

MASTER THESIS (45 ECTS)

# Policy Changes Under the Influence of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets: A Case Study of the United Kingdom



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01/09/2018

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## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>ABT</b>	Aichi Biodiversity Targets
<b>ABTTF</b>	Aichi Biodiversity Target Task Force
<b>AIC</b>	Agricultural Industries Confederation
<b>ALB</b>	Arm's Length Body
<b>AM</b>	Assembly Members
<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>BEIS</b>	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
<b>BLG</b>	Biodiversity Liaison Group
<b>CAP</b>	Common Agricultural Policy
<b>CBD</b>	Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>CEFAS</b>	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
<b>CEN</b>	Chagos Environment Network
<b>CFE</b>	Campaign for the Farmed Environment
<b>CITES</b>	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
<b>CLA</b>	County Land and Business Association
<b>CMS</b>	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
<b>COP</b>	Conference of Parties
<b>DCMS</b>	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
<b>DECC</b>	Department of Energy and Climate Change
<b>DEARA</b>	Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs
<b>DEFRA</b>	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>EBSA</b>	Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EEA</b>	European Economic Area
<b>ENVI</b>	Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organisation
<b>FCO</b>	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
<b>HM</b>	Her Majesty's
<b>ICF GHK</b>	International Consultancy Firm (GHK Consulting LTD)

<b>IPBES</b>	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature
<b>JLG</b>	Joint Liaison Group
<b>JNCC</b>	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
<b>LNP</b>	Local Nature Partnerships
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MoD</b>	Ministry of Defense
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>MPA</b>	Marine Protected Area
<b>MSP</b>	Member of Scottish Parliament
<b>NBSAP</b>	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
<b>NCC</b>	National Capital Committee
<b>NDPB</b>	Non-Departmental Public Bodies
<b>NEA</b>	National Ecosystem Assessment
<b>NEWP</b>	Natural Environment White Paper
<b>NFU</b>	National Farmers Union
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NIA</b>	Nature Improvement Areas
<b>OT</b>	Overseas Territory
<b>OTBG</b>	Overseas Territories Biodiversity Group
<b>RSPB</b>	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
<b>SAC</b>	Special Areas of Conservation
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SEPA</b>	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
<b>SGSSI</b>	South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
<b>SNH</b>	Scottish Natural Heritage
<b>SPA</b>	Special Protection Areas
<b>TEEB</b>	The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UKOTA</b>	United Kingdom Overseas Territories Association
<b>UKSC</b>	United Kingdom Supreme Court
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>US</b>	United States of America
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organisation

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## **Abstract**

Biodiversity loss is one of the main threats in the era of the Anthropocene. Numerous international legal instruments and agreements have been adopted to govern the issue for decades. However, these legal instruments have not been very effective. The Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as a ten-year global goal-setting strategy, were delivered in 2010 in order to encourage conservation conditions to be improved in several dimensions in every country. However, has it, as non-legally binding goals and targets, been effective in inducing policy change? Scholars have recently pointed out the limited understanding about how this type of global governance tool works. This study therefore, has taken an insight into the policy changes in the United Kingdom under the influence of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. A process tracing approach has been adopted, since the purpose is to illustrate the underlying mechanisms through which the Aichi Biodiversity Targets effect change. The research was based upon two theoretical lenses, namely governing through goals and punctuated equilibrium theory. Firstly, according to the former theory, one has distinguished ideal conditions on the participation level as well as legitimacy and coherence for a global goal. Focusing on these three aspects, the research established an analytical framework and took an insight into how the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and its relevant implementation in the United Kingdom has performed. This includes whether it has met or it has failed to realise the expected conditions. Secondly, punctuated equilibrium theory provided a lens to shed light into what exactly happened within United Kingdom politics with regard to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and its relevant implementation. The inquiry for this part intended to outline the issue attention in different policy venues. Thirdly, the researcher checked passed bills in the United Kingdom Parliament to indicate whether major policy changes occurred under the influence of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Furthermore, there are three hypotheses which assumed that the merits of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as understood under the analytical framework, would play their roles in promoting policy changes. The results illustrated that the Aichi Biodiversity Targets only has limited ability to promote policy changes in the United Kingdom. There was no major policy change, nor collapse of monopolies in the subsystem or a shift of the policy-making stakeholders. Moreover, as tested through the hypotheses, the merits were not enough to promote a major policy change whilst the defects of the implementation had helped to block the advance in changes.

*Keywords: Aichi Biodiversity Targets; Governing through Goals; Punctuated Equilibrium Theory*



# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Supranational Instruments for Biodiversity Conservation

Biodiversity is in decline globally (IUCN, 2010). The main threats are from human-related activities which includes habitat loss and fragmentation, invasive alien species, over-exploited resources, climate change, pollution and diseases (ibid.). Notwithstanding, it is not a new governance field. From the 1950s to the present, there has been a growing interest within the international community with numerous international legal instruments and agreements being used to address biodiversity issues (Le Prestre, 2017).

Currently, there have been six major global biodiversity-related conventions, namely, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention (IUCN, 2018). Among the six conventions, each of them has a different focus and mechanism. For example, the CBD works on its three basic objectives, including the conservation, the sustainable use and the equal sharing of biodiversity resources (CBD, 2018a). To fulfill these tasks, it relies on state governments to carefully design and implement the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) (IUCN, 2018). CITES, on the other hand, aims to prevent harm to endangered species from illegal trading. Different from the CBD, its power is legally binding. Through the use of trade sanctions, it controls parties' behaviors, protecting wildlife species listed in its three appendices (ibid.). Moreover, the CMS aims to look after migratory species, including both terrestrial and marine. The migratory species in Appendix I and Appendix II are urged to be protected by parties in terms of removing obstacles, restoring migratory routes and stopovers, conserving their habitats, establishing multilateral agreements and launching relevant research, for example (ibid.).

Besides, in response to the global concerns, biodiversity-related instruments have also been used in different regions. For example, in the European Union (EU), the Bird Directive and the Habitats Directive, together known as the Nature Directives, are the most important legislative examples (ibid.). Under these legislation, two types of areas are marked as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Member states of the EU have inescapable responsibilities in and outside these localities, including to avoid pollution, deterioration of habitats and disturbance, for example (ibid.).

## 1.2 Aichi Biodiversity Targets

Despite the popular use of these numerous instruments and agreements, it is observed that global biodiversity has not been protected very effectively. In 2010, as a milestone of a coming decade, the CBD adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011- 2020 on its 10th Conference of Parties (COP) (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2016). It includes five strategic goals with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (ABTs), as 20 specific targets under these items. The five strategic goals cover five broad aspects, including (1) to emphasise the underlying causes of the loss and mainstream biodiversity conservation across government and society; (2) To eliminate the direct threats to biodiversity and promote sustainable use; (3) to strengthen the status of conservation through enhancing ecosystem, species and genetic diversity; (4) to safeguard the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services to human beings; and (5) to improve the implementation in terms of capacity building, participatory planning and knowledge management (CBD, 2018b). Furthermore, the 20 targets give more detailed guidance, for example, removing or reforming harmful incentives or subsidies (T3), establishing 17% terrestrial and 10% marine protected areas (T11), and adopting or developing national policy instruments (T17) (ibid.).

Later, the UN General Assembly set the targets as a universal foundations in terms of biodiversity conservation for all stakeholders, including agencies across the UN system (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2016). Meanwhile, in order to make the process coherent and globally effective, NBSAPs were also scheduled and updated in line with the establishment of the ABTs framework (CBD, 2010a). The purpose is to ensure conservation planning and actions can be integrated into all relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral activities and policies within a country (CBD, 2018c).

The ABTs are meant to encourage policy reforms towards biodiversity conservation. However, the prospects of its effectiveness are not optimistic. The mid-term assessment of the ABTs did not convey a positive message. It seems the world is very unlikely to achieve the goals by 2020. According to Global Biodiversity Outlook 4, only three out of 20 targets are likely to be achieved to an extent, in which only the 16th target is fully on track (CBD, 2014a). Hagerman & Pelai (2016) conducted a study in Canada: through a content analysis of the 154 policy, planning, public relations and technical related documents, they illustrated that the ABTs there tend to be more of an aspiration, instead of for implementation. Besides, those targets which focus on biophysical values and impacts (e.g. T11 & 12) have relatively higher implemented responses comparing to those which emphasise equity, rights or policy reform.

### **1.3 Knowledge Gap: Governing through Goals**

Similar to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the ABTs are a single, goal-oriented agenda. Different from the mechanism of rule-based regimes, goal settings as another type of policy tool, is not a novel phenomenon, but a newly studied objective in earth system governance (Kanie et al., 2017). Its non-legally binding feature has been recognised as the most significant divergence from other traditional global governance tools (Biermann et al., 2017). Without mandatory provisions, how and to what extent can global goal-setting, specifically the ABTs, change actors' behaviours towards a more biodiversity friendly world? Kanie et al. (2017) firstly distinguished the different types of international goals. According to the scholars, some goals are purely for inspiration. However, state governments who hold the same belief will be willing to chase those objectives. Conversely, there are other types of goals. Before or after they are set, sooner or later, formal institutions will be also established to realise the process towards the end. Furthermore, chapter two has provided an insight into the theoretical background of this approach, which includes the potential mechanisms of goal-setting in terms of steering multi-level actors' actions, its advantages and limits as a global governance strategy, and the potential ways to improve its effectiveness, for example.

In this field of study, on the one hand, the empirical aspect of the process towards the ABTs remained relatively under examined (Hagerman & Pelai, 2016). It is unsure how the ABTs have influenced multiple actors in national politics to address or align their activities with the goals, making changes in biodiversity conservation policies (ibid.). On the other hand, as a newly studied subject, relevant knowledge of governing through goals is also limited. Its fundamental frameworks are still under construction. Notwithstanding, several scholars have given their initial observations and analyses. For example, Young (2017) has focused on the differences between goal-setting and rule making as policy instruments. The unique characteristics of the former, such as setting priorities, reallocating attentions and scarce resources, and overcoming the short-term political desires. Yamada (2017) has taken an insight into how the goals function on corporate sectors who potentially play double roles, both as a target of and a partner in pursuit of the goals. Moreover, Bernstein (2017) has discussed the importance of the appropriate governance arrangements at regional, national, and local level in pursuit of the goals. Coherence, orchestration and legitimacy are regarded as the purposes of goal-setting in terms of realising these appropriate arrangements. Furthermore, Bernstein re-emphasised the knowledge gap of the proper conditions for effective governance via “goals”, especially comparing to rules, and the limited cognition about the causal relationship of goals to outcomes. In that case, he stressed the necessity to understand the wide range of drivers of goals through the broader analyses of the role of goals and governance mechanisms in changing behaviour and outcomes. Therefore, in this research, learning from the previous works, one conducted a case study to further understand

the underlying mechanisms of the process of how the ABTs have influenced the national politics towards biodiversity conservation. Through the investigation, it is expected to contribute to both the understanding of the goal-setting approach and the ABTs.

#### **1.4 United Kingdom Politics**

The United Kingdom (UK) has been chosen for the case study, mainly considering the language ability of the researcher and the relative transparency of its politics. This research have used punctuated equilibrium theory to establish the analytical framework, which will be further illustrated in the following chapters. The theory, as explained by Baumgartner et al. (2014) intends to explain stability and change in the policy process. Although stasis is the typical characteristic in most policy areas, changes do occur. Sometimes, after several years of status quo, important governmental programs are dramatically created. Basing on this theory to depict the process requires detailed information. By settling down the research object as the UK, it is believed that sufficient and high quality data is able to be collected to unveil what has happened in the black box.

Chapter four will introduce UK political system in details and how biodiversity issues are concerned in the system. Generally, the country is ran by UK government and Parliament. These two bodies are seperated. Parliament, located in Westminster, functions as to scrutinise the work of government, conducts debates, makes laws and approves government taxation (Parliament.UK, 2018a). On the other hand, the government also plays a role in making laws. At the early stage of law making, they can propose Public Bills and introduce it to Parliament. Besides, after a law becomes effective, the departments of government have responsibility to implement it (Parliament.UK, 2018b).

Parliament in the UK has two chambers, known as the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Members of the House of Lords are appointed by the Queen under the opinions of the Prime Minister. The House of Commons represents democracy in the UK. 650 members of parliament, known as MPs are elected by the public from 650 different constituencies across the UK (Parliament.UK, 2018c). Committees are the venues in Parliament, where details on an issue will be fully examined and debated by Lords, MPs and outside experts who work on these specific areas (Parliament.UK, 2018d). Besides, there are several political parties in the UK, among which, since the Second World War, the Conservative Party and the Labour Party are the most influential ones. The party who can achieve 326 (over half) of the seats in Parliament will become the incumbent ruling party (Parliament.UK, 2018).

Furthermore, in terms of collaboration, despite being part of the UK, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all have their own devolved governments and parliaments or assembly. The

extent of their devolved power is ranged. Under the ABTs, each nation has also handed in their own NBSAPs. Moreover, the UK has 14 overseas territories (OT) with rich biodiversity resources and various political systems on these islands. What's more, the UK has also been one of the members in the EU. The latter has showed great concern on biodiversity issues and has evolved several institutions to look after the problem, closely connecting to the governments and the public from its member states.

## **1.5 Research Objective**

The objective of this research is to understand how the ABTs, as a global goal-setting strategy, has encouraged national policy reform towards biodiversity conservation through uncovering the conditions which have influenced the change.

This research is based upon the theories regarding governing through goals and punctuated equilibrium. Firstly, former studies on goal-setting strategy have illuminated diverse dimensions on adopting this policy tool, such as its unique mechanisms in steering actions and its advantages and limitations, for example. For this research, according to the theory, it has distinguished ideal conditions on the participation level as well as legitimacy and coherence for a global goal. Focusing on these three aspects, the research established an analytical framework and took an insight into how the ABTs and its relevant implementation in the UK has performed. This includes whether it has met or it has failed to realise the expected conditions, such as the presence of the Prime Minister; fully meeting the demands of the public and establishing learning mechanisms to promote coherence, for example.

Following this analysis, punctuated equilibrium theory provided a lens to shed light into what exactly happened in UK politics with regard to the ABTs and its relevant implementation. The analytical framework for this part intended to outline the issues attention in the two Chambers, the Committees and the media. Issues which have been promoted to the Chambers could be regarded as the issues to reach macro politics, further leading policy changes. On the other hand, issues which stayed in the committees might be swamped by the subsystem politics. Moreover, issues attention in the media reflected how the public react to the changes in UK politics and whether there was any conflict expansion.

Thirdly, the researcher checked passed bills in the UK Parliament, other UK countries and the OTs to indicate whether major policy changes occurred under the influence of the ABTs. This also combined the findings in the process regarding whether there was any collapse of monopolies in subsystem and a shift of the policy-making stakeholders. Furthermore, three hypotheses were formed and tested, which assumed that the merits of the ABTs as understood under the analytical framework, would play their roles in promoting policy changes.

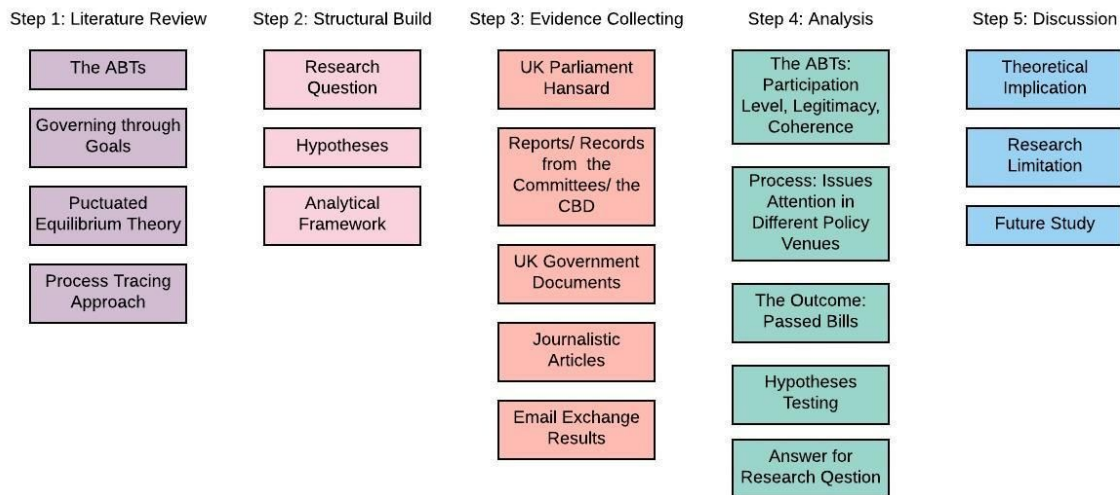
The research objective was realised through a process tracing approach. One gathered evidence from hansards of UK parliament, reports and records of the committees and the CBD, documents from the UK government, email exchanges with relevant stakeholders and journalistic articles from the four major UK newspapers.

## 1.6 Research Questions

*Under what conditions have the ABTs influenced policy change in a UK context?*

In raising this research question, one will firstly give a basic judgement on whether the ABTs has influenced policy change at all. This can be concluded through the analyses of policy processes in UK politics and the respective policy results. Moreover, whether there was any collapse of monopolies in the subsystem and whether there were any new laws to strengthen biodiversity conservation. The three hypotheses will help to resolve the question. They were based upon the theories of governing through goals and punctuated equilibrium. The former assumed several ideal conditions for a global goal to be effective and on the other hand, unexpected conditions. Linking the latter, one expects to illustrate how these features of the ABTs and its implementation have functioned in the policy process.

## 1.7 Research Framework



*Figure 1.1: Research Framework*

The framework illustrates the process of this research. Firstly, from a literature review, one first got a basic understanding of the biodiversity issues, the incumbent supranational policy tools and

the ABTs. Afterwards, a further investigation was completed on the theories regarding governing through goals and punctuated equilibrium. These theories were used to determine the research direction and to build the analytical framework. Moreover, inspired by the study of Walgrave & Varone (2008), which was similarly built upon punctuated equilibrium theory, the research decided to adopt a process tracing approach. A further literature review of this method was completed to ensure the common traps could be avoided as much as possible. In the second step, based on the two theoretical lenses and combining the initial knowledge of the context of the ABTs, one has clarified a research question, established three hypotheses and an analytical framework. Thirdly, the research started to collect evidence in conformity with the framework, including the conditions of the ABTs, its relevant implementation, issue attention in different policy venues in the UK and the results of passed bills. This information was from the sources of the UK Parliament Hansard, records of the CBD and the committees, email exchange results and journalistic articles. Following this, it came to the stage of the analysis. Questions raised in the framework have obtained their answers, for instance, the participation level of the CBD meetings, the legitimacy conditions of the implementation and the coherence mechanism. Furthermore, the three Hypotheses have been tested and the research question has been answered. Finally, on the fifth step, there was a reflection on the theory regarding governing through goals and the process tracing approach. The research has also suggested further study directions.

## **1.8 Scientific & Social Relevance**

In terms of scientific relevance, section 1.3 has already introduced that through this research, the result can contribute to both the understanding of the effectiveness of the ABTs and the theory on governing through goals. As suggested by Bernstein, the causal relationship from the international goals to the final outcomes was still opaque, especially considering the wide range of drivers and the specific governance mechanisms. For example, there was need to improve knowledge with regard to “the relationship between goals, policies and plans, enabling mechanisms such as capacity building and learning, and outcomes” (Bernstein, 2017, p215). In this research, it has focused on these three elements post the launch of the ABTs. The NBSAPs of the four UK countries and the Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP), as plans issued by the respective British governments, have been chosen as ones which should have led to further or potential conservation policy changes. Moreover, under the influence of the ABTs, the EU has also published their 2020 biodiversity vision. The reform of the CAP had intended to contribute to these biodiversity goals, which as a policy on the EU level, is entangled with the politics in the UK. Therefore, in this research, to contribute to the gap as proposed by the aforementioned scholar, one intended to clarify the process of UK politics under the influence of the ABTs. Likewise, one intended to discover key elements; to analyse specific conditions in the UK and to check whether major policy changes had occurred. In realising so, as introduced in section 1.6, it

has analysed the role of the ABTs. Afterwards, punctuated equilibrium theory helped to take an insight into the policy process.

In terms of social relevance, one noticed that many biodiversity conservation issues still exist in the UK and are similarly severe worldwide. By studying the change of one country in the world under the influence of the ABTs, it hopes to contribute to a degree of understanding of how this international goal-setting scheme worked in reality and what factors influenced its effectiveness. At present, the ABTs are nearing the end. It is time to discuss global conservation strategy post 2020. One expects that the results of this research and analysis can assist in future planning to overcome the weaknesses which have been pointed out.



## Chapter 2 Theory

In this chapter, we give an insight into two theories, governing through goals and punctuated equilibrium. With the popular use of such non-legally binding tools, for example, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the ABTs and the SDGs, the former in recent days has successfully attracted attentions from scholars, becoming a newly studied subject in earth system governance. On the other hand, punctuated equilibrium has been one of the major frameworks in terms of explaining the process of public policy making for over 20 years. Therefore, the use of these two theoretical lenses is intended to shed light on the policy process occurring on national level which is under the influence of this specific international governance tool, global goal-setting.

### 2.1 Governing through Goals

Setting single, goal-oriented agendas has become popular in international governance, being marked by the launch of the SDGs in 2015 which were built upon the earlier perceived success of the MDGs (Kanie et al., 2017). Oftentimes, governments and other political actors can use this approach to identify and publicise collective ambitions or aspirations in pursuit of some set of objectives. At international level, through adopting goals as declarations by conferences, summits, or the UN General Assembly, the participants announce their intentions and possibly prepare to be responsible for the following actions (ibid.).

