

Appraisal of Land Use Transformation using Remote Sensing in Kajiado County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Kajiado County is predominantly inhabited by the Maasai nomadic pastoralists who rely on natural systems for their provisions and production needs. Traditionally, communal land management has been the norm in the area but that has evolved under the swift development context with the private holding of land becoming prevalent. The land-use transformation has curtailed the traditional seasonal movement of livestock and that has exposed the Maasai community to production risks which have contributed to the widespread food insecurity in the area. To address this gap, the study investigated land-use transformation in the area using Landsat 8, 4 and 5 datasets, where 1987, 2000 and 2015 epochs with a spatial resolution of 30*30m were sourced from www.glovis.usgs.org. Remote sensing technology used to evaluate biophysical attributes showed changes in land-use patterns with the bare area, built-up area, cropland, forested land, grassland, riverine, shrubland, waterbody and wetland having undergone significant changes in their respective sizes. These land-use transformations have been compounded with the spread of invasive species to the point of threatening pastoralism. However, the successive governments have shown a marked disdain for resource use patterns. Thus, there is need for an all-inclusive land-use policies to inform adaptation and resilience planning in Kajiado County, Kenya.

Key Words: Natural Resource; Pastoralism; Biophysical Attributes, Land-Use Transformation; Remote Sensing

INTRODUCTION

Globally, pastoralists are known to inhabit the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) which are characterized as hostile and less productive (McCabe 2003). In Kenya, ASALs occupy 80 per cent of the landmass and it is home to about 20-25 per cent of the country's population (ILRI 2006). Kajiado County is one of the 27 ASAL counties in Kenya (MOALF 2017). The Maasai pastoralists, who are the dominant tribe, derive their livelihood from livestock rearing (Watson et al. 2016) which creates a delicate balance between the available natural resources and optimal livestock density in that complex ecosystem (Nori 2007).

The communal land system has aided them secure large herds. However, the significant conversion of

communal to private landholdings is raising concerns over the future of pastoral livelihood system considering that large tracts of land under communal use still unregistered. There is an emerging trend of private landholding which continues to thrive on the basis of the weak land tenure but it is a disjuncture to nomadic pastoralism. The overlaps in territorial claims has made the community to continue losing their grazing area from private holders leading to dispossession of their customary land and as such their traditions could easily become obsolete (Ng'ang'a et al. 2016).

The growing pressure for land subdivision is disrupting the natural system and that has left the Maasai pastoralists with multiple production risks (Folk et al. 2010). The altered land-use patterns has curtailed their mobility (Cuni-Sanchez et al. 2016) as manifested in

the herd losses (Walker et al. 2004, Roth et al. 2012 and Ng'ang'a et al. 2016) because the Maasai pastoralists rely on natural systems for their provisions and production needs (Watson et al. 2016, Carley et al. 2013). Therefore, Maasai pastoralists have increasingly become vulnerable and locked in spiral chronic food insecurity and poverty. This prompted the need for an in-depth study to offset the incomplete understanding of the status of natural resources in relation to the pastoral livelihood system. Thus, the study evaluated the status of biophysical attributes since the Maasai pastoralists derive their ecosystem services from nature (Homewood et al. 2012).

The Maasai community harbours a rich indigenous knowledge which has thrived over time. This knowledge has helped them to be resilient and to sustain their ecology (OleSaitabau 2014) fostered by the good relations and complex system of exchange of knowledge (Ngong et al. 2007). The Maasai pastoralists have strong conservation values especially when it comes indigenous tree species such as *Juniperus procera*, *Olea europaea* and *Cuspidatus* spp which are conspicuous in the area. It is important to note that these trees have accrued benefits which include: provision of herbal medicines, treatment extracts and other unique spices Nahlik et al. (2012). Furthermore, the assemblage of wild herbivores in the area have attracted revenue, albeit indirectly, as tourism ventures extend goodwill by helping in the conservation efforts of the Maasai pastoralists and it also complements the income of the pastoralists (Burn silver et al. 2003).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The Study Area

