An Ecocritical Examination of Ghana's National Policy for Combating Climate Change.

***Ali Dan Akla (Mphil, Literature-In-English)**

Department of English Language, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology – Ghana.

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8120101

Received: 13 November 2024; Accepted: 04 December 2024; Published: 04 January 2025

ABSTRACT

This paper considers ecocritical perspectives embedded in the National Climate Change Policy and its Framework (NCCPF & NCCP, 2013) of Ghana, titled "Ghana Goes for Green Growth." The objective of this study is to closely analyze the texts of the National Climate Change Policy Framework and Policy to identify ecocritical elements within these documents and assess how they can be leveraged to promote sustainable approaches to climate adaptation and development. This policy document reflects Ghana's commitment to sustainable development and climate resilience. The framework, which evolved into the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) in 2013, focuses on sustainability. Applying close reading and ecocriticism as theories, the study found out that, the title "Ghana Goes for Green Growth" is a unique approach to economic development that prioritizes sustainability, aligning with ecocritical perspectives that emphasize harmony between human progress and nature. Drawing on ecocritical theories from scholars like Cheryll Glotfelty, Lawrence Buell, and Timothy Morton, the policy shows Ghana's responsibility as a national and global ecological steward. The policy acknowledges the interconnection between economic growth and environmental health and stresses the urgent need to integrate ecological considerations into national development strategies. The policy framework addresses five focal areas: Agricultural and Food Security, Natural Resource Management, Social Development, Energy, and Industrial and Infrastructural Development, each reflecting ecocritical concerns about sustainability. The policy's contribution to "green growth is a step in the right direction, towards a broader discourse on sustainability" Through a close reading, the text critiques the tension between Ghana's developmental ambitions and the ecological realities posed by climate change, highlighting the need for a balanced and sustainable approach to progress. By positioning ecological integrity at the core of its developmental agenda, this study discovered that the NCCP advocates for a paradigm shift where true development is both environmentally sustainable and equitable, ultimately redefining how progress is measured in Ghana and beyond.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, climate change, sustainability, environmental preservation, and ecology.

INTRODUCTION

Climate change in the West African subregion is highly alarming. At the peak of floods, hundreds of lives are rendered homeless, and natural vegetation is destroyed. According to Appiah (2024), flooding in the Upper East, Upper West, and Northern regions has been devastating, leading to the deaths of at least 32 people and affecting over 260,000 residents in the year 2024. Infrastructure damage includes the collapse of bridges, destruction of farms, and loss of livestock. Heavy downpours in May caused severe flooding in parts of Accra, including Pokuase, Achimota, and Tesano. The flooding resulted in traffic disruptions, with roads rendered impassable and commuters stranded. In 2023, Ghana faced significant challenges related to bushfires and droughts, the Central Region, for instance, reported a 39% increase in bushfire cases. In addition, droughts affect Ghana by approximately 13% annually. These climatic conditions impact livelihoods and force some communities to migrate, compounding the socio-economic strain. Ghana does not stand alone when it comes to the impact of climate change. The impact of recent climate events in West Africa is becoming increasingly severe. Rising occurrences and intensities of climate disasters, disruptions in food production, impediments to regional trade, and surging food prices are key factors driving the worsening food insecurity in the region. The World Food Program (2024) reports that, by August 2024, over 3.5 million people across 14 countries in West Africa had

been affected by flooding linked to above-average rainfall, as also reported by OCHA and national authorities. Chad, Mali, and Niger are the hardest hit, accounting for nearly 70% of the total affected population. In Chad and Nigeria, approximately 50,000 individuals have been displaced due to these events. In response, several nations have declared emergencies, and the WFP aims to support around 760,200 of the most at-risk people over the next three months. Literary wise, Kofi Awoonor (1935-2013), in his poem, "*The Sea Eats the Land at Home*", adds an emotional touch to the climate discourse. He examines the indifference of natural disasters to the natural world in his poem, "*The Sea Eats the Land at Home*". In the poem, Awoonor describes the sea as cruel and angry, and furtherance to that as unfeeling and immortal. These descriptions of the Sea manifest in the psychological and social perils of Aku and Adena. While Aku feels abandoned by the gods, Adena loses her dowry, all due to the natural disaster. According to David Rubadiri (1930-2018), these natural disasters, in his poem *The African Thunderstorm*, go beyond the sea but include the wind. He goes on to describe the wind as accompanied by, 'jagged blinding flashes, rumble, tremble and crack'. The pseudonyms accompanying the wind are one of destruction, fear, and terror. Contrary to the present, William Wordsworth (1770 -1850) writes in his poem, popularly known as 'Tintern Abbey' that *nature never did* betray *the heart that loved her*. Placing nature at the center of literary discourse reveals this awe-inspiring truth.

However, as noted by Yeboah et al. (2023), the ecosystem is consistently facing threats from the actions and the inactions of humans. They added that if care is not taken, we stand the chance of losing all the benefits that we derive from nature such as its therapeutic qualities, its ability to clean the air we breathe, purify our water, produce food and medicine, reduce chemical and pollution, and many others. I agree with the researchers, particularly with the trend of climate change thus far and its effect on the West African subregion and Ghana to be precise. This study particularly evaluates the Green Ghana Policy in the light of sustaining climate resilience and positive growth of the Economy.

This research employs ecocriticism and close reading to examine the texts. Ecocriticism examines how the policy reflects cultural attitudes toward nature. It explores whether the policy promotes a sustainable relationship with the environment, and looks for recognition of the interconnectedness of ecosystems and how the policy addresses the relationships between human and natural systems to maintain environmental integrity. Ecocriticism seeks to identify the inclusion of local ecological knowledge and practices and evaluate how these perspectives are integrated into policy strategies and decision-making processes. A critical component involves scrutinizing the policy's approach to equity and justice, particularly regarding the impacts of climate change on marginalized communities and the measures taken to address these inequities. Ecocriticism in this study investigates how the policy aligns with or challenges traditional Ghanaian values and practices related to land and resource management. It considers the emphasis placed on promoting ecological education and awareness among citizens through educational initiatives. Focus on the resilience and adaptation strategies outlined in the policy, unveils their relevance to local needs and contexts. According to Cornelius et al. (2024), smallholder farmers in Ghana's Savannah face climate challenges. The study examined how participation in Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) and Climate Action Plans (CAPs) affects resilience. Results showed that FFSs, CAPs, food security, credit access, and larger households boosted resilience, while larger land sizes and only primary education reduced it. The study suggests expanding FFSs, integrating CAPs, improving resource access, and enhancing monitoring to strengthen farmers' climate resilience. The extent to which grassroots organizations and local communities are engaged in the policy development and implementation processes will be considered through this theoretical framework. The National Climate Change policy acknowledges and responds to the broader socio-political and economic factors and contributes to environmental degradation and climate change. Its sustainability goals, both long-term and short-term vision for environmental stewardship and climate action in Ghana will go a long way in mitigating the effects of climate change.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to closely analyze the texts of the National Climate Change Policy Framework (NCCPF) and the National Climate Change Policy (NCCPF & NCCP, 2013) to identify ecocritical elements within the documents and how these elements can be leveraged to promote sustainable approaches to climate adaptation and development. The study aims to evaluate the language and structure of the policy framework through various dimensions of close reading, thus semantic, syntactic, thematic, iterative, generic, and

adversarial, while grounding its analysis in ecocriticism as a theoretical framework. The research seeks to highlight the ecocritical significance of the policy, which has been largely overlooked in previous studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ecocriticism examines how policies reflect cultural attitudes toward nature and explore whether the policy promotes a sustainable relationship with the environment. It looks for recognition of the interconnectedness of ecosystems and how the policy addresses the relationships between human and natural systems to maintain environmental integrity. In particular, ecocriticism seeks to identify the inclusion of local ecological knowledge and practices, evaluating how these perspectives are integrated into policy strategies and decision-making processes (Ryan, 2020). A critical component of ecocriticism involves scrutinizing the policy's approach to equity and justice, particularly regarding the impacts of climate change on marginalized communities and the measures taken to address these inequities (Kerridge & Sammels, 2016). In Africa, the impacts of climate change are both profound and widespread. Defined by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as a shift in climate patterns caused by human activities that alter the composition of the global atmosphere beyond natural variability, climate change is predicted to bring significant challenges to the continent (UNFCCC, 2007b). Reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicate that African temperatures may rise by 1.5–3°C by 2050, potentially reaching 2–6°C within the next century, coupled with increasing rainfall variability and frequent flooding (Hulme et al., 2001; IPCC, 2007). Such projections suggest that Africa's warming could exceed that of other regions, underscoring its vulnerability to climate-related changes (Collier et al., 2008; Gemeda & Sima, 2015).

