

ASSESSMENT AND MAPPING OF ARIDITY CONDITIONS IN ZANGILAN, JABRAYIL AND FIZULI DISTRICTS USING MULTISPECTRAL INDEXES

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Abstract

Aridity is the most destructive phenomenon for the environment. Weather-related disasters affected 2.8 billion people, 50% of them from aridity between 1967 and 1991. Because aridity cover large areas, they are difficult to control using traditional systems.

Solving these problems is possible with the help of geographic information technologies, as well as remote sensing of the Earth, which provide objective information in the form of multispectral images of the earth's surface.

Currently, a large number of indices have been developed to determine the type of covering surface and its condition, based on the calculation of the ratios of reflection coefficients in various areas of the electromagnetic range.

The main purpose of the paper is to highlight the potential use of temperature condition indices to determine the degree of aridity of a research area based on satellite imagery data over an extended period.

The article discusses the issue of determining the degree of aridity of the research area using the temperature condition index TCI. Based on Landsat satellite images, electronic maps of TCI index values were constructed in the territory of 3 regions included in the southwestern region of Azerbaijan: Zangilan, Jabrayil and Fizuli districts.

The results were analyzed, and the entire territory, according to the calculated index values by using the ArcGIS 10.6 program, was divided into 5 zones with different aridity values - from extreme drought to its absence.

Satellite images were taken for 4 years to determine the dynamics: 1987, 2004, 2013 and 2023. A pairwise (for each period considered) comparison of data was made. It is shown that the driest seasons are currently occurring in this area. Areas with a pronounced change in the situation for the worse are indicated.

Keywords: aridity, remote sensing, Landsat, TCI multispectral index, Azerbaijan, southwestern region

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Introduction

Aridity is one of the most significant impacts of climate change and one of the world's most serious natural disasters. It is recognized worldwide that this has an adverse impact on agricultural production, which plays an important role in the economies of countries. The effects of aridity directly affect crop yields, and a negative impact looks set to continue in the near future [1].

Currently, the issue of monitoring aridity in agriculture using satellite data is of great relevance.

Azerbaijan can be considered as one of the most affected countries due to the complex climate structure, especially climate changes due to global warming. Azerbaijan ranks 18th in the world in terms of the risk of severe aridity until 2040, said Murad Jamalov, a representative of the Space Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Azercosmos" under the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport. "According to climate models, it is predicted that in 2020-2040 the temperature will increase by 0.5-2.5 degrees, and the amount of precipitation will decrease by 10-20%," Jamalov said [2].

Water scarcity is a serious problem faced by farmers in semi-arid climates or in climate types with distinct wet and dry seasons, such as the Mediterranean or Caspian lowlands. Less obviously, this could lead to a reduction in agricultural production where precipitation is evenly distributed throughout the year.

Materials and methods

Both traditional methods based on remote sensing of the Earth's surface are used to monitor drought. Traditional methods for determining aridity and its parameters use meteorological data and include measurements of precipitation, soil and air surface temperature, soil and air humidity, etc. This technique is limited by spatial boundaries, and, as a rule, by the allocated budget.

Along with traditional methods, methods for processing satellite images of the Earth's surface are becoming increasingly widespread. The main advantage is the ability to process large surface areas, as well as the availability of a large amount of initial data for processing. Satellite images are data on the reflectivity of areas of the Earth's surface obtained in one or more spectral channels.

As a result of research, a large number of methods have been proposed based on indexes, which are fractional-linear combinations of spectral channels of the visible, near-infrared and short-wave infrared spectral ranges.

Various indices make it possible to monitor aridity under different environmental conditions. However, there is no universal index suitable for all circumstances. The National Drought Mitigation Center has compiled a list of aridity indexes used in the United States [1].

There are quite a large number of indexes that are used to determine the degree of aridity using indirect data. Although it is impossible to determine the amount of precipitation from space data, it is possible to determine the condition of agricultural crops from the predicted vegetation cover and temperature conditions of the area. Therefore, when using remote sensing methods, the main signs of drought are precisely these parameters and their changes as a result of the development of aridity. Normalized vegetation index NDVI, brightness or physical surface temperature, and combinations of these parameters are usually used as primary data. Indexes such as SPI (standard precipitation index) and LST (Landsat Surface Temperature) are widely used. SPI provides a practical way to identify dry seasons using total cumulative precipitation data for a specific region [3]. The LST index is an important geophysical parameter in global energy balance studies, hydrological modeling, crop and vegetation monitoring, and extreme heat events such as volcanic eruptions or forest fires [4].