Kajiado County is located in the southern region of Kenya bordering five counties, namely: Nairobi, Machakos, Makueni, Taita Taveta and Nakuru counties. The County also borders Tanzania where it shares a section of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Loitokitok area. The County's average area is 21,900.9 km² and lies between latitudes 1° 0' and 3° 0' S and longitude 36° 5' and 37° 5' E (Figure 1). The County's altitude ranges between 1580 and 2460 metres above sea level (GoK 2016) and it is predominantly occupied by the Maasai pastoralists (Mworia and Kinyamario 2008). The main economic activity is livestock rearing that highly depends on natural vegetation (Reynolds et al. 2007). The population of Kajiado County has grown significantly in the last 30 years from a population of 258,659 in 1989 to 1,111,840 in 2019 (KNBS 2019).

Land Use Land Cover Mapping

Remote sensing technology was applied where Landsat datasets were used to develop land cover maps for the years 1987, 2000 and 2015. These quantitative satellite datasets were sourced from www.glovis.usgs.org and are available as open data portal. The land use land

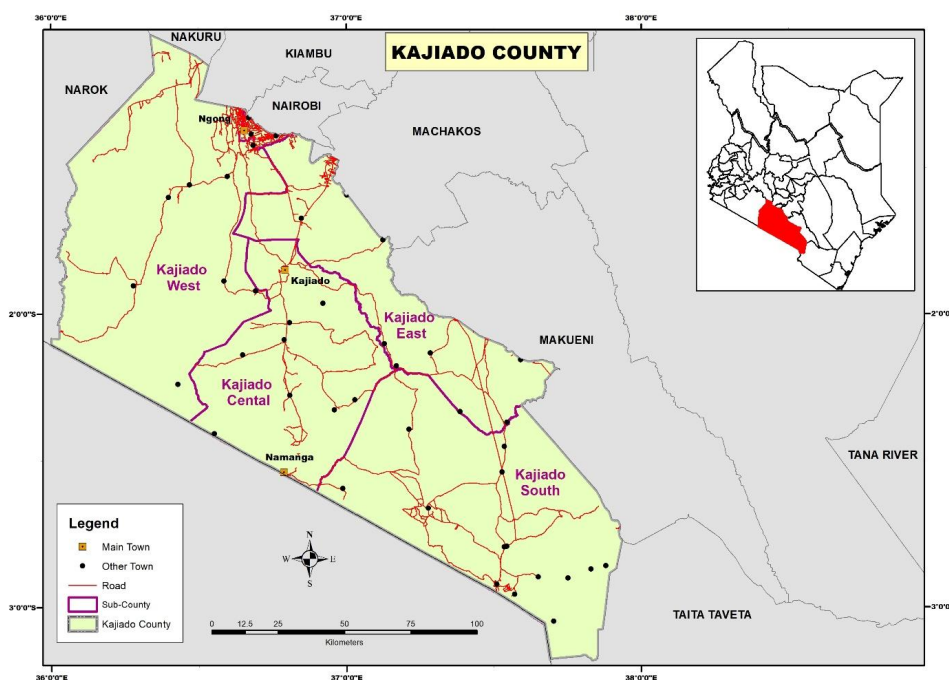


Figure 1. Map of Kajiado County showing administrative boundaries

cover mapping sought to determine land cover changes that had taken place over time to evaluate the status of biophysical attributes in the County.

Remote sensing and GIS technique are essential for mapping as it enables fieldwork covering larger areas to be completed at a lower cost and more quickly (Barret and Curtis, 1982). According to Shuckman et al. (1987), remote sensing is the science of deriving information about the Earth features from images acquired at a distance while relying upon measurements of electromagnetic energy reflected or emitted from the feature of interest.

The entire mapping development process is shown in Figure 2.

