funded organizations, skepticism of the idea that EU integration threatens national identity, resistance to prioritizing economic ties with China over relations with the West, and opposition to limiting free speech on religious grounds. It also includes opposition to mandatory Orthodox Christian education in schools and military neutrality, support for ending state funding of religious institutions, vetting high-ranking judges through foreign-led commissions, full protection of LGBTQ+ rights, NATO membership regardless of timing, and maintaining a pro-Western foreign policy even at the cost of strained relations with Russia.

The regression results presented in Table 5.3 indicate that holding left-wing economic views combined with conservative socio-cultural values (factor 1) is significantly and positively associated with being an unaffiliated voter. Conversely, voters with liberal and pro-Western social views (factor 2) are significantly less likely to be unaffiliated. Gender, settlement type (rural-urban), and ethnicity do not exhibit statistically significant relationships with political affiliation.

An interesting pattern emerges regarding age: as a voter's age increases, the likelihood of being politically unaffiliated decreases. The robustness of these findings is confirmed across different model specifications. When the regression model replaces the four distinct ideological factors with broader left-right economic and conservative-liberal socio-cultural dimensions, the results remain consistent. Specifically, supporting culturally liberal views and holding right-wing economic preferences both reduce the probability of being unaffiliated.

Furthermore, these trends hold regardless of whether vote recall is based on the 2020 parliamentary elections or the 2021 local elections, suggesting a stable relationship between ideological positioning and political affiliation.

Factors associated with unaffiliated voters.

Tab. 5.3

Logit Regression	Parliamentary Election 2020		Local Election 2021	
Explanatory Variables	Unaffiliated Voters		Unaffiliated Voters	
Factor 1: Left-wing economic views, conservative social values	0.396*** (0.054)		0.318*** (0.048)	
Factor 2: Liberal and pro-Western social views	-0.244*** (0.046)		-0.250*** (0.045)	
Rural (compared to Urban)	0.243 (0.225)	0.168 (0.190)	0.138 (0.219)	0.029 (0.184)
Eastern Georgia (compared to Western Georgia)	-0.072 (0.198)	-0.137 (0.166)	-0.354 (0.191)	-0.443*** (0.163)
Tbilisi (compared to Other Settlement Types)	-0.371** (0.165)	-0.442*** (0.139)	-0.149* (0.162)	-0.222 (0.138)
Rural & East	0.047 (0.320)	0.248 (0.269)	0.533 (0.309)	0.632** (0.263)
Gender (Female compared to Male)	-0.094 (0.106)	-0.032 (0.087)	-0.088 (0.100)	-0.046 (0.083)
Ethnicity (Other ethnicities compared to Georgians)	0.32 (0.523)	0.154 (0.445)	0.347 (0.471)	0.474 (0.429)
35-49 (compared to 18-34)	-0.375*** (0.113)	-0.443*** (0.097)	-0.439*** (0.107)	-0.429*** (0.091)
50-64 (compared to 18-34)	-0.578*** (0.166)	-0.605*** (0.139)	-0.530*** (0.155)	-0.599*** (0.134)
65+ (compared to 18-34)	-1.363*** (0.487)	-1.220*** (0.345)	-1.582*** (0.472)	-1.176*** (0.308)
Economically Left-Right		-0.467*** (0.061)		-0.401*** (0.056)
Culturally Conservative-Liberal		-0.297*** (0.070)		-0.294*** (0.067)
Constant	-0.999 (0.137)	-0.835*** (0.122)	-0.711*** (0.127)	-0.525*** (0.114)
Observations	3,154	4,197	4,179	4,179
Pseudo R-squared	0.057	0.062	0.057	0.058

Coefficients are log-odds, with standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

6.

Concluding Remarks

Election Compass Georgia provides a detailed snapshot of party and voter positions, capturing shifts between the 2020 and 2024 elections. While its data reflects the views of self-selected respondents rather than the general population, the results offer valuable insights into where many Georgian voters stand on the left-right and conservative-liberal axes. This tool not only highlights broad patterns within the electorate, but also allows for comparing party platforms with voter preferences, revealing key points of alignment and divergence.

Overall, Compass users tend to hold moderate and somewhat left-leaning economic views, favoring greater state involvement in the economy. Views on judicial, foreign, and social policies lean more liberal or centrist, while healthcare, education, economic, and environmental stances are more consistently left-wing. Even though right-leaning economic positions often align with liberal social attitudes, parties like Georgian Dream and the Alliance of Patriots combine leftist economic platforms with conservative social values. Meanwhile, parties such as Ahali, Girchi, Girchi – More Freedom, Droa, and European Georgia occupy the opposite end, favoring right-wing economic policies alongside socially liberal positions.

Notably, only four of the 32 policy statements show full or partial convergence among parties, contrary to a generally accepted assumption of the lack of ideological pluralism among Georgia's political parties. The 2024 elections also saw major ideological shifts, particularly within Georgian Dream, which pivoted from moderate socio-cultural positions to more conservative stances.

In terms of voter-party proximity, the largest mismatches arise for Georgian Dream, Alliance of Patriots, and United National Movement. GD's conservative turn has distanced it from its centrist supporters, while UNM's right-leaning economic and liberal social platform conflicts with a more leftist, somewhat conservative voter base. In contrast, Lelo, Citizens, and Ana Dolidze for the People enjoy strong alignment with their supporters, while right-leaning parties such as Ahali, Droa, Girchi, and European Georgia struggle to reconcile their economic positions with a voter base leaning economically left. Strategy Aghmashenebeli, Labour Party, and Gakharia for Georgia closely match their supporters on socio-cultural issues but differ on economics. Since 2020, GD's ideological gap with supporters has doubled, while UNM, Lelo, and Citizens have reduced their own gaps.

Additionally, individuals who favor leftist economics yet hold conservative social views are more prone to remain unaffiliated. Older voters show a higher rate of affiliation, while socially liberal, pro-Western voters typically back a specific party. As Georgian Dream occupies the conservative-left quadrant, one might expect unaffiliated voters to gravitate in its direction.

Looking ahead, an overarching question is whether Georgia's political system and emerging democracy can withstand the global tide of authoritarianism that is already manifesting at home. While sustained protests suggest continued resistance, it remains to be seen whether Georgia will advance toward a more pluralistic and democratic order, or fall back to the authoritarian trap. Regardless, the 2020 and 2024 iterations of Election Compass provide critical snapshots of where parties and voters stood during these pivotal moments.

7.

Appendixes

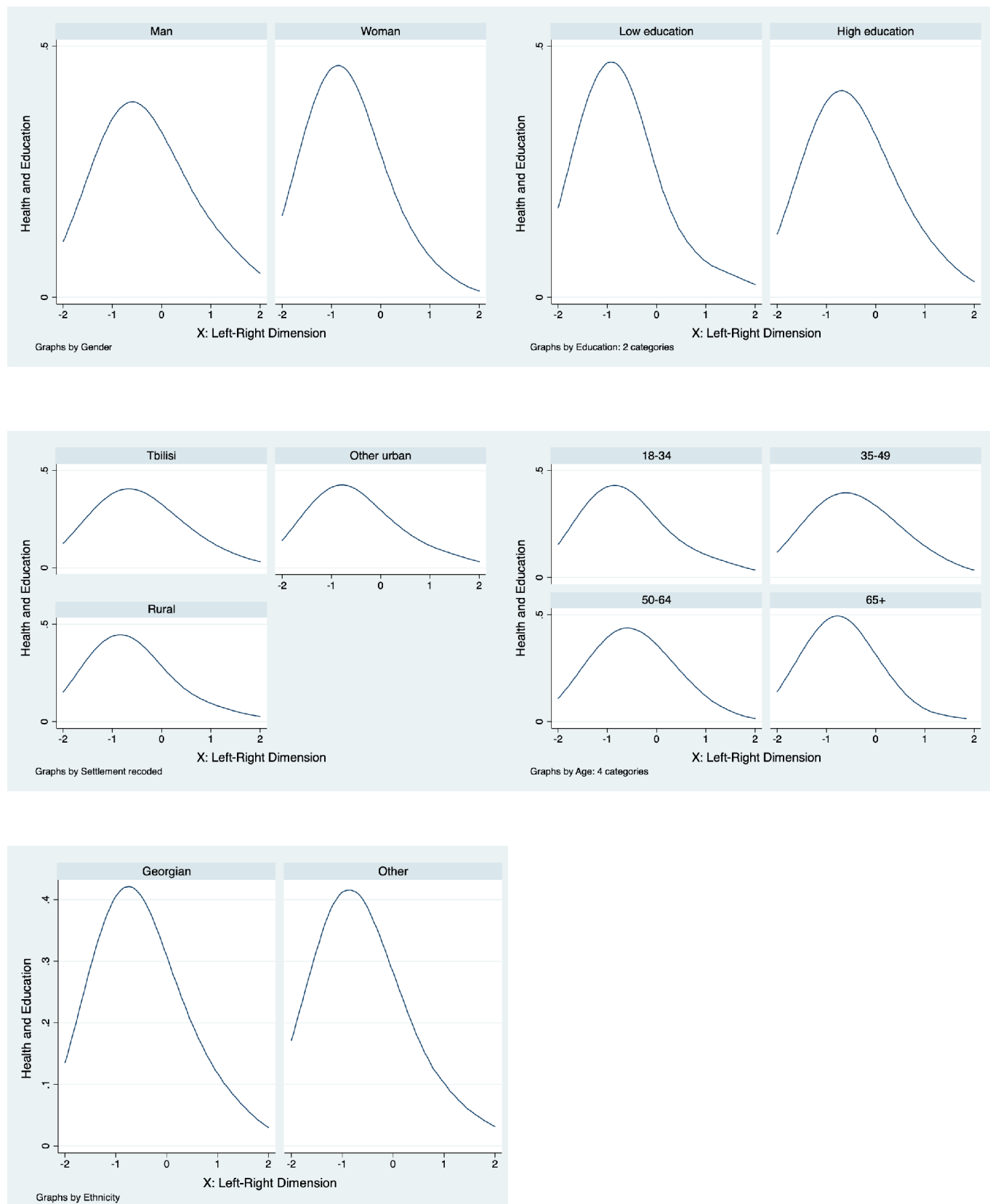
Appendix 1: The average score, standard deviation and Esteban-Ray Polarization Index for each of the statements