An alternative indicator of aridity that can be supported by remote sensing data may be vegetation characteristics such as crop and pasture productivity [5].

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration NOAA has developed the Advanced Very High Resolution Radiometer AVHRR. The radiometer is used to determine the vegetation condition index VCI and the temperature condition index TCI. These indexes are useful for detecting and monitoring aridity over large areas [6].

An increase in leaf temperature is an indicator of critical plant moisture, which precedes the onset of aridity. Increasing the thermal response of a plant leaf can occur even when the plants are still green to minimize water loss through evaporation. Critical moisture content in plants occurs when the need for water exceeds its actual content in the soil.

Temperature-related aridity can be defined using the TCI index. This value can be calculated from satellite data and indicates a sharp decrease in soil moisture, which has put severe pressure on vegetation [7].

TCI values can range from 0 (extreme aridity) to 100 (no aridity). Based on the index values, the study area is divided into categories shown in Table 1.

Table 1. TCI Index Values and Corresponding Categories

TCI Index values	Category
0÷10	Extreme aridity
10÷20	Severe aridity
20÷30	Moderate aridity
30÷40	Mild aridity
40÷100	No aridity

The LST surface temperature is calculated from data from bands 10 (TIRS) and 6 (SWIR1). Next, based on the calculated temperature value, as well as the minimum and maximum values for a certain period, the TCI index itself is calculated [5, 6]:

$$TCI = \frac{LST_{max} - LST}{LST_{max} - LST_{min}} * 100 \%$$

Here LST = current temperature value in °C, LST_{max} and LST_{min} are the maximum and minimum temperature values for a certain period.

Results and discussion

To create electronic maps with the TCI index, LST data for 1987, 2004, 2013 and 2023 were taken. After calculation, the entire research area was divided into 5 categories in accordance with the index values (see Table 1).

Electronic maps with TCI index values for 1987, 2004, 2013 and 2023 shown in Fig. 1-4. Next to each figure is a table with the area occupied by each TCI category (in hectares and as a percentage of the total area of all three districts).