Africa is often considered the region most at risk from climate change due to its high exposure and limited adaptive capacity (Niang et al., 2014). The heavy reliance on agriculture, a sector providing employment to about 60% of the population and contributing over 50% of GDP in some countries, heightens this vulnerability (Collier et al., 2008). Prolonged droughts in Eastern Africa, devastating floods in the West, deforestation in equatorial regions, and rising ocean acidification along the southern coast illustrate the severity of climate impacts on agriculture, water, health, and energy systems (Besada & Sewankambo, 2009; Hummel, 2015). These issues significantly hinder Africa's ability to achieve sustainable development.

Although Africa contributes minimally to global greenhouse gas emissions due to limited industrial activity, it remains disproportionately affected by climate change (Bewket, 2012; Gemeda & Sima, 2015). Challenges such as land degradation, desertification, and extreme weather events exacerbate the continent's socioeconomic fragility (Hummel, 2015). Many African nations also face difficulties adapting to these challenges due to insufficient financial, technical, and institutional resources (Huq et al., 2004; Rose, 2015; Singh & Purohit, 2014).

Ecocriticism in this study investigates how the policy aligns with or challenges traditional Ghanaian values and practices related to land and resource management. It considers the emphasis placed on promoting ecological education and awareness among citizens through educational initiatives (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996). Focus on the resilience and adaptation strategies outlined in the policy unveils their relevance to local needs and contexts. According to Cornelius et al. (2024), smallholder farmers in Ghana's Savannah face climate challenges. The study examined how participation in Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) and Climate Action Plans (CAPs) affects resilience. Results showed that FFSs, CAPs, food security, credit access, and larger households boosted resilience, while larger land sizes and only primary education reduced it. The study suggests expanding FFSs, integrating CAPs, improving resource access, and enhancing monitoring to strengthen farmers' climate resilience (Cornelius et al., 2024). This theoretical framework will consider the extent to which grassroots organizations and local communities are engaged in the policy development and implementation processes.

The National Climate Change policy acknowledges and responds to the broader socio-political and economic factors contributing to environmental degradation and climate change. Its sustainability goals, both long-term and short-term, envision ecological stewardship and climate action in Ghana, which will contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change (Kerridge & Sammels, 1998; Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the natural environment. It examines how literature reflects, engages with, and shapes our understanding of ecological issues, such as environmental degradation, climate change, and the human-nature relationship. The term "ecocriticism" was first coined in the early 1990s by American scholar William Rueckert, although the foundations of the field can be traced back to earlier works in both literature and science that explored nature and environmental concerns (Rueckert, 1978).

In the context of Ghana, ecocriticism has gradually gained attention as environmental challenges, such as deforestation, pollution, and land degradation, have become more pressing. Local writers, like those in West African countries, have begun to address environmental themes in their works, raising awareness and critiquing the environmental impacts of modernization and industrialization. Ecocriticism, therefore, serves as a powerful tool to analyze how local writers and artists engage with these pressing ecological issues and contribute to the broader discourse on environmental sustainability (Harrison, 2005).

The concept of ecocriticism has been extensively developed through research across disciplines, evolving from an interdisciplinary approach to a more established academic field. Scholars have expanded the scope of ecocriticism by incorporating ideas from environmental philosophy, political ecology, and postcolonial studies, thus highlighting the global and local dimensions of environmental crises (Garrard, 2012).

At the international level, the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE), based in the United States, plays a key role in promoting knowledge and research in ecocriticism. ASLE has many branches worldwide, fostering collaboration among scholars, writers, and environmentalists. Through conferences, publications, and initiatives, ASLE continues to advance the field, offering valuable resources for researchers and promoting a global dialogue about literature's role in addressing ecological issues (ASLE, 2023).

According to Barry (2020), ecocriticism dates back as far as the 1970s and came up at the meetings of the Western Literature Association. He identified three major writers of the nineteenth -century to have had so much influence on this theory, thus: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau. Following the contribution of these writers, William Rueckert's 1978 essay, "Literature and Ecology" sets another tone for the term "ecocriticism" which in later years was revived by Cheryll Glotfelty now Assistant Professor of Literature and the Environment at the University of Nevada, Reno. The term Ecocriticism was identified as the study of the relationship between humans and the environment. This theory takes special interest in the land, water, and air, as well as the animals and landscapes. Ecocritics deals with how issues about the environment particularly nature is dealt with. Our culture influences how we treat the nature around us, and nature is the source of life. Ecocriticism, traditionally rooted in literary studies, examines the interplay between human narratives and the natural world, focusing on how texts represent, engage with, and shape ecological concerns. While initially applied to literature, the framework has expanded into nonliterary discourses such as policy documents, speeches, advertisements, documentaries, and social media. This broader application reveals ecocriticism's utility in analyzing various mediums that address environmental issues, fostering a deeper understanding of humanity's impact on the planet.

One significant area where ecocriticism is applied is environmental policy documents. In Ghana, for instance, the National Climate Change Policy Framework (NCCPF) and the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) of 2013 are key texts that outline strategies for addressing climate-related challenges. An ecocritical reading of these policies reveals the language of urgency and responsibility in addressing issues such as deforestation, droughts, and flooding. The NCCPF emphasizes the integration of climate resilience into national development planning, framing nature as both a resource and a stakeholder in sustainable growth. Ecocriticism helps unpack how these policies balance economic development and ecological preservation, exposing potential contradictions between stated goals and implementation strategies.

Environmental speeches also provide a platform for ecocriticism. For example, political leaders and climate advocates often use rhetoric to frame humanity's relationship with nature. The NCCP (2013) underscores the

importance of "climate-smart" agricultural practices and renewable energy. By analyzing the language used in promoting these initiatives, ecocritics can evaluate how the policies conceptualize nature—whether as a passive resource to be exploited or an active participant in ensuring sustainability. Such analysis highlights the anthropocentric tendencies of policy discourse while advocating for more ecocentric approaches.

Advertisements, particularly those related to sustainability, are another domain for ecocritical analysis. Greenwashing—where companies exaggerate their environmental commitments—is a common practice in corporate advertising. For instance, businesses might claim alignment with the NCCP's goals by showcasing minimal contributions to renewable energy or afforestation. An ecocritical perspective scrutinizes these advertisements, revealing discrepancies between the promises made to consumers and the companies' actual environmental practices. This critical lens fosters accountability in how ecological messages are conveyed in corporate discourse.

Documentaries also serve as powerful tools for ecological storytelling. Productions like David Attenborough's *Our Planet* and local environmental films often aim to inform and inspire action. Ecocriticism explores how such documentaries use imagery, narrative, and emotional appeals to frame ecological crises. The policies outlined in the NCCP (2013)—such as water resource management and disaster preparedness—could be further contextualized in documentaries to localize global climate challenges. Analyzing such narratives allows ecocritics to examine the interplay between visual media and policy frameworks in shaping public awareness.

Social media campaigns, particularly those supporting initiatives outlined in the NCCPF, amplify environmental advocacy. Hashtags like #ClimateAction or #GreenGhana serve as digital platforms for engaging diverse audiences. An ecocritical reading investigates the role of these campaigns in democratizing ecological discourse and fostering collective action. However, it also examines the superficiality of performative activism, questioning whether social media efforts align with substantive policy goals like those detailed in the NCCP.

