Regional Environmental Cooperation in the Southern Cone: Which Forms does it take and why?

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Abstract

The main objective of this thesis is to contribute to a better understanding of the forms that environmental cooperation takes in regions of the South and the processes determining these different forms. Environmental cooperation has been researched extensively in other contexts, notably in relation to global environmental regimes, but the regional dimension and regions in the South in particular, have received very little attention. This thesis provides an in-depth exploratory study comparing three cases of regional environmental cooperation in one region of the South, the Southern Cone of South America. Based on the findings from two extensive fieldwork periods which served to conduct over 50 interviews with policy-makers, civil society representatives and researchers in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay and to collect relevant documentation, the thesis argues that regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone takes place in three main forms; regional organisations; regional resource regimes; and the regional implementation of global environmental conventions. These vary in terms of the type of institutional framework and its political purpose; the scope of issues addressed; and the way the membership is determined. Regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone is promoted by different types of drivers from within the region, notably civil society organisations and networks of government officials, as well as drivers from outside the region, most importantly donors and international organisations. The variation in the forms of cooperation is thus determined not only by the position of national governments, but also by the objectives and strategies used by the different drivers. In addition, regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone is marked by low political will and takes a marginal position in particular in relation to economic interests. While different drivers have been crucial in shaping the different forms that regional environmental cooperation takes, the marginality of this is an outcome of the political and economic context and the development strategy adopted by governments. Consequently, during the research process it became clear that it is important to distinguish between differing levels of strength of regional environmental cooperation and the thesis has developed the concepts of robustness and marginality to this end. These theoretical tools provide an important basis for further research and comparisons on environmental cooperation in regions of the South.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature

Printed name: Karen Siegel

Abbreviations

Alba	*Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de nuestra América* (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CARU	*Comisión Administradora del Río Uruguay* (Administrative Commission of the Uruguay River)
CEFIR	*Centro de Formación para la Integración Regional* (Centre of Education for Regional Integration)
CIC	*Comité Intergubernamental Coordinador de los Países de la Cuenca del Plata* (Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee of the La Plata Basin Countries)
CLAES	*Centro Latinoamericano de Ecología Social* (Latin American Centre of Social Ecology)
CMC	*Consejo del Mercado Común* (Mercosur Common Market Council)
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
COMIP	*Comisión Mixta Paraguayo-Argentina del Río Paraná* (Paraguayan-Argentinean Joint Commission of the Paraná River)
CyMA	*Competitividad y Medio Ambiente* (Mercosur project Competitiveness and Environment)
EU	European Union
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
FARN	*Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* (Environment and Natural Resources Foundation)
FLACSO	*Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales* (Latin American Social Sciences Institute)
FONPLATA	*Fondo Financiero para el Desarrollo de la Cuenca del Plata* (Development Fund of the La Plata Basin)
GCFA	*Grupo de Conservación Flamencos Altoandinos* (High Andes Flamingo Conservation Group)
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GM	genetically-modified
GMC	*Grupo Mercado Común* (Mercosur Common Market Group)

GIZ	*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (German agency for international cooperation)
GTZ	*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* (German agency for technical cooperation)
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IIRSA	*Iniciativa para la Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Suramericana* (Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LATU	*Laboratorio Tecnológico del Uruguay* (Technological Laboratory of Uruguay)
Mercosur	*Mercado Común del Súr* (Common Market of the South)
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OAS	Organization of American States
REMA	*Reunión Especializada de Medio Ambiente* (Specialised Meeting on the Environment)
SGT	*Subgrupo de Trabajo* (Mercosur working subgroup)
SGT6	*Subgrupo de Trabajo 6 Medio Ambiente* (Mercosur working subgroup 6 on the environment)
Unasur	*Unión de Naciones Suramericanas* (Union of South American Nations)
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
US	United States (of America)

Chapter 1: Introduction

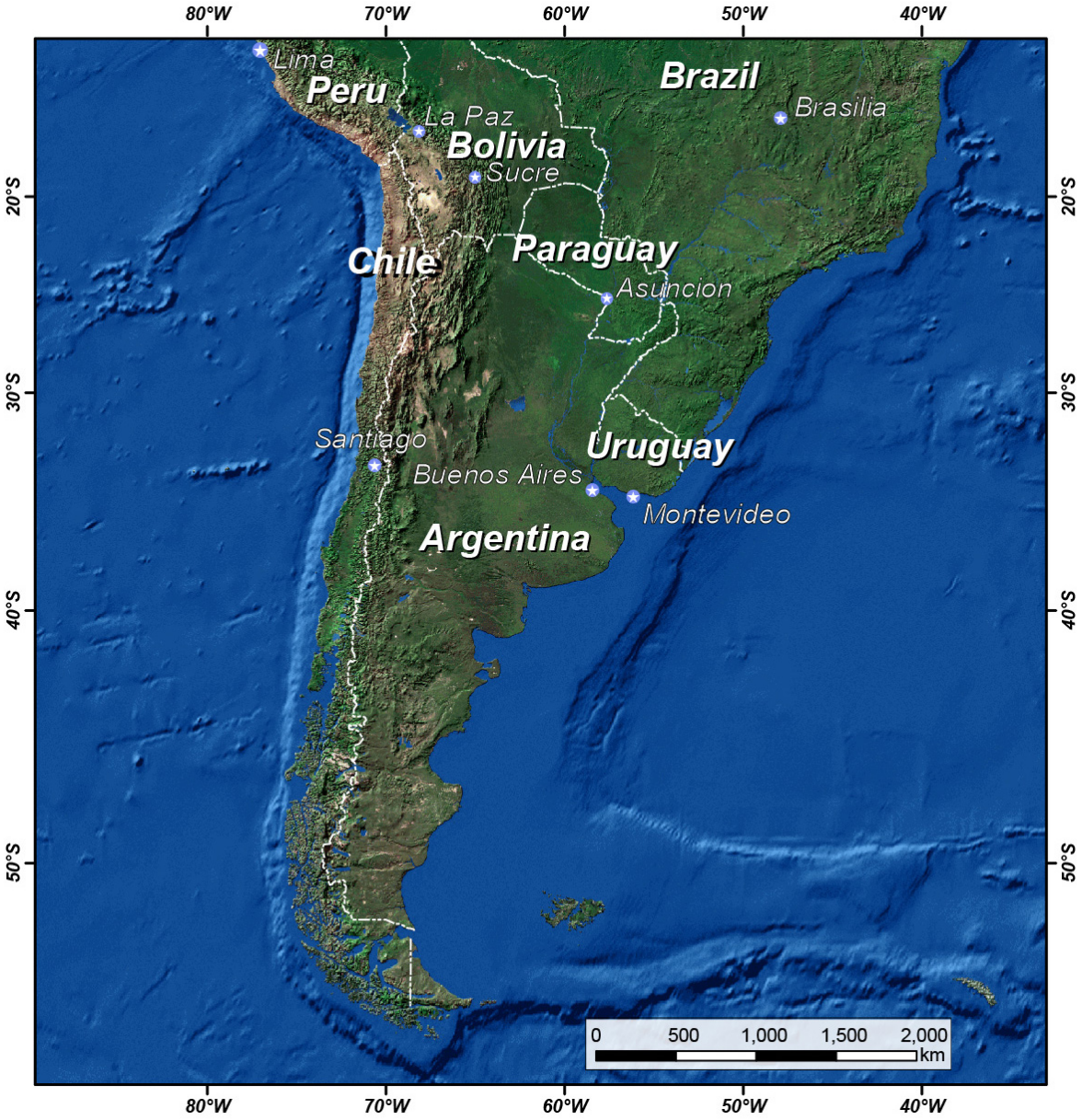

Figure 1.1:The Southern Cone of South America (Source: This map was created using ArcGIS® software by Esri. The base map, World WorldSat Color Shaded Relief Image, provides a shaded relief background on which the countries borders are displayed. Both the base map and national borders were supplied by ArcGIS® ArcWorld Supplement.)

1.1 Introduction

In June 1992 two-thirds of the world's heads of state and thousands of non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives met in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil for the United Nations (UN) Conference on Environment and Development or Earth Summit (Elliott, 1998: 144; Friedman et al., 2001: 12). The event was remarkable for several reasons. Never before had

so many countries sent their highest representatives to discuss how to address shared environmental problems, an issue which generally does not make it to the top of government agendas. The summit was also noteworthy for its location. It clearly demonstrated that important changes had recently taken place in Brazil and in the Southern Cone of South America more generally. During the 1980s all the countries in the region had returned to democracy which put an end to the repressive military dictatorships of the previous era. Hosting the Earth Summit demonstrated a new commitment to international environmental norms which was not a policy area that the military dictatorships had paid much attention to. Furthermore, it was remarkable that the summit took place in a country of the global South. Since the first UN Conference on the Human Environment held in 1972 in Stockholm, global environmental politics has been marked by significant South-North divisions in relation to how environmental issues should be addressed and which issues should be given priority. While countries of the South have argued for the need to address local environmental problems and insisted that environmental protection cannot come at the expense of economic and social development, Northern countries tend to give greater priority to global environmental concerns (Connolly, 1996; Fairman, 1996; Gupta, 1995; Hochstetler, 2012a: 961–962; Williams, 2005). The focus on environment *and* development evident already in the official name of the Rio Summit in 1992 thus showed the influence that the countries of the South had been able to gain over the conference (Vogler, 2007: 436; Williams, 2005: 56). Yet, this remains a key tension which is also central to the thesis.

Environmental cooperation, understood as collaborative efforts across national boundaries in order to address shared ecological concerns, has received significant scholarly attention since the Stockholm Conference in 1972. Nevertheless, two important gaps remain in the literature on environmental cooperation, which are addressed in this thesis. First, only in the last couple of years have scholars started to look at the regional level as a distinct scale for environmental cooperation. Second, most studies have focused on Northern approaches to environmental cooperation. Countries of the South have been examined mostly in relation to environmental cooperation at the global level and in particular their opposition to Northern approaches and priorities. This means we know relatively little about how environmental cooperation between countries of the South takes place, but given the North-South disagreements that have been clearly demonstrated at the global level, approaches and priorities are likely to be different in regions of the South. In particular, social and economic development remains the foremost priority and consequently

governments have been less concerned with creating cooperative arrangements focussing primarily on environmental concerns.

This thesis thus makes a crucial contribution to the emerging research programme on environmental cooperation at the regional level by providing an in-depth study of environmental cooperation in a region of the global South, the Southern Cone of South America. The Southern Cone is a valuable case to study regional environmental cooperation due to the combination of two aspects. First, regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone has increased significantly over the last two decades, largely as a result of the return to democracy in the 1980s. Second, regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone takes place in the margins of other cooperation efforts and political priorities. This makes it less visible than examples of cooperation which focus primarily on environmental concerns, and it has not received much attention in previous studies. This means there is a key tension which is at the centre of the thesis: although robust forms of cooperation have increasingly developed over the last two decades, these have consistently remained marginalised.

The increase in regional environmental cooperation is evident on two levels. First, there has been a rise in what I call "formal" environmental cooperation which refers to written agreements, declarations or joint policy statements. These are negotiated at the highest levels of government and governments are the main actors in formal cooperation. The agreements or declarations that make up formal cooperation thus represent a written and public commitment of states to regional environmental cooperation on a particular topic. In my definition formal cooperation includes binding as well as non-binding agreements and the latter are in fact more common in regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. Moreover, the agreements that make up formal cooperation can be more or less specific. Overall, my definition of formal cooperation thus includes a continuous range of written and public agreements between governments ranging from non-binding and fairly general declarations reflecting a relatively low level of commitment by governments, to binding and specific treaties representing a much stronger commitment.

Second, there has also been an increase in what I call cooperation "in practice". This refers to the daily or very regular joint or coordinated activities between partners in different countries. This includes for example common monitoring of environmental concerns or implementing specific conservation measures as well as developing joint approaches to shared problems. Regular meetings or exchanges of information and best practices are thus

important elements of cooperation in practice. The actors involved in cooperation in practice are state officials, typically lower level government officials working for environmental agencies, as well as non-state actors, notably environmental NGOs. Moreover, cooperation in practice is often promoted by international actors, notably different types of donors and international organisations. Although individual initiatives also existed before, the increase in formal cooperation together with the rise in cooperation in practice from the early 1990s onwards demonstrates a change in the quality and extent of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone which has led to more robust forms of cooperation. Regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone takes place in three main forms; regional organisations; regional resource regimes; and the regional implementation of global environmental conventions. These vary in terms of the type of institutional framework and the political purpose of this; the scope of issues addressed; and the way the membership is determined. This variation is due to the preferences of the Southern Cone governments on the one hand and the objectives of the various actors promoting regional environmental cooperation on the other.

On the other hand, these changes towards more robust examples of cooperation have been less visible than many cases of environmental cooperation at the global level and they have not attracted a lot of scholarly attention. At the global level the formation of new environmental cooperation regimes, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change or the Convention on Biological Diversity, have thus clearly demonstrated the increase in environmental cooperation over the last four decades and received much public and scholarly attention. In contrast, in the Southern Cone governments have not created new cooperation regimes dedicated specifically to regional environmental concerns. Instead, cooperation regimes that existed previously have been turned into frameworks for regional environmental cooperation. The increase in joint activities and formal commitments since the early 1990s has thus taken place in the margins of other cooperation efforts and subordinate to other political priorities. One example that has been examined in previous studies is the regional organisation Mercosur (*Mercado Común del Súr* or Common Market of the South). Mercosur was created in 1991 for economic and political reasons, but it is also a framework for some initiatives of regional environmental cooperation (Devia, 1998c; Hochstetler, 2003, 2005; Laciar, 2003; Tussie and Vásquez, 2000). Moreover, most of the agreements that have been signed in relation to regional environmental concerns in the Southern Cone lack specificity or are non-binding and thus find themselves at the lower end of the spectrum of formal cooperation. In addition, there is a high dependence on external funding for activities of regional environmental

cooperation. All of these are indications of a half-hearted commitment on the part of the Southern Cone governments. Consequently, regional environmental cooperation remains marginalised despite the increase in quantity and quality over the last two decades.

The thesis argues that this apparent contradiction of the emergence of robust examples of regional environmental cooperation, but which remain marginal, is due to the impact of two simultaneous developments; the return to democracy which opened up political agendas on the one hand and the strengthening of a development model based on export-driven growth and the intensive and extensive exploitation of natural resources which left very little space for environmental concerns on the other. In this context the development of more robust forms of regional environmental cooperation has been driven by a combination of different types of civil society organisations, external donors, some government officials and international organisations. In addition, international norms and processes have provided important incentives for the Southern Cone governments to engage in formal cooperation. Cases of robust, but marginalised regional environmental cooperation are thus an outcome of the specific political and economic context.

This chapter first outlines the focus of the thesis and the rationale behind the two elements that make up the research question. This is followed by an introduction of the main concepts developed in the thesis. The succeeding section explains how the thesis relates to previous studies on environmental cooperation and in particular how the topic and research question of the thesis make an important contribution to filling significant gaps in the literature. This is followed by a presentation of the main findings in relation to the two parts of the research question and a brief presentation of the methodological approach as well as an outline of the remaining chapters.

1.2 The research question and the focus of the thesis

Given the likelihood that environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone would look different from what has been observed in most previous studies on cooperation at the global level or in regions of the North, it was necessary to phrase the research question relatively openly. The first part of the research question “Which forms does regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone take?” aims to examine what the main characteristics of environmental cooperation are and account for the possibility that this may differ from previous studies. The objective of the first part of the research question is thus to provide a broad mapping of environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. In the

thesis "form" refers to the combination of key characteristics that define a particular cooperation effort. In particular, building on a model developed by Balsiger and VanDeveer (2012), the thesis examines three central and interlinked dimensions which define the form of regional environmental cooperation; first the type of institutional framework and the political objectives it pursues; second, the scope of the issues covered; and third the way the membership or the spatial boundaries are defined. The second part of the research question "Why does it take these forms?" thus uncovers why a particular cooperation effort has a particular set of characteristics.

The thesis examines regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone over a time period of 20 years with the two UN environmental conferences held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and 2012 providing an approximate start and end point. The analysis is based on three case studies of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone which were selected on the basis of an analysis of previous studies, a pilot study early on in the research process as well as an overview of treaties with environmental components signed between South American countries. Although some cases share some of the characteristics, the combination of characteristics is different in each case, making each a distinct form of regional environmental cooperation. The first case study is the regional organisation Mercosur which has been created for economic and political reasons, but also acts as a coordinating organisation for environmental cooperation. In this case the scope of issues covered is very broad as many different environmental issues have been on Mercosur's agenda since its creation in 1991. Membership is unrelated to ecological concerns and determined by political and economic criteria alone. Most earlier studies on environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone have concentrated on Mercosur (Devia, 1998c; Hochstetler, 2003, 2005; Laciar, 2003; Tussie and Vásquez, 2000), yet the following two case studies demonstrate very clearly that focussing exclusively on Mercosur is too narrow to understand regional environmental cooperation in the region. The second case study thus examines the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), a global environmental convention which has gradually become a framework for regional environmental cooperation. Since 2005 four memoranda of understanding under the umbrella of the CMS have thus been signed by Southern Cone countries and some neighbouring countries. In this case the scope of issues covered is the narrowest, focussing specifically on endangered species that migrate across national boundaries on a regular basis and their habitats. Membership is determined by political and ecological criteria. Finally, in the third case regional environmental cooperation is linked to the La Plata basin regime, a regional resource regime dedicated to the sustainable development of the basin, including economic

as well as environmental objectives. In this case the regime's multilateral coordinating committee is thus the coordinating organisation and membership is defined by ecological as well as political and economic criteria with all five riparian states being members. The scope of issues covered is relatively broad, but always linked to the topic of freshwater resources.

As set out in more detail in chapter 3, other examples of environmental cooperation also exist in the Southern Cone, so that these three case studies are representative of broader categories, i.e. regional organisations; regional resource regimes; and the regional implementation of global environmental conventions. Yet, the case selection process clearly showed that not all cases of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone are robust and thus it became important to select cases where cooperation is likely to continue beyond an initial starting period. Consequently, the thesis has developed the concept of robustness presented in more detail below. Overall, the three case studies selected represent three of the most robust examples of cooperation in relation to different environmental concerns and institutional frameworks, although levels of robustness also vary slightly between the three cases.

The thesis primarily focuses on how governments in the Southern Cone region cooperate on shared environmental issues and does not examine exclusively private governance arrangements. However, as the thesis will demonstrate very clearly, environmental cooperation between Southern Cone governments is driven by a variety of actors, many of whom are not part of the Southern Cone governments. These include domestic NGOs and networks of researchers as well as a range of different donors, including international NGOs, international organisations and national development agencies of Northern countries. In particular the regular meetings, exchanges of information and joint projects that make up cooperation in practice are often driven forward by these different actors which are not part of the Southern Cone governments. Moreover, they also play a role in encouraging and supporting governments in developing the written agreements and declarations which make up formal cooperation. While cooperation between governments is thus the focus and the point of departure of the thesis, the way in which cooperation works in practice means that the analysis is by no means restricted to the role that states play.

The thesis concentrates on the core Southern Cone countries, namely Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay (see Figure 1.1). Although with the creation of the new regional

organisation Unasur (*Unión de Naciones Suramericanas* or Union of South American Nations) cooperation on other issues has over the last decade moved towards a larger scale including the whole of South America, robust environmental cooperation mostly takes place at the level of the different regions within South America. In many respects the Southern Cone contrasts starkly with the neighbouring Amazon region which has received much more public and scholarly attention (Hochstetler and Keck, 2007: chap. 4; Keck and Sikkink, 1998: chap. 4; Keck, 1998; Nepstad et al., 2009). Similar to the Amazon region, the Southern Cone is in many ways defined by a river basin. The La Plata basin, which is the second biggest basin in South America after the Amazon, links the riparian countries physically by providing an important means of transportation and a shared source of energy, exploited in a number of national and bi-national hydropower stations. Yet, the dynamics driving regional environmental cooperation are very different. Domestically, the Amazon represents the most remote areas in each of the Amazon countries, while the La Plata basin constitutes the political and economic centres of its riparian countries. Internationally, the reverse is the case and the protection of the Amazon especially in relation to deforestation, has been subject to considerable international pressure while the La Plata basin has received much less international attention. At the same time, the boundaries of a region are never completely fixed (Balsiger et al., 2012: 7–8; Debarbieux, 2012; Elliott and Breslin, 2011: 5, 13). Moreover, in environmental cooperation the spatial boundaries are defined not only by political and economic concerns, but ecological criteria often play an important role as well. In addition, of course developments in neighbouring countries also influence a particular region. Consequently, where relevant the thesis also examines some neighbouring countries and the South American context as a whole in order to situate regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone better.

1.3 Key concepts of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone: robustness within marginality

Having outlined the rationale of the two-part research question and the focus of the thesis, this section outlines the key concepts developed in the thesis. Throughout the research process it became evident that a core concern for regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone was not only to differentiate between different forms of cooperation, but also to be able to differentiate between different levels of robustness. In 2010 during the first year of this research project I conducted a pilot study where I interviewed government officials, NGO representatives and representatives of international organisations in

Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil in order to find out what important transboundary environmental issues in the region are and how they are addressed. I complemented this with a comprehensive overview of treaties signed between Southern Cone governments with environmental components. This provided important first insights with regards to the place that environmental concerns take in regional cooperation and in relation to what regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone consists of.

Regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone is marked by low political will as economic objectives dominate and often conflict with environmental ones. Regional environmental cooperation is thus a marginal phenomenon that takes place in the shadow of other priorities and other cooperation efforts. However, this is not unusual as regional environmental cooperation is rarely a government priority anywhere. The thesis thus offers three criteria to define the marginality of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone further. A first criterion is the absence of cooperation regimes created specifically to address regional environmental concerns. As noted above, the Southern Cone governments have not created new cooperation regimes dedicated specifically to regional environmental cooperation. Instead, this has become linked to regimes established previously or for other objectives. Second, although regional environmental cooperation has increasingly become formalised in written agreements between governments since the 1990s, many of these are vague which makes implementation harder, or non-binding. Third, there is a high dependence on external funding or the support of NGOs in order to make cooperation in practice happen. Taken together, these three elements define the marginality of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone and demonstrate the extent to which cooperation is a low government priority. Moreover, the three dimensions help to draw out differences compared to regions in the North where, even though governments also have other priorities, they tend to dedicate more resources to addressing shared environmental concerns and outline more specific objectives, and levels of institutionalisation are often higher.

In addition, the first research also uncovered that regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone consists of two elements; first, formal cooperation which refers to written agreements made by governments although, as outlined previously, these need not be binding and often lack specificity; and second, cooperation in practice. The latter relates to the everyday practices of cooperation, such as meetings, exchanges of information and joint projects. The two elements of cooperation are not exclusive categories and both can take place at the same time and in relation to the same environmental issues. However,

they do not necessarily occur together and one can be decoupled from the other. Moreover, they do not signify different stages of environmental cooperation where one follows on from the other in a linear progression. Cooperation in practice and formal cooperation are thus two different elements of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone which may be more or less linked.

This last point is crucial because it means that in the context of marginality, with a high dependence on external funding and few specific commitments on the part of governments, environmental cooperation is very vulnerable if only one of the elements is present. On the one hand, there is always the risk that cooperation in practice may stop when funding runs out or when a particular project with an external donor comes to an end. Formal cooperation on the other hand, risks becoming an empty phrase on paper if it is not implemented due to a lack of political will and resources. One of the key concerns of the thesis was thus to identify a measure to assess whether regional environmental cooperation is likely to continue beyond an initial starting period. The concept of robustness is very well-suited for this because it refers to the ability of cooperation to continue even when the external circumstances change (Hasenclever et al., 1996: 178, 1997: 2). Robustness is not a binary category, but exists along a continuous scale. This means a particular case of regional environmental cooperation can be more or less robust.

The findings from the thesis show that if both elements of environmental cooperation are present and cooperation in practice is linked to formal commitments by governments, there is evidence of robust regional environmental cooperation even if this is in the context of marginality. Formal cooperation can play a crucial role in promoting continuity, because a formal agreement between states is a public and written commitment to environmental cooperation on a particular issue which remains valid even when governments or donors change. This in turn makes it easier to source funding and it is also a mechanism to hold governments to account and remind them of their obligations. However, as several scholars of Latin American politics have noted, formal institutions very often only tell half the story and there can be a huge gap between the rules that are set out on paper and actual practices (Arias, 2009: 240; Grugel, 2007b: 242).

To understand whether regional environmental cooperation is robust, it is thus crucial to examine also the practices of cooperation. Cooperation in practice is important in order to make sure that cooperation also happens on the ground, for example through regular meetings, exchanging information and carrying out joint activities. If cooperation in

practice becomes linked to formal cooperation on the same environmental issue, cooperation is thus likely to continue even if external circumstances change. It is thus possible for regional environmental cooperation to be robust even in the context of marginality. Robustness then occupies a middle ground between weak cooperation on the one hand where only one of the elements of cooperation may be present and which is likely to stall relatively quickly, and strong cooperation on the other hand where environmental concerns have become less marginal and where funding is secure and commitments of governments are relatively specific. It should be noted that robustness is conceptually different from effectiveness. Whereas effectiveness relates to how successful cooperation has been in addressing a certain environmental concern, robustness assesses the ability of cooperation to continue when circumstances change (Hasenclever et al., 1996: 178).

The distinction between cooperation in practice and formal cooperation is thus important not only to understand what regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone consists of, but also to be able to assess the level of robustness. In addition, the distinction is also important in relation to the second part of the research question "Why does regional environmental cooperation take these forms?". The distinction between cooperation in practice and formal cooperation is useful because it helps to build a more nuanced understanding of why a particular form of regional environmental cooperation develops. This is due to the fact that, in the context of marginality, the processes which lead to formal cooperation are often not the same as the dynamics promoting cooperation in practice. Fairly general motivations such as the desire to show a commitment to environmental norms in order to gain international and/or domestic approval may thus be sufficient for governments to sign a formal agreement, in particular if this is non-binding or unspecific. For cooperation in practice to take place on the other hand, very specific drivers are necessary. Cooperation in practice thus only takes place if particular people or organisations find the means to make the necessary resources available and have an interest in promoting regional environmental cooperation on a particular issue.

Overall, there are thus three inter-related key concepts which are crucial to examine the level of strength of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. Marginality describes the context in which regional environmental cooperation takes place and captures the low commitment on the part of governments which is relevant for all forms of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. This is evident in the high dependence on external funding and support from other sources as well as the vague and non-binding nature of many agreements and the absence of regimes created specifically to address

regional environmental concerns. The distinction between cooperation in practice and formal cooperation as two different elements of cooperation helps to understand what regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone consists of. Moreover, the distinction is crucial to assess whether cooperation is likely to continue even if there are changes in the circumstances, for example when a government or a donor changes. This ability to persist is captured in the concept of robustness which is present when cooperation in practice becomes linked to formal cooperation. As outlined in the following section, these different concepts are not only valuable to understand regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone better, but also advance the study of environmental cooperation in regions of the South more generally.

1.4 Placing the thesis in the literature

From the Stockholm Summit in 1972 onwards cooperation between states in order to address shared environmental concerns expanded in terms of the number of countries involved as well as the types of activity and the environmental issues covered. The academic community followed with numerous analyses of this new phenomenon of environmental cooperation and by the 1990s this had become a well-researched topic (Zürn, 1998). The notion of "regimes" defined as "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations" (Krasner, 1982: 186) became a key concept to examine environmental cooperation and capture different elements.

However, two important caveats remain and these are crucial for the development of more refined theories of environmental cooperation. First, until very recently most studies have not distinguished between the global and the regional dimension of environmental cooperation, thus lumping together phenomena that are analytically quite different (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012: 7; Balsiger et al., 2012: 5). Consequently, even studies of environmental cooperation that address topics which are clearly not global in scope and relate much more to regional issues, such as cooperation on the Rhine basin (Bernauer, 1996), the Baltic and North Seas (Haas, 1993) or the Great Lakes (Valiante et al., 1997) have generally not analysed these as a form of cooperation that is analytically distinct from global environmental cooperation. The main exception to this is the European Union (EU) which has been very successful in promoting regional environmental cooperation and where this has also been researched specifically from an EU perspective (see for example Jordan and Adelle, 2013; McCormick, 2001; Vogler, 2011; Weale et al., 2000). However,

the EU represents a very specific model of regional cooperation with its own dynamics which has not been replicated elsewhere. Consequently, it is difficult to apply findings from regional environmental cooperation in the EU to other regions, although the EU remains influential as a role model for other regions (Elliott and Breslin, 2011: 1).

Overall, there have thus been few studies looking specifically at *regional* environmental cooperation outside Europe. This is important because both the key characteristics and thus the forms of environmental cooperation, and the way it takes place are different at the regional level. Whether relations with neighbouring countries are friendly or hostile is thus likely to play an important role and specific geographic or cultural aspects may be important as well. Moreover, the role of a particular regional power is likely to be far more influential at the regional level (Balsiger et al., 2012; Elliott and Breslin, 2011: 11–12) and may differ from the role the same power plays at the global level. In addition, distinguishing between the regional and the global level may help in explaining what types of environmental issues are more likely to be addressed in which setting. For example, concerns relating to the management of natural resources are more likely to be addressed at the regional level by those states sharing a particular natural resource (Balsiger et al., 2012: 22).

In addition, the failure to distinguish between "global" and "regional" environmental cooperation has also made it more difficult to realise that in fact most of the research on environmental cooperation has been carried out in relation to the global North. Most studies have thus either focussed on global environmental regimes, i.e. regimes that are in principle open to all states, or on regions of the North, whether they have specified this as regional cooperation or not. Global environmental regimes on the other hand have also mostly been promoted by Northern countries. The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is an exception in this regard as it was driven by countries of the South (Najam, 2004) and with regards to climate change some emerging powers, including Brazil, have also taken active roles in particular since 2009, by specifying voluntary domestic commitments (Hochstetler and Viola, 2012; Hochstetler, 2012a; Viola and Franchini, 2012). Nevertheless, generally global environmental conventions have tended to be initiated and driven by countries of the North. This means that overall the study of environmental cooperation presents a Northern bias, in terms of where empirical research has been conducted geographically and in terms of the characteristics of cooperation that have been studied. Yet, we also know that when it comes to global environmental cooperation priorities and approaches frequently diverge between countries of the North

and South. Moreover, the political, economic and social context is of course also very different, so that the preconditions for regional environmental cooperation are not the same. At the same time the regional level does not simply reflect the global level on a smaller scale (Balsiger et al., 2012: 9). This means what happens at the global level can only to a limited extent help explain cooperation at the regional level. We thus have good reasons to assume that environmental cooperation in the South may look different from the North, but we know very little about what these differences might look like and how exactly different preconditions affect the characteristics of regional environmental cooperation.

There are of course numerous studies on regional cooperation more generally and some of these have also specifically looked at regions outside the global North. These have found for example that regional cooperation is a way of improving domestic economies and increasing competitiveness in relation to other economic blocs (Mattli, 1999: 155) or that it is a strategy of states and/or domestic actors to shape the development and impact of globalisation in their region (Grugel and Hout, 1999). However, studies on regional cooperation have mostly focussed on security and economic cooperation, but left out environmental concerns (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012: 3; Balsiger et al., 2012: 6). This is also the case for most studies on regional cooperation in South America.

At the same time research on environmental policy-making at the national level is also more limited in relation to countries of the South compared to the North. Already in the early 1990s Levy, Keohane and Haas (1993: 419) noted the need for studies on environmental policy-making in countries of the South to assess whether international environmental institutions make a difference. Twenty years later other authors have pointed out that there are still major research gaps in relation to how developing and post-communist countries approach environmental protection and sustainable development and that we cannot assume that this is similar to industrialised democracies (Meadowcroft, 2012: 80–81). Moreover, with regards to the climate change regime, for example, studies of the national level have mostly focussed on industrialised countries in the North. Even the increasingly important group of emerging countries has mostly been examined in relation to international negotiations and we know very little about domestic policy processes in these countries in relation to climate change (Bailey and Compston, 2012: 205–206). Finally, the activities and strategies for environmental protection of highly visible Northern actors working in countries of the South have been examined in much

more detail than dynamics of national policy-making and the role of domestic actors (Steinberg, 2001: 5–6).

The second important gap in the literature on environmental cooperation is thus that there is very little research on how countries in the South cooperate on shared environmental concerns and what the characteristics of cooperation are. With the publication of two important collections (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012; Elliott and Breslin, 2011) focussing specifically on regional-level environmental cooperation a few scholars have in the last few years started to address these gaps. Studying the regional level as a site of environmental cooperation is not only necessary to develop more refined theories of environmental cooperation, but may also be useful from a practical point of view. The regional level may thus be a more practical or feasible level to address common problems simply because fewer countries have to coordinate. In addition, it may also be seen as more legitimate because countries are more likely to share a common history, culture or language and North-South differences which have often led to severe criticism of environmental cooperation at the global level are likely to be less pronounced at the regional level (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012: 3; Elliott and Breslin, 2011: 8–10). The regional level may also be able to act as a building block towards cooperation at the global level (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012; Carrapatoso, 2012) and help in addressing implementation gaps of global conventions (Selin, 2012). In this sense the regional level could potentially complement the global level which is particularly important at a time where the global level is often perceived to be stagnating or failing in environmental cooperation although of course, numerous problems also exist in regional cooperation (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012: 2; Conca, 2012).