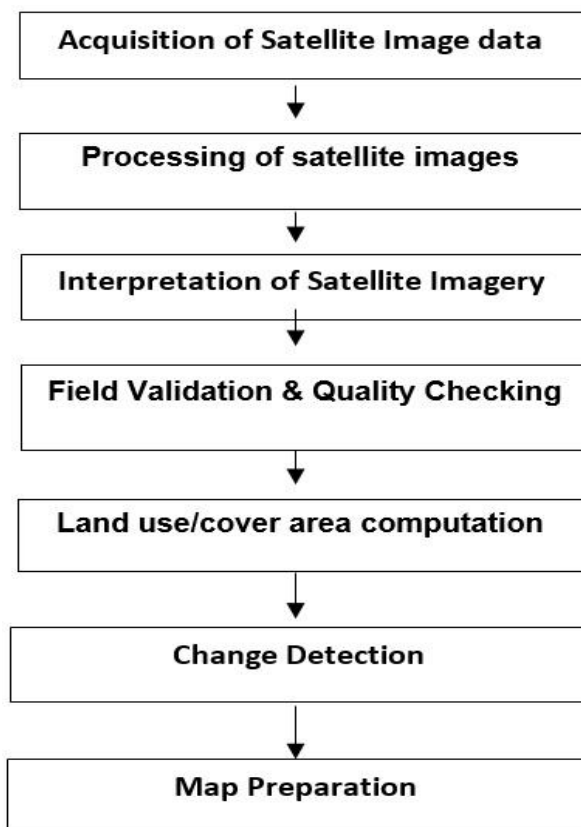


Figure 2. Flow chart on LULC mapping development process

Acquisition of satellite images

Remote sensing and GIS technique were used to analyse historical land use/ land cover which included vegetated areas and artificial surfaces (Barret and Curtis 1982). These consisted of Landsat 8, 4 and 5, where 1987, 2000 and 2015 epochs with a spatial resolution of 30m were sourced from www.glovis.usgs.org while focussing on the dry season imagery (cloud-free) i.e. January-March

and July-September (Tiwari and Saxena 2011).

Processing of satellite images

The raster form of datasets for 1987 2000 and 2015 epochs underwent pixel-based screen supervised classification (Barret and Curtis, 1982). The classified data produced were edited using both interactive and batch mode. This process encompassed layer-stacking, subsetting and mosaicking using ArcGIS and impact tool (JRC¹) (Barret and Curtis, 1982). The generated pre-processed database from which analysis was done utilised ancillary data in which case ILRI polygons with readily available shapefiles were used to derive control points such as roads, rivers and administration boundaries that were used to geo-reference the coordinates in the base maps.

Interpretation of satellite imagery

Image classification process involved identifying features on LULC maps through supervised classification maximum likelihood classifier (Enderle and Weihjr 2005) methodology in ENVI software platform from which each of the period image with nine land-use classes identified based on the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Land Cover Classification System (LCCS) was adopted. The major land cover types were: bare area, built-up area, cropland, forestland, grassland, riverine, shrubland, waterbody and wetland.

Validation and quality checking

The validation of the output of the land cover was done before the final interpretations. The first draft of images generated were further analysed and it involved field checks which further confirmed the identified land cover categories latent to the Landsat imagery. This was carried out according to Lillesand et al. (1994) where validation targeted specific parts of interest which were cross-checked using high-resolution imagery from Google Earth to verify accuracy of the maps and aid in further identification of doubtful cases marked during interpretation Figure 3.

Table 1 shows accuracy which was utilised and it gives an indication of the quality of map based on areas of interest. The overall accuracy is essential as it tells us the proportions that are correctly mapped out of the reference sites which are expressed in percentages. In this regard, the study has attained an accuracy level of 80.16% with 100 % accuracy being a perfect classification.