Ecocriticism is known and referred to in different forms, such as "Green (cultural) studies", "Eco-poetics", "Literary - ecology", "Eco-theory" and "Environmental literary criticism." As an approach to ecocriticism, Fawareh et al., (2023) assert that the Romantic writers from the United Kingdom and America gave special attention to the meaning of beauty in nature, promoted getting back in touch with nature and the beauty of the people, and defined the beauty of harmony with nature. When applying ecocriticism to a literary text, the theory focuses on examining the environmental themes present in the work. This includes analyzing how nature, landscapes, animals, and ecosystems are portrayed. Additionally, it considers environmental issues such as deforestation, bushfires, climate change, the extinction of endangered species, and pollution (Gerrard, 2011). Human-to-nature relationships are vital in ecocriticism. How humans treat nature in the text is ecocritical. A text could reveal that humans exploit or live harmoniously with nature, and the effects of either way can be discovered alongside the text. The historical and cultural milieu of the text forms part of ways of applying ecocriticism as a theory. How a text deals with environmental justice forms part of the ecocritical approach to a text. For example, analyses can focus on how environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalized communities, and proceed to look at how the text critiques industrial, economic, and political systems that contribute to environmental harm. This step is essential in understanding the text's stance on equity and justice in environmental matters.

According to Asenath and Santhanalakshmi (2021), to protect the planet and its inhabitants, it is crucial to scrutinize the ethical practices of individuals, businesses, and governments. The primary threat to the environment stems from human neglect. Therefore, a thorough comprehension of the human value system is essential to modify it for the preservation of the ecosystem, as human actions and the environment are deeply interconnected. Asenath and Santhanalakshmi's view therefore adds to the relevance of ecocriticism in evaluating the Green Ghana policy, aimed at sustainable growth and development.

Justification for choosing Ecocriticism as a Theory

When examining Ghana's *National Climate Change Policy* (2013) from the perspective of a researcher in Literature-in-English, ecocriticism emerges as a more appropriate analytical framework than ecolinguistics or other linguistic theories. This argument is grounded in ecocriticism's interdisciplinary roots, focus on textual

representation of environmental concerns, and alignment with the expertise of literature scholars. By distinguishing ecocriticism from ecolinguistics and showcasing its applicability, this argument leaves no room for doubt.

Ecocriticism is rooted in literary studies, making it a natural choice for a researcher from the Literature-in-English field. The theory originated as a method of analyzing how literary texts engage with ecological concerns, focusing on themes, imagery, and the relationship between humans and nature. Extending this approach to non-literary texts like the NCCP leverages the researcher's existing skills in textual analysis, thematic exploration, and critique of narrative structures. In contrast, ecolinguistics primarily focuses on the role of language in shaping ecological realities, examining syntax, semantics, and discourse patterns. While valuable, ecolinguistics requires linguistic expertise that might not align with the strengths of a literature scholar, whose training emphasizes interpretative analysis rather than linguistic structuralism. Ecocriticism thus provides a familiar yet flexible framework for engaging with the policy text.

The NCCP, as a governmental procedural document, is rich in representations of nature, human responsibility, and sustainability. Ecocriticism excels at unpacking such representations, analyzing how the policy constructs the human-environment relationship. Ecocriticism allows the researcher to critically assess the ideological framing of the policy, revealing implicit biases, cultural values, and ethical considerations. In contrast, ecolinguistics would primarily dissect the policy's language structure and rhetorical strategies, which, while useful, may overlook the broader narrative and thematic elements central to the researcher's literary training.

Ecocriticism is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing from literature, environmental studies, and cultural theory. This makes it adaptable to analyzing diverse texts, including policies, as it seamlessly bridges literary analysis with environmental concerns. Ecolinguistics, while also interdisciplinary, focuses more narrowly on language use and ecological impact, limiting its capacity to explore the narrative, cultural, and ethical dimensions emphasized in the policy. Ecocriticism's broader scope aligns better with the researcher's literary focus and the policy's multifaceted nature. The NCCP tackles pressing issues like deforestation, climate change, and renewable energy.

Ecocriticism enables the researcher to critically evaluate how these themes are presented, exploring their ethical and cultural implications. While ecolinguistics might analyze how specific linguistic choices reflect ecological attitudes, it lacks the depth to engage with the thematic and ethical questions central to ecocriticism. This makes ecocriticism more suitable for exploring the policy's underlying values and ideologies. As a literary scholar, the researcher is well-positioned to use ecocriticism to bridge policy analysis with cultural critique. The NCCP reflects not only governmental priorities but also Ghanaian cultural attitudes toward nature and sustainability. Ecocriticism's ability to interrogate cultural narratives makes it ideal for examining how the policy aligns with or challenges traditional ecological knowledge and practices.

Ecolinguistics, by contrast, would focus on linguistic strategies within the policy, potentially missing these broader cultural insights. For a researcher from Literature-in-English, this distinction is critical, as their expertise lies in analyzing texts as cultural artefacts, not merely as linguistic constructs. The researcher can apply this proven framework to the NCCP to assess its portrayal of environmental concerns, human responsibility, and sustainability strategies.

METHODOLOGY

This study conducts a close textual reading of Ghana's National Climate Change Policy Framework (NCCPF) to identify the linguistic structures in it and how it can be encouraged to sustain climate change and development. According to Greenham (2018), close reading is about enjoying how the collections of letters on the page create beauty in complexity (p. 4). Greenham identified six contexts of close reading of a text, thus semantic, thematic, iterative, generic, and adversarial (p. 7). The semantic aspect of close reading explores what individual words can mean in a given work of art, while the syntactic examines how words in a text convey meaning when they are put together. In literary studies, the thematic dimension explores how themes emerge and influence meaning as we read. Ecocriticism relates to Ghana's *National Climate Change Policy* (2013) by critically analyzing how the document represents human-environment interactions, addresses environmental issues, and communicates

solutions. It examines the policy's language, values, and priorities, assessing whether it adopts a sustainable, equitable, and holistic approach. Additionally, ecocriticism evaluates the interconnectedness of ecosystems with policy goals and explores the cultural and ethical dimensions of the NCCP, such as incorporating indigenous knowledge and promoting biodiversity. This analysis highlights the policy's effectiveness and areas for improvement in addressing climate change and fostering sustainable development.

The data being read affects the interpretation given to the texts, and in this case, the generic dimension of close reading comes to the fore. The historical, theoretical, and political concerns play key roles in reshaping the meaning of and in a text. Close reading allows for such through the adversarial. These approaches will be employed in the evaluation of the document.

The textual analysis of the National Climate Change Policy Framework (NCCPF) was conducted over a carefully structured period of six months to ensure depth and precision in examining the document's ecocritical dimensions. This process began with an extensive, phased review of the NCCPF, allowing for a systematic application of Greenham's six contexts of close reading: semantic, syntactic, thematic, iterative, generic, and adversarial.

In the *initial phase,* the focus was on thoroughly reading the entire document to identify overarching ecocritical themes, such as references to environmental preservation, sustainable development, and climate adaptation. This foundational step involved cataloguing prominent themes that would later guide a more detailed analysis. Next, *dedicated sessions* were conducted to perform *semantic* and *syntactic* analysis, honing in on specific passages where the language of the policy addressed climate-related issues directly. During this stage, individual words and phrases were isolated to explore how they conveyed specific meanings, such as "Ghana," "Goes," or "Green." The syntactic analysis complemented this by examining how these terms were arranged within sentences, aiming to reveal any inherent emphasis or patterns in the document's language that highlighted the policy's stance on environmental issues. The process also involved an *iterative* examination, in which repeated phrases or terms within the NCCPF were identified and analyzed for their potential impact on the document's ecocritical message. This iterative focus sheds light on the frequency and intentionality of certain ecological terms, providing insights into the policy's emphasis on particular environmental concerns.

Throughout the analysis, the *generic dimension* was also considered, recognizing that as a policy document, the NCCPF had specific functional, social, and governmental implications. This context provided a lens through which the framework could be interpreted not just as a static text but as a dynamic tool within Ghana's broader socio-political climate policy landscape. Finally, an *adversarial approach* was used to interpret the text through Ghana's historical, theoretical, and political context. This layer of analysis was critical in understanding how past environmental policies, theoretical discussions on climate justice, and current political priorities intersect within the NCCPF, influencing both its structure and its goals.