Although the concept of a cooperation regime is relatively broad, in the study on environmental cooperation it has mostly been used for cases with a relatively high level of institutionalisation where environmental concerns are the main objective, or at least one of the central aims. Studies on environmental regimes have therefore mostly focussed on the formation of new environmental regimes created specifically to address a particular shared environmental problem (Young, 1998; Zürn, 1998: 625–632). In this case the purpose of the institutional framework is thus to address this particular environmental concern and the scope of issues addressed is relatively narrow. Moreover, the formation of a new regime reflects a relatively high level of government commitment and most of the cases studied demonstrate fairly high levels of institutionalisation. Research on environmental regimes

has thus left out those cases where environmental cooperation is marginal and where no new regimes have been created and where the level of government commitment is lower.

The emerging research programme on regional environmental cooperation, including regions in the South has demonstrated that there is a huge variety of different cooperation arrangements and institutional frameworks, motivations for cooperating as well as actors and processes driving cooperation. Many of the developments observed in regional environmental cooperation around the world, however, do not correspond neatly to a process of regime formation and the regional environmental cooperation arrangements show greater variation in forms than the environmental regimes studied previously. The political purpose of institutional frameworks is therefore not necessarily to address primarily regional environmental concerns and these may be one of many different objectives. This means it is necessary to approach the topic of regional environmental cooperation with a relatively open-ended question and find out what the main characteristics are and why certain combinations of characteristics, i.e. different forms have developed. The model developed by Balsiger and VanDeveer (2012: 7–9) provides a useful starting point in this respect. It outlines three key dimensions to describe regional environmental cooperation which the thesis builds on; first, agency refers to the type of coordinating or rule-making agency of a regional cooperation initiative; second substance describes the scope of issues covered; and third territoriality refers the way the boundaries are drawn, including both political and ecological criteria. All of these are conceptualised as continuous ranges, so that the combination of these three dimensions is able to describe an infinite number of different forms of regional environmental cooperation and also provides a basis for comparison.

However, the research process of this thesis and a reading of the first studies focussing specifically on regional-level cooperation in the South both demonstrate that another element also requires attention in order to understand regional environmental cooperation in the South better and to make comparisons. It is thus striking how often scholars qualify a particular cooperation effort by referring to its weakness or to serious obstacles. In relation to the Middle East and North Africa, Kulauzov and Antypas note that so far both environmental and regional cooperation are “marginal phenomena” (2011: 128) and referring to Sub-Saharan Africa Compagnon, Florémont and Lamaud characterise regional environmental governance as “embryonic” and “fragmented” (2011: 106). With regards to South Asia Swain notes the “lack of political will” (2011: 87) and Matthew describes initiatives of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation as “modest actions with

little tangible effect" (2012: 111). Finally, Hochstetler points out the "institutional fragility" (2011: 145) of regional environmental governance arrangements in South America and Elliott (2011: 71) notes the lack of funding for environmental concerns in both Northeast Asia as well as Southeast Asia, although the latter has much more developed regional institutions.

The challenges to regional environmental cooperation and the weakness of many arrangements are thus a common concern amongst scholars of regional environmental cooperation in the South. Studies on environmental regimes have addressed the question of effectiveness (Haas et al., 1993) and thus examined different levels of strength of environmental cooperation. However, by focussing on environmental regimes, these relate to the stronger end of the spectrum of environmental cooperation where government commitment tends to be relatively high. For the lower end of the spectrum where environmental cooperation is marginal and government commitment is much lower, theoretical tools to assess the level of strength or weakness are much less well-developed. This also makes it difficult to make comparisons between cases, in particular because regional environmental cooperation is rarely at the top of the list of governments' priorities in any region. The concepts developed in the thesis thus make a crucial contribution to the emerging research programme on regional environmental cooperation. The concept of marginality goes beyond stating that regional environmental cooperation has a low priority or that the preconditions matter and specifies three elements which distinguish marginal forms of cooperation from stronger ones: the absence of regimes dedicated specifically to regional environmental cooperation; the high dependence on external funding; and the non-binding or vague nature of formal agreements. This provides a clear basis for comparison and a way to determine the extent to which regional environmental cooperation is a low priority.

Furthermore, the concept of robustness helps to make distinctions within the context of marginality. The thesis thus argues that even if regional environmental cooperation is marginalised, it can be robust if the regular activities that make up cooperation in practice are linked with formal commitments by states. Robust cooperation thus contrasts with weak cooperation where only one of the elements is present and where cooperation is likely to stall quickly if circumstances change. Overall, the thesis thus makes a crucial contribution to conceptualise better regional environmental cooperation in the context of marginality and to assess and compare the robustness of different cases. This is especially important in relation to many regions in the South where regional environmental

cooperation often seems to be more marginal compared to regions in the North. This also makes regional environmental cooperation more difficult to see and to understand and this potentially explains why environmental cooperation in regions of the South has not received a lot of attention by researchers.

Moreover, the thesis presents a framework distinguishing between endogenous drivers, who are actors from within the region, such as NGOs and civil society organisations as well as government officials, and exogenous drivers who come from outside the region, notably donors and international organisations. In addition to national governments, these different types of drivers have been crucial in shaping regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. The combination of key characteristics that makes up the form of cooperation in each case study is thus determined by the interests and priorities of national governments as well as those of the other actors promoting regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. However, not all of these have the same possibilities to influence the forms that regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone takes. Two elements in particular are important in this regard. On the one hand, actors with significant resources of their own are in a much stronger position to engage in regional environmental cooperation in practice because they have the means to organise joint activities with partners in neighbouring countries and perhaps employ staff to work on these on a daily basis. On the other hand, actors who are willing to work within the parameters set by governments rather than seeking radical changes are much more likely to convince governments and thus influence the forms that regional environmental cooperation takes. In addition, some institutional frameworks offer more possibilities for civil society participation than others. The characteristics of a particular case of regional environmental cooperation are thus not only determined by the objectives and interests of the Southern Cone governments and the various other actors involved, but also by the question of who has access to decision-making and resources. This is an important finding which is worth bearing in mind in other studies on environmental cooperation in regions of the South because it highlights that a perceived lack of involvement of endogenous drivers in regional environmental cooperation does not necessarily signify a lack of domestic nonstate actors interested in regional environmental cooperation. Rather, it could also mean that access to decision-making is restricted in such a way that domestic groups may not have much influence.

Finally, this analysis of who is able to shape regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone and under which conditions, also makes an important contribution towards

understanding the nature of regional cooperation in South America better. In particular, the focus on environmental cooperation, which is a marginal policy area and has not received much attention in other studies on the region, helps to draw out important contradictions between the stated objectives of the progressive governments that have come to power over the last decade, and actual outcomes. While governments have thus stressed the need to address social problems and improve democracy, regional strategies of natural resource exploitation have in many ways created new socio-environmental problems and reinforced existing inequalities while allowing only very limited possibilities for participation in decision-making by affected citizens. These contradictions also point to important limitations of the development strategy adopted by governments in the region.

1.5 Main findings: Regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone

Regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone takes place in three main forms; regional organisations; regional resource regimes; and the regional implementation of global environmental conventions. These vary in terms of the type of institutional framework and the political purpose; the scope of issues addressed; and the way the membership is determined. As governments dedicate few resources to regional environmental cooperation, actors who can provide crucial resources and who are interested in promoting regional environmental cooperation play a prominent role in regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. Most importantly, these include various civil society groups, networks of researchers as well as different types of donors. Regional research and university networks have often been important in developing a better understanding of the transboundary nature of different environmental concerns and have thus in several cases outlined the need for cross-border cooperation. In addition, civil society groups are an important source of pressure which has helped to put shared environmental concerns on regional political agendas. In particular in relation to the La Plata basin, civil society protests have on several occasions been successful in bringing transboundary environmental issues to the attention of governments and downscaling or stopping certain plans. Yet, with the exception of the CMS, which is relatively open towards the participation of professional conservation NGOs, institutional frameworks do not provide many possibilities for civil society participation. Consequently, the specific characteristics of regional environmental cooperation and thus the forms that it takes, have been shaped much more by the positions of donors and national governments. As donors

prioritise certain environmental issues, geographical locations or institutional frameworks, regional environmental cooperation on other issues which are not able to attract funding does not seem to take place or is much weaker. In addition, governments also bring in their views in terms of which issues are addressed and through which frameworks, as well as who has how much of a say over them. Overall, the Southern Cone governments have thus tended to grant more access to those civil society organisations who are willing to work with governments and who can offer support or resources to governments than radical or very critical organisations.

In the case of the La Plata basin the availability of funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was thus crucial in promoting cooperation in those parts of the basin deemed globally important, but at the same time the Southern Cone governments decided to keep this in the framework of the La Plata basin regime rather than the regional organisation Mercosur which is a bit more accessible to civil society. Regional environmental cooperation in the CMS framework on the other hand was promoted by domestic conservation groups as well as the CMS itself and both provided important support to governments in terms of technical and human resources. The close links between different actors are important in making this the most robust example of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. However, not in all cases are specific environmental concerns the primary objectives. This is demonstrated by the case of the regional organisation Mercosur where the objective to copy the EU model on the part of Southern Cone governments and the aim to promote EU-style regional integration on the part of European donors was stronger than the aim of addressing any particular environmental concern. In this case the objectives of the donors involved and the Southern Cone governments thus centred on a particular framework of regional cooperation, rather than a particular environmental issue as in the other two cases. Yet, the Southern Cone governments have resisted the replication of EU-style integration. This has led to friction between donors and recipients and has contributed to lower levels of robustness.

In addition, all three forms also share one important trait and this is the marginality of regional environmental cooperation. The thesis argues that this apparent contradiction of robustness within marginality is due to the impact of two simultaneous developments; the return to democracy on the one hand and the strengthening of a development model based on export-driven growth and the intensive and extensive exploitation of natural resources on the other. While the former paved the way for robust regional environmental

cooperation, the development model pursued over the last two decades has had the effect of keeping regional environmental cooperation a marginal phenomenon.

The process of democratisation that started in all the Southern Cone countries in the 1980s was crucial for regional environmental cooperation because it opened up the political agenda for the inclusion of new issues, such as environmental concerns, and it provided significantly more space for civil society activity. These developments facilitated the work of environmental groups as well as cross-border interaction and the Rio Summit in 1992 further promoted the strengthening of regional environmental networks. All of these processes encouraged cooperation in practice. Moreover, in an effort to gain international recognition the new democratic states became more open towards international norms and processes. This included environmental norms as well as an increase in cooperation with external donors on environmental concerns (Hochstetler, 2003, 2005: 353–356, 2012b; Mumme and Korzetz, 1997). Finally, democratisation also set the stage for enhanced cooperation between states in the region in general (Kaltenthaler and Mora, 2002; Tussie and Vásquez, 2000). These developments in turn led to increasing formal environmental cooperation as well. Overall, regional environmental cooperation was thus strongly influenced by changes in domestic politics, most importantly the return to democracy in the 1980s and the political openings that this brought.

These changes encouraged formal cooperation as well as cooperation in practice in all three case studies. When the Southern Cone governments thus established the regional organisation Mercosur in 1991 they referred to environmental concerns in the preamble of the founding treaty although its main aims relate to trade. This was followed up with a series of joint policies and declarations on environmental issues as well as joint cooperation projects with support from external donors. Moreover, the La Plata basin regime increasingly incorporated environmental concerns. The five riparian countries, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay established a regional resource regime in the late 1960s in order to promote the economic development of the basin and in particular hydropower, while ensuring political stability. From the 1990s onwards it was complemented with several treaties which specifically refer to environmental concerns as well as six large environmental projects with external funding which, except for one, all involved at least two countries. Finally, regional networks of conservation NGOs, epistemic communities and government officials became increasingly aware that some species were endangered and that the same species regularly migrate across national boundaries. This meant that in order to protect those species cross-border cooperation was

necessary. Consequently, regional conservation networks became increasingly active in joint monitoring as well as information exchanges and coordination of conservation measures. This cooperation in practice was formalised in two stages. First, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, the three Southern Cone countries which are members of the CMS, all joined the convention at different points in the 1990s. Formal cooperation under the CMS umbrella was strengthened further in a second phase during the 2000s when different Southern Cone and some neighbouring countries signed four memoranda of understanding outlining their commitment to the protection of different groups of species whose habitat stretches across several countries in the region.

However, the particular circumstances in which the democratic transition took place limited the extent to which regional environmental cooperation could develop. The 1980s and 1990s were thus shaped not only by the return to democracy, but also by far-reaching neoliberal reforms which made economic growth the main objective with little attention paid to other concerns. Key elements of the economic reforms carried out included measures to open the markets and reduce the role of the state as well as attracting foreign investment (Gwynne and Kay, 2000). The neoliberal agenda embraced by political and economic elites in the Southern Cone and promoted by international financial institutions and the United States (US) government thus paved the way for more intensive natural resource exploitation with severe socio-environmental consequences (Green, 1999; Murray, 1999) while the newly created environmental agencies remained weak (Barton, 1999: 195; Gwynne and Silva, 1999: 159–160; Mumme and Korzetz, 1997: 53–54).

These developments clearly provided an unfavourable context for the creation of strong forms of regional environmental cooperation. Limited state budgets and state capacities made it difficult for governments to create new regimes specifically dedicated to regional environmental concerns while donors and NGOs came to play prominent roles. While democratisation thus opened up the space for the inclusion of environmental concerns on the policy agenda, neoliberal reforms simultaneously limited how far these could advance, leading to what appears like a paradox. On the one hand, robust cases of regional environmental cooperation combining formal cooperation and cooperation in practice were thus able to develop. On the other hand, however, these remained marginalised with a high dependence on external funding or support from NGOs, a low level of government commitment resulting in non-binding and often vague agreements and the absence of regimes created specifically to address regional environmental concerns.

What is perhaps more unexpected, is that regional environmental cooperation also remained in the margins in the 2000s when Leftist governments were voted into office in a majority of South American countries, including all the Southern Cone countries, as part of a wide-spread reaction of voters against the austere neoliberal reforms of the previous two decades. Previously, the ideas and objectives of environmental movements and the Left had often converged in South America. This included criticism of social inequality and the emphasis on the free market, both of which have social and environmental dimensions, or demands for a more radical democratisation. In the absence of green parties in most Southern Cone countries at the start of the millennium environmental movements generally supported the Left (Gudynas, 2010b: 149). Moreover, before coming to power the Left frequently criticised a model of development based primarily on natural resource exploitation and the export of primary commodities with little added value. Reasons for this criticism included socio-environmental aspects, such as the local impact of extractive industries and agribusiness, the poor working conditions or the marginalisation of peasants and small agricultural producers vis-à-vis the growing power of large and often foreign companies, as well as economic arguments, notably the dependency on exports and the vulnerability to world market prices of commodities over which the exporting countries have little influence (Gudynas, 2009: 188–189, 2010a: 38–39, 2010c: 66).

Yet, driven by high global prices for commodities and increasing demand in particular from China, the commodity sector has flourished all over South America. Over the last decade the proportion of primary commodities in the total exports has thus doubled in Latin America and currently makes up 65 percent for the Southern Cone countries (Blanke, 2013: 1). Meanwhile the discourse of progressive governments has changed to promoting intensive natural resource exploitation, but using some of the revenues for much needed social programmes (Gudynas, 2009: 213). Reversing policies adopted under the neoliberal governments of the 1980s and 1990s Leftist governments in the Southern Cone have thus to varying degrees increased, or in the case of Paraguay attempted to increase, the role of the state in the management of natural resource exploitation. Revenues from the export of commodities have thus become an important pillar for social programmes implemented by Leftist governments and have contributed to significant improvements with regards to poverty reduction, health care provision and education. These achievements are an important element in the popularity of progressive governments and a source of legitimacy (Gudynas, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Hogenboom and Fernández Jilberto, 2009; Hogenboom, 2012a, 2012b). Gudynas (2009) thus refers to the *neo-extractivismo* (neo-extractivism) of progressive governments which combines old practices of natural resource

exploitation with new social policies and a stronger role of the state. In addition, the continuation of commodity exports has also served as a tool to avoid the alienation of powerful economic elites linked to the export sector which is important for political stability.

At the same time, this model of development is still based on increasingly intensive and extensive natural resource exploitation with significant socio-environmental consequences. In this context progressive governments have repeatedly dismissed demands for environmental justice or alternative development models and insisted on the need to attract foreign investment and to exploit the natural resources available as a basis for economic and social development. In this framework the only debate that governments are willing to have is over how to spend the revenues, but not over how these revenues are generated in the first place. This means decision-making in relation to natural resource governance remains highly centralised in the hands of political and economic elites with little space for alternative points of view or public consultation (Gudynas, 2010a, 2010c; Hogenboom, 2012a, 2012b; Saguier, 2012a, 2012b).

Regional cooperation too has been shaped by these developments. Since the start of the millennium physical integration has become an important cornerstone of current integration projects in a region which has long looked outward and thus historically had a relatively poorly developed internal infrastructure (Garzón and Schilling-Vacaflor, 2012; Hochstetler, 2011: 140–141). The necessity of a better transport infrastructure in order to export commodities such as soybean is one of the driving forces behind such projects (Gudynas, 2008: 514; Lapitz et al., 2004: 119–123). Another important element is the development of a regional energy infrastructure in order to satisfy the demands of the growing economies and in particular Brazil (Burges, 2005; Garzón and Schilling-Vacaflor, 2012). Saguier (2012b) thus refers to "resource-driven integration" in order to point out the prominent role that natural resource exploitation plays in relation to regional cooperation. With the focus of governments on natural resource exploitation in national and regional projects with very little consideration of socio-environmental impacts, regional environmental cooperation has thus remained marginalised also under the progressive governments of the 21st century.

Overall, the apparent paradox of robust regional environmental cooperation in the margins is thus an outcome of the political and economic context which has shaped policy-making at the national level as well as regional cooperation in the Southern Cone in the last two

decades. In particular, the development strategy adopted by governments has been built on large-scale and intensive natural resource exploitation and left very little space for environmental concerns. Nevertheless, pressure from various regional civil society groups and research networks often working together with some government officials as well as international organisations and donors, has succeeded in putting shared environmental concerns on regional political agendas in various settings. The characteristics of regional environmental cooperation, i.e. the institutional frameworks and the scope of issues addressed as well as the membership of countries that participate, have then been mostly determined by the positions of national governments as well as donor priorities. However, in the case of regional environmental cooperation on migratory species the CMS Secretariat and professional conservation NGOs, which have benefitted from the comparatively more open institutional structures of the CMS, have equally shaped the characteristics of cooperation.

1.6 The methodological approach

Given the lack of previous research on environmental cooperation in regions of the South and the open nature of the research question, I chose an open-ended approach building on grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1994) to examine the forms that regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone takes and the processes driving these. However, as set out in more detail in chapter 3 there were also challenges in the grounded theory approach, most importantly in relation to the case study selection. The case study selection is crucial because the first part of the research question "Which forms does regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone take?" directly builds on the case selection. Consequently, a thorough case selection was vital and therefore I have used both deductive and inductive approaches to select the cases, so that the overall approach of the thesis can best be described as hybrid.

As set out previously, during the pilot study I realised that cooperation in practice can and does often exist without formal cooperation and vice versa. In the Southern Cone context where regional environmental cooperation is marginalised, it was thus crucial to look for both elements to ensure that the cases selected represent robust forms of cooperation. Robustness thus became a crucial criterion in the case study selection to identify meaningful examples of regional environmental cooperation rather than just empty agreements on paper that are barely implemented or development cooperation projects that run the risk of stopping as soon as funding runs out. In addition, I was looking for cases

that differed in relation to the characteristics describing a form of cooperation. In particular, I looked for variation in terms of the environmental issues addressed and the institutional framework through which they are addressed in order to be able to compare different forms of cooperation.

The search strategy was based on three different sources combining inductive and deductive approaches. The first one was the existing literature. Only very few previous studies had been done in relation to regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone and these focussed mostly on the regional organisation Mercosur (Hochstetler, 2003, 2005; Tussie and Vásquez, 2000). A second element was thus the pilot study I carried out during the first year of the project. This was crucial to get a perspective from interviewees in the region early on in the research process. From the pilot study it became clear that water and in particular transboundary rivers and underground water reserves are a very important environmental concern for the region. This is addressed through a range of instruments including bilateral and multilateral treaties, technical commissions and development cooperation projects that are loosely integrated under the umbrella of the La Plata basin regime. However, the regional organisation Mercosur only plays a very minor role in relation to this topic. Clearly then, Mercosur is neither the only nor the most important channel for regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone.

Thirdly, in order to finalise my case study selection and to ensure it is systematic, following the pilot study I put together an overview of treaties with clear environmental components signed between South American countries between 1940 and 2008. This overview was developed on the basis of the ECOLEX database (FAO et al., 2014), a comprehensive online database bringing together the environmental law information held by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). An analysis of this overview confirmed the findings from the pilot study because issues relating to water have frequently been the object of treaties between Southern Cone countries. In addition, the overview also showed that a number of agreements were made relating to global environmental conventions, an issue that did not emerge as particularly prominent either from the existing literature or the pilot study. In particular, the Convention on Migratory Species stands out with several agreements having been signed between South American countries since 2006 within the framework of this global environmental convention. This represents a notable new trend which I decided to follow up at the start of my second period of fieldwork. From the first interviews on this topic it became clear that these

treaties were linked to regular joint activities of regional conservation networks, government officials and the CMS itself.

Overall, the case study selection thus had a solid basis consisting of a combination of three sources, the existing literature, the pilot study and a systematic treaty overview which served to identify three of the most robust examples of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone in relation to different environmental issues and institutional frameworks; first, the regional organisation Mercosur and its approach to environmental issues; second cooperation in the framework of the La Plata basin regime consisting of a variety of treaties, technical commissions and projects; and third the Convention on Migratory Species and its implementation in the region. As set out in more detail in chapter 3, other examples of environmental cooperation also exist in the Southern Cone, so that these three case studies are representative of broader categories, i.e. regional organisations; regional resource regimes; and the regional implementation of global environmental conventions. Yet, in other cases cooperation was less robust with weaker links between cooperation in practice and formal cooperation, so that the three case studies selected represent three of the most robust examples of cooperation in relation to different environmental concerns and institutional frameworks.

Following the case study selection I conducted a second extended period of fieldwork between February and July 2011 in order to gain more detailed information on the three cases. My main methods of data collection were semi-structured elite interviews with policy-makers, NGOs and researchers. Altogether I thus conducted formal interviews with more than 50 people and several informal discussions in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay as well as one interview in Germany at the CMS Secretariat. In addition to the information gained directly from the interviews, many interviewees also provided me with documents or information of where to find important written documentation on the three case studies. Consequently, I also examined over 150 written articles, including reports of NGOs, governments and international organisations as well as websites, newspaper articles and research reports.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

The thesis is broken down into seven further chapters. Chapter Two identifies the main debates and gaps in the literature on environmental cooperation in more detail and sets out how the thesis contributes to addressing these. Furthermore, the chapter sets out the

analytical framework of the thesis. The aim of Chapter Three is to provide transparency regarding the methodological approach taken and the research process. Chapter Four focuses on the paradox of robust, but marginal regional environmental cooperation which is shared by all case studies. It thus examines in more detail why regional environmental cooperation started to increase significantly from the early 1990s onwards, but also why it has remained marginalised under neoliberal as well as progressive governments.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven then present the three case studies examining how regional environmental cooperation takes place nevertheless within the limited space available and why it takes different forms. Each chapter first describes the form of regional environmental cooperation taking into account the environmental concerns addressed and the institutional framework as well as the way the membership is determined. Second, each chapter examines why this particular institutional framework has become a channel for robust regional environmental cooperation paying attention to cooperation in practice and formal cooperation.

Finally, the concluding chapter makes a comparison of the three case studies and summarises the key findings. Furthermore, it examines the implications of the findings in relation to regional cooperation in the Southern Cone and South America more broadly. In particular, it highlights how the focus on environmental cooperation, which is a marginal policy area and has not received much attention in other studies on the region, helps to draw out important contradictions between the stated objectives of regional cooperation and actual outcomes. These contradictions point to important limitations of neo-extractivism as a strategy for social development in the region. To conclude, the chapter outlines avenues for further research. In particular, it relates back to the initial motivation to understand environmental cooperation in regions of the South better. While the thesis is a valuable starting point because it presents one of the first in-depth exploratory studies of environmental cooperation in a region of the South and has developed several key concepts in relation to this, further research and comparisons with other regions in the South are needed to test and refine these further.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the focus of the thesis as well as the rationale behind the two-part structure of the research question. The chapter has argued that regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone takes place in three main forms; regional organisations;

regional resource regimes; and the regional implementation of global environmental conventions. These vary in terms of the type of institutional framework and the political purpose of this; the scope of issues addressed; and the way the membership is determined. This variation is largely shaped by the preferences of the Southern Cone governments and the priorities of donors. Civil society organisations are an important source of pressure to address environmental concerns at the regional level, but, with the exception of the case study on migratory species, they have been less influential in terms of shaping the characteristics of cooperation as institutionalised channels for participation remain weakly developed. Furthermore, the chapter has introduced the three case studies; the regional organisation Mercosur; the La Plata basin regime; and the regional implementation of the Convention on Migratory Species. Although regional environmental cooperation can be described as robust in all three case studies, it remains marginal. This apparent contradiction of robust, but marginal environmental cooperation has emerged as a result of the specific political and economic context of the Southern Cone. The chapter has thus also presented the concepts of marginality and robustness developed in the thesis and outlined how this particular topic and research question contribute to filling an important gap in the literature on environmental cooperation. This provides the basis for examining in more detail how the thesis relates to previous studies and where it adds to and refines already existing approaches and concepts. This is the objective of the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Overlooked by the literature: Regional environmental cooperation in the South

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the existing literature on environmental cooperation and present the analytical framework of the thesis in relation to the two parts of the research question "Which forms does regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone take and why?". The first part of the chapter situates the thesis in the wider literature on environmental cooperation. It traces the development of the literature from focussing on environmental regimes as the main form of environmental cooperation to the emergence of the concept of environmental governance. In this section I argue that the initial focus on environmental regimes has led to a relatively narrow view on the forms that environmental cooperation takes. In addition, it has resulted in two important gaps, a lack of research on the regional level on the one hand and a lack of research on environmental cooperation in the South on the other. Over the last decade, researchers have increasingly found that new developments in terms of how environmental problems are being addressed cannot be captured by examining only the relatively narrow group of environmental regimes. This has led to the development of the concept of "environmental governance" as a new approach. As part of this broader research programme on environmental governance a research strand focussing specifically on the regional level as a site for environmental cooperation has emerged in recent years which is particularly relevant for the thesis.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the study of environmental cooperation at the regional level. In reference to the first part of the research question it first examines how different combinations of characteristics can be conceptualised. The subsequent section then relates to the second part of the research question and examines why regional environmental cooperation takes different combinations of characteristics which make up different forms. The findings from the thesis suggest that the form that regional environmental cooperation takes in a particular case depends on who promotes it and for which reasons as well as the relationships between different actors involved in cooperation.

The final section focuses in more detail on examining different levels of strength of regional environmental cooperation in contexts where this is marginal. The research process of this thesis and a reading of the first studies focussing specifically on regional-level cooperation in the South both suggest that this is an important element in order to understand regional environmental cooperation in the South better and to make comparisons. The section thus outlines how the concepts of marginality and robustness developed in the thesis contribute to a better understanding of regional environmental cooperation, particularly in the South. Moreover, it identifies several factors to understand why regional environmental cooperation in the context of marginality is more robust in some cases than in others.

2.2 From environmental regimes to environmental governance

This section outlines the development of the literature from focussing on environmental regimes as the main form of environmental cooperation to the emergence of the concept of environmental governance. While regime analysis has been crucial in moving beyond the study of formal organisations only, it has left several important gaps, both in relation to the forms that environmental cooperation takes and the processes driving cooperation. Although the concept of a regime is relatively broad, in the research on environmental cooperation most studies have applied it to those regimes where environmental concerns are the primary objective and where new regimes have been created specifically to address these. This has led to a relatively narrow view on environmental cooperation because it excludes those cases of cooperation where environmental concerns are more marginal or only one among many objectives. Furthermore, for these cases research on regime formation cannot fully explain why environmental cooperation takes place and why it takes particular combinations of characteristics. Second, regime analysis has not systematically distinguished between the regional level and the global level as two separate scales of cooperation. On the whole this means that environmental cooperation in regions of the South has not received much attention in the study of environmental regimes, on the one hand because scholars have not examined or compared environmental cooperation in different regions and on the other hand, because environmental cooperation in regions of the South often does not follow the process of regime formation and does not meet the relatively narrow characteristics of the environmental regimes examined in the majority of studies.

Going beyond the study of environmental regimes, the concept of environmental governance was thus developed in order to account for new developments and the large variety of actors, relationships and processes which shape environmental cooperation. While the thesis uses the regime concept to understand institutional frameworks for regional environmental cooperation better, it also shares some elements of the governance approach. In particular, its attention to the practices of cooperation and the diversity of actors engaging in this relate to research under the broader programme of environmental governance.

2.2.1 The initial focus on environmental regimes as the main form of environmental cooperation

During the 1980s and 1990s the concept of "regime" became a crucial concept to examine the new forms of transboundary cooperation that had developed. Defined by Krasner as "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations" (1982: 186) the concept was valuable because it was able to capture many different elements of cooperation. The regime concept thus relates to official organisations, but at the same time also allows examining the less formal elements of cooperation which had not received much attention in prior studies. Regimes then are not official organisations as such, but organisations are often key players in creating and implementing regimes (Young, 1999: 21). The regime concept became a central element of studies on environmental cooperation, but it is important to note that the concept has also been applied to other areas, such as trade or security. This means there are many different types of cooperation regimes and environmental regimes are only one group.

The regime concept itself is relatively broad and in fact defining exactly what is meant by a regime has generated numerous debates (Breitmeier et al., 2006: 10–11; Hasenclever et al., 1997: chap. 2; Strange, 1982). However, in the study of environmental cooperation it has mostly been applied to a particular group of regimes where new institutional frameworks were created with the objective of addressing a particular environmental concern. Following this approach most research on how environmental cooperation is initiated has thus looked at the formation of new environmental regimes (Zürn, 1998: 625–632). In relation to this Young's research on the different stages of regimes was crucial. Young (1998: chap. 1) thus divided the process of regime formation into three stages: agenda formation; negotiation and operationalisation. Each stage is marked by a different

dynamic, so that the importance of particular actors or issues also changes throughout the process. In the process of regime formation "institutional bargaining" is an important element. Young developed the concept of institutional bargaining in order to account for the negotiation process that states engage in with the aim of finding a consensus on institutional structures for a particular environmental problem. Although hard bargaining is an element of this, the participants rarely have full knowledge about the payoff structure and there is often a high degree of uncertainty regarding the costs and benefits of cooperation or the risks of non-cooperation (Young, 1998: chap.1; Zürn, 1998: 626–628).

Studies on regime formation have also examined the constellation of interests and noted that regime formation does not require a dominant state or hegemonic power to take the initiative (Young, 1998: 2; Zürn, 1998: 625, 628–629). Others have focused on the role of scientific knowledge in regime formation and examined what kind of knowledge is necessary to lead to the creation of new environmental regimes (Dimitrov, 2003), or the way networks of experts, so-called epistemic communities, contribute to shaping the interests of states (Haas, 1992). Simultaneously, the research programme has moved on towards assessing the compliance with different regimes (Brown Weiss and Jacobson, 1998) or examining what makes regimes effective (Breitmeier et al., 2006; Haas et al., 1993). These are crucial questions, after all regime formation matters little if regimes are not implemented or remain ineffective.