Figure 3. Google Earth image showing biophysical features on a section of the study area

Table 1: Summary of Internal Validation for the LULC

Class Name	Reference Totals	Classified Totals	Number Correct	Producers Accuracy	Users Accuracy
Forestland	24	16	9	37.50%	56.25%
Shrubland	214	198	181	84.58%	91.41%
Grassland	13	37	10	76.92%	27.03%
Cropland	3	3	3	100.00%	100.00%
Wetland	2	2	2	100.00%	100.00%
Built area	1	1	1	100.00%	100.00%

Overall classification accuracy = 80.16%

Data Analysis

The analyses of data commenced once editing, coding, classification and tabulation of the raw data had been completed. Statistical software tools ArcGIS was used at various points for analyses of satellite data to establish land cover changes in the form of area computation based on the land cover maps by cross-referencing the different years to detect noticeable changes.

The resulting maps which included 1987, 2000 and 2015 were imported and overlaid into ArcGIS software for analysis while factoring in the main land cover classes. The maps were compared and manipulated through overlays to extract the total areas under the nine land cover types and quantify the LULC changes in hectares.

Further, the rate of change per year was calculated using the formula:

$$R = \frac{Y - X}{T} \quad \dots \text{Equation 1}$$

Where:

R is the rate of change

Y is the area in hectares of the study area in the final year

X is the area in hectares of the study area in the initial year

T is the difference in years.

The percentage rate of changes for the various land use covers were calculated by dividing the rate of change per year by the original areas respectively for change detections.

RESULTS

The Landsat satellite datasets were used to generate Land Use Land Cover maps for the years 1987, 2000 and 2015 (Figures 4, 5 and 6). These maps were subjected to validation using simple points collected from high-

resolution images from Google Earth as ground truth data. The maps were the output of spatial data and were visually represented on based on the Food and Agriculture Organization Land Cover Classification System (FAOLCCS) covering the nine Land Use Land Cover (LULC) types across the entire Kajiado County.

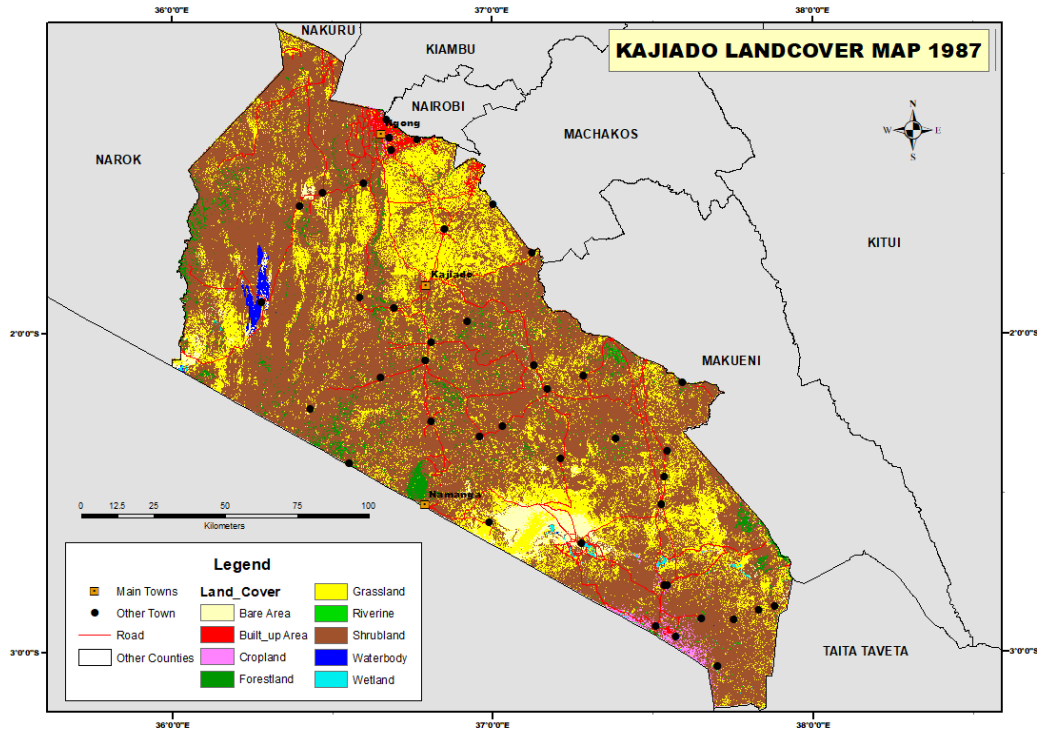


Figure 4. Kajiado County Land Cover Map 1987 (Data source: www.glovis.usgs.org)