Generally, Kanie et al. (2017) have distinguished these international goals into three types. In the first situation, goals are set purely for aspiration. It might eventually lead to unilateral effects, since some governments who hold a similar belief are willing to comply. The second type depicts the situation where goal-setting is being initially set as aspirational, however, after a while formal institutions become attached to these goals for their implementation and institutionalisation. Therefore, campaigns and associated institutional development are observed once such goals are established. Finally, in the third situation, institutions and agencies are immediately attached with the goals being created. In reality, the three types are not necessarily separated. Taking the SDGs as an example, the authors pointed out that it contains some characteristics of each type, but more prone to the first two.

Despite adopting the forms of broad goals, with time frames, measurable targets and observable indicators, as well as procedures to track progress, this strategy has no direct consequence for individual actors if the goals eventually go to fail (ibid.). In spite of an increasing enthusiasm towards this approach from governments, scholars have acknowledged the limited understanding, leaving goal-setting still to be classed as a contested governance strategy (ibid.).

## **Mechanisms**

The most profound divergence of governing through goals from other traditional international governance tools is its non-legally binding feature (Biermann et al., 2017). Therefore, unlike accustomed tools which adopted top-down regulation or market-based approaches, using this strategy leaves some primary concerns. Firstly, what are the mechanisms that governing through goals relies on to steer actions from multilevel actors? Alternatively, what roles that goal-setting can play in terms of stimulating multilevel actions? Oran R. Young (2017, 32) has given his initial explorations on some behaviour mechanisms: (1) By listing goals or targets, it confirms the priorities and reallocates both attention and scarce resources among competing objectives. (2) It strengthens the efforts which has been assigned in pursuit of the goals. (3) It identifies the targets and set yardstick to trace the process towards achieving the goals. (4) It overcomes the short-term desire and impulses which are in risks to shift attention and resources away. Besides, Biermann et al. (2017) had a focus on the linkage between the global aspiration and national implementation. According to them, the measure of process is the key to promote adoption on a national level. Because of the international “naming and shaming” dynamic, once indicators are clear and widely accepted, under the same assessment standards, national governments are likely to nudge their programs or policies forward.

Furthermore, as emphasised, one of the most significant challenges of goal-setting is the gap between this global leadership, guidance and authority, and the reality of actions and resource mobilisation launched at regional, national and local level, involving a wide range of public and private actors (Bernstein, 2017). Bernstein regarded the issue as the need for appropriate governance arrangements to diffuse and integrate the goals into institutions, policies and practices. Goal-setting, in his view, provides “the direction of steering”, namely, giving a consistent global vision for actions (ibid., 213). To realise appropriate governance arrangements, the core purposes of goal-setting should contain three aspects: coherence, orchestration and legitimacy.

Firstly, coherence illustrates that the evolution of correlative policies under global governance should reflect legitimate social dispositions. The concept of coherence includes two dimensions, institutional and ideational. The former indicates that organisations should work in line with and stress similar goals, rather than being divergent. It further requires established mechanisms to promote mutual learning and coordination; to address conflicts among institutions and to monitor the impact of cross policies, for example. For the second dimension, coherence refers to goals and purposes meeting a common and acceptable normative framework, which should be legitimate. Taking the SDGs as an example, Haas & Stevens (2017) concluded that several goals have not reached normative consensus. Therefore, Bernstein remarked that appropriate governance arrangements should endeavour to stimulate relevant social learning.

Secondly, orchestration indicates that goal-setting is rather an indirect, soft governance mode for which the roles of “orchestrators” and “intermediaries” are highlighted. Instead of directly managing the target actors, orchestrators work through intermediaries in pursuit of their goals. In the studies of the SDGs, the High-level Political Forum has been recognised as an orchestrator (Bernstein, 2017; Underdal & Kim, 2017; Biermann et al., 2017). These studies have noticed that national governments showed preference for this type of governance. Instead of delegating strong authority and paying sovereignty costs, through orchestration, states can choose to nudge towards the goals with weak institutions. Moreover, the most important factors which have led to the success of the High-level Political Forum are recognised as high-level participants; a developed review mechanism for learning and improvement; a connector for science-policy and robust linkages from the United Nations to diverse “intermediaries”. For the first point, Bernstein illustrated that in the earlier years, the increasing inability of the UN commission in terms of transforming knowledge into concrete actions and policies can be blamed on the lack of high-level participation. The UN commission was troubled in its ability to bring any non-environmental ministers, especially policy makers from the economic and social sectors, to the discussion. A greater extent of attracting high-level participation will empower the forum, enhancing its ability in terms of providing leadership, legitimacy and leveraging national governments’ actions. For the monitoring mechanism and the science-policy interface, the main purpose is to clarify accountability, enhance learning, and consistently put pressure on the process. Those reports could be improved in a way that points out policy gaps and shortcomings based on evidence, and analysing drivers to outcomes, to effectively guide policy making in the future.

Thirdly, legitimacy is the root that a lead institution relies on to successfully orchestrate actions on the goals. The impact of legitimising actions can be conflicting. In the study of the SDGs, it has found that on the one hand, the SDGs have an ability to legitimise the institutions which contribute to the goals. Whilst, on the other hand, the early development of legitimacy of institutions, for example, the UN Economic and Social Council, and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), will decide the SDGs’ ability to orchestrate. Moreover, there are sensitive issues which could be the core of legitimacy, such as issues of ownership, rights and participation, for example. Differences among different countries can be significant and need particular attention. Top-down or mandatory measures in terms of realising the goals should be avoided. The goals should encourage support and progress simultaneously.

Besides, Underdal & Kim (2017) also shed light on “orchestration”. They pointed out that despite the establishment of the new global goals opening new policy windows for a while, the start and therefore, the success of the new goals have to depend primarily on existing institutions. Moreover, most of these institutions will be stuck in their own agendas. Therefore, the

effectiveness of governing through goals will depend on how it could penetrate these regimes and organisations. To an extent, Underdal & Kim express a similar view of the purpose of goal-setting to Bernstein when talking about coherence and orchestration. There is a need for governing through goals to overcome the complicity and fragmentation of the system. Reforms are required to induce international institutions in one issue area into mutually supportive relationships. Furthermore, Underdal & Kim made their hypotheses of three conditions that goal-setting can be useful in terms of orchestration. The first is a small and manageable set of goals which needs to be agreed upon by the involved decision-making bodies. The second is the goals need to be clarified by their “principals” and to “agents”. It illustrates that the goals, ideally, should be internally coherent, clearly specified, and also hierarchically ordered. In that case, despite “agents” having their own priorities or chasing different interests, orchestration can help to guide these goals to that of their principals. A superior goal, which can endow a shared primary purpose to agents to be responsible is better than a diverse list of goals, which can be weaker. The third point is the willingness and ability of the agents to achieve the goals. Organisational behaviour studies illustrated that instead of internalising any high-level policy declaration, organisations have more intent to set boundaries to distinguish their own domains and find their specific essence. Besides, in the context of international politics, calls from one institution to influence rules of another with a different membership will be regarded as a threat to national sovereignty. As for ability, new goals will also require an institution to prepare new expert resources and sufficient funding.

### **Advantages and Drawbacks**

Noticing all these distinctive features of goal-setting especially compared with the past global governance instruments, there exist a number of potential advantages and pitfalls, as some authors have revealed. Yamada (2017, 190-194) used “coerciveness” and “directness” to capture the subtle nuances among global governance and sort them into a two-by-two matrix, as four different types. Coerciveness, refers to the degree that “a policy instrument used in global governance restricts the extent to which a policy instrument restricts the freedom of targeted individual actors”. Directness refers to the degree that “the international organisation authorising the provision of public goods is involved in the provision of the goods itself”. Within the four different types, rule-based public governance is the most familiar mode, for example, the Kyoto Protocol. In contrast to this, goal-based hybrid governance is the diametrical opposite in the matrix, which is the type this study is concerned with. The former governance type is characterised by its fixed international rules in order to ensure compliance. Governments are simultaneously more directly involved in regulating subnational actors’ behaviours, therefore, with having high coerciveness and high directness. The benefit of this type of mode, as Yamada remarked, is “ the more coercive the instrument of governance, the more effective the government will be” (ibid., 191). Effectiveness here simply indicates the changes of key actors’ behaviours towards the solutions of the problem. However, defects of this governance can be the

expansion of the public sector, the increase of administrative costs and a loss of support from those whose freedom is deprived. Goal-based hybrid governance, on the other hand, never requires excessive administrative costs from governments or puts penalties on private actors. It has low coerciveness and is highly indirect. Therefore, these features makes this mode of governance more efficient and potentially more welcomed by both the private sector and governments. But the weak point is the “risk of goal displacement”. As Yamada argued, the highly indirect character of this governance mode makes the collaboration of private actors important. However, these private actors might not necessarily follow their commitments towards goal attainment, especially when their interests significantly deviate.

Biermann et al. (2017) had also illustrated the advantages and challenges of governing through goals in several dimensions: (1) As goal-setting is far detached from an international legal system, the authors pointed out that national governments have no obligation in terms of translating those targets into their respective national legal systems. (2) Loose institutional arrangement at the intergovernmental level is highlighted as another distinctive feature of this governance mode. However, instead of merely being a drawback for implementation, the authors remarked that it is likely to stimulate the bottom-up, non-confrontational, country-driven and stakeholder-oriented actions, which are the key of its success. (3) A large concession has been given to national governments. Under this circumstance, the governments have maximum freedom to interpret and implement the goals. Finally, taking the Sustainable Development Goals as an example, the authors summarised that despite several potential negative factors, they did witness the success of the Sustainable Development Goals in promoting public policy and private efforts towards the ambitious agenda.

## **Improvement**

Scholars have several foci on the approaches which can potentially improve this global governance instrument. Some aforementioned points have been mentioned, for example, when talking about coherence, orchestration and legitimacy of global goals. Beyond these, Yamada (2017) has identified several strategies, including activation, orchestration and modulation. For activation, it requires the high-level institutions to mobilise corporations, such as through stakeholder forums, to create a network of businesses, non-governmental organisations and governments, for example. Orchestration here indicates creation of a common vision or knowledge among stakeholders. Finally, modulation requires an establishment of an incentive structure for stakeholders to commit to. Moreover, Gupta & Nilsson (2017) realised that drivers and barriers which can influence goal attainment come from multiple levels. In this case, a local action is never able to deal with global drivers. Conversely, global actions is also too blunt to deal with local drivers. The authors remarked that some countries and actors seek to globalise the issues or nationalise them due to a series of political reasons. In order to achieve the goals, an understanding of the driving forces and taking actions on appropriate levels are expected. Their

second focus is a rebalance from government to governance. Under this governance approach, the central state can never monopolise actions, but needs to interact with actors from different levels through many different ways. Heterogeneity and preference, as well as innovation and experimentation are needed to be given space. There needs to be a combination with actions under governing through goals being a balance between “top-down” and “bottom-up”. Furthermore, Gupta & Nilsson (2017) also gave their third point in terms of coherence in actions. These include coherence of actions across levels and coherence in the chain of governance and policy. This ensures there is no conflict between different domains and goals can be mainstreamed into existing policy arenas. Moreover, Biermann et al. (2017) listed some general points, including, for example, establishing a strengthened system of indicators and commitments, improving global governance arrangements and assuring reliable and predictable mobilisation of resources.

## **2.2 Punctuated Equilibrium Theory**

Public policies changes have long been a difficult study subject for scholars. Accuracy is particularly difficult due to the complex underlying process, sequences of events and outputs (Howlett & Migone, 2011). The elements of punctuated equilibrium began to appear in the mid-1990s, which has been regarded as a bold challenge to an old orthodoxy, namely, incrementalism (ibid.). Started from Lindblom in 1950s, incrementalism had long been a dominant model of policy change for almost 40 years, which suggested the status quo bias and minor changes as the results of “mutual partisan adjustments” by the participants in the policy process (Eissler et al., 2016). The main criticism of this period focused on its overly political nature and argued that the incremental tenets would only reinforce the status quo since it results in sub-optimum choices (Howlett & Migone, 2011). On the other hand, as the originator of punctuated equilibrium, Baumgartner & Jones highlighted lurches and significant changes as the policy results (Baumgartner et al., 2014,). Although stasis is the typical characteristic in most policy areas, sometimes, after several years of status quo, important governmental programs are dramatically created. Punctuated equilibrium is a model which interprets both periods of extreme stability and dramatic bursts. The theory was initially developed as to explain the US policy making. Over these years, it has evolved to apply to a broader set of governments (ibid.).

## **Subsystem Politics & Macro Politics**

Human-designed organisations, including businesses and governments, are thought to function differently from individuals. Unlike individuals who can only devote attention to one thing at a time and make decisions on serial fashion, organisations are more tractable where issues are capable to be dealt in some decision structures, in parallel. A political system, like a human, has no ability to tackle all issues, simultaneously at the highest level. Therefore, policy subsystems

are created, being the mechanisms to allow these multiplicity of issues to run concurrently within the political system in a parallel process (Baumgartner et al., 2014).

Here, subsystem politics and macro politics are highlighted as a set of important notions in this theory. The definition of a policy subsystem can follow Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith (1999), referring to an issue area, a geographic territory and a set of stakeholders, who can be officials from all level of government, representatives from interest groups and scientists. Macro-politics, on the other hand, illustrates that power and decision-making are conducted at state levels.

A deep insight has been given to both scales. Oftentimes, the political subsystem is considered to be dominated by a single interest, a so called policy monopoly, or several competitive or independent interests eventually building specific forms, such as “iron triangles”, “policy communities” and “issue networks”, for example (Baumgartner et al., 2014, 62). It is observed that policy monopolies can systematically blunt changes. In other situations, decision-making in subsystem politics is decentralised to iron-triangles or bureaucracies, legislative subgroups, interest parties in issue networks. In a nutshell, subsystem politics consolidates the politics of equilibrium through generating negative feedbacks. Contrast to this, issues in macro politics are likely to attract attention from the government as an entity and are able to mobilise a larger number of people around, known as the process of “agenda entrance” and “issue expansion” (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991). These processes play important roles of weakening the strength of subsystem. Thus, macro politics is the politics of punctuation, which brings positive feedbacks, overcoming inertia and intensifying large-scale changes (Baumgartner et al., 2014).

### **Policy Images & Institutional venues**

Taking the US as an example, Baumgartner et al. (2014) remarked that usually, the dynamics between subsystem politics and macro politics - the separated institutions, overlapping jurisdictions and relatively open access of mobilisations, are working against those advances in terms of change. Only in rare circumstances, the dynamics reinforces the impetus to change (ibid.).

In that case, why do some issues within subsystems finally catch fire and are moved higher on the political agenda? The notions of policy images and institutional venues provide a lens. Policy images, as defined by Baumgartner et al. (ibid, 66), are “a mixture of empirical information and emotive appears”. Discourses on political topics which discussed in public and in media are policy images. On the other hand, policy venues refers to “institutional sites where the portrayal of problems and solutions take place” (Baumgartner & Jones 1993, 32). Formal political arenas such as legislatures, executives and the judiciary, as well as the media and the stock market where policy images and solutions might be shaped, are the policy venues (Timmermans & Scholten, 2006).

In the study of policy images, Baumgartner & Jones (1991) had discovered that after a period of time, one aspect of the issues, as a single image, would become dominant, excluding the others in media coverage and public discussion eventually. This phenomenon corresponded to a successful monopoly being made in policy subsystems. However, changes do also happen over time, which are often caused by new scientific discoveries, dramatic events, especially catastrophes, triggered political events and even subtle influences (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991; Holt & Barkemeyer, 2012). Under the influences of those exogenous factors and their uncertainty, elite actors will occasionally have an “intensive sense of urgency” to respond (Eissler et al., 2016). Moreover, Baumgartner & Jones (1991) had pointed out that policymakers have the intent to manipulate the images and there is evidence showing their attempts in terms of changing the public and elite understandings on those political issues. Therefore, disproportionate information process is regarded as a core mechanism of punctuated equilibrium (Eissler et al., 2016). By manipulating the frame of the issues, policy entrepreneurs can create opportunities to change policy agendas. Baumgartner & Jones (1991) further remarked that when a issue is depicted as a technique complex problem, containing scientific or engineering details, experts will dominate the discussion and policy making process. Whilst when a issue is portrayed in terms of an ethnic or social problem, it will attract a much wider range of participants.

On the other hand, policy venues are closely related to the policy images. These two can generate a self-reinforcing phenomenon. As Baumgartner & Jones (1991) remarked, “Where the rhetoric begins to change, venue changes become more likely. Where venue changes occur, rhetoric changes are facilitated”. The reason why some social institutions are able to obtain jurisdiction over particular issues is determined by how the issues are understood rather than any fixed rule. However, due to the difference in compositions and decision-making routines of these venues, each of them has its own decisional prejustice. This situation leads to the case: winners in one institutional venue might find that they enter into weak position with the shift of other venues.

Baumgartner & Jones (1991) further illustrated the expansion of venue might be from three means, namely, the winners and losers dynamics, concerned outsiders’ participation and attacks from decision maker in another venue. The first, winners and losers dynamics indicates that the losers in a policy debate have motivation to change their disadvantages. The second, in terms of outside participants, often times these outsiders choose to join allegiance with losers in the first situation, because they may lack credibility and information to influence the existing subsystem. Nevertheless, it is not a necessary condition. The third situation is mostly due to fact that the decision makers in one venue intend to expand their jurisdiction via digesting others. In sum, all these types of expansion can reinforce each other. For decision makers, how they decide whether their ideas are workable in terms of entering the new institutional venues? Instead of rational

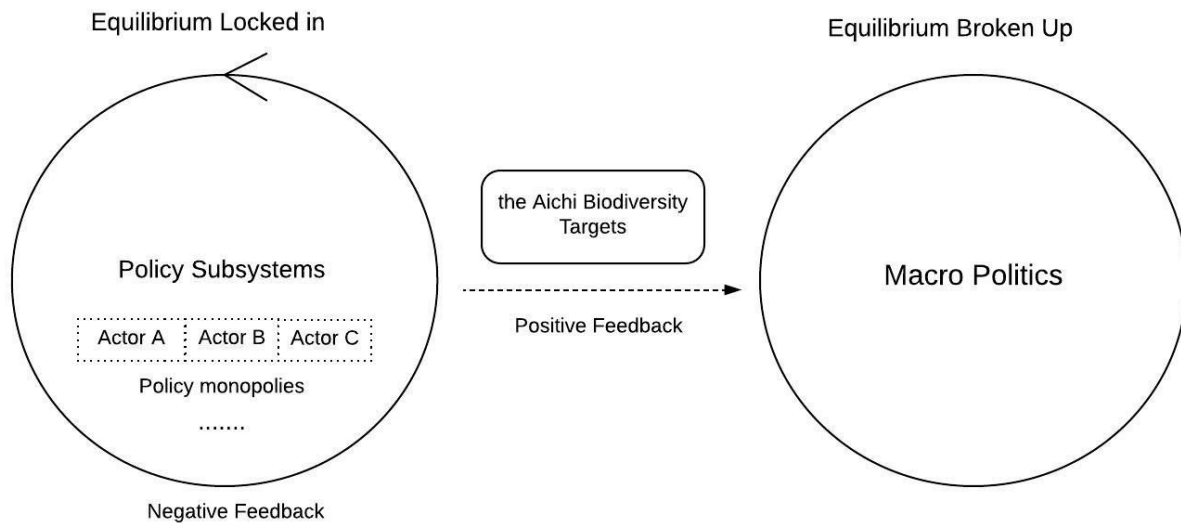


decision making, the authors pointed out that they used “trial-and-error process” or called evolutionary search as their strategies. A broader range of interested arenas will be selected at once. Then these decision makers will start trying in order. Success encourages the search going further; Where the idea is rejected, it will be abandoned.

In summary, in regard to the entanglement between venue and policy image, when policy images and venues are not blocked, one can expect that changes happen in institutional jurisdictions and debates about issues can go further. However, when images and venues are tightly controlled, changes on both sides are less likely. The results are coming from two sides, namely, the power of maintenance and power of weak opponents. Besides, mass public here is regarded as one of a number of venues. However, as Baumgartner & Jones (1991) illustrated, when the issue was socialised to the general public, all these vital decisions plus the manipulating of policy images and venue had already been settled among all levels of governments. In this case, instead of creating, opinions from the public is such a role to solidify the outcomes of the battle among elites.

Policy subsystems can be constructed and can collapse. If things remain apathetic, it is unlikely to change or changes only come in a slow process. However, if pressures are built up and sufficient enough, namely, the supporting policy image substantially changing, new political actors or governmental institutions who had previously stayed away might sniff the chance to exert their authority and interfere in. Phenomenons, for instance, rewriting on rules and shifting on the balance of power usually occur. A new equilibrium will be established. Former policy monopolies are broken up and then locked in for the future as the institution reforms. The issues are back into parallel process (Baumgartner et al., 2014).

## 2.3 Conceptual Model



*Figure 2.1 Conceptual model*

This model has briefly illustrated punctuated equilibrium theory and the potential role of the ABTs in the national policy process. The ABTs can possibly cause positive feedback, moving biodiversity conservation issues from policy subsystems into macro politics. On the other hand, policy monopolies within subsystems might digest any of those influences under the ABTs, maintaining order. Further research is to clarify the mechanisms, how changes can or cannot happen and the role of core factors.