However, regime analysis has focussed on a relatively narrow set of cases of environmental cooperation because it has concentrated on newly created regimes whose political purpose is to deal with specific environmental issues. This is not surprising given the rapid increase in the number of environmental regimes formed from the mid-1970s onwards (Zürn, 1998: 625) which clearly called for explanations. Studies have included both, regimes dedicated to addressing a relatively well-defined environmental concern or set of issues, such as biodiversity, climate change or desertification as well as resource regimes established to manage a shared natural resource. Environmental concerns can play a greater or lesser role in resource regimes and this also affects the institutional frameworks created. In relation to shared rivers Bernauer (1997) for example points out that some international river institutions have a single objective, whereas others pursue multiple aims. In the case of the Rhine for example two different commissions have been established to deal with navigation and pollution control respectively. In other cases international river institutions aim to promote the socioeconomic development of the river basin more generally and therefore pursue several objectives. In the La Plata basin regime

the importance of environmental concerns has thus increased over time, but is still only one of several objectives as discussed in more detail in chapter 7. Similarly, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty does not primarily address environmental concerns, but includes a range of objectives including navigation and infrastructure improvements (Hochstetler, 2011: 133–135). In principle, resource regimes can thus include a broad range of objectives where environmental concerns may be more or less important. However, research on environmental regimes has generally focussed on those regimes where environmental concerns are the primary or among the most important objectives rather than resource regimes where environmental concerns play a marginal or subordinate role. Most of the international environmental regimes studied thus reflected relatively high levels of government commitment and institutionalisation evident for example in the creation of funding mechanisms and new bureaucracies to implement the regimes.

On the whole this means that most research on environmental and resource regimes has focussed on a relatively narrow set of characteristics where the scope of issues to be addressed revolves around a particular environmental concern or set of related environmental concerns and this also affects the other characteristics of this form of cooperation. Membership for example is determined by those countries which share a particular environmental problem and which are interested in addressing this through cooperation and thus create a particular regime. The political purpose of the institutional framework is thus also to address this particular concern. Moreover, even if levels of robustness and effectiveness also vary between different regimes, the creation of a regime dedicated specifically to a particular environmental concern demonstrates a relatively high level of government commitment which makes this a comparatively strong form of environmental cooperation. In effect, most research has then examined either regimes in regions in the global North such as cooperation on the Rhine basin (Bernauer, 1996) or the Baltic and North Seas (Haas, 1993) or regimes on environmental concerns seen as globally important, such as protection of the ozone layer (Parson, 1993). With the exception of the UNCCD which has been developed and defended by an alliance of countries of the South (Najam, 2004) global environmental conventions have largely been driven by countries of the North. This means that most research on how environmental cooperation takes place has in fact examined forms of cooperation which are predominantly found in and promoted by countries of the North.

Moreover, until very recently, most studies on environmental cooperation have not distinguished between the regional and the global level (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012: 7;

Balsiger et al., 2012: 5). Instead, scholars have frequently used "global" and "international" interchangeably leading to the false impression that environmental cooperation mostly takes place at the global level (Balsiger et al., 2012: 5). On the one hand this means that the distinct dynamics that characterise environmental cooperation at the regional level as opposed to the global level have gone understudied. For example concerns relating to the management of natural resources are more likely to be addressed at the regional level by those states sharing a particular natural resource (Balsiger et al., 2012: 22). Moreover, the role of a regional hegemon is likely to be far more influential at the regional level (Balsiger et al., 2012; Elliott and Breslin, 2011: 11–12). On the other hand, the lumping together of "global" and "international" has obscured the lack of research on the global South and the fact that most studies have focussed on environmental cooperation initiatives driven by the North. On the whole the focus on environmental and resource regimes in the first decades of research on environmental cooperation has thus led to two inter-related gaps. It meant that research has taken a relatively narrow view of the forms that environmental cooperation takes, concentrating on those cases where environmental concerns are key elements in cooperation and where there is a relatively high level of government commitment. Simultaneously, the regional level and in particular regions in the South where cooperation on environmental concerns exists, but where these are often more marginal and not the central objectives of cooperation, have not received much attention. This means we know relatively little about the forms that environmental cooperation in regions of the South takes.

2.2.2 Towards a broader view: environmental governance

Over the last decade, researchers have increasingly found that new developments in terms of how environmental problems are being addressed cannot be captured by studying only environmental regimes. Building on previous studies on environmental regimes, the concept of environmental governance was developed in order to account for new developments and the large variety of actors, relationships and processes which shape environmental cooperation and which go beyond environmental regimes. According to Biermann and Pattberg (2008: 280–282) "governance" captures in particular three new broad developments. In the first place these are new types of agency and actors that have emerged in addition to national governments which are traditionally considered the main actors in international environmental politics. There are thus not only significantly more nonstate actors who are involved in environmental cooperation now, but these new actors are also increasingly able to shape events and processes. Second is the development of new

mechanisms and institutions of cooperation which go beyond state-led, treaty-based regimes. These include new forms of cooperation, such as public-private partnerships or private-private cooperation. Third, there is an increasing segmentation and fragmentation between different levels and functional spheres. Fragmentation occurs when several institutional frameworks co-exist and address different aspects of environmental cooperation (Biermann and Pattberg, 2008: 284–285). A key concern of the governance approach is thus also to examine the overall "architecture" of environmental cooperation and understand how different "clusters of norms, principles, regimes and other institutions" (Biermann et al., 2009: 14, 2010: 281) relate to and affect each other. Overall, the concept of environmental governance thus takes a broader view on environmental cooperation than the initial research programme on environmental regimes.

The thesis relates to both, regime analysis as well as some of the research strands of the programme on environmental governance. On the one hand, the different forms of regional environmental cooperation found in the Southern Cone can all be described as cooperation regimes. However, only one of them, the Convention on Migratory Species, is an environmental regime and was created exclusively to address a particular environmental concern. Yet, even this regime was originally created in a different context in order to address an environmental concern seen as globally important, and only later became a framework for regional cooperation in the Southern Cone. The regional organisation[1] Mercosur and the La Plata basin regime are examples of regional regimes where environmental concerns are one among several objectives and the institutional frameworks were not created exclusively with the political purpose of addressing a particular environmental concern. Consequently, the thesis builds on the concept of a cooperation regime, but the focus of the thesis is wider than most previous studies which have mainly applied the regime concept to a relatively narrow group of environmental regimes. This also means that regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone is not the

[1] Given the different circumstances and economic and political objectives in different regions it is not surprising that there are also very different types of regional organisations, in terms of objectives, institutional structures and level of development. This has posed challenges in terms of developing a conceptual framework and agreeing on definitions or comparing developments in different regions (De Lombaerde et al., 2010; Hettne, 2005; Hurrell, 1995: 333). For the purpose of the thesis which focusses on regional *environmental* cooperation rather than regional integration in general, I use "regional organisations" as an overall umbrella to denote those organisations that were created by states in a region to achieve vital political or economic aims and which do not primarily relate to transboundary natural resources.

outcome of a process of regime formation as in all three cases the regimes had been created previously. The question is thus not why a particular regime was created, but how previously created regimes became channels for regional environmental cooperation.

On the other hand, many of the key elements in terms of how environmental cooperation takes place in the Southern Cone relate to the concept of environmental governance. In particular the variety of actors that drive "cooperation in practice" and the many different shapes that this takes, fit more easily under the framework of governance. Individual development cooperation projects that are so important in many regions of the South for example are not necessarily linked to a particular regime. Similarly, regional networks including NGOs, researchers and government officials which carry out many important tasks sometimes coordinate with a particular regime, but are not necessarily an official part of this.

Overall, the thesis thus uses the regime concept to understand institutional frameworks for regional environmental cooperation better, but it also shares some elements of the governance approach. In particular, its attention to the practices of cooperation and the diversity of actors engaging in this relate to research under the broader programme of environmental governance. In addition, the recent research programme examining the regional level as a site for environmental governance is particularly relevant for this thesis.

2.3 Studying environmental cooperation at the regional level

Having situated the thesis in the broader literature on environmental cooperation, this section focuses on the emerging research programme on regional environmental cooperation. Over the last few years, at the same time as this thesis was developed, a broader research agenda focussing specifically on *regional* environmental cooperation has emerged. The section starts with an analysis of how environmental cooperation at the regional level has been conceptualised which relates to the first part of the research question "Which forms does regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone take?". It finds that scholars have taken into account a much wider set of characteristics than those of environmental regimes resulting in the development of a model to distinguish and compare different forms of regional environmental cooperation. Research on regional

environmental cooperation thus examines a more diverse variety of forms which is relevant for the research question of this thesis.

The second part of the section then focuses on the second part of the research question and examines why regional environmental cooperation takes particular forms. The findings of the thesis suggest that the three main characteristics, i.e. the type of institutional framework and its political purpose, the scope of issues covered and the way the membership is determined, are inter-related and depend on who promotes regional environmental cooperation and for which reasons as well as the position of national governments. Consequently, it is important to examine the specific people or organisations which drive regional cooperation and their relationships to governments.

2.3.1 Distinguishing between different forms of regional environmental cooperation

Environmental cooperation at the regional level comes in many different forms and not all of these fit under the concept of environmental regimes (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012: 8). Consequently, scholars of regional environmental cooperation have been concerned with examining the different characteristics that make up the forms of regional environmental cooperation in a more detailed and systematic way. Balsiger and VanDeveer (2012: 7–9) thus point out that regional environmental cooperation can vary along three dimensions; agency, substance and territoriality. In this model agency refers to the type of coordinating or rule-making agency of a regional cooperation initiative. The thesis refers to this dimension as the institutional framework and includes the political purpose as this helps to understand better why institutional frameworks vary and how forms of cooperation differ. Substance describes the scope of issues covered by a particular initiative of regional environmental cooperation. This varies from single-issue arrangements to those addressing broader mandates. Territoriality refers to how the boundaries of a regional initiative are set. In the case of regional environmental cooperation political and economic as well as ecological criteria can be used to define boundaries.

The position of a particular cooperation initiative along each dimension can also change with time. Moreover, all three dimensions need to be understood as continuous ranges and this means that the model is able to describe a huge variety of combinations of characteristics (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012: 7–8). The model thus captures

environmental regimes as well as other types of regimes where environmental objectives are only one among several. This means it also includes examples of cooperation where environmental concerns are marginal. The thesis builds on this model because it provides a systematic way to examine and compare different characteristics of environmental cooperation, including in the context of marginality. This is important in relation to the first part of the research question "Which forms does regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone take?". Moreover, the model can provide the basis for the development of further hypotheses which in turn help to advance the study of environmental cooperation more generally (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012: 9). These could include for example whether institutional frameworks with broader mandates offer better possibilities to address economic and social development together with environmental protection and are thus more attractive or more common in regions in the South. Some of these questions are taken up in the concluding chapter. While these are important first steps most scholars agree that more research and better theoretical tools are urgently needed in order to understand regional environmental governance better (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012: 8; Balsiger et al., 2012: 26–28; Elliott and Breslin, 2011: 2).

Relating to the second part of the research question "Why does regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone take these forms?" the next section sets out a framework to understand why cooperation takes different forms, based on the findings of the thesis and a reading of the first studies on environmental cooperation in other regions of the South.

2.3.2 Accounting for different forms of regional environmental cooperation: the presence and objectives of different drivers

The first studies focussing specifically on the regional level show that environmental cooperation at the regional level exists around the world and takes a variety of different combinations of characteristics. A model consisting of several continuous dimensions is thus more useful to describe the forms that regional environmental cooperation takes than focussing only on environmental regimes. However, this also means that the process of regime formation does not help much in terms of explaining why a particular cooperation effort has a certain set of characteristics. This section presents a framework in relation to the second part of the research question in order to understand why regional environmental

cooperation takes particular forms. The section focuses on regional environmental cooperation in the context of marginality where there is a high dependence on external funding, agreements are often vague or non-binding and governments have not created new regimes dedicated specifically to regional environmental concerns. I thus leave out stronger forms of regional environmental cooperation because these have been studied in much more detail in the literature on environmental regimes and they are less relevant for many regions in the South.

As Matthew (2012) notes in relation to the Kindu Kush/Himalaya region, there can be many convincing reasons for regional environmental governance, yet environmental institutions and governance processes are hard to create. Even if there are good reasons for regional environmental cooperation, it does not take place without specific drivers, i.e. the people or organisations promoting cooperation. The findings of the thesis suggest that the three main characteristics of a form of cooperation, i.e. the type of institutional framework and its political purpose, the scope of issues covered and the way the membership is determined, are inter-related and depend on who promotes regional environmental cooperation and for which reasons as well as the position of national governments. Consequently, it is important to examine the specific people or organisations which drive regional cooperation and their relationships to governments. These can be divided into two categories; endogenous drivers and exogenous drivers. The first group are actors from within a particular region, such as NGOs and civil society organisations as well as government officials. Exogenous drivers come from outside the region and the main ones are donors and international organisations. Each group has different possibilities and strategies at their disposal to promote regional environmental cooperation. The motivations and interests of these actors promoting regional environmental cooperation as well as the tools they have thus play an important part in explaining why regional environmental cooperation takes place in a specific case and in a particular form. Moreover, some actors may be stronger or more represented in some regions than in others, so this also affects how regional environmental cooperation takes place. In addition, there are different motivations for regional environmental cooperation. In some cases existing regional integration is the main objective and environmental cooperation is seen as a strategy to strengthen integration. In other cases neighbouring countries share important environmental problems and the desire to address these leads to regional cooperation on those issues.

Actors from outside the region seem to play an important role in most studies on environmental cooperation in regions of the South and some authors have noted that regional environmental cooperation is more driven by external actors than domestic ones (Compagnon et al., 2011: 107; Kulauzov and Antypas, 2011: 113). In my definition exogenous drivers are actors from outside a particular region and include a huge variety of different donors as well as international organisations whose role in promoting regional environmental cooperation goes beyond providing financial and technical assistance. The relatively young field of research on regional environmental governance has provided many examples of the involvement of external actors, but has not yet developed many systematic analyses of these. However, previous studies on environmental governance more generally have analysed the role of both donors and international organisations. This section thus builds on these different studies and outlines how exogenous drivers promote regional environmental cooperation and how this can impact on the forms that this takes.

The most important function that donors have is in offering financial and technical support as well as policy models or guidelines. Environmental aid has the potential to affect political dynamics positively by increasing concern and improving capabilities as well as the contractual environment (Connolly, 1996: 362–363; Keohane, 1996: 1–14). If strategies are carefully designed and take into account recipients' priorities, environmental aid can help to change the incentives of key actors, strengthen domestic coalitions interested in environmental protection and significantly improve capacity (Connolly, 1996: 328). If donors target specifically transboundary or shared environmental concerns in a particular region, they can thus use a variety of tools and strategies to promote regional environmental cooperation. Projects with funding from donors are thus important elements of cooperation in practice, but in some cases donors also work with governments to encourage the agreements that lead to formal cooperation.

Given the central role that donors often play in environmental cooperation in regions of the South, it is not surprising that they also affect the characteristics of cooperation in important ways. Donors are of course not neutral, but often have strong interests of their own and in many cases these dominate environmental aid programmes and cooperation (Connolly, 1996: 329; Fairman and Ross, 1996: 42). In particular in regions of the South where regional environmental cooperation is highly dependent on external funding donor priorities then have a large impact on the kind of issues that receive support as well as the institutional frameworks of cooperation. For example, as chapter 5 will demonstrate, European donors wishing to promote the EU model are likely to support environmental

cooperation in frameworks that resemble or aim to imitate the EU. Other donors may have specific priorities in terms of which environmental concerns should be addressed. This is notable for example in the case of the GEF. With its emphasis on promoting projects with global environmental benefits (Fairman, 1996; Gerlak, 2004: 111; Streck, 2001: 72) the GEF has a clear impact on the types of issues that receive funding as well as the geographical location of projects as both have to be considered as globally important.

On the whole this means that because of the high dependence on external funding actors from outside the region have a large influence over the forms that regional environmental cooperation takes. While donors prioritise certain environmental issues, geographical locations or institutional frameworks, it seems much harder to develop regional environmental cooperation on other issues which are not able to attract funding. At the same time, the role of donors is not uncontested. Since its creation the GEF for example has been the subject of many debates mostly running along North-South lines. One of the main issues has been the question of the types of environmental issues that should receive funding (Fairman, 1996; Gupta, 1995). This means donors do not unilaterally decide which forms regional environmental cooperation takes. Instead, this is always the outcome of negotiations between donors and recipients. Moreover, as discussed in more detail in the final section, the robustness of cooperation depends on how closely different actors work together and this also includes the donor-recipient relationship.

However, providing financial or technical support is not the only role that exogenous drivers play. In particular, international organisations can play important roles in terms of raising concern, promoting environmental norms and improving the contractual environment, thus making it easier for states to make commitments (Levy et al., 1993: 399–404). Moreover, some environmental international bureaucracies have developed significant autonomous influence (Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009a) and have thus been able to influence agendas and negotiation processes and encourage cooperation by helping with implementation (Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009b: 319). Finally, international organisations can also play a role in providing a structure for regional environmental cooperation. This can consist of hosting regular meetings or monitoring activities such as writing or asking for regular reports and sharing them among all parties or making them publicly available. Moreover, by developing schedules for action and review mechanisms international organisations provide incentives for states to keep commitments (Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009b; Keohane et al., 1993).

Again, these different functions of international organisations encourage both cooperation in practice and formal cooperation. As the case study on the CMS will demonstrate, if a particular international organisation encourages environmental cooperation in a particular region and on a specific topic, this can also contribute to explaining why regional environmental cooperation takes place on a particular issue and in a particular framework. The general objectives and motivations of an international organisation are determined by its mandate and its member states, but the details of implementation and the degree of influence of an organisation are also shaped by micro-level factors, such as individual people working in the organisation, the style of leadership as well as organisational procedures and cultures (Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009b). Overall, the availability of external funding for particular issues and the preferences of different actors from outside the region are thus important factors to examine why regional environmental cooperation takes place in particular forms in regions of the South.

However, actors from outside the region are not the only drivers and endogenous drivers, i.e. actors from within a particular region, equally play crucial roles. Yet, as Steinberg (2003: 19) points out domestic actors and domestic political resources often have a much lower visibility than international ones and as a consequence are frequently overlooked. Endogenous drivers for regional environmental cooperation can be divided into two groups; transnational networks of government officials on the one hand and civil society organisations on the other. Both of these groups frequently engage in transboundary activities which make up cooperation in practice and encourage governments to make formal agreements. The characteristics of regional environmental cooperation are thus also shaped by the presence of these endogenous drivers and their motivations for promoting regional environmental cooperation as well as their interests in addressing specific issues or working within particular institutional frameworks. However, there are also important constraints to the influence of endogenous drivers. The resources and autonomy of transnational networks of government officials are thus generally determined by national governments and this can severely limit their influence. Civil society organisations on the other hand have different sources of support, but those with more human, technical and financial resources are generally better placed to exert influence.

Even if the highest levels of governments do not prioritise regional environmental cooperation, staff working at lower levels of governments, such as environment ministries, national park administrations or technical commissions, often cooperate on environmental issues with their counterparts in neighbouring countries and sometimes also cooperate

actively with civil society organisations. This clearly shows that governments are not unitary actors, but consist of different entities some of which also play a role in promoting regional environmental cooperation even if there is little political will at the highest levels.

Government officials can also form transnational networks with their counterparts in neighbouring countries (Slaughter, 2004) and thus engage in cooperation in practice and encourage formal cooperation. Such networks exist for example between high-level officials at the ministerial level as well as lower level civil servants. Members of such networks work for national governments, but in addition they also embody their professional interests and norms. Government networks include regulators who are appointed top officials or career civil servants with specialised knowledge on a particular topic (Slaughter, 2004: 38). This includes networks of executive officials who meet in the framework of established international organisations as well as networks of officials that have developed following an agreement negotiated by heads of state (Slaughter, 2004: 45).

Regional organisations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Elliott, 2012), Mercosur (Hochstetler, 2003, 2005, 2011) or the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Slaughter, 2004) have all created networks on environmental concerns between high-level officials at the ministerial level as well as lower-level civil servants. In the case of ASEAN the formation of such transgovernmental networks was the result of a deliberate strategy of the ASEAN member states (Elliott, 2012: 49). Transnational networks of government officials also exist in other, less institutionalised frameworks, such as the South Asian Cooperation for Environmental Protection (Matthew, 2012: 113; Swain, 2011), the Senior Officials Meeting for Environmental Cooperation in Northeast Asia (Elliott, 2011: 67) the Commission for the Forests of Central Africa or the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (Compagnon et al., 2011).

Such networks can promote regional environmental cooperation in practice by exchanging ideas, techniques, experiences and problems, and offering training or technical assistance, in particular for weaker member countries. Moreover, they are well-positioned to promote formal cooperation from within the government, for example by working on the harmonisation of laws and regulations (Slaughter, 2004: 51–52). By concentrating on issues that they see as relevant or promoting particular institutional frameworks networks of government officials can thus also influence the characteristics of regional environmental cooperation. However, it is crucial to note that the members of such networks usually have no autonomous source of funding and underfunding is often a

problem. Moreover, they still have to represent and work towards the national interests. These in turn are still defined by government policy which, at least on sensitive issues, will be decided by the highest levels of government. How much influence such networks have therefore depends very much on the positions of national governments and as the Mercosur case study will demonstrate, governments can also severely restrict the influence of such networks.

A second important endogenous driver are civil society organisations. This group includes a whole range of different organisations from domestic branches of large international NGOs to grassroots organisations and environmental justice movements. Civil society groups often engage in cooperation in practice and they can also put pressure on states to address environmental issues at the regional level and thus encourage formal cooperation. Many NGOs are involved in carrying out conservation measures as well as monitoring and providing alternative sources of information on environmental concerns which is often more comprehensive than the information supplied by governments (Haas, 1999: 112, 114; Jacobson and Brown Weiss, 1998: 533–534; Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 18–22; Raustiala, 1997: 728; Steinberg, 2005: 345). While much of this takes place at the national level, some environmental concerns have clear transboundary dimensions or broader alliances might strengthen their position, so that civil society organisations cooperate with their counterparts in neighbouring countries.

In addition, civil society organisations can put pressure on states to address regional environmental problems, for example by referring to international norms and commitments to hold governments to account, using what Keck and Sikkink call “accountability politics” (1998: 24). They can also directly target governments through demonstrations, road blocks or other forms of protest or, if they can build networks with groups in the global North, they can indirectly put pressure on governments. This includes for example the use of the boomerang strategy where domestic groups look for international allies to exert pressure on their governments from the outside (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 12–13). These different strategies can also be used to achieve written commitments by governments to address shared environmental problems and thus promote formal cooperation between governments.

On the whole this means that endogenous drivers also encourage regional environmental cooperation in practice and in formal agreements. Whether regional environmental cooperation takes place in a specific instance and the forms it takes thus also depends on

the preferences and objectives of these endogenous drivers, their composition and resources as well as their relationship to governments in the region. These may vary significantly. Compagnon, Florémont and Lamaud (2011: 105–106) for example note that in Sub-Saharan Africa the contribution of non-state actors in regional environmental governance comes mostly from large international NGOs which they classify as external drivers. In other regions of the South domestic NGOs are more established or local branches of international NGOs have stronger domestic components, thus making them an endogenous rather than an exogenous driver. Moreover, states clearly have a large impact on the degree of influence that non-state actors have and the highest levels of government also decide how autonomous networks of lower-level government officials are. Yet again, this may vary significantly between regions or even between different cases or institutional frameworks in the same region. Overall, the presence and the objectives of different exogenous and endogenous drivers together with the positions of national governments are thus important to understand the scope of issues addressed and the institutional frameworks chosen as well as the way the boundaries are drawn. However, the research process of this thesis and a reading of the first studies focussing specifically on regional-level cooperation in the South both demonstrate that in addition to the different forms that regional environmental cooperation takes, the level of strength is an important concern.

2.4 Examining differing levels of strength

Studies of environmental cooperation in regions of the South frequently point to the weakness or marginality of different cooperation initiatives. The challenges to regional environmental cooperation and the weakness of many arrangements are thus a common concern amongst scholars of regional environmental cooperation in the South. Studies on environmental regimes have addressed the question of effectiveness (Breitmeier et al., 2006; Haas et al., 1993) and thus examined different levels of strength of environmental cooperation. However, by focussing on environmental regimes, these relate to the stronger end of the spectrum of environmental cooperation where government commitment is relatively high. For the lower end of the spectrum where government commitment is much lower, theoretical tools to assess the level of strength or weakness are much less well-developed. This also makes it difficult to make comparisons between cases, in particular because regional environmental cooperation is rarely at the top of the list of governments' priorities in any region. This final section thus first presents the concepts of marginality and robustness developed in the thesis and outlines how these lead to a better

understanding of regional environmental cooperation. Furthermore, based on findings from the case studies it examines different factors that can lead to higher levels of robustness.

2.4.1 Marginality and robustness

When examining studies of environmental cooperation in regions of the South, it is striking that scholars frequently emphasise the weakness of existing regional environmental governance mechanisms. In relation to the Middle East and North Africa Kulauzov and Antypas note that so far both environmental and regional cooperation are "marginal phenomena" (2011: 128) and referring to Sub-Saharan Africa Compagnon, Florémont and Lamaud characterise regional environmental governance as "embryonic" and "fragmented" (2011: 106). With regards to South Asia Swain notes the "lack of political will" (2011: 87) and Matthew describes initiatives of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation as "modest actions with little tangible effect" (2012: 111). Finally, Hochstetler points out the "institutional fragility" (2011: 145) of regional environmental governance arrangements in South America and Elliott (2011: 71) notes the lack of funding for environmental concerns in both Northeast Asia as well as Southeast Asia, although the latter has much more developed regional institutions.

All of these qualifications show that, although there are many examples of environmental cooperation at the regional level, the weakness and the significant challenges that cooperation often faces, are a common concern for many studies on environmental cooperation in the South. At the same time environmental cooperation is rarely a government priority anywhere. In Europe where regional environmental cooperation has a very high level of institutionalisation because it is embedded in the structures of the EU, environmental concerns thus also generally come second to other objectives and there are conflicts between environmental and economic aims. This means stating that political will is low or that there are significant challenges is not sufficient to determine the level of strength or weakness and make comparisons between different regions.

It is in relation to these issues that the concepts developed in the thesis make a crucial contribution. First, the concept of marginality goes beyond stating that regional environmental cooperation has a low priority or that the preconditions matter and specifies three elements which distinguish marginal forms of cooperation from stronger ones; the absence of regimes dedicated specifically to regional environmental cooperation; the high dependence on external funding; and the non-binding or vague nature of agreements. This

provides a clear basis for comparison and a way to determine the extent to which regional environmental cooperation is a low priority. However, even if regional environmental cooperation is marginal, this does not necessarily mean that it is also weak and likely to break down or stop very quickly.

The findings of the thesis thus show that robust environmental cooperation is possible even if it is marginal. Robustness refers to the ability of cooperation to continue even if external circumstances change (Hasenclever et al., 1996: 178, 1997: 2). In the context of marginality regional environmental cooperation can be deemed robust and thus likely to continue even when governments or donors change, if the regular activities that make up cooperation in practice are linked with written and public commitments by states which constitute formal cooperation. In my definition formal cooperation includes binding as well as non-binding agreements and these can be more or less specific. Overall, my definition of formal cooperation thus includes a continuous range of written and public agreements between governments ranging from non-binding or fairly general declarations reflecting a relatively low level of commitment by governments, to binding and specific treaties representing a much stronger commitment. Even if they are non-binding and/or lack specificity as is often the case for the marginal forms of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone, formal commitments are important in encouraging continuity because they can be used to remind states of their promises and they can also make it easier to source funding. On the other hand, specific organisations or regional networks engaging in regular exchanges of information or joint projects are crucial to make sure that cooperation also happens on the ground. Conversely, if only one of the two elements is present cooperation is much more vulnerable. Without a formal commitment of governments for support cooperation in practice is more likely to face severe difficulties if funding for a particular project runs out. Yet, in the context of marginality, a formal commitment on its own also risks being forgotten and not implemented if there are no people or organisations that are committed to making cooperation happen on the ground.

The concept of marginal, but robust cooperation thus takes a middle position between weak cooperation on the one hand where only one of the elements of cooperation may be present and which is likely to stall relatively quickly, and strong cooperation on the other hand where funding is more secure and commitments of governments are more specific. The concept of robustness thus helps to develop a better understanding of the level of strength in contexts where environmental cooperation is marginal. Furthermore, the three case studies suggest that the level of robustness depends to a large extent on how closely

the actors driving cooperation in practice collaborate with the governments who are needed for formal cooperation.

2.4.2 Determining the level of robustness: the relationships between different actors

As outlined before, regional environmental cooperation becomes more robust when formal cooperation is linked to cooperation in practice. While formal cooperation depends on governments and only takes place if governments sign an agreement, cooperation in practice is often driven forward by actors who are not part of the governments in a particular region, such as NGOs and donors. This means the level of robustness is influenced by the relationship between those actors that engage in cooperation in practice on the one hand and governments on the other. Robustness is further increased if governments closely work together with both endogenous and exogenous drivers. This section thus examines three key elements which can have an important impact on the level of robustness; first, the donor-recipient relationship; second, the relationship between governments and civil society; and third, epistemic communities and bilateral activists, two groups of actors who can provide a link between endogenous and exogenous drivers as well as between governments and civil society.

Given the prominent role that donors play in providing support for cooperation in practice, the relationship between donors and recipients is important for the level of robustness. This includes both, the relationship between donors and national governments where these are the recipients as well as donors and domestic nonstate actors if these receive funding directly. As previous studies on environmental aid have found the donor-recipient relationship is often complex and the source of many disputes (Connolly, 1996; Fairman and Ross, 1996). One of the main issues of contention are differing priorities as examined above, but disagreements can also arise over the way projects are implemented. For example, donors often have an interest in hiring their own citizens and companies to carry out a lot of the work which often has severe disadvantages for recipient countries. It is generally more expensive for them to hire foreign consultants and even if these are more familiar with donor procedures and practices, they usually do not have the same knowledge of local conditions as local staff (Connolly, 1996: 347; Fairman and Ross, 1996: 42,44). Moreover, short-term financial aid can result in serious contracting problems because recipients may stop implementation as soon as external funding runs out (Connolly, 1996: 339). Several studies have thus concluded that for environmental aid to be effective it is

important to build on local knowledge and develop long-term ties with recipients, for example by supporting domestic organisations or officials who are committed to the same goal (Connolly, 1996: 347; Fairman and Ross, 1996; Gutner, 2002: 43). A very similar argument can be made in relation to the level of robustness of regional environmental cooperation. If donors are key actors in cooperation in practice, robustness thus increases if they work closely together and share a commitment to the same goal as domestic non-state actors engaging in cooperation in practice on similar issues as well as with the governments who are needed to make formal cooperation happen. Furthermore, a long-term commitment of an individual donor to a particular issue or the presence of several donors supporting the same issue increases continuity and thus robustness.

Second, the level of robustness is also influenced by the relationship between governments and civil society organisations. Following the distinctions made in other studies (Alcock, 2008: 67; Uhlin, 2011), I argue that it is important to distinguish between civil society groups working within the established institutions and those taking a more radical or confrontational stance criticising those very institutions. In practice this distinction may not always be easy to make and there are overlaps and coalitions between the two groups (Uhlin, 2011: 854). Nevertheless, the distinction is useful analytically because the relationship to governments is very different. This also impacts on the extent to which it is possible to link formal cooperation between governments with cooperation in practice through civil society organisations and thus affects the level of robustness. Moreover, there are differences in the strategies which the two groups employ as well as the degree of their influence.

Even if civil society participation and influence has increased in environmental cooperation over the last decades, several studies suggest that states are still clearly in control of how much access is granted to nonstate actors. Moreover, several studies have noted that governments as well as international organisations tend to grant more access to civil society organisations which are willing to work within the framework conditions set by governments and which are seen as useful due to the resources or expertise they bring while those with more radical or very critical approaches are excluded (Raustiala, 1997; Uhlin, 2011: 854). In some international environmental negotiations NGOs have to be deemed as “qualified” to address a particular subject by governments and this can act as a criterion to exclude more radical groups (Raustiala, 1997: 723). Overall, states thus often only allow some NGOs to participate and restrict the roles they are able to play in international negotiations (Raustiala, 1997: 734). Others have noted that NGOs have more

influence if their arguments do not contradict dominant discourses and if there are lower levels of contention over economic interests (Betsill, 2008: 201–202). Moreover, government policies also shape how civil society organisations can act and how much influence they have (Steinberg, 2005: 364). These findings clearly suggest that governments mediate the influence of NGOs and this has also been reflected in studies on regional environmental cooperation. Elliott (2012: 52) thus outlines how ASEAN governments have selectively included NGOs in regional environmental governance while not providing broader participation mechanisms. A similar argument can be made in relation to regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone, discussed in the three case study chapters and the concluding chapter.

Those groups working with governments and within the frames set by governments can thus significantly strengthen regional environmental cooperation in practice and encourage formal cooperation between governments. Some NGOs for example work together with governments by providing free policy advice (Raustiala, 1997: 727) and supporting these in implementation. Such close links to governments means they are better-positioned to use the information they have to lobby governments. In some countries in Latin America and Asia where NGOs are relatively strong they have taken on quasi-governmental functions, in particular if governments do not have the capacity to carry out certain tasks (Fairman and Ross, 1996: 43–44). In many countries of the South domestic NGOs are in a strong position vis-à-vis national governments because they are part of global networks and thus have access to funding from Northern partner organisations which is independent of governments (Fairman and Ross, 1996: 43–44; Jacobson and Brown Weiss, 1998: 533–534). Some international environmental conventions have also recognised the additional tools and expertise that NGOs can provide and explicitly use NGOs in developing and implementing agreements (Jacobson and Brown Weiss, 1998: 545). In some cases NGOs also help strengthen regional environmental cooperation between governments and there are several examples of public-private partnerships. Examples include the ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation (Elliott, 2012: 51), the Global Tiger Forum in South Asia (Matthew, 2012: 113) or the Asia Forest Partnership (Elliott, 2011: 70) as well as regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone in the framework of the CMS, discussed in chapter 6.