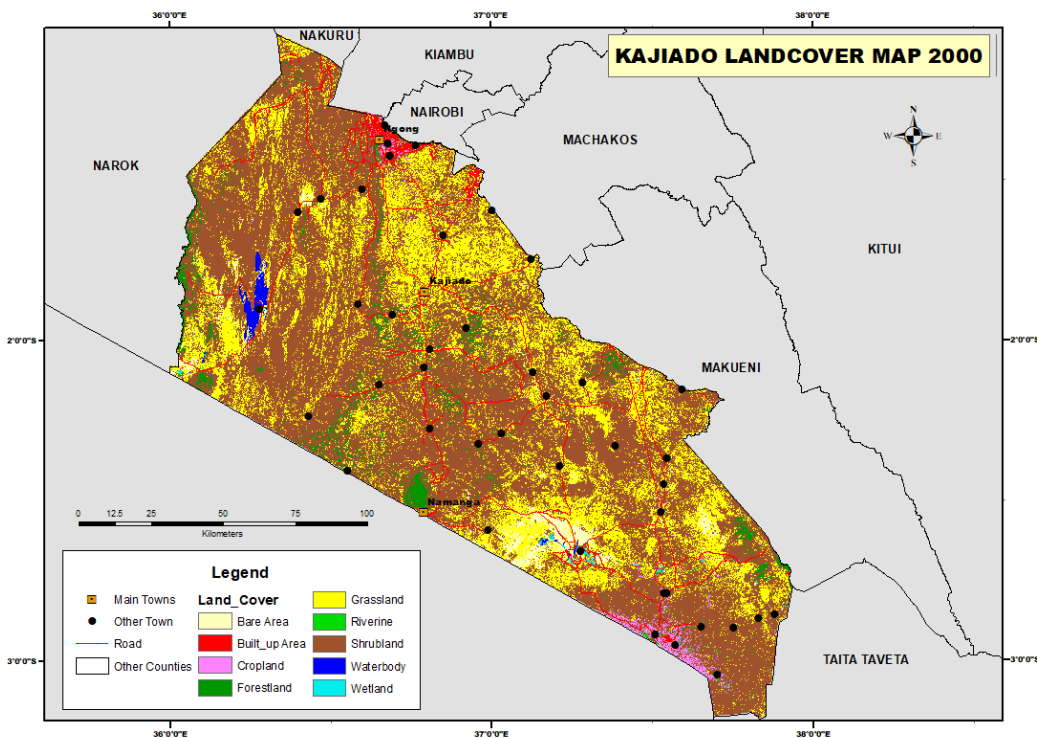


Figure 5. Kajiado County Land Cover Map 2000 (Data source: www.glovis.usgs.org)