The study's foundation is built upon ecocriticism as a theoretical lens, with special attention to the language used in the NCCPF and how it reflects ecocritical values. Primary sources include both the NCCPF document and the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP), with supplementary support from credible journals and academic papers. All sources are properly cited, adhering to ethical standards in acknowledging prior research contributions.

RESULTS

Introduction

This study focuses on analyzing Ghana's National Climate Change Policy through the lens of ecocriticism, unfolding the findings along two key axes: agriculture and food security and natural resource management. These axes were chosen because they encapsulate the most critical areas where climate change impacts intersect with Ghana's socio-economic and ecological priorities. Agriculture and food security are vital to sustaining livelihoods and addressing hunger, while natural resource management is central to preserving ecosystems and ensuring sustainable development. These themes represent the policy's most pressing environmental and societal concerns, making them the most relevant for this analysis.

Discussions

The government of Ghana, aiming to ensure climate resilience and climate compatible economy while achieving sustainable development and equitable low-carbon economic growth for Ghana in 2010, supervised a National Climate Change Policy Framework (NCCPF) dubbed: Ghana Goes for Green Growth. This document matured into a full policy in 2013, called the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP). The Ecocritical inscriptions in this policy framework and policy start from the title: "Ghana Goes for Green Growth".

The term "green" is commonly associated with environmentalism. It represents the protection of natural resources and also the preservation of them. In this context, therefore, "green growth" suggests an important approach to the economic development of Ghana that gives special attention to sustainability and aims to achieve economic progress without depleting or harming the environment. Placing the nation's name Ghana as the subject of such an important framework brings to light the national identity and ecological stewardship. It frames the pursuit of green growth as not just an economic strategy but as a part of Ghana's identity and responsibility. This title holds feet to the fact that Ghana is positioning itself as a leader in sustainable development within Africa or the global community.

The economic and ecological interconnection of the policy framework is rooted in the text, *Goes For* (NCCP, 2013). A close reading of this text reveals a deliberate commitment or obvious choice by Ghana to take a unique trend. This trend is the conscientious efforts employed to integrate into the nation's growth strategy - ecological concerns. Addressing the current environmental challenges is not the only aim of Ghana but also preparing for a sustainable future. The color "green" is commonly associated with environmentalism, and represents, the protection and preservation of our natural resources. Drawing upon the authority of Isidore of Seville's seventh-century work Etymologiae, and National Natural Resources brings us to the consensus of 'all authors', by stating that for a fact, green 'is most comforting to human sight and, of all colors, the most soothing to the afflicted' (p. 141). According to Khudoynazarovna (2019), green in English signifies freedom as it is commonly used in the idiom, "to give a green light. "Green Growth" as stated in the National Climate Change Policy Framework (2013) suggests an approach to economic development that prioritizes sustainability, aiming to achieve economic progress without depleting or harming the environment. Rather than harm nature, this advocacy pushes for harmony between man and nature. Ecocriticism however questions how "green" the growth really is and whether it addresses issues like environmental justice, the impact on local communities, and the potential conflicts between economic development and ecological preservation. The document noted in the background that:

> Ghana aims to become a middle-income country by 2020, but climate change is a serious threat to this ambition. It is already affecting our economic output and our livelihoods and, therefore, our long-term development prospects, even though Ghana's own contribution to global climate change has been negligible. (p. 16)

In the above extract, climate change is labelled as a "serious threat" to Ghana's goal of becoming a middle-income country. The hyperbole exerted in "serious threat" relates to the pseudonyms of climate change, thus, deforestation, water pollution, air pollution, and land degradation through illegal; mining activities. The time setting of the middle-income ambition is considerably a decade starting from 2010. After a decade, it is prudent that the economic outlook be subjected to critical evaluation. The contrast created by the introduction of the coordinating conjunction, "but", projects the devastation of climate change, thus poor economic output, and livelihood. The setting in "long-term development prospects" aligns with ecocritical concerns about the sustainability of development practices. The prospect of which is bleak hope. Building on the ecocritical perspectives embedded in the forewords of this policy, the following comment of H.E John Dramani Mahama, former president of the Republic of Ghana, (2012 -2016) ensues:

> "We cannot allow climate change to pull us back. The only way we can go forward, developmentally, is to address its impact and to seize any opportunities it presents."

In line with ecocritical thought that challenges the conventional development models that often ignore environmental costs, the author links ecological sustainability directly to human progress. We deduce from the

text that true development must be both environmentally sustainable and equitable. The author sees a glimpse of hope in its positive change and innovation, therefore implicit in his vision is a suggestion of a balanced relationship between humans and the natural world. The absolutism of “the only way” in the text heightens the stakes in addressing climate change. It serves as a counterpoint to past practices where development often came at the expense of the environment. The advocacy for this paradigm shift makes ecological integrity central to the developmental agenda, and a call to rethink how progress is measured. The use of "only" creates a sense of urgency and inevitability, and links the success of all other developmental efforts to the state of climate change. The linkage of forward movement exclusively with the addressing of climate change redefines development itself - it is no longer just about economic growth or technological advancement but is inextricably tied to the health of the planet. In furtherance of the text, climate change becomes both an impediment to be overcome and a catalyst for innovation. Its duality reflects a sophisticated understanding of development as not just a passive process but an active engagement with the challenges posed by climate change. Translating the discussion document into a main framework, the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) is noted as Ghana’s response to climate change. Five focal areas are considered in the policy framework that carry deeper ecocritical perspectives: Agricultural and food security, Natural Resource Management, equitable Social Development and Energy, and Industrial and infrastructural development. From these focal points, we can see that nature and the environment are idealized in the policy. While all these focal points hold ecocritical significance, Agriculture and food security along with Natural Resource Management have become very key components that contribute to Social Development and Energy as well as industrial and infrastructural development. The research expands on these two further:

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

The first focal point, thus Agricultural and food security reflects a sense of acknowledgement that human health is unavoidably linked to the environment in which they live. Nature is key in this focal point, the significance of which is that a return to sustainable agricultural practices that work in harmony with natural cycles, is key for food security. Ecocriticism advocates for a symbiotic relationship between the earth and humans, and according to Glotfelty and Fromm (2024), this relationship borders on a balance between the exploitation of natural resources and the conservation efforts towards replenishing, replacing, and sustaining them.

The need for effective and responsible stewardship of natural resources against any form of unchecked exploitation and environmental degradation is a perspective that stands out. A shift towards a more ecocentric worldview where citizens' activities are regulated to maintain ecological balance is a step towards sustaining Agriculture and food security (Buell, 1995). This focal area is key to the availability of arable land for the planting for food and jobs. The over-extraction and illegal mining of these natural resources matter greatly to anthropocentrism and the survival of water bodies.

Nature is under siege by human-induced climate change, holding to the statistics presented in the policy section herein. The anthropocentric mindset of humans driven by economic growth and industrialization is accountable for this siege. According to Lynch et al. (2021), Agriculture significantly reduces global warming, especially through methane and nitrous oxide emissions, which differ in impact from carbon dioxide. Unlike CO_2, a stock pollutant, methane is a flow pollutant, making conventional CO_2-equivalent reporting misleading and obscuring each sector's climate impact. They believe that effective strategies should consider both scientific and economic, technical, and ethical dimensions, helping to balance food security, land use, and fairness in emissions reduction efforts. The National Climate Change Policy aligns with the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations (UN), which sets ambitious objectives for the economy to preserve natural resources and achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

Ghana’s agricultural landscape is shaped by contrasting approaches to land use: traditional farming methods rooted in indigenous knowledge and industrial farming techniques promoted by modern agricultural policy. These contrasting approaches reveal a critical ecocritical tension. According to Section 2, policy content 2-3:

> The small-scale farmers who account for about 80% of domestic agricultural production have few resources to invest, and farming remains “low tech”. As a result, the sector is very vulnerable to climate change

Small-scale farmers, responsible for 80% of domestic food production, rely on simple farming methods due to limited resources. While these "low-tech" practices have a low environmental impact, they leave farmers highly vulnerable to climate change, including unpredictable rainfall and extreme temperatures.

