



CADGAT

Central Asia Data Gathering and Analysis Team

GENDER AND POLITICS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Central Asia Regional Data Review

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In 2009, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the OSCE Academy established the Central Asia Data-Gathering and Analysis Team (CADGAT). The purpose of CADGAT is to produce new cross-regional data on Central Asia that can be freely used by researchers, journalists, NGOs and government employees inside and outside the region. The project is managed by Kristin Fjaestad and Indra Overland at NUPI. Comments and questions can be sent to: cadgat@nupi.no. The datasets can be found at: www.osce-academy.net/en/cadgat/

Introduction

In addition to bringing together already existing numbers for the Central Asian countries, this data review aims to produce some new figures as well as to provide an overview of the developments over time with regard to gender and politics in Central Asia from independence until today.

The data was collected from October 2011- February 2012 by individual researchers in each of the five countries. Variation in terms of data availability and quality across the countries must be noted. Sources and methods used are listed in footnotes. The report is divided into four parts: gender in governments, parliaments and political parties and descriptions of the gender quotas in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Main findings:

- The revocation of gender quotas after the fall of the Soviet Union has led to a significant reduction in the number of women represented in political institutions at the national level. This is particularly the case for government positions, but also in parliament.
- Women in ministerial positions typically serve as ministers of education and health, but have also held posts such as minister of economy (Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) and justice (Kyrgyzstan). The ministers of the interior, defense and national security have in all five countries exclusively been male since independence.
- The average number of women in Central Asian parliaments today is 17, 2 %.¹ This is just slightly below the world average of 19, 8 %, but above average in the Arab states, which is 14, 7 %.²
- The political party scene in Central Asia is dominated by men. Even in countries with a large number of political parties, such as Kyrgyzstan, there are few women in the party elite.
- Gender quotas have been re-introduced in the electoral laws of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, but not in the other countries.

¹ In cases of a bicameral parliamentary structure, upper and lower houses have been counted together.

² As of March 2012. Source: IPU 2012. Women in parliaments. World Classification: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>
Accessed: 11 June 2012.

1. Gender distribution in Central Asian governments, 1991-2011

	Kazakhstan		Turkmenistan		Uzbekistan		Kyrgyzstan		Tajikistan	
	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women
1991	17	1	9	0	16	0	9	0	17 ³	1
1992	23	1	9	0	16	0	10	1	19	2
1993	25	2	9	0	17	0	10 ⁴	1	19	3
1994	23 21 (Oct) ⁵	1 2	9	0	17	0	10	1	19	3
1995	20	1	9	0	17	0	10	2	19	1
1996	22	2	9	0	17	0	10	2	19	1
1997	22 15 (Oct)	1 1	9	0	17	0	9	1	25	2
1998	17	1	9	0	16	0	9	1	25	2
1999	17 16 (Oct)	2 2	9 (May) ⁶	1	16	0	9	1	25	2
2000	16	2	9	1	16	0	9	1	27	3
2001	15	2	9	1	16	0	11	4	27	3
2002	15 15 (Jan)	2 3	9 ⁷	1	16	0	11	3	27	3
2003	15 16 (June)	3 2	9	1	16	0	11	3	28	2
2004	17	2	9	1	14	0	11	3	27	2
2005	18	3	9	0	14	0	11	1	28	2
2006	20	5	9	0	14	0	12	1	28	2
2007	17	4	9	1	14	0	13	2	23	2
2008	17	1	9	1	14	0	13	2	23	1
2009	17	2	9	1	14	0	12	1	23	1
2010	19	3	10	1	14 ⁸	1	11	3	22	1
2011	19 ⁹	3	9	1	14	1	12	1	22	1

For graphs, see appendix 1.

³ In Tajikistan, women have occupied the following government positions at some point since independence: culture, social affairs, youth, sports and tourism, education, labour and employment, women and family affairs, social security, health, statistics.