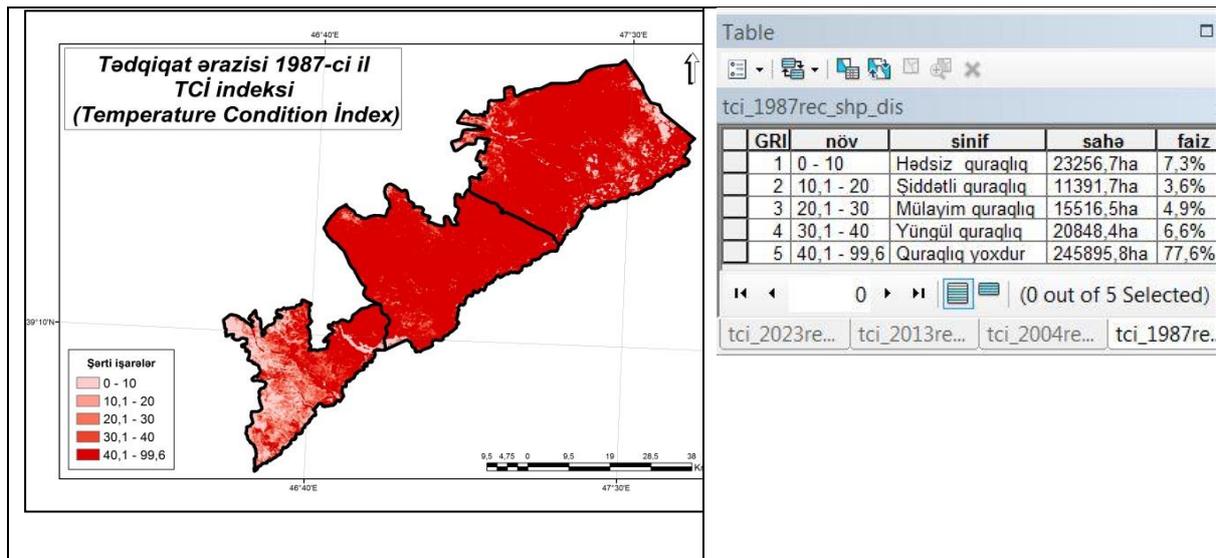


Fig. 1. Map of the research area, based on the 1987 TCI index values

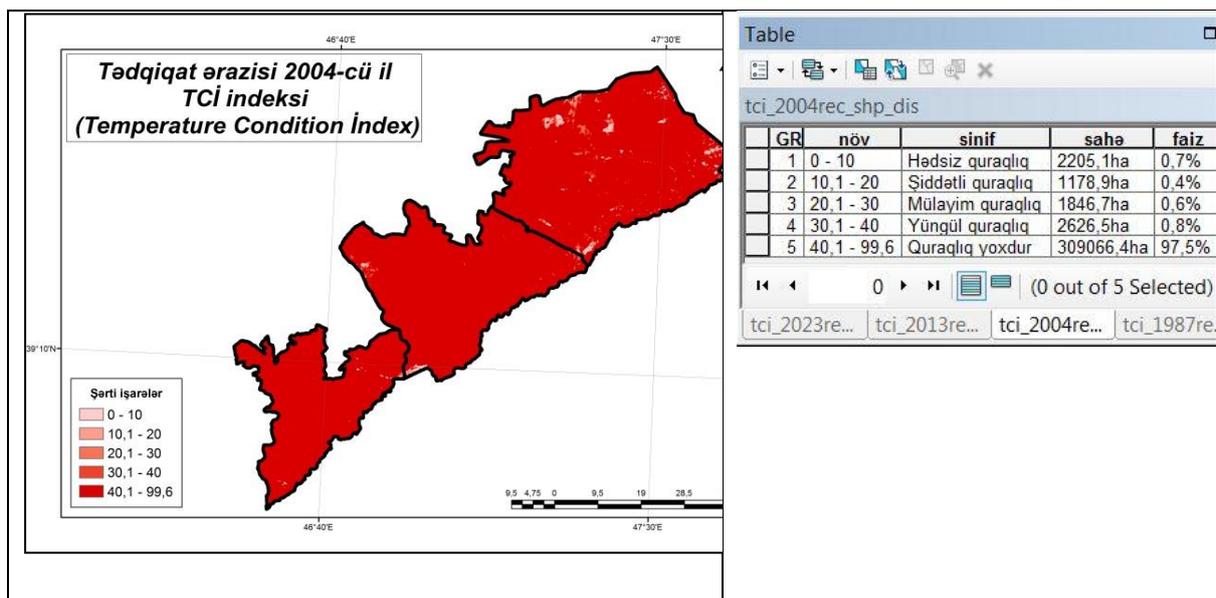
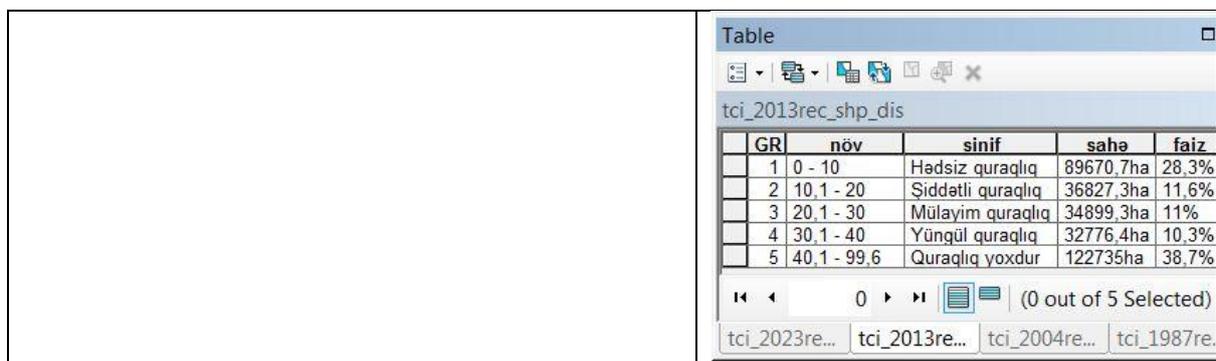