This situation calls for sustainable solutions that blend traditional knowledge with modern techniques to boost resilience while protecting the environment. However, systemic inequalities further compound the challenges these farmers face, raising concerns about fairness and environmental justice. Supporting them is essential for securing food supplies and preserving biodiversity.

Traditional practices, often involving polyculture, agroforestry, and organic inputs, have historically fostered a sustainable relationship with the land. Indigenous knowledge systems, which harmony with natural cycles, respect for biodiversity, and low-impact farming, have allowed generations of Ghanaians to cultivate the land while maintaining its fertility and ecological health. However, these methods are increasingly sidelined by industrial agriculture, which promotes monocropping, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides in pursuit of higher yields and economic growth.

From an ecocritical perspective, industrial agriculture in Ghana is fraught with ecological and ethical challenges. Monocropping, particularly with cash crops like cocoa and palm oil, leads to soil degradation, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. Heavy reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides disrupts soil microbial life, pollutes waterways, and diminishes the land's natural resilience. These practices may temporarily boost productivity, but they deplete natural resources in the long term, undermining the very foundations of food security. Ecocriticism urges us to question the cultural narratives underpinning this approach, which often valorizes economic growth and technological advancement over ecological balance. It challenges the assumption that agricultural progress must come at the expense of the environment, advocating instead for a paradigm shift those respects ecological limits and acknowledges the intrinsic value of nature. According to the policy framework:

> Modernisation of agriculture, as a way to increase yields, requires a transformation of current agricultural practices and, for example, the development and application of new crop varieties that are better suited to the changing climate conditions; higher energy and water inputs to support large-scale irrigation; and mechanization.

The statement employs technical diction such as "modernisation," "crop varieties," "irrigation," and "mechanization," which conveys a forward-thinking and solution-oriented tone. The use of enumeration in listing "development and application of new crop varieties," "higher energy and water inputs," and "mechanization" highlights the multifaceted approach needed for agricultural transformation. This policy idea reflects the complexity of the changes required. Juxtaposition is subtly present between the existing agricultural practices and the advanced methods proposed, underscoring the gap that modernization seeks to bridge. The phrase "better suited to the changing climate conditions" uses personification**,** giving climate an active role in influencing agricultural outcomes. The tone is optimistic yet pragmatic and portrays both the challenges and the opportunities inherent in adopting modern methods. However, the underlying implications of high resource demand and potential environmental impact are hinted at, creating a nuanced perspective on agricultural progress.

The cultural narratives around land use and food production are further complicated by global economic pressures. Ghana's agricultural policies are influenced by international trade dynamics and donor-driven development agendas, which frequently prioritize export-oriented agriculture. While these policies aim to integrate Ghana into the global market, they can have adverse effects on local food security. When fertile land is allocated to cash crops rather than staple foods, local communities may struggle to access affordable, nutritious food. This shift in land use also makes Ghanaian agriculture more vulnerable to global market fluctuations, which can destabilize the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and increase food insecurity in rural areas. Ecocriticism highlights the ethical dimensions of this issue, questioning whether it is just to prioritize export-driven agriculture over the food sovereignty and nutritional needs of local populations.

In Ghana, deforestation for farming and the use of synthetic fertilizers contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. As climate impacts worsen, rural farmers—who are least responsible for emissions—bear the brunt of erratic

weather patterns, droughts, and floods. This injustice underscores the need for an agricultural system that is both resilient to climate shocks and aligned with climate mitigation goals. Ecocriticism advocates for approaches like agroecology, permaculture, and regenerative agriculture, which work with nature rather than against it. These methods enhance biodiversity, improve soil health, and increase resilience to climate extremes, offering a pathway to sustainable food production that respects both human and ecological well-being.

Ghana's dependence on industrial farming also reflects a broader cultural value placed on technological and economic "progress." Yet, this pursuit of progress often overlooks the social and environmental costs. In the context of Ghana, "progress" could mean investing in smallholder farmers who use sustainable practices, supporting local food systems that prioritize food security over export revenue, and valuing traditional knowledge systems that have long sustained the land. Rather than equating progress solely with economic growth, ecocriticism urges a definition of progress that respects the integrity of ecosystems and prioritizes the health and well-being of local communities.

Furthermore, consumption patterns, both local and global, drive unsustainable agricultural practices. In Ghana, rising demand for certain foods, like imported rice and poultry, reflects shifting dietary preferences influenced by globalization. This shift places pressure on local farmers to meet demand through intensive farming, often at the cost of environmental degradation. On a global scale, the demand for commodities like cocoa creates incentives for monocropping and deforestation. A shift in consumption patterns toward sustainable, locally sourced food, along with advocacy for policies that support local food systems encourages dietary diversity. By promoting a culture of responsible consumption, ecocriticism supports the transition to food systems that are more aligned with ecological limits and local needs.

To build a more resilient agriculture, policies that support sustainable, small-scale farming practices need to continue to be promoted. Such policies could provide financial and technical assistance to farmers practicing agroecology, promote organic certification for local produce, and invest in infrastructure that supports local markets. Additionally, policies could encourage crop diversification and soil conservation measures that reduce reliance on chemical inputs and mitigate the risks associated with climate variability. Education and knowledge-sharing platforms can empower farmers with sustainable techniques, recognizing that food security in Ghana depends not only on production but also on preserving the land's ecological health. Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, on Wordsworth Revisiting of the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, on July 13, 1798, carries a heavy connection to these focal areas of the National Climate Change Policy. Wordsworth recalls in his very first stanza, after five long years, the state of the environment he left behind in his early days. He writes of his experience:

> I hear These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs…
>
> I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, Which on a wild secluded scene impress…
>
> The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
>
> These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
>
> Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
>
> Are clad in one green hue…
>
> …Green to the very door…
>
> (Tintern Abbey, 1798)

This last entry, known popularly as *Tintern Abbey* in the lyrical ballads, holds a view of the vision of the climate change policy. Wordsworth presents an idealized environment, one "virgin" from the exploitive schemes of man. The mountains, cliffs, sky, wildlife, landscapes, and forest, hold a view of a better climate in Wordsworth's poem. Wordsworth mentions the scenery as Green to the very door, this relates with the caption of the framework: Ghana Goes

For Green Growth. The aim of the National Climate Change policy alludes to the imageries in Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey. Six sceneries hold view to the cover page of the Climate Policy: The scene of air pollution, grassland, stilt house, fossil fuel, drought and planted tree, and water falls. To delve into the ecocritical perspectives of these, the destructive effect of industrialization and human activities on the natural environment is what is represented in the scene of air pollution coming from an old vehicle. This is a socio-political factor ingrained in the elements of ecocritical theory. Air pollution is an unsustainable practice that is endemic to climate change and sustainability.

However, the projection of agriculture under section 2 of the climate policy, thus "Agriculture and Food Security" (p. 11) calls to mind the protection and sustainability of this vital ecosystem against threats of urbanization, deforestation, and bushfires. Grasslands play a vital role in carbon sequestration, and holding to the vision to reduce carbon emission in the climate change policy, the scenery was a guide to sustainable practice. The third scenery, a stilt house, could view environmental challenges such as rising sea levels or flooding and how humans adapt to it. This scenery raises questions regarding the sustainability of these adaptations in the face of severe impact or changes in the climate.

The fifth scenery, thus afforestation, creates a conflict between environmental destruction and its restoration. The sight of drought alongside, illustrates the devastating effect of climate change on water bodies, and on the other hand, the planted trees draw a sense of restoration of the ecological balance.

The waterfalls paint the picture created in the Tintern's Abbey-natural beauty and the power of nature. The waterfalls may also suggest in an ecocritical context, the life-sustaining force of water. Nature is sublime, and the waterfalls deepen the emotional attachment to this grandeur power of nature. Section 2 of the policy reads that "more than 80% of the disasters in Ghana are considered to be climate-related".