Overall, this means that the presence of NGOs whose objective it is to address transboundary or shared environmental concerns in a particular region and who are willing to work with governments can significantly increase the levels of robustness. Such groups

can provide a link between formal cooperation and cooperation in practice and by bringing in their own resources and expertise they can play an important role in strengthening governments. On the other hand, more radical groups can also strengthen cooperation in practice by forming networks with partners in neighbouring countries and addressing shared environmental concerns. However, if governments prefer to work with less critical organisations, it is less likely that this will become linked to formal cooperation between governments. There are of course important variations in the state-civil society relationships between different regions and countries, but also over time. Overall, how much access is granted to which type of organisations and how well civil society organisations cooperate with governments are thus important elements to understand why levels of robustness in regional environmental cooperation vary.

Finally, the robustness of regional environmental cooperation can also be increased by the presence of actors who are able to provide a link between both governments and civil society on the one hand, and endogenous and exogenous drivers on the other. This final section examines two such groups, epistemic communities and bilateral activists, and outlines how they link different actors and thus increase robustness. Defined as a "network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area" (Haas, 1992: 3) Haas describes epistemic communities as professionals from different disciplines and backgrounds who need to have four things in common. They need to share a set of normative and principled beliefs as well as causal beliefs and notions of validity. Finally they need to have a common policy enterprise (Haas, 1992: 3). The members of epistemic communities can be governmental and non-governmental and scientific or non-scientific and work not only as scientists, but also in governments or NGOs (Cross, 2013: 147, 153–154). This means a particular epistemic community can have members in government agencies, the non-governmental sector, and international organisations. If an epistemic community exists which takes an interest and promotes a particular regional environmental concern or a specific institutional framework, this can thus also enhance cooperation between endogenous and exogenous drivers as well as governments and non-state actors and thus increase the level of robustness of regional environmental cooperation. The case study on migratory species presented in chapter 6 presents a good example of this.

While epistemic communities exist in the South and the North, bilateral activists, the second group of actors linking different drivers for regional environmental cooperation, are specific to the South. As Steinberg (2001, 2003) has found in countries of the South

different resources reside in different spheres. As a legacy of colonialism sources of funding and scientific expertise are concentrated in the international sphere in the global North. This also gives donors such a prominent role in regional environmental cooperation in the South. However, domestic political resources, which are equally important, but often less visible, are found at the domestic level in countries of the South.

Key elements of domestic political resources are a long-term presence, access to domestic networks, knowledge of policy processes or the ability to take rare opportunities (Steinberg, 2003: 20–21). International actors rarely have such domestic political resources. On the one hand, the colonial legacy and history of foreign intervention in domestic political affairs have understandably led to significant opposition to the involvement of foreign actors (Steinberg, 2001: 18; 136–137) and on the other hand foreigners working on environmental protection rarely spend more than a few years in a certain country and political contacts and experience is rarely transferred to new people taking over (Steinberg, 2001: 139–140). This means international actors may provide crucial funding, but they lack the long-term presence at the level of individual people as well as the political legitimacy to become involved in domestic policy processes.

Domestic actors on the other hand may not have the same financial resources, but they have significant advantages in terms of legitimacy and domestic political resources. They have a long-term presence which is often built on the initiative of committed individuals. Whereas donor priorities often change, domestic actors can thus provide continuity and institutional memory and they are able to learn from past experiences. This is crucial because it can take multiple attempts and several years to develop project proposals to apply for funding and the creation of laws and institutions typically requires a decade or more (Steinberg, 2001: 137–139, 2005: 345). In addition, domestic actors can build substantial personal networks, which are important especially where institutions are weak and they have in-depth knowledge of power structures and the domestic political culture (Steinberg, 2001: 16–18). This includes an understanding of both formal and informal rules as well as knowing what potential obstacles and sources of opposition might be and how to address these (Steinberg, 2001: chap. 5). As Hochstetler and Keck (2007: 16–22) also point out in relation to Brazil informal politics and networks are crucial elements for environmental policy-making. With this knowledge domestic actors are then also in a good position to take advantage of windows of opportunity when these present themselves (Steinberg, 2001: chap. 5).

Key actors are then often individuals, so-called “bilateral activists”, who are able to operate simultaneously in the international and the domestic sphere and who provide a link between internal drivers and external ones. Bilateral activists may be reformers within governments as well as civil society actors and in many cases individuals change between those two roles. They are usually nationals of countries in the South with extensive international ties, but in some cases they are also expatriates who have spent a long time in a particular country (Steinberg, 2003: 17). This means they have important domestic political resources, but they also have access to international networks and donors. Consequently they can put together funding applications and access international scientific knowledge while also being able to use their networks and knowledge of domestic policy processes to promote certain issues. Bilateral activists are thus an important link between endogenous and exogenous drivers and this means their presence or absence can also impact on the level of robustness of environmental cooperation in regions of the South.

Overall, the relationships between different actors and in particular the donor-recipient relationship and state-civil society relations are important to account for different levels of robustness. The presence of actors who can provide a link between governments and non-state actors as well as endogenous and exogenous drivers, notably epistemic communities and bilateral activists can further increase robustness.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has first placed the thesis in the wider literature on environmental cooperation and then focused specifically on the regional level. It has outlined how different combinations of characteristics of regional environmental cooperation can be conceptualised and set out a framework to help understand why regional environmental cooperation takes particular characteristics. It has argued that in the context of marginality where government commitment is relatively low, this depends on the type of actors that promote cooperation and their objectives as well as relationships between different actors. The final section of the chapter has concentrated on the concepts of marginality and robustness developed in the thesis and outlined why these are important to examine the level of strength in particular in relation to many regions of the South. The lack of research on regional environmental cooperation in the South outlined throughout the chapter has also influenced the methodological approach adopted for the thesis in significant ways, which is the topic of next the chapter.

Chapter 3: Linking empirical data to theory development

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines how I approached the topic of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone methodologically in light of the existing literature and the gaps in the literature that the thesis aims to fill. The objective of the chapter is thus to present the rationale behind the two parts of the research question and provide transparency as to how the research was carried out in order to address this question. As set out previously, although environmental cooperation has been well-researched two dimensions in particular have not received much attention. On the one hand, the regional level has not been examined as a distinct level of cooperation and on the other hand cooperation between countries of the South has received very little attention. At the same time analyses of global environmental politics have clearly exposed North-South divisions based on different priorities and approaches to environmental concerns. Because of these gaps in the literature I phrased the research question in a relatively open way "Which forms does regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone take and why?".

This two-part question allows exploring different characteristics that regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone takes and accounts for the possibility that these may look different from the characteristics of environmental cooperation described in previous studies. Consequently, I also mostly followed a more open-ended methodological approach building on grounded theory. At the same time one of the main objectives of the question is to provide a broad mapping of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone and for this a thorough case selection was vital. I thus based the selection of the cases on three sources combining inductive and deductive strategies; a reading of the existing literature; a pilot study where I conducted interviews with policy-makers, NGOs and researchers in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay early on in the research process; and an overview of treaties with environmental components signed between South American countries. Overall, as outlined in the introductory chapter, the approach adopted in the thesis can thus best be described as hybrid.

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part presents the research approach adopted and the rationale for this in more detail. It outlines theoretical and normative arguments for

using a more open-ended approach for this research topic and introduces the core aspects of grounded theory. The second part of the chapter then presents the research process starting with the pilot study that I conducted at the start and the subsequent re-phrasing of the research question. Following on from this, the section examines the case selection process in more detail presenting the three different sources on which this was based as well as the selection criteria. Finally, the data collection and the way this was analysed and gradually led to theoretical conclusions, are presented.

3.2 Research approach and rationale

The aim of this section is to outline the research approach chosen and the rationale for the hybrid approach adopted in order to address the topic of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. As there were relatively few studies on environmental cooperation between countries of the South when I started this thesis, there were both theoretical and normative arguments for following a more open-ended approach. This section first examines these arguments in more detail and then presents the grounded theory approach which provided the main methodological guidance for the thesis. Nevertheless, this approach also posed some challenges in particular in relation to the case study selection. The final part of this section thus outlines how these were addressed.

When designing a methodological approach at the start of the research project the researcher has to decide whether a deductive approach which aims at testing hypotheses derived from earlier research is most appropriate or whether an inductive approach building theoretical concepts from empirical material from the bottom up is more useful. Of course, in practice the two approaches are not always as clearly divided as researchers using a deductive approach may also re-adjust their hypotheses in light of empirical findings while a researcher using an inductive approach also has knowledge from prior studies which influence the research process. This means most research projects include deductive and inductive elements even though one approach may be more prominent (Bryman, 2008: 9–12). As this chapter will demonstrate prior knowledge of different literatures also influenced the methodological approach adopted for this thesis and the case selection equally included deductive elements, namely a review of existing studies and an overview of treaties with environmental components signed by South American countries. Overall, the thesis has thus followed a hybrid approach.

As outlined in the previous chapter, the research agenda on regional environmental cooperation is very recent and many of the studies that do exist in relation to regions in the South have been published after the research on this thesis had started. Of course there was an extensive literature on environmental cooperation in general, but as set out in the previous chapter this has focussed mostly on environmental regimes. These represent a relatively narrow group of cases of environmental cooperation which are mostly found in and promoted by countries in the North. At the same time studies on environmental cooperation at the global level demonstrated clear North-South differences in approaches and priorities.

Overall, there were thus good reasons to assume that regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone may look different from previous studies of environmental cooperation. On the one hand, this made it impossible to develop well-grounded hypotheses. As Arias (2009: 240–242) notes in relation to the study of Latin American politics more generally, focussing only on those elements that are relevant for politics in North America and Western Europe risks ignoring aspects that are crucial for Latin American politics. On the other hand, it meant that it was thus crucial to choose a research question and a methodological approach that would allow seeing other priorities and approaches to regional environmental cooperation. Consequently, I phrased the research question in a relatively open way to provide a mapping of environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone and explore its characteristics as well as the actors and processes driving this. Moreover, I mostly followed an inductive approach building on grounded theory. Inductive approaches are particularly useful for topics where little previous research has been done and where the objective is to do a first mapping of the subject and to build theory from this[2].

In addition, when taking into account some of the contributions of postcolonial theory to the study of international relations, there are also normative arguments against deriving hypotheses from the literature on environmental regimes which has focussed mostly on

[2] Other researchers working on environmental politics have also pointed to the value of inductive research if few prior studies exist. Levy, Keohane and Haas (1993, 420) for example suggested to carry out an inductive mapping exercise of NGOs to examine how they affect environmental politics, a topic that had not been explored much at that time. Similarly, in their study on transnational advocacy networks Keck and Sikkink used the inductive grounded theory approach to study the subject because it had not been examined theoretically or empirically (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 5–6).

Northern approaches and priorities. One of the central insights of postcolonial theory is the recognition that the colonial history matters and has played a central role in shaping international society (Seth, 2013: 20). Colonisation has led to Latin America's marginalisation at the economic, political and epistemological level and the latter also played a role in the development of the methodological approach.

When Latin America was first colonised, Europe also took control over knowledge and the way knowledge was produced repressing other forms of knowledge production (Quijano, 2000: 540–542). Knowledge not only relates to the production of scientific 'facts', but includes more widely "explanatory schemes, frames of reference, crucial sets of assumptions, narrative traditions, and theories" (Agnew, 2007: 138). Eurocentrism thus became the dominant perspective on knowledge. Non-Europe on the other hand was assigned a place in the past and a role as an object of knowledge (Quijano, 2000: 552,555), but was not allowed a role in the production of knowledge itself. There is thus a long history of dominant "Eurocentric frames of knowledge" (Mignolo, 2005: 8) and as Mignolo (2005: 153) also points out "Control of money and control of meaning and being are parallel processes". Both control of money and control of meaning and knowledge are concentrated in the global North, although with the rise of the emerging powers outside the North this is seriously being challenged. Given this history of dominant Eurocentric concepts, framings and knowledge which started with colonisation but reaches into the present, using an inductive approach was in my view clearly the most appropriate approach to address this research topic, not least of all for a European researcher coming from a European university.

Simply testing hypotheses derived from research in the North would mean applying Northern priorities and framings without reflecting on these and would limit the possibilities for actors involved in regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone to express their views. Even if both inductive and deductive approaches to this research topic would be likely to entail interviews, the topics addressed and the way questions are posed have an impact on how much and what kind of information interviewees are encouraged to give, an issue that will be further explored in the second part of this chapter. This means that in a deductive approach where the researcher already has clearly formulated frameworks in mind and asks very specific questions looking for very specific information, it will be much harder for interviewees to bring in and for the researcher to understand alternative concepts or ways of framing the issue in the first place. Using an inductive approach is thus not only aimed at filling a gap in the literature, i.e. to

examine environmental cooperation in a region of the South which is a topic that has not received a lot of attention, but also an attempt to give as much space as possible to interviewees to express their points of view and approaches to the topic.

3.2.1 Grounded theory

In grounded theory methodology the perspectives and voices of the people researched play a central role and must be explicitly included in the research process and the theory emerging from this. Because of the centrality of the voices of the people researched and the demand that theory emerges from this rather than being pre-conceived, the methodology of grounded theory lends itself well to the research topic of this thesis and the approach that I have chosen. Moreover, grounded theory recognises that "theories are embedded 'in history'" (Strauss and Corbin, 1994: 280) and that historical eras and moments have to be considered in the development of theories. This links well with postcolonial approaches outlining that history, and in particular the colonial history which has long been ignored, matters.

In grounded theory data is coded soon after it is collected using categories that emerge from the data rather than previously decided codes. This way the researcher engages with the material while she is collecting it and can thus make comparisons between different sources (for example between different interviews or documents) and refine concepts while continuing to collect data. After the coding the researcher writes memos, formulating first impressions, making comparisons and developing concepts. Writing the memos requires an ongoing analysis and also serves to document the evolution of the researcher's thinking and makes it possible to go back to this at any point. Following on from the data collection and its ongoing analysis the researcher will then be able to generate more general concepts and categories which serve to build theory based on the data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This means there is an ongoing interaction between analysis and data collection which leads to the emergence of theory and which means that theories can always be traced back to the data that constituted the starting point (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 43; Strauss and Corbin, 1994: 273, 278). The aim of theory is to expose "*plausible* relationships proposed among *concepts* and *sets of concepts*" (Strauss and Corbin, 1994: 278) and the aim of grounded theory methodology is to develop theory which is "'conceptually dense' – that is with many conceptual relationships" (Strauss and Corbin, 1994: 278). Grounded theory thus offers a methodological approach to generate theory from the bottom up while working systematically and being able to trace the research

process and link the emerging theories to the data. Nevertheless, even though grounded theory sets out a series of steps quite clearly, applying these is not always straightforward.

Two aspects in particular merit attention. First, grounded theory requires a careful navigation between the researcher's own position as well as prior knowledge and experience on the one hand and a necessary openness towards the empirical material on the other. Second, grounded theory offers relatively little guidance on selecting cases, but as set out before for this research question the case selection was crucial. Selecting the cases was thus a challenging task and for this it was necessary to combine the bottom-up approach of grounded theory with more deductive approaches.

Even though grounded theory offers an open-ended approach which gives significant space to interviewees it also requires a reflection on the role and the position of the researcher herself. The personal characteristics of a researcher have important practical implications, but also influence the theoretical development. Practical implications include for example the ability to access certain kinds of information (Schatz, 2009: 11). During the research for this thesis, for example, I was positively surprised by the relatively high response rates from people I contacted. I used "snowball" or "referral" sampling in order to identify interviewees who were in a position to say something about my particular research topic, so I used information from the existing literature and the internet in order to identify the first interviewees and then asked them if they could recommend other people to speak to (Burnham et al., 2004: 207). While it can be difficult to access elites (Burnham et al., 2004: 208), I found that this method worked very well.

This was probably due to a combination of circumstances. On the one hand, most of the people I spoke to shared a personal commitment towards environmental concerns and tried to raise the profile of these either within their organisation or towards the outside. Consequently they probably saw speaking to a researcher and publicising their views this way as a way to promote environmental issues. On the other hand, it is very likely that global power structures worked to my advantage and coming from a European university helped to gain access. Nevertheless, there were also limitations to this and overall I found it much more difficult to gain access to higher level decision-makers, in particular in the ministries of foreign affairs. Most of the information I gained from the national governments was thus from the ministries of environment or equivalent which are generally less influential than the foreign ministries, but know more about the day-to-day work on environmental politics. This meant that I was able to get very detailed information

on specific activities and projects from the interviews. This was crucial given that there has not been much previous research on the three case studies. However, to understand the positions and priorities of national governments I also built on other studies on South American politics.

The position of the researcher impacts not only on practical aspects in carrying out research, but also has to be recognised in relation to the development of theory emerging from the data. The final analysis is thus always an interpretation that the researcher makes from the interviews and the researcher has to accept responsibility for this. Moreover, because the development of theory is a central aim of grounded theory, the perspectives of the people studied are integrated into the researcher's own interpretations and conceptualisations (Strauss and Corbin, 1994: 274, 280).

In addition, the role of prior knowledge that a researchers brings to a project has been the subject of several debates among grounded theorists (Charmaz, 2006: 165). Grounded theory thus emphasises the need to develop concepts and theories from the data and not from existing theories, but this does not mean the researcher's mind corresponds to a blank sheet, this would neither be possible nor necessarily desirable. Although a "naïve researcher" (Strauss and Corbin, 1994: 284) may be more open towards new approaches, theoretical sensitivity reflecting disciplinary or professional knowledge as well as research and personal experience is equally important and existing theories can be used by the researcher to compare systematically against the data. Moreover, the more theoretically sensitive a researcher is towards concepts like class, gender, race or power, the more she will be able to pay attention to these issues in the research (Strauss and Corbin, 1994: 277, 280). While it is important not to force data into existing categories that do not match, it is useful to think about differences and similarities with the existing literature after the main concepts and relationships have emerged from the data (Charmaz, 2006: 166; Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 36–37). Rather than being ignorant of existing theories, it is thus important for a researcher to be critical of them and not rely on them to guide the data collection.

In practice the tension between prior knowledge as well as existing literature on the one hand and an open research approach on the other can be difficult to negotiate. As explored in more detail in the second part of the chapter, this thesis thus started out with a focus on the regional organisation Mercosur because this was most prominent in the literature on environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. Yet, a pilot study exploring environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone early on in the research process quickly

showed that Mercosur is neither the only nor the most important form of environmental cooperation in the region. Consequently, I re-phrased and opened up the research question. During the first year of the research I thus went from building on the existing literature and therefore focussing on Mercosur, to a more open-ended approach and research question. Overall, this shows that the research process always evolves and that the boundaries between inductive and deductive approach may be more blurred than is often admitted.

This became even more evident with the case study selection. Grounded theory does not set clear guidelines or criteria for the case study selection. As other researchers have also found, this means the case study selection using grounded theory can be tricky because setting clear criteria would imply setting hypotheses before collecting any data, but on the other hand a systematic approach is nevertheless needed in order to ensure quality of research (Bartels, 2012: 67–69). As set out in the introductory chapter the objective of the first part of the research question of this thesis is to provide an overview of different forms of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. To develop such an overview it was crucial to have a solid basis for the case selection. Consequently, I used three different sources for the case selection and combined both deductive and inductive approaches in this in order to make the case selection as thorough as possible as outlined in more detail below. Overall, the thesis is thus built on a hybrid approach, based on inductive grounded theory, but also using some deductive elements.

3.3 The research process

Having outlined and justified the overall methodological approach, the second part of the chapter describes the research process in more detail in order to provide transparency as to how the research question was approached and answered. It approximately follows the chronological order of the research process starting with the pilot study and the development of the research question. This is followed by a more detailed description of the case study selection and the data collection for the three cases as well as language issues arising during these steps. The final part examines the process of how theoretical concepts and linkages were gradually developed from the empirical data.

3.3.1 The pilot study and evolution of the research question

The first reading of the literature in combination with a first pilot study produced a clear tension which led to an important re-definition and re-focussing of the research question.

When I first started this project in 2009 the literature on regional environmental cooperation in South America focussed very much on the regional integration system Mercosur. Mercosur has frequently been compared to the EU (Telò, 2006: 131) and EU and Mercosur policy-makers have often expressed the view that Mercosur should follow the EU model in terms of institutional set-up (Malamud, 2005: 429). Mercosur has also received substantial aid from the EU and other European agencies in an effort to promote the EU's values and model of integration in other parts of the world (European Commission, 2007, 2010: 13; Grugel, 2004; Sanchez Bajo, 1999: 935; Santander, 2002: 495, 2006: 44). The few studies that existed on environmental cooperation in this region also reflected this focus on Mercosur (Devia, 1998c; Hochstetler, 2003, 2005; Laciar, 2003). Consequently, when I first started the research, the question also focussed on Mercosur.

At the same time, for the reasons outlined above I had decided to follow a grounded theory approach and thus conducted a pilot study of three months at the end of the first year in June-August 2009. During that time I made first contacts and conducted eight formal interviews as well as many informal discussions with policy-makers, NGOs, researchers working on related topics and members of civil society movements in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. I kept the questions asked fairly open with the objective of finding out what the most important transboundary and regional environmental concerns were and how they were being addressed (see appendices A-D for a sample interview outline, as well as the information provided to interviewees and a list of all interviews). During the pilot study I contacted some interviewees that dealt specifically with Mercosur, but I also spoke to several members of NGOs and international organisations that dealt with environmental issues more generally which allowed going beyond the Mercosur focus. Moreover, I spent a couple of days in Gualeguaychú, the Argentinean town that was at the centre of the protests against the pulp mills on the Uruguay River. During that time I engaged in group discussions with members of the protest movement and was shown several presentations and also attended the re-opening of the bridge between Argentina and Uruguay which had been blocked as part of the protests for several years.

What emerged from the pilot study was that Mercosur is neither the only forum addressing regional environmental concerns, nor the most important one. The pulp mill conflict in particular clearly demonstrated that there were important transboundary environmental issues with serious political implications that were not addressed in Mercosur at all. Instead I found that for the topic of shared rivers in the La Plata basin, for example, there were

several agreements, technical commissions and also projects with funding from the GEF. Clearly then there were initiatives for regional environmental cooperation that bypassed Mercosur completely. At the same time however, these different initiatives of environmental cooperation did not correspond very well to the environmental regimes described in the literature which usually addressed a relatively clearly defined environmental problem through regimes specifically designed for this issue. In fact, looking for the same forms of environmental cooperation that have been described in the Northern-centric literature on environmental regimes probably would have led to the conclusion that there is no environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone at all. Yet, the pilot study did provide examples of environmental cooperation, but these looked very different and were thus harder to classify.

Following the pilot study I thus decided to broaden the research question and consider Mercosur as one channel of regional environmental cooperation, but not the only one. Interestingly this decision has been confirmed by some more recent studies on both regional cooperation and regional environmental cooperation in South America, which have moved away from a focus on Mercosur and examined also Unasur and Alba (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America or *Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de nuestra América*) as new regional organisations following different integration logics (Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012b; Riggirozzi, 2012b) and Mercosur as only one form of regional environmental governance in South America amongst others such as the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (Hochstetler, 2011). This has retrospectively confirmed both the appropriateness of the methodological approach and the need to re-phrase the research question.

I thus reformulated the research question with two objectives in mind. As outlined before, one of the main observations from the pilot study was that regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone does not easily fit the categories established in previous studies on environmental cooperation. Consequently, the first objective was to provide an overview of environmental cooperation in the region and to understand the main characteristics. The second objective then aimed at understanding the dynamics driving regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone and examining why it takes particular forms or combinations of characteristics. The research question as it is formulated now addresses both of these objectives and thus makes an important

contribution towards understanding environmental cooperation in a region outside the global North.

However, moving away from the Mercosur focus also meant leaving very clear geographical boundaries behind. Following the pilot study I considered looking at South America as a whole rather than just the Southern Cone, in particular given that Unasur and Alba, the two newest regional organisations which were created in the new millennium, both take a South American perspective. However, I decided against this for several reasons. First, an analysis of the relevant websites and research articles showed that neither Unasur nor Alba address environmental concerns in much detail (Alba, 2013; Colombo and Roark, 2012; Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012b; Riggirozzi, 2012b; Secretaría General de la UNASUR, 2013). Although environmental concerns and sustainable development are sometimes mentioned, unlike Mercosur the two more recent regional organisations have not created institutional structures to address these. Instead, environmental issues are only touched on in passing and in relation to other issues, such as building a regional energy infrastructure. Although these two new regional organisations have thus undoubtedly played an important role in re-framing regional cooperation in South America, they have been much less relevant for environmental cooperation and this mostly takes place in other frameworks. This suggests that environmental cooperation takes place at the level of the different regions within South America rather than the much larger South American scale.

This is perhaps not surprising given that South America as a whole is a vast area with very different ecological systems and environmental problems, but also very distinct political dynamics in relation to environmental issues. Both the Amazon basin and the Andean range are very different from the Southern Cone in many of these aspects. Given the time frame and resources of the project as well as the fact that there was not a lot of existing research on regional environmental cooperation in South America to build on, looking at the whole of South America would have meant taking a rather superficial approach and running the danger of lumping together what are potentially very different approaches to regional environmental cooperation driven by different dynamics. Consequently I decided to keep the focus on the Southern Cone, but including neighbouring countries and referring to the wider South American context where this is relevant. As the pilot study had showed, there are different examples of environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone, yet these have received much less attention than the neighbouring Amazon region, making this a valuable case to study.

3.3.2 The case selection

The case study selection was of course another issue that needed to be considered in a different light with the re-phrasing of the research question. I decided to use a case study design as it allows for the detailed and in-depth analysis which I was looking for. The case selection required a careful navigation between the open-ended research question and methodological approach on the one hand and the importance of a thorough case selection on the other hand. As outlined in the first part of this chapter, the thesis directly builds on the case studies and therefore a solid basis for the selection was necessary, but grounded theory provides little guidance on the case study selection. In addition, I wanted to compare at least two different examples of regional environmental cooperation with different characteristics in order to get a broader view of the subject. Yet, the open phrasing of the research question meant that I had no clear criteria of different characteristics to select the cases on. Having done a thorough reading of the literature and conducted a first pilot study I decided to base the case selection on three different sources to make it systematic and comprehensive. Moreover, I set a few loosely defined criteria and thus looked for cases that addressed different environmental concerns or where there were differences in the institutional framework. With the subsequent analysis of the case study these initial loose criteria developed into two of the different characteristics that describe a form of environmental cooperation, i.e. the institutional framework and its political purpose, and the scope of issues addressed. The third element which relates to the way the geographical boundaries are drawn, did not play a role in the case selection, but emerged as a characteristic in the analysis later on. In addition, robustness emerged as an important criterion after the pilot study.

Given that regional environmental cooperation is marginal in the Southern Cone, many examples of regional environmental cooperation are not well-known beyond those directly involved in them and not always very visible. Consequently, it was important to use several different sources to select the cases. Moreover, during the pilot study I realised that various cross-border activities which make up cooperation in practice can and do often exist without formal cooperation through agreements by governments. At the same time many of these activities are highly dependent on external funding and thus vulnerable to stopping if a particular project with a donor stops. Conversely, there are also formal agreements with none or very little implementation which thus have few links with cooperation in practice. Consequently a crucial concern was to choose meaningful cases, i.e. cases where cooperation is likely to continue beyond an initial starting period, rather

than just empty agreements on paper that are barely implemented or development cooperation projects that run the risk of stopping as soon as funding runs out. I thus specified robustness as an additional criterion and decided to select only cases where there was evidence that regular activities of cooperation had become linked to agreements between governments. As set out in the previous chapter, robustness is not a binary category, but is best conceptualised as a continuum and different examples of cooperation can be more or less robust.

Moreover, because the aim of the thesis is to examine which forms of regional environmental cooperation exist in the Southern Cone and why cooperation has different combinations of characteristics, rather than explaining variation in success between cases, I did not select any cases of failed cooperation. In the field of environmental politics where other concerns frequently take precedence over environmental issues, understanding "why things sometimes go right" (Steinberg, 2003: 30) is important to improve outcomes. It is also more likely to yield new insights than explaining why other concerns were more important than environmental ones.

I based the case study selection on three different sources. The first one was the existing literature which pointed very much to Mercosur as discussed above. Second, the pilot study was crucial to get a perspective from interviewees in the region early on in the research process. From the pilot study it became clear that water and in particular transboundary rivers and underground water reserves are a very important environmental concern for the region which is addressed through a range of instruments including bilateral and multilateral treaties, technical commissions and development cooperation projects. Moreover, the topic is noteworthy because it is one of the few environmental issues that have led to an inter-state conflict in the Southern Cone in recent years, notably the pulp mill conflict between Argentina and Uruguay. While state-civil society disagreements over issues relating to land rights, natural resource use and socio-environmental issues are fairly common in South America and have been researched quite extensively (Bebbington, 2011; Haarstad, 2012), open conflicts between states over such issues are less common and transboundary environmental problems have so far not been a main driver for environmental cooperation (Hochstetler, 2011: 130).

Thirdly, in order to finalise my case study selection and to ensure it is systematic, following the pilot study I put together an overview of treaties with clear environmental components signed between South American countries between 1940 and 2008. This

overview was developed on the basis of the ECOLEX database (FAO et al., 2014), a comprehensive online database bringing together the environmental law information held by the FAO, UNEP and the IUCN. Further information on the search strategy I used for selecting the treaties that are relevant for my research question from the ECOLEX database and an overview of all treaties selected can be found in appendices E and F. When I was developing this overview I was still in the process of deciding whether to look at South America as a whole or only the Southern Cone. Similarly, the time frame of the thesis only emerged during the analysis as explained in more detail below. Consequently, I kept the scope of the treaty overview very broad looking at South America as a whole and including the full time scale available in the ECOLEX database.

Using the treaty overview as one of the sources was particularly useful to identify examples of formal cooperation. In the analysis of the treaty overview I also worked out how many treaties had been signed for different environmental issues which helped to identify clusters of agreements on similar issues (see Figure 3.1). The treaty overview clearly brought significant deductive elements into the case study selection, so that overall I used a hybrid approach to select the cases.

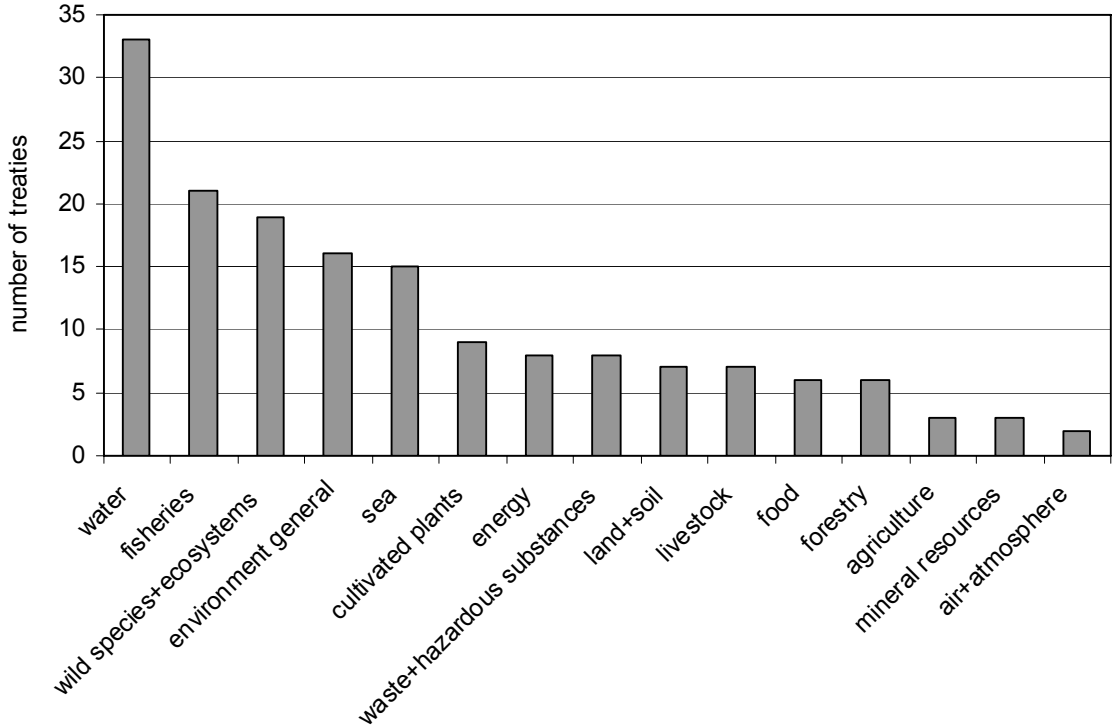

Figure 3.1: Number of treaties per subject (Source: Developed by author on the basis of the ECOLEX database (data extracted in November 2010). Note: The classifications are taken over from the ECOLEX database. One treaty can have more than one classification.)