Fig. 2. Map of the research area, built according to the 2004 TCI index values



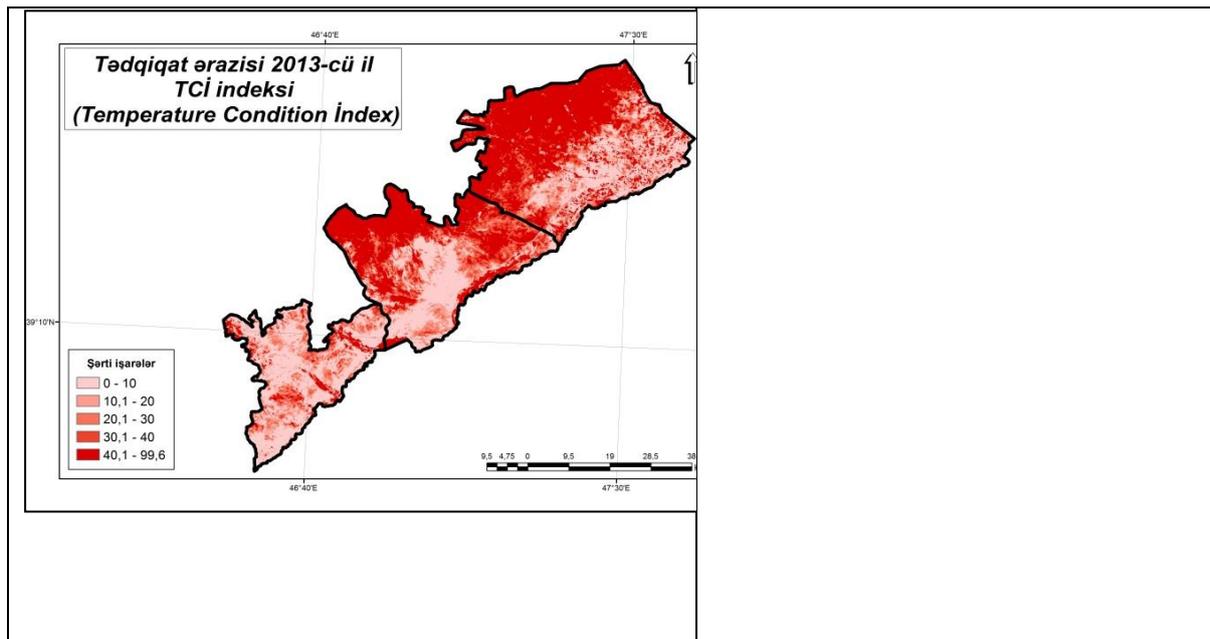


Fig. 3. Map of the research area, built according to the 2013 TCI index values

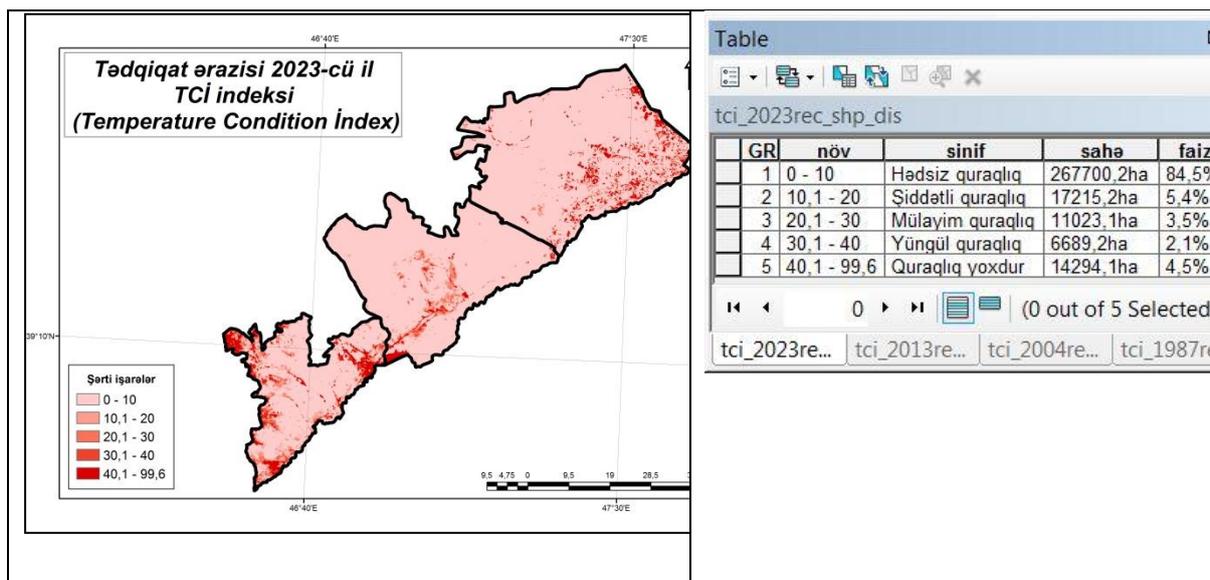


Fig. 4. Map of the research area, built according to the 2023 TCI index values

The diagram shown in Fig. 5 based on the obtained TCI index maps. The diagram shows the shares occupied by each category in the total territory over the entire period of the research.

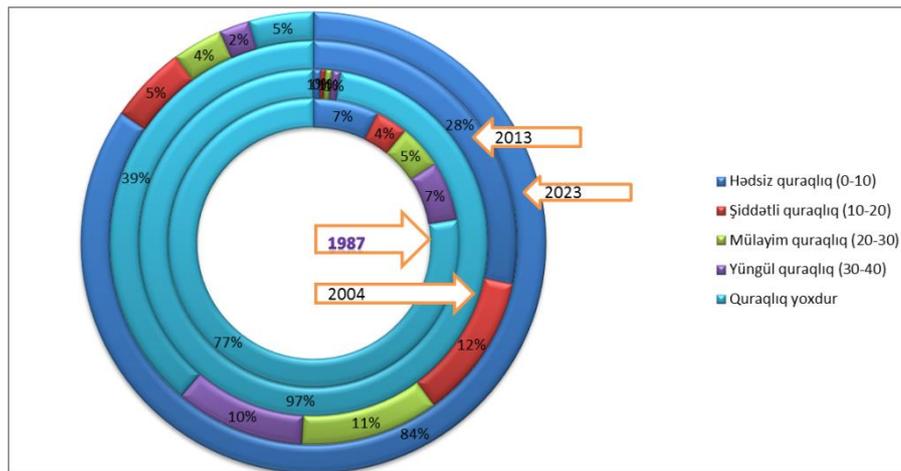


Fig. 5. Diagram showing the dynamics of the TCI index in the research area for 1987, 2004, 2013 and 2023.

2023 was the driest year, and 2004 was the wettest according to the chart.

A pairwise comparison of data for 1987–2004, 2004–2013, and 2013–2023 was carried out to analyze the dynamics of the TCI index. The comparison results are shown, respectively, in Fig. 6-8. Each figure shows how aridity has varied, such as from extreme to severe, moderate to mild, etc. Each figure is accompanied by a table with numerical values of the area (in hectares).