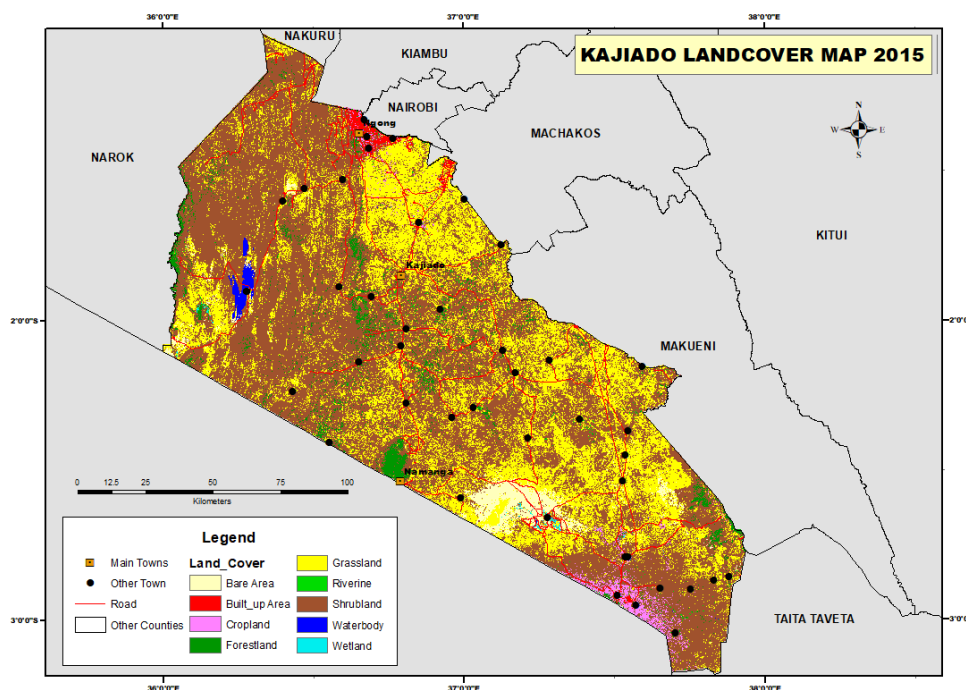


Figure 6. Kajiado County Land Cover Map 2015 (Data source: www.glovis.usgs.org)

Land Use Land Cover Mapping

Statistics for Land Use Land Cover in Kajiado County

Statistics were generated based on the three maps (Figures 4 to 6) where the area of Land Use Land Cover changes were established by cross-referencing the different years of land covers covering changes between 1987 and 2000, 2000 and 2015 and 1987 and 2015.

The results of the summarized statistics for Land Use Land Cover Mapping (Table 2).

The results using 1987 as the initial year (past) and 2015 as the final year (near present) with the actual LULC change types computed in hectares (Table 3).

The gains were in the bare area (1,387), built-up area (615), cropland (14,914), grassland (211,573) and forestland (9,870) and the loses were in riverine (-922), shrubland (-235,925) waterbody (-216) and wetland (-1,304).

The results using 1987 as the initial year and 2000 as the final year with the actual changes under the various LULC categories computed in hectares (Table 4). The gains were in the built-up area (346), cropland (8,614), grassland (129,952), forestland (4,015) and waterbody (1,307) and loses were in the bare area (-6,453), riverine (-2,715), shrub land (-134,141) and wetland (-862).

The results using 2000 as the initial year and 2015 as the final year, the actual changes under various LULC computed in hectares (Table 5). The gains were in the

Table 2. Statistic for Land Use Land Cover types in 1987, 2000, 2015

S/No.	LULC types	Area (hectares)		
		Year: 1987	Year: 2000	Year: 2015
1.	Bare area	55,130.31	48,676.95	56,517.48
2.	Built up area	326.88	672.66	942.12
3.	Cropland	15,382.80	23,997.24	30,295.89
4.	Forestland	55,371.96	59,386.56	65,242.08
5.	Grassland	480,015.81	609,967.98	691,588.80
6.	Riverine	9,292.50	6,578.19	8,370.18
7.	Shrubland	1,560,841.20	1,426,699.78	1,324,916.37
8.	Waterbody	9,862.20	11,169.99	9,646.47
9.	Wetland	3,848.94	2,987.10	2,544.84

Data source: www.glovis.usgs.org

Table 3. Land Use Land Cover changes from 1987 to 2015

S/No.	LULC types	Area (Hectares)		
		Year: 1987	Year: 2015	Change (1987-2015)
1.	Bare area	55,130	56,518	1,387
2.	Built up	327	942	615
3.	Cropland	15,383	30,296	14,914
4.	Forestland	55,372	65,242	9,870
5.	Grassland	480,016	691,589	211,573
6.	Riverine	9,293	8,370	-922
7.	Shrubland	1,560,841	1,324,916	-235,925
8.	Waterbody	9,862	9,647	-216
9.	Wetland	3,849	2,545	-1,304

