



CADGAT

Central Asia Data Gathering and Analysis Team

GENDER AND POLITICS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Central Asia Regional Data Review

No. 6, August 2012

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 and the reports are edited 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 available figures for the Central Asian countries, this data review aims to produce some new data, while also providing an overview of developments with regard to gender and politics from independence until today.

The data were collected between October 2011 and 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 in 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, particularly for government positions, but also in parliament.
- Women in ministerial positions typically serve as ministers of education and health, but some women have also held posts such as minister of economy (Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) and justice (Kyrgyzstan). Ministers of the interior, defence and national security have, in all five countries, been exclusively male since independence.
- The average share of women in Central Asian parliaments today is 17.2%.¹ This is just slightly below the world average of 19.8%, but above the average for the Arab states, which is 14.7%.²
- The political party scene in Central Asia is dominated by men. Even in countries with many political parties, like 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 of Central Asia.

¹ With bicameral parliaments, the 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.

Table 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	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 ministerial 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 ministerial 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/ministerial 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 There were no female ministers in Uzbekistan 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 Minister of Economy.

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

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

	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 ¹⁶	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 The 1992 Constitution of Turkmenistan provided for two parliamentary bodies: 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 the new constitution drafted in 2008, again making the Assembly/Mejlis one body (but apparently still a 'rubberstamp' function).

¹¹ The Majlisi Oli (the Tajik Parliament) has two chambers: the Majlisi Namoyandagon (lower house) and the Majlisi Milli (upper house). Initially, Majlisi Oli had a single chamber, but the 1994 Constitution included a provision for a law on the creation of professional parliament. The Majlisi Namoyandagon is professional and permanently acting chamber, its members elected by popular vote for 5-year terms. The Majlisi Milli has several sessions a year, and its members are both elected and appointed, for 5-year terms.

¹² The Parliament of Kazakhstan consists of two Chambers: the Senate and the Mazhilis. The Senate is formed of deputies elected on the basis of two from each region, cities of the republic-level importance and capitals, on a joint meeting of the deputies of all representative bodies. Seven deputies are appointed by the President of the Senate. Elected senate deputies sit for 6-year terms, with half of their number up for election every three years. The majority of the deputies in the Mazhilis are elected from single-mandate districts that are based on the administrative-territorial division of Kazakhstan and have approximately equal numbers of voters. The remaining deputies are elected on the basis of party lists according to a system of proportional representation and on the territory of united national electoral districts. The term of Mazhilis deputies is 5 years.