⁴ In Kyrgyzstan, women have occupied the following government positions at some point since independence: Education, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Labour and Migration, Social Protection.

⁵ A new Cabinet was appointed in October 1994 with a reduction in total ministerial posts from 23 to 21.

⁶ In Turkmenistan, women have occupied the following government positions at some point since independence: Textile Industry, deputy prime minister, vice-minister for culture, TV and radio.

⁷ From 2002-2004, the governor of Ahal province held the position of deputy prime-minister.

⁸ Uzbekistan did not have any female minister until Galina Saidova was appointed Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, Investments, and Trade on 28 December 2010. On 1 August 2011, she was transferred to the position of the Minister of Economy.

⁹ In Kazakhstan, women have occupied the following government positions at some point since independence: Economy and Finance, Health and Education and Environmental Protection.

2. Gender distribution in Central Asian parliaments, 1991 – 2011

(figures are given for the year of elections)

	Kazakhstan		Turkmenistan		Uzbekistan		Kyrgyzstan		Tajikistan	
	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women
1991	####		175 ¹⁰	13	####		342	26	181 ¹¹	5
1992	####		####		####		####		####	
1993	####		####		####		####		####	
1994	####		50	9	####		####		63	8
1995	107 ¹²	13	####		245	16	105	5	####	
1996	####		####		####		####		####	
1997	####		####		####		####		####	
1998	####		####		####		####		####	
1999	116	11	50	13	####		####		####	
2000	####		####		250	19	60	5	97 ¹³	15 ¹⁴
2001	####		####		####		####		####	
2002	####		####		####		####		####	
2003	####		####		####		####		####	
2004	116	10	50	14	####		####		####	
2005	####		####		250 ¹⁵	36	75	0	97	20 ¹⁷
2006	####		####		####		####		####	
2007	154	19	####		####		90	23	####	
2008	####		125	22	####		####		####	
2009	####		####		####		####		####	
2010	####		####		250	48	120	28	97	17 ¹⁸
2011	####		####		####		####		####	
2012	154	26 ¹⁹	####		####		####		####	

10 According to the 1992 Constitution, there were two parliamentary bodies in Turkmenistan, a People's Council or Halk Maslahaty (2507 delegates) and an Assembly or Mejlis (50 seats). In late 2003 a new law was adopted reducing the powers of the Mejlis and making the Halk Maslahaty the supreme legislative organ. The People's Council was abolished by a new constitution drafted in 2008, making the Assembly/Mejlis one body (but apparently still "rubberstamp") again.

11 The Majlisi Oli (the Tajik parliament) comprises of two houses; Majlisi Namoyandagon (lower house) and Majlisi Milli (upper house). Initially, Majlisi Oli had a single house, but a Constitution adopted in 1994 included a provision about a law on creation of professional parliament. Majlisi Namoyandagon is professional and permanently acting house, elected by population for 5 years. Majlisi Milli has several sessions a year, both elected and appointed for 5 years.

12 The Parliament of Kazakhstan consists of two Chambers: Senate and Mazhilis. The Senate is formed by the deputies elected on two persons from each region, cities of the republican importance and capitals on a joint meeting of the deputies of all representative bodies according to the region, city of the republican importance and capital of the Republic. 7 deputies are elected by the President for the Senate. Half of elected Senate deputies is re-elected each three years. The term of the Senate deputies is 6 years. The majority of the deputies in the Mazhilis are elected in single-mandate districts based on the administrative-territorial division of Kazakhstan and with approximately equal number of voters. The rest of the deputies are elected on the basis of party lists according to a system of proportional representation and on a territory of united national electoral district. The term of the Mazhilis deputies is 5 years.

13 Majlisi Namoyandagon (lower house) consists of 64 deputies and the Majlisi Milli (upper house) consists of 34.

14 11 women in the lower house and 4 women in the upper house.

15 Before the December 2008 elections, the number of seats was changed from 50 to 65. Due to the adoption of a new constitution, the number of seats was again changed to 125.