The treaty overview confirmed the findings from the pilot study that water and in particular freshwater is a central concern for the Southern Cone and South America as a whole (see Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2). A further analysis showed that in most cases the topic is not addressed at the South American level, but rather at the scale where shared concerns relating to water arise. A cluster of agreements between Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Panama thus addressed issues relating to the Southeast Pacific and in many other cases agreements dealt with shared rivers, either at the bilateral level or the scale of the basin as a whole. This confirmed that as far as environmental cooperation is concerned the different regions within South America are a more appropriate level of analysis than South America as a whole. Moreover, it demonstrates how ecological criteria in some cases contribute to determining the boundaries of regional environmental cooperation.

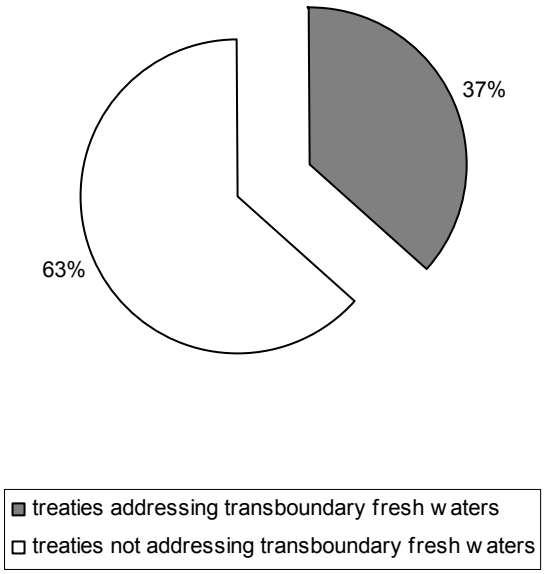

Figure 3.2: Breakdown of treaties addressing transboundary freshwater concerns (Source: Developed by author on the basis of the ECOLEX database (data extracted in November 2010). Note: This classification was not in the original ECOLEX database and I added it myself based on a reading of the description of each treaty in the database.

In the Southern Cone the La Plata basin clearly defines environmental cooperation on water with a number of treaties addressing either parts of the basin or the basin as a whole. These different agreements together with the technical commissions established by some of the treaties represent a resource regime. Moreover, I knew from the pilot study that there are also important examples of cooperation in practice for individual parts of the basin and the basin as a whole, notably different projects with funding from the GEF. Although

individual Southern Cone countries also engage in cooperation on the topic of water outside the La Plata basin - the Treaty on the Environment signed between Argentina and Chile in 1991 for example includes an additional protocol on shared water resources – the La Plata basin regime represents the most extensive and robust example of regional environmental cooperation on the topic of water in the Southern Cone.

In addition, the overview showed that a number of agreements were made relating to global environmental conventions, an issue that did not emerge as particularly prominent either from the existing literature or the pilot study. In particular, the CMS stands out with several agreements having been signed between South American countries since 2006 within the framework of this global environmental convention. This represents a notable new trend which I decided to follow up at the start of my second period of fieldwork. From the first interviews on this topic it became clear that this represented another example of robust regional environmental cooperation where the work of regional conservation networks, government officials and the CMS itself demonstrates significant examples of cooperation in practice in addition to the four agreements signed.

A second example are the recent cooperation efforts in relation to desertification. In 2007 Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay signed an agreement in relation to the Gran Chaco, an area of rich biodiversity shared by the three countries and suffering from desertification. The UNCCD also includes a regional coordination unit based in Santiago de Chile and there have been efforts to address desertification from a regional perspective. An example is the Gran Chaco Americano project between Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay (Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable de la Nación - Argentina n.d.; personal e-mail communication with UNCCD regional coordination unit Santiago, 2012). However, research at the start of the second period of fieldwork as well as follow-up research later on showed that cooperation in this case is less developed and much more dependent on one project. Consequently, I chose regional environmental cooperation in the framework of the CMS as a third case study as this represented the most robust example of regional cooperation in the framework of a global environmental convention. This third case study also contributed to the decision to keep the focus on the Southern Cone. Although the CMS is a global convention and most South American countries are members, the four agreements that were signed centred on the Southern Cone. Nevertheless, depending on the distribution of the different species, some neighbouring countries are also parties to the agreements. Again, this demonstrates how ecological criteria influence the boundaries of regional environmental cooperation.

Overall the case study selection thus had a solid basis consisting of a combination of three sources, the existing literature, the pilot study and a systematic treaty overview. These served to identify three of the most robust examples of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone; first, the regional organisation Mercosur and its approach to environmental issues; second cooperation in the framework of the La Plata basin regime consisting of a variety of treaties, technical commissions and projects; and third the Convention on Migratory Species and its implementation in the region. All three cases can be described as robust cooperation in the context of marginality where no new regimes have been created specifically for regional environmental concerns, there is a high dependence on external donors and agreements are often vague or non-binding. However, the three main characteristics, i.e. the scope of issues addressed, the institutional framework and its political purpose, and the way the membership is determined, vary. This makes each a distinct form of cooperation. As outlined above, the three case studies are examples of broader categories of environmental cooperation in the region and there are other examples for each category. However, I selected those three cases because they provided more evidence of links between formal cooperation and cooperation in practice and were thus more robust.

In addition, the process of the case study selection already indicated some of the issues that would become important in the analysis later on. During the pilot study it had become clear that environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone looked different from previous studies on environmental regimes and this impression was reinforced further during the analysis of the treaty database. One of the issues I found most challenging in working with the treaties I had selected from the ECOLEX database was the fact that these were frequently very hard to classify. The ECOLEX database lists all treaties that are somehow related to environmental concerns and then classifies them according to environmental topics with one treaty being allocated several topics if necessary. In a second step I attempted to put the treaties into one category only in order to determine which topics are addressed most often. The exercise demonstrated very clearly that many treaties in the Southern Cone address environmental concerns in addition to other objectives, but not necessarily as the primary focus. The treaty overview thus already indicated that regional environmental cooperation takes place in the margins of other cooperation efforts, but in order to understand how exactly this happens and what the differences are to other studies of environmental cooperation, a more detailed data collection and analysis were necessary.

Moreover, with the case selection and the subsequent analysis of the three cases, the temporal boundaries of the thesis also emerged more clearly. When I started the research I thus did not have a clear time frame in mind and that is why the treaty overview included all treaties listed in the ECOLEX database. The time frame, 1992-2012, emerged logically from the data as I realised that, although individual initiatives existed before, in all three case studies robust examples of regional environmental cooperation increased significantly from the early 1990s onwards following the return to democracy. This shows that there have been noteworthy changes over the last two decades even though regional environmental cooperation is still a marginal phenomenon. The two UN environmental summits held in Rio in 1992 and 2012 thus constitute good temporal markers for this research question.

3.3.3 Data collection and language issues

Following the case study selection I conducted a second extended period of fieldwork between February and July 2011 in order to gain more detailed information on the three cases. During this time I was based at FLACSO (*Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales* or Latin American Social Sciences Institute) Buenos Aires, a well-known Argentinean research institute, as a guest researcher. This enabled me to attend seminars, use the library and most importantly informally discuss my research and related topics with other researchers. My main method of data collection were semi-structured elite interviews with policy-makers, NGOs and researchers because such interviews are a useful tool for a researcher who is interested in how interviewees see the world around them (Burnham et al., 2004: 219). This time I contacted people who had been involved in particular in the three case studies selected with the objective of getting more information on those cases and understanding what led to regional environmental cooperation in each case and what this consisted of (see appendices A-C for a sample interview outline, as well as the information provided to interviewees). Table 3.1 below presents a breakdown of the interviews per case study. More detailed information can be found in appendix D. Altogether I conducted formal interviews with 57 people in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Most of these focussed specifically on one of the three case studies, but some interviews also addressed several topics. These are counted under all relevant categories and appendix D provides information regarding the overlaps. In addition, I also spoke to a few people who had a good knowledge on environmental politics in the region overall rather than on any specific case study and this helped to understand the broader picture better. These are shown in the fourth category. I also conducted one interview in

Germany at the CMS Secretariat and contacted the UNCCD Secretariat by e-mail. Overall, the case study on the La Plata basin regime clearly accounts for the largest number of people interviewed. This is a reflection of the many different actors who are involved in environmental cooperation in the basin. As chapter 7 shows in more detail, out of the three case studies, environmental concerns in the La Plata basin have sparked the most public interest with issues relating to the governance of the basin often affecting citizens very directly.

Mercosur	15
CMS	12
La Plata basin regime	27
General	12

Table 3.1: Number of people interviewed per topic

All the interviews were enormously helpful for understanding the topic better and there are direct references to many of them in chapters 4-7. Moreover, I also had several informal discussions with researchers or NGO representatives in all four countries which equally helped to understand the context of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone better, but these were less structured and are not included in the list of formal interviews.

In addition to the information gained directly from the interviews, many interviewees also provided me with documents or information of where to find important written documentation on the three case studies. Altogether I thus also examined over 150 written articles, including reports of NGOs, governments and international organisations as well as websites, newspaper articles and research reports. The majority of these were primary documents, but in a few cases interviewees also pointed me to secondary academic articles which I was not aware of, because they were published either in Spanish-language journals that I had not come across or in natural sciences journals[3]. I could find the most extensive primary documents on the case study on migratory species where the CMS as well as NGOs and government agencies have made extensive information available online. Moreover, some interviewees also provided me with articles directly. Overall, the CMS thus accounts for almost half of the written documents examined whereas Mercosur accounts for the least with the La Plata basin regime coming in the middle. However, out of the three case studies Mercosur, including environmental politics in Mercosur, have

[3] For the case studies on migratory species and the La Plata basin a few such articles were useful to understand the transboundary nature and the extent of the environmental problems better.

been examined most thoroughly in previous research whereas to my knowledge there are no studies on regional environmental cooperation in the framework of the CMS in South America. Combining interviews, documents and previous studies I was thus able to get a balanced view on the three cases. As for the interviews, the aim of the document analysis was to find out more about the origins of regional environmental cooperation in the three cases, who was involved and what cooperation consisted of. This document analysis was a crucial second source, but I would not have been able to find and access all this information without help from interviewees.

Finally, I also attended meetings where this was possible. In particular in relation to the CMS case study I attended a public one-day seminar and an evening presentation organised by an NGO network which gave me further insights into the topic and opportunities for informal discussions. This, together with the time spent in Gualeguaychú in relation to the pulp mill conflict during the pilot study, thus also brought participant observation and some ethnographic elements into the data collection. During the pilot study and the second period of fieldwork I also tried to observe some of the meetings of the Mercosur environment working group that took place in that time. However, although parts of these meetings are in principle also open to some outside observers, it was extremely difficult to get information about the exact timing of the meeting and the procedures for observers, so that I was not able to gain access.

In the Spanish-speaking countries I conducted most of the interviews in Spanish, but as my Portuguese is weaker than my Spanish I took the decision to conduct the interviews in Brazil in English or Spanish, depending on the preferences of the interviewee[4]. However, both Spanish and Portuguese are foreign languages for me and this brought up challenges, but also advantages. Although I had a good knowledge of Spanish when I started the interviews, this nevertheless meant that the interviews required more concentration. Even in your own language semi-structured interviewing is demanding and requires a high level of concentration because the researcher only has a set of loosely formulated questions or research topics which are adapted during the interview. This means the researcher has to take in and examine the answers given during the interview in order to formulate the next questions. The researcher thus has to understand the main points of what the interviewee is saying quickly in order to decide which aspects to follow up while at the same time

[4] A few interviews were also conducted in my native language German.

formulating new questions. Moreover, she has to direct the interview in order to ensure that all necessary topics are covered in the time available (Burnham et al., 2004: 210; Legard et al., 2003: 142, 147).

After the interviews a careful transcription and analysis was crucial in order to eliminate misunderstandings based on language as much as possible. I used several strategies in order to address these challenges and to ensure a reliable data collection and analysis. First, most interviewees agreed to have the interview recorded which made it much easier for me to keep a precise record of the discussion and go back to specific points when necessary. However, most of the interviews that for different reasons I was not able to record and sometimes not cite directly, related to the Mercosur case study, so that the analysis of the material for this case study is slightly more limited. Overall however, I recorded the majority of the interviews and then did a transcription of the interview straight into English. This enabled me to have a document in English to work with, but also spend some time on the translation in order to make sure that this is as accurate as possible. Second, I kept a fieldwork diary where I noted down impressions immediately after each interview. This also included writing down and looking up key words and making sure that I knew these for the next interview. I already started with this during the pilot study, so that I quickly built up the vocabulary or word pool necessary for this particular research topic. This made the interview process, but also the analysis much easier[5]. Finally, as mentioned before the interviews also served to identify relevant documents. During the first stages of the analysis I thus examined not only the interviews themselves, but also went in detail through all the documents and websites recommended by interviewees. This was an important source for triangulation and further helped to cross-check and eliminate possible language misunderstandings. Although most documents were also in Spanish or Portuguese I found analysing a document easier than conducting an interview as I could take as much time as I needed, use dictionaries throughout the process and ask native speakers for help if necessary. This also meant that although I had taken the decision not to do any interviews in Portuguese, I had no problems analysing documents in Portuguese.

Overall, I thus combined different strategies to ensure a reliable data collection and analysis. However, working in a foreign language means that all steps require considerably more time (Kruse et al., 2012: 52–53) and as a result I was not able to follow the grounded

[5] This strategy has also been recommended by other researchers working in foreign languages, see Kruse et al. 2012, 55.

theory approach as closely. Grounded theory stipulates that data is coded as soon as possible and that different codes are being compared and developed while the data is still being collected. In this way the theory gradually starts to emerge during the data collection. However, it was not possible for me to transcribe and translate all interviews in detail while still on fieldwork. As an alternative I thus transcribed interviews whenever this was possible and used the fieldwork diary to reflect on each interview and prepare the next ones. Moreover, I had a first look at the written information that interviewees recommended to me. On my return to Europe I then transcribed and translated all interviews in detail.

Despite these challenges working in a foreign language also had some advantages. First, it is important to remember that qualitative research and interviewing is always an interactive process which requires interpretation of the information given by interviewees. This means even in your native language there is the possibility to misunderstand or misinterpret information from interviews (Kruse et al., 2012: 64–65). However, because I was working in a foreign language I was much more aware of this possibility and therefore used different strategies to cross-check much more systematically than I probably would have done in my own language. In addition, making the effort to work in a foreign language can also be a way of demonstrating respect to interviewees rather than just expecting them to participate in the research on the researcher's terms. This in return can help the researcher to gain respect, so that using a foreign language can also help open doors for the research (Kruse et al., 2012: 44, 57). Whether this contributed to the high response rates for my interviews is impossible to know, but in my view it was important to make the effort to use and improve my Spanish not only for practical considerations, but also to demonstrate respect to the people I interviewed, many of whom would have been very well able to speak English.

3.3.4 From empirical data to theoretical concepts

Following the data collection and transcription of the interviews I went through all the information collected for each case study and wrote a first case study report as a synthesis of the empirical material. Following this I wrote several memos on the comparison of the three cases in order to examine the process of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone overall. One of the most important observations that emerged from this was that regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone is mostly driven by a combination of endogenous drivers, so different domestic nonstate actors as well as some

government officials and exogenous drivers, meaning international processes and actors from outside the region. This very rough and general framework was evident very quickly from the three case studies, but it also brought new questions. In particular, states and national governments seemed to be mostly absent as drivers for regional environmental cooperation. This was surprising in particular because the agreements that make up formal cooperation were in all three case studies agreed and signed by national governments. However, the empirical material did not provide much of an explanation for this apparent paradox, so that at this point it became crucial to go back to the existing literature and theoretical frameworks and compare these to my findings (Charmaz, 2006: 165).

In order to understand the role of states better it was necessary to examine two very different bodies of literature in more detail. On the one hand, I thus looked at studies arguing that states cannot be considered as unitary actors and need to be disaggregated into different components (Slaughter, 2004). This helped to understand the difference between the highest levels of governments which are setting the main priorities and strategies, and lower-level government officials who are often engaged in cooperation in practice and constitute an endogenous driver. On the other hand, I also needed to go back to the literature on South American politics, particularly in relation to environmental concerns and natural resource governance to understand what shaped national priorities and strategies. This means the first important observations emerged from the empirical data and were then compared to the existing literature in order to find explanations. One of the main challenges in this process was the fact that I needed to refer to different literatures which are usually not examined together and where few links exist. This is not unusual for grounded theory where researchers often have to refer to different fields and disciplines (Charmaz, 2006: 166). Grounded theory thus provides opportunities to discover and examine relationships between different literatures, but at the same time this can be challenging.

Although having a rough framework and a better understanding of the role of states was a crucial step, this nevertheless did not answer the research question fully. In order to do this much more work going back and forward between the empirical material and different literatures was necessary. I thus compared the three case studies in more detail in order to establish the characteristics of cooperation in each case and identify similarities and differences between the three cases. These corresponded well to the three dimensions developed by Balsiger and VanDeveer (2012), i.e. agency which refers to the type of coordinating or rule-making agency of a regional cooperation initiative; substance which

describes the scope of issues covered; and territoriality which outlines how the boundaries of a regional initiative are set. However, as outlined in the previous chapter it does not capture the level of robustness which is particularly important for many regions in the South. The concepts of marginality and robustness were thus developed on the basis of the empirical findings and the comparison of the three case studies presented in the thesis as well as an analysis of the studies on environmental cooperation in other regions of the South.

In terms of drivers for environmental cooperation a list of the different actors involved was relatively easy to establish. However, it proved more complex to identify under which conditions and over which elements of environmental cooperation the different actors have influence and how they relate to each other. Again, I compared the three cases with each other in detail and thus identified the aspects that are crucial to drive regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone forward and the processes through which this takes place. Overall, this constant process of comparing the three cases with each other and with other studies thus led to the development of the key concepts and relationships presented in the thesis.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the rationale for formulating the two-part research question in light of the existing literature and presented the hybrid methodological approach taken in order to address this research topic. Furthermore, it has outlined why an inductive approach building on grounded theory was most suitable for this particular topic and research question, but also acknowledged the deductive elements, most notably in the case selection. In addition, the chapter also aimed at providing transparency as to how the research was carried out and how the theoretical concepts were developed. The research process also uncovered the important role that the specific economic and political context has played in shaping regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone as well as an important tension which characterises all three case studies; the increase in regional environmental cooperation over the last two decades on the one hand and its continuing marginality on the other. The aim of the next chapter is to understand the processes that have led to this apparent paradox.

Chapter 4: Accounting for robust but marginal regional environmental cooperation: The political and economic context and regional relations in the Southern Cone

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the political and economic context in which regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone has taken place over the last two decades. The objective of the chapter is to examine why robust forms of regional environmental cooperation emerged from the 1990s onwards on the one hand, and why, on the other hand, they have remained marginal and did not become stronger. This puzzle is crucial to understand the apparent contradiction of robustness within marginality which provides the backdrop for all three case studies regardless of the differences in the characteristics and processes of environmental cooperation. The chapter argues that this puzzle can only be understood with reference to the specific political and economic context of the region and in particular two simultaneous processes; the return to democracy on the one hand and the strengthening of a development model based on export-driven growth and natural resource exploitation which leaves very little space for the consideration of environmental concerns on the other. This development model has heavily influenced policy-making at the national level as well as regional cooperation and it is followed by all the Southern Cone countries although there are of course some variations. Moreover, despite important political and economic changes over the last two decades the basis of the model, i.e. the reliance on the export of commodities for development, has remained in place. The marginality of regional environmental cooperation is thus an outcome of the development strategy adopted by governments and has been shaped much more by underlying political and economic considerations than any particular drivers for cooperation.

The chapter is structured in three parts. The first part covers the 1990s and examines the simultaneous impact of democratisation and neoliberal reforms. While the transition to democracy opened up political agendas and spaces and thus made the emergence of robust forms of regional environmental cooperation possible, by focusing on export-led growth

and business interests the neoliberal reform agenda limited how far regional environmental cooperation could advance and thus accounts for its marginality. The second part then turns to the progressive governments that have come to power during the 2000s and outlines the significant changes that these governments have introduced in relation to social concerns, but also the continuity when it comes to policies on natural resource exploitation and environmental governance. Consequently, regional environmental cooperation has remained marginal also under progressive governments. The final section then examines environmental concerns in the regional context by analysing examples of both cooperation and conflicts at the regional level as well as the role of Brazil, by far the largest country and regional power. It finds that natural resource exploitation plays a large role in determining regional relations too. Consequently, all the Southern Cone governments have tended to keep environmental concerns off regional agendas as much as possible, whether in conflict or cooperation.

4.2 The 1990s: Opening up space for regional environmental cooperation while keeping it in the margins

This section focuses on the decade of the 1990s and examines how the simultaneous processes of democratisation and neoliberal reforms impacted on regional environmental cooperation. I first outline how democratisation changed the preconditions in such a way that increased and robust regional environmental cooperation became possible. Yet, at the same time during the 1990s the central focus of policy-makers as well as international financial institutions was on export-driven economic growth with the assumption that this would also solve other concerns. Economic growth was to be achieved through a series of neoliberal reforms, notably opening up the markets and bringing in foreign investment while reducing the role and capacity of states.

As a consequence of this reform agenda the nascent forms of regional environmental cooperation could not develop into stronger forms of cooperation and thus remained marginal for several reasons. The shrinking of state budgets and responsibilities meant that although environmental institutions developed following democratisation, these were weak from the beginning and this accounts for the high dependence on external funding. Furthermore, the priority given to export-led growth and natural resource exploitation made governments reluctant to develop stronger environmental agencies or adopt

regulations or regional agreements which could present limitations to this growth strategy. This explains why governments did not create regimes dedicated specifically to regional environmental concerns and why many agreements remain vague or non-binding.

Finally, state-civil society relationships of course improved significantly with the end of the military dictatorships, but again this was shaped by the neoliberal reform agenda. Professional NGOs were thus able to gain prominent roles by providing services that the state no longer offered. Nevertheless, the extent to which civil society organisations could influence policy decisions in particular in relation to economic issues remained very limited. This means that although there were improvements in the relationship between states and civil society and this also benefitted regional environmental cooperation, the nature of the transition process limited how far these could advance and thus explains why environmental cooperation remained marginal.

4.2.1 Democratisation: making robust forms of environmental cooperation possible

The return to democracy of the Southern Cone countries in the 1980s had at least four important implications which paved the way for the emergence of robust forms of regional environmental cooperation. As set out before, robustness relates to the ability of cooperation to continue even when the external circumstances change. The thesis argues that regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone can be deemed robust if regular activities of cooperation, what I call "cooperation in practice" become linked to agreements between governments, that is formal cooperation. First, democratisation opened up the political space for different civil society groups which under the dictatorships had been excluded from the policy-making process and persecuted if they were seen to be opposing the military regimes. The return to democracy meant that civil society organisations and protest movements could develop without having to fear government authorities and this led to an expansion and strengthening of civil society organisations throughout the region (Grugel, 2009: 32; Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 130; Peters, 2011). This included environmental groups which also increased and gained more possibilities for influencing political processes (Hochstetler, 2012b; Mumme and Korzetz, 1997). Moreover, gradually information regarding environmental concerns became available allowing environmental groups to present a stronger case (Barton, 1999: 199). Environmental groups were further strengthened by the Rio Summit in 1992 where Latin American NGOs had a strong presence. The summit also helped to promote the

development of regional environmental NGO networks (Espach, 2006: 64; Friedman et al., 2001; Hochstetler, 2003: 26). Exchanges of information between different civil society organisations in the region and coordinated actions in relation to putting pressure on governments as well as carrying out conservation measures are all crucial elements of regional environmental cooperation in practice. This means the increased possibilities for civil society activity which democratisation brought and the changes in the relationship between the state and civil society also encouraged regional environmental cooperation.

Second, democratisation also opened up opportunities for restructuring existing institutions and including new issues on the political agenda, such as environmental concerns. Brazil was exceptional as it had already developed domestic environmental institutions under military rule. However, Argentina's military regime in fact abolished the environmental agency that had been created earlier and neither Paraguay nor Uruguay created any domestic environmental institutions in that time period. This changed with the return to democracy and during the 1990s the Southern Cone countries significantly developed and strengthened their domestic environmental institutions and legislation (Hochstetler, 2003, 2005: 353–356, 2012b: 213–222). For example, in both Argentina and Paraguay environmental concerns were included in constitutional reforms. Argentina's constitutional reform in 1994 thus set out that it is the responsibility of the national state to establish minimum standards for environmental protection whereas it is the responsibility of the provinces to pass more detailed corresponding legislation according to the characteristics of each province in order to implement the minimum standards (Bueno, 2010: 124–126; 152–154; Devia, 1998b; Di Paola and Rivera, 2012: 16–18). In Paraguay an environmental programme was set out in the new constitution of 1992 (Díaz Labrano, 1998; Hochstetler, 2003: 10) and a number of environmental laws relating to topics such as environmental impact assessments, eco-crimes, forestry or wildlife were passed in the 1990s. In addition the start of the new millennium saw the creation of a new Environment Secretariat charged with the development of policies as well as the implementation of plans and programmes (Facetti, 2002: chap. 4 and 5). Uruguay developed basic legislation on environmental issues during the 1990s using loans from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) while Brazil introduced new legislation on environmental crimes in 1998 which raised the penalties for pollution considerably (Hochstetler, 2003: 8–9).

Third, the new democratic governments were keen to gain recognition by the international community and participating in international environmental politics and accepting international environmental norms was one way of achieving this. As Finnemore and

Sikkink (1998: 902–906) explain, the wish to foster a certain state identity and become part of a group of states are powerful incentives to comply with dominant international norms. Moreover, international legitimation also increases domestic legitimacy and both are particularly important in periods of domestic turmoil and uncertainty. States that are insecure with regards to their international recognition can thus be expected to have a high motivation to adhere to international norms. It is not surprising then that in an effort to strengthen their position domestically and internationally the newly democratic Southern Cone governments opened up to international environmental norms. Brazil and Argentina also sought to demonstrate their commitment to environmental concerns by hosting important international events, the 1992 UN conference in Rio de Janeiro and the Buenos Aires round of climate change negotiations in 1998 (Hochstetler, 2002: 40–41, 2005: 356). Both of these aspects, the development of domestic environmental institutions and the commitment to international environmental norms are important in terms of promoting formal regional environmental cooperation, namely written and public agreements between governments in the region on shared environmental concerns.

Moreover, governments also became more open towards the involvement of international donors for environmental purposes and since the 1990s important environmental projects funded by international assistance have been implemented in all Southern Cone countries (Hochstetler, 2005: 355–356). Projects with external donors are another important element which strengthens cooperation in practice and in all three case studies this has become linked to formal cooperation. In the La Plata basin from the 1990s onwards six large environmental projects have been carried out and all but one involved at least two countries. During the same time period the riparian countries signed several agreements which included environmental concerns. Mercosur too, received significant external funding for environmental projects and this also encouraged the signing of several environmental agreements or declarations in the framework of the regional organisation. Finally, in the case of the CMS funding has come from many different sources and been mostly channelled through environmental NGOs in the region. These have cooperated closely with governments and encouraged the signing of four memoranda of understanding between Southern Cone and some neighbouring countries under the umbrella of the CMS.

Finally, the return to democracy also encouraged more regional cooperation in general. The most obvious example of this was the creation of Mercosur in 1991, but the more cooperative climate also extended to other issues, such as joint projects in the La Plata basin (Elhance, 1999: 35–36; Kaltenthaler and Mora, 2002; Tussie and Vásquez, 2000).

This also had repercussions for environmental cooperation. The number of treaties with environmental components signed between South American countries thus increased substantially in the 1990s (see Figure 4.1). Although individual initiatives of course existed before, overall the early 1990s thus marked the start of increased regional environmental cooperation in practice and in formal terms. This was strongly shaped by changes in domestic politics, most importantly the return to democracy and the political openings that this brought as well as greater openness towards international norms and processes.

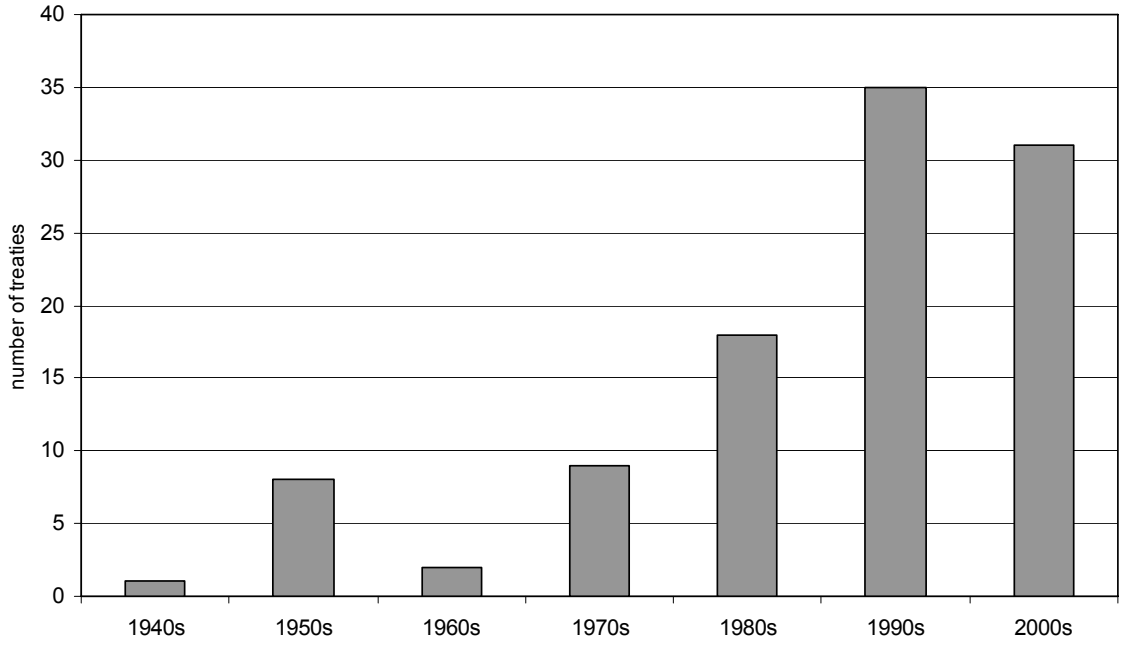

Figure 4.1: Number of treaties with environmental components signed between South American countries per decade (source: Developed by author on the basis of the ECOLEX database (data extracted in November 2010))

4.2.2 The neoliberal reform agenda: keeping regional environmental cooperation in the margins

However, the 1990s were shaped not only by the process of democratisation, but also by neoliberal reforms and structural adjustment packages which were promoted by governing elites throughout South America under strong pressure from international financial institutions, notably the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as the US government (Gwynne and Kay, 2000). The central idea was that market opening while reducing state spending would lead to economic growth and at the same time strengthen democracy (Grugel, 2009: 33). Democratisation thus took place in the context of neoliberal reforms and this significantly shaped the nature of the transition process. It

also meant that although following democratisation robust forms of regional environmental cooperation developed in several areas, these could not gain more than a marginal position in regional cooperation. As set out before, marginality of regional environmental cooperation is characterised by an absence of new regimes created specifically for regional environmental concerns; a high dependence on external funding; and the vague or non-binding nature of agreements. This section examines the different ways in which neoliberal reforms and the nature of the transition process contributed to the marginalisation of the nascent forms of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone.

First, a central element of the neoliberal reform agenda was the reduction of state capacity and responsibilities in an effort to cut down on government spending and reduce corruption. This went hand in hand with a strengthening of the private sector and in particular large-scale transnational corporations. This was closely related to a second important element of the neoliberal reform agenda which was the focus on export-led growth and natural resource exploitation. Governments in Southern Cone and all over South America, thus carried out a series of measures aimed at opening up the markets, cutting external tariffs and bringing foreign investors into sectors of the economy that had been closed up till then, including public utilities and natural resources (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2012: 4; Grugel, 2009: 32–33; Gwynne and Kay, 2000). This was very evident in the mining, oil and gas sectors where a series of reforms, including privatisation, lower taxes and more labour flexibility were implemented with the aim of attracting investors and sometimes complemented with agreements guaranteeing extremely favourable conditions (Hogenboom, 2012a: 135–140). Neoliberal policies also extended to other types of natural resources and in many countries included the privatisation of water management, both in relation to rivers and hydropower installations and in relation to sanitation and the provision of drinking water (Wickstrom, 2008). As discussed in more detail below economic reforms also affected agriculture and forestry, two sectors which are specific to the large plains and rivers of the Southern Cone, but less prominent in other parts of South America. Overall, using their comparative advantage in this area South American countries thus relied increasingly on exports of commodities for economic growth (Green, 1999; Murray, 1999) although this trend was less prominent in Brazil which had a more developed industrial base and a lower reliance on exports for growth (Burges, 2009).