Ideological Direction of the Statement	Statement	Average Score	Standard Deviation	Esteban-Ray Polarization Index
Socio-Culturally Liberal	All parties should be obliged to maintain a quota of female members in their electoral rolls	3.16	1.39	0.20
Socio-Culturally Liberal	Mandatory military service should be abolished	3.22	1.37	0.21
Economically Right	Government should not interfere in determining interest rates on loans	2.89	1.36	0.21
Socio-Culturally Liberal	Soft narcotics should be legalized	2.81	1.35	0.20
Economically Left	The rich should pay a larger share of their income to the state budget	3.43	1.33	0.19
Economically Right	State-funded insurance should be only for those people who need it the most	3.09	1.32	0.22
Economically Left	Education at all levels in public education institutions should be free-of-charge	3.37	1.30	0.20
Socio-Culturally Conservative	Georgia should declare military neutrality	2.45	1.29	0.19
Economically Left	Government should regulate drug prices	3.80	1.28	0.17
Economically Left	The government should establish a minimum wage threshold	4.00	1.28	0.15
Socio-Culturally Conservative	In order to reduce the level of crime, the punishment should be more severe	3.50	1.26	0.19
Socio-Culturally Liberal	The integrity of high-ranking judges should be vetted by a commission composed of foreign experts	3.78	1.25	0.16
Socio-Culturally Liberal	The state must fully protect the freedom of assembly and expression of LGBTQ+ persons	3.83	1.25	0.15
Economically Right	State-owned higher education institutions should be privatized	2.73	1.24	0.19
Socio-Culturally Liberal	Georgia should conduct direct negotiations with the de facto governments of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region to resolve immediate problems of these territories	3.33	1.24	0.18
Socio-Culturally Conservative	Rules regulating foreigners entering Georgia and obtaining a residence permit should be made stricter	3.61	1.24	0.17
Economically Left	In order to protect the environment, the construction of large hydropower plants should be banned	2.89	1.24	0.19
Economically Left	The amount of funding allocated by the state for agriculture should be increased	3.76	1.24	0.16

Ideological Direction of the Statement	Statement	Average Score	Standard Deviation	Esteban-Ray Polarization Index
Economically Left	Healthcare should be universal and free-of-charge	3.79	1.23	0.16
Socio-Culturally Conservative	Teaching of Orthodox Christianity should be mandatory at schools	2.15	1.23	0.17
Socio-Culturally Liberal	Religious institutions, including the Orthodox Church, should not be financed from the state budget	3.94	1.21	0.15
Socio-Culturally Liberal	Foreigners should have the right to purchase agricultural land	2.50	1.20	0.19
Socio-Culturally Liberal	Residents of areas inhabited by ethnic minorities should be able to receive government services in their own language	2.69	1.18	0.19
Economically Left	The state should provide free meals for students in public schools	3.96	1.14	0.13
Socio-Culturally Conservative	Georgia should deepen its political and economic partnership with China even if harms relations with the West	2.13	1.10	0.16
Socio-Culturally Conservative	It is acceptable to limit freedom of speech for protecting religious beliefs	1.91	1.08	0.14
Socio-Culturally Liberal	Georgia should maintain a pro-Western vector even if it harms relations with Russia	4.26	1.07	0.11
Socio-Culturally Conservative	The activities of organizations that receive funding from the West are against Georgia's national interests	1.84	1.07	0.13
Socio-Culturally Liberal	Georgia should try to join NATO even if it does not happen in the near future	4.31	1.02	0.09
Economically Right	Participation in the funded pension system should be voluntary	4.20	0.94	0.09
Socio-Culturally Conservative	Integration in the European Union threatens Georgian national identity	1.53	0.92	0.08
Economically Left	Businesses that pollute the environment must pay additional taxes to the state budget	4.33	0.91	0.07

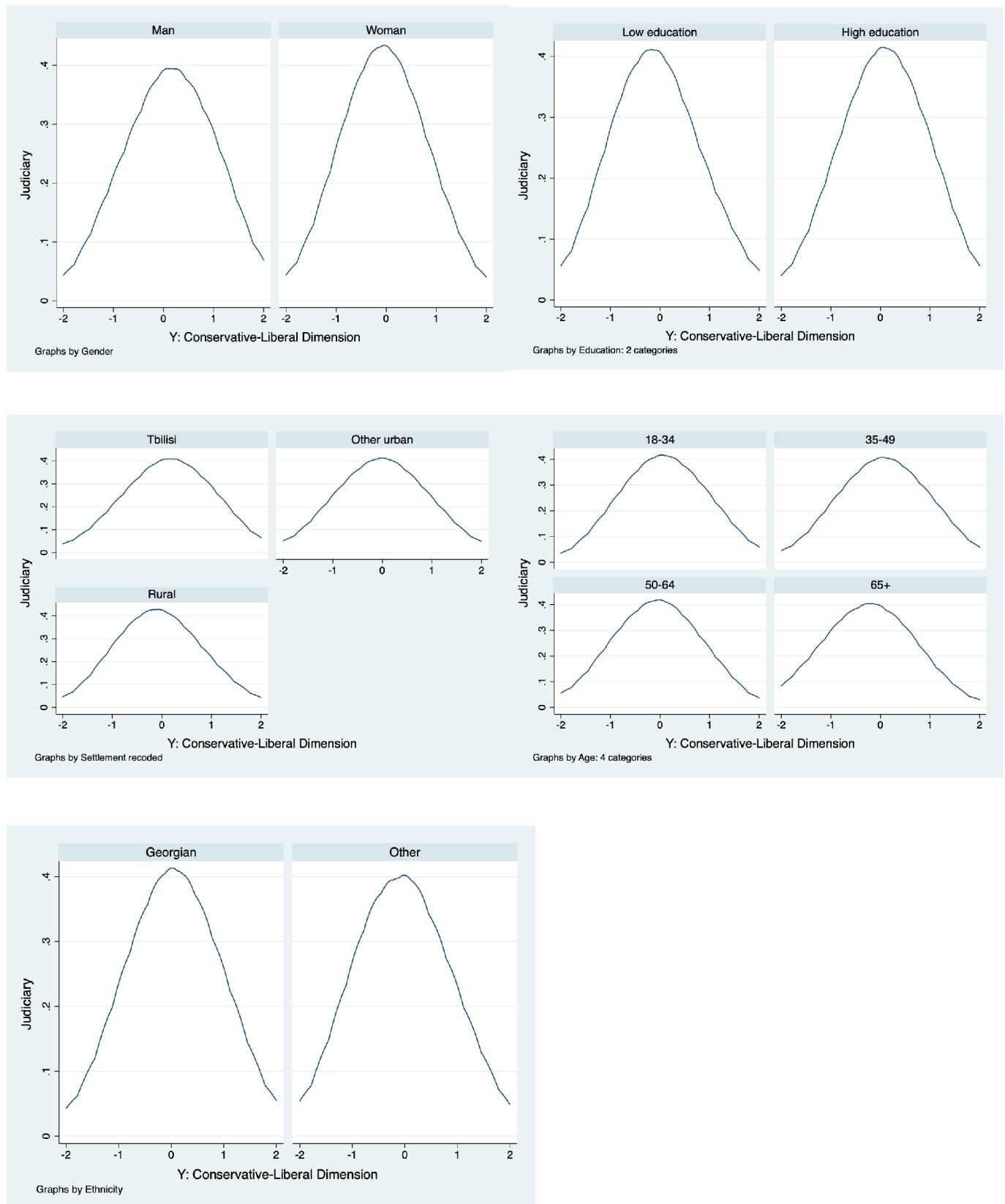
Source: Election Compass Georgia

Appendix 2: Health and Education - distribution of ideological dimensions for different policy areas by demographic characteristics (gender, education, settlement, age, and ethnicity)