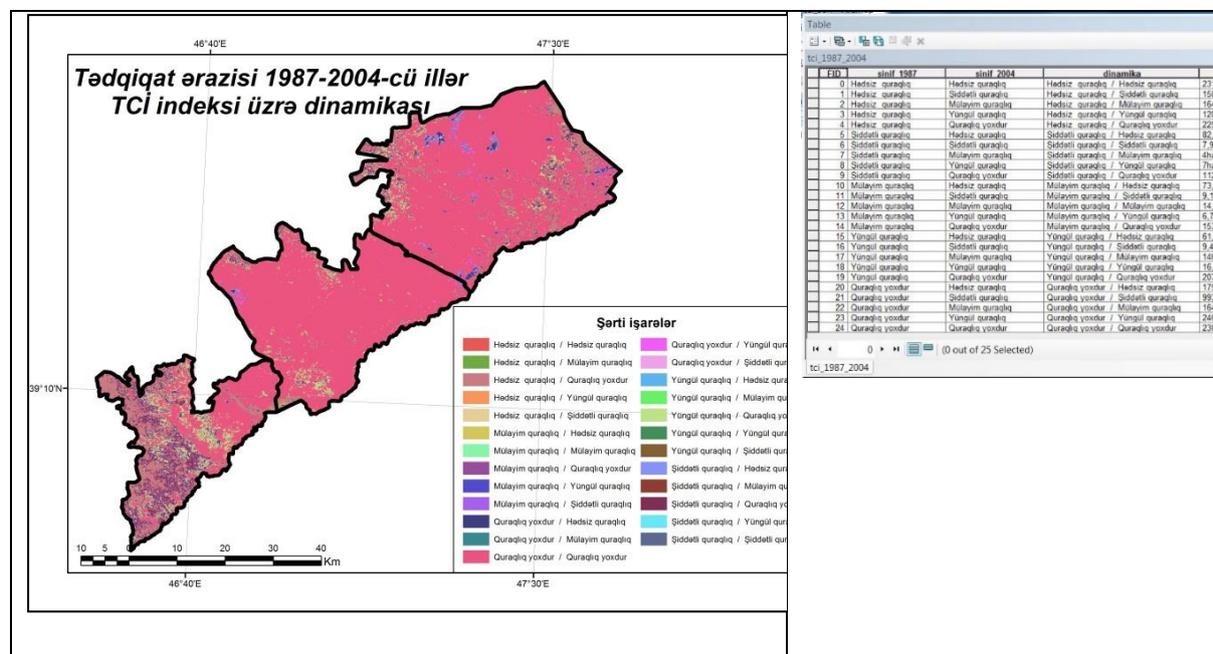


Fig. 6. Dynamics of the TCI index in the research area in 1987-2004

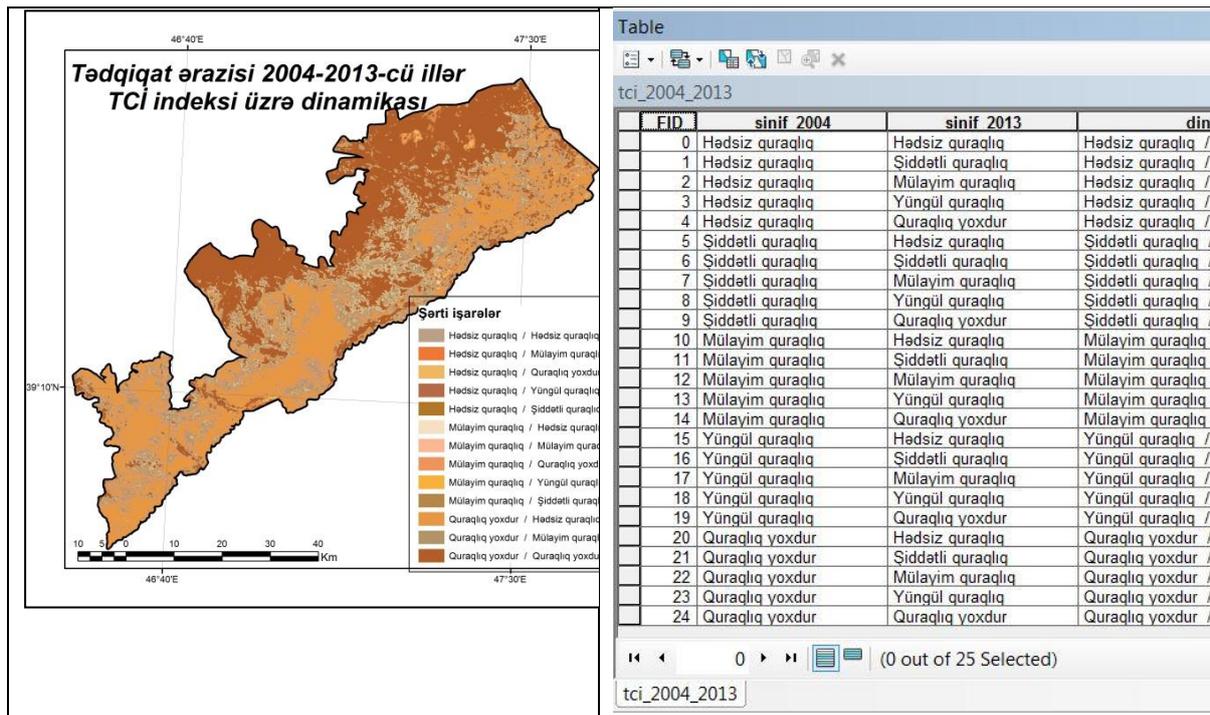


Fig. 7. Dynamics of the TCI index in the research area in 2004-2013