A context where natural resource exploitation and export-led growth as well as a strengthening of business interests were central elements in the development model adopted was not favourable to the development of stronger forms of regional

environmental cooperation. While neoliberal policies thus prioritised economic growth and business interests, environmental regulations were seen as obstacles which might limit growth or lead to opposition by business. In a development model oriented to such an extent towards economic growth there was little political will to create strong environmental agencies or develop more stringent regulations (Barton, 1999: 195–196). This meant that, although following democratisation, governments in the Southern Cone and all over South America, created new environmental institutions, these never became very strong and often did not have the capacity to carry out their mandates. Moreover, they remained considerably less powerful than other state agencies and ministries in terms of their budgets and resources (Barton, 1999: 195; Gwynne and Silva, 1999: 159–160; Mumme and Korzetz, 1997: 53–54). Furthermore, although countries in the region strengthened their environmental legislation serious shortcomings remained. This included the adoption of legislation for symbolic reasons only as well as a lack of implementation and high barriers for citizens and environmental groups who wished to refer to environmental legislation to build a court case (Mumme and Korzetz, 1997: 51–52). All of this seems to suggest that the commitment to the newly created environmental agencies and regulations was only half-hearted and perhaps driven less by a concern to address environmental problems effectively than to improve the reputation of governments at the domestic and international level.

Overall, democratisation was thus important in making increased and more robust forms of regional environmental cooperation possible, but the particular conditions in which the transition took place meant that the conditions for the creation of stronger forms of regional environmental cooperation were extremely unfavourable and in some cases this had direct impacts on cooperation. The initial report for a shared project on the Rio de la Plata between Argentina and Uruguay for example noted as one of the problems the reduced capacity of state agencies for monitoring and controlling environmental problems in the river as a result of the state reforms of the 1990s (FREPLATA, 2005: 206).

Third, the nature of the transition process also shaped state-civil society relations in a particular way and as set out in chapter 2 this is one of the elements which influence the level of robustness of regional environmental cooperation. This is due to the division between the two aspects of regional environmental cooperation where governments are necessary for formal agreements whereas civil society organisations are often important actors in cooperation in practice. With the end of the military dictatorships and repression, state-civil society relations of course changed considerably. Most notably, the antagonism

between civil society and state authorities which had characterised the dictatorships started to break up and was replaced by new, more complex relationships. In particular, professional NGOs gained prominent positions in neoliberal democracies and increasingly worked together with governments to provide services that the state no longer offered (Taylor, 1999; Tedesco, 1999). To some extent, cooperation between governments and NGOs thus improved and this is of course important to link formal agreements with regular activities and thus achieve robust forms of regional environmental cooperation. However, the reliance on external funding and sources of support for regional environmental cooperation rather than assuming full responsibility is also one of the key reasons for its marginality.

Moreover, there were again limitations in how far state-civil society relations could improve in the context of neoliberal reforms. In fact, promoting NGOs as service providers has meant that organisations focussed more on solving practical problems than political activity or ideological questions (Taylor, 1999: 142). In addition, although the assumption was that liberalised markets would strengthen democracy, neoliberal reforms were in fact carried out in a top-down manner with very little popular consultation. Even though democratisation strengthened civil society, this rarely led to any real influence over the political agenda, in particular in relation to economic questions (Grugel, 2001: chap. 8, 2009: 32–33). Instead economic reforms were carried out on the basis of a consensus between domestic and international economic and political elites. Domestic and transnational business groups who were involved in the export sector or the privatisation processes were important sources of investment and legitimacy for governments and consequently had good access to decision-makers while other groups and their points of view were sidelined (Grugel, 2009: 36; Phillips and Buxton, 1999: 2–3; Phillips, 1999: 86). Many South American citizens on the other hand saw the privatisation of natural resources as unfair as they believed that the mineral wealth of their countries should benefit the people rather than foreign investors (Hogenboom, 2012a: 137–139; Perreault, 2008). Moreover, it was the elites that mostly reaped the benefits of economic growth while the poor suffered from increasing unemployment and insecurity as well as the cut-backs in state welfare programmes. Latin America as a whole thus averaged poverty rates of about 40 per cent during the 1990s and in Argentina unemployment rates reached almost 20 percent by 2002 (Green, 1999: 22; Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2012: 4–5). While there are important differences between countries, the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s have deepened inequality and economic and political exclusion in many cases and reinforced distrust of the state (Grugel, 2001; Gwynne and Kay, 2000).

On the whole this means that state-civil society relations did open up, but in a very selective way with deep divisions remaining. Civil society organisations and in particular professional NGOs were able and encouraged to take over some of the functions of the state, but decision-making remained dominated by economic and political elites in particular in relation to economic questions, such as natural resource governance. This meant the possibilities of civil society to challenge the basis of the development model for example by promoting stronger environmental regulations or more specific regional agreements remained limited. Overall, democratisation was thus crucial in setting the preconditions for robust forms of regional environmental cooperation, but the nature of the transition process restricted how far these could advance and thus explains why they remained marginal.

4.3 Reinforcing marginality: The difficult relationship of progressive governments and environmental concerns in the 2000s

Social unrest and protests against the neoliberal reform agenda had simmered throughout the 1990s and erupted spectacularly in Argentina in 2001 in the midst of hyperinflation and an economic crisis that also impacted on neighbouring countries. Protestors demanded that their interests also be represented by political leaders and governments and asked for a new democratic pact and a different model of citizenship (Grugel, 2009: 37–42). Middle-class and low-income protestors united under the slogan “Que se vayan todos” (Out with all of them) and toppled several governments over the course of only a few weeks (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2007; Prevost, 2012). Meanwhile in neighbouring Bolivia the governance of natural resources became the focus of popular opposition. Here, protests against the privatisation of water in the city of Cochabamba in 2000, the so-called “water wars”, became so strong that they succeeded in reversing the policy. Three years later, widespread protests shook the whole country and brought down the president at the time, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. The cause this time was the privatisation of gas which the government defended heavy-handedly and which gave extremely favourable conditions to foreign investors, but very few benefits for the Bolivian state and population. These events paved the way for the election of Evo Morales, the country’s first indigenous president, in 2005 (Crabtree, 2009: 95–96; Perreault, 2008; Wickstrom, 2008).

In the course of the 2000s dissatisfaction with the policies of previous governments brought Leftist governments to power in a majority of South American countries and in all the Southern Cone countries. Consequently, in 2009 about three-quarters of South America in terms of territory and 80 per cent of its population was governed by different types of Leftist governments (Gudynas, 2009: 189). In the largest country, Brazil, Luiz Inácio da Silva (Lula), the leader of the Worker's Party and a former industrial worker, won the presidency in 2002 and was re-elected for a second term in 2006. Not being able to run for president a third time, Lula then supported Dilma Rousseff who won the presidential elections in 2010. In Uruguay Tabaré Vásquez of the *Frente Amplio* coalition bringing together several Leftist parties, was elected in 2004. Five years later he was succeeded by José Mujica, a former member of the left-wing Tupamaro guerrilla who had been imprisoned under the military dictatorship. In Argentina Néstor Kirchner brought the Peronist Party back to its original centre-left position and won the presidential elections of 2003. This was followed by the election of his wife Cristina Fernández de Kirchner of the same party in 2007 and 2011. Finally, in Paraguay the election of Fernando Lugo, a former bishop and defender of liberation theology[6], in 2008 ended over 60 years of conservative rule by the Colorado Party. However, Lugo's presidency came to a premature end with his impeachment in 2012 in which disputes relating to land rights and natural resource governance played a key role, as discussed below. There are of course many differences and nuances in the positions and policies of this wave of Left and centre-left governments, also called the "pink tide", and these have been discussed in numerous works (see for example Cannon and Kirby, 2012b; Castañeda, 2006; Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2009; Lievesley and Ludlam, 2009; Prevost et al., 2012). Yet, their approach to environmental concerns has received relatively little attention, certainly in the English-language literature. This is perhaps a testimony to the continuity from neoliberal policies which has marked environmental governance more than anything else and which contrasts with the visible changes and sometimes strong rhetorical positions in social and foreign policy.

This section examines regional environmental cooperation under the progressive governments that have come to power during the first decade of the new millennium. In particular it seeks to understand why regional environmental cooperation has remained marginal while many important political advances have been made on other issues, most

[6] Liberation theology is a progressive movement of the Roman Catholic Church that started in Latin America in the 1960s and promotes profound reforms to address the causes of political, economic and social injustice. For Lugo's role in the Catholic Church, see O'Shaughnessy and Ruiz Díaz 2009.

notably in relation to social concerns. The lack of progress on environmental concerns also seems surprising given that before coming to power the Left frequently criticised the social and environmental impact of natural resource exploitation and economic development based on export-driven growth. Reasons for this criticism included the local impact of extractive industries and agribusiness, the poor working conditions or the marginalisation of peasants and small agricultural producers vis-à-vis the growing power of large and often foreign companies, as well as economic arguments, notably the dependency on exports and the vulnerability to world market prices of commodities over which the exporting countries have little influence (Gudynas, 2009: 188–189, 2010a: 38–39, 2010c: 66).

In this section I argue that the continuing marginality of regional environmental cooperation is the by-product of two important objectives of progressive governments. A first crucial priority of progressive governments was thus to keep their election promises and address urgent social needs. This provides the basis for their legitimacy and, with the exception of Paraguay, the stability of these governments and their re-election. However, in order to secure stability, it is not only important to keep citizens and the majority of the electorate content, but also not to alienate powerful international and domestic business elites. Although out of all the Southern Cone countries Paraguay is the weakest democracy and therefore not fully representative for the region, the impeachment of Fernando Lugo nevertheless gives an idea of the significant obstacles that elite opposition can pose for progressive governments. The need to satisfy elite interests is thus an important second objective.

By continuing the strategy of natural resource exploitation and export-led growth which was installed by previous neoliberal governments, the progressive governments of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay have managed to achieve both of these objectives. On the one hand, natural resource exploitation has thus not only continued, but even increased. Moreover, in many cases policies reflect the preferences of economic elites, most notably agri-business. On the other hand, progressive governments have also introduced some changes in order to address urgent social needs and this has led to a change of discourse in favour of intensive natural resource exploitation (Gudynas, 2009: 213). In particular, they have increased the role of the state in natural resource governance and used rents from these sectors for much needed social programmes. Export-led growth and natural resource exploitation have thus become the basis for economic *and social* development. Again, this is a general trend that reflects developments all over South America, although there are of course variations between countries and sectors (Gudynas, 2010b, 2010c; Hogenboom and

Fernández Jilberto, 2009; Hogenboom, 2012a). Gudynas (2009) thus refers to the *neo-extractivismo* (neo-extractivism) of the pink tide governments which combines old practices of natural resource exploitation with new social policies and a stronger role of the state. These in turn have led to important progress on social concerns and consequently provide an important pillar of the legitimacy and popularity of progressive governments.

Neo-extractivism as a development strategy has thus made it possible for progressive governments to keep their election pledges on the one hand and avoid alienation of powerful business elites on the other. However, one of the consequences has been the continuing marginality of regional environmental cooperation. Formally progressive governments have maintained a commitment to environmental concerns and consequently the Southern Cone countries have also signed new agreements and declarations on shared environmental concerns, for example in relation to the Guaraní aquifer and various groups of migratory species. Moreover, domestic civil society groups, some government officials as well as donors have continued to work towards regional environmental cooperation as set out in more detail in the three case study chapters. This means some examples of robust forms of regional environmental cooperation continue to develop, but these also remain marginal. Like their neoliberal predecessors progressive governments have thus been hesitant to allow limitations to natural resource exploitation on which so many of their successful policies are built. Consequently, regional environmental cooperation remains highly dependent on external support and agreements that have been signed by progressive governments also lack specific guidelines and commitments. Moreover, an analysis of environmental politics in the region reveals that although state-civil society relationships have changed somewhat with progressive governments being more sympathetic towards some social movements, this has not translated into effective institutionalised channels for participation in decision-making on natural resource governance. Instead, decision-making on natural resource governance remains fairly closed and governments have rejected discussions questioning the basis of the development model. On a political level critical groups have thus found themselves isolated. This means that those groups who are in favour of strengthening regional environmental cooperation only have very limited influence over decision-making on natural resource governance.

This section first examines the processes driving neo-extractivism in more detail and gives an overview of three key sectors to provide evidence of the increase in natural resource exploitation and the continuing resistance to stronger regulations on the part of governments. Following on from this it examines why neo-extractivism is crucial for

progressive governments to achieve their objectives and remain in power, looking at both, social programmes which benefit the poorer sections of the population and policies that satisfy elite demands.

4.3.1 Neo-extractivism in the Southern Cone

After the economic crisis at the start of the millennium the Southern Cone countries have benefitted from sustained economic growth during the 2000s which in many ways has been the result of a continuation of policies from the 1990s. Like South America as a whole, all the Southern Cone countries have thus continued to increase natural resource exploitation in order to achieve economic growth through commodity exports. Increasing demand for commodities from Asia and China in particular, has led to high global prices for commodities, benefitting South American exports and resulting in high growth rates (Fernández Jilberto and Hogenboom, 2010). At the same time, this has reinforced the position of South American countries as providers of primary commodities in the global economy. Over the last decade the proportion of primary commodities in the total exports has thus doubled in Latin America and currently makes up 65 percent for the Southern Cone countries (Blanke, 2013: 1). Although it has the most diversified economy and export sector in the region this trend is also valid for Brazil. As a consequence of the growing importance of China as a trading partner the proportion of primary products in Brazil's total exports thus increased from 22.8 to 43.4 percent during the first decade of the new millennium (Hochstetler, 2013: 40, 42). Neo-extractivism also includes the new forms of agricultural production, notably soybean, that have developed in the Southern Cone since the 1990s because it shares many of the key characteristics of the traditional extractive industries. These are large-scale extraction processes to export high volumes of resources with very little or no processing (Gudynas, 2010a: 40). In the Southern Cone natural resource exploitation and the resultant environmental degradation and socio-environmental problems have thus increased in three key sectors. At the same time progressive governments have hesitated to address socio-environmental concerns and in several cases changed their position compared to when they were in opposition.

Most notably, agricultural production, which has always been one of the main sectors of the economies in the Southern Cone, has changed significantly since the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s. Following market liberalisation large agribusinesses increasingly took over agricultural production in sectors where profits could be expected (Gudynas, 2008: 514; Newell, 2008b: 347; Robinson, 2008: 88). In large parts of Argentina, Bolivia,

Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay this led to an explosion of soybean plantations since the 1990s. Soybean exports have become highly profitable because of high global demand for biodiesel as well as animal feed with rising demands in particular from China. Soybean has thus become the most important agricultural export of the Southern Cone countries. Brazil and Argentina have become the second and third largest producers of soybean globally while Paraguay has the largest share of land used for soybean (Gudynas, 2008: 513; Lapitz et al., 2004; Newell, 2008b: 347–348; Robinson, 2008: 84). This trend clearly started with neoliberal governments, but against the expectations of some activists, in particular the landless workers' movements, it also continued under progressive governments who had previously criticised this type of agricultural production (Gudynas, 2010a: 38).

Brazil thus adopted GM (genetically-modified) technology which transnational agricultural companies, such as Monsanto, strongly pushed for under the progressive Lula government. Moreover, following his election victory Lula introduced some changes, but overall took a far more moderate approach on the question of land reform than he had advocated previously, thus disappointing the hopes of the landless movement (Branford, 2009; Newell, 2008b; Vanden, 2012). In neighbouring Argentina the Leftist Kirchner governments have also promoted large-scale industrial agriculture and the use of GM technology (Gudynas, 2010a: 49). In Uruguay too, the export boom has led to a strengthening of multinational corporations resisting political changes, and the widespread use of biotechnology with all soybean grown in Uruguay being genetically-modified (Thimmel, 2010b: 104; Zibechi, 2010: 110). Meanwhile environmental degradation further increases and socio-environmental conflicts continue. The increase in agricultural production over the last two decades has thus led to an expansion of the agricultural frontier, with soybean plantations either directly pushing into new areas, such as the Brazilian Cerrado, one of the biologically richest savannas in the world, (Wolford, 2008), or displacing traditional activities, notably cattle-ranching, and pushing these into new areas (Gudynas, 2008: 514). These processes have led to large-scale deforestation as well as conflicts over land between peasants and indigenous communities on the one hand and agribusiness on the other (Cardozo, 2009; Segovia, 2009; Yanosky, 2013). What is worse, the spraying of chemicals from fumigation planes also affects inhabited areas and has severe consequences on human health (Branford, 2013; Gudynas, 2008: 514; Robinson, 2008: 89; Wandscheer, 2009).

Forest monocultures and the production of pulp for the paper industry which has expanded in parts of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay have followed a similar path. This

development was initiated by neoliberal policies, but also continues under progressive governments, as the cases of Chile and Uruguay demonstrate. In Chile the neoliberal policies of the Pinochet dictatorship started to make the forestry industry into one of the main pillars of the economy. This continued also under democratic governments and since the 1990s the sector has expanded exponentially supported by the IMF and the World Bank and promoted with policies of privatisation as well as direct and indirect subsidies, such as tax exemptions (Cuenca, 2005; Ortiz et al., 2005: 44–46). Uruguay followed a similar path about a decade later and has since become a new key location for the pulp industry. Under the conservative government of President Sanguinetti, the first elected president after the military dictatorship, the country approved a law on forestry in 1987 declaring the forestry sector a national interest and establishing extremely favourable conditions for foreign investors including state subsidies and tax exemptions. These were reinforced with a bilateral investment agreement between Uruguay and Finland in 2004 which some interviewees have regarded as "neo-colonial" (interview, civil society representative, Buenos Aires, 2010). Since the 1980s both, monocultures of trees for the industry as well as pulp mills have increased significantly in Uruguay. While in opposition the Left-wing *Frente Amplio* sided with environmentalists and criticised the construction of a large pulp mill on the Uruguay River (Berardo and Gerlak, 2012: 107), but once in government it did not fundamentally alter policies in relation to the pulp industry. In 2005 the new left-wing government thus made minor changes to the neoliberal policies from the previous decade and stopped direct subsidies to the sector, but the tax exemptions remained in place. Moreover, the construction plans of new pulp mills in Uruguay have continued also under progressive governments (Achkar et al., 2005; García Duchini, 2005; Thimmel, 2010a, 2010b: 103–104; Zibechi, 2005). Gudynas (2010b: 154) notes that in the 2009 election environmental concerns did not feature at all in the programme of the governing *Frente Amplio* coalition.

Like large-scale industrial agriculture, this sector is also based on monocultures and the usage of high levels of chemicals as pesticides and fertilisers. Moreover, it generates little employment and working conditions are often poor. In addition, the trees planted for the pulp industry are usually non-endemic species which require large amounts of water in order to grow, thus putting strains on water availability. Moreover, pulp mills pollute the rivers on which they operate through industrial discharges which can only to some extent be mitigated by using better technology (Achkar et al., 2005; Contreras, 2005; Ramírez and Baigorri, 2009).

Thirdly, reflecting developments in the Andean countries the mining sector too has continued to expand under progressive governments in the Southern Cone. This manifests itself in increased production in countries such as Brazil and Argentina as well as moving into new areas. These include frontier areas, such as the large-scale Pascua Lama project between Argentina and Chile as well as countries where mining is being established as a new sector, such as Uruguay (Gudynas, 2009: 191; Saguier, 2012b: 127). Again, these trends started during the 1990s, Argentina and Chile for example signed a bilateral mining treaty in 1997 (Saguier, 2012a, 2012b: 129), and continued during the 2000s. In Argentina, for example, investments in mining went up by 740 percent between 2003 and 2009 (Saguier, 2012b: 127). Unlike the agricultural sector and paper industry in the Southern Cone which have received less attention, the negative impact of the traditional extractive industries, including mining, in terms of water, air and land pollution is notorious and struggles against such projects all over South America have been examined in various studies (see for example Bebbington 2011; Haarstad 2012; Hogenboom 2012b).

These three examples show that in the Southern Cone, like the rest of South America, natural resource exploitation and commodity exports have continued to flourish also under the progressive governments on the 21st century. Moreover, like their neoliberal predecessors progressive governments have been extremely hesitant to introduce stronger regulations or policies which might limit production and economic growth. Socio-environmental concerns tend to be addressed only inconsistently and on an ad hoc basis in response to protests, as examined in more detail in the next section. Consequently, regional environmental cooperation has remained marginalised also under progressive governments. The reasons for this lie in the importance of export-driven growth for a number of policies and programmes which form the basis for the legitimacy and stability of progressive governments. The next section thus examines how neo-extractivism serves as a strategy to address urgent social needs while keeping business elites content. It also examines the case of Paraguay where the Leftist President Lugo was not able to find a compromise with elites and this ultimately brought down his government and led to his impeachment.

4.3.2 Fulfilling electoral promises while responding to elite interests

Revenues from the commodity sector have been a central element that made social programmes possible and thus allowed progressive governments to address some of their

most urgent priorities. In Argentina a 20 percent tax on exports of agricultural commodities and hydrocarbons was thus crucial to fund social emergency programmes following the 2001 crisis (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2007: 96; Riggirozzi, 2009: 104). Overall, soybean exports were a central element in Argentina's impressive economic recovery after the crisis at the start of the millennium (Newell, 2009: 51; Robinson, 2008: 86). Moreover, the high commodity prices and increased revenues helped Brazil and Argentina to pay back their debts to the IMF before the deadlines, thus making them independent of the policy prescriptions of international financial institutions (Hogenboom and Fernández Jilberto, 2009: 94; Hogenboom, 2012a: 149). In Argentina the reduced debt burden in combination with the commodity boom helped to advance on important social issues and increase spending on health, education and housing (Prevost, 2012: 27–28). Revenues from taxes on GM soybean exports were also important for social programmes such as the *Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogar* providing monthly support to unemployed heads of households (Newell, 2009: 32; Riggirozzi, 2009: 105). In Uruguay and Brazil too, governments used the strengthened economy to expand social programmes (Gudynas, 2009: 208; Zibechi, 2010: 107–108). Under the *Bolsa Familia* programme the Lula government thus extended social spending to over 11 million families, providing financial support under the condition that children attend school (Branford, 2009: 161; Burges, 2009: 207). On the whole, neo-extractivism has thus served as a strategy for economic and social development. In this view, the environment is thus seen as a resource to be exploited in order to address social needs. Social programmes in turn are crucial for progressive governments to keep their election promises and provide the basis of their political legitimacy and popularity (Gudynas, 2009: 213). With the exception of Paraguay progressive governments have thus been re-elected in all the Southern Cone countries.

In addition, the continuation of natural resource exploitation with very few limitations has allowed progressive governments to respond to the demands of economic elites and in particular the business groups linked to the export sector. Progressive governments in turn needed elite cooperation to gain stability and make social programmes possible. As Grugel (2007b, 2009: 29) argues, Latin America has seen much less of a transformation of elite mentalities than Europe. Instead, elites have been extremely reluctant to accept the notion that the state should assume responsibility in relation to the welfare of citizens and oppose principles of political equality, welfare and social inclusion. This means elite opposition can pose serious obstacles for progressive policies and this makes it important for Leftist governments to secure at least a minimum of support. Neo-extractivism as a development strategy thus offers ways of making some progress on social concerns while responding to

elite interests. The following section demonstrates how business elites have shaped policies on natural resource governance by using a combination of lobbying decision-makers, shaping public opinion and direct pressure on governments.

In Brazil the influence of domestic and international business elites together with the media already became evident during the 2002 election. Foreign media, a US financial speculator and the opposition candidate thus all warned of economic chaos in case Lula won the presidential elections. This was one of the reasons why Lula decided to reassure economic and financial elites at home and abroad by continuing the economic policies of his predecessors (Branford, 2009: 156–157). More specifically in relation to natural resource governance, the agribusiness sector has been successful in building strong ties with policy-makers under progressive governments in all the Southern Cone countries. In Argentina, for example, biotechnology corporations benefit from close links with the government and formal access to decision-making. Together with their enormous material resources this means that transnational companies are in a strong position to shape government agendas. Moreover, biotechnology corporations have used their influence and resources not only to shape policy-making, but also to access and sponsor mass media, resulting in a discourse in favour of GM technology which dominates the political and public sphere and a very limited space for alternative points of view (Newell, 2009). This is similar in Uruguay and Paraguay and while in Brazil there has been more opposition to GM technology, this did not prevent the lifting of the GM ban under the Lula government (Newell, 2008b: 372).

In this context environmental policy-making remains fragmented and inconsistent as the case of Argentina very clearly demonstrates. A large part of the laws for minimum standards set out in the 1994 Constitution thus still have not been passed and coordination between the national and the regional level remains problematic (Bueno, 2010: 124, 177; Di Paola and Rivera, 2012: 16–18; interview environmental NGO, Buenos Aires, 2010). What is more, objectives of different policies contradict each other to the detriment of environmental protection. In 2011 the government thus announced a plan to significantly increase agricultural production of grains as well as livestock over the following decade. This is very likely to result in severe pressure on land with negative environmental consequences. Although the plan also includes some environmental components, these are not well-developed and it is not clear how they will be integrated into the agricultural and economic objectives (Di Paola and Rivera, 2012; Ryan, 2012: 19). Moreover, the absence of a strategy to address climate change led Estrada Oyuela, a high-level diplomat in the

Foreign Office working on the topic, to comment that Argentina did not have an environmental policy, neither external nor internal. He criticised the country's lack of data on environmental concerns and commented that it is not possible to regulate mining or industry. As a consequence his position was abolished, but there was no response as to what the environmental policy consists of (Estrada Oyuela, 2009; Obarrio, 2007; interview former diplomat, 2011). These examples clearly demonstrate the lack of commitment towards addressing environmental problems.

Moreover, economic elites, governments and large parts of the research communities in the Southern Cone have converged and created a discourse promoting natural resource exploitation while critical accounts have been sidelined. This discourse maintains that the resources available are vast, that impacts of resource exploitation are minimal and technical solutions possible. In addition, governments have stressed the necessity of exploitation in order to maintain social programmes, thus presenting the issue as a choice between poverty and environmental protection (Gudynas, 2009: 206, 2010c: 64–67). In Uruguay, José Mujica has stressed the need for foreign investment, stating clearly that the only debate possible is over how to spend the revenues, but not over how these are generated in the first place, a position that is also taken in other countries (Gudynas, 2009: 210, 212, 2010c: 68). Saguier (2012a, 2012b: 135) notes the absence of a public debate on the benefits and costs of mining projects in Argentina and elsewhere in South America, as well as in relation to regional infrastructure projects. In the Brazilian Cerrado the dominant discourse of journalists, policy-makers and academics established that large-scale intensive agriculture is a "logical" response to the characteristics of this area because the soil needs intensive treatment and the flat topography makes it ideal for the use of machinery (Wolford, 2008: 216). Furthermore, Gudynas (2009: 217) notes that those NGOs who are willing to work with governments are restricted much less than those taking an independent or critical stance. Overall, there are thus very few effective universal or institutionalised channels of access to decision-making which would be able to reflect broader views. Instead governments remain selective in terms of who they grant access and how much influence different actors have.

Finally, examples from Argentina and Paraguay demonstrate how agribusiness elites have also entered into alliances with other actors in order to put direct pressure on governments. In 2008 the decision of the Argentinean government to raise export taxes further provoked a large-scale crisis. As the proposal affected the agricultural sector as a whole it resulted in unprecedented roadblocks and protests by large-scale as well as small farmers, and

eventually forced the government to give in (Díaz Echenique et al., 2011: 199–201; Gudynas, 2008: 516; Riggirozzi, 2009: 110; Vivares et al., 2009: 207). This clearly shows the vulnerability of governments to opposition from the export sector. Moreover, as social policy is dependent on revenues from the export sectors as the main source of funding, the cooperation of exporting elites is thus necessary to make social programmes possible (Riggirozzi and Grugel, 2009: 222–223).

However, the clearest demonstration of the far-reaching power of economic elites and the implications of this for progressive policies has certainly taken place in Paraguay. Here, Fernando Lugo came to power in 2008 with a very ideological programme promising to address the country's high levels of poverty and inequality as well as tackling corruption and land reform and protecting the rights of indigenous people (Lambert, 2011a: 76, 2011b: 177; Lugo Méndez, 2013; O'Shaughnessy and Ruiz Díaz, 2009: chap. 1). More than anywhere else in the Southern Cone, these were challenging objectives in a country where corruption was ingrained –in 2002 Paraguay was ranked as the third most corrupt country worldwide- and where elite interests were well entrenched. The 2008 election thus ended more than half a century of conservative rule by the Colorado Party and constituted the first time in the country's history that power was handed over to an opposition party peacefully and on the basis of elections (Lambert, 2011b: 177–178). Despite Lugo's high personal popularity his government from the start depended on a fragmented and divided coalition which did not have an absolute majority in a Congress with extensive constitutional powers. In this context Lugo managed to make some important advances, in particular in expanding public healthcare and establishing a system of conditional cash transfer which reached 65,000 families in 2009 and was based on the example of the Brazilian *Bolsa Familia* programme (Lambert, 2011b: 181–182; Wachendorfer, 2013). Moreover, he succeeded in the renegotiation of the terms of the Itaipú Treaty which Paraguay had signed in 1973 with Brazil when both countries were under military dictatorships. The treaty set the conditions under which Paraguay could sell its excess electricity from the joint Itaipú hydropower station. The terms of the treaty were highly favourable to Brazil and thus had been regarded as unfair by Paraguayans for a long time, so that the renegotiation of the treaty was seen as a major victory and as an important source of funding for social programmes (Canese, 2013; Lambert, 2011a, 2011b: 182; interview river commission, Asuncion, 2011).

Negotiating with the government of powerful neighbouring Brazil proved easier than finding a consensus with the elites in Paraguay. Paraguay is one of the most unequal

countries even compared to other Latin American countries. This is particularly evident in relation to land distribution with one percent of landowners in possession of 77 percent of arable land. Furthermore, Paraguay's tax system is characterised by the absence of a direct income tax, and no effective export tax on agricultural products, using instead income from regressive and indirect taxation, mostly in the form of value added tax (Lambert, 2011b: 184–185). Since reform efforts first started during the 2000s any changes to the status quo have been opposed by the elites benefitting from the system. These are largely made up of cattle ranchers and soya exporters, many of whom are of Brazilian origin. These "Brasiguayos" have not only contributed to significant environmental degradation in Paraguay, but have on several occasions clashed with landless peasants (Lambert, 2011a: 79, 2012; O'Shaughnessy and Ruiz Díaz, 2009: 118–119). Moreover, with support from Brazil, farmers of Brazilian origin have become an important political force in Paraguay and constitute a powerful conservative lobby (Lambert and Nickson, 2013: 453; Lambert, 2011b: 186, 2012). This also demonstrates the regional ties and the way that agribusiness operates across national boundaries.

In Paraguay, much more so than in the other Southern Cone countries, conservative lobby groups have been extremely influential in limiting progressive policies. Already the Colorado Party government of Lugo's predecessor, Nicanor Duarte Frutos, faced an alliance of interest groups opposing its efforts of tax and land reform which was so strong that it was able to block the proposals despite the fact that the Colorado Party had a clear majority in Congress at the time (Lambert, 2011b: 181). Given Lugo's much weaker position in Congress it is not surprising that his initiatives of land and tax reform were frequently blocked as well. This also meant that he lacked the income necessary to make progress on other issues of his programme, including tackling inequality, poverty and corruption. This lack of progress in turn significantly contributed to widespread popular disillusionment with his presidency (Lambert and Nickson, 2013: 451–452; Lambert, 2011b: 191; Llanos et al., 2012: 3).

The defence of elite interests went even further in June 2012 when the Congress used its powers to impeach Lugo almost overnight in an extraordinarily rapid process which was widely criticised by other governments in the region and led to the suspension of Paraguay from the regional organisations Mercosur and Unasur (Lambert and Nickson, 2013; Lambert, 2012; Llanos et al., 2012; Wachendorfer, 2013). The event that provided a reason for the impeachment was a clash between landless peasants and police in the area of Curuguaty in which eleven peasants and six policemen lost their lives. The exact

circumstances of the massacre have still not been fully investigated and remain obscure (Wachendorfer, 2013: 1), but the powerful opposition cited "poor performance" and Lugo's inability to deal with growing insecurity to get rid of a president whose commitment to reform threatened their interests (Lambert and Nickson, 2013; Lambert, 2012). After an interim government, elections in April 2013 once more brought a candidate of the Colorado Party, Horacio Cartes, to power (Wachendorfer, 2013). Overall, the impeachment clearly demonstrated the weakness of democracy in Paraguay and the unwillingness of elites to accept compromises and work towards a national interest which includes not only absolute growth rates, but also the welfare of the country's citizens as a whole.