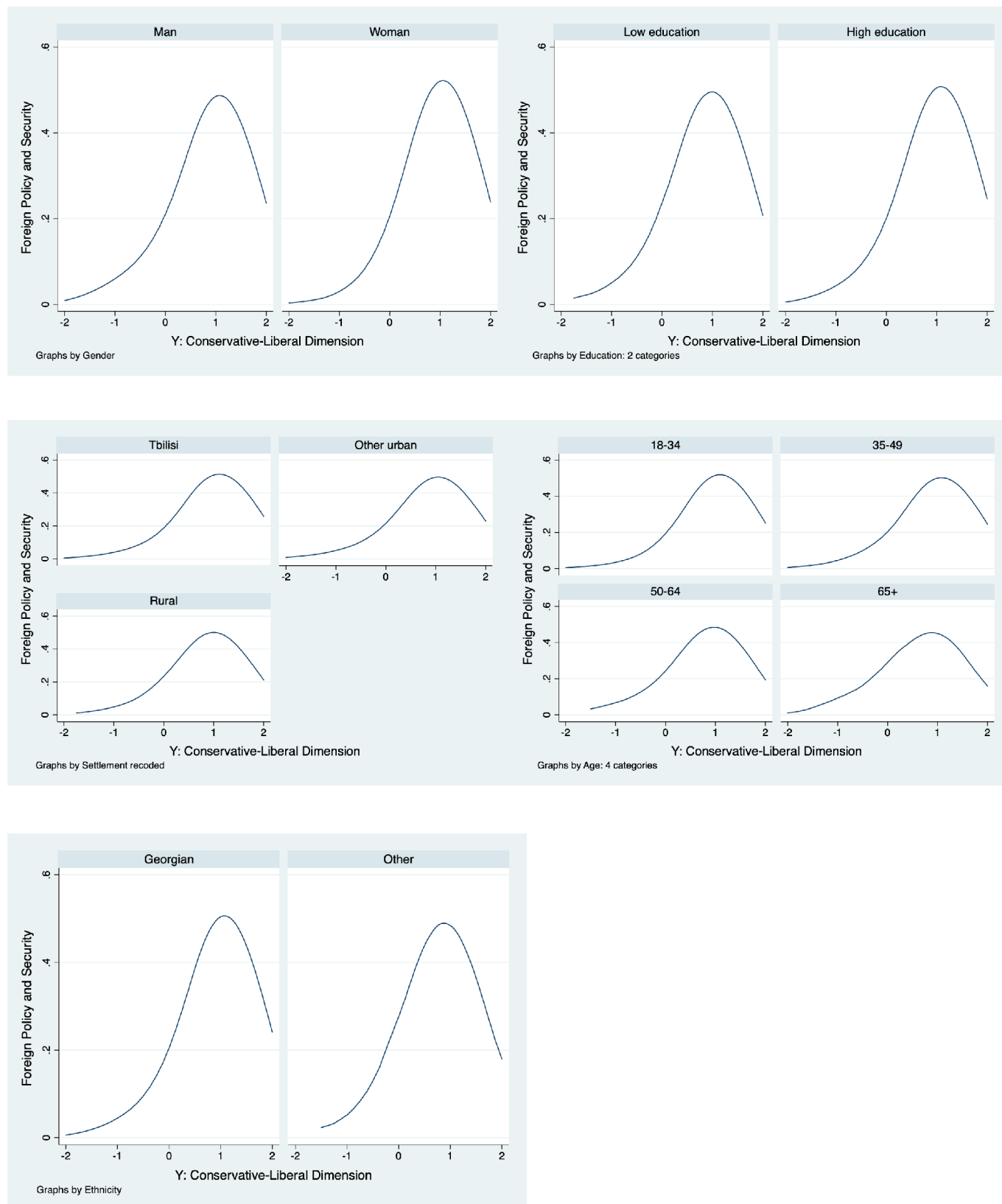
Source: Election Compass Georgia

Appendix 3: Judiciary - distribution of ideological dimensions for different policy areas by demographic characteristics (gender, education, settlement, age, and ethnicity)

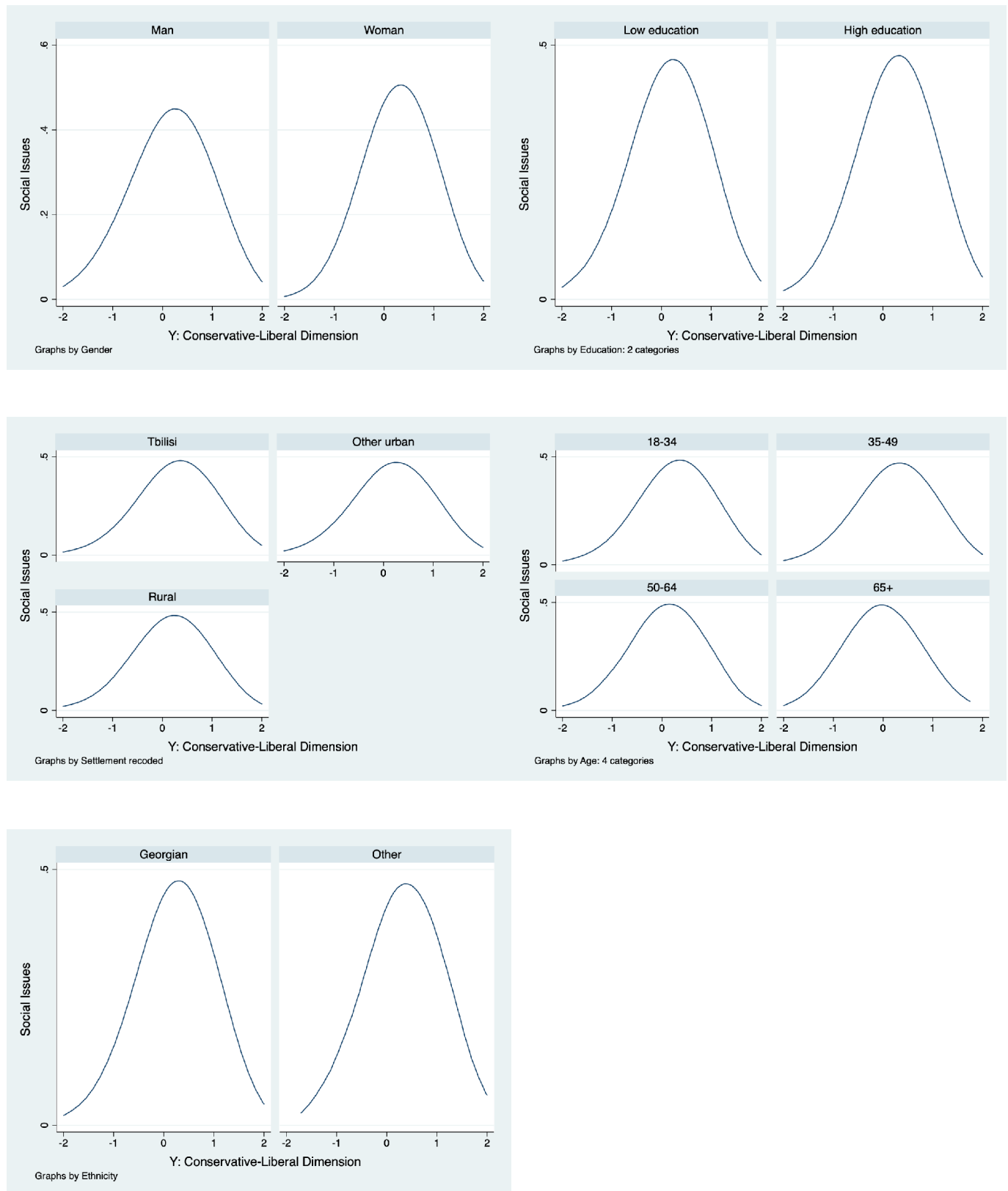


Source: Election Compass Georgia

Appendix 4: Foreign Policy and Security - distribution of ideological dimensions for different policy areas by demographic characteristics (gender, education, settlement, age, and ethnicity)