## 2.4 Hypotheses

This chapter has introduced recent studies on governing through goals and a major theory in terms of explaining national policy change, punctuated equilibrium. As mentioned in the first chapter, to further judge the conditions of effective goal-setting, there is a need to widely explore the role of goals in particular governance systems. To realise this purpose, one will test three hypotheses which are built upon the two theoretical lenses.

*If the Aichi Biodiversity Targets relevant forums (conferences/ workshops) have attracted high-level participation from the United Kingdom, then it can generate positive feedback within the UK political system.*

The study on governing through goals and the SDGs has recommended the role of a High-level Political Forum as an orchestrator. Correspondingly, this study takes an insight into those

important forums (or conferences/ workshops) related to the ABTs, which involved diverse participation. One of the key factors leading to success has been proposed as attracting high-level participation, which can contribute to legitimacy, focality, and adds political weight. It is expected that except for environmental ministers, policy makers from economic or social sectors could also participate. Punctuated equilibrium theory further provides a lens to check what might happen within national politics. For example, those participants might play a role as so called policy entrepreneurs and institutional venues might be further expanded. Likewise, governments might set new agendas and generate new policy images. All these will promote policy reform.

*If the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and its implementation do not have high social legitimacy in the United Kingdom, then policy reforms towards the goals cannot be promoted.*

As mentioned above, legitimacy has been recognised as one of the most important purposes of goal-setting in terms of successfully diffusing and integrating the goals into institutions, policies and practices. The concept of social legitimacy refers to the acceptance of the international institution's right to rule by its audiences, namely the states and the public (Dellmuth and Tallberg, 2014). Therefore, this hypothesis intends to explore the legitimacy condition of the ABTs and its related institutions in the UK. It is expected to link the social legitimacy with subsystem issues and policy images, to see how it has influenced policy reforms in the UK.

*If there are efforts to promote coherence of the 2020 Biodiversity Targets on different levels within the UK, then it can generate positive feedback for biodiversity policy reform in the UK.*

Coherence has been emphasised as a way to enhance the ability of goal-setting. It requires that institutions stay in line with similar goals and working framework of the ABTs. Moreover, the establishment of mutual learning and coordinating mechanisms can contribute to improve this coherence. Therefore, this hypothesis intends to find out whether and if so, how the coherence can bring positive influences in the UK politics.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Research Strategy

#### Qualitative Research

A qualitative approach has been adopted to conduct this inquiry. Creswell (2014) addressed that the nature of the research problem, the investigators' own experience and the audience are all determined factors with regard to choosing a qualitative, a quantitative or a mixed approach. In this research, one intends to explore the ability of the ABTs in leading policy changes. Instead of focusing on the final outcomes to judge the ability of the ABTs which some researchers have already studied, this research focuses on the changes in the process. Therefore, instead of using numbers and giving closed-ended answers, employing words and open-ended answers are more desirable. A qualitative approach can realise the latter intention. By selecting a qualitative approach, it requires the collection of documents, interviews and audiovisual or observation data. Image or text analysis is also expected. The next step is to decide sampling.

#### Single Case Study

This research has chosen a single case to study, which as mentioned before, is the United Kingdom (UK). A prioritised thought for the selection of the UK is the language ability of the researcher and the relatively transparency of UK politics. This is in order to obtain quality and quantity of information. Furthermore, to make clear why and what the advantages are, in terms of choosing this single case study, especially compared with a cross-case study, this research has considered eight trade-offs, proposed by Gerring (2007).

The first consideration is whether the research is towards hypothesis generating or testing. A large-N cross-case study can be more confident and reliable in terms of proving the existence of a hypothesised mechanism. In contrast to this, a single case study is more suitable for hypothesis generating. Using a single case study to realise theory confirmation is largely hypothetical. However, it does not mean a single case study cannot be used for hypothesis testing purpose. A single case might be able to falsify the hypothesis and often times it is useful to elucidate causal mechanisms, namely, what exactly has it been going on in an X/Y relationship (ibid.). This research intends to test the hypotheses instead of building. However, it is closer to the second situation that it expects to know the exact procedure of the policy reform.

The second trade-off is whether the research is for internal or external purposes. A cross-case study is more representative of general situations. Whilst, a case study can only stand for a small number of situations. In this study, the information implies that merely studying policy changes

in the UK can hardly illustrate what has happened in other parts of the world under the influence of the ABTs. Besides, since the feature of internality of a single case study, within-sample validity has more been a threat than out-of-sample validity (ibid.).

Thirdly, it is to ask whether the research is exploring causal mechanisms or causal effects. The former refers to the pathway from X to Y. It has already been mentioned in the first trade-off, that a single case study is useful to illustrate the process in detail. Causal effect, on the other hand, seeks “the magnitude of a causal relationship”, and “the relative precision or uncertainty associated with that point estimate” (ibid., p103). Only a cross-case study can realise the latter purpose. Whereas, Gerring remarked the importance and uniqueness in knowing causal mechanisms, that X and Y might be linked in a false fashion. Moreover, a cross-case study might not be as illuminating as a case study in terms of clear up those intermediate factors lying on a mechanism chain (ibid.). As mentioned in the introduction, the ABTs meant to bring changes in biodiversity conservation policies. Instead of investigating whether the ABTs have brought changes globally, to evaluate the effectiveness of the ABTs, the research intends to check the functions of the ABTs in changes.

The fourth trade-off is for researchers to choose between “knowing more about less, or less about more” (ibid., p107). Cross-case evidence can offer a great breadth on an argument. Whilst, a case study might not be so representative of general occasions. However, it can provide in-depth knowledge, being “thick”, richness, completeness and wholeness. A single case study is more holistic, including natural settings. Contrast to this, the way that a cross-case study employs abstract variables to analyse is decontextualised (ibid.). The benefit of this research by choosing a single case, therefore, is a comprehensive lens on the UK politics.

Fifth, cross-case evidence requires a degree of homogeneity, namely, among cases. They should be compatible in respect to the influential factors to the causal relationships. If situations are heterogenous, a single case study is more suitable, even though the ultimate interest of the investigators is a broad view (ibid.). This research has interest on the effectiveness of the ABTs, which has been used for the whole world. However, since the political conditions, biodiversity sources and economics, for example, are broadly varied across countries, it cannot select similar cases to represent the world. Therefore, one case study is the better choice.

The sixth thought is the causal strength, which indicates “the magnitude and consistency of X's effect on Y across a population of cases” (ibid., p110). If the causal strength is strong, it can be understood as deterministic, i.e. X is necessary or sufficient for the occurrence of Y (ibid.). This deterministic relationship can be disproved by a single case. Therefore, a strong causal relationship corresponds to a case study. Moreover, since a weak causal relationship is difficult to be distinguished, it will even be more opaque in a case study. Hence, a large-N case study is

more suitable for weak causal relationships. In this research, the former studies have revealed that the ABTs have not effectively brought changes across the world, which indicates a weak relationship. Therefore, the opaqueness of weak causal relationship under a single case study is one challenge for this research.

A seventh point considers whether the useful variation (temporal and spatial) is rare or common (ibid.). Since the ABTs are globally applied, theoretically, potential policy reforms could occur in most of countries in the world. Under this consideration, a cross-case study is feasible. However, the final choice on a single case study is a comprehensive consideration of all the eight points.

The last trade-off is about the quantity and quality of information that investigators can obtain. According to Gerring (ibid.), when information is evenly distributed across a number of cases, a large-N case study is suitable. Conversely, an individual case study will be a better choice when information is concentrated in a single case, or among different cases where information is incommensurable. In this research, since different countries vary widely on political systems and transparency, one can hardly expect to collect equivalent data. Besides, thanks to good transparency in UK politics, adequate and precise information is more likely to be obtained.

### Process Tracing

Process tracing has been used for this study, as it is a research method within a single case to identify and test the causal mechanisms between independent variables (Aichi Biodiversity Targets) and dependent variables (policy reforms) (Bennett & George, 1997; Beach, 2017). The general task of this method is to sort out and analyse data with regard to the mechanisms, including events, actions, process, expectations and observed outcomes, for example (Bennett & George, 1997). Furthermore, scholars have distinguished three variants of process-tracing method, namely, theory-testing, theory-building and case-centric (Beach, 2017). This research is closer to the first situation, which seeks to verify and further illustrate how the hypothesised causal mechanisms existed in the study case. For the second situation, theory-building highlights the unknown reason between a cause and an outcome. It aims to eventually build a plausible causal mechanism, basing on a structured analysis of the empirical materials (ibid.). Since the theoretical background of governing through goals has already given some initial views on the mechanisms, and further developing the theory is a purpose of the study, this research has not chosen the second method. Besides, the third variant seeks a comprehensive understanding of a specific historical result. According to Beach (2017), it looks into “a continual and creative juxtaposition between empirical material and theories”. The starting point of the case-centric process tracing can either come from a theory or empirical evidence. If it begins with a theory, the first step is also similar with theory-testing method. It applies for the situation when existing explanations on causal mechanisms are not sufficient. Therefore, after the first step of

theory-testing, according to the results, either the testing or building method can be chosen to continue the study (ibid.). This research also holds some properties of the third variant, since the theory with regard to governing through goals is still under development.

As for the first step of theory-testing process tracing, theories of governing through goals and punctuated equilibrium have supported the research to establish plausible causal mechanisms. The hypotheses has been illustrated in the prior chapter. The second step is to operationalise these hypotheses through developing predicted observables, which will be illustrated in the next section in this chapter. In the end, once the evidence is provided for each constituent part of the mechanism, or for the overall mechanism in a minimalist understanding, then it can conclude that the hypothesised causal mechanism exists in this study case.

### **3.2 Analytical Framework**

The analytical framework is based on the theoretical lenses which have been introduced in the second chapter. The deconstruction of the independent variable, the ABTs, has focused on the three vital properties of goal-setting, namely, participation, legitimacy and coherence. Then, one took an insight into how the ABTs and its relevant implementation had been discussed in different policy venues in the UK. It is expected that this framework can clearly lay out the process, the role that the ABTs played, its influence and results on the UK politics, to further elucidate the three hypotheses.

#### **3.2.1 Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

##### **Participation**

High-level participation is recognised as a factor that can effectively promote orchestration in the theoretical lens of governing through goals. Beyond ministers from environmental sectors, it is also expected that policy makers from other domains, for example, economic and social sectors, can also take part in. In regard to punctuated equilibrium theory, these high-level or other departmental politicians can potentially play a role as so called policy entrepreneurs or as a interested new participant stirring the old order. According to the theory, afterwards, there might be policy venue expansion and new policy image creation to further promote policy changes.

In the study of the SDGs, a High-level Political Forum is the study target. Correspondly, COPs are the highest level meetings of the CBD. Besides, as a main sponsor of the ABTs, other meetings which were held by the CBD and attracted the UK participation also are relevant for this research. To measure the participation level, one intends to find out who has represented the UK in these ABTs related conferences and their respective positions. Moreover, there is a further concern regarding their subsequent activities in UK politics.

## Legitimacy

The dimension of legitimacy that this research has measured is focused on its sociological meaning. It refers to the extent that an international institution is accepted by the people. Taking the SDGs as an example, Bernstein (2017) has suggested the importance of the union among SDGs and other UN organisations, which can legitimise both sides. Besides, the extent to which the goals have dealt with sensitive social issues, including rights, ownership and participation, for example, will also influence its legitimacy. Some other studies have also explained that the legitimacy of an international institution reflects on how it can channel and represent the demands of the public (Dellmuth & Tallberg, 2014). Dellmuth & Tallberg's research has also revealed that civil society organisations are the useful conduit, linking both sides, to achieve this purpose. Moreover, the problem-solving ability of an international institution is positively related to the legitimacy (ibid.; Kumm, 2004).

In that case, this research measures the legitimacy by exploring (1) the partnerships (both on international level and within the UK) of the ABTs, (2) the outcomes of the former CBD's goals, and (3) the negative or positive effects of the ABTs in terms of meeting the demand of the UK public (especially for key stakeholders, for example, farmers and MPs). Furthermore, in this process tracing research, the following step is to understand how these dimensions of legitimacy has had an impact on UK politics. Punctuated equilibrium theory provides lenses for analysis. The acceptance level of the ABTs by the UK public, especially by those stakeholders in subsystems, might have significant power to manipulate the political trend. Furthermore, the former grade or the partnerships of the CBD might help to shape positive or negative policy images of the ABTs, affecting the future policy results.

## Coherence

The coherence of the ABTs is also highlighted as to activate its promise. It requires the institutions to keep similar agendas with the ABTs. Furthermore, mutual learning and cooperation mechanisms can enhance this ability. Therefore, the coherence of the ABTs is checked by (1) the coherence of the NBSAPs of the UK (including England, Scotland, Wales, North Ireland, its overseas territories) and the EU with the ABTs, (2) whether ABTs relevant mutual learning and cooperating mechanisms (forums/ conferences/ workshops) have been established. A further prospect is whether this coherence level of the ABTs in the UK has brought any positive influence, for example, eliminating conflicts in the political subsystems.



Properties	Measuring by
<b>Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which representatives from the UK have participated in the CBD conferences? (The contents of the conference?/ With attendees?)</li> </ul>
<b>Legitimacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who (globally and in the UK) has joined the partnerships of the United Nations Decades on Biodiversity and the process in the UK towards 2020 goals?</li> <li>• What are the outcomes of the CBD's former goals?</li> <li>• Have the ABTs played a positive role or a negative role in terms of meeting the demands of the UK public?</li> </ul>
<b>Coherence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the NBSAPs of the UK (including England, Scotland, Wales, North Ireland, its overseas territories) and the EU kept in line with the ABTs?</li> <li>• Have the ABTs relevant mutual learning and cooperating mechanisms (forums/ conferences/ workshops) been established within the UK and its partners?</li> </ul>

*Table 3.1: Analytical framework*

### 3.2.2 Issue Attention in Different Policy Venues in the UK

The framework in this section was built upon punctuated equilibrium theory, intending to bring the consequences of the ABTs in UK politics to light. The research has examined which policy venues the new international biodiversity goals and additionally, its relevant implementation had been entered into. One has specifically checked the two Chambers, the potential committees within the UK Parliament and the media.

Firstly, for the two Chambers, usually issues which has been sent to this level would get the highest attention from politicians in the UK. Therefore, referring to the concept in punctuated equilibrium theory, namely, macropolitics, those issues which have been brought to the Chambers are worthy to be further investigated whether they have caused significant influence and even sharp controversies. Similar investigations are whether they have attracted wide concerns from MPs and Lords in a short time. If these concerns within macropolitics did exist, then one would be interested about the consequent process and the final policy results. Conversely, if these issues only shortly stayed in the Chambers without significant conflict expansion, then it cannot be described as having reached macropolitics. The following step was tracking their process in the committees. In sum, the research investigated (1) whether the ABTs and its relevant implementation had entered into the House of Commons and the House of Lords? (2) Have they been frequently discussed? (3) Whether there were conflicting debates around the issues, and whether there were any issue expansion? (4) What proposals raised by the MPs or Lords could potentially lead to further policy change?

Secondly, for the Committees in the Parliament, Punctuated equilibrium theory has illustrated that the expansion of policy venues was a sign of positive feedback which would further lead to policy change. Additionally, policy issues in the committees would be examined in detail. However, because of the large numbers of those committees and numerous affairs under scrutiny in the system, the majority of issues cannot get significant attention. The theoretical subsystem politics might exist here. Therefore, investigation for this part has checked (1) which committees the ABTs and relevant implementation has entered into. It could help to further judge whether the expansion of policy venues has occurred. Afterwards, one has took an insight into (2) how did the ABTs, its relevant implementation and those ideas raised by the MPs or Lords in the Parliament evolve in the committees? (3) Who has joined the inquiry on these issues? The second and the third question intended to further reveal the phenomenon of subsystem politics.

Thirdly, it was for the media. The research has selected four different major newspapers in the UK to study, namely, the Guardian, the Independent, the Telegraph and the Daily Mail, which considered their different political standpoints. In the theoretical lens of punctuated equilibrium, politicians, especially those on the weak side, would like to seek converting inattentive public to attentive ones, in order to gather winning coalitions. Moreover, often times, the conflict expansion which could further lead to policy changes followed an abrupt reversal of public image. Therefore, the research has investigated the reports on those four newspapers with respect to the international biodiversity event (International Year of Biodiversity, Nagoya Summit and the ABTs) and the relevant implementation in the UK to see (1) what was the attention level on this global biodiversity event and on the major strategy of the UK. Furthermore, (2) whether there was any abrupt reversal of public image occurring due to this global biodiversity milestone and relevant implementation in the UK. Additionally, Baumgartner & Jones (1991) pointed out that instead of creating new policy images, public venues played a role as to solidify the outcomes of the battle among political elites. Therefore, one has linked the debates in the Parliament to analyse this.

### **3.2.3 Policy Changes**

In this research, policy changes was the dependent variable. Following the process to check what reforms exactly happened was a final stage to assess the effectiveness of the ABTs. The measure of major policy changes followed Walgrave & Varone (2008) in their punctuated equilibrium study. It was to find the number and the content of passed bills, in this research, which referred to the ones related to the biodiversity conservation. Moreover, as defined by Baumgartner & Jones (1993), major policy change indicated the collapse of monopolies in policy subsystem and a radical change of the policymaking stakeholders. The judgement could based on the relevant evidence collecting in the study of process, to illustrate whether the major change happened.

### **3.3 Data Collection & Data Process**

For this research, one has collected abundant information and documents online. These include mainly the Hansards of UK parliament, reports and records of the committees and the CBD, documents from the UK government as well as journalistic articles from the four major UK newspapers. To supplement this information, there were also useful data from email exchanges with relevant stakeholders.

The website of the CBD reserved documents for their diverse conferences, for example, meetings related to national reports, biodiversity targets, and economic, trade and incentives measures. These documents have covered the period before and after the year 2010. In these documents, it usually contained the theme, date, venues, summarised contents and participants' information. They were useful clues in finding the participation level of the ABTs. Their website also sorted out programmes launched by the CBD, for example, ecosystem approach, protected areas and traditional knowledge. It provided useful information to learn other mechanisms that have been adopted to achieve the goals, except for NBSAPs. Besides, the partnerships of the CBD were also easily found here. On the website of UK Parliament, one can search Hansards of discussions that happened in the House of Commons and the House of Lords after the year 2010, which recorded every word the MPs or Lords had said. To find out the exact meetings which this research needed to study, one has searched words, such as "Aichi", "Nagoya" "CBD" and "biodiversity". Moreover, on the page of the committee, it gathered the inquiry reports and oral or written evidence from experts or stakeholders related to the relevant topics. The titles of inquiry subjects can help to quickly lock potential targets. Additionally, from the website of Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and JNCC, one can find official documents, such as the NEWP, the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework and the NBSAPs, for example. For the newspaper articles, one has also searched those keywords. Besides, since the Guardian has the classification of biodiversity, the research has checked the articles within the study period. For the email-exchange, the research has tried to get information from the governments of several OTs, Defra, JNCC, the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the Scottish Government, the European Economic Area (EEA), officers of the CBD-EU and a former officer in Defra. However, only two OT governments and the SNH provided quality answers.

### **3.4 Reliability and Validity of the Method**

According to Drost (2011, 106), reliability refers to "the extent to which measurements are repeatable –when different persons perform the measurements, on different occasions, under different conditions, with supposedly alternative instruments which measure the same thing." In this case, there are several ways to test the reliability, including test-retest, alternative forms and split-half, for example. To ensure the reliability of this research, namely, being testable, the

majority of the data that the research has used was publically available, for example the hansards, the journalistic articles and the reports, which allows different researchers in different time to repeat the research with the same materials.

For validity, it indicates whether via the method, the research has measured what it intended to measure (ibid.). Two types of validity under this concept are the core of the research, including internal validity and construct validity. The internal validity refers to whether the relationship is a causal one. In this study, one is investigating whether the ABTs is the cause of the outcome of policy changes. As the purpose of the research is to find the causal mechanism, therefore, proving the relationship, the certification of internal validity via process tracing has long been a tricky problem (Mahoney, 2015). This research has paid attention to illustrating how the ABTs connected to those variables in different stages which potentially lead to policy change. Additionally, in the sixth chapter, there is a further discussion on the limitation of this study in considering alternative explanations. Furthermore, constructive validity indicates how well the research translated the particular mechanisms in the causal relationship, which are further splitted into content validity, face validity and criterion-related validity. Face validity refers to “a subjective judgment on the operationalisation of a construct” (Drost, 2011, 116). To avoid this problem, this research has learned from the indicators and standards of measurement which have also been used in similar studies. Content validity requires for the domain of concept having no ambiguity. In the research, it has given clear definition of the key concepts in the second chapter and section 3.2 has expounded how those variables are going to be measured.

## **Chapter 4 United Kingdom Politics**

This Chapter will provide an overview of the political background of the United Kingdom (UK), including how its government and Parliament work, the process in passing a bill, the conditions in other three UK countries, the OTs and the EU.

In the UK political system, the Prime Minister as the head and the Cabinet which consists of the senior members runs the government. The Prime Minister has responsibility to appoint members of the government and supervise the operation of government agencies and the Civil Service. Ultimately, he or she is responsible for all policy and decisions of the government. Members of the Cabinet, on the other hand, meet in Parliament every week to talk over the most important issues in this country (GOV.UK, 2018a).