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Introduction

Natural resource management (NRM) in Ghana presents an opportunity to reframe humanity's relationship with the environment. Beyond economic considerations, a sustainable approach emphasizes the intrinsic and cultural value of natural resources. This analysis explores the ecological and cultural significance of forests, water resources, and agricultural land while proposing holistic solutions for sustainable management.

Forest Resources

Ghana's forests, covering 33.7% of the country's land area, play an integral role in maintaining biodiversity, supporting livelihoods, and regulating the climate (Forestry Commission, 2023). However, deforestation due to logging, mining, and agricultural expansion has resulted in the loss of about 2% of forest cover annually (Forestry Commission, 2023).

This loss not only threatens ecological balance but also undermines cultural heritage, as many communities regard forests as sacred spaces. The Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) initiative provides a promising solution, conserving over 20,000 hectares of forested land by combining local knowledge with modern conservation techniques (UNDP Ghana, 2022). Expanding such programs is crucial for addressing the dual challenges of economic development and environmental degradation.

Water Resources

Ghana's rivers, including the Volta, Pra, and Ankobra, are essential for agriculture, domestic use, and hydropower. Despite their significance, activities like illegal mining (galamsey) and industrial discharge have heavily polluted these water bodies. The Ghana Water Company reported that 70% of rivers in mining regions were contaminated, increasing water treatment costs by 40% in 2022 (Ghana Water Company, 2022).

Additionally, efforts like the One-District-One-Dam initiative, intended to enhance irrigation, have seen limited

success, with only 15% of the target dams completed by 2023 (Ministry of Food and Agriculture, 2023). Improving water management requires stricter enforcement of anti-pollution laws and investments in sustainable irrigation systems.

Agricultural Land

Agriculture contributes 20% of Ghana's GDP and employs nearly 50% of its population (World Bank, 2023). However, over-reliance on unsustainable practices, such as slash-and-burn farming and excessive use of chemical fertilizers, has led to a decline in soil fertility and productivity. Ghana loses 1.5% of arable land annually due to erosion and urbanization (Ministry of Food and Agriculture, 2023).

Conservation agriculture and agroforestry have emerged as viable alternatives. For instance, a pilot project in northern Ghana reported a 30% increase in maize yields and a 25% reduction in soil erosion, demonstrating the efficacy of sustainable farming techniques (UNDP Ghana, 2022). These practices integrate local traditions with scientific innovation, promoting long-term agricultural viability.

THE NEED FOR HOLISTIC POLICY SOLUTIONS

Natural resources in Ghana are more than economic assets; they embody cultural heritage and ecological integrity. An ecocritical perspective challenges the dominant paradigm of exploitation and calls for sustainable practices that respect the interconnectedness of ecosystems.

First, forest conservation programs such as CREMAs should be expanded nationwide, involving more communities in participatory conservation. This will protect biodiversity and strengthen community ties to the land. Second, stringent anti-pollution laws must be enforced to combat the degradation of water bodies, alongside investments in water infrastructure to ensure equitable access. Third, sustainable farming practices should be incentivized through financial support and technical assistance to reduce land degradation.

Finally, raising public awareness about the cultural, ecological, and economic value of natural resources is essential. Empowering communities with knowledge fosters a sense of guardianship over ecosystems, ensuring their preservation for future generations. By adopting these measures, Ghana can align its development goals with global sustainability standards, safeguarding its natural heritage while promoting economic growth.

Water management in Ghana illustrates a critical ecocritical concern, specifically regarding citizen's attitudes to the environment. The rivers, lakes, and coastal regions provide essential services, from irrigation and drinking water to fish habitats. Water is more than a utilitarian resource; it is a life-sustaining entity deserving of respect and protection. Integrated Water Resource Management aims to address water scarcity and pollution, but ecocriticism pushes this further, advocating for an approach that respects water as a vital component of interconnected ecosystems. For instance, illegal mining, or *galamsey*, has led to severe water pollution, affecting both aquatic ecosystems and community health. According to Yeboah (2023), since 1989, governments have tried to curb illegal mining through military interventions. However, these efforts have been unsuccessful. Growing concerns about environmental degradation and the effects of climate change have intensified worries over illegal gold mining in Ghana. An ecocritical approach to NRM in Ghana would call for strict regulation of activities that harm water bodies, and promote the intrinsic value of these ecosystems and the necessity of protecting them from degradation. This perspective encourages society to see water management not only as an economic necessity but as an ethical commitment to future generations and other forms of life that depend on these water sources.

In Ghana, policy often emphasizes resource use for economic growth, sometimes neglecting the long-term ecological costs. Advocacy for policies that recognize ecosystems as dynamic entities with rights and intrinsic value, going beyond conservation laws to foster a balanced relationship with nature is key. For example, while Ghana has laws to protect forests and regulate mining, a strong policy like the NCCP (2013) would push for stronger enforcement and more community involvement in these processes. Natural Resource Management policies encourage collaboration between the government, NGOs, and local communities to create strategies that

prioritize ecosystem health and resilience. Such policies would integrate local ecological knowledge, acknowledge the spiritual and cultural significance of natural resources, and prioritize the well-being of both human and non-human communities.

Climate change exacerbates the challenges of NRM, as rising temperatures and unpredictable rainfall patterns disrupt agricultural productivity, water availability, and biodiversity in Ghana. Current adaptation strategies focus on technological solutions and infrastructure, yet ecocriticism calls for adaptation approaches that respect natural systems and enhance ecological resilience. This might involve reforestation initiatives, wetland restoration, and the promotion of drought-resistant crops. The sustainability of these resources calls for true resilience that involves not only technological adaptation but also a sense of coexistence and reciprocity with nature. This approach supports adaptive strategies that work in harmony with ecosystems rather than manipulating them solely for human benefit.

Owing to this urgency, the policy framework, ecocritical suggests five key steps to unravel the situation. All five are summed up in the G4, thus: *Ghana Goes For Green Growth.* By this caption, Ghana aims to align economic development with environmental sustainability. However, in the Ghanaian context, economic development often conflicts with the preservation of natural resources, and this tension poses real challenges to the practical implementation of *"green growth."*

One of the central contradictions of "green growth" in Ghana is that while it advocates for sustainable development, the country's economic foundation still heavily relies on extractive industries such as gold mining, logging, and large-scale agriculture to the detriment of the environment and human life. For example, the mining sector, particularly gold mining, significantly contributes to Ghana's GDP and employment. However, mining activities often lead to deforestation, water pollution, and land degradation, which run counter to the green growth agenda.

Galamsey is the illegal and unregulated small-scale mining of minerals, typically gold, often conducted without proper permits or adherence to environmental and safety regulations. According to Emmanuel and Adams (2021), to curb the galamsey problem which to date is predominant in Ghana, the former President of Ghana - John Mahama, established an Inter-Ministerial Task Force in May 2013, bringing together the Ministries of Lands and Natural Resources, Interior, and Defense to tackle illegal mining. The task force was directed to seize equipment used in illegal mining, arrest offenders, deport non-Ghanaians, and revoke the licenses of locals who had sold or leased their concessions to foreigners. The team dismantled numerous illegal mining operations, expelled miners from their sites, and reported the arrest of over 4,500 illegal foreign miners, who were subsequently deported. Despite these efforts, the issue persisted.

According to the Herald (2024), President Nana Akufo-Addo reportedly ordered the police and military in September 2024 to take action against illegal small-scale mining (galamsey), following increased pressure for decisive measures. This decision came after a national security meeting that evaluated Galamsey's severe impact on rivers and the environment. During a recent media briefing, Lands and Natural Resources Minister Samuel Abu Jinapor, who has faced calls to resign, stated that the President also authorized the dismantling of illegal mining equipment when necessary.

Agricultural expansion, especially in cocoa production, leads to deforestation and biodiversity loss, challenging Ghana's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint.

These sectors, critical for Ghana's economy, present a paradox for green growth: while they provide economic benefits, they simultaneously threaten ecological sustainability. Without substantial regulatory frameworks and incentives for sustainable practices, Ghana's green growth initiatives risk becoming symbolic rather than transformative.

To explore whether "green growth" as proposed by the NCCP is a realistic strategy for Ghana, it is essential to consider alternative models like "degrowth" and "just transitions."