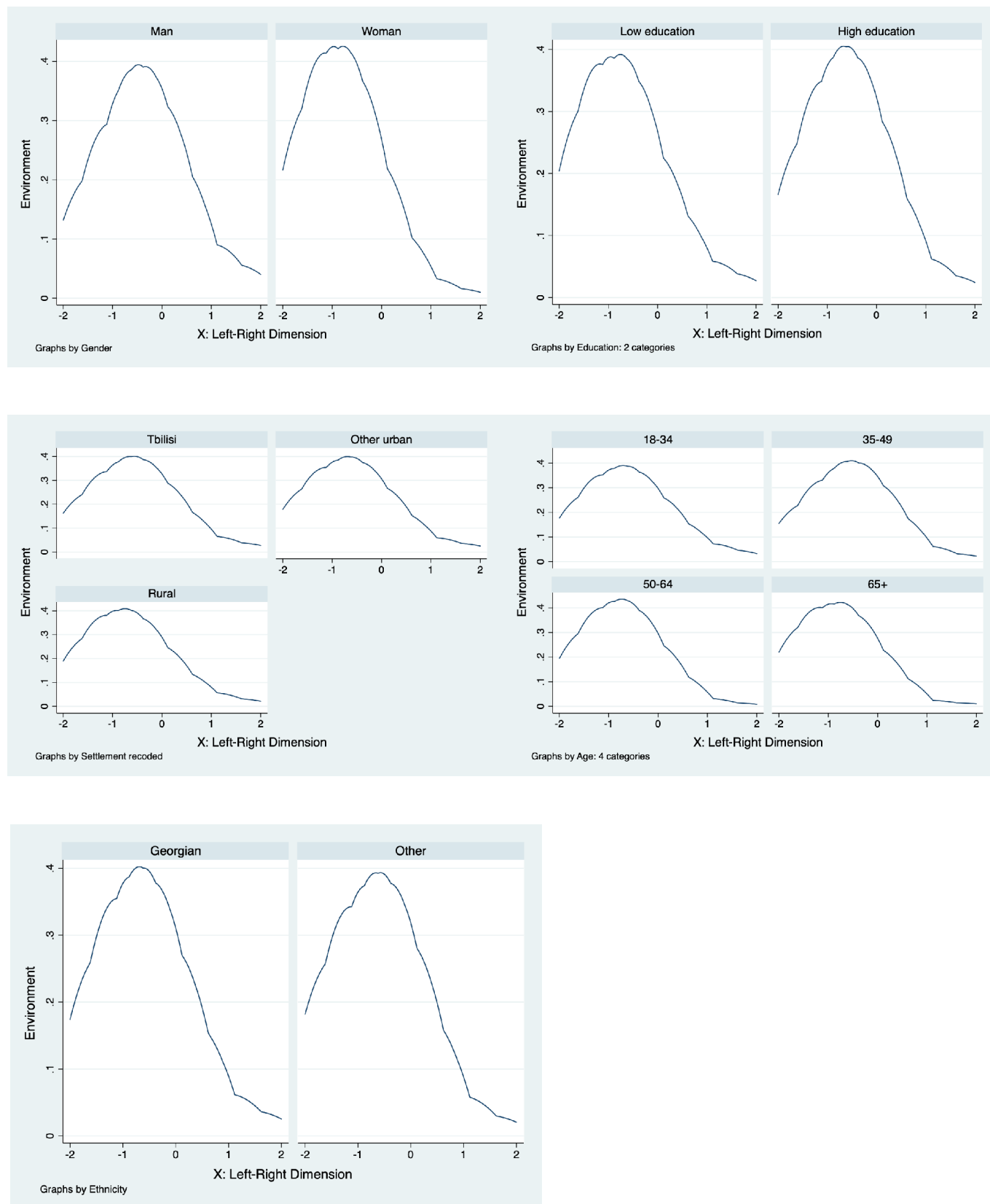


Appendix 5: Social Issues - distribution of ideological dimensions for different policy areas by demographic characteristics (gender, education, settlement, age, and ethnicity)



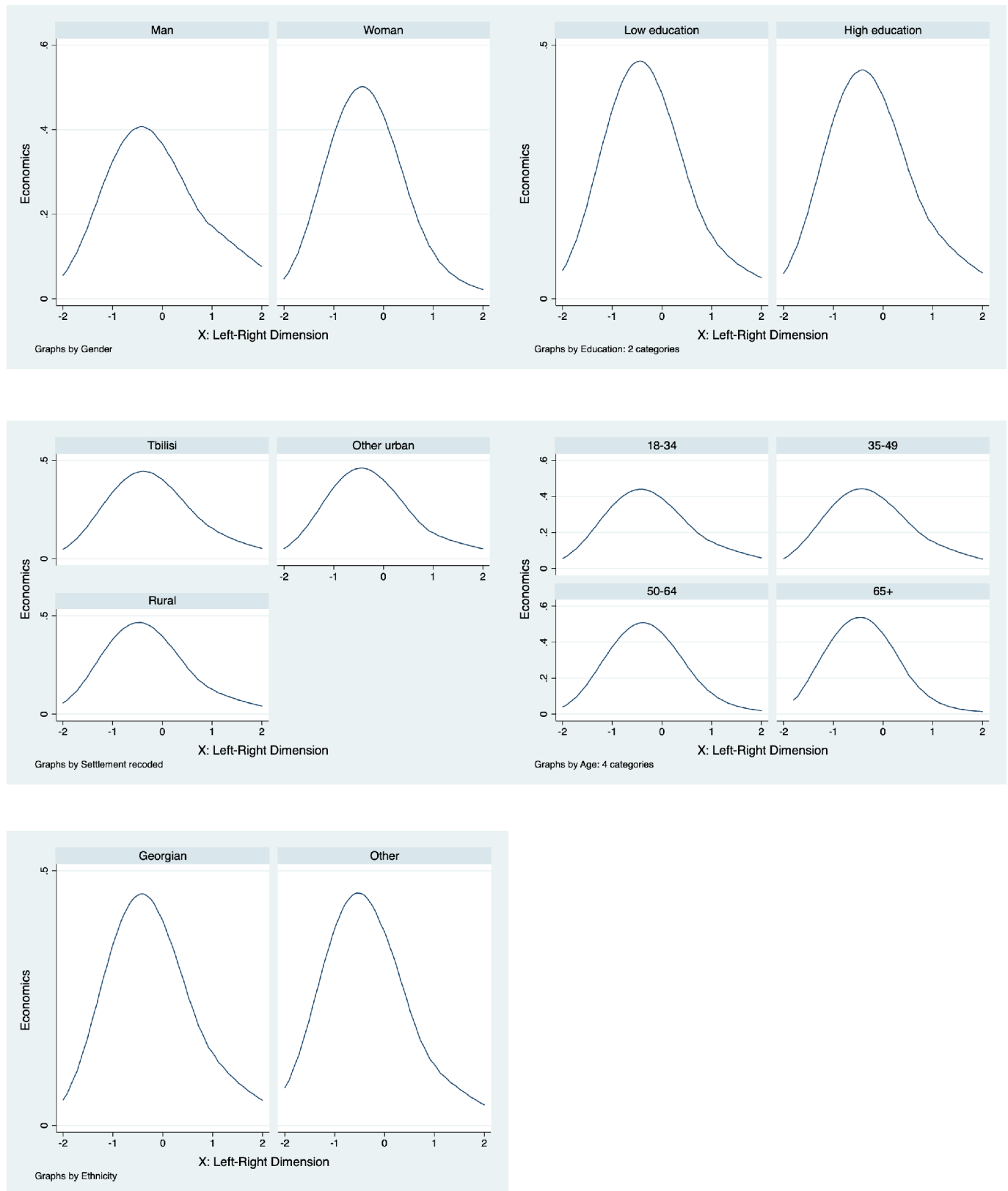
Source: Election Compass Georgia

Appendix 6: Environment - distribution of ideological dimensions for different policy areas by demographic characteristics (gender, education, settlement, age, and ethnicity)



Source: Election Compass Georgia

Appendix 7: Social Issues - distribution of ideological dimensions for different policy areas by demographic characteristics (gender, education, settlement, age, and ethnicity)



Source: Election Compass Georgia

Appendix 8: Average score and standard deviation per statement theme by demographic characteristics (gender, education, settlement, age and ethnicity)

Average score and standard deviation per statement theme by gender

Tab. A.1

Gender		Male		Female	
Dimension	Policy Area	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
L-R	Health and Education	2,66	0,90	2,31	0,73
C-L	Judiciary	3,12	0,85	2,94	0,76
C-L	Foreign Policy and Security	3,87	0,71	3,95	0,59
C-L	Social Issues	3,14	0,72	3,30	0,58
L-R	Environment	2,58	0,92	2,67	0,65
L-R	Economics	2,90	0,90	2,14	0,77

Source: Election Compass Georgia

Average score and standard deviation per statement theme by age

Tab. A.2

Age		18-34		35-49		50-64		65+	
Dimension	Policy Area	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
L-R	Health and Education	2,42	0,85	2,61	0,86	2,52	0,75	2,32	0,66
C-L	Judiciary	3,07	0,80	3,05	0,81	2,91	0,80	2,76	0,81
C-L	Foreign Policy and Security	3,97	0,62	3,92	0,65	3,77	0,70	3,64	0,75
C-L	Social Issues	3,27	0,65	3,24	0,67	3,09	0,63	2,97	0,62
L-R	Environment	2,37	0,92	2,42	0,85	2,21	0,76	2,16	0,77
L-R	Economics	2,81	0,83	2,79	0,81	2,70	0,64	2,61	0,56

Source: Election Compass Georgia

Average score and standard deviation per statement theme by age

Tab. A.3

Ethnicity		Georgian		Other	
Dimension	Policy Area	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
L-R	Health and Education	2,48	0,84	2,38	0,87
C-L	Judiciary	3,03	0,81	2,95	0,82
C-L	Foreign Policy and Security	3,92	0,65	3,78	0,67
C-L	Social Issues	3,22	0,66	3,35	0,65
L-R	Environment	2,36	0,87	2,33	0,86
L-R	Economics	2,78	0,79	2,68	0,79

Source: Election Compass Georgia

Average score and standard deviation per statement theme by settlement type

Tab. A.4

Settlement Type		Tbilisi		Other Urban		Rural	
Dimension	Policy Area	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
L-R	Health and Education	2,54	0,85	2,47	0,85	2,39	0,80
C-L	Judiciary	3,12	0,81	2,97	0,81	2,93	0,79
C-L	Foreign Policy and Security	3,96	0,64	3,88	0,68	3,85	0,65
C-L	Social Issues	3,28	0,66	3,19	0,68	3,17	0,65
L-R	Environment	2,40	0,88	2,34	0,88	2,29	0,86
L-R	Economics	2,82	0,80	2,77	0,79	2,72	0,77