Data source: www.glovis.usgs.org

Table 4. Land Use Land Cover changes from 1987 to 2000

S/No	LULC types	Area (Hectares)		
		Year: 1987	Year: 2000	Change (1987 to 2000)
1.	Bare area	55,130	48,677	-6,453
2.	Built up area	327	673	346
3.	Cropland	15,383	23,997	8,614
4.	Forestland	55,372	59,387	4,015
5.	Grassland	480,016	609,968	129,952
6.	Riverine	9,293	6,578	-2,715
7.	Shrubland	1,560,841	1,426,700	-134,141
8.	Waterbody	9,862	11,170	1,308
9.	Wetland	3,849	2,987	-862

Data source: www.glovis.usgs.org

Table 5. Land Use Land Cover changes from 2000 to 2015

S/No.	LULC types	Area (Hectares)		
		Year: 2000	Year: 2015	Change (2000-2015)
1.	Bare area	48,677	56,518	7,841
2.	Built up area	673	942	269
3.	Cropland	23,997	30,296	6,299
4.	Forestland	59,387	65,242	5,855
5.	Grassland	609,968	691,589	81,621
6.	Riverine	6,578	8,370	1,792
7.	Shrubland	1,426,700	1,324,916	-101,784
8.	Waterbody	11,170	9,647	-1,523
9.	Wetland	2,987	2,545	-442

Data source: www.glovis.usgs.org

bare area (7,841), built-up area (269), cropland (6,299), grassland (81,621), forestland (5,855) and riverine (1,792) and loses were in the shrubland (-101,784) waterbody (-1,523) and wetland (-442).

The results of changes in the area when the study period was split into two equal intervals between the early years (from 1987-2000 period) and later years (from 2000-2015 period). There were relative changes in the magnitude at which land use transformation was taking place from the areas under the various LULC

types (Table 6). The results showed relatively less changes in the status of the bare area, forestland and waterbody and more changes in the status of built-up areas, cropland, grassland, shrubland and wetland in the early years (from 1987-2000 period) compared later years (from 2000 to 2015 period).

LULC rate of change per annum

The results based on the percentage rate of change for

the three periods namely 1987 to 2000, 2000 to 2015 and 1987 to 2015 (Table 7).

Table 6. Land Use Land Cover change comparison in hectares between the early (1987-2000) and later (2000-2015) Period

S/No.	LULC Types	Change of Area (Hectares)	
		(1987-2000)	(2000-2015)
1.	Bare area	6,453	7,841
2.	Built up area	346	269
3.	Cropland	8,614	6,299
4.	Forestland	4,015	5,855
5.	Grassland	129,952	81,621
6.	Riverine	2,714	1,792
7.	Shrubland	134,141	101,784
8.	Waterbody	1,308	1,523
9.	Wetland	1,524	442

Data source: www.glovis.usgs.org

Table 7: Percentage rate of change (type per annum)
(Data source: www.glovis.usgs.org)

S. No.	LULC Types	Percentage rate of change (ha/annum)		
		1987-2000	2000-2015	1987-2015
1.	Bare area	-0.90	1.07	0.09
2.	Built up	0.08	2.67	6.72
3.	Cropland	0.04	1.75	3.46
4.	Forestland	0.01	0.66	0.64
5.	Grassland	0.02	0.89	1.57
6.	Riverine	0.02	1.82	-0.35
7.	Shrubland	0.06	-0.48	-0.54
8.	Water body	0.01	-0.91	-0.08
9.	Wetland	0.02	-0.99	-1.21

Positive sign (+) means increase and a negative sign (-) means a decrease in area