### **4.1 UK Parliament**

Parliament is separated from government, constituted by the House of Commons and the House of Lords. It is responsible for overseeing what the government is doing, debating issues, passing new laws and setting taxes (Parliament.UK, 2018a). In the House of Commons, 650 members of parliament (MPs) who are elected by the UK public, have responsibility to represent the interest and concerns of their constituency (Parliament.UK, 2018f). In the House of Lords, there are 800 members being appointed by the Queen under the prime minister's advice. They do not necessarily have any political background, representing a wide range of professions (Parliament.UK, 2018g). Besides, the Committees which is made up of MPs or Lords, undertake the majority work of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Here, discussion on policy issues, supervision on governments' work and expenditures, and examination on proposals happen. Comparing the functions of the two Houses, works here are more focused on details (Parliament.UK, 2018d). Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee and Environment Audit Committee are the ones among these diverse functioned committees where biodiversity issues would be mainly concerned. Both of them are Commons Select Committees. House of Commons Select Committees are mainly responsible for checking the behaviours of government departments (Parliament.UK, 2018h). Each government department has a corresponding Commons Select Committee. The former corresponds to Defra. As for Environment Audit Committee, it plays a role as to coordinate cross departmental issues (Parliament.UK, 2018i). Lords Select Committees, on the other hand, concern on the six specific areas, which are Europe, science, economics, communications, the UK constitution and international relations (Parliament.UK, 2018h). In Commons Select Committee, members take inquiry, and gather oral and written evidence. After that, their discoveries are reported to the Commons. Government has 60 days to reply to Committees' accommodations (ibid.). Committees can also invite specialist

experts to assist in inquiry. They are not permanent members, who are usually scholars in specific study areas (ibid.).

## **4.2 Making Laws**

As mentioned, one of the major functions of Parliament is to make laws. It can be initially introduced by government, individual MPs or Lords, and private individuals or organisations (Parliament.UK, 2018j). Three types of documents are functioned in draft legislation. White Papers contour proposals for new laws. Green Papers look for public opinions before the White Paper being published. Bills are proposals for new laws or revisions on existing ones (GOV.UK, 2018a). However, it is not necessary to prepare White Papers and Green Papers for Bills. There are also differences among Bills, as being four different types: Public Bills, Private Members' Bills, Private Bills and Hybrid Bills. Among these Bills, Public Bills are the most common type, which are proposed by government, distinguishing with those proposed by individual MPs or Lords, known as Private Members' Bills (Parliament.UK, 2018j).

Before a law becoming effective, there are several stages. Before bills are introduced to Parliament, consultation or discussion is held among stakeholders, such as interest groups, professional bodies and voluntary organisations. After that, in recent years, the practise of Draft Bill has been used more frequently, which allows further consultation and pre-legislative scrutiny. Committees often take part in at this stage, which gives MPs and Lords opportunities to have an early influence on the bills (Parliament.UK, 2018k).

A bill can either start in the House of Commons or start in the House of Lords. But eventually, it has to be approved by both House to become an act (law). The passage of a bill in one House includes five stages, namely first reading, second reading, committee stage, report stage and third reading. First reading is about formal introduction. No debate happens on this stage. Second reading gives the first opportunities to MPs to debate the main principles of a bill, where government ministers, opposition spokespersons and MPs all join in. In committee stage, details on a bill are examined, namely, each clause and any amendment to a bill being discussed. Next, in the report stage, MPs have opportunities to raise further amendments to the examined bill on the floor of the House. Finally, third reading is the last chance for this House to debate on the contents of a bill. After that, the bill will enter another House, experiencing five similar stages. In the end, Royal Assent, namely, the Monarch agreement is the final stage before a bill becomes an act (law) (Parliament.UK, 2018l).

## **4.3 Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)**

After a Law becoming effective, government departments and their agencies are the roles to implement it. Ministers who work in these departments, are chosen from the members of the

House of Commons and the House of Lords by the Prime Minister (GOV.UK, 2018a). In this study, the government's Defra is the major research target, for it is mainly responsible for biodiversity relevant issues on national level. Defra has other 33 agencies and public bodies as its arm's length bodies (ALBs), including the Forestry Commission, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and Natural England, for example. Defra only directly works in England. For issues in Wales, Scotlands and Northern Ireland, it closely collaborates with their own devolved administrations. In addition, Defra generally represents the UK on negotiations in the European Union (EU) and internationally (Defra, 2018a).

#### **4.4 Incumbent Parties Since 2010**

Despite there being several parties in the UK, the Conservative Party and the Labour Party have significant dominance. After the Second World War, it is either the Conservative Party or the Labour Party that formed the government. During the United Nation Decade on Biodiversity, in May 2010, five months before the 10th COP of the CBD, the UK held its general election. The Conservative Party won the largest votes and seats, with 306 out of 650 in Parliament. The Labour Party got 258 seats. Therefore, there was a shift of the UK politics at that time, from Labour Party, led by Gordon Brown to Conservative Party, led by David Cameron (UKpolitical.Info, 2018). Another worth mentioning external event, which had significantly influenced UK government and also its green politics at that time was global financial crisis in 2009. The crisis made the new government cut down their budgets and staffs. Defra suffered 30% of its total budget cut, comparing to the government average of 19%. The jobs in Defra and its ALBs, as a result, was predicted to shed 5,000 - 8,000 out of a total of 30,000 (Guardian, 2010h). Moreover, in 2015, there was another general election. Cameron, leading the Conservative Party, won again with 330 seats against 232 seats of the Labour Party. In 2016, another important external event was that the UK voted to leave the EU, known as Brexit. It has caused deep political and social impact, involving changes on fisheries, agriculture and international agreements, for example. David Cameron resigned as Prime Minister due to the result of the referendum, to be replaced with Theresa May (Guardian, 2016a). As a result of the political turmoil, in 2017, the UK held a general election again. The Conservative Party still won by 317 seats against 262 seats of the Labour (Guardian, 2017a).

#### **4.5 Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland**

In addition, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all have their own devolved governments and parliaments, known as the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly. They also proposed their own NBSAPs which have been handed to the CBD in pursuit of ABTs in 2020.

The Scotland Act 1998, followed by Scotland Act 2012, enhanced the power of Scottish Government. The Scottish government and the Scottish Parliament are separated organisations. There are 129 elected representatives in the Parliament, known as Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). The Parliament can make laws on 12 devolved matters, including agriculture and environment. However, there are reserved matters which the Scottish Government cannot decide, including foreign affairs, immigration and defence, for example. Parliamentary business here runs with some similarities as UK Parliament, which contains meetings of the full Parliament and committees meetings. However, it is a single-chamber Parliament. Due to this reason, committees play a more important role. They can propose new laws by themselves in the form of committee bills, and consider and amend proposals for new laws. They can also do investigation, publish reports and give their recommendations within their remit, on the policy and operation of Scottish Government or on European legislation. In terms of making laws, a public bill can be introduced to the Parliament by the Scottish Government, by Parliament committees or by individual MSPs. There are only three stages in Parliament before a bill becoming effective (Scottish Parliament, 2014). In addition, the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee is the functional body in Scottish Parliament, dealing with biodiversity relevant issues. In the Scottish Government, it is its Rural Directorate with Biodiversity Strategy Team and Biodiversity Implementation Team that is responsible for these issues. In the UK, the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland is the government department making sure that Scottish interests are represented (GOV.UK, 2018b). In UK parliament, Scottish relevant issues can be discussed in Scottish Affairs Committee (Parliament.UK, 2018m).

In Wales, the UK has also devolved powers to elected bodies, namely Welsh Government and National Assembly for Wales during 1998 and 1999. However, they have relatively more limited authority than the bodies in Scotland. The UK Parliament and Government still have significant influence on Welsh affairs. There are 60 elected Assembly Members (AMs) in the National Assembly (National Assembly for Wales, 2018). In terms of making their own laws, they face more reserved matters, covering almost all major aspects of social life, including land and agricultural assets, health, safety and medicine, transport, energy and political parties, for example (ibid.). Its committees have similar functions in the Assembly as the ones in UK and Scottish Parliaments. The Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee is the one that is responsible for biodiversity relevant issues. Besides, the Secretary of State for Wales in the Wales Office represents Wales' voice in UK government. There are also the Welsh Affairs Committee and Welsh Grand Committee in UK Parliament as well.

In Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Executives is the devolved government body (Northern Ireland Executive, 2018). They have the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA), who is responsible for biodiversity relevant issues. For the Northern Ireland Assembly, there are 108 elected members (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2018). Its function,



structure and limitations are similar as the bodies in Wales and Scotland. The Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs is the one who looks after biodiversity issues. In addition, The UK also has the Northern Ireland Office, and Northern Ireland Affairs Committee and Northern Ireland Grand Committee are the venues in UK Parliament to discuss Northern Ireland issues.

#### **4.6 Overseas Territories**

Besides, the UK owns 14 overseas territories (DFID, 2018). According to UK government (GOV.UK, 2018c), biodiversity resources on these islands account for roughly 90% of the UK and the territories in total. These territories have various political systems. For example, Bermuda has been self-governed since 1620, and is relatively more populous (Bermuda Parliament, 2018a). In this case, it has its own Parliament, which imitates the Westminster system, having two chambers and similar passage to pass a law (Bermuda Parliament, 2018b). In their government, it is the Department of Environment and Natural Resources that looks after the biodiversity issues. Saint Helena is also an internally self-governed island. However, the structure of its legislative bodies is very different from the Westminster model (CPA, 2018). The Environment and Natural Resources Directorate is the government body concerning biodiversity issues. In contrast to this, in South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI), there is no elected government, since there is no permanent residents. Therefore, merely the Commissioner, along with an Administrator deals with the affair of the territories (Personal Communication, May 13, 2018). In the UK, it is the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Department for International Development (DFID) that look after the interests of these overseas territories (DFID, 2018; FCO, 2018). In Westminster, two government departments have their own corresponding committees, namely, Foreign Affairs Committee and International Development Committee.

#### **4.7 Fit in the EU**

The EU is a partnership among 28 democratic countries (EU, 2018a). The UK is a member of the EU, although it will leave in 2019. The EU has a unique institutional set-up. Briefly, there are three bodies involved in EU legislation, which are the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission (EC) (EU, 2018b).

The European Parliament is elected by the EU's citizens and represents them (EU, 2018c). It has 766 members, known as MEPs (ibid.). 73 of them are from the UK, representing British citizens from different areas (European Parliament, 2018a). The three main functions of the European Parliament include legislative, supervisory and budgetary. Namely, they are responsible for passing EU laws (collaborating with the Council), deciding on international agreements, questioning the Commission and the Council, and establishing the EU budget (collaborating with

the Council), for example (EU, 2018c). The Council of the EU consists of government ministers from these different member countries. These member states are in rotation of the presidency of the Council (EU, 2018d). The Council is a role for voicing the member states' governments, discussing, amending and adopting EU laws, and coordinating EU policies (ibid.). Beside, those laws passed at the EU levels are meant to be superior to domestic laws, even when they are in conflict. The EC is the body to represent the Union's interests as a whole (EU, 2018e). Each member state has one officer joining in the team. The Commission has the responsibility to propose new laws, to consult experts and public for technical details, to allocate EU funding, setting priorities, to represent EU internationally and to enforce EU laws.

Except for these three bodies, the European Council (different with the Council of the EU) is the institution to set broad priorities for the EU (EU, 2018f). The heads of states or governments, EuC President and High Representative for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy gather in the European Council. It has ability to deal with more complex and sensitive issues which are hard to be settled at low level meetings (ibid.).

For this research, there are questions about how the UK fit in the EU system and especially how does biodiversity conservation concerns pass from the EU to the UK. As mentioned before, 73 members from the UK are in the European Parliament. They belong to the different political groups. Currently, there are eight different ones. The Greens/European Free Alliance (EFA) is the group who concerns environment issues, including agriculture, fisheries and climate change, for example (Green/EFA, 2018). At present, six members from the UK are in this group. Beside, the ministers from the UK regularly meet in the Council of the European Union. Which ministers are going to represent the UK government decides on the policy areas being discussed. Environment Council (ENVI) is responsible for biodiversity issues (European Parliament, 2018b). Usually, it is members from Defra that participate in relevant meetings. Moreover, only one commissioner nominated by the UK works in EC. The Environment Directorate General of the EC ('DG Environment') is the body in the Commission to look after biodiversity issues (EC, 2018a).

## Chapter 5 Results

### 5.1 Aichi Biodiversity Targets

#### 5.1.1 Participation

	Negative evidence	Positive evidence
<b>Key information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Prime Minister of the UK did not participate in any of these CBD meetings.</li> <li>- Other than Defra and DFID, there was no evidence suggesting that other departmental politicians from the UK participated in the CBD meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Caroline Spelman as the head of Defra, a Cabinet Minister participated in the Nagoya Meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Supplement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Across the whole world, only five countries sent their heads to the Nagoya Meeting (CBD COP 10).</li> <li>- Defra stated that they could not send their Cabinet Minister to the CBD COP 13.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Academic institutions, environmental NGOs and representatives of the industries from the UK constantly participated in the CBD COPs.</li> <li>- Bermuda (as a OT) environment minister joined the UK delegation in the CBD COP 13.</li> <li>- Defra had participated and played important roles in several types of the CBD meetings.</li> </ul>

*Table 5.1 Overview of the participation*

- Which representatives from the UK have participated in the CBD conferences?

One has emailed Defra and the JNCC in order to get relevant information, especially for understanding more accurately who had participated in the CBD COP meetings. However, there was no clear answer. Whilst, the newspaper reports, the CBD meeting records and a statement from Caroline Spelman provided a general list of participants.

For the CBD COP10, namely, the Nagoya Meeting, from the Guardian's report, it was known that the Prime Minister of the UK did not participate. In fact, across the whole world, only five countries sent their head of state to this meeting (Guardian, 2010a). Caroline Spelman, as a Cabinet Minister, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, was the highest officer from the UK government who was present. Her statement further illustrated that a team to support her was made up by officers from Defra and DFID (House of Commons, 2010a). Moreover, from the meeting record, it explained that those participants were classified into eight groups, namely, (1) international institutions, (2) academic institutions, (3) indigenous groups, (4) Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), (5) local authorities, (6) industries, (7)

parliamentarians and (8) other observers. Among these, it notices that the House of Commons, University of Oxford, University of Edinburgh, Zoological Society of London, Birdlife International, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, Natural History Museum and the Royal Society were from the UK (CBD, 2010b).

From the COP11 to the COP13, academic institutions from the UK, such as the University of Oxford, York University, United Kingdom Ocean Acidification Research Programme, Imperial College London, University of Edinburgh and University of Sussex had participated in. Moreover, the Birdlife International, Zoological Society of London, Royal Society and Botanic Gardens were frequent guests of the meetings. Apart from that, International Consultancy Firm (GHK Consulting LTD) (ICF GHK) Head Office London, and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales as the representatives of industries were respectively present in the COP11 and the COP12 (CBD, 2012a; CBD, 2014b; CBD, 2016). There were no report that the head of the UK government or other governmental department had participated in any of these meetings. A hansard of the Parliament discussion before the COP13 further illustrated that despite there being a suggestion that a Cabinet Minister should be present in Cancun, Mexico, Defra had confirmed that it would not happen. However, they would send a delegation of considerable size (House of Commons, 2016a). In addition, through a personal email exchange, the biodiversity officer of Bermuda (one of the OTs), mentioned that their environment minister had joined the UK delegation in Cancun, 2016 (Personal Communication, May 9, 2018).

Besides, this research has also checked the records of several other types of CBD meetings. For example, the Global Workshop on National Experiences in implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, found that the workshop was hosted by the Brazilian Ministry of Environment and Defra. The participants from Defra were at the posts of UK CBD National Focal Point Head, Director (Wildlife, Landscape and Rural), Biodiversity Policy Advisor, Biodiversity Policy Unit and also Paul Rose from JNCC as Science Policy Director (CBD, 2012b). Another meeting was the High-level Panel on Global Assessment of Resources for implementing the Strategic Plan Opens Consultations with Parties, and it had a following meeting for the second phase. The UK government and the Indian government were the co-sponsors. Professor Robert Watson from Defra and Professor Georgina Mace from Imperial College London were two of the high-panel members. Besides, there were also government observers from the UK and they were all from Defra (CBD, 2012c). Some other meetings were more technique based, such as meetings with respect to adequacy of biodiversity observation systems to support the CBD 2020 targets, and Joint Expert Meeting on addressing biodiversity concerns in sustainable fishery, which attracted experts from Natural History Museum, BirdLife International, Zoological Society of London, University of Edinburgh and Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), for example (CBD, 2011a; CBD, 2012d). Besides, this research also observed that the Bermudan environmental office had also

been to the Wider Caribbean and Western Mid-Atlantic Regional Workshop to Facilitate the Description of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) (CBD, 2012e).

### 5.1.2 Legitimacy

	Negative evidence	Positive evidence
<b>Partnership</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The United Nations Decades on Biodiversity has attracted universe participation.</li> <li>- The most important biodiversity-related international conventions have joined in.</li> <li>- Defra and its ALBs led the implementation in the UK.</li> </ul>
<b>Former grade</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The objective of the former biodiversity targets completely failed.</li> <li>- None of the 20 former biodiversity targets had been fully achieved.</li> <li>- The UK had only met 41% of its pre-2010 targets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comparing with historical trend, the rapid biodiversity loss had been halted in the UK in 2000's.</li> </ul>
<b>Public demands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The UK agriculture would suffer unbalance of sustainability and food production under the CAP reform. Farmers could become victims.</li> <li>- The establishment of marine protected area around Chago Islands (OT) would prevent expelled indigenous people to come back home and to follow their life of fishing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General public can benefit from better ecosystem service.</li> </ul>

*Table 5.2 Overview of the legitimacy*

#### 5.1.2.1 Partnership

- Who (globally and in the UK) has joined the partnerships of the United Nations Decades on Biodiversity and the process in the UK towards 2020 goals?

It has observed that the CBD have brought 29 international agencies, organisations and environmental conventions to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets Task Force (ABTTF) (CBD, 2018d). These international institutions include the most important biodiversity-related ones, which have been introduced in the first chapter, namely, the CMS, CITES, United Nations Education, Scientific and Culture Organisation, Ramsar Convention and International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. They also belong to a Biodiversity Liaison

Group (BLG). Other support of the United Nations are from UN Environment, UN habitat, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), UN Conference on Trade and Development, UN Institute for Training and Research, UN World Tourism Organisation and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), for example. The World Bank Group, as the largest and world famous development bank, has also joined in. Besides, the Worldwide Fund for Nature and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), as the most important and influential wildlife conservation organisations, are the members of the ABTTF. There is also a Joint Liaison Group (JLG), which gathers the CBD, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to discuss the interrelated issues with regard to climate change, biodiversity and desertification. Another supplement material was in a UK parliament debate. It mentioned that the Nagoya Meeting “will be the first time that biodiversity has had a day dedicated to it at the General Assembly” (House of Commons, 2010b).

The CBD has a universal membership, with 195 parties. However, the United States (US) as the most powerful and influential country in the world is not a party. Reviewing the Trust Fund for the CBD which was presented within the COP10 and COP13 documents, it found that in 2010, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the UK were the only countries to contribute more than US\$1,000,000 and in 2016, it were Brazil, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the UK (CBD, 2010b; CBD, 2016).

Moreover, the International year of Biodiversity campaign across the world had attracted 1500 organisations in 146 countries, including 90 governments, 388 NGOs, 3 indigenous communities and 21 UN agencies (UKBAP, 2011). In the UK, around 140 organisations expressed their intention to join in, including media such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), education institutions such as the University of Bath, the University of Birmingham and the University of Plymouth, as well as others such as the National Lottery Fund and Plymouth Art Centre, for example. Over 40 were formally signed up (United Kingdom Supreme Court (UKSC), 2009).

For implementation, Defra and JNCC are the main leaders for the post 2010 biodiversity framework (JNCC, 2013). As introduced in the fourth chapter, defra has 33 agencies and public bodies as its ALBs by now (GOV.UK, 2018d). These 33 institutions are classified into six categories, namely, non-ministerial department, executive agency, executive non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), advisory NDPBs, tribunal NDPBs and others. JNCC as an executive NDPBs belong to Defra family. The report in 2012, illustrated that the defra had sponsored for 53 NDPBs, which were just after the Ministry of Justice, ranking the second out of 22 departments. The executive NDPBs by Defra received £1,022,225,426 in government funding, which ranked seventh out of 17 departments (Cabinet Office, 2012). In 2015, because of a public

bodies reform, the number of the NDPBs by Defra has dropped to 14, which ranked seventh out of 22 departments. £1,105,573,820 in government funding has been given to its executive NDPBs, which ranked fifth out of 18 departments (Cabinet Office, 2015).

Other institutions have also participated in the implementation plan. They were under particular goals. Some are from Defra family, for example, Nature England, Environment Agency, Marine Management Organisation and Forest Commission. Except for that, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and the DFID have also involved in. Moreover, as mentioned in the fourth chapter, Defra only directly works in England and have authority to deal with international affairs. Therefore, to carry on actions and to represent the interests of local people, the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, SNH, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and OTs have played their parts.

#### **5.1.2.2 Former Grade of the CBD Biodiversity Goals**

- What are the outcomes of the CBD's former goals?

Global Biodiversity Outlook 3 had reviewed the 20 former targets which were launched in 2002 and ended in 2010. The eventual objective of this global schedule was to halt the significant biodiversity loss in that decade. However, for this final purpose, the results have showed that the rate of biodiversity loss is not just constant, but even intensifying (CBD, 2010c).