"Degrowth" advocates for reducing consumption and production to relieve environmental pressure. However,

in Ghana, where poverty rates remain high and many communities rely on natural resource extraction for survival, degrowth is difficult to implement without compromising livelihoods. For instance, cocoa farming, a major export industry, supports nearly one million farmers but often involves environmentally harmful practices like deforestation and monoculture farming. Applying a degrowth model would require substantial investment in diversified, sustainable livelihoods and social safety nets to prevent exacerbating poverty among these farmers.

On the other hand, "just transitions" could offer a more viable approach by focusing on social equity alongside environmental goals. In Ghana, this might involve transitioning workers from high-impact industries like mining and logging to greener, less resource-intensive sectors, such as renewable energy or sustainable agriculture. For example, if the government were to expand its investment in solar energy farms in the northern regions, this could provide jobs and reduce dependence on deforestation for charcoal production. Additionally, "just transitions" emphasize community involvement in decision-making, which could be crucial in Ghana's context, as many rural communities depend directly on natural resources and could offer traditional insights into sustainable land management.

Comparing "green growth" with these alternative models reveals that while "green growth" aims to achieve both economic and environmental goals, it may inadvertently perpetuate unsustainable practices by continuing to prioritize economic growth over deep environmental reforms. The pursuit of economic expansion, even under a green banner, can lead to contradictions, especially in a country like Ghana where pressing economic needs often overshadow ecological priorities.

Ghana as an identity is the first step to climate restitution. The name Ghana is thought to originate from the title Kaya Maghan of the rulers of Wagadu, which translates as ruler of gold (Wikipedia). Owing to this identity, the name reaffirms the earnestness of seeking for a lost treasure. The ecocritical significance of the name in the quest to reclaim and sustain the climate is the history behind the name. The mention of Ghana becomes a collective action towards climate change. In the background to the policy, it is stated:

The Government of Ghana recognizes that climate change must be mainstreamed into policies and sectoral activities to achieve sustainable growth.

Under the umbrella of Ghana as an identity are the sectors that play key roles in mitigating the effects of climate change. The rhetorical question is, *who is responsible?* This receives a favorable response under section 3 of the policy framework. There are 13 Ministries and their associated departments and agencies under section 3. These ministries and their activities constitute the policy statement, "Sectorial activities", tasked with ecological stewardship. These ministries are the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, National Development Planning Commission, Ministry of Communications (Ghana Meteorological Agency), Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, and Ministry of Roads and Highways. These ministries are important in the policy framework and must be mentioned as the stewards of ecological sustainability in Ghana.

The second dimension to mitigating the effects of climate change lies in the verb: Goes. Oftentimes, the verb "goes" implies progression, change or movement. Goes here signifies the nation's ongoing efforts towards combating the issues of climate change and the environment as a whole. The movement towards sustainability under this dimension comes in four aspects. The first aspect of this dimension, "Goes" as Progress", denotes the adaptation of renewable energy, promotion of eco-friendly agriculture and enforcement of laws against deforestation.

The second aspect of the second dimension, "Goes as Direction", speaks to the education, policies and public awareness campaigns, that promote positive action towards climate change, and determine how effectively the country can combat climate change. This examines whether Ghana is moving towards a future that prioritizes ecological health or not and whether the choices made by policymakers and citizens contribute to environmental

sustainability or exacerbate ecological issues.

The third aspect of the second dimension is "Goes as Cultural Change". Ghana's cultural attitude towards nature and consumption habits is important in ravaging the effects of climate change. The sharp migration from the rural to the urban areas, places pressure on the natural resources, land, water and air. This leads to indiscriminate dumping, burning, release of harmful gases into the atmosphere and pollution of the water bodies. There is a need for a shift in how communities view and interact with their natural environment, to enable and maintain more environmentally conscious behaviors. Cultural narratives in Ghana, such as folklore, traditions, and modern media, influence public perception of climate change. Exploring these cultural elements positively contributes to the nation's progress in combating climate change.

The fourth and final aspect of the second dimension is "Goes" as Time." The verb "Goes" also implies the passage of time. The history of combating climate change in the past is crucial to fighting the long-term battle against it in the present. Looking beyond the present is a critical look at how current policies will also impact the environment over time.

The preposition "For" is the third dimension of combating climate change. The aspects under this dimension are: For as Purpose, For as Direction, For as Advocacy and For as Alignment. A clear intention or purpose is the first step to combating climate change. The support and pursuit of green initiatives reflect a deliberate commitment to environmental sustainability. A direction, this third dimension implies is for Ghana to channel its efforts and resources toward achieving "Green," which symbolizes ecological preservation, renewable energy, and sustainable practices. The Green Solutions should be the focus.

Within the borders of Ghana, "For Green" can also be seen as an advocacy stance. As part of a global climate, Ghana must continually support green initiatives and policies. Ghana must be actively involved in the affairs of other nations, and be ready to adopt best practices from other nations. This will potentially influence global conversations on climate change.

The last on this dimension is "For" as Alignment. Alignment is essential for integrating ecological considerations into national policies and practices. Alignment with the policies and practices of others calls for a framework that allows for cross-cultural exchange and a global framework for combating climate change that is accepted and adopted by all nations.

The "Green" concludes the dimensions of salvaging the effects of climate change. The green practices are crucial in this regard. These green practices are grouped into five sections, thus: Renewable Energy Adoption, Energy Efficiency Improvements, sustainable agriculture, reforestation and afforestation, waste management, water conservation, sustainable land use, Carbon Sequestration and Climate-Smart Policies. Breaking these sections into action units we get: Installation of solar panels for electricity generation, Development and use of wind farms, Harnessing Earth's internal heat for power, Designing and constructing energy-efficient buildings, using energy-saving appliances and lighting (e.g., LED bulbs), Promoting electric vehicles (EVs) and public transportation,

Enhancing energy efficiency in manufacturing processes, Reducing chemical use and promoting organic methods, Integrating trees into agricultural practices, Practices that restore soil health and capture carbon, Implementing strategies to minimize food waste, Large-scale tree planting campaigns, Protecting existing forests from deforestation, Expanding green spaces in urban areas, Promoting recycling programs to reduce landfill waste, Encouraging composting to manage organic waste, Converting waste into energy through incineration or biogas, Implementing water-saving techniques in agriculture and households, Collecting and storing rainwater for reuse, Protecting and restoring wetlands to enhance natural water filtration, Developing compact cities with efficient land use, Establishing conservation zones for biodiversity protection, Promoting responsible logging practices, Enhancing soil carbon storage through improved land management, Protecting coastal ecosystems like mangroves, which store carbon, Combining bioenergy production with carbon capture technologies, Implementing carbon taxes or cap-and-trade systems and Providing financial incentives for renewable energy and conservation projects.

According to Awuni et al. (2023), adaptation strategies in Ghana have focused on advancing technological needs within the agricultural sector. These efforts include integrating cereal and legume crops, implementing climate-smart cocoa farming practices, improving poultry feed and enhancing genetic resources, fostering climate-resilient livestock and genetic conservation, promoting sustainable fishing and aquaculture, expanding tree crop diversity, integrating root-tuber and livestock systems, and developing knowledge-based advisory services. Additionally, water harvesting and irrigation management technologies have been prioritized. Other adaptation measures address the need to strengthen insurance programs to mitigate the effects of climate change on crop yields, particularly in northern Ghana, where insurance options for farmers remain limited.

Similar results were found by Arhin (2022); Arhin reports that, over the past decade, Ghana has implemented a series of substantial initiatives to enhance climate resilience and environmental management across various sectors. Recognizing the threat of coastal erosion and rising sea levels, Ghana has invested nearly US$670 million into seven sea defense projects along its coastline, aiming to protect vulnerable coastal communities and ecosystems.

In the energy sector, the government enacted the Petroleum Exploration and Development Act of 2016 (Act 919), a significant regulatory measure aimed at limiting gas flaring during oil exploration and production. This legislation supports efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with the oil industry, aligning with Ghana's broader climate goals.