Source: Election Compass Georgia

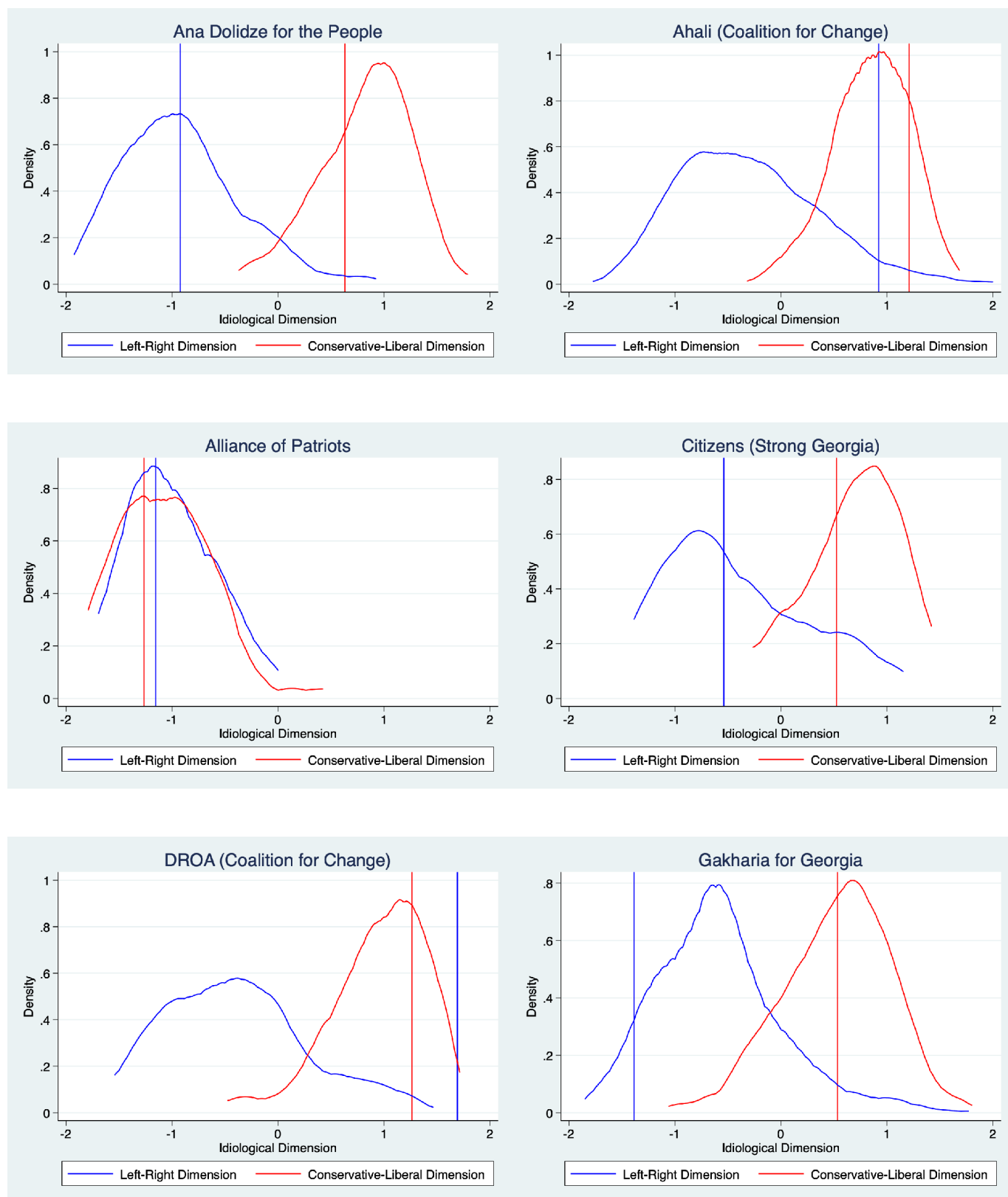
Average score and standard deviation per statement theme by educational attainment level