Among the 20 biodiversity targets, none of them had been fully achieved. The best situation was that although the target have not been met, significant progress had been observed. Only four had reached this level, including the specialised habitats or biomass conservation, genetic diversity conservation and reducing the impact of pollution on biodiversity (ibid.). Besides, 13 targets had made some progress, which include the dimensions on the conservation of species diversity, reducing pressure on habitat loss, controlling the threats from alien species, ensuring fair and equitable genetic resources benefit sharing and capacity building to implement the Convention, for example. The other three targets had not even had any progress or the situation had even worsened, which were controlling unsustainable consumption, using biological resources to support livelihood, local food security and healthcare, especially for poor people, and traditional knowledge conservation (ibid.).

Besides, to forecast the future of conservation, the CBD had also evaluated the trends in the state of the various components of biodiversity in 2010, covering four major dimensions, namely genes, populations, species and ecosystems. Nine out of 15 showed negative changes, for example, trends in abundance and distribution of selected species, trends in status of threatened species and trends in ecological footprint. Whilst, only two aspects would be towards positive, which are the coverage of protected area and official development assistance. Others did not

have clear global trends, varying difference in different regions, or there was no sufficient data to support a conclusion(ibid.).

In general, the biodiversity global targets in the 2000's had not conveyed reliable processes to achieve a sufficient outcome. Furthermore, there is no optimistic prospect left for the coming decade.

For the UK, under the guidance of the global targets, it had developed 32 indicators to measure its own performance (Defra, 2009). Among them, 13 (41%) items showed improvement, including the population of key species like bats, agri-environment land, sustainable fisheries, areas of protected sites and biodiversity expenditure, for example. 10 (31%) items showed little or no overall change, such as the population of butterflies, conservation on priority species and priority habitats, and marine ecosystem integrity. Lastly, 7 (22%) items showed deterioration, including bird protection, invasive species in marine and territories ecosystems, for example. On the whole, comparing with the last 30 years, the national report of the UK concluded that the rapid biodiversity loss had been halted in this country during that period.

#### **5.1.2.3 Support from the Public**

- Have the ABTs played a positive role or a negative role in terms of meeting the demands of the UK public?

For the general public in the UK, the ABTs have played a positive role, mainly because it has enhanced public benefits from ecosystem services. The Strategic Goal D (Aichi Target 14-16) has focused on this point. In the UK, the NEWP, which was issued out in 2011 and was consistent with the ABTs (see the section on coherence), emphasised its ambitions to reconnect people and nature (Defra, 2011a). In this plan, Defra has promised upcoming actions and profits to the general public, including providing nature's health services, encouraging outdoor education and improving better neighborhood access to nature. Besides, both from the inquiry of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee and the Guardian's report, one noticed that the environmentalists and even farming sector and industry sector welcomed the launch of the NEWP (Defra, 2012; Guardian, 2011a).

However, evidence also suggested that some of the ABTs relevant implementations are negative in meeting the demands of specialised groups.

1. The first piece of evidence is with respect to the agriculture. The Aichi Target 3 has urged to eliminate the incentives or subsidies which could do harm to biodiversity, meanwhile, develop and apply positive ones. The EU was ambitious on its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform. The CAP was one of the EU's oldest and most important policies, since it was launched



in 1962 and so far it has accounted for approximately 40% of the total EU spending (EC, 2018b; House of Commons, 2012). The biodiversity strategy to 2020 of the EU (EC, 2011) highlighted its role: the CAP would contribute to realise the EU target 1, 2 and 3, namely, to realise more sustainable agriculture, to maintain ecosystems and to protect species and habitats. Moreover, through reforming, the CAP looks forward to enhance synergies among the biodiversity conservation objectives and other relevant policies.

However, there is negative voice from the UK public towards this new ambition, mainly coming from the farmers' group. The agricultural census 2010 illustrated that there were 186,660 farms in the UK. Utilised agricultural area covered 64% of the total land. Whilst, the population regularly working in agricultural sector was only 1.4 % of the British active population in 2010 (Eurostat, 2012). Glyn Davies who is the MP of Montgomeryshire and also a British farmer, pointed out that despite most of the public in the UK supporting the principle of greening in the CAP, British farmers are going to be the victims of the policy (House of Commons, 2012). Evidence from Miss Anne McIntosh who was the chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, shows that British agriculture and its farmers have already faced a series of challenges, including food security, lack of competition and aged agricultural population, for example (ibid.). The most profound worry is, potentially, what the CAP could bring to the UK economy. Ian Paisley (MPs of North Antrim) emphasised that agri-food production is a £20 billion industry in this country. The negative impact would be especially significant in some regions. For example, in Northern Ireland, around 20% of the total private sector employment is contributed to the agri-food sector (ibid.). For an individual farmer, the huge redistribution of money would influence their livelihoods and future choices. Supplementing by McIntosh, if direct payment has been cancelled, more than 50% of farms would be unprofitable. Several MPs held the view that the CAP is a one size fits all policy across the Europe, with all its inflexibility and complexity, which can only hinder the British agriculture in terms of balancing development and sustainability (ibid.).

Besides, there is suspicion that the reformed CAP will bring back a set-aside approach in terms of realising conservation (ibid). Back to the year 2007 - 2009, the High-level Group on Set-Aside, which was constituted by the heads of five key organisations (National Farmer Union, Country Land and Business Association, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Environment Agency and Natural England), had already done a range of research projects with respect to the importance of set-aside to protect biodiversity (CFE, 2018a). Despite the reports having proved diverse benefits of this approach and they promoted a compulsory conservation method, the National Farmer Union (NFU) and County Land and Business Association (CLA) thought it is disproportionate and concluded that set-aside approach cannot deliver the exact environmental benefits wanted. Through the movement of the NFU and the CLA, eventually, in 2009, an industry-led voluntary approach had replaced the compulsory set-aside method (ibid.).

In the House of Commons, March 8th 2012, the majority of the MPs expressed the potential disadvantages and worries of the reformed CAP to their constituencies' farmers.

2. Another piece of evidence is the conflicts of the establishment of protected areas in Chagos islands and the right of its indigenous group. The 11th Aichi Target has encouraged every country to set 17% of the terrestrial and inland water, and 10% of the coastal and marine areas as protected areas. Chagos islands belong to a part of the UK's overseas territories, being recognised as a biodiversity hotspot of global importance (Guardian, 2010b). 40 years ago, around 2,000 islanders were ejected to make way for a giant US air base at the Diego Garcia atoll (Guardian, 2010c). In 2010, by setting the Chagos archipelago as a marine protected area, it has blocked the islanders' right to return (Guardian, 2011b). The Chagos Conservation Trust, Linnean Society, Royal Botanic Gardens of Kew, the Zoological Society of London and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) are all in an umbrella group, namely, the Chagos Environment Network (CEN), which opposed the return of any significant number of islanders (ibid.). Their idea is to keep the people out for the natural flourish. Besides, there came along a total fishing ban within this area (Guardian, 2010c). The evidence showed that the exiled Chagos with their relatives have fought for their right to come back home and fishing for livelihoods ever since they were expelled, and especially after the establishment of the marine protected area in 2010 (Guardian, 2018). The sovereignty controversy between the UK and Mauritius, and the tenant of US military makes the political background complicated.

### 5.1.3 Coherence

	Negative evidence	Positive evidence
<b>UK 2020 biodiversity vision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The NBSAP (England) was based on the NEWP. The NEWP was more for a national audience. The schemes of the NEWP were not equivalent in comparison with the ABTs.</li> <li>- The situations of the OTs were diverse. Some made their NBSAPs, some did not, but they stated they had followed the spirit of the ABTs.</li> <li>- The EU did mention the CAP would contribute to the Aichi Target 6 (sustainable agriculture), but did not regard the Aichi Target 3 (incentives reform) as the aim of the CAP reform.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The NBSAPs of the four UK countries and some OTs covered most of the ABTs.</li> <li>- The NEWP kept the same aspiration with the ABTs.</li> <li>- The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework further facilitated collaboration and synergies upon the NBSAPs towards the ABTs.</li> <li>- Biodiversity Progress 2020 is current business in the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee. (Scotland)</li> <li>- The EU had set 2020 biodiversity strategies corresponding to the ABTs. The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework noticed the coherence with the EU's vision as well.</li> </ul>

<b>Learning mechanism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Email exchange illustrated that Bermuda government and SGSSI government have never been to the meetings of Interdepartmental Overseas Territories Biodiversity Group. Other OTs were unknown. There was no funding to support them to go to UK based meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internationally, the CBD has diverse meetings and programmes which has merged the ABTs in.</li> <li>- TEEB has closely collaborated with the programmes of the economic, trade and incentives of the CBD, along with experts and the government from the UK. The NEWP was based on the research of TEEB.</li> <li>- Based on the communication, the CBD meeting has updated the milestone of the Aichi Target 3 (incentive reform).</li> <li>- Nationally, the UK held a Biodiversity Partnership Conference just after the Nagoya meeting which not only brought in Defra and environmental NGOs, but also members from the National Farmer Union.</li> <li>- A Four countries' Biodiversity Group was established based on the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.</li> <li>- An Interdepartmental Overseas Territories Biodiversity Group was established. The ABTs have been stressed in their meetings.</li> <li>- Local learning mechanisms in the UK also exist.</li> </ul>
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*Table 5.3 Overview of the coherence*

#### **5.1.3.1 UK 2020 Biodiversity Vision VS EU 2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

- Have the UK 2020 biodiversity vision (including England, Scotland, Wales, North Ireland, its overseas territories) and the EU one kept in line with the ABTs?

The evidence shows that the UK 2020 biodiversity vision have in general kept in line with the ABTs.

The UK has several documents corresponding to the ABTs and the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020. The NEWP was the early response to the ABTs from the UK government, which has been clearly pointed out by Defra officers in several UK Parliament meetings (see: House of Commons, 2010d; House of Commons, 2010e; House of Commons, 2010f). Afterwards, the respective NBSAP of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have also come out. In 2013, there was another UK post-2010 implementation plan. Besides, there are several updated progress documents (see: JNCC, 2018c).

The NBSAP of England mentioned that it was built upon the NEWP. Whilst, the NEWP was more for a national audience. This research has found that it was always the NEWP being discussed in UK politics, instead of the NBSAPs. However, since the NBSAPs were sent to the CBD, there was a direct comparison on how the national actions can contribute to specific ABTs.

### **The NBSAP of England**

The NBSAP of England had listed four strategy priority areas, including (1) better conservation on land and at sea, (2) putting people at the heart of policy, (3) reducing environment pressures and (4) improving knowledge (Defra, 2011b). 17 possible elements to measure were listed under these four themes, for example, extent and condition of selected habitats, habitat connectivity, integrating biodiversity considerations into local decision-making and innovation financial mechanisms. They covered 17 Aichi Targets, except for #16, #17 and #18, which are ABS, biodiversity strategies and action plans, and traditional knowledge.

### **The Natural Environment White Paper**

However, within the whole of the UK, it was the NEWP that guided the government's direction. This research deemed that it was more important to check the coherence between the NEWP and the ABTs. In the NEWP, the UK government clearly stated that they aimed to halt the decline in species and habitats, and the degradation in landscapes (Defra, 2011a). It can tell that the UK government have kept the same aspiration as the ABTs. Moreover, the UK government made 92 commitments. Some main measures were in these commitments, which were also the most frequently heard topics in political debates, including (1) Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs), (2) Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs), (3) National Planning Policy Framework, (4) Biodiversity Offsets, (5) getting best value from agriculture land, (6) woodland and forest protection and improvement, (7) marine environment management, (8) growing a green economic, (9) setting the Natural Capital Committee (NCC), (10) reconnecting people and nature, and (11) leadership internationally and in the EU, for example (ibid.). Furthermore, according to the report by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (2012), by their interpretation, the core idea of the NEWP was to secure the value of nature in decision-making and to bring the big society to conservation.

Compared with the ABTs, obviously, the UK's national set up was more concrete, and had a more profound and established governance architecture. However, when compared to the specific Aichi Targets, for example, the #3 incentives reform, can be found that the UK's corresponding strategy was "getting best value from agricultural land" (Defra, 2011a, 69). Under this, Commitment 17 promised to bring government, industry and environment partners together to reconcile the common goals and interests in the following 12 months. Commitment 18 promised to assess the effectiveness of that practical voluntary industry-wide approach. Commitment 19 promised a research on how greater flexibility can be given to reach the

expected outcomes. Commitment 20 was another review on how to use advice and incentives for farmers, to generate a more “integrated, streamlined and efficient” approach, being “clearer” for them and make better environmental outcomes (ibid., 69). The Aichi Target 3 was more direct, giving the instruction that remove harmful incentives. The UK’s government has touched the issue, but cannot give equivalent actions. Another example is that the Aichi Target 11 had given clear standards, requiring 17% territorial and 10% marine areas be set as protected areas. Neither in the NBSAP of England nor in the NEWP, have the same standards been used.

### **The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework**

Besides, the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework: Implementation Plan was set up in 2012 and signed by the four UK countries. It promised to bring the four UK countries working together on the priorities in the framework, and to make sure that all international responsibility had been met, with no gaps. The framework also emphasised that it was not for duplicating the NBSAPs, instead, it intended to facilitate collaboration and synergies (JNCC, 2013). 23 actions were under this framework. Each of them was linked to one of the five goals in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The Activity D3 had a focus on ABS this time. Furthermore, the activity A2 targeted at incentives reform. However, the 2015 milestones was almost followed the NEWP, which was to finish research and to publish reports. The Activity C5 focused on marine protected areas. Its 2015 milestones did not use the 10% as a standard either. Moreover, the framework had done good job as making it pretty clear which public bodies or agencies were responsible for which specific activities.

### **The NBSAP of Other UK Countries**

Scotland has the richest biodiversity resources among the four UK countries. Compared with England, the NBSAP of Scotland, namely the “2020 Challenge for Scotland’s Biodiversity” (2013) and the “Scotland’s Biodiversity – A Route Map to 2020” (2015), worked both as the response to the CBD and the main guidance for the Scottish government. In this case, the linkage between the ABTs and the Scottish government seems more direct. Biodiversity Progress 2020 has also been current business in the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee. This research believes it can contribute to more consistent attention on international goals in national politics. As for the Scottish NBSAP, through an email exchange, the SNH explained that the 2013 version listed five strategic objectives of the Scottish government, including wealthier and fairer, healthier, safer and stronger, smarter, greener, and it also contained three aims for developing a sustainable economy (Personal Communication, 11th July, 2018). Scottish environment outcomes from the 2020 challenge were illustrated in this document as to how they connected with the government’s agenda and the international ABTs. It is observed that all ABTs have been covered. For the 2015 vision, the Scottish biodiversity strategy aims mainly contained three, which were biodiversity loss halted, people connected with nature and benefits for Scotland. Twelve priority projects were launched for six big steps. Combined

with the supplementary explanation, all the ABTs have found countermeasures in this documents, except for #6, #10 and #16.

Besides, in the email exchange with the SNH, its Biodiversity Strategy Manager, Debbie Bassett mentioned that the SNH was the institution appointed by the Scottish government to develop and update the Biodiversity Strategy for Scotland. The Scottish government had given very clear instruction to the SNH that the 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity was to contribute to the delivery of the ABTs. The scope of the ABTs had exceeded the Scottish biodiversity governance. Therefore, they had linked the biodiversity goals with the five strategic objectives of the Scottish government, in order to demonstrate how other sectors could contribute to the ABTs.

As for Northern Ireland and Wales, their NBSAPs were published in 2015. It observes that Northern Ireland had compared their actions with the 20 ABTs. Except for Aichi Target 16, ABS, all the other targets have been covered. Wales compared their Nature Recovery Plan objectives and actions with the five strategic goals. All of them were corresponded.

As for the OTs, through an email exchange, the Biodiversity Officer in Government of Bermuda, Alison Copeland mentioned that the UK government had devolved responsibility for environmental issues to the OTs, so they can set their own environmental policy (Personal Communication, May 9, 2018). However, the only exception were international agreements, which the UK first signs, then extends to the territories. Therefore, not all the territories were party to the same agreements. As for the CBD, it had not extended to Bermuda. Apart from that, Copeland indicated that Bermuda set their own Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan in 2003, but have not updated it yet. However, their annual report on their activities has still been generated. In the 2016 report (See Government of Bermuda, 2016), it highlighted Aichi Target 11, but no other targets were mentioned. Moreover, Copeland pointed out that they did try to follow the spirit of the ABTs, but did not do it explicitly. Another email exchange result was from the SGSSI, the Environment Officer, Jennifer Lee indicated that there were almost no population on SGSSI. Therefore, it was a non-elected government. However, environment management was at the core of everyday activities and was embedded in policies. Their new Biodiversity Action Plan was published in 2016 (Personal Communication, May 13, 2018). It observed that all ABTs were covered under this plan. Besides, there was also an OTs White Paper published in 2012. Biodiversity conservation was one of the main focuses. Defra, in this paper, promised to guarantee the need of the OTs to be represented internationally, and to provide advice and support in meeting the requirements of the CBD, CITES and the CMS (FCO, 2012).

## **The EU Biodiversity 2020**

The EU had also issued out their 2020 biodiversity targets. In this document, it described that the actions were under a dual mandate, namely, the EU and the CBD. There were six targets in total, which were (1) fully implementing the Birds and Habitats Directives, (2) maintaining and restoring ecosystems and their services, (3) increasing the contribution of agriculture and forestry to maintain and enhance biodiversity, (4) ensuring sustainable use of fisheries resources, (5) helping to combat invasive alien species, and (6) helping to halt biodiversity loss (EC, 2011). Actions under these targets covered the 17 ABTs, except for #4, #18 and #19. For these three, the EU regarded them as horizontal issues. Besides, the research noticed that the CAP was under the EU target 3, mentioning that by 2020, maximisation of areas under agriculture should be protected under the CAP. The EU target 3 was corresponded to Aichi Target #5, #7 and #13. Despite the CAP reform being on the EU agenda, it had not being set as a target, especially for contributing to Aichi Target 3. The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework has paid attention to maintaining consistency with the EU's role. For example, the activity A2 incentive reform stressed to link work at EU level. The activity B2 and B3 directly aimed at the EU payments, policy and practice.

### **5.1.3.2 Learning Mechanisms**

- Have the ABTs relevant mutual learning and cooperating mechanisms (forums/ conferences/ workshops) been established internationally, within the UK and its partners?

This research finds that several learning mechanisms have been established internationally and within the UK, which can contribute to the coherence of the ABTs.

### **International**

After the ABTs had been set, the diverse programmes and meetings of the CBD had stressed its roles. For example, the programmes of economics, trade and incentive measures had linked their activities with the Aichi Target 2, Target 3, and Target 20 (CBD, 2018e). The meaning of the programme contained several dimensions, including valuation, harmful and positive incentives, market creation and trade. For example, for valuation, the CBD indicated that they had emphasised the importance of it in the COPs. In 2016, COP13 parties had agreed to introduce or enlarge the use of natural capital accounting and environmental economic accounting. Besides, the CBD emphasised that The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) was one of the main pioneers in this working area, which was initiated at the G8 meeting of environmental ministers in 2007 and under the support of UNDP (CBD, 2018f). Currently, TEEB was supporting numerous national study in different countries. In the UK, TEEB had contributed to its National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA), which was the basic research that the NEWP relied on (TEEB, 2018a; Defra, 2011a). Besides, it further observes that TEEB had very close

relationship with the government and experts from the UK. Defra, UKaid, London School of Economics, Imperial College of London, University of Liverpool were all its main partners (TEEB, 2018b).

Incentives reform was another purpose under this programme. After the Nagoya Meeting, the CBD highlighted that the parties had agreed milestones in COP12, including by 2015, revised NBSAPs reflecting Aichi Target 3. Similarly, by 2016, policy or legislative action should have been developed on incentives, and they should finalise national analytical studies to identify candidates for reform. Finally, by 2018, they should have finalised a policy plan (CBD, 2014c). Moreover, TEEB had also played its part here. Through its studies, a range of positive incentives had been identified which intended to help policy makers in different countries (CBD, 2018g). Apart from TEEB, other international initiatives who had joined in the programme includes UNDP, Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services, United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting and the World Trade Organisation, for example.

## **National**

Within the UK, it finds that one month after the Nagoya Meeting, there was a UK Biodiversity Partnership Conference (Scottish Government, 2011). The theme of the meeting was to respond to the new international and EU targets. Caroline Spelman participated in this meeting. The conference not only attracted governmental institutions, environmental agencies and NGOs, such as Defra, the Scottish Government, United Nations Environment Program - World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC), the Bat Conservation Trust, the Scottish Agricultural College, SNH, NEA, IUCN Peatland Programme, RSPB, Natural England and National Biodiversity Network, the Prince's Foundation, but also brought in the NFU and South Western Trains whose major activities might cause damage to nature. Diverse topics had been communicated in this meeting, for example, how can the biodiversity community address the drivers of loss. Similar topics include that despite TEEB having done research to alert the economic consequences of allowing biodiversity loss continue, how can the UK best use these economic arguments to influence behaviour on the ground.

Besides, the UK biodiversity Partnership was actually established back to 2003, and they have had annual meeting ever since then. However, because of the government decision to simplify the UK Biodiversity Action Plan structure during 2011 to 2012, this collaboration did not exist after that (JNCC, 2018a). To replace it, with the publishment of the UK post-2010 implementation plan, a new Four countries' Biodiversity Group was established (ibid.). The new group brought in the JNCC, the Northern Ireland Government, Scottish Government, Welsh Government, UK Government, statutory agencies from each of the four countries, and additional invited experts (JNCC, 2012). They had agreed to meet once every quarter. Achieving the EU



and international targets has been set at the top of the agenda. Work details include to establish, coordinate and scrutiny under the framework, to consort the UK with the newly emerging EU and international biodiversity initiatives, to highlight the biodiversity-related matters which can benefit through strategic collaboration at the UK level, to coordinate reports of the UK to the EU and the CBD, and to set and oversee sub-groups and events as to support the tasks (ibid.).