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

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

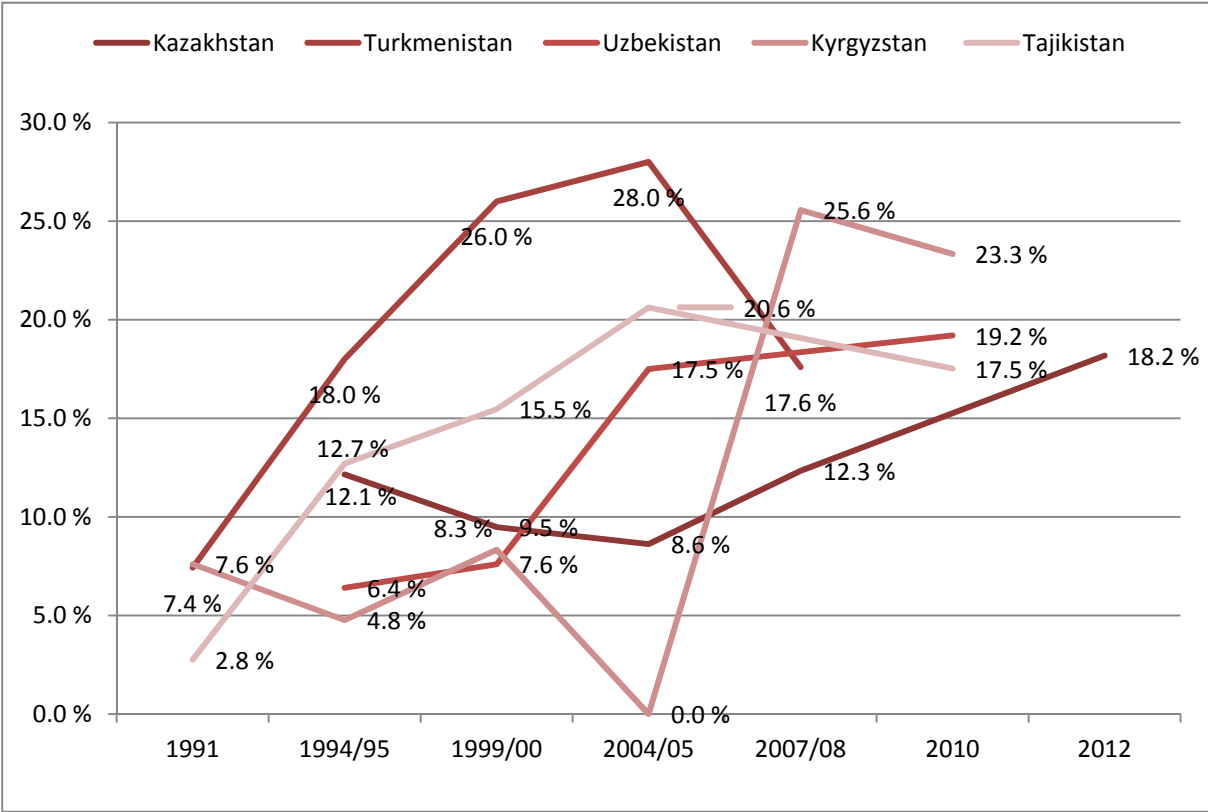
¹⁵ Prior to the December 2008 elections, the number of seats was changed from 50 to 65; then, with the adoption of a new constitution, the number was again changed to 125.

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 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.

Figure 1. Representation of women in Central Asian parliaments



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

3. Gender and political parties

Uzbekistan

There are four political parties in Uzbekistan: 'Adolat' (Justice), Democratic Party of Uzbekistan 'Milliy Tiklanish' (National Revival), Movement of Entrepreneurs and Businessmen – Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, and People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan. None of them has a female leader.

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 (2008) Constitution, Turkmenistan is no longer defined as a one-party state. In practice, however, there is only one political party, the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan, headed by President Berdymukhammedov.

Kazakhstan

Out of the six major parties in Kazakhstan, five have women represented in the party leadership. At the Majilis elections in 2007, the proportion of women candidates on party lists ranged between 6.1% (Kazakhstan Social-Democratic Party 'Ayil') and 30% ('Ruhaniat'). The dominant party, Nur Otan, had 14.3% women on its party lists.

Tajikistan

There are eight political parties in Tajikistan, but none has a female leader, although the parties claim to have significant female membership. Interestingly, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (Partiya Islamskogo Vozrozhdeniya Tajikistana) has the highest percentage of female members – 48%. For the Communist Party, the corresponding figure is 37%, and for the ruling People's Democratic Party approx. 30% (as of September 2011).

²⁰ Certainly, the number of formally registered parties is far greater than 29. However, efforts to get the full list of parties tend to lead to uncertain conclusions, since many officially registered parties are believed to not actively participate in politics. Focusing on parties that have clearly been active in the political process should 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 each party intending to run for parliamentary elections to propose a list of its potential candidates for parliamentary seats. On each list no more than 70% of the candidates should be of the same gender: i.e., the law requires at least 30% representation of each gender. The gender quota was first introduced in 2007 parliamentary elections, after there had been no women in the 75-member parliament from 2005 to 2007.