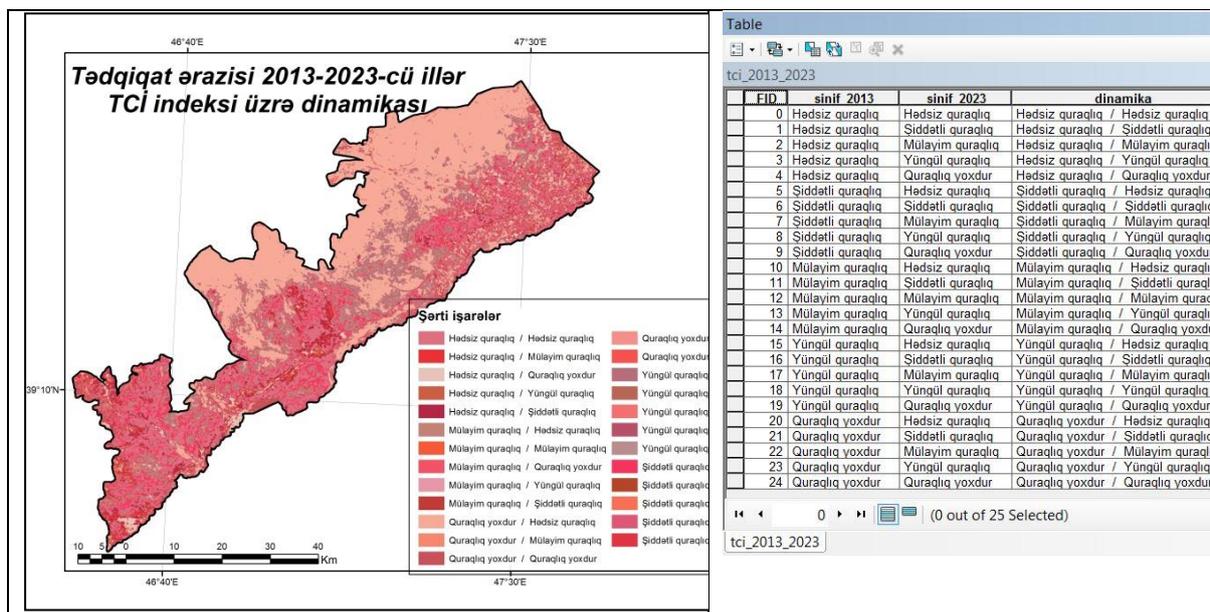


Fig. 8. Dynamics of the TCI index in the research area in 2013-2023

The dynamics of changes in the TCI index over the entire period of the research (1987-2023) are shown in Fig. 9.