There was also an Interdepartmental Overseas Territories Biodiversity Group (OTBG). This group was initiated in 2009 and started to take shape in 2010. By the end of 2017, it has 21 conferences. Through the meeting records, it finds that the OT White Paper, Marine framework with regard to the Aichi Target 11, strategic plan had all be discussed in the meetings (see: OTBG, 2012a; OTBG, 2012b). There were notifications by the group that a strategic plan should be mapped on to the SDG or the ABTs or employ a natural capital approach (OTBG, 2017). There were also Aichi Target OT consultations, which through surveys on OT attitudes towards the ABTs, aimed to find ways where relevant ABTs could offer an approach to stimulate biodiversity conservation in the OTs (OTBG, 2013). Besides, a JNCC stakeholder group was developed upon the ABTs to identify common areas of focus (OTBG, 2014). The conferences has brought core members, including Defra, FCO, DFID, Ministry of Defence (MoD), Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the United Kingdom Overseas Territories Association (UKOTA), Cefas, the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and the Natural History Museum (JNCC, 2018b). However, through an email exchange, the research also noticed that the Bermudan Biodiversity Officer, Alison Copeland said no one she knew had participated in these meetings, and they did not have funds to travel UK-based meetings (Personal Communication, May 9, 2018). SGSSI environment officer, Jennifer Lee also pointed out that she was not familiar with this meeting (Personal Communication, May 13, 2018).

## **Local**

Learning mechanisms have also been found on a local level. For instance, the Campaign for the Farmed Environment (CFE) was an industry initiated partnership approach in the UK, which brought in actors who were closely connected with both agriculture and environment such as Defra, the NFU, the Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC), the Country Land and Business Association (CLA), and the RSPB, for example (CFE, 2018b). Biodiversity 2020 has been set as one of its campaign themes. It was launched in 2011 as to meet the national strategy, and the aim was to halt biodiversity loss, to support healthy ecosystems and to establish ecological networks. There were four key priorities under this campaign, including to come up with a clearer approach to farmers and land managers; to be more integrated, streamlined and efficient; to bring stakeholders together to reach an agreement both good for environment and food production; to work together to develop environmental stewardship and to look for maximising the contribution of countryside stewardship (CFE, 2018c). These four points, especially the first was promised in

the NEWP as well. Besides, the campaign has delivered information to voluntary participants in terms of what they could do to contribute to the goals.

Besides, LNPs as one of the key committees in the NEWP, was launched by the UK Government (Defra, 2012). It intended to attract a broad range of local organisations, business and people to come up with self-sustaining strategies. The ambition was to help locals systematically manage their natural environment through this approach and to embed the value in local decisions for the welfare of nature, people and the economy. Despite the LNPs having not set special targets for 2020, the government promised that two members can represent the views of the LNPs network, participating in the national England Biodiversity Stakeholder Group. The latter was promised in England's NBSAP. Moreover, Natural England would also keep in contact with the LNPs, to reveal how biodiversity 2020 can best link to local actions.

## 5.2 Issue Attention in Different Policy Venues

Venues	Questions
<b>Westminster Hall</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether the ABTs and its relevant implementation had entered into the House of Commons and the House of Lords?</li> <li>• Have they been frequently discussed?</li> <li>• Whether there were conflicting debates around the issues, and whether there was any issue expansion?</li> <li>• What proposals raised by the MPs or Lords could potentially lead to further policy change?</li> </ul>
<b>Committees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which committees the ABTs and relevant implementation has entered into?</li> <li>• How did the ABTs, its relevant implementation and those ideas raised by the MPs or Lords in Parliament evolve in the committees?</li> <li>• Who has joined the inquiry on these issues?</li> </ul>
<b>Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the attention level on this global biodiversity event and on the major strategy of the UK?</li> <li>• Whether there was any abrupt reversal of public image occurring due to this global biodiversity milestone and its relevant implementation in the UK?</li> </ul>

*Table 5.4 Issue Attention in Different Policy Venues*

The research found that the topics regarding the ABTs and its relevant implementation have entered into several different policy venues in the UK. The most significant ones included the two Chambers, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, the Environment Audit Committee, the Scottish Parliament and the media. There were also venues that this research earlier thought where the issues should be given attention to but finally did not, such as the International Development Committees and the Foreign Affairs Committees.

### 5.2.1 Issue Attention in Westminster Hall

Both in the House of Commons and the House of Lords, the new international goals have been discussed. Since the highest heed in Parliament, the research initially expected that it would be a good chance to promote the ABTs into macro politics. However, despite talking about the international goals, several issues have been highlighted such as the NEWP, natural capital and Aichi Target 11. The evidence illustrated that it did not successfully attract attentions from the whole Parliament and cross department in the government. There was no significant conflicts occurring which as illustrated in punctual equilibrium theory, could lead to an abrupt policy change. Beside, there were some other issues related to the implementation of the 2020 biodiversity vision in the UK, namely, the CAP and the privatisation of the public forest estate. One noticed fierce debates in the House of Commons with regard to these two affairs. Potentially, in both situations, there could have been rapid policy changes. However, the results showed that the old order finally took the upper hand in these high-level arguments in the UK politics.

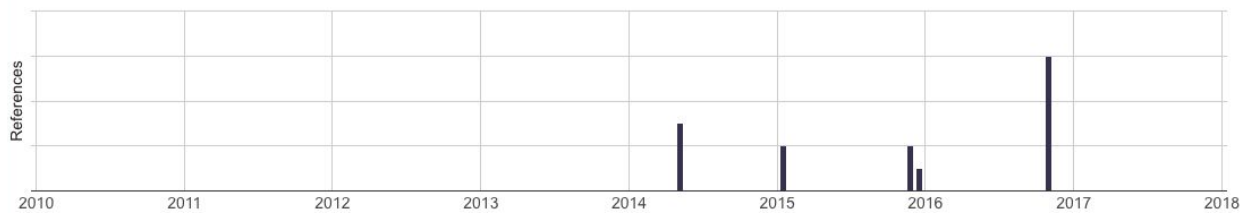
#### International Goals

Just few weeks before the Nagoya Summit, the House of Commons had a major concern on the meeting. The poor grade of the former global goals, the government's ambition on the new ones, the future planning, namely the NEWP, the topic regarding Natural Capital, the volunteer approach, namely the CFE and conservation on the OTs, for example, have all received attention. For further trends in promoting policy change, one noticed the speeches from Richard Benyon and Barry Gardiner. The former was the representative of Defra, stating that with the publishment of NEWP, one expected a radical transformation on the economy, society and conservation in the UK (House of Commons, 2010b). On the other hand, the latter, Barry Gardiner, as a member in the delegation of the EU, would also be the chair of the global legislators session in the Nagoya Summit. He introduced a topic, namely, natural capital. Borrowing this chance, Gardiner had given suggestion on eleven concrete steps to mainstream biodiversity issues across the whole government in the UK (ibid.). For example, in his suggestion, the UK Government departments should all have natural capital accounting and therefore, every policy could be evaluated whether it had helped to improve the natural capital or had damaged natural wealth. Besides, Gardiner advised and stressed the new role of the Treasury in the UK government. For instance, in his opinion, the Treasury should prepare green accounts for natural capital and ecosystem services. In addition, there also should be annual reports on these issues from the Treasury. The research was interested in the consequence of such suggestion, because potentially it would bring new participants into the old subsystem politics. Moreover, Gardiner's ideas had received wide responses from other MPs in the debate. The research, in this case, further regarded him as a 'policy entrepreneur', in regard to the passionate

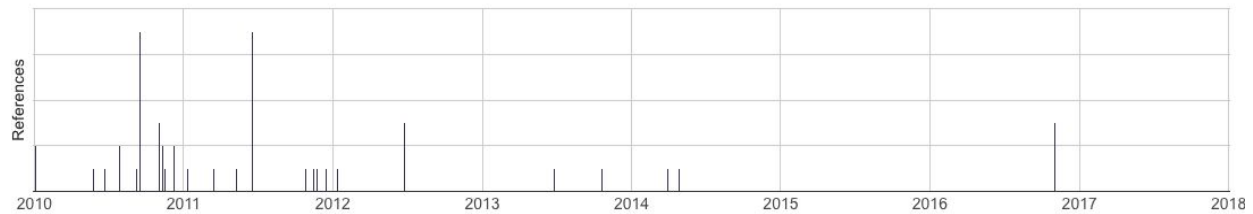
fashion Gardiner had argued the issues and his frequent appearances in the other non-Defra-based discussions in the Chamber. Furthermore, one noticed that the Strategic Goal A also emphasised to “mainstream the biodiversity across government and society” (CBD, 2018h). This hansard illustrated that similar thoughts and methods have been conceived in the UK as well, but before the exact international goals had been announced.

Besides, to track more debates which happened in the Chambers regarding the ABTs, this research has searched “Aichi” and “Nagoya” in the UK Parliament hansard. One found that during the period, there were only five meetings in the two Chambers that directly referenced “Aichi” with specifically relevant context, with the one in November 2016 mentioning it the most times with six. These meetings were between May 2014 to November 2016, four years after the targets had been launched. One further noticed that within these approximate two years, Aichi Target 11 and especially the part, establishing MPAs, was the only one out of 20 targets which has been repeatedly mentioned and discussed in deeper detail. Most of the other targets, were never specifically mentioned. For the result in searching “Nagoya”, there were 21 meetings referring to the summit. Figure 5.2 illustrated that most of these debates occurred in 2010 and 2011. The earliest one was in January 2010, in which Barry Gardiner discussed the topic of natural capital with Sarah McCarthy-Fry, the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (House of Commons, 2010c). In several other situations in the Commons, Caroline Spelman, simply introduced the spirit of Nagoya and the upcoming new plan draft by her team, namely, the NEWP to Parliament. In the House of Lords, international goals also drew attention. In earlier years around 2011, the focus was on the expectation of the NEWP. In 2015, the focus shifted to biodiversity conservation in the OTs and Aichi Target 11, establishing MPAs. Furthermore, figure 5.3 was the result when searching for the “Natural Environment White Paper” in the Parliament hansard, which illustrated that this nationalised environmental solution had received much wider concerns from politicians in the UK.

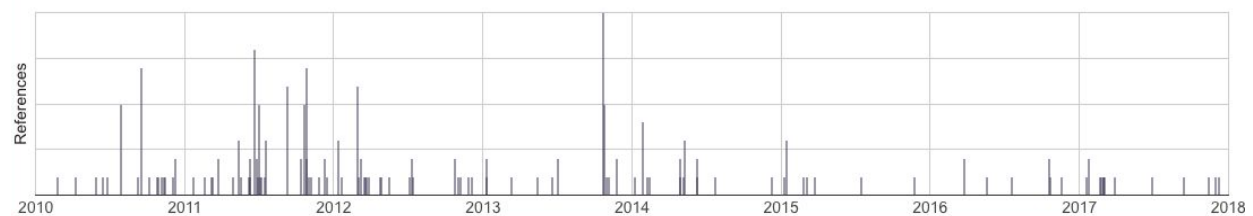
The results illustrated that except for Aichi Target 11, the other 19 targets were very unsuccessful to get any attention from politicians in the UK. However, the Nagoya meeting did open new policy window in around 2010 and 2011. Caroline Spelman with her Defra team and Barry Gardiner were the people who took this advantage. Spelman promoted Defra’s new policy, NEWP, whilst Gardiner advocated natural capital accounting across all governmental departments.



*Figure 5.1: The frequency of “Aichi” in Parliament debates*



*Figure 5.2: The frequency of “Nagoya” in Parliament debates*



*Figure 5.3: The frequency of “Natural Environment White Paper” in Parliament debates*

## The CAP Reform

Except for issues discussing conservation on a macro scale, there were also issues with respect to the ABTs relevant implementation being promoted to the House of Commons. One of them was the reform of the CAP. Section 5.1.2.3 has introduced the CAP as one of the most important EU policies, which was expected to contribute to the EU Biodiversity 2020 through its reform. However, it seemed that due to the conflict with farmer’s groups, the MPs chose to stand on the farmers’ side. This is a major reason why the reform could not work and blocked any further policy changes. Anne McIntosh, as the Chair of the Environment Audit Committee, enumerated that, for example, under the CAP reform, there might be a potential inconsistency between food production and sustainability. Secondly, farmers from the UK have performed much better than farmers from many other EU countries in agri-environmental schemes. Thirdly, future agriculture policy should look for win-wins for sustainability and competitiveness. Finally, the “reckless” cancellation of the direct payments in the CAP might cause farmers to export their social and environmental impacts elsewhere (House of Commons, 2012). Other MPs had contributed to the view that the CAP was inappropriate as well, such as the view that the agricultural policy and subsidies should be managed nationally, not internationally. Similarly, the

one-size-fits-all policy across all EU countries would not work and the CAP should look for a common objectives, instead of a unified common policy.

This could be the result of the subsystem politics. An iron triangle might exist among Defra, the Committee and farmers' group, especially the most powerful stakeholder, the NFU. The concept illustrated that the interest group provided electoral support to Parliament and parliamentary support to the government. On the other hand, Parliament made friendly legislation to the interest group and neglected the farmer's potential mistakes. Additionally, government used low regulation to take care special favours of the interest group. Moreover, between Parliament and government, they also benefited from each other in this way. Here in Parliamentary debates, the MPs fully expressed their support to British farmers and were totally against the EU's new policy, which was an outsider to this subsystem politics. Afterwards, the report and response session in the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee regarding greening the CAP, was meant to scrutinise Defra's work. One noticed that there was no criticism on the government's job. Instead, the focus was on urging Defra to negotiate with the EU for a more flexible CAP framework. Furthermore, in the past, the iron triangle relationship had also appeared. For example, one introduced CFE as a local learning mechanism in section 5.1.3.2, which was an industry initiated partnership approach to protect the natural environment. Scientific reports led by the High Level Group on Set-Aside (HLSAG) suggested the government propose a compulsory scheme to make sure that the environmental benefits related with former compulsory set-aside land would not lost. However, the NFU was in the coalition with other leading farming organisations who were against this scheme. Through negotiation and Defra's public consultation, finally, the government gave up the compulsory plan. The CFE, as voluntary measures were adopted (CFE, 2018a).

#### Privatise Public Forest Estate

Another event in the House of Commons was lead by new thoughts from the NEWP. It was the privatisation of the public forest estate, which prompted by Caroline Spelman with her team, could have caused significant policy change. In the NEWP, the government had a consideration which was to value nature and to involve the big society into conservation. The intention of privatisation had these two dimensions. Caroline Spelman planned to guarantee the future of these public forests by giving them charitable trust status. As explained by her, there were several benefits, for example, firstly, the most precious national assets would be given over to charitable trusts, which indicated better conservation and financial security. The second point was to improve public access. Similarly, local communities and organisations would have an opportunity to manage their own forests if they wished. However, it finally evolved to a clash between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. The opposition pointed out, for example, that even the National Trust and the Woodland Trust distrusted the new plan, since their members would not be willing to pay more money for what they had already owned. Besides,

how could large money which was required for forest managing be raised in perpetuity? In Caroline Spelman's view, the opposite party did not raise any constructive questions, nor did they read the consultation document carefully. The concern of the public, had also been guided to a ludicrous way by the media (House of Commons, 2011a).

This political storm finally ended as the David Cameron censured the sell-off plans. Caroline Spelman apologised, abandoned the plan and halted the public consultation for this new scheme which originally intended to run for another nine weeks.

Fierce debates in this event has been observed. It was the incumbent government actively seeking changes in terms of future nature management. However, the Labour Party stood at an opposite position, and as a loser in the general election, also tried to expand the issue to general questioning on the Conservative Party's ability to govern. They seized up some most public concerned points, such as how to guarantee public access on this private land and how they were destroying the funding model which had protected England's forests for nearly 100 years. Despite Spelman repeatedly promising that it would not be a problem, there was no clear scheme in the future. Labour's views won in public venues. Eventually, change has been blocked.

### **5.2.2 Issues Attention in Other Committees**

As introduced in the fourth chapter, committees functioned as to undertake the majority of work for the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Here, policy issues, government's works and expenditures would be given careful scrutiny. There were numerous committees and diverse issues running within them in UK politics. The majority of the issues, therefore, would not be given higher attention and they would only be dealt with inside 'subsystem' politics. On the other hand, according to the theory of punctuated equilibrium theory, issues were more likely to be promoted to macro politics and generate policy changes if there was an issue expansion. However, through this research, one found these discussions only stayed within the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee and the Environment Audit Committee. In this section, the results of the examinations on how these topics regarding the ABTs and its relevant implementations had evolved in the system are illustrated. One expected it could help to further confirm the situation and to clearly illuminate the process.

#### **The Natural Environment White Paper**

In the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, one found that the NEWP was an inquiry subject. The investigation was launched in July 2011 with the report and government's response published a year later. One noticed that the inquiry had attracted actors, including Defra, NGOs, charities, the farming industry, the construction industry and local authorities.

Furthermore, the inquiry here continued some key points which had been raised before. For example, in the last section, Barry Gardiner took his whole set of suggestions on mainstreaming natural capital accounting across government departments to Parliament and the new expected role of the Treasury. The committee's final suggestions to Defra also highlighted the requirement of the highest attention regarding the NEWP across the whole government, especially with the leadership of the Prime Minister. Besides, Her Majesty's (HM) Treasury and the Cabinet Office were recognised as departments that could play vital roles. The committee had further advised that the Cabinet Office Minister should provide government policy advice and collaborate with HM Treasury, to make sure that the value of nature was understood by all these partners who worked within or with the government. Besides, since government had expressed their aspiration to integrate natural capital values into decision-making, the Cabinet Office should ensure that all government policy and legislation was in line with this objective (Efra, 2012a). However, in the government's response, Defra had denied that HM Treasury or the Cabinet Office had these responsibilities as the committee suggested. In their opinion, in order to ensure that the government's policies had been fully accounted for, the most effective approach was to mainstream environment analysis across all departments. The Treasury and the Cabinet Office, therefore, only needed to make sure that they were within their accountability to implement the principles and approaches enumerated in the NEWP (Efra, 2012b). Moreover, there was no direct reply from Defra to the question regarding whether without including the Treasury as a central part of the NEWP project team, the green economy policy would only be at the edge of core economic concerns. It seemed there potentially could have been a chance for new participants to join, significantly influencing the system. However, it finally stayed in the status quo with Defra in charge of everything.

Other than that, several NGOs had linked the UK ambition to the international goals in 2020. The Wildlife and Countryside Link pointed out that the UK biodiversity 2020 had not used any wildlife legislation or regulation to make up where voluntary approach had failed (Efra, 2012a). Moreover, the RSPB remarked that the funding strategy was not convincing. Similarly, the government only used a market-based strategy and volunteering approach, and were reluctant to adopt regulation and incentives or funding to deliver policy outcomes. Besides, despite the NEWP emphasising local engagement, there was no clear relationship between local actions and the central structure to deliver national priorities. Additionally, there was no promise regarding the UK overseas territories in the NEWP. Defra did not formally reply to these investigation outcomes (ibid.).

For some other issues, for instance, the committee pointed out that there was no clear action plans to achieve the commitment in the NEWP. Defra replied that the NEWP was a version for the next 50 years. To reaching the final promise, there should be a long-term and collaborative process. It was not for government to implement micro-management, and to tell who should do



what and when. It was about the partners and locals choosing what they could offer. Defra further listed where they had put their efforts, including selecting priority areas and setting monitoring progress. Besides, the committee suggested Defra set clear objectives for the LNPs and NIAs, in terms of guiding their performance. However, Defra emphasised their voluntary roles, stating that they could have their own objectives and priorities. Defra was only responsible for studying how these different areas had fulfilled their LNP roles.

Furthermore, according to the description of the committee, the ideas of the NEWP had received wide support, including the project leader of TEEB, the farming sector and industrial organisations. Only a small number of commentators were not satisfied with the NEA and the NEWP's attempts to price everything.

From the result, one observed that Defra has taken some of the suggestions from Barry Gardiner as he talked in the House of Commons. Nonetheless, it did not adopt some of the other advice, including the participation of the Treasury and Cabinet Office. Therefore, there were no new actors being introduced to the subsystem politics, to significantly affect the pattern. Moreover, despite several NGOs raising some vital weaknesses of the NEWP in their written evidence relating to the global 2020 biodiversity goals, the committee could not cover all these points in their final suggestions and questions to Defra. Additionally, facing these questions raised by the Committee, Defra focused on explain the rationality of their choices. Therefore, in conclusion, the whole process has been maintained within the status quo.

#### Biodiversity Conservation in Overseas Territories

The sustainability of the OTs was an investigation subject within the Environment Audit Committee. The inquiry had re-emphasised the legal responsibility of the UK government to exercise hard or soft power in protecting biodiversity in the OTs. In general, the government showed they were going to keep the status quo on most of these recommendations. Only on few points, Defra explained that they were already in action.

One noticed that there had been points directly linked to the CBD and the ABTs. Firstly, the Committee required the FCO to immediately extend the ratification of the CBD to all the inhabited and uninhabited OTs (Environment Audit Committee, 2014a). However, Defra expressed that they cared more whether this movement could be meaningful for the inhabited territories. Some of them were still too ill-equipped to realise the task (Environment Audit Committee, 2014b). For the uninhabited OTs, only for SGSSI did Defra agree it would be a right time to consider the extension. Others, in Defra's explanation, were still controversial for reasons such as the different views on the status of sovereignty and future resettlement policy. Secondly, it was not a suggestion but a conclusion made by the committee, that establishing new MPAs

around the Pitcairn Islands, Tristan da Cunha and SGSSI could significantly contribute to the Aichi Target 11 (ibid.).