Additionally, in 2019, the Forestry Commission committed to reducing six million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions through the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Program in collaboration with the World Bank. This initiative reflects Ghana's dedication to preserving its forests and reducing emissions, particularly in areas impacted by cocoa farming.

In the northern drylands, which are especially susceptible to the impacts of climate change, Ghana has invested over US$100 million since 2016 to enhance the resilience of smallholder farmers and the ecosystems they depend on. This funding supports agricultural adaptation strategies to help farmers cope with climate variability and safeguard their livelihoods. Urban resilience efforts have also received significant attention, particularly in the Greater Accra region. The government, in partnership with the World Bank, launched the Greater Accra Resilient Integrated Development Project, with a US$200 million investment focused on improving flood risk management and solid waste handling in the Odaw River area. This project is spearheaded by the Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation and is designed to bolster the city's infrastructure against climate-related risks.

Furthermore, Ghana has developed strategies to address health risks exacerbated by climate change, particularly those that intersect with gender vulnerabilities. Efforts to improve climate education and climate services have also been prioritized, ensuring efficient management of weather information systems that benefit communities across the country.

In addition to these measures, Ghana has established early warning systems and disaster risk management protocols, along with initiatives for integrated water resources management. These comprehensive strategies indicate Ghana's commitment to preparing for and mitigating the impacts of climate change while fostering sustainable development across all regions and sectors.

CONCLUSION

The paper has examined the ecocritical inscriptions in the National Climate Change Framework and Policy (NCCF & NCCP). The vision of the climate change policy is to Ensure a climate-resilient and climate-compatible economy while achieving sustainable development through equitable low-carbon economic growth for Ghana. Analyses of the vision and the policy sections revealed that Ghana is facing a severe climate crisis. The study revealed that the inscription *Ghana Goes For Green* has ecocritical significance. Analyses of this inscription revealed that to salvage the effects of Climate Change, requires a collective effort, an action and collaboration, purpose and practices. Nature was key in the policy, and the need to preserve it. Wordsworth Tintern Abbey has alluded to the vision of the climate change policy, and a close reading revealed the causes of

climate change as inscribed on the cover page.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is thankful to the entire staff of the faculty of English Language and Literature at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author has no conflict of Interest to declare

REFERENCES

1. Appiah, S. (2024). Parts of Accra flooded after heavy Monday morning rainfall. Citi News Room.
2. Arhin, A. (2022). Climate change adaptation in Ghana: Strategies, initiatives, and practices. Retrieved from: file:///C:/Users/PC/Downloads/Climate-Change-Adaptation-in-Ghana-Strategies-Initiatives-and-Practices.pdf
3. Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (2023). About ASLE. https://www.asle.org
4. Asenath, T. J., & Santhanalakshmi, A. (2021). A study of eco-criticism for the relationship between natural and human environments. Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 17(2), 1285–1289.
5. Awuni, S., Adarkwah, F., Ofori, B. D., Purwestri, R. C., Huertas Bernal, D. C., & Hajek, M. (2023). Managing the challenges of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in Ghana. Heliyon, 9(5), e15491. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e15491
6. Awoonor, K. (1975). The sea eats the land at home (pp. 115–116). Heinemann.
7. Barry, P. (2020). Ecocriticism. Manchester University Press EBooks, No. 4. https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526153524.00018
8. Besada, H., & Sewankambo, N. (2009). Climate change in Africa: Adaptation, mitigation, and governance challenges. International Development Research Centre.
9. Bewket, W. (2012). Climate change perceptions and adaptation in Ethiopia. Regional Environmental Change, 12(3), 471–484.
10. Buell, L. (1995). The environmental imagination. Harvard University Press. https://books.google.com.gh
11. Collier, P., Conway, G., & Venables, T. (2008). Climate change and Africa. Oxford Review of Economic Policy, 24(2), 337–353.
12. Cornelius, Antabe, R., Arku, G., & Luginaah, I. (2024). Farmer field schools, climate action plans, and climate change resilience among smallholder farmers in Northern Ghana. Climatic Change, 177(6). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-024-03755-w
13. Emmanuel, O., & Adams, A. (2021). Insight into illegal mining phenomenon "Galamsey" in Ghana-causes, effect, and policy challenges. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 11(7), 14–24. https://doi.org/10.30845/ijhss.v11n7p3
14. Fawareh, A. J. A., Dakamsih, N. J., & Alkouri, A. M. (2023). Ecocriticism in modern English literature. Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 13(3), 783–788. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1303.28
15. Forestry Commission. (2023). Annual report on deforestation in Ghana. Accra: Forestry Commission Publications.
16. Garrard, G. (2011). Ecocriticism. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203806838
17. Garrard, G. (2012). Ecocriticism. Routledge.
18. Gemeda, D. O., & Sima, A. D. (2015). The impacts of climate change on the African continent and the way forward. Journal of Ecology and the Natural Environment, 7(10), 256–262.
19. Glotfelty, C., & Fromm, H. (1996). The ecocriticism reader: Landmarks in literary ecology. University of Georgia Press.
20. Glotfelty, C., & Fromm, H. (2024). The ecocriticism reader. Google Books. https://books.google.com.gh
21. Greenham, D. (2018). Close reading. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203709979
22. Harrison, M. (2005). Ecocriticism: The nature of the text. University of London Press.
23. Herald. (2023). Akufo-Addo reportedly orders police & military galamsey crackdown. The Herald.
24. Hulme, M., Doherty, R., Ngara, T., New, M., & Lister, D. (2001). African climate change: 1900-2100.

Climate Research, 17(2), 145–168.
25. Hummel, D. (2015). Climate change, land degradation, and desertification in Africa. Global Environmental Change, 35, 1–8.
26. Kerridge, R., & Sammells, N. (2016). Writing the environment: Ecocriticism and literature. https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:160807559
27. Khudoynazarovna, T. G. (2019). The symbolism of color names in English and Russian languages. European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences, 7(12), 1088–1092.
28. Lynch, J., Cain, M., Frame, D., & Pierrehumbert, R. (2021). Agriculture's contribution to climate change and role in mitigation is distinct from predominantly fossil CO2-emitting sectors. Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems, 4(1). https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2020.518039
29. Ministry of Food and Agriculture. (2023). Agricultural productivity and sustainability in Ghana. Accra: MoFA Reports.
30. Niang, I., et al. (2014). IPCC Fifth Assessment Report: Impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability. Cambridge University Press.
31. Pienaah, C. K. A., & Luginaah, I. (2024). The impact of village savings and loan associations as a financial and climate resilience strategy for mitigating food insecurity in Northern Ghana. Risks, 12(4), 58. https://doi.org/10.3390/risks12040058
32. Rueckert, W. (1978). Literature and ecology: An experiment in ecocriticism. The Iowa Review, 9(1), 71–86. https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2319
33. Rubadiri, D. (1981). An African thunderstorm. In S. Awoonor & J. Reed (3rd ed., pp. 32–33). The Penguin book of modern African poetry.
34. Ryan, J. C. (2020). Ecocriticism. The Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory. https://doi.org/10.1093/ywcct/mbaa018
35. Singh, S., & Purohit, R. (2014). Technical adaptation to climate change in Africa. Renewable Energy, 65, 765–771.
36. UNDP Ghana. (2022). Sustainable resource management: Case studies from Ghana. United Nations Development Programme.
37. UNFCCC. (2007b). United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Report.
38. Wordsworth, W. (1798). Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on revisiting the banks of the Wye during a tour, July 13, 1798. In W. Wordsworth & S. T. Coleridge (Eds.), Lyrical ballads, with a few other poems (pp. 201–209). London: J. & A. Arch.
39. World Bank. (2023). Economic contributions of agriculture in Ghana. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.
40. Yeboah, P. A. O., Freitas, P. K., & Otoo, P. (2023). "The trees shake their heads in defiance": Ecocritical inscriptions in selected Ghanaian poems. Proglas (Veliko T″rnovo), 32(1). https://doi.org/10.54664/oplq9956
41. Yeboah, R. (2023). Galamsey fight in Ghana: An analysis of failure of government interventions since 1989. E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, 4(4), 455–472. https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20234417