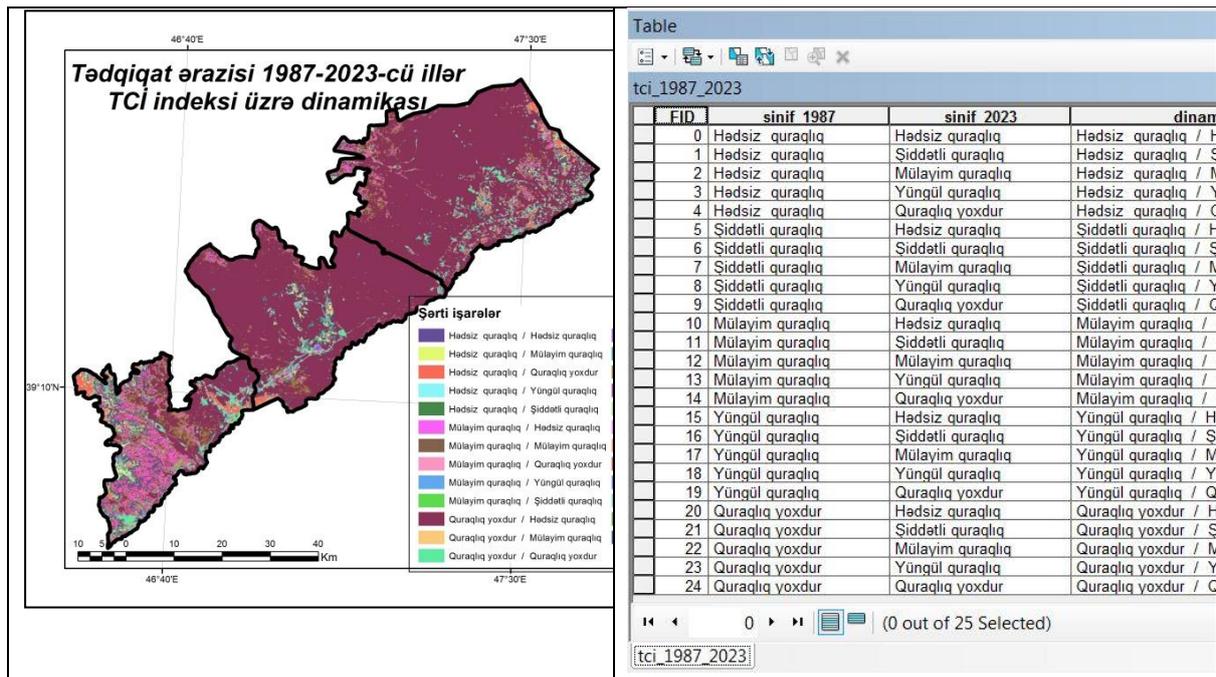


Fig. 9. Dynamics of the TCI index for the full period of the research (1987-2023)

The results shown in Fig. 6-8 were summarized in Table 2. Numerical values are expressed in hectares (ha).

Table 2. Dynamics of area changes for each aridity category, ha

Category	Dynamics of changes in categories according to the TCI index, ha								
	1987-2004			2004-2013			2013-2023		
	Increase	Decrease	No changes	Increase	Decrease	No changes	Increase	Decrease	No changes
Extreme aridity	1973,3	23008,2	231,4	89401,3	1966,8	237,9	214433,4	36438,3	53185,4
Severe aridity	1170,6	11374,4	7,9	36758,3	1125	53,5	16572,7	36182,2	631,1
Moderate aridity	1831,9	15489,5	14,4	34770,6	1729,5	116,8	10538,4	64786,7	475,7
Mild aridity	2609,1	20816,4	16,5	32515,8	2375,3	250,3	6332,3	32416,7	350,5

No aridity	69969,7	6865,9	238987	4830,3	191079,6	117884,2	9527,1	117953	4757
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Based on the indicators given in Table 2, a histogram of the increase and decrease in area by category was constructed, presented in Figure 10.

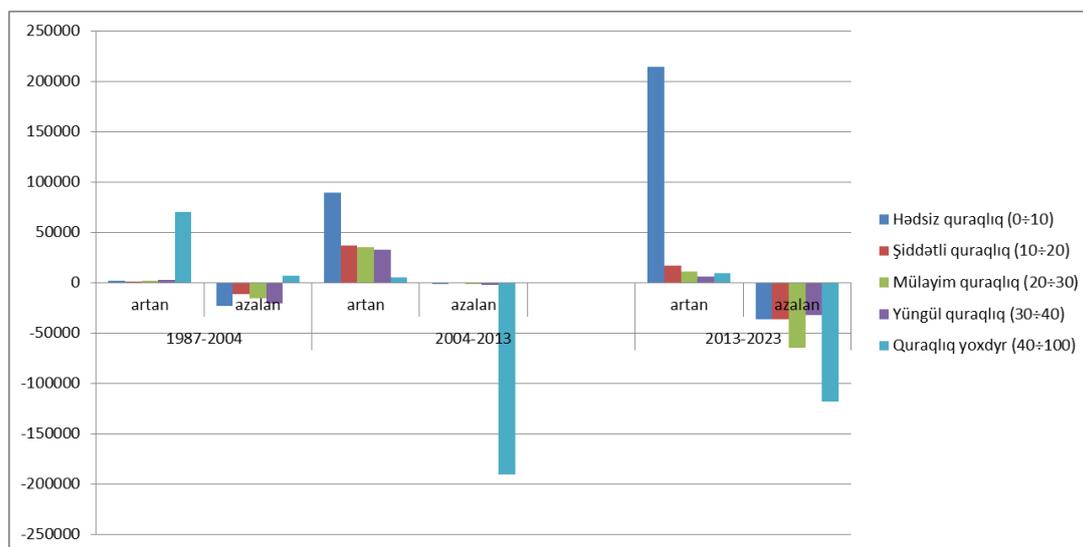


Fig. 10. Histogram of increasing and decreasing areas by category

Conclusions

There was an increase in areas without aridity and a decrease in other areas in 1987-2004. There is an increase in areas with extreme aridity and a decrease in other areas in other years. The worst aridity was recorded in 2013-2023, and it seems that this situation will continue for a long time.

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