Besides, there were other suggestions by the committee which could be regarded as establishing learning mechanisms to enhance coherence. For example, it asked Defra to send officers to the islands to communicate with local civil servants and transmit understanding of environment issues in person. However, in Defra's opinion, despite being willing to, it was a consideration of the cost effectiveness regarding use of taxpayers' money that prevented this. As the results of the government's decision to tackle public spending, they had faced budget cuts. Moreover, in the past, officers from Defra and JNCC had travelled to some of these islands and attended specific meetings, which they believed had enabled a stronger cooperation relationship.

In summary, the committee had urged Defra to take more actions on biodiversity conservation in the OTs. On the establishment of the MPAs, Defra and the committee reached a consensus. Nonetheless, regarding other issues, Defra explained diverse reasons why they could not follow the advice. Moreover, with the response from Defra, most of the suggested points have been concluded. There was no further discussion in the committee. It was still a status quo situation.

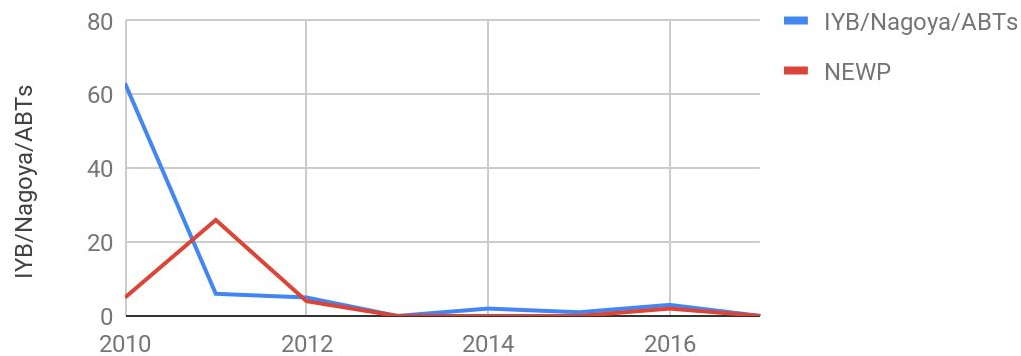
### **5.2.3 Issue Attention in Media**

Punctuated equilibrium theory has illustrated the role of public images in conflict expansion. Usually, the latter followed a blunt reversal of the former. To expand the struggle, "losers" in a policy process would look for converting the inattentive public to attentive ones (Douglas, 1990). In this research, one noticed that the new international biodiversity goals and the government's strategy, namely, the NEWP had both got attention from the media, but mainly from newspapers like the Guardian. Moreover, despite there being critical views, one did not observe that this u-turn occurred in the process. It might be further explained as there was no new forces, such as interest groups or parties, being attracted by the issue areas and preparing to make changes.

The research has checked relevant articles in the Guardian, the Independent, Daily Mail and the Telegraph. The Guardian showed the most attention on the topic among the four newspapers, which had a series of articles with respect to the international year of biodiversity, CBD COPs, ABTs and UK biodiversity policies. The statistical chart below (Figure 5.4) illustrates the frequency of each year that Guardian articles mentioned the International year of biodiversity, the Nagoya Meeting, the ABTs or the NEWP. For the former, 2010 was the peak: over 60 articles gave focus to the topic. After that, each year only had sporadic data. For the NEWP, after its publishing and also the peak year, 2011, the topic became relatively quiet. However, there were other articles taking a further look of the ideas in the NEWP such as natural capital and biodiversity offsetting which did not count. Besides, the Independent also had several articles about the Nagoya meetings and mentioned ABTs whilst the Telegraph reported the Nagoya

Meeting. For the Daily Mail, it only found a report regarding the CBD COP 11, with its main focus on the ideas of putting a price on nature.

### The Guardian



*Figure 5.4: The frequency of the international biodiversity goals and the NEWP in the Guardian*

Furthermore, the research has followed the journalistic articles in the Guardian to check what exact problems had been framed there. It noticed that there were articles expressing disappointment on the former CBD goals among analysis of issues surrounding implementation and the new goals. For example, George Monbiot pointed out the vital role of measures on the national level. In his opinion, international measures would not be truly effective and it could distract national governments' faults and responsibilities. For the new goals, he further suggested that more concrete and specific actions within a limited period of time should be encouraged, instead of a vague international declaration (Guardian, 2010d; Guardian, 2010e). Besides, since the targets were all about aspiration and a flexible framework, governments were free to choose what they wanted to do. They can easily accept these non-targets, because there would not be a significant cost to themselves, both on an economic and political context. Eventually, the essential issue of the international biodiversity targets was a lack of political will. In political debates, similar opinions in terms of the failure of the former goals and a lack of political will had been raised by MPs as well. However, they had never been a focus in the debate, which were only simply mentioned. Moreover, from the report of the Guardian, a lack of optimism for success at the beginning of the COP 10 due to non-existent public concern, gloomy former grades and divergence among countries, finally reached an impressive success (Guardian, 2010f). Nonetheless, reports in 2012 and 2014 further cited the research results, to illustrate that the countries had failed to act on promises and new global biodiversity targets would not be met by 2020 (Guardian, 2012; Guardian, 2014).

Besides, there were also other articles that noticed that natural capital had been a hot topic in Nagoya. In this regard, the author expressed a wait-and-see attitude (Guardian, 2010g). If this

attitude is done negatively, eco-financing might further tear apart nature. If it is done positively, it might realise a resetting in human values and even transform capitalism. However, there were also articles from the Guardian holding an antagonistic opinion, with titles, for example, “No, Greens must not cosy up to capitalism. They must resist it”, “Put a price on nature? We must stop this neoliberal road to ruin” and “What’s wrong for putting a price on nature”. The Telegraph, on the other hand, when reporting on the Nagoya Summit, used the headline “World must start putting a value on nature”. Furthermore, it seemed that on this issue, both the Conservative Party and the Labour Party supported the promotion of natural capital. For the former, the ideas in the NEWP was clear. For the latter, Barry Gardiner as the most significant politician in the backing of this concept was from Labour. This might help to explain why even though the issues were still controversial, there was no conflict on these points in political debate.

For the NEWP, articles in the Guardian had introduced its attempt to involve big society and to develop a green economy. On the other hand, the Guardian also collected negative criticisms. For example, it pointed out that the NEWP still had a lack of concern regarding the specific target issue, biodiversity loss. Furthermore, some NGOs remarked that there was no need to “reinvent the wheel”, therefore Defra should support and invest in a “big society” which had already existed for better conservation. Similarly, a journalist expressed dissatisfaction on the process of publishing the NEWP, which he viewed as a lack of transparency to the press (Guardian, 2011c). He further attacked that despite these commitments looking fine, the real meaning of the NEWP might be the removal of public nature conservation, i.e. selling off anything possible and encouraging no new protection legislation. Compared with what had been discussed in Parliament, one did not observe politicians, especially from the opposition party using these opinions to protest against the NEWP. However, as introduced before, on the issue of privatisation of public forest estate, the Labour Party had adopted some of these views against the Conservative Party. This might be further explained as the NEWP was an incremental plan with everything under consideration, especially for the interests of actors in subsystems. Conversely, privatisation of public forest estate was an abrupt shift, which immediately and significantly influenced these actors. The Labour Party, as a “loser” in the general election, took this chance to challenge the governance ability of the Conservative Party.

### **5.3 Policy Change**

The research found that there has been no major policy change in the UK. Notwithstanding, minor changes have been observed, such as the launch of the NEWP, the promotion of natural capital accounting and the blue belt programme. Furthermore, the evidence collected in the study of the process did not show there was a collapse of policy monopolies in subsystem politics or an essential shift of the policy-making stakeholders. Nor was there any influential biodiversity

conservation bill passed in the UK parliament. However, one observed several relevant passed bills in the Scottish Parliament and some of the OTs.

### **Passed Bills in the UK Parliament**

In the UK Parliament, there was no such finding. It noticed a Planning (Green Belt Protection) Bill, which was sponsored by Bob Stewart as a Private Members' Bill, intended to increase the powers of local authorities in relation to unauthorised development of green belts in 2011. However, after the first reading, it was withdrawn (Parliament.UK, 2011). A National Planning Policy Framework (Community Involvement) Bill in 2014, as advocated by Greg Mulholland was to help the locals achieve their own ambitions instead of leaving developers to continually "cherry-pick" greenfield sites (Parliament.UK, 2014a). Before the end of the session, the bill had not completed its passage through Parliament, it only stayed in the first reading, hence, it failed (Parliament.UK, 2014b). A Bat Habitats Regulation Bill in 2015 intended to enhance the condition of bat habitat protection. It also faced a prorogue in Parliament at the end of the year, therefore, making no further process, with it ending at the second reading (Parliament.UK, 2015a). Furthermore, Mr Christopher Chope as the sponsor of the bill lead two other turns in 2015 and 2016. The first started from the House of Lords and a second turn started from the House of Commons in 2016. They both did not finish their stage (Parliament.UK, 2016a; Parliament.UK, 2016b; Parliament.UK, 2017a). A Nature Bill in 2015 lead by Sir John Randall aimed to set biodiversity targets for 2040, to establish NCC, to identify endangered species, and to require local authorities to maintain local ecological network strategies, for example. It did not finish the passage, ending at the first reading, i.e. it failed (Parliament, 2015b). The bill also started from the House of Lords in 2015, which finally stayed at the first reading (Parliament.UK, 2016c). Moreover, a Local Authority Roads (Wildlife Protection) Bill and a UK Environmental Protection (Maintenance of EU Standards) Bill in 2016 also hardly made any progress in the House (Parliament.UK, 2017b; Parliament.UK, 2017c).

In sum, these bills had never got enough attention in the UK Parliament. The research noticed that there was no Government Bill. These ones mentioned above were all Private Members' Bills, which means they were public bills but introduced by MPs and Lords who are not government ministers. Unlike Government Bills, normally, this type of bill is deemed very unlikely to proceed through all the stages (Parliament.UK, 2018n).

### **Passed Bills in the Scottish Parliament**

In Scotland, the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill was passed to become an act in 2011. The bill made several amendments on former Acts (Scottish Parliament, 2010). It removed the the definition of "game bird" in Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. In that case, these birds were under the same protection terms as other wild birds. It repealed section 3 of the 1981 Act,

which enabled Scottish Ministers to state special protected areas for birds. Moreover, in section 17, it enhanced the control of non-native species, for example. The bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament in June 2010, namely, four months before the Nagoya Meeting. Its first stage debate took place in December 2010, just after the CBD COP 10. Second stage and third stage were in the first quarter of 2011. However, it cannot find direct evidence to illustrate that the ABTs had any influence on the decisions.

The Aquaculture and Fisheries Bill became an act in 2013. The purpose as introduced was to increase effectiveness in managing farmed and wild fisheries, helping sustainable economic growth with due regard to the wilder marine environment (Scottish Parliament, 2012). The bill enhanced several aspects in terms of more sustainable fish farming, such as the exercise of new investigation powers and improving technical equipment. Comparing the ideas in the bill with the Scottish NBSAP, 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity, one found evidence of coherence, as the NBSAP emphasised how these environment actions would contribute to the three Scottish national goals, and one of them was developing sustainable economics. However, by checking the records of debates during the passage of the law, one cannot find any direct influence of the ABTs.

### **Passed Bills in the Overseas Territories**

In the OTs, there were a series of bills being passed to enhance local biodiversity conservation. For example, in the Cayman Islands, these include the Marine Conservation (Amendment) Bill (2013), the National Conservation Bill (2013), the Animals (Amendment) Bill (2014) and the Endangered Species (Trade and Transport) (Amendment) Bill (2015). Among these, one noticed that the National Conservation Bill, 2013, had especially matched the spirit of the ABTs which had a broad cover. The bill emphasised that it was to secure and promote biodiversity conservation, whilst maintaining sustainable use of natural resources in the Islands. It aimed to protect endangered species and their habitats, to provide for protected terrestrial, wetland and marine areas, to improve effectiveness in managing these issues, and to contribute to the CBD, the CMS, the Ramsar Convention and the UNFCCC. In Bermuda, new laws which became effective were the Protected Species Amendment Act in 2014, the Protection of Bird Amendment Act in 2015, the Bermuda National Parks Amendment Act in 2017 and the Bermuda National Parks Amendment (No.2) Act in 2017. Another example was in SGSSI. As there was no permanent population and therefore, no elected parliament, the UK government made laws and directly applied them to the islands. The Wildlife and Protected Areas Ordinance was made in 2011, followed by the Marine Protected Areas Order 2012, the Marine Protected Areas Order 2013, and the Wildlife and Protected Areas (Amendment) Ordinance 2013.

The results have reflected static political conditions, especially in UK Parliament with respect to biodiversity conservation. For the conditions in the OTs, there was a focus in terms of how the

UK politicians decided in Parliament to assist these OTs. However, it is important to study their own politics as well to explain these changes in the OTs, which this research has not done.

## 5.4 Hypotheses Analysis

### 5.5.1 Hypothesis 1

*If the Aichi Biodiversity Targets relevant forums (conferences/ workshops) have attracted high-level participation from the United Kingdom, then it can generate positive feedback in the UK political system.*

The research has found that the first hypothesis cannot be fully proved. High-level participation indicated the expectation that national political leaders and policy-makers from other departments (except environment) can appear personally. However, the ABTs relevant forums were not very successful to attract these actors.

Nevertheless, the CBD COP 10 was able to bring Caroline Spelman who was the head of Defra, a Cabinet Minister in the UK to the scene. One noticed that her participation did attract attention from the newspaper articles. She had been a focus in public opinion venues. The media gave specific stress on what Spelman said in the Nagoya Meeting, regarding the NEWP as her policy. The media followed and criticised her comments in 2011 and reiterated again what she had promised. For example, the reports highlighted that Spelman had been praised internationally for her efforts in contributing to UN biodiversity goals. Environmentalists rejoiced in her upcoming NEWP. In addition, she faced new challenges and questions pointed out by a journalist, including budget cuts, forestry sell-offs and environmentally friendly farming, for example. Besides, in UK politics, Spelman was active on relevant topics. There were statements written by her which could be regarded as a knowledge exchange between the international forums and UK politics, and a further move to policy changes. For instance, she introduced to the Parliament what agreement had been reached in the Nagoya biodiversity summit \. On the other hand, through her own speech, what ideas she had also brought to the summit, including the new forestry fundings, fundings for Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and support for TEEB. In the end, Spelman emphasised that all 193 parties needed to form new strategic framework. For England, the key elements would be included in the NEWP (House of Commons, 2010a). Additionally, she had constantly attended debates in House of Commons, linking the scope of Nagoya summit, to introduce and defend the ideas in the white paper (see: House of Commons, 2010g; House of Commons, 2010h; House of Commons, 2011b).

Another finding was Barry Gardiner MP. Though he was not a high-level officer in the UK, he could be regarded as a policy entrepreneur. Gardiner had participated in the CBD COP 10 as a

member of the EU delegation. He also used to be the minister for biodiversity in Defra during 2006 to 2007, and in 2010, he was in the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs committee (Parliament.UK, 2018o). As illustrated in the section 5.2.1, he had an impressive speech in the House of Commons just before the Nagoya meeting, which successfully linked the future achievement of biodiversity conservation and the role of natural capital accounting. The latter had become a popular concept in the UK politics in the last decade. The NCC was established from 2012 to advise government on natural capital such as forests and oceans (GOV.UK, 2018e). Press talked about this concept, with journalists in the Guardian particularly questioning and criticising it. Even newspapers such as the Daily Mail, which in general did not concern itself that much on biodiversity policies, did show interest on this concept. Besides, it further noticed that Gardiner was active not only in Defra-based discussions in the Chamber, but also attended meetings such as business of the house, and the ones held by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local government and the DECC, for example (see: House of Commons, 2010i; House of Commons, 2010j; House of Commons, 2013; House of Commons, 2015). He had slightly brought the ABTs and biodiversity concern to these policy venues.

The UK delegation in the Nagoya summit also contained officers from DFID. However, no evidence suggested that they were high-level in UK politics. Spelman in her statement did not specifically refer to any of them. Nor did newspaper articles or any spokesman from DFID give significant biodiversity relevant opinions in the House. In the International Development Committee, the ABTs relevant topics such as conservation in the OTs had never become investigating targets. Whilst, biodiversity conservation in the OTs, especially part of the Aichi Target 11, namely to establish marine protected areas were certainly a concern of the Environment Audit Committee and discussed in both Chambers, Defra was still the only one who represented the UK government in these discussions in the House of Commons.

The research has observed that with the head of Defra participating at the high-level Nagoya summit, it did help Spelman's team to promote their new policies. However, it might only be regarded as minor changes. On the contrary, major changes or positive feedbacks required a dramatic shift such as the collapse of the policy monopolies. Without any high level or other departments being interested about the biodiversity summit, or any new participants, it was unlikely to happen. As policy-makers, Defra in this issue area was dominant. The Strategic Goal A had stressed to mainstream biodiversity concerns across the government and society. In the UK, there was also appeal in the investigation on the NEWP, which had suggested the highest attention across the whole government on the NEWP; the collaboration between HM Treasury and Defra in dealing with the issue of the value of nature, and the Cabinet Office's responsibility in terms of ensuring that all government policy and legislation are consistent with the aspiration to fully reflect natural capital value in policy decisions, for example. Despite these, the move Defra had taken was to deny either the HM Treasury or the Cabinet Office had these



responsibilities. In Defra's operation, mainstreaming was to ensure environment analyses had been used across all departments. The HM Treasury or the Cabinet Office, in this regard, was to make sure they had followed the principles and approaches set out in the NEWP.

### 5.5.2 Hypothesis 2

*If the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and its implementations do not have high social legitimacy in the United Kingdom, then the policy reforms towards the goals cannot be promoted.*

The second hypothesis was supported by several phenomena. The most significant one was the reform on agriculture incentives. The public demands in the UK, more accurately the special interest group, farmers' demands were at risk of being violated by a wave of policy operations. The EU 2020 biodiversity targets had legalised itself with the ABTs and shifted the voluntary international goals to more coercive policy instruments on a supranational level, which offended the farmers and encountered the resistance from the politicians in the UK. Politicians were in line against the significant implementing power in the CAP by the EU. They criticised the one size fits all policy on the EU level, pointing out the potential damage to the economy and the safety of food production. They deemed that the international governance operating in the EU's way could not effectively manage agricultural policy and subsidies, which should have been largely dealt with nationally with more flexibility. Furthermore, there were voices from environmental NGOs and the Guardian, appealing for the urgent need of greening and reflecting on the hegemonic phenomenon of the NFU. Despite these, the politicians' main focus was hardly there. They joined to fight for the largest right for the UK from the EU in the CAP reform. On the aspect of delivering environmental benefits, the MPs usually responded in this way that compared with the other EU countries, the UK farmers certainly had done better in conservation. The current phase of the CAP ended up giving a large leeway to the national governments.

The second phenomenon was the privatisation of public forest estate. The idea to protect woodland through transfer of ownership was not part of the ABTs. However, the Conservative government took this step as to realise long-lasting protection, big society concern and to encourage local rights in conservation. These more profound ideas in reform could be found in their NEWP. Nonetheless, the public did not understand the government's decision, expressing their worries and confusion. The Labour Party, on the side, took advantage of the populism, fanning the flame, to attack the policy of the Conservatives and to question their real intentions. The storm did not last long, ended as the Prime Minister criticised it and Spelman announced to abandon the policy.

The two phenomena mentioned above could be both illustrated through the lens of punctuated equilibrium theory. The MPs in the UK once united to pit against the EU's intervention in bringing significant policy reform. They had been pushed and also been supported in this way by

the monopoly in the subsystem, namely, the farmers group. In political debating, the policy images were mainly maintained as there were numerous potential damages under the EU's mandatory policy, and if the UK government could be more autonomous, there would be a win-win situation on sustainability and food production. Despite there being media criticising the NFU being selfish and reinvesting nothing on environment conservation, it just strengthened their old portrait. In the end, the UK politicians beat the external factor, maintained status quo. In another case, borrowing the successful contouring of the policy images on risks of privatisation, the Labour Party won in its resistance with the new endeavour and the ideology of the Conservative Party's policy.

Besides, the research found that the former grade of the global biodiversity targets would influence the policy images of the ABTs in media and in political debates. Because the previous results were way from satisfactory, the media talked about it and expressed that they were not in confidence of the new one. They even announced early that the ABTs was going to fail again. However, in political debate, the breakdown of the former ones stimulated politicians to announce that they did not want the tragedy to happen again. Nonetheless, it also got the information from the Natural History Museum survey that the majority of the public were indifferent of the international biodiversity targets and the CBD summit after all.

There was also an opposite illustration. Despite offending Chago Islanders' interests, the Chagos marine protected areas were successfully established. Besides, more protected areas were also created around other OTs. The Aichi Target 11, especially the marine protected area part, was mentioned repeatedly in political debate. In fact, it was almost the only specific Aichi Target that the politicians directly emphasised. The Chago's case might be explained as those islanders were not represented by any politicians in the UK political system. Instead of having any significant roles in the subsystems, they were the marginal group. Moreover, the sovereignty of the islands was still a controversial topic between the UK and Mauritius. Additionally, the UK had also rented the place to the US for their air base. By taking this step as establishing MPAs, the UK might have considered these political factors.