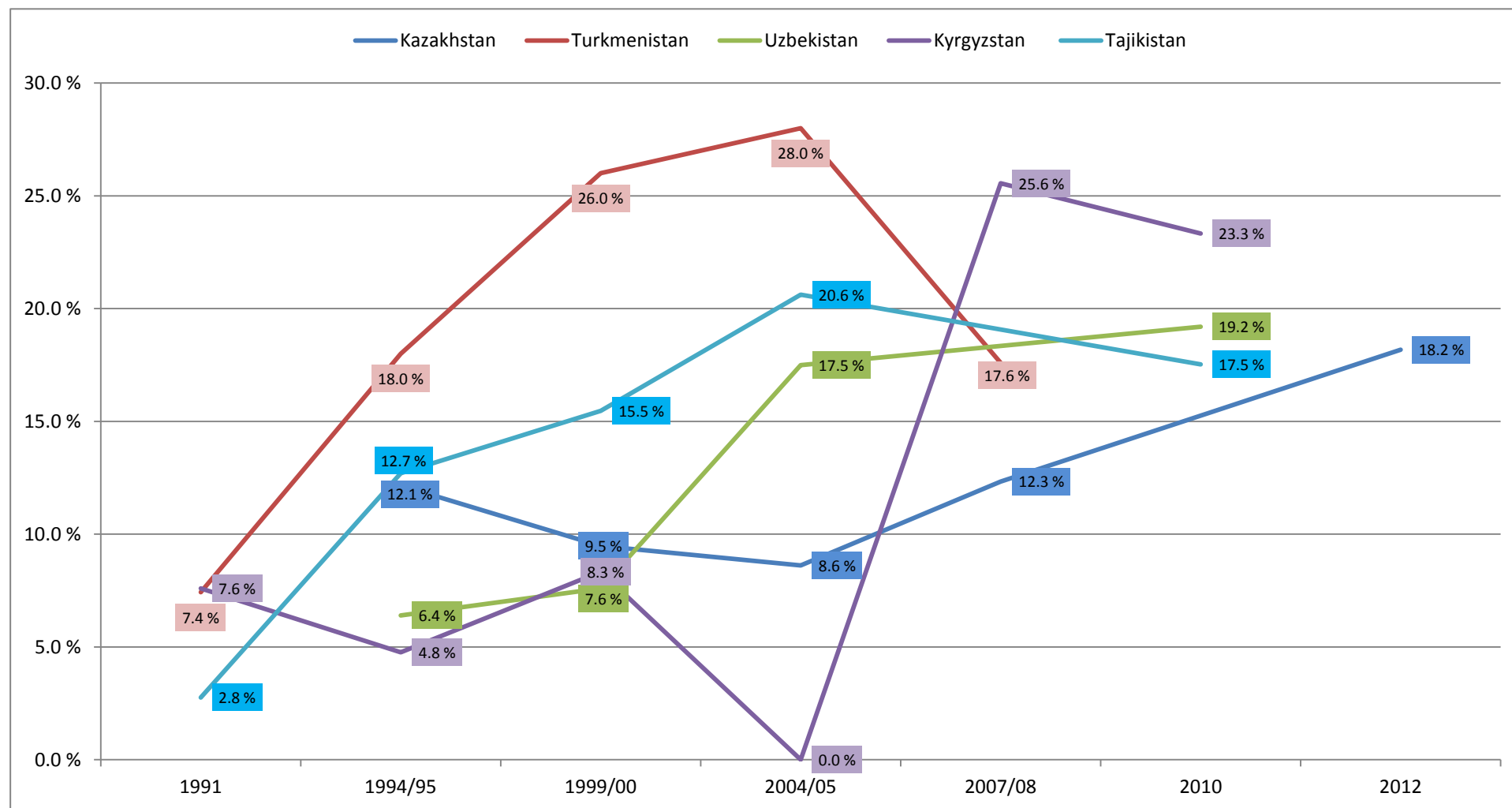
16 Uzbekistan introduced a bicameral parliamentary structure in 2005 with a lower chamber consisting of 120 deputies and the Senate consisting of 100 senators, whereof 84 were elected by regional and local parliaments and 16 appointed by the President.