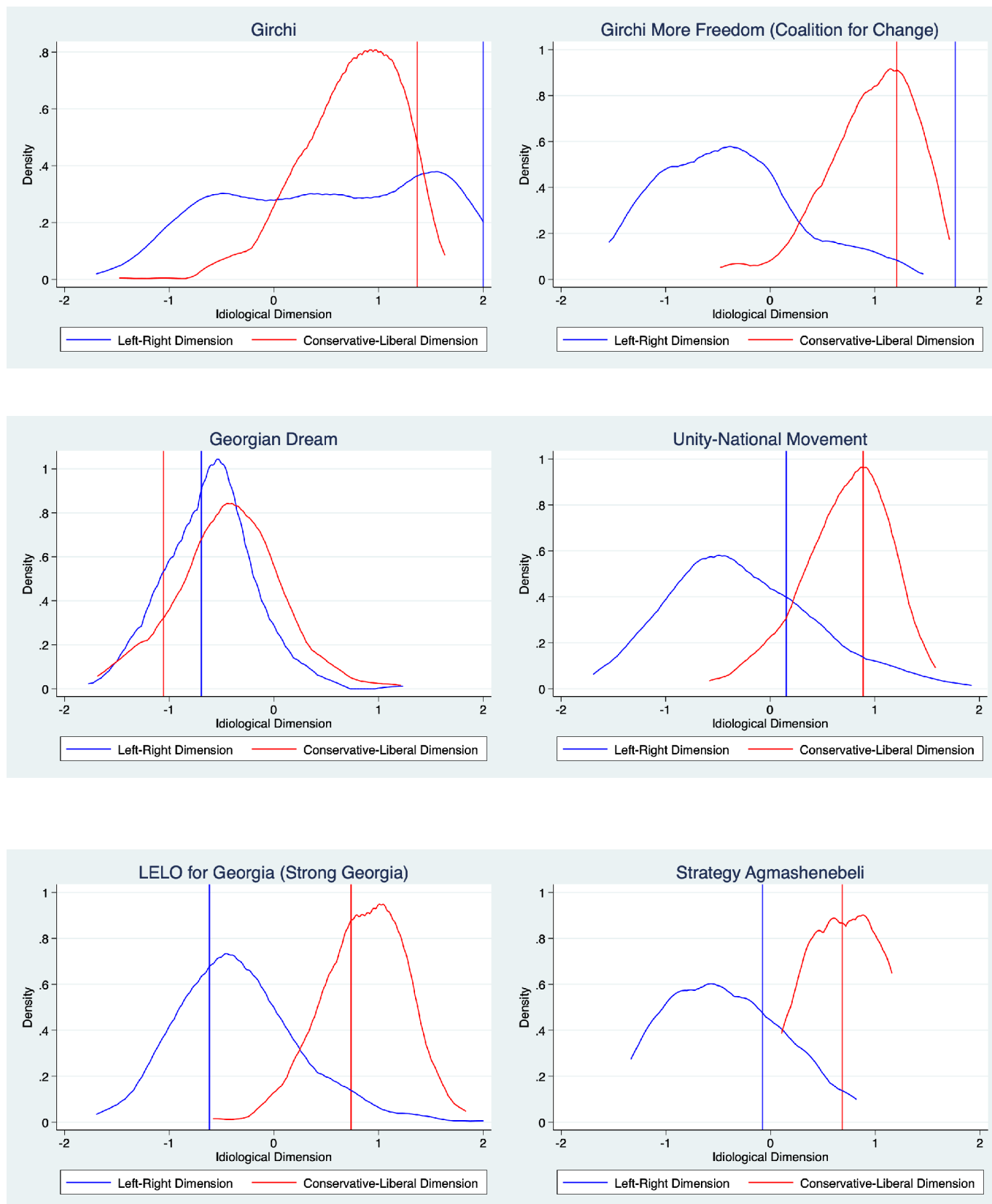
Tab. A.5

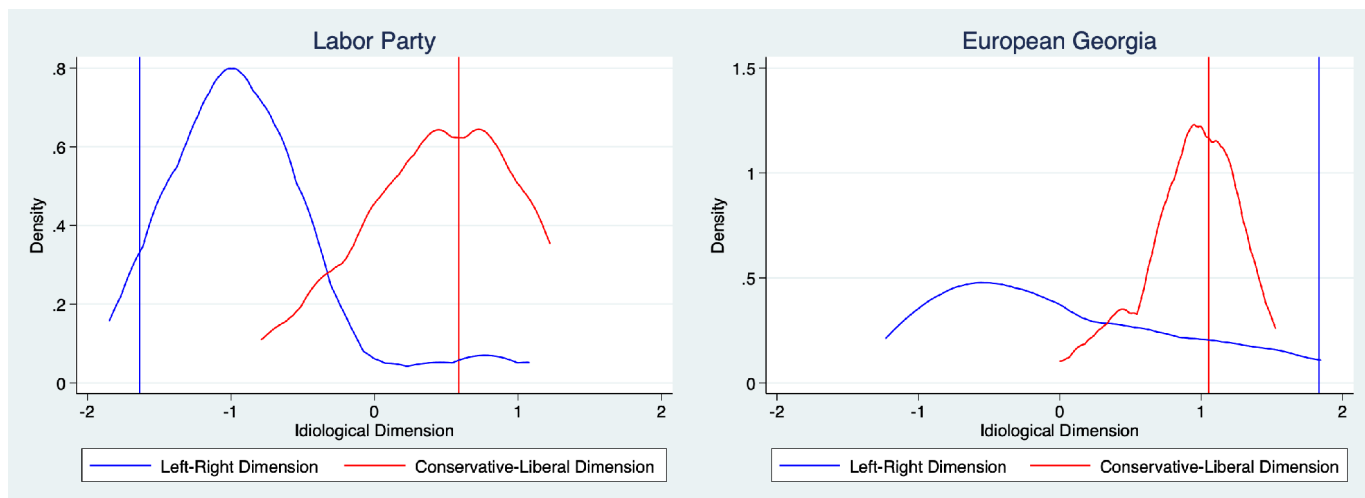
Education Attainment Level		High Education		Low Education	
Dimension	Policy Area	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
L-R	Health and Education	2,53	0,84	2,28	0,78
C-L	Judiciary	3,06	0,80	2,90	0,83
C-L	Foreign Policy and Security	3,93	0,65	3,83	0,67
C-L	Social Issues	3,24	0,66	3,15	0,67
L-R	Environment	2,38	0,87	2,27	0,90
L-R	Economics	2,79	0,80	2,72	0,76

Source: Election Compass Georgia

Appendix 9: Distribution of supporters' preferences across two ideological dimensions by party preference



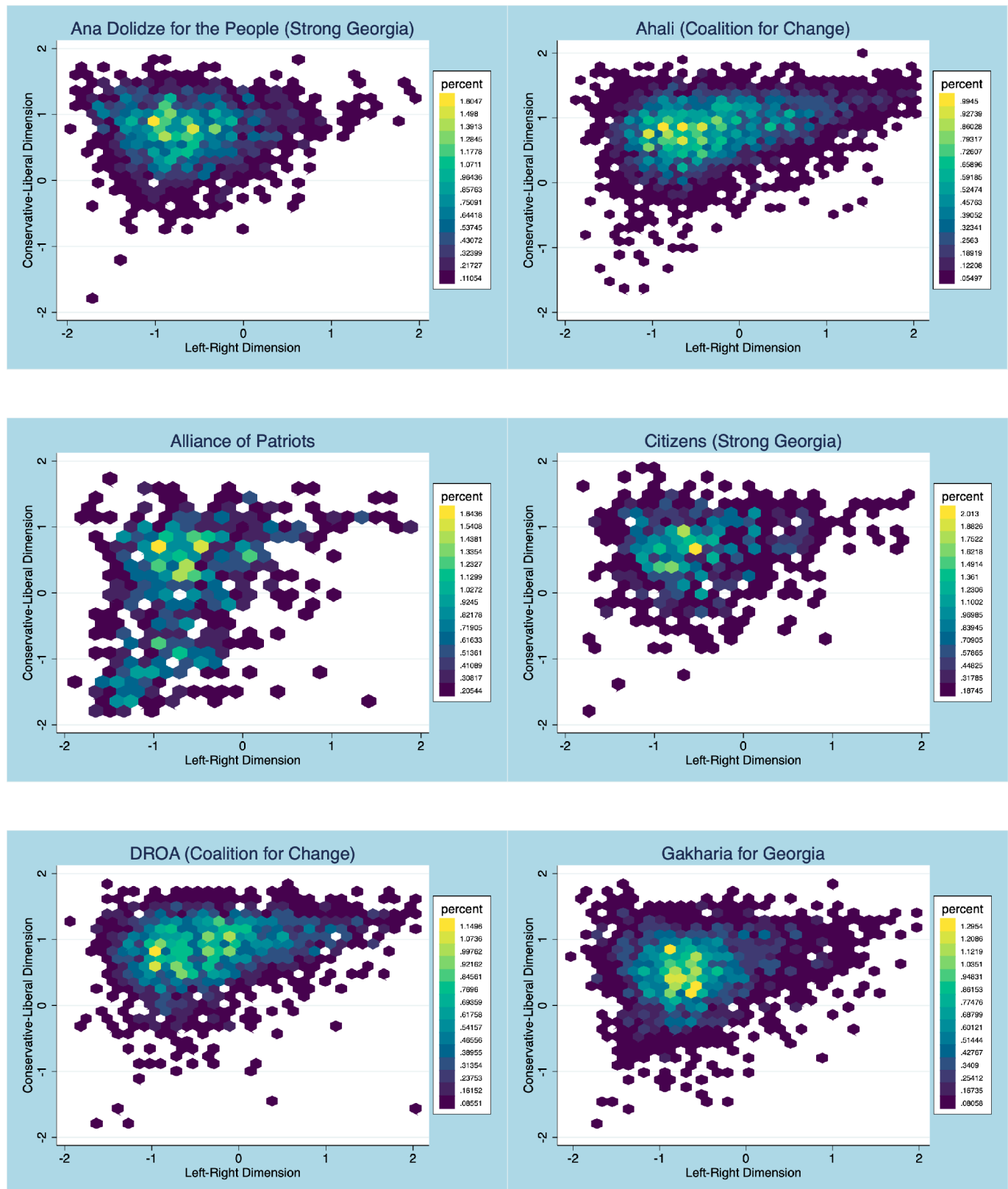


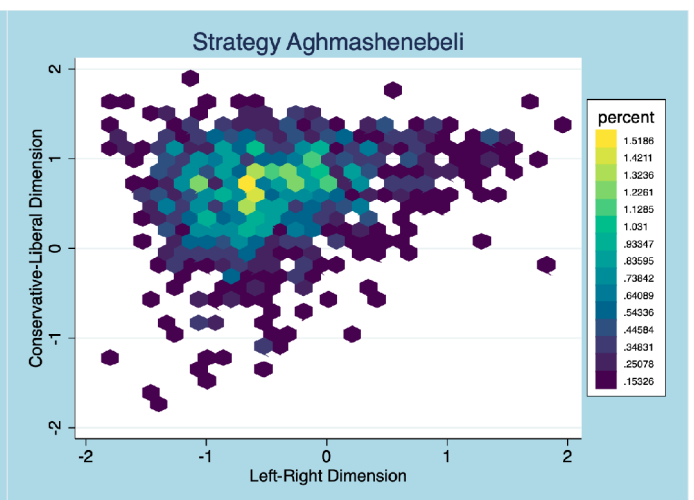
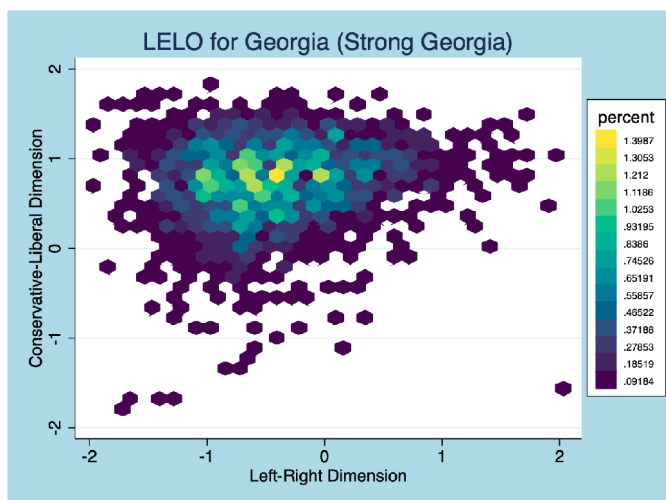
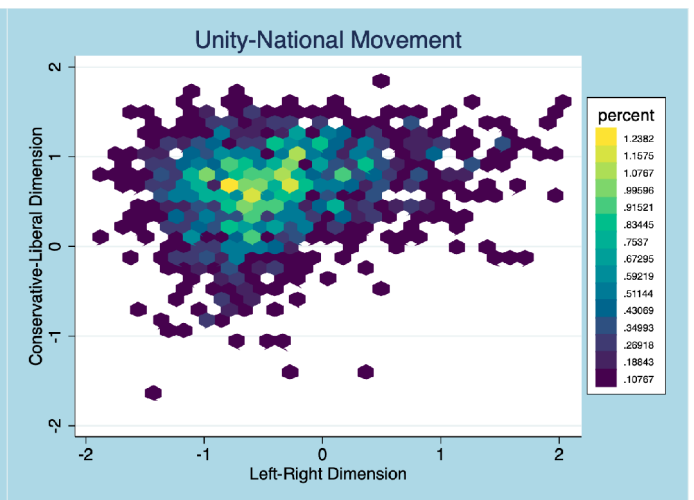
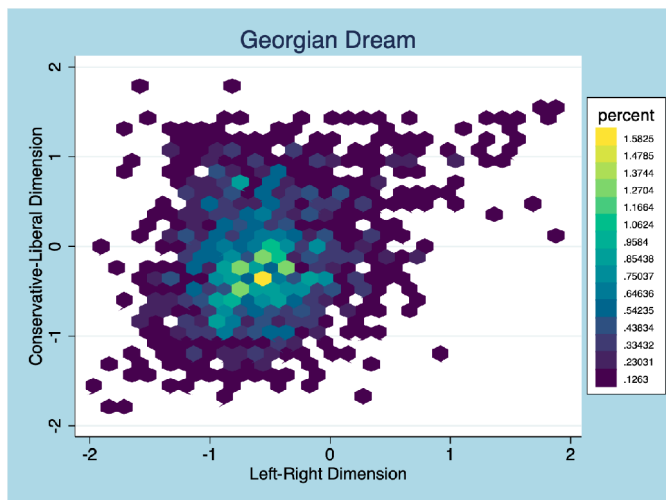
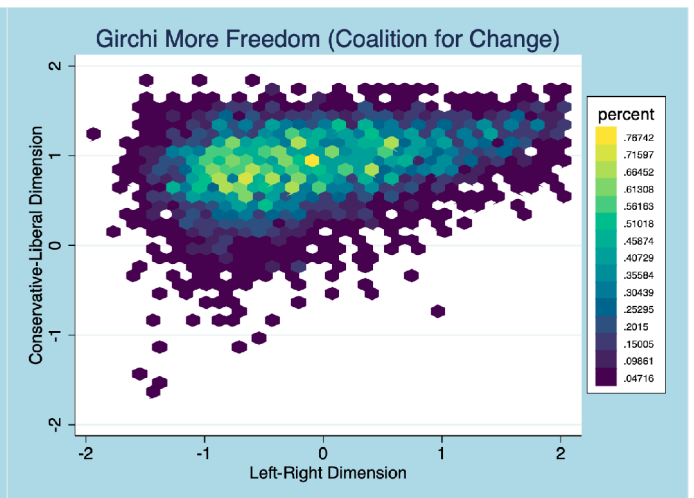
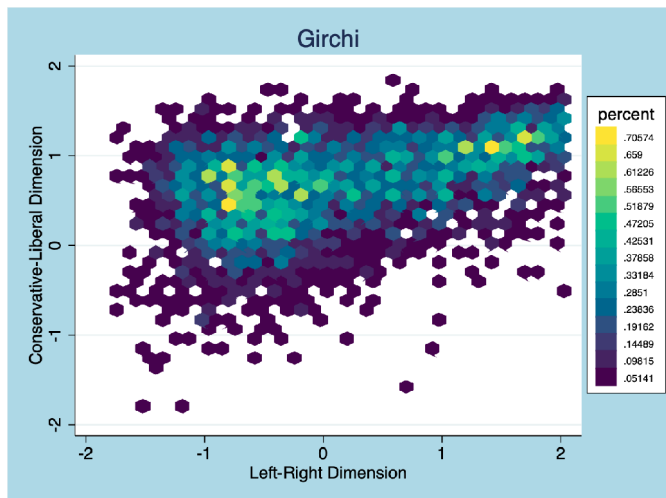