On the whole neo-extractivism has thus served as a strategy to address urgent social needs and respond to the interests of domestic and international economic elites. Progressive governments have continued the development strategy of export-led growth introduced previously, but added some social components. As a consequence regional environmental cooperation has remained marginalised also under Leftist governments and these have not been willing to address socio-environmental concerns in a more consistent and effective way. This applies not only to national policies, but is also very evident in regional relations.

4.4 Regional relations

While the first two sections have outlined how environmental concerns have been marginalised at the national level in the different Southern Cone states, the aim of this final section is to examine environmental concerns in the regional context. To do this the section looks at examples of both cooperation and conflicts at the regional level as well as the role of Brazil, by far the largest country. It finds that natural resource exploitation is increasingly moving into the regional sphere, but this is not matched by an improvement in regional institutional channels to address socio-environmental concerns in relation to natural resource governance. On the contrary, when the pulp mill conflict occurred, which was one of the most serious inter-state conflict in the Southern Cone in the last decade, Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil all addressed it in a way that weakened regional institutions. Finally, although the regional power Brazil has the most developed environmental institutions domestically and has taken a leading role on some environmental issues at the global level, this has not been mirrored at the regional level. Instead, like the other Southern Cone countries, Brazil struggles to reconcile natural

resource exploitation with environmental protection. Despite their different backgrounds and asymmetries in size and political power, the Southern Cone countries thus overall converge in the lack of political will to address regional environmental issues and to strengthen corresponding institutions. While neo-extractivism has clearly moved into the regional sphere, regional environmental cooperation has therefore remained marginal.

4.4.1 Resource-driven integration: Neo-extractivism moving into the regional sphere

Increasingly natural resource exploitation is also taking place in frontier areas and through bilateral and regional projects. Mining is one of the sectors that has moved into border areas and is thus based on transboundary cooperation, as is evident in the agreement between Argentina and Chile (Saguier, 2012a, 2012b: 128–129). However, the largest regional project linked to resource exploitation is clearly IIRSA, the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America. This large-scale South America-wide initiative was launched by Brazil at the start of the millennium and aims at improving the transport, energy and communications infrastructure. With a budget of over US $ 95 billion and over 500 planned projects which are often in frontier areas and involve several countries, the initiative aims to overcome considerable geographical barriers like the Andes or the Amazon basin and has been compared to the construction of the Trans-Siberian railway (Carciofi, 2012; Garzón and Schilling-Vacaflor, 2012; Saguier, 2012b: 130). The initiative also includes several projects in the La Plata basin aimed at the construction of further hydropower dams as well as improving the navigability of parts of the basin. IIRSA is particularly important for Brazil as it uses the scheme to secure energy from its neighbours to fuel its economic growth and to facilitate its own exports. Consequently Brazilian leadership was fundamental in terms of launching IIRSA and Brazilian transnational companies are often involved in the construction of large-scale projects (Burges, 2005; Garzón and Schilling-Vacaflor, 2012; Saguier, 2012a, 2012b: 130).

While many energy projects are based on large-scale hydropower developments, an important objective of the transport projects is to facilitate the movement and export of commodities. Consequently, IIRSA is also closely related with different forms of natural resource exploitation. Because of the centrality of natural resources in transboundary and regional projects on mining, energy generation and transport infrastructure, Saguier (2012b: 126) thus speaks of “resource-driven integration” to characterise regional cooperation in South America in the 21st century. At the same time a recent meeting on

natural resource governance in the framework of Unasur has reiterated the discourse of abundant resources which need to be exploited to guarantee the well-being of the people and which are so vast that they can satisfy the demands of the region and requirements of countries outside the region (Secretaría General de la UNASUR, 2013). The turn towards focussing on natural resource exploitation in regional cooperation over the last decade has further deepened the marginal position of environmental concerns.

In particular, resource-driven integration has not been matched by corresponding regional institutional channels to address socio-environmental concerns. Many projects carried out under the IIRSA framework are large in scale and often in remote areas and thus have a significant impact on the lives of people in the area as well as on the physical environment. Although some assessments of environmental and social impact have been carried out, these have come late and have been applied inconsistently, thus not meeting the ambitious targets that had been set (Hochstetler, 2011: 143–144, 2013: 43–44). Due to the social and environmental impact of IIRSA and the lack of effective consultation mechanisms, it has faced large-scale regional opposition of civil society groups and affected communities (Garzón and Schilling-Vacaflor, 2012; Hochstetler, 2011: 144; Phillips and Cabitza, 2011; Saguier, 2012a, 2012b: 134–135). Overall, the focus of recent regional cooperation initiatives on facilitating the commodity trade has reinforced the marginal position of socio-environmental concerns in regional cooperation.

4.4.2 Weakening regional institutions: the pulp mill conflict

While governments have ensured that environmental concerns play only a marginal role in regional cooperation, they have equally addressed conflicts with clear environmental and transboundary dimensions in such a way that these have not led to strengthened regional environmental cooperation either. At the start of the millennium Argentina and Uruguay, two neighbouring countries whose relationship was previously characterised by friendly relations and economic and political cooperation, became involved in a bitter international dispute over environmental degradation of a shared natural resource which lasted almost a decade. However, the two countries as well as Brazil all addressed the conflict in a way that weakened regional institutions and sidelined any debates over how to address shared environmental problems. This means that although conflicts with transboundary and environmental dimensions exist, the political dynamics are such that these have not become a driver for regional environmental cooperation.

Between 2003 and 2005 the Uruguayan government led at the time by President Jorge Batlle unilaterally authorised the construction of two large pulp mills on the Uruguay River which in this section forms the border between Argentina and Uruguay. In particular the approval of the second mill led to strong civil society opposition on the Argentinean side in the town of Gualeguaychú (Berardo and Gerlak, 2012: 107–108). The two countries had decades before signed an agreement regarding the Uruguay River and established a joint commission, the Administrative Commission of the Uruguay River (*Comisión Administradora del Río Uruguay* or CARU). However, the commission lacked formal channels to allow non-governmental stakeholders to participate in decision-making (Berardo and Gerlak, 2012: 113–114). Consequently, the protestors in Gualeguaychú resorted to informal means and blocked a bridge over the river and an important border crossing point for several years. Moreover, the Uruguayan government bypassed the shared commission CARU and the conflict was subsequently addressed outside of CARU. This severely weakened the commission and as Berardo and Gerlak argue (2012: 107–111), contributed to the escalation of the conflict. Meanwhile, in Argentina with over 40,000 people gathering on the bridge in April 2005 the protest managed to reach the highest level of the Argentinean government, led at the time by Néstor Kirchner (Berardo and Gerlak, 2012: 109; Newell, 2008a: 64–65; Reboratti, 2008: 113–114).

The Kirchner government responded by avoiding confrontation and siding with the protestors. This included the adoption of an environmental discourse and strengthening the position of the Environment Secretariat, Argentina's main environmental agency, by putting it under the authority of the presidency[7] where it has remained until now. However, these changes reflected more a concern for the public image of the president and the government than a serious commitment to environmental concerns. Rather than considering the pollution caused by the pulp mill the government thus quickly reduced the dispute to a legal question of whether Uruguay had breached the agreement signed between the two countries in relation to the Uruguay River (Bueno, 2010: 171–187; Reboratti, 2008: 113–114). Moreover, the government promoted a nationalistic discourse which was successful in directing the anger and demands of the protestors away from the government and domestic politics and towards the Uruguayan government instead (Waisbord and Peruzzotti, 2009: 695). This political manoeuvre also prevented any deeper discussions of domestic environmental policies and regional questions relating to decision-

[7] The Environment Secretariat was put under the authority of the cabinet of ministers (*Jefatura de Gabinete de Ministros*) which in Argentina is part of the presidency.

making processes and the governance of the La Plata basin. The conflict was eventually resolved in 2010 when the International Court of Justice in The Hague ruled that the pulp mill could continue operating, a decision which was accepted by the Argentinean government.

While Uruguay's decision to side-step CARU weakened the existing institutions, the environmental discourse of the Argentinean government thus turned out as more of a measure to appease voters than any real commitment to addressing environmental problems. Moreover, the decision to treat the issue as a legal problem and refer it to the International Court of Justice in The Hague further limited the mandate of existing regional institutions in dealing with environmental concerns. This was furthermore exacerbated by Brazil's stance on the issue. To Uruguay's bitter disappointment Brazil refused to mediate in the pulp mill conflict between Argentina and Uruguay (Malamud, 2012: 174; Sotero, 2010: 76). Moreover, although the conflict also affected cooperation in the Mercosur framework, stalling some processes and turning mutual trust into distrust, Brazil equally refused to address this through Mercosur insisting that this is a bilateral and not a regional issue. The pulp mill conflict was not the only time that Brazil took this approach. When Paraguay asked to address the topic of illegal trade in wood in Mercosur's environmental forum, this was vehemently blocked by Brazil arguing once more that this was a bilateral issue (Torres and Diaz, 2011: 209–210). It seems then that Brazil is keen to keep inter-state conflicts with environmental dimensions at the bilateral level. Given that the Brazilian government and Brazilian private actors have repeatedly earned criticism regarding their involvement in natural resource governance in neighbouring countries, it is perhaps not surprising that Brasilia does not want to move such conflicts into a regional or multilateral arena where it might be opposed by a majority of neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, Brazil's minimal commitment to regional environmental cooperation is noteworthy, not least because it contrasts with the approach Brasilia has taken towards some environmental concerns domestically and at the global level.

4.4.3 The role of Brazil

Brazil is the only country that developed environmental protection already under the military dictatorship and it has had a national environmental agency continuously since the early 1970s which was turned into a ministry in 1985 (Hochstetler and Keck, 2007: chap. 1; Hochstetler, 2003: 8, 2005: 353–354). Although the development of environmental protection clearly started before international attention turned to Brazil (Hochstetler and

Keck, 2007: 22), out of the Southern Cone countries Brazil also has the longest history of international pressure in relation to environmental issues, in particular regarding deforestation in the Amazon (Hochstetler and Keck, 2007: 111; Keck, 1998: 186).

Environmental concerns have thus been particularly important for Brazil's international reputation. Already in 1992 Brazil made an important demonstration of its commitment to international environmental norms by hosting the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. As one of the emerging powers during the first decade of the new millennium Brazil has worked towards strengthening its position at the global level (Gomes Saraiva, 2011; Malamud, 2012; Sotero, 2010). This is driven forward by a professionalized diplomatic bureaucracy pursuing long-term and coherent foreign policy objectives (Gomes Saraiva, 2011; Malamud, 2011: 100; Peters, 2011: 7). This is also reflected in environmental policy and several interviewees have noted that in comparison to other countries in the region Brazil's environmental policies and institutions are better developed and more coherent (interviews environmental NGO Asunción, 2011; national park administration, Buenos Aires, 2011; former diplomat, Buenos Aires, 2011).

Finally, whereas in most South American countries green parties and electoral politics do not play a big role in promoting environmental issues (Hochstetler, 2012b: 217), this is again different in Brazil. This became particularly notable in the last presidential elections in 2010 when Marina Silva, the candidate of the green party became third with almost 20 percent of the vote. Silva's candidacy and her popularity among important parts of the electorate brought environmental issues into the election campaign. This forced the other two candidates to pay more attention to environmental concerns and all three candidates attended the Copenhagen climate change negotiations in 2009 (Flemes and Hoffmann, 2010; Gudynas, 2010b: 152–153; Hochstetler and Viola, 2012: 12; Ryan, 2012: 13).

Overall, Brazil's environmental institutions are thus better developed and more coherent than those of its Southern Cone neighbours and this would suggest that South America's largest country is also in a strong position to take a leading role in relation to regional environmental cooperation. However, a closer look at Brazil's position in the region reveals that in fact this is not the case. Natural resource exploitation is also a central element of Brazil's growth strategy and its priorities in the region. As Riethof (2013) argues, Brazil, as well as other countries in the South, defines its national interest not so much in terms of national security, but rather as the right to economic development and the right to use natural resources for development with few limitations. This is evident in

relation to the construction of the Belo Monte hydropower station in the Amazon region which has been the subject of heated debates and numerous protests for several years (Peters, 2011; Riethof, 2013) as well as the Forest Code legislation regulating deforestation (Riethof, 2013: 13). Although deforestation rates in the Amazon have decreased significantly in the last years, the Cerrado in the centre of the country, one of the biologically richest savannas in the world, suffers from rapid and large-scale deforestation and weak enforcement of the Forest Code. The main driver for deforestation are large-scale soybean plantations for export (Viola and Franchini, 2012: 186; Wolford, 2008). Moreover, the agri-business lobby is strong in Brazil as well and has been able exert significant influence on government policies and resist stronger environmental regulations (Branford, 2009: 159; Hochstetler, 2013: 41; Vanden, 2012: 44). Overall, Brazil's environmental management of industrial production has thus been more successful than of the natural resources and agricultural sectors (Hochstetler and Keck, 2007; Hochstetler, 2013: 40). In addition, Brazil's position as a regional leader, including its role in promoting IIRSA is contested, and has led to fears of a new imperialist power (Burges, 2005: 451; Malamud, 2012: 175; Phillips and Cabitza, 2011). However, given that many of the region's most important shared environmental problems relate to natural resource exploitation it would be difficult for Brazil to take a leadership role on regional environmental cooperation without addressing natural resource governance. A closer look at the regional level thus reveals why Brazil has not taken a leading role on regional environmental cooperation, although it has comparatively stronger domestic environmental institutions.

On the whole the marginalisation of environmental concerns and those promoting them at the national level is also reflected at the regional level. With resource exploitation turning into an important component of regional cooperation, regional environmental cooperation has remained marginalised and there are no effective regional forums for public participation in decision-making. Furthermore, the Southern Cone countries have addressed the most serious inter-state conflict in the region in the last decade in such a way that regional environmental institutions were weakened. Finally, despite Brazil's comparatively stronger domestic environmental institutions, its stance towards natural resource governance has prevented the regional power from becoming a leader on regional environmental cooperation. Overall, all the Southern Cone countries are thus struggling to reconcile natural resource exploitation with environmental sustainability. In this context, arguably regional environmental concerns have turned into a kind of Pandora's Box which no government dares to open in case this ignites a flood of demands from dissatisfied

citizens. It is not surprising then that none of the people interviewed for this project mentioned a particular country or a change of government as the main driver for a particular regional environmental initiative.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the political and economic context is crucial to understand the development of robust, but marginal regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone from the 1990s onwards. The chapter has thus outlined how the process of democratisation made robust forms of regional environmental cooperation possible, but also how the adoption of a development model based on natural resource exploitation and export-led growth has pushed environmental concerns into the margins of political agendas at the national and the regional level. What is more, decisions regarding natural resource governance are mostly made by political and economic elites with very few possibilities for participation of civil society and affected communities. In addition, a coalition of governments and business groups has crafted a discourse stressing the need for natural resource exploitation and downplaying its negative impacts which has left very little space for alternative points of view. Overall, the marginality of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone, evident in a high dependence on external funding, the lack of binding or specific agreements and the absence of regimes created specifically to address regional environmental concerns, is thus a result of the development model adopted under neoliberal governments and continued, albeit with some modifications, by progressive governments.

This presents the backdrop for the three case studies presented in the following chapters. In all three cases different endogenous and exogenous drivers have succeeded in putting environmental concerns on regional political agendas and developing robust forms of cooperation despite the obstacles outlined in this chapter. While these drivers have not been able to challenge the marginality of regional environmental cooperation, they have shaped the forms that this takes in various ways in line with their objectives. Chapter 5 examines the regional organisation Mercosur which, in response to international norms and processes, included environmental concerns on its agenda from the moment of its foundation in 1991. This was taken up by European donors who lent strong support to environmental cooperation in the Mercosur framework in an effort to promote EU-style regional integration coupled with norms of environmental sustainability. In the second case study presented in chapter 6 regional conservation networks have used the openings that

the institutional structure of the CMS provides to professional conservation NGOs in order to promote the protection of endangered species in the Southern Cone from a regional perspective. This has been further strengthened by the CMS Secretariat itself which increasingly turned its attention to the Southern Cone governments in an effort to promote the Convention in other parts of the world. Third, chapter 7 examines regional environmental cooperation in the framework of the La Plata basin regime. Here, various civil society networks have equally been very active, but have been more influential in putting pressure on governments to take socio-environmental concerns into account than in shaping the characteristics that cooperation takes. This is largely due to the preference of the Southern Cone governments to treat the management of the basin in an institutional framework with very limited openings for civil society. However, the GEF as the main donor has had a significant impact in terms of the kind of issues that are addressed in cooperation projects and the geographical location of these.

Chapter 5: Emulating the European Union? The regional organisation Mercosur

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines environmental cooperation in the framework of the regional organisation Mercosur as a first case study of robust environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. The first part of the chapter addresses the first part of the research question and examines the three main characteristics of Mercosur as a form of regional environmental cooperation. The section thus outlines the political purpose behind the creation of Mercosur's institutional framework as well as the scope of issues it addresses and the way the membership is determined. Focusing specifically on environmental cooperation it finds that this appears to be relatively well-institutionalised and includes both, joint declarations or statements which represent written and public agreements between governments and thus demonstrate evidence of formal cooperation, as well as forums for regular meetings showing cooperation in practice. With both elements of cooperation present, regional environmental cooperation in the Mercosur framework can thus be classified as robust. Nevertheless, a more thorough analysis also reveals the marginality of environmental cooperation in the Mercosur framework. In particular, joint declarations or agreements seem to be more important in terms of symbolic value, but frequently lack implementation. Moreover, Mercosur's environmental forums have very little autonomy and are in a weak position vis-à-vis other Mercosur organs. In addition, the relevance of Mercosur for environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone has declined over time with many of the region's most important environmental issues not being addressed by the regional organisation and environmental NGOs losing interest. This declining trend contrasts with the other two cases studies. Finally, many civil society initiatives take place outside the Mercosur framework, indicating that links with endogenous drivers are not very strong. Both of these aspects are important in contributing to lower levels of robustness compared to the other two case studies.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the second part of the research question and examines why Mercosur has become and continues as a form of regional environmental cooperation. It argues that the motivations for formal cooperation have often been different from the drivers and motivations for cooperation in practice. Joint declarations or statements on environmental topics which are examples of formal cooperation were thus

part of the Mercosur integration process from the start and have served as a way for governments to demonstrate a commitment to international environmental processes. Consequently, their contents have often been shaped by international agendas. Conversely, cooperation in practice has been advanced to a large extent by exogenous drivers, most importantly European donors. With only limited financial support from the Mercosur governments, funding from these donors is crucial to support the regular meetings and joint projects that make up cooperation in practice.

Donors thus make robust cooperation possible and their priorities and objectives have played an important part in shaping the characteristics of cooperation. European donors have promoted the regional organisation Mercosur as a framework for regional environmental cooperation in an effort to promote the EU model in other regions. This is important to understand why this particular institutional framework with this specific membership continues to be an example of robust regional environmental cooperation despite the limitations outlined above. Moreover, donors have also influenced the type of environmental issues addressed. At the same time some important disagreements between donors and the Southern Cone governments have become evident. These disagreements, together with the decline of Mercosur's relevance for environmental cooperation in the region over time and the lack of integration of civil society initiatives, make this the least robust example of regional environmental cooperation of the three case studies.

5.2 Mercosur as a framework for regional environmental cooperation

This section examines Mercosur as a form of regional environmental cooperation, looking at the type of institutional framework and its political purpose, the scope of issues addressed and the way the membership is determined. It first presents the regional organisation in general and outlines the political purpose behind the creation of Mercosur's institutional structures. The regional organisation was mainly created for political and economic objectives and these also determine its membership. The section then focuses specifically on environmental cooperation in the Mercosur framework, examining the institutional set-up as well as joint strategies and declarations on environmental issues which are examples of formal cooperation and the channels for regular meetings and exchanges of information which promote cooperation in practice.

At first sight, environmental cooperation in the Mercosur framework seems to be fairly institutionalised. Yet, a more detailed analysis shows that Mercosur's environmental forums have very little autonomy and are in a weak position vis-à-vis other institutions and interests. In this context, joint environmental strategies or declarations frequently lack implementation and are often not taken into account in other policies developed later. Moreover, there is little consistency in terms of topics addressed with many different environmental topics having appeared on Mercosur's agenda since its creation. This suggests that regional environmental cooperation in the Mercosur framework is driven less by the need to solve particular regional environmental problems, as is the case for the other two case studies, than by the desire to make symbolic commitments and replicate EU-style regional integration. All of these limitations demonstrate the marginality of environmental cooperation in the Mercosur framework. Furthermore, the relevance of Mercosur as a forum to address regional environmental cooperation has declined over the years and environmental organisations have also become less interested in the regional organisation over the years. At the same time several regional civil society initiatives continue to build on a shared Mercosur identity. This clearly demonstrates an interest on the part of some civil society groups to address environmental concerns from a regional perspective, but also the reluctance of governments to integrate these endogenous drivers into the formal structures which would be likely to strengthen regional environmental cooperation.

5.2.1 The regional organisation Mercosur

Mercosur was created in March 1991 when Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay signed the Treaty of Asuncion. The creation of Mercosur was preceded by a rapprochement between Argentina and Brazil. Overall the integration process was very much driven by the presidents of these two countries with only limited involvement of national parliaments or domestic business organisations (Briceño Ruiz, 2012: 174; Carranza, 2003: 76; Gardini, 2010; Kaltenthaler and Mora, 2002; Laciar, 2003: 46; Malamud, 2003: 56–57). Following initial integration agreements between Argentina and Brazil, first Uruguay and then Paraguay asked to be included. Whereas Argentina and Brazil used regional integration as a way of overcoming security concerns and decades of distrust between the two historic rivals, the Uruguayan government at the time feared that economic integration of the two big neighbours would lead to Uruguay's economic marginalisation and saw regional integration as a way of being included. Paraguay on the other hand was weakened considerably after over three decades of the Stroessner dictatorship and saw regional integration as a way of consolidating democracy and seeking

support for the government, ending its isolation at the international level and strengthening the economy (Kaltenthaler and Mora, 2002).

Created at a time when the Southern Cone governments adopted the neoliberal policies of the Washington Consensus Mercosur was an example of "open regionalism" focussing on market opening and free trade. At its inception Mercosur was thus mainly a trade agreement focussing on economic objectives as its name *Mercado Común del Súr* (Common Market of the South) also indicates (Carranza, 2003: 68; Laciar, 2003: 25; Riggirozzi, 2012b: 9; Torres and Diaz, 2011: 203). Gradually political objectives such as labour rights, civil society participation and a structural convergence fund to address some of the asymmetries within Mercosur also gained ground. The social dimension of Mercosur was strengthened in particular when left-wing governments came to power in Argentina and Brazil (Briceño Ruiz, 2012; Riggirozzi, 2012b: 10; Serbin, 2012).

Overall, Mercosur is thus an example of a regional organisation which was created in order to achieve key political and economic objectives. In some respects this is not so different from some regional freshwater resource regimes and as chapter 7 will show, there have indeed between overlaps and rivalries between Mercosur and the La Plata basin regime. Nevertheless, they differ in a crucial aspect which is particularly important for environmental cooperation. The management of a shared natural resource including the need to address transboundary pollution problems are thus not the primary objectives of regional organisations.

This also has an impact on the way the membership of regional organisations is determined. In particular, ecological criteria which play a role in determining the territorial boundaries of the other two case studies have not shaped the membership of Mercosur. Instead, economic and political criteria take precedence. This became particularly obvious with the suspension of Paraguay from the regional organisation due to the impeachment of its former president Fernando Lugo in 2012, which the other three Mercosur governments saw as undemocratic. The suspension of Paraguay paved the way for Venezuela's entry into Mercosur which had long been approved by the other three Mercosur countries, but stalled due to opposition in the Paraguayan senate. In line with the political and economic priorities of the other three Mercosur member states Venezuela thus joined the bloc very shortly after Paraguay's suspension leading to suspicions that this was nothing more than a pretext to find a way for Venezuela's entry (Lambert, 2012; Llanos et al., 2012: 6). At the time of writing (January 2014) Paraguay remains suspended from Mercosur, but following

the election of Horacio Cartes, which gained the approval of the international community, Paraguay's re-entry into Mercosur is expected (MercoPress, 2013a, 2013b). These developments clearly show how political and economic considerations determine the membership and cooperation in the Mercosur framework.

5.2.2 Marginality despite high levels of institutionalisation: environmental cooperation in Mercosur

Environmental concerns have been on Mercosur's agenda since its creation in 1991 with the Treaty of Asuncion referring to the preservation of the environment in its preamble (Hochstetler, 2003: 5–6, 2005: 351). A year after the Asuncion Treaty had been signed the Specialised Meeting on the Environment (*Reunión Especializada de Medio Ambiente* or REMA) was created. In 1995, the Mercosur countries approved the Taranco Declaration referring to several regional and global environmental issues such as the ISO 14000 norms, a set of global standards for environmental management in companies, or the importance of environmental impact assessments for projects like the hidrovía that was planned in the La Plata basin at the time to improve the navigability of parts of the basin. The Mercosur countries also used the declaration to confirm their commitment to the UN process and global environmental agreements and to recognise that it is useful for them to coordinate their positions beforehand. In addition, the Taranco Declaration recognises the necessity to strengthen the institutional framework in order to address environmental issues. As a step towards this, the declaration upgraded the REMA to the working subgroup 6 on the environment (*Subgrupo de Trabajo 6 Medio Ambiente* or SGT6) (Laciar, 2003: 51–61; Secretaría Administrativa del MERCOSUR, 2002: 16–17; Torres and Diaz, 2011: 205–206; Tussie and Vásquez, 2000: 196–197; UNEP and CLAES, 2008: 105).

In the Mercosur framework several such working subgroups (SGTs) exist for different topics. The SGT6 consists of government officials from the ministries of environment or equivalent from the four member states and meets on a regular basis. The SGT6 is thus a good example of a transnational network of government officials. However, it does not have resources of its own and cannot set its own agenda. Instead it depends very much on Mercosur's main decision-making bodies. In addition to the SGT6, a first meeting of environment ministers of the four Mercosur countries took place in 1995 and was institutionalised in 2003 with the creation of the Meeting of the Environment Ministers (*Reunión de Ministros de Medio Ambiente*) taking place about twice a year (Moreno, 2011: 70; UNEP and CLAES, 2008: 106–107). The highest Mercosur organ is the Common

Market Council (*Consejo del Mercado Común* or CMC) consisting of Ministers of the Economy and Foreign Relations of each country. The CMC takes the most important decisions, approves policy directives and deals with commercial issues and relations with third countries. Several other organs depend on the CMC, including the Meeting of the Environment Ministers. The second highest organ is the Common Market Group (*Grupo Mercado Común* or GMC), which is the executive branch and is made up of representatives from the national foreign affairs and economy ministries and the central banks. The different SGTs, including the SGT6, answer to the GMC. The SGTs may propose additional agenda items, but it is up to the GMC to agree to any final proposals for implementation. The SGT6 thus acts very much as a technical advisory committee responding to questions and tasks set by the GMC (Hochstetler, 2003: 4–6; 12–14, 2005: 351; Laciar, 2003: 34–36; UNEP and CLAES, 2008: 23–26). Overall there is little political will to provide more resources or autonomy to the environmental forums of Mercosur and these are weak both in comparison to other Mercosur institutions and environmental bodies of other regional organisations such as NAFTA or the EU (Hochstetler, 2003: 12–13).

The Mercosur Parliament is another actor that has repeatedly argued in favour of giving environmental concerns more attention. As set out in more detail in chapter 7 the Parliament has worked very actively on the Guaraní aquifer which the four original Mercosur countries share and in 2010 the chairman of the Brazilian delegation to the Parliament pointed out that 30-40 percent of proposals of the Mercosur Parliament relate to the environment (Câmara dos Deputados Brazil, 2010b). The Parliament has also made suggestions, such as creating a transboundary area under environmental protection in the triple border area between Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay to protect the biodiversity of this region (Câmara dos Deputados Brazil, 2010a; Torres and Diaz, 2011: 215–216). However, like the SGT6, the Mercosur Parliament can only make suggestions, but it is up to the CMC to decide whether and how these will be addressed and its only duty is to keep the Parliament informed twice a year. Currently the Parliament consists of representatives of the national parliaments. Direct elections might strengthen the Mercosur Parliament and in fact these are planned for the end of 2014, but a previous deadline has already been postponed (Drummond, 2011: 1, 4; Pasquariello Mariano, 2011: 11, 13; Torres and Diaz, 2011: 215–216). On the whole this means that those Mercosur institutions that have the most interest in promoting environmental cooperation do not have much power within the Mercosur structures. This is a clear indicator of the marginality of environmental cooperation in Mercosur and the lack of political will on the part of the Southern Cone

governments to make Mercosur an effective framework for addressing regional environmental concerns.

In terms of policy-making the Mercosur countries have adopted several joint strategies or declarations on different environmental topics such as climate change, desertification, biodiversity or sustainable production and consumption and after several years of negotiations the Mercosur countries approved an environmental framework agreement (*Acuerdo Marco sobre Medio Ambiente del Mercosur*) in 2001. The fact that an environmental framework agreement was approved in Mercosur's first decade can be seen as an achievement because it demonstrates the efforts the member states made towards the coordination of their environmental policies. Nevertheless, the lack of concrete indications of how it would be implemented clearly demonstrates its limitations and further negotiations would be necessary to ensure implementation (Laciar, 2003: chap. 2; Torres and Diaz, 2011: 209). Moreover, several accounts point out that a very ambitious and more detailed initial proposal was watered down considerably before the Mercosur governments agreed to approve a pragmatic final version (Hochstetler, 2003: 17–23, 2005: 352–353; Laciar, 2003: chap. 2; Moreno, 2011: 71; UNEP and CLAES, 2008: 106).

Moreover, although Mercosur has dealt with a number of different environmental topics these are not well-integrated with other topics addressed by Mercosur and there is often very little coordination between the SGT6 and other Mercosur forums which deal with topics that also touch on environmental issues (Mercosur, 2008: 6). In addition, once a declaration or strategy has been approved there is often little follow-up that would guide how it is to be implemented. One interviewee, for example, stated that Mercosur norms or declarations on environmental issues are hardly taken into account at later stages or in the development of new norms relating to other subjects. As examples the interviewee cited the programme of productive integration that was approved in 2008, but did not take into account the programme of sustainable consumption and production approved a year earlier, or the Mercosur environment framework programme that is hardly mentioned by norms developed later (interview government official, Buenos Aires, 2011).

What is more, environmental issues which are particularly important for the region have not been addressed by Mercosur's environmental forums at all. One of the major obstacles in the development of Mercosur's environmental framework agreement was thus Argentina's objection to including biosafety issues. In contrast to the other Mercosur countries which initially restricted the use of GM technologies, Argentinean policy-makers

had embraced them during the 1990s. Although the Argentinean delegate of the SGT6 had widely consulted in Argentina regarding a first, more detailed Mercosur environment protocol, this was rejected by Argentina's GMC delegation in 1997 with the inclusion of biosafety issues being one of the main concerns. The agreement was only approved after the topic of biosafety, an important environmental issue in all the Mercosur countries which has been the subject of criticism by environmentalists and small farmers, had been excluded (Hochstetler, 2003: 20; Newell, 2008b: 363).

The SGT6 has also been sidelined or excluded from discussions on other environmental issues that were particularly important for the region such as the plans for the construction of the hidrovía in the La Plata basin or the GEF project on the Guaraní aquifer (Hochstetler 2003: 13–14, 2011: 137; Mercosur 2008: 18; Moreno 2011: 73; Villar and Ribeiro 2011: 651; interview government official, Buenos Aires, 2011) both discussed in more detail in chapter 7. Finally, as outlined in the previous chapter Brazil has on several occasions demonstrated a preference to treat problems bilaterally rather than through the regional organisation. Brazil thus refused to address the pulp mill conflict between Argentina and Uruguay as well as a request by Paraguay to deal with illegal trade in wood at the regional level in Mercosur because Itamaraty regarded them as bilateral issues (Torres and Diaz, 2011: 209, 210).

On the whole there is thus evidence of robust cooperation with both, cooperation in practice and formal cooperation on environmental issues taking place in the Mercosur framework, but this remains very marginal. Mercosur's environmental forums and networks of government officials have only very limited autonomy and resources and the Southern Cone governments have on several occasions decided not to address many of the region's most important environmental concerns through Mercosur. Moreover, the topics that are addressed are frequently not followed up and implementation of joint strategies or declarations is often lacking and highly donor-dependent as explored later on. It is not a surprise then that a document on the evolution and perspectives of environmental issues within Mercosur put together during the 9th Meeting of the Mercosur Environment Ministers in November 2008 refers to the "progressive draining of Mercosur's environmental agenda" (Mercosur, 2008: 2, author's translation). Although Mercosur is often seen as the most developed regional organisation outside Europe (Gardini, 2011: 235; Kaltenthaler and Mora, 2002: 73; Telò, 2006: 131) its relevance for environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone has in fact decreased over the last two decades. This is

an important element contributing to the lower level of robustness compared to the other two cases studies.