Non-compliance with this rule results in the rejection of a party's registration for elections, and in the December 2007 elections six parties were denied registration for elections due to non-compliance with the gender proportion requirement.²¹ However, this stipulation refers only to the initial lists proposed prior to elections. In practice, some members of the winning parties tend to withdraw, thus leaving the seat to the next person on the list. According to Central Election Commission resolution #170, such replacement may take place without respect to gender or ethnicity quotas.²²

Uzbekistan

In accordance with the Law of Uzbekistan 'On Elections to Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan' of 29.08.2003, at least 30% of candidates nominated by political parties in elections to the lower house must be female. The correct representation of female nominated candidates is checked by the Central Electoral Commission. The parties have fulfilled this quota requirement without major problems, but the percentage of women actually elected has remained far below the 30% mark – which probably indicates that parties sometimes fulfil the requirement with female candidates who have poor chances of getting elected.

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

²² Resolution on 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 2. Kazakhstan

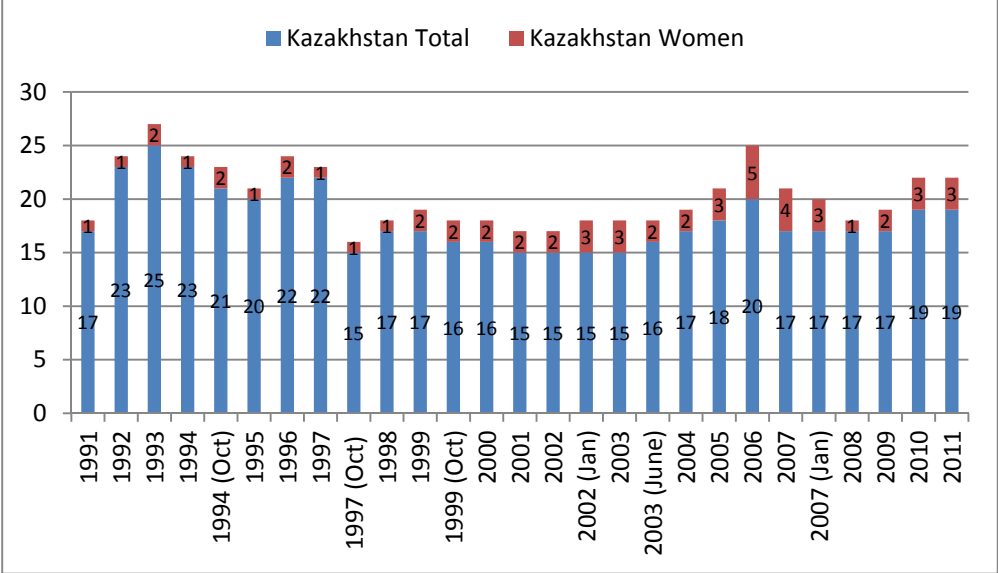


Figure 3. Kyrgyzstan

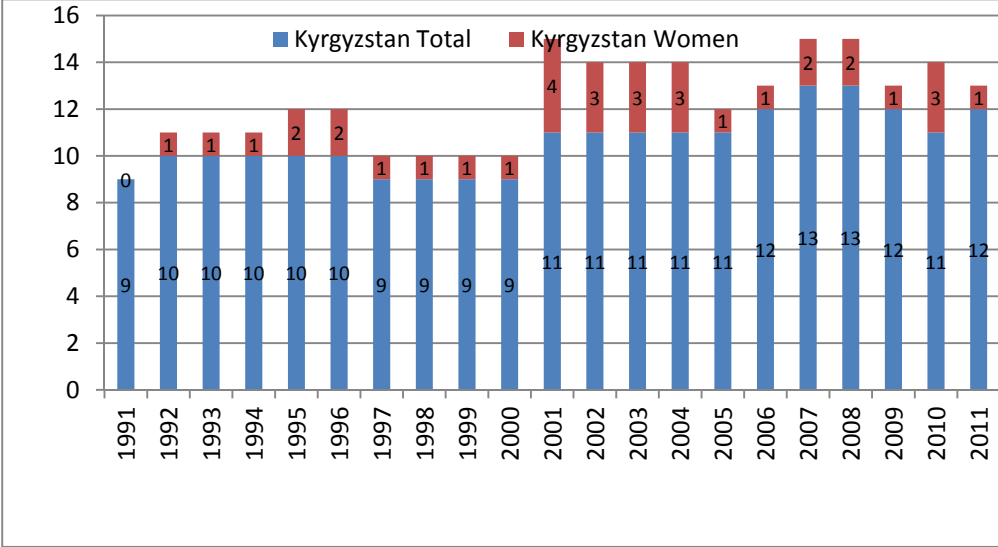


Figure 4. Tajikistan

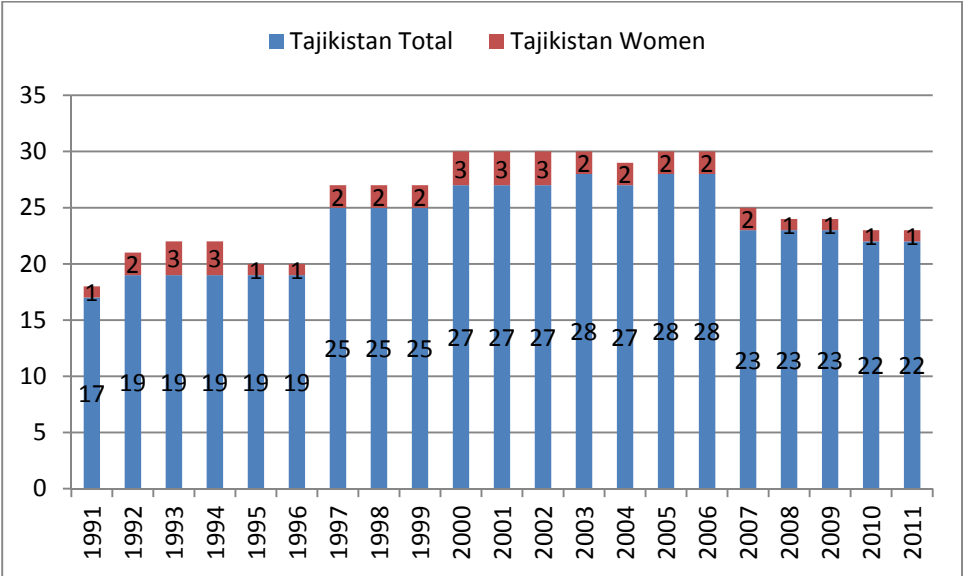


Figure 5. Turkmenistan

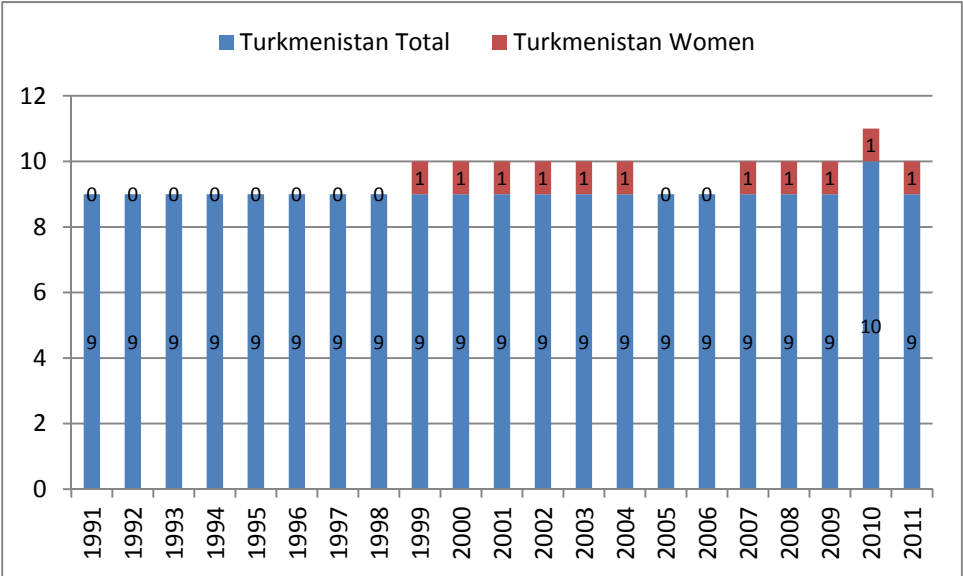


Figure 6. Uzbekistan