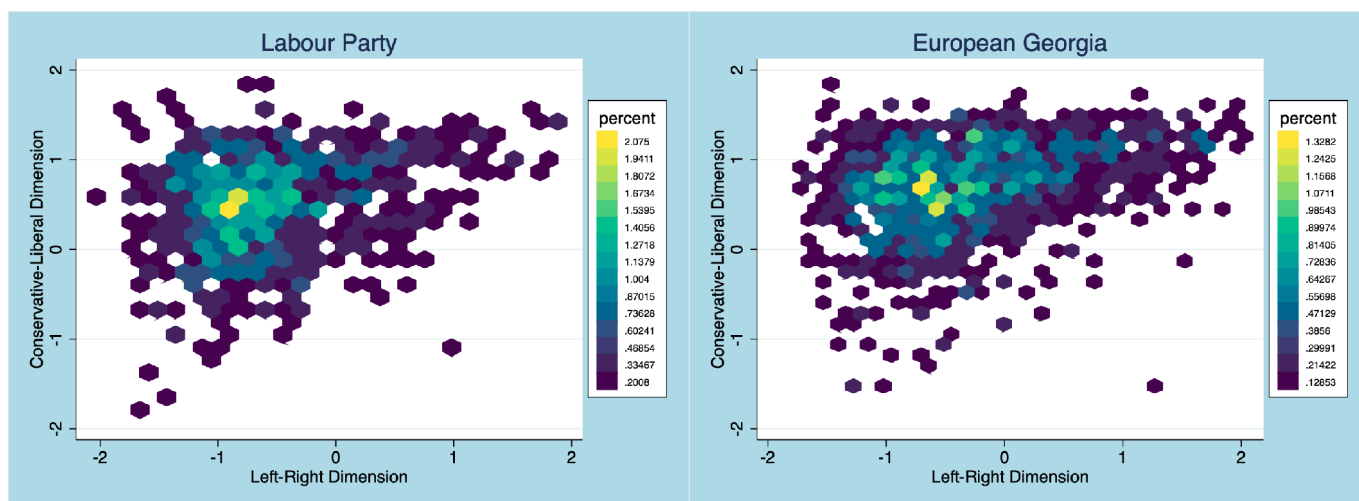
Source: Election Compass Georgia

Note: Distribution shows ideological position of supporters. Vertical lines show an ideological position of a political party

Appendix 10: Ideological distribution of respondents with positive attitudes towards political parties