17 12 women in the lower house and 8 in the upper house.

18 12 women in the lower house and 5 women in the upper house.

19 <http://www.parlam.kz/ru/history>, accessed: 13 July 2012.

Figure 2.1 Representation of women in Central Asian parliaments



3. Gender and political parties

Uzbekistan

There are 4 parties in Uzbekistan: “Adolat” (Justice), Democratic Party of Uzbekistan “Milliy Tiklanish” (National Revival), Movement of Entrepreneurs and Businessmen – Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, and Peoples Democratic Party of Uzbekistan. None of them is led by a female chair.

Kyrgyzstan

Out of 29 parties that formally competed in the most recent parliamentary elections (October 2010), only two had women leaders - Union of Peoples of Kyrgyzstan (Gulmiza Seitkazieva) and Zhashasyn Kyrgyzstan (Toktaiym Umetalieva).²⁰

Turkmenistan

According to the new Constitution from 2008, Turkmenistan is no longer defined as a one-party state. In practice, however, there is only one political party, The Democratic Party of Turkmenistan, which is led by President Berdymukhammedov.

Kazakhstan

Out of the 6 major parties in Kazakhstan, 5 have women represented in the party leadership. During the elections to Majilis in 2007, women-candidates in party lists were between 6,1% (Kazakhstan Social-Democratic Party-“Ayil”) and 30% (“Ruhaniat”). The dominant party, Nur Otan, had 14,3% women on the party lists.

Tajikistan

There are 8 parties in Tajikistan but none has a female leader. Parties claim to have significant number of female members. Interestingly, Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (Partiya Islamskogo Vozrozhdeniya Tajikistana) has the highest percentage of female members – 48%. The share of female members for Communist Party is 37% and ruling People’s Democratic Party is about 30% (as of Sep 2011).

²⁰ Certainly, the number of formally registered parties is far greater than 29. However, most efforts to get the full list of parties tend to lead to dubious conclusions, since many officially registered parties are believed to not actively participate in politics. Thus, focusing on parties that have evidently been active in the political process seems to provide more accurate data.

4. Gender quotas and electoral legislation

Gender quotas have been re-introduced into the electoral legislation in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, but not in the other three countries.

Kyrgyzstan

Article 60-3 of the Constitutional Law on Elections requires that each party that runs for the parliamentary election should propose a list of its potential candidates for parliamentary seats. In this list no more than 70% of persons should be of one gender, i.e., the law requires at least 30% representation of each gender. The gender quota was first introduced in 2007 parliamentary elections, after the experience of having no women in the 75-member parliament in 2005-2007.

Non-compliance with this rule results in the rejection of a party's registration for elections. Thus, in the December 2007 elections six parties were rejected the registration for elections on the basis of non-compliance with the gender proportion requirement.²¹ However, this stipulation only refers to the initial lists proposed before the elections. As a matter of practice, though, some members of the winning parties tend to withdraw from the list, thus vacating the seat to next person/s on the list. The Central Election Commission resolution #170 allowed the replacement to happen without respect to the gender/ethnicity quotas.²²

Uzbekistan

In accordance with the Law of Uzbekistan "On Elections to Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan" as of 29.08.2003, at least 30% of nominated candidates for lower house elections from political parties must be female. The correct representation of female nominated candidates is checked by the Central Electoral Commission. The parties fulfill this quota requirement without major problems but the percentage of women eventually elected remains much lower 30% mark for nominated candidates. This probably indicates that parties have to fulfill the female representation requirement sometimes with candidates who do not have a good prospect of becoming elected.