### 5.5.3 Hypothesis 3

*If there are efforts to promote the coherence of the 2020 Biodiversity Targets on different levels within the UK, then it can generate positive feedback for biodiversity policy reform in the UK.*

For the third hypothesis, various efforts in terms of promoting coherence of the 2020 biodiversity targets on different levels were placed. However, the consecutive positive feedbacks to promote major policy change were not significant. Notwithstanding, there was still a positive illustration. TEEB had helped to exchange the ideas between the CDB and the UK government, and promoted the policy process in the UK. As mentioned in early section, one noticed that TEEB

communicated frequently with the CBD as a partner and a pioneer in its economics, trade and incentive programme. Their mutual learning process started earlier before 2010. In the UK, it also closely collaborated with Defra and other academic experts. The NEWP, as a milestone on UK natural policy were based on the study results of TEEB. Natural capital which was a major study subject of TEEB, successfully became popular in UK political discourse and policy implementation. Despite these, it was also pretty clear that this liaison between international and the UK politics was solid, but merely included the original policy-making stakeholders in subsystem in the UK.

In another situation, one observed that the coherence mechanism might strengthen the old order in the policy subsystem, forbidding any positive feedback for policy changes to be created. Taking the example of the linkage between farmers groups and the government, the member of the NFU had been invited to the UK Biodiversity Partnership Conference in November 2010, whose theme was the UK's response to the new international and EU biodiversity targets. Furthermore, in the industrial lead partnership, the CFE (Defra and NFU are its members), Biodiversity 2020 had also been literally set as a campaign theme. However, as mentioned, the CAP reform which came from the EU, primarily containing the ambition of greening, which totally deviated from its original purpose under the lobby of the NFU with its counterparts in other European countries, according to the Guardian's observation (2013). The politicians in the UK were on the farmers' side. The results of the mutual learning process between the UK government and the farmers seemed to create a solid union in the policy subsystem against external influences. On the other hand, the results of the mutual learning process between the EU, the national government and the farmers was the withdrawal of the outsider from the subsystem.

Besides, as illustrated in section 5.1.3, one has assumed that efforts on the national level to promote coherence of the UK 2020 Biodiversity Targets has been influenced by the ABTs.

## **5.5 Summary**

The first section in this chapter illuminated some positive sides of the ABTs and its implementation in the UK. For instance, it had attracted universe participants and the highest attention from Defra. On multiple levels, 2020 biodiversity strategies were established and generally kept in line with the ABTs. Besides, mutual learning mechanisms to promote coherence were observed. Whilst, negative sides were also exposed, including the head of state or the policymakers in other departments had a general lack of concern, the poor grade of the former goals, and the setbacks in implementation in terms of meeting the demands of the public, for example. These straightforward distinctions on two hands derived from the theoretical background of the governing through goals, which had hypothesised certain ideal situations.

In the following sections, one took an insight into what had happened in the UK politics in relation to the ABTs and its implementation of relevant topics, and what policy changes had exactly occurred. One found that the Nagoya summit, the new international biodiversity goals as well as its corresponding strategy in the UK, the NEWP and controversial issues such as the CAP, marine protected areas around the OTs, public forest estate privatisation had all become discussion or investigation topics. The press had their perspectives on these issues as well. Besides, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee and the Environment Audit Committee were the main venues where the affairs had been scrutinised in depth. In the two Houses, international goals were also stressed by MPs or Lords. In terms of the final policy changes, in England, there was no passed bills specifically for enhancing biodiversity conservation. Whilst, in Scotland and the OTs, the relevant new laws were observed. Meanwhile

At last, the three hypotheses replied to the main research question:

*Under what conditions have the ABTs influenced policy change in a UK context?*

They explored whether some of those merits as presented in the first section, had actually facilitated policy changes. Conversely, whether some of those defects were the reasons in blocking significant advance. In the first section, it was clear that the ABTs and its implementations had both positive and negative sides. In general, neither of the two had overwhelmed another. In the last section, it was also clear that no major policy change had happened. Only limited policy tools had been used. For the process, the punctuated equilibrium theory provided an analytical lens to explain the inertia. It observed that the subsystem politics were ascendent in the policy process under the influence of the ABTs. The Nagoya Summit had successfully attracted the head of Defra, instead of any other higher level bureaucracy or important participants from other departments. Therefore, there was no new players to challenge the rules. Defra was able to promote their new policies in an incremental fashion. Despite the ideas and appeals on mainstreaming biodiversity issues across whole sectors being in the ABTs and also suggestions during the implementation of the NEWP, Defra handled it in a way that environment assessment would be done across the whole government, and they were still the only main body in charge. Besides, for other liaisons from the international level to the national level, for example, the one involving TEEB, if looked closely, it would find that on national level, it directly fell into the subsystem politics, with all those familiar experts around. In addition, the intervention of the EU, namely the reform on the CAP could have been a good chance to lead to a major policy change. However, despite authorisation by the international goals and the EU, the CAP reform faced difficulty in terms of legitimacy, namely, meeting the demands of the special interest group. A solid union was established in the policy subsystem against this external influence. Ideally, through mutual learning mechanisms to promote

coherence, according to Bernstein (2017), it could help to improve the “systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policies” (ibid., 218). The research found the mechanisms in this case failed to realise this function.

In other respects, public images were also an important role in punctuated equilibrium theory. In this research, one noticed that different media in the UK had different degrees of concern on the ABTs and their relevant implementation. Some of them only had one or two articles mentioning it. The Guardian was the one among the four samples which had consistently focused on the issues. The failings of the former targets, the policy advices on the new ones, the criticisms on the Defra’s new strategy and on the NFU, for example, were all part of the articles. However, it was limited by its specific audience. Besides, there was no abrupt reversal of public images to help enlarge any conflict.

Besides, among all the 20 ABTs, only part of target 11, establishing MPAs has been specifically stressed in debates or inquiries in Parliament. Other targets have hardly been mentioned to support policy processes, despite those targeting problems existing.

In sum, the merits in the ABTs and its relevant implementation in the UK were not enough to promote a major policy change. On the other hand, the defects of the implementation, such as the failure in meeting the demands of the public and the incompleteness of coherence mechanisms, had helped to block the advance in policy change.

## Chapter 6 Discussion

### 6.1 Theory Discussion on Governing through Goals

Governing through goals is a newly studied subject. As introduced in the second chapter, scholars have given several initial views on, for example, what could contribute to its effectiveness as a non-legally binding global governance instrument. Through this research, some of these prospects have been supported. On the other hand, there were also questions to be raised. According to the theory of governing through goals, the three hypotheses assumed certain conditions which should influence the success of the ABTs. Meanwhile, combined with punctuated equilibrium theory, one believed that these expected conditions in the lens of goal-setting theory should also lead to positive changes in UK politics. High-level participation from the UK and the establishment of coherence mechanisms were recognised as positive conditions. Whilst, a lack of high social legitimacy was a negative one. From the result, it was illustrated that the CBD summits have not attracted highest level participation and there were issues regarding the implementation of the ABTs in terms of meeting the demands of the public. However, there were coherence mechanisms being established. The punctuated equilibrium theory further help to interpret the dynamics in UK politics lead by these conditions. Therefore, combining the two theories, one has given the following reflections.

Firstly, Bernstein (2017) stressed the role of coherence in global governance, which expected a “systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policies” (ibid., 218). However, the process on the reform of the CAP illustrated that this assumption faced difficulties in reality. The attempt on the CAP reform at the EU level were under the new 2020 biodiversity vision, which expected that through the reform, it could enhance coherence between the objective of biodiversity conservation and other policies. However, it encountered resistance on the national level. Mutual learning or communication mechanisms which should have contributed to the coherence, existed between the EU and the UK government, the EU and the farmers groups, and the UK government and the farmers groups. Despite these, the process analysis through the lens of punctuated equilibrium theory illustrated that it was more a triumph for actors in subsystem politics in the UK, instead of the EU’s planning being effectively promoted. Besides, there have been similar views in the development of punctuated equilibrium theory, which criticised the theory of incrementalism as being overly political in nature and because of those sub-optimum choices, the incremental tenets could only reinforce the status quo (Howlett & Migone, 2011). Moreover, Bernstein has conceived and carefully distinguished the different functions of the developed mechanisms to promote coherence, including the ones for monitoring the impact of overlapping policies, addressing the conflicts and coordinating, for example. In reality, these means or mechanisms were missing. Furthermore, there was no third party, other than the

government in all these judgements. Nonetheless, for the reason of the failure, there were also defects of the CAP reform itself, which are to be blamed. It turned the international goals into a mandatory rule at supranational level, which the UK politicians depicted as an inappropriate one size fit all policy.

On other points, Bernstein stressed that legitimacy would be fundamental in terms of a lead institution successfully conducting orchestration, and to be legitimate and effective, governance must be cautious on dealing with some sensitive issues. The research supported this view. By attracting multiple agencies across the UN system and the major biodiversity-related conventions, the Nagoya summit also successfully drew attention from Defra as the representative of the UK government. On the other hand, because the implementation related to the ABTs, namely, the CAP reform, had offended the interests of farmers, its promotion was not capable. However, there was also a counterexample. Despite establishing marine protected areas around the Chago islands damaging the interests of the expelled indigenous islanders, they were still set up. This might be explained as those islanders were a marginal group. Their interests were hardly represented by any agent. Besides, starting from the self-beneficial, the UK might have other political considerations. As mentioned in the second chapter, Gupta & Nilsson (2017) remarked that the countries choosing to globalise some issues might do so due to a series of political reasons. The phenomenon here also reasonably meets this observation. On the issue of establishing marine protected areas, it was almost the only situation where in UK politics, part of the Aichi Target 11, namely, building marine protected areas, as a global issue and a global goal, was directly and repeatedly mentioned. On other significant existing issues, such as greening agriculture, no relevant Aichi Target was referred.

For the suggestion regarding the high-level participation or participants from other sectors rather than environment, the ABTs relevant meetings were not successful in meeting this expectation. Caroline Spelman, as the head of Defra was the highest level officer from the UK who participated to the Nagaya Summit. The study on what has happened in UK politics further illustrated how Spelman took this international event as a chance to promote policy of her team. On the other hand, there was no other department interested about this issue area or prepared to take part in it, limiting any significant influence. Furthermore, through the lens of punctuated equilibrium theory, the research likewise assumed that these suggestions, which encouraged the highest level and cross-sector participation, would contribute to positive changes since it could bring new actors into the policy subsystem and attract public attention. It might further cause conflicts expansion, leading to a major policy change.

Besides, Kanie et al. (2017) distinguished three different types of international goals. The first was purely for aspiration to attract followers who had the same ambitions. The other two referred to the situations where there were formal institutions attached to the goals sooner or later after

the targets being established. The ABTs were close the last two. It was not the first time that the CBD launched ten-year goals. Therefore, several programmes under the CBD were in progress and the ABTs were merged in. In addition, the UK government had somewhat similar aspiration as the ABTs. As when the Conservative Party became the incumbent ruling party in 2010, being “the greenest government ever” was their eye-catching manifesto (Guardian, 2010i). Moreover, Underdal & Kim (2017) pointed out the issue as with the establishing of the new goals, institutions might still be stuck in their old agendas. The research found that the use of the NBSAP helped to improve the situation. The interview of the officer in SNH illuminated how they considered the ABTs and incorporated it into the major development plan of the Scotland. However, as illustrated before, the NEWP was the actual framework which the UK government’s work was based on. Comparing with the ABTs and the NEWP, the latter was indeed more profound and concrete, but not in direct correspondence with the ABTs. It might be an original agenda of the UK government, with or without the ABTs. Despite the government indicating that the NEWP was the early response to the new international goals, to what extent the NEWP had considered the ABTs was uncertain. They may just be coincidences in time. Nonetheless, there was still a positive evidence. TEEB had long been a partner of the CBD programmes with experts from the UK. The NEWP was based on their study results. Furthermore, natural capital or the green economy, which were the main working areas of TEEB, became one of the most significant program for implementation in the UK, covering a wide range of other biodiversity topics. However, this meant that other issues in the ABTs may have been ignored.

## **6.2 Reflection & Limitation**

This research has adopted process tracing, more accurate theory-testing process tracing as its methodology. With the help of the existing theoretical background, namely, governing through goals and punctuated equilibrium theory, the task of the research was through a processual analysis of history, to examine the potential causal factors which were consistent with these existing theories within the study period. As suggested by the scholars, this approach potentially had some key issues. For example, Bennett & Checkel (2012) explained that the process is easily unconvincing if there were potential variables being neglected. Alternative explanations should always be given attention. Therefore, a good process tracing should cast the net widely and be equally tough on those alternative suggestions. In this research, there has been these worries. For example, one has noticed the change of incumbent ruling party in 2010 as a major factor. There were differences regarding political ideology between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. Moreover, before that, the UK also suffered a financial crisis which directly caused the cut of funding for the UK government and Defra. These might all be the reasons why Defra sought those profound changes in the NEWP, such as developing a green economy, natural capital accounting and a big society participation. The attempt to privatise public forestry estimate was a



good example, through which Defra might be able to save some public budget, despite declaring it as a way to better protect nature.

In fact, except for these two points, Bennett and Checkel have given ten points in total in terms of overcoming the weaknesses of the process tracing approach. On the third point, they suggested that a two-step analysis was necessary, which was due to the consideration that the given evidence by the agents might have instrumental motives to convince observers that those explanations were more important. Therefore, according to Bennett & Checkel, it was to check “given A’s possible motives, how much should I trust what he/she says? Given what he/she has said, what are A’s likely motives?” (ibid., 28). On this point, the secondary source also showed its importance as supplementary information. In this research, due to the time limits and the large amount of potentially relevant information in and around the past decade, one was only able to engage with governmental material, therefore double-checking the motives of the respondents was extremely difficult. In several situations, for example, the release of the NEWP or the CAP reform, the research has simply accepted the statements by the UK government officers or in the EU document, linking their generating processes or motivation with the Nagoya meeting or the ABTs. However, linking the point of alternative explanations, it was hard to judge whether the NEWP would still be created or how the CAP reform would be conducted without the COP 10 summit. Therefore, a deeper investigation and information collection regarding the history of the NEWP and the CAP would be preferable.

On the fourth point, Bennett & Checkel suggested being more patient when a theory failed to apply the most likely case or a theory successfully applied on a least likely case. In the research, this problem was not significant because the theory of governing through goals was in construction, a strong degree of causality have yet to be proven. On the fifth point, they remarked the importance in choosing and justifying a starting point for looking into the alternative explanations. Bennett & Checkel remarked that there was no fixed answer regarding which could be the selection of the point. The subject was always under discussion. Usually, a critical conjunction would be the proper one. Before 2010, hansards in UK Parliament and investigation documents in committees could not be checked online, which, therefore, restrained the choice of starting points in this investigation. Nonetheless, to retrieve the consideration of vital factors, the research has carefully examined the journalistic articles in the Guardian under the classification of biodiversity from 2007 to 2018.

On the sixth point, Bennett & Checkel suggested that to be ceaseless in terms of collecting diverse and relevant evidence, but also had a clear decision when to stop. Diverse and independent resources of evidence was preferable, but there was also consideration that those seemingly diverse resources might be originated from the similar instrumental reasons to convince observers on a specific explanation. For the decision on when to stop gathering

evidence, the authors illuminated that a persuasive logic was it was the time to stop when repetition started. This research has used the Hansards, reports by the committees in the UK Parliament, documents of the CBD, the UK government, email-exchanged information with officers from Bermuda, SGSSI and SNH, and journalistic articles. In some attempts to get detailed information from private sources, there were obstacles. For example, Bob Bloomfield who was the former public programme coordinator for the international year of biodiversity on behalf of UK Government, expressed that he could not provide information and suggested to inquire through Defra. The latter also could not help. Besides, some emails simply had no reply. For the NFU, most of their information is only available to be shared with their members. These situations limited the ability in terms of gathering more diverse and independent information.

On the seventh point, the authors suggested to combine the process tracing research with a case comparison study in order to achieve the research goal. This case comparison could be a direction for future study. For the eighth point, Bennett & Checkel remarked to also hold inductive insights, since the approach would provide many evidence in detail to help rethink former explanations. Through this research, one believes to have held this purpose, especially on reflecting back to the theory of governing through goals. On the ninth point, the author emphasised to clearly illustrate the process in the specific case. Since there was a massive amount of information and intricate storylines, this was a real challenge and something that is impossible to convey to its fullest extent. Finally, the tenth point remarked that a good process tracing research was no need to be conclusive.

### **6.3 Further Research**

The last section has mentioned several points that are limitations in this study. Further research should be expected to improve them. For example, it could be a deep interview with officers from Defra with respect to the generating process of the NEWP to see how it connected with the ABTs and how it connected with other political agendas in the UK. Due to a broader scope this research has set, these types of detailed information were lacking. Besides, as suggested by Bennett & Checkel, diverse and independent sources of information was always expected. Further research could also interview members from the NFU to find out how these farmers have linked with the 2020 biodiversity vision and how they connected with UK politicians, to reveal more facts with regard to the policy subsystem. For the connection of TEEB and the UK government, one also preferred to be clearer on details. Besides, considering the research goals, Bennett & Checkel has suggested to combine process tracing with a comparative cases study. For this research, its objective was to have an insight on the effectiveness of the ABTs and of the global goal-setting instruments. Therefore, further research could choose other countries to check policy processes under the influence of the ABTs in a like manner. Moreover, this research has focused on the three dimensions, namely, high-level participation, legitimacy and coherence,

which the scholars have noted in the study of governing through goals. Through this study, in section 6.1, it has mentioned that there was also observation that the UK seemed to globalise or nationalise some issues due to a series of political reasons, which was correspond to Gupta & Nilsson's view. However, one still needs further study on this assumption. Except for this, there were also diverse initial understandings regarding global goal-setting, as introduced in the second chapter, waiting for further examination.

## **Conclusion**

By taking an insight into the the ABTs and its implementation, one observed that the merits under the theoretical lens of governing through goals include, for example, its ability to attract universe participation. Similar merits include the NBSAPs of UK countries generally keeping in line with the ABTs and the establishment of mutual learning mechanisms to promote coherence. On the other hand, there were also defects which could potentially undermine the effectiveness of the ABTs. These include the poor grades of the former biodiversity global goals, the inability of the CBD COPs in bringing high level participation and the relevant implementation in meeting the demands of special interests groups.

Afterwards, to know the process, one focused upon the issue attention in different policy venues in UK politics. The findings illuminated that despite the topics regarding the Nagoya Summit or the ABTs entering into the two Chambers in Parliament, it did not successfully attract attention from the whole Parliament and across departments in government. Therefore, there were no significant conflicts occurring which, as explained in punctual equilibrium theory, could lead to an abrupt policy change. However, one still noticed several issues which were highlighted in the Houses such as the NEWP, natural capital and Aichi Target 11. A further examination of issue attention in committees illustrated how these issues have been raised and discussed in policy subsystems. According to punctuated equilibrium theory, often times policy subsystems imply policy monopolies, negative feedback and therefore, inertia to change. The phenomenon which this research found could be interpreted by this concept. Besides, the study also concerned issue attention in the media. As the theory suggested, conflict expansion which can lead to policy change usually followed a blunt reversal of public images. However, no such reversal happened. Moreover, except for the Guardian, the other three popular newspaper in the UK almost paid no attention on these new biodiversity global goals. The Guardian with its left-wing political standpoint has a specific audience, and therefore will not inform the wider population.

Finally, the research revealed that no major policy change has happened. Despite there being passed bills to enhance biodiversity conservation in the OTs, in the UK Parliament, there was none. Besides, the process also illustrated that there was no collapse of policy monopolies in subsystem politics or an essential shift of the policy-making stakeholders.

For the three hypotheses, they connected the role of the ABTs and its relevant implementation to the consequences in UK politics in order to resolve the research question. They have assumed that those merits of the former can help to generate positive feedback in the policy process. In contrast to this, the deficits would be the reason to reinforce the inertia to block policy change. The results proved that the defect, namely, the inability of the CAP reform in meeting the demands of the farmers' group did cause the phenomenon of an iron triangle in UK politics and therefore, new proposals were not promoted. Moreover, despite coherence mechanisms having been recognised as one merit in the implementation of the ABTs, one can conclude that they have an incomplete function. Bernstein assumed the coherence mechanism could help to systematically promote mutually reinforcing policies. However, the results suggested that the mutual learning process between the UK government and the farmers ended up creating a solid union in the policy subsystem against external influences. Moreover, the UK government had sent high level officials to the Nagoya Summit, namely, the head of Defra. Nonetheless, it did not reach the expectation as the theory of governing through goals suggested as the participation of the head of state or policy makers in other sectors were not present. Furthermore, one observed that Defra has successfully promoted some of their new strategies. However, the intervention of other departments were blocked.

Through this study, it has also reflected on the theory of governing through goals. For example, Bernstein's expectation on mutually reinforcing policies might have the same weak point of incrementalism, which was overly political in nature. Besides, there was also a finding that only Aichi Target 11, especially the establishment of MPAs has been stressed in UK politics. Others targets, despite having significant existing issues, have received no specific emphasis. This could be due to the qualitative nature of target 11 over the qualitative nature of the others. Overall, there are a significant amount of conditions that the ABTs have to overcome in order to inspire policy change. The current format of governing through goals therefore needs revision to incorporate the defective factors illuminated in this research. This reinforces the difficulty in attempting to connect international to national governance.

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