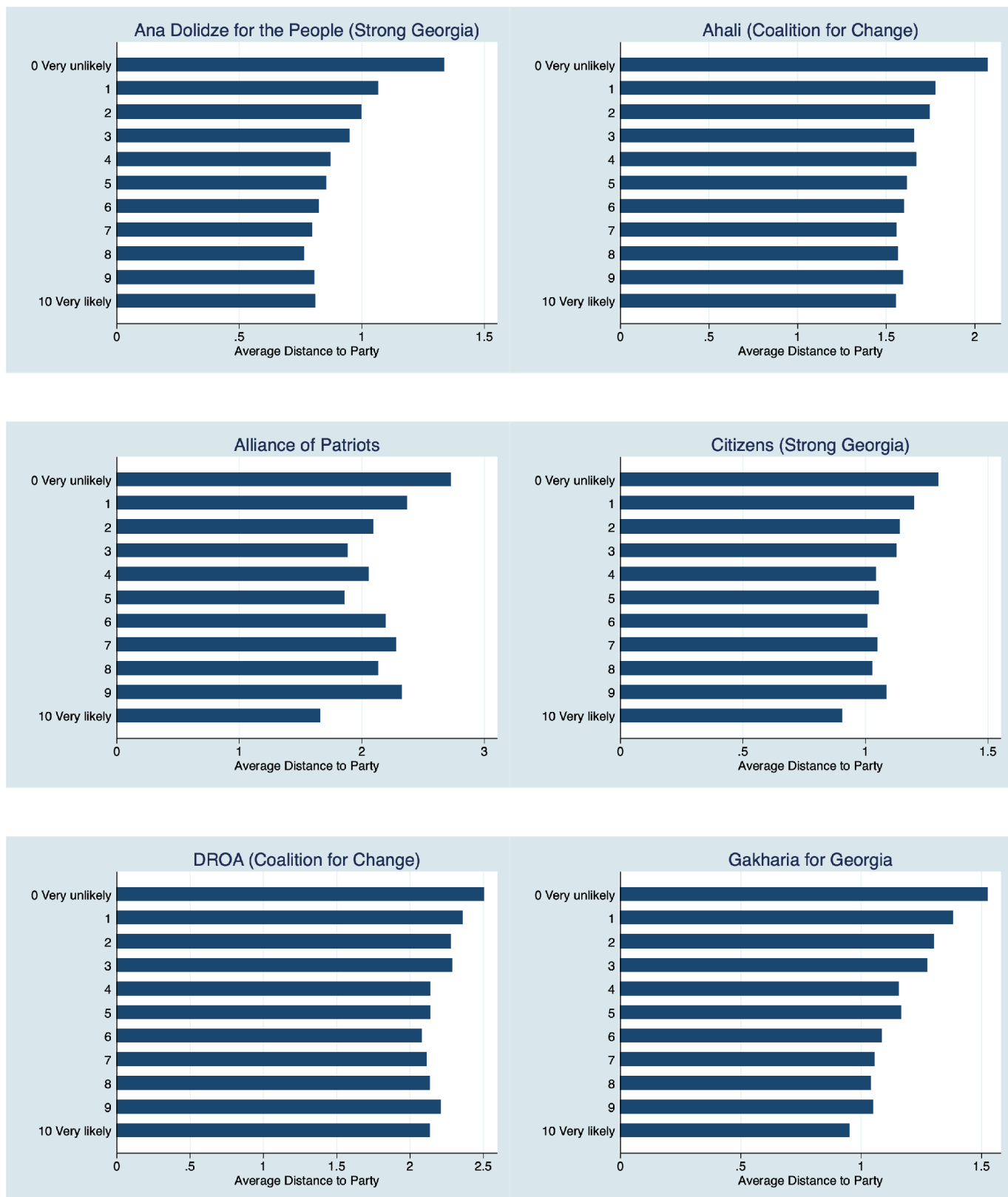


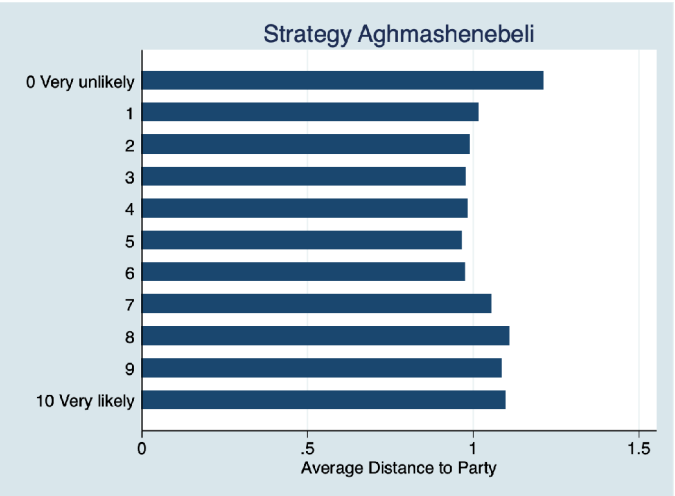
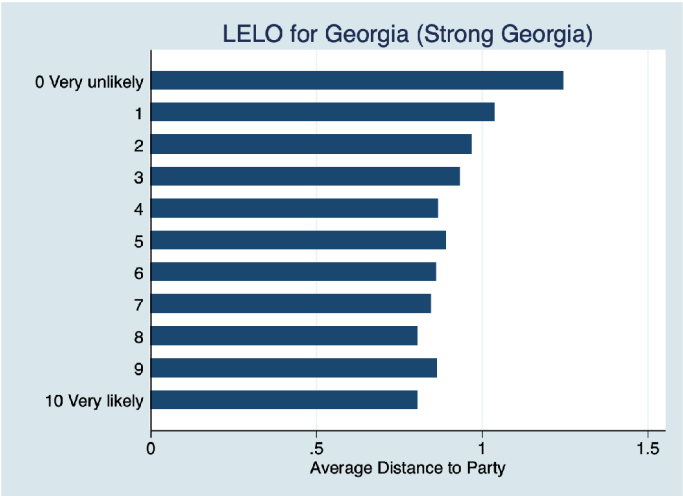
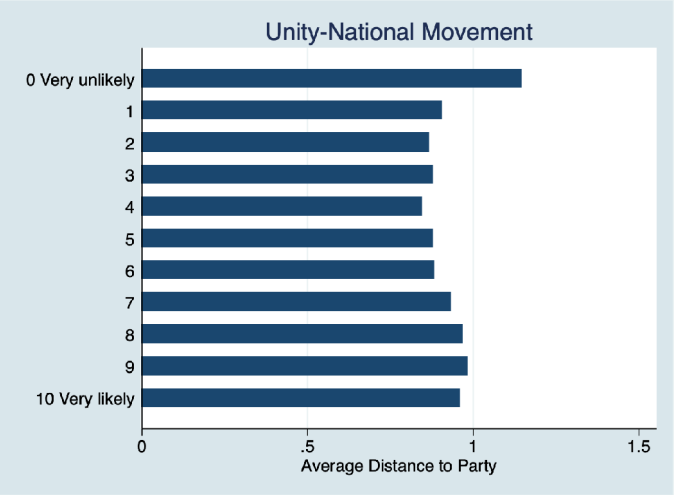
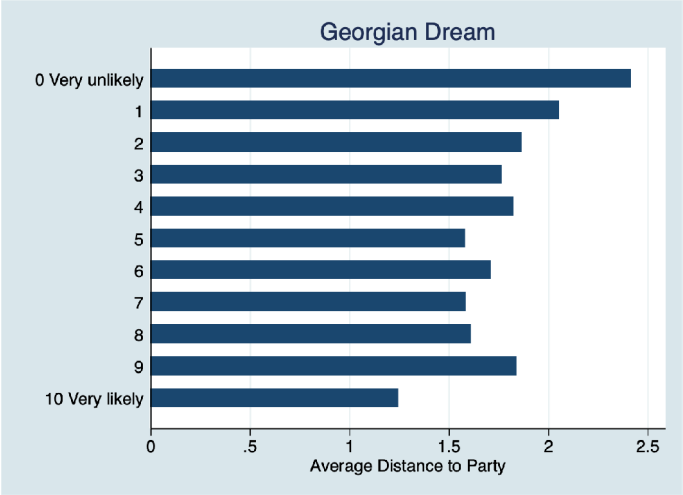
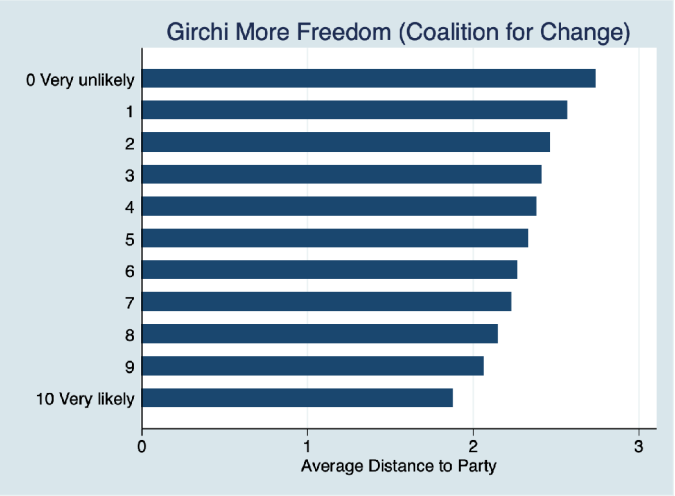
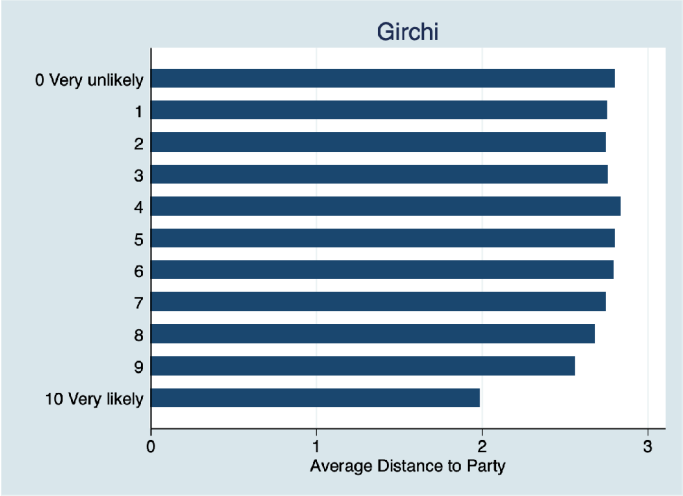


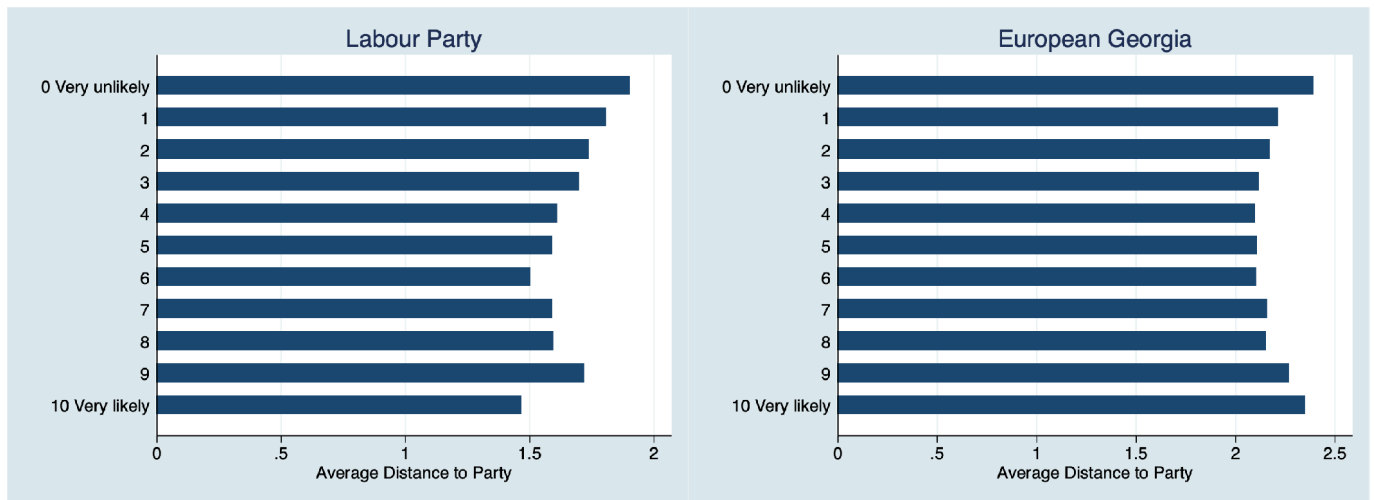


Source: Election Compass Georgia

Appendix 11: Average distance to parties across PTV scores







Source: Election Compass Georgia

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Political Landscape of Georgia

The 2024 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia were fiercely contested, with opposition figures, civil society groups, and ordinary citizens characterizing them as “existential.” Held amid a protracted political crisis triggered by the ruling Georgian Dream government’s controversial legislation—measures widely viewed as curbing civil rights and tightening an authoritarian grip—the elections took place in a polarized environment. Politicians ran on high-stakes platforms, leaving little room for substantive policy debates.

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