DISCUSSION

The Land Use Land Cover mappings covering the years 1987, 2000 and 2015 highlighted key land classification clusters in Kajiado County namely: bare area, built-up area, cropland, forestland, grassland, riverine, shrubland, waterbody and wetland. This observation is similar to those of Niamey and Fuller (2000); Gunderson and Holing (2002) and Homewood et al. (2012) who reported that the County is endowed with vast species. The results of Land Use Land Cover mapping indicated that the forestland had increased progressively which is attributed to the communal land ownership and traditional stewardship structure which has largely supported

the livestock production system in Kajiado County. However, the study established the growth of private landholdings with the expanding alternative land uses such as built-up areas and cropland. This observation is in agreement with that of Lalisa (2015) who noted the expansion of settlement and cropland. According to Catley et al. (2013), this is associated with exclusivity in land use which is a threat to the pastoral Social-Ecological System which if left uncontrolled could adversely affect pastoralism. Similarly, Carley et al. (2013) and Schwartz (2005) noted that significant areas of the habitat has been converted for alternative land-uses which is a threat to pastoralism and recipe for environmental degradation. Birch and Grahn (2007) reported that alternative land uses have created discord, promoted exclusivity and as such, increased production risks.

The noticeable losses in riverine, wetland and waterbody were connected in one way or another to the changes in the land-use patterns. This observation is similar to that of Galvin et al. (2004) who noted increased encroachment in riparian areas which he attributed to irrigated agriculture and preference of urban centre encroachment in locations closer to water sources. The land-use policy bottleneck has also contributed to the receding water levels which is detrimental to the pastoralism and could negatively affect livestock production (Juma 2009 and Watson et al. 2016). According to Chibinga (2010) and Waila et al. (2018), most policies are biased towards sedentary crop production. Moreover, laws to secure community land rights of the Maasai Pastoralists have been slow or often manipulated leaving them out in development debate on issues touching on their environment and economic livelihood (Mutu 2017). Moreover, their conservation efforts have been frustrated.

The Maasai pastoralists have ended up with multiple production risks which they might not be able to tackle on their own in the fast-changing context of land-use transformation. In as much as grassland areas appeared to have increased from the land use land cover mappings, it is important to note that its interpolation with invasive species such as *Prosopis Julisflora* and *Ipomoea* spp complicated the dynamics in this ecosystem. Invasive species are known to suppress the indigenous and palatable grass species. This observation is similar to that of Kidake et al. (2016) who reported a significant spread of invasive species of up to 60-80 per cent in the pasture fields in the area. As such, this has eroded the Maasai pastoralists' ability and rendered sustainable pastoralism unattainable. Furthermore, the Maasai pastoralists have become less cohesive leading to the adoption of other forms of practices associated with land alienation and sedentary lifestyle. Filho et al.

(2017) opine that evolving cultural practices by a section of the community is linked to the distortions of norms and social networks. These sentiments concur with those of Kramer and Brewer's (1984) economic theory which states that "*where there is high competition for resources, social non-conformity dominates*".

CONCLUSIONS

The Maasai pastoralists are still connected with nature and through these connections they have been able to make deliberate actions to safeguard their ecosystem's capacity to maintain vast biodiversity. However, the fast rate at which the land-use is getting transformed could compromise their land management decisions which have remain misunderstood by outsiders who argue from the point of unknown. The outsiders view pastoral livelihood as backward and environmentally destructive. As such, the Maasai pastoralists have not gotten adequate support from the successive governments who have been biased towards sedentary agrarian-driven system. It is against this backdrop that the Maasai pastoralists have become more vulnerable as they have had limited access to critical resources.

RECOMMENDATION

The natural regeneration of resources in Kajiado County cannot be realizable with the current state of land policy bottlenecks. Thus, the study recommends policy realignment which should involve the existing local traditional institutions in the integration of livelihood protection and diversification.

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Authors' contributions: J. Kaoga was the team leader responsible for the identification of study site, acquisition of datasets, application of computational data analysis, synthesis and writing up of original draft. D. Olago

developed overarching research goals and conceptual framework. George Ouma designed the study and worked on field characteristics. Gilbert Ouma edited the manuscript and J. Onono evaluated the datasets.

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