²¹ More information on p.5 of OSCE election report: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/kyrgyzstan/29857>

²² Find this resolution, or p. 11 of OSCE election report: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/74649>

Appendix 1. Representation of women in Central Asian governments since independence (country by country)

Figure 1. Kazakhstan

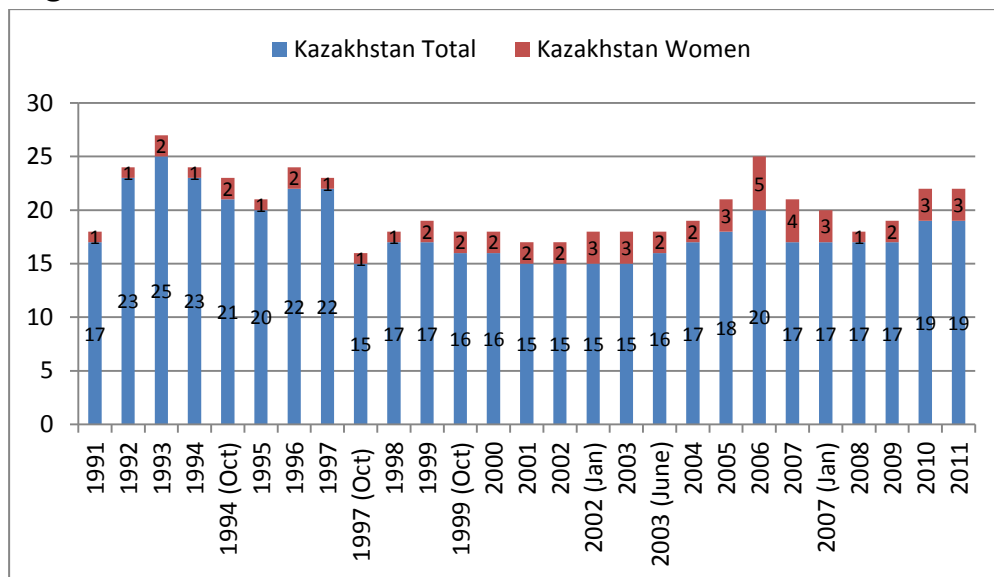


Figure 2. Kyrgyzstan

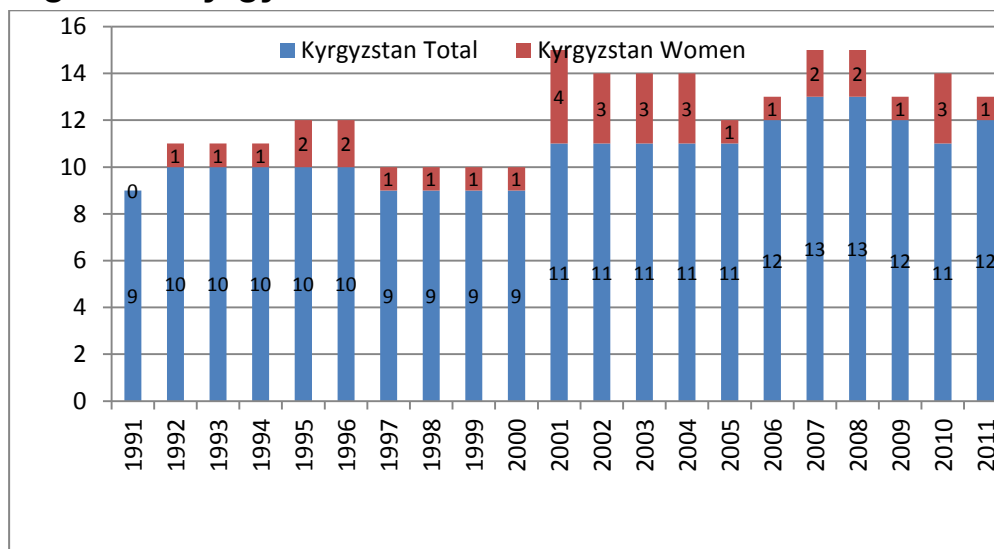


Figure 3. Tajikistan

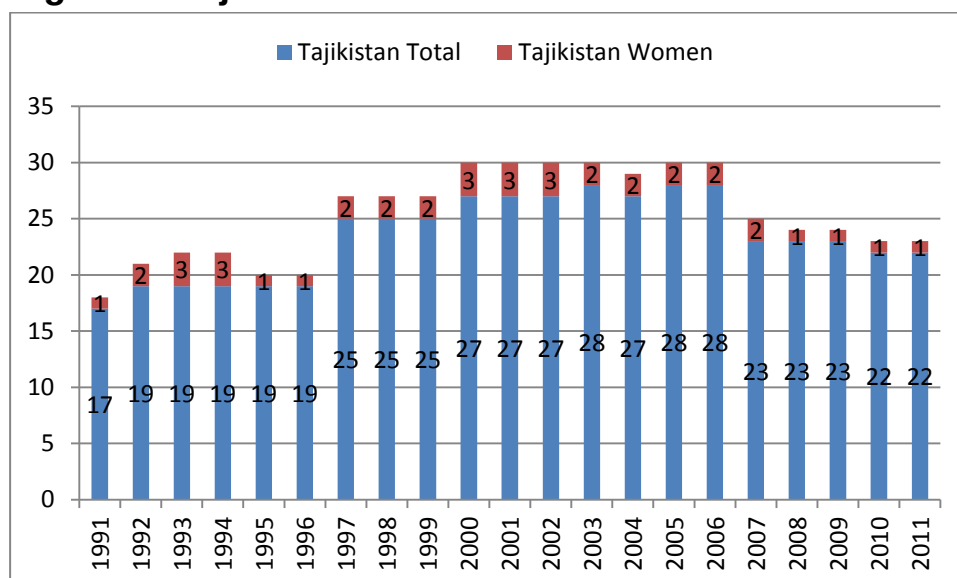


Figure 4. Turkmenistan

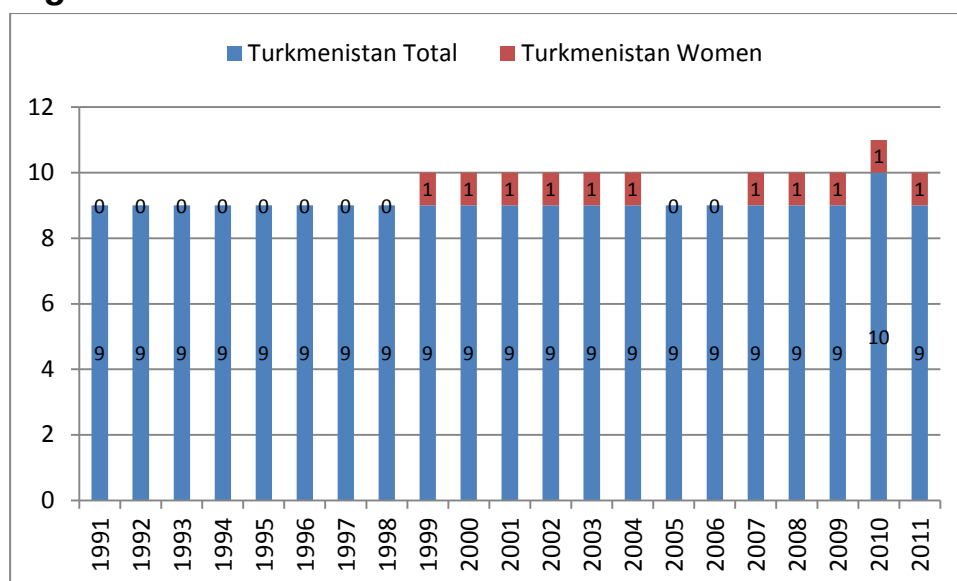


Figure 5. Uzbekistan