5.2.3 Cooperation in practice outside the Mercosur framework: the role of civil society

The impression of Mercosur's declining relevance for environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone is further reinforced when examining the role of civil society in the regional organisation. While initially environmental organisations expressed some interest in the regional organisation, this declined over time as it became clear that access to decision-making was difficult to get and that those environmental forums which provided a minimum of access did not deal with many of the most important regional environmental problems. Yet, various civil society organisations have continued to borrow the name of Mercosur and thus build on the identity that the regional organisation provides without being linked to the official cooperation processes and institutions. On the one hand, this clearly demonstrates the interest of some civil society groups to engage in cooperation in practice and address environmental concerns from a regional perspective. On the other hand, it also uncovers the reluctance of governments to open up regional cooperation processes to include endogenous drivers for regional environmental cooperation from civil society. While this would strengthen both regional cooperation and environmental cooperation, it would also mean the inclusion of a wider range of actors and perspectives which might not always agree with the model of regional cooperation and development pursued by governments in the region. Consequently, there is a disjuncture with several of the initiatives of cooperation in practice taking place outside the official institutions of the regional organisation and thus environmental cooperation remains marginal within the formal Mercosur structures.

Initially the creation of Mercosur also sparked interest on the part of some environmental NGOs and civil society initiatives. The Argentinean organisation *Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* (Environment and Natural Resources Foundation or FARN), for example, published several analyses on the environmental aspects of free trade during Mercosur's first decade and the *Centro Latinoamericano de Ecología Social* (Latin American Centre of Social Ecology or CLAES), based in Montevideo, includes regional integration and trade as one of its thematic areas (CLAES, 2013; FARN, 2013). In theory, some of the Mercosur institutions also allow for civil society participation. The meetings of the SGT6 are held in two stages, a preparatory stage and a second stage where decisions

are taken. The first stage is open to representatives of NGOs or private sector organisations. Moreover, there are workshops for specific topics where the private sector can participate (Laciar, 2003: 83–85). Nevertheless, there are important limitations in practice. While Argentina regularly updates its website with information from the latest SGT6 meetings, it is less clear how to get information about future meetings or who to contact in order to attend. Representatives from non-governmental and private sector organisations have thus cited a lack of knowledge about the meetings as reasons for not participating and commented that they always had to make the effort to get information in order to attend and documents were not sent out routinely. This also means that it can be difficult to participate in the discussion. In addition, many civil society organisations only have limited resources and are therefore not always able to attend meetings (Fulquet, 2010: 18; Hochstetler, 2003: 15–16; interview, foundation staff member, Montevideo, 2011). Another interviewee noted that initially environmental NGOs were interested in Mercosur because they thought that it would be a way to address shared problems from a regional perspective, but then they found that Mercosur does not resolve the most important problems, so they lost interest (interview, environmental NGO, Montevideo, 2011). As set out before, the SGT6 has a very limited agenda and power while the more prominent Meeting of Environment Ministers does not offer possibilities for the participation of any outside actors (Hochstetler, 2011: 138). Given these constraints it is not surprising that environmental NGOs do not spend valuable resources on Mercosur even though initially they may have had an interest in the work of Mercosur in relation to environmental concerns or believe that it would be useful to address environmental concerns at the regional level. Consequently, civil society participation in SGT6 meetings has declined consistently over the years (Hochstetler, 2011: 138).

At the same time several initiatives have developed in parallel to the official Mercosur forums. These generally build on the ideas of regional cooperation, but are not directly related to the official Mercosur process and often include partners from non-Mercosur member states as well. On the municipal level, a network of cities, Mercociudades, was created in 1995 with the aim of promoting the participation of municipalities in the process of regional integration. The network now includes over 200 cities in the four Mercosur member states as well as in Bolivia, Chile, Peru and Venezuela. One of the thematic units of the network is dedicated to environment and development and others, such as science and technology or urban development, also relate to environmental issues. The network uses Agenda 21, the action plan that resulted from the Rio Summit in 1992, as a reference and serves as a platform to exchange information and develop common positions for global

meetings. The network includes a permanent secretariat in Montevideo which liaises with the permanent administrative secretariat of Mercosur, but it is not part of the official Mercosur institutions (Mercociudades, 2013; Torres and Diaz, 2011: 211–213).

Another example is the Centre of Education for Regional Integration (*Centro de Formación para la Integración Regional* or CEFIR), based in Montevideo which serves as an instrument for the Mercosur governments and civil society. The centre acts as the technical secretariat of *Somos Mercosur*, an initiative which aims at strengthening civil society participation in Mercosur and involving the population in the regional integration process (Somos Mercosur, 2013; Torres and Diaz, 2011: 213–215). The agenda of the initiative includes environmental issues and like Mercociudades goes beyond the official Mercosur agenda. CEFIR also strengthens and coordinates civil society participation by organising courses and seminars about Mercosur, providing information in their library and on the website, providing a platform to discuss ideas from civil society representatives and providing financial and logistical support. All of these activities have the aim of strengthening the capacity of civil society. One of the centre's work areas is sustainability in Mercosur, including environmental aspects (interview, foundation staff member, Montevideo, 2011).

Overall, these initiatives clearly demonstrate the interest of some civil society groups to engage in regional cooperation and address shared environmental concerns from a regional perspective. However, they also demonstrate ambiguity on the part of governments and in particular the progressive governments of the pink tide. On the one hand, these have spoken out in favour of more civil society participation in general and in regional cooperation, and they have taken some steps towards this (Briceño Ruiz, 2012). The Somos Mercosur initiative, for example, was launched by the Uruguayan government during the presidency of Tabaré Vázquez (Briceño Ruiz, 2012: 181–182; Serbin, 2012: 156). On the other hand, these new initiatives have not been formally integrated into the Mercosur structure and institutionalised channels for civil society participation in regional cooperation remain weakly developed, particularly in relation to environmental concerns which are often linked to the highly sensitive topic of natural resource governance.

Overall, an analysis of the role of civil society thus contributes to a better understanding of the marginality of environmental cooperation in the Mercosur framework. It shows that many of the activities of cooperation in practice are decoupled from formal cooperation and the official Mercosur institutions contributing to the declining relevance of the regional

organisation for regional environmental cooperation. This raises the question of why Mercosur, which was essentially created for economic purposes, also included environmental issues from the start and why they continue to remain on its agenda, making the regional organisation a framework for environmental cooperation nevertheless.

5.3 Why is Mercosur a framework for regional environmental cooperation?

This section relates to the second part of the research question and examines why Mercosur has become a form of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone and why it addresses particular environmental concerns. This is a pertinent question given the lack of political will to strengthen environmental cooperation in the Mercosur framework outlined in the first part of the chapter. The section shows that the motivations driving formal cooperation are not necessarily the same as the motivations leading to cooperation in practice. By developing various declarations and joint strategies the Southern Cone governments have used Mercosur to demonstrate a commitment to international environmental processes. Moreover, when Mercosur was created policy-makers expected that trade and environmental policy might be linked and this provided another reason for including environmental concerns on the agenda of a regional organisation whose central objective was trade liberalisation. Both of these motivations account for formal cooperation and the different Mercosur agreements on environmental issues, but they have not led to consolidated cooperation in practice. In addition, from the start Mercosur policy-makers have also looked to the EU as a role model for the new regional organisation and this has been reciprocated with substantial aid from European donors for regional cooperation in the Mercosur framework. This external funding and support has been crucial in terms of promoting the regular meetings, exchanges of information and pilot projects on environmental issues which make up cooperation in practice.

Overall, given that civil society initiatives which are examples of endogenous drivers, are not integrated into the formal Mercosur structures and that the Southern Cone governments provide only very limited resources to allow Mercosur's environmental forums to function, cooperation in practice within the Mercosur framework is highly dependent on the support of European donors. This means robust regional environmental cooperation which links formal agreements with daily practices of cooperation also depends on the continuing support of these donors. The interests and preferences of donors are thus crucial to

understand why robust regional environmental cooperation continues in the framework of Mercosur and also have an impact on the types of environmental issues that are being addressed. However, disagreements between donors and recipients also make environmental cooperation in Mercosur very vulnerable and this is a third element contributing to a comparably lower level of robustness.

5.3.1 Government motivations for formal cooperation

Developments at the global level and in particular global environmental summits and conventions have played an important role in encouraging the Southern Cone governments to include environmental concerns on the Mercosur agenda. The creation of Mercosur coincided with the preparations for the Rio Summit a year later. This brought environmental concerns to the centre of attention at the global level and in the region (Moreno, 2011: 70) and also had repercussions for the newly established Mercosur. The presidents of the Southern Cone thus approved the Canela Declaration prior to the Rio Summit in 1992 with the aim of examining the topics of the conference. Moreover, the governments confirmed their willingness to maintain regular contact on environment and development and to establish common positions. The declaration also states that market mechanisms on their own are not sufficient to guarantee sustainable development and that commercial transactions need to include the environmental costs (Secretaría Administrativa del MERCOSUR, 2002: 86–88)[8]. While the declaration is not officially a Mercosur declaration as it also includes Chile, the fact that it was approved by the presidents of all four Mercosur countries made it a reference document for the integration process that had just started and has been considered a first joint action of Mercosur on the topic of the environment (Laciar, 2003: 48–49; Moreno, 2011: 70; Torres and Diaz, 2011: 204).

While the Rio Summit in 1992 was an important influence in Mercosur's first years, other global processes played a role later on. The creation of a regular meeting of Mercosur environment ministers for example was linked to the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002 (Moreno, 2011: 70). Moreover, several of the Mercosur declarations and strategies on environmental topics clearly relate to global conventions and often reiterate the objectives and commitments of these. This is the case

[8] See also: Laciar, 2003: 48–49; Simão Figueiras, 1998: 22–23; Torres and Diaz, 2011: 204; Tussie and Vásquez, 2000: 196; UNEP and CLAES, 2008: 101

for topics such as climate change, biodiversity, desertification or sustainable production and consumption. Events relating to global environmental conventions thus often explain why certain topics are included on the Mercosur agenda (Mercosur, 2008: 22; Torres and Diaz, 2011: 224; UNEP and CLAES, 2008: 107) and account for formal environmental cooperation.

However, as pointed out before implementation of such joint strategies is often lacking and depends very much on external funding. Moreover, it is less clear to what extent Mercosur has had an impact on these global processes in return. Although there have been attempts to formulate joint Mercosur positions, these have remained isolated and respond to specific events rather than representing a regular coordination process. Overall, in terms of exercising influence or even stating joint positions, individual countries, in particular the bigger states Brazil and Argentina, and other groupings such as the whole Latin America and Caribbean region, or the G77, a coalition of over 130 countries of the South, have been more prominent than Mercosur (Mercosur, 2008: 9). Moreover, since the Copenhagen Summit in 2009 Brazil has increasingly coordinated its position in the climate change negotiations with other emerging powers, such as China, India and South Africa, rather than with its neighbours in the region (Hochstetler and Viola, 2012; Hochstetler, 2012a).

One of the few exceptions is the Marrakech process, which was launched a year after the Johannesburg Summit, as a voluntary multi-stakeholder process to promote sustainable production and consumption. In this process, the Latin America and Caribbean region has played an active role since the start and in several reports Mercosur appeared as one group which also sent experts to give a presentation on behalf of Mercosur (UNEP, 2007, 2009). However, this larger visibility of Mercosur also coincided with the period of time when Mercosur was implementing a project on the topic of sustainable production with the support of an external donor, discussed in more detail below.

On the whole this means that international environmental summits and conventions have been important in encouraging the Southern Cone governments to adopt Mercosur strategies or declarations on a range of environmental issues. However, a more detailed analysis shows that Mercosur as a regional organisation is not very visible in global environmental processes, which indicates that the Southern Cone governments do not use Mercosur much as a forum for strengthening the preparation and participation in those processes. In fact, Mercosur is thus not very relevant for regional cooperation vis-à-vis global processes. Moreover, the fact that Mercosur governments refer to global processes

in joint declarations does not necessarily lead to implementation of these or to cooperation in practice.

In addition to global environmental summits and conventions, the expectation that trade and environmental policy are linked has also contributed to the inclusion of environmental concerns on the Mercosur agenda. When Mercosur was created, the link between the environment and trade was very much debated in the context of the negotiations on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the World Trade Organization as well as the NAFTA discussions. This also helps explain why governments decided to include environmental concerns in Mercosur although this was mostly a trade agreement (Laciar, 2003: 27–30; Torres and Diaz, 2011: 203; UNEP and CLAES, 2008: 104). However, within the Mercosur framework the emphasis of governments has clearly been on trade and competitiveness rather than environmental protection. As outlined above, when Mercosur was created in the early 1990s, the Southern Cone governments were strong advocates of trade liberalisation. Consequently, they were very concerned that environmental regulation could be turned into non-tariff barriers or that environmental concerns may limit important economic activities. As a result the emphasis in the work given to the REMA and later the SGT6 was clearly on trade-related aspects and in particular the concern that environmental regulations could be used as non-tariff barriers in the region. Moreover, environmental topics with sensitive implications for trade have frequently been withdrawn from the agenda of Mercosur's environmental forums and addressed elsewhere without the involvement of environmental experts (Devia, 1998a: 30–34; Hochstetler, 2003: 14; Laciar, 2003: 61–78; Mercosur, 2008: 21; Torres and Diaz, 2011: 206). In addition, as explained above, proposals for a Mercosur environmental legal agreement came under considerable pressure from the national ministries of trade and foreign relations and were watered down considerably (Hochstetler, 2003: 17–23, 2005: 352–353).

A declaration issued by the Mercosur environment ministers prior to the environmental summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 further outlines the priorities of the Mercosur governments very clearly. It stresses the need to avoid "green protectionism" at the global level and obstacles to trade because of environmental concerns as well as the necessity that environmental protection has to take economic and social development into account. In relation to environmental concerns, the declaration does not offer much detail, but mostly reaffirms commitments made in previous summits (Mercosur, 2012). Overall, the expectation that there are linkages between trade and environmental policy thus also explains why the Southern Cone governments have decided to include environmental

concerns on Mercosur's agenda. However, the way these have been addressed in the Mercosur framework clearly demonstrates the priority given to trade concerns to the detriment of environmental cooperation.

Yet, it is also important to note that the creation of Mercosur has not prevented the strengthening of national environmental institutions either. This was particularly the case for Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay which only started to develop environmental policies when civilian rule was re-established. This meant that while at Mercosur level there was a downward pressure on environmental regulations evident in the negotiations for an environmental legal instrument, there was at the same time also domestic and international pressure to improve the environmental standards nationally, leading to a "race to the middle" (Hochstetler, 2005). This is a further indication of Mercosur's lack of relevance for environmental politics in the region. On the whole this means that the inclusion of environmental concerns on Mercosur's agenda and formal cooperation through joint declarations or strategies has been driven by global environmental processes as well as the expectation that trade and environmental policy are linked. However, cooperation in practice has mostly been driven by quite different objectives.

5.3.2 Promoting cooperation in practice: the impact of European donors

In order to understand why cooperation in practice takes place in the Mercosur framework it is necessary to examine the convergence of two factors. Since its creation Mercosur policy-makers have also looked to the EU as a role model for the new regional organisation. This has been reciprocated by substantial aid from European donors for regional cooperation in the Mercosur framework. What is more, European donors have promoted a very specific model of regional integration which encompasses not only trade liberalisation, but also certain norms, including environmental sustainability. Consequently, several projects funded by European donors have focussed on environmental issues or included components to address these through regular meetings, exchanges of information and pilot projects. By linking support for regional integration through Mercosur to environmental sustainability European donors have thus become the most important driver for environmental cooperation in practice. Donors are thus important to make robust cooperation possible and their priorities and interests have had a large influence on the characteristics of cooperation, in terms of why Mercosur continues as a framework for regional environmental cooperation and the kind of issues that are being

addressed. However, disagreements between donors and recipients over the extent and type of regional cooperation also contribute to lower levels of robustness.

The influence of the EU was already evident in the Asuncion treaty and the EU was a constant reference in the creation of Mercosur (Lenz, 2012: 161). Policy-makers in other regions often see the EU as a model for successful regional integration (Börzel and Risse, 2012b; Sanchez Bajo, 1999) and the EU also actively promotes this. Mercosur has frequently been compared to the EU and both, EU and Mercosur policy-makers, have often expressed the view that Mercosur should follow the EU model in terms of institutional set-up (Malamud, 2005: 429) or that the EU could provide a "road map" for Mercosur's institutional development (Sanchez Bajo, 1999: 938). Moreover, Mercosur has received substantial aid from the EU and other European agencies in an effort to promote the EU's values and model of integration in other parts of the world (European Commission, 2007, 2010: 13; Grugel, 2004; Lenz, 2012: 162; Sanchez Bajo, 1999: 935; Santander, 2002: 495, 2006: 44). In addition to encouraging regional integration the EU also promotes values such as democracy, human rights, social responsibility, or environmental sustainability, using a range of tools such as elite interaction, policy advice, political summits, inter-regional agreements and declaratory statements or financial and technical assistance (Börzel and Risse, 2012a; Grugel, 2004, 2007a; Lenz, 2012; Manners, 2002; Sjursen, 2006).

External funding has also been crucial for environmental cooperation in Mercosur. As the Southern Cone governments do not provide much funding for Mercosur's environmental forums, these heavily depend on external funding to be able to address environmental issues (Fulquet, 2010: 15; Mercosur, 2008: 2, 16). This is even the case for attending meetings with Paraguay, the poorest of the Mercosur countries, hardly being able to send representatives to all the meetings (Hochstetler, 2011: 140). Overall, environmental cooperation in Mercosur has received support from different donors, but the largest projects have been funded by the German cooperation agency (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* or GTZ[9]) and the European Commission.

[9] Following internal restructuring, the GTZ was renamed *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit,* or GIZ in 2011. However, as this took place after the end of the project that is relevant for this chapter, I use the term GTZ in the thesis.

The project "Competitiveness and Environment" ("Competitividad y Medio Ambiente" or CyMA according to its Spanish acronym) was funded by the GTZ and ran for five years from 2002 until 2007. The overall aim of the project was to elaborate and implement a strategy to increase the competitiveness and environmental efficiency particularly of small and medium enterprises. The project targeted small and medium enterprises in the four Mercosur member states because they are increasingly under pressure to meet the rising standards of international markets, including on environmental issues. Moreover, they make up a high percentage of the companies in the region and thus make a significant contribution to the generation of employment (Oddone, 2004: 56), but they have limited resources and thus are most in need of support to adapt to higher environmental standards (interview government official, Buenos Aires, 2011; interview former government official, Buenos Aires, 2011; Fulquet, 2010: 13; Mercosur, 2004: 10, 2007: 7). On the Mercosur side, the project was carried out by the SGT6, but also involved technical experts of the four countries as well as the SGT7, the Mercosur working subgroup on industry. The GTZ provided two German experts and four national experts located in each of the four member states (Monge and Jacoby, 2007: 14–15).

Two years after the end of the CyMA project Mercosur made an agreement with the EU for another project which would amongst other things continue cooperation on the topic of sustainable consumption and production. The ECONORMAS project started in 2009 and will run over five years. The overarching objective of the project is to improve the quality and safety of Mercosur products and strengthen the capacity to reconcile economic and commercial activities with the sustainable management of resources and the strengthening of environmental protection. It includes four main components: first, the promotion of sustainable production and consumption; second to combat desertification and the effects of drought; third progress for the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals; and fourth the convergence of the framework of norms and regulations in terms of quality and safety, in the areas of metal-mechanical and electrical products in Mercosur, and wood and furniture for Paraguay and Uruguay, and the creation of regional capacities for the evaluation of the convergence. The project is implemented by the *Laboratorio Tecnológico del Uruguay* (Technological Laboratory of Uruguay or LATU) under the supervision of a directing committee. This committee consists of representatives of the four Mercosur states from the SGT3 "Technical regulation and evaluation of convergence" as well as the SGT6, a manager and accountant agreed for the project, a representative of the European Commission delegation to Uruguay and Paraguay with observer status and representatives of the Committee of Technical

Cooperation of the Mercosur member states (Convenio de Financiación – Econormas, 2009: 8; Mercosur-LATU, 2011: 3).

Given the lack of resources provided to environmental issues by the Mercosur governments themselves, European donors have had a significant impact in terms of promoting Mercosur as a form of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone by funding projects such as CyMA and ECONORMAS and have also influenced the content of cooperation in practice, although as is the case for the La Plata basin regime, this is negotiated with governments. Donors have thus been crucial for keeping environmental issues on the Mercosur agenda and especially promoting cooperation in practice. This also became obvious in the development of the ECONORMAS project. Although the main focus of the project is on the topic of technical norms, the EU generally emphasises environment and climate change and has a policy of mainstreaming environmental issues into all its cooperation projects with Mercosur (European Commission, 2007: 22, 2010: 12, 17). The component on sustainable production and consumption thus offered the possibility to address environmental issues while continuing the work of the CyMA project (interview government official, Asuncion, 2011) and desertification is a topic on which Mercosur had already developed a joint strategy and action plan. Nevertheless, what is notable is that the EU did not seem to prioritise any particular regional environmental concern. Instead, the main focus was on strengthening regional cooperation in the Mercosur framework while taking environmental concerns into account in general. The history of the project evolution thus accounts for the selection of the four components of the ECONORMAS project which otherwise seem rather unrelated, and demonstrates the impact of donors in attempting to strengthen environmental cooperation in the Mercosur framework.

This case study thus presents another example of the influence of donor priorities on regional environmental cooperation. Interestingly, unlike the donors involved in the other two case studies, in this case the EU's main objective was not to promote a particular environmental topic or solve a specific regional environmental problem. Rather its aim is to promote EU-style regional integration in the form of Mercosur and combine this with its own norms of environmental protection and sustainable development. By linking support for Mercosur to assistance for environmental concerns, European agencies thus play an important role in terms of promoting Mercosur as a framework for regional environmental cooperation. Moreover, the EU has never questioned the impeachment process against Fernando Lugo and has put strong pressure on the Mercosur governments to reintegrate

Paraguay, making this a condition for further negotiations for an EU-Mercosur agreement (MercoPress, 2013a). Again, this shows how Brussels attempts to promote its own vision of regional cooperation in the Southern Cone.

Overall, the two projects funded by European donors have led to some important achievements, in particular in relation to cooperation in practice. It is thus largely thanks to these projects that Mercosur can be classified as an example of robust environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone despite the many limitations. The CyMA project was thus important to collect information from the four Mercosur countries to get an overview of activities and projects in relation to clean production in each country. One interviewee stated that the joint work on the topic of sustainable production was also essential to establish common parameters and definitions and commented that initially it was "like the tower of Babel" where all the countries were talking about different concepts (interview government official, Asuncion, 2011, author's translation). Moreover, the project led to the approval of a declaration of principles of clean production by the ministers of the environment in 2003. The declaration comprised seven principles for the promotion of clean production calling amongst other things for the development of institutional and legal frameworks; the strengthening of cooperation between the member states; mutual support between different sectors, including the NGO, private, work and civil society sectors; the development of economic, financial and voluntary mechanisms and instruments; and the dissemination of information. Four years later this was strengthened by a policy on the promotion and cooperation on sustainable production and consumption in Mercosur (*Política de Promoción y Cooperación en Producción y Consumo Sostenibles en el Mercosur*) approved by the CMC (Mercosur, 2003, 2007b). This means the project strengthened both formal cooperation and cooperation in practice.

The CyMA project also contributed to the strengthening of several Mercosur forums. It reinforced in particular the SGT6 (Monge and Jacoby, 2007: 32) which is generally not one of the strongest or most important Mercosur working groups (interview government official, Asuncion, 2011). The project to a great extent compensated the lack of resources the SGT6 was suffering from and thus allowed it to follow up the topic on a regular basis and in more detail (Monge and Jacoby, 2007: 32). Moreover, the project encouraged cooperation between different Mercosur working groups, in particular by involving the SGT7 in the implementation of the project. As a result the topic of the project also gained a more horizontal relevance, rather than being seen only as an environmental matter. This means the project temporarily deterred the marginalisation of Mercosur's environmental

forums and environmental policies. The project also supported the development of the Mercosur environmental information system (*Sistema de Información Ambiental del Mercosur*). Overall, the CyMA project thus led to a significant strengthening of the environmental agenda in Mercosur (Mercosur, 2007a: 13; Monge and Jacoby, 2007). Finally, the project contributed to the reduction of asymmetries in Mercosur by ensuring that representatives from all countries were able to participate in the meetings on a regular basis and at an equal level. In particular, representatives from the smaller member states appreciated the fact that the project reduced the gap to the bigger member states in terms of level of technical capacity and the capacity to contribute to the discussions at the regional level in a proactive way and on a regular basis (Monge and Jacoby 2007, 33; interview former government official, Buenos Aires, 2011). As the ECONORMAS project is still ongoing it is not yet possible to fully assess its achievements, but so far it has also facilitated several meetings with representatives from all member states and contributed to maintaining a dialogue on the topics covered by the project (ECONORMAS, 2013).

Overall, the role of donors is thus crucial to understand why regional environmental cooperation continues in the Mercosur framework despite the declining relevance of the regional organisation for environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. Donors thus make cooperation in practice and therefore also robust cooperation possible. Moreover, their priorities shape the characteristics of regional environmental cooperation, particularly in terms of promoting Mercosur as a framework for regional environmental cooperation. However, at the same time there is also some evidence of disagreements between European donors and the Mercosur governments in relation to the nature of regional cooperation. As outlined in chapter 2, if donors and recipients disagree or are not committed to the same goal this can seriously weaken cooperation. The donor-recipient relationship is thus another important element that accounts for the lower level of robustness of regional environmental cooperation in the Mercosur framework compared to the other two case studies.

As outlined before, the main objective of European donors is not to address a particular regional environmental problem, but rather to promote a certain model of regional integration which builds on the EU example and in which the norm of environmental sustainability is a core element. EU policy documents frequently reiterate the importance of the EU model for Mercosur and how Mercosur could learn from the EU (European Commission, 2007: 24–36). Similarly, in the great majority of project publications the prologue by the German cooperation agency states that Germany as well as the EU, based

on their own experience, believe in regional integration as a solution to environmental and other global problems and therefore follow the development of Mercosur with great interest (Mercosur, 2004a: 12, 2004b: 12, 2007a: 7). However, this comparison of Mercosur with the EU has led to very specific expectations and as the evaluation of the CyMA project shows, this has also led to some friction:

> Particularly from a perspective that applies, misleadingly, the supranational institutional model of the EU as a reference model, expectations that are too high with regards to the objectives of regional integration and which do not conform to Mercosur's own model of integration tend to be generated. As a result, the complexity of the decision-making processes of Mercosur, as well as the added value of decisions taken at the regional level are occasionally underestimated which obstructs a just and unanimous appreciation of strategic products, like for example the elaboration and approval of a regional policy on sustainable production and consumption. (Monge and Jacoby 2007, 51, author's translation)[10]

The evaluation thus recommends that in any future cooperation projects with Mercosur, the partners need to be aware of the structures of Mercosur because only if they realise the potential as well as the limitations of Mercosur's integration model, will it be possible to adjust the expectations to reality (Monge and Jacoby, 2007: 71).

On the whole donors, in particular from Europe, have thus had a large impact on regional environmental cooperation in Mercosur. By promoting this particular model of regional integration and coupling it with environmental norms, they have made sure that Mercosur has continued to carry out joint activities relating to environmental concerns. However, this

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[10] Spanish original: Particularmente desde una perspectiva que aplica, equivocadamente, la institucionalidad supranacional de la Unión Europea como modelo de referencia, se tienden a generar expectativas demasiado altas en cuanto a las metas de integración regional y no conformes con el modelo de integración propio del Mercosur. En consecuencia, se subestiman, ocasionalmente, tanto la complejidad de los procesos decisorios del Mercosur, así como el valor agregado de las decisiones tomadas a nivel regional, lo cual dificulta una valoración justa y unánime de productos estratégicos tal como, por ejemplo, la elaboración y aprobación de una política regional de producción y consumo sostenibles.

approach also has limitations. Recipients in other regions are of course not passive, but actively adapt and interpret EU norms and policies and may also resist them (Börzel and Risse, 2012a: 8). The example above has demonstrated that there is friction in particular over the model of regional integration. Although Mercosur policy-makers initially adopted the EU model enthusiastically, there were no detailed plans of how to achieve this (Lenz, 2012: 161–162). Two decades later it has become very clear that there is little political will to strengthen Mercosur and follow the EU's path of building supranational institutions. While European donors have very much promoted Mercosur as a channel for regional environmental cooperation, the Southern Cone governments resist this on two levels. First, they have not strengthened Mercosur's institutions in general, so that to some extent the overall weakness of Mercosur's environmental institutions is also a reflection of the low level of institutionalisation in Mercosur generally (Hochstetler, 2011: 136). In addition, environmental protection is not a priority for the Mercosur governments and Mercosur reflects the priorities of its member states (Mercosur, 2008: 2; Tussie and Vásquez, 2000: 199; interview, government official, Buenos Aires, 2011). Consequently, the Mercosur governments have resisted the diffusion of environmental norms and environmental cooperation in Mercosur remains very marginal. This echoes other studies which have found that in the area of democracy promotion and in particular social citizenship as an element of democracy, Mercosur's governing elites have equally resisted the adoption of norms promoted by the EU, suggesting that norm diffusion is an extremely ambitious goal (Grugel, 2007a).

Given these discrepancies between the priorities of donors and recipients it is perhaps not surprising that regional environmental cooperation in the Mercosur framework suffers from interruptions and discontinuity. The perspective for cooperation in practice is thus very much limited by the duration of specific projects. In the case of the CyMA project, the GTZ decided not to fund a second implementation phase as was hoped on the Mercosur side (interview government official, Buenos Aires, 2011) and that meant that the implementation of the policy on sustainable production and consumption was not ensured. Several years after the end of the project interviewees still listed the approval of the policy as one of the main achievements, but some also pointed out that the implementation was still lacking (interviews government officials Buenos Aires, 2010 and 2011). One interviewee also stated that the *ad hoc* group on Competitiveness and Environment created during the project had hardly been active after the end of the project and that there was no follow-up of the implementation, so that nobody knows to what extent companies now use the information generated during the project (interview government official, Buenos Aires,

2011). Another interviewee stated that there is no continuity at the structural level because Mercosur does not have any permanent structures to deal with the topic and the people responsible in the relevant ministries often change. Moreover, the interviewee explained that a few years is nothing to address a topic like sustainable development and that a much longer timeframe is needed to do this successfully. In addition the interviewee pointed out that while the work with the German cooperation agency had been very good, the GTZ had now closed its office in Buenos Aires (interview former government official, Buenos Aires, 2011). Overall, the high dependence on external funding thus not only characterises the marginality of environmental cooperation in Mercosur, but the disagreements in the donor-recipient relationship also contribute to a lower level of robustness.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the characteristics of regional environmental cooperation in the framework of Mercosur as well as the processes driving this. It has argued that environmental cooperation seems to be relatively well-institutionalised in Mercosur, but a closer look reveals that, like in the other case studies, environmental concerns take a marginal position in regional cooperation. While the desire of the Mercosur governments to demonstrate a commitment to international environmental summits and processes has played an important role in encouraging formal cooperation, cooperation in practice is driven by external donors. However, there are some significant disagreements between European donors and the Mercosur governments in terms of what regional cooperation should look like. What is more, the relevance of the regional organisation for environmental cooperation has declined over time and civil society initiatives take place mostly outside the official Mercosur framework. All of these aspects make this case study the least robust example of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. This contrasts starkly with the second case study presented in the following chapter where the work and priorities of NGOs, donors and international organisations are much more aligned resulting in more robust regional environmental cooperation.

Chapter 6: Species protection at the regional level: the Convention on Migratory Species in the Southern Cone

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the protection of migratory species as a second case study of robust regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. Relating to the first part of the research question, the first part of the chapter examines the characteristics of regional environmental cooperation in order to describe the form of cooperation. The case study differs from the other two cases in particular in relation to the institutional framework and the political purpose of this. While in the other two case studies the institutional framework is provided by regional regimes which were created for political and economic reasons and where environmental concerns are only one among several objectives, in this case study a global convention targeting a specific environmental concern serves as a framework. This also means that the scope of issues addressed is narrower and focuses specifically on the protection of endangered migratory species. On the other hand, the link to the regional level is much less obvious. Consequently, the first part also explores how and why a global environmental convention should become a framework for regional cooperation and how the boundaries are defined. While ecological criteria play a role in this, political considerations are equally important as some countries have opted out of cooperation in the CMS framework. This also demonstrates that, like the other case studies, regional cooperation on the protection of migratory species is also marked by marginality. This is also evident in the non-binding nature of the agreements that have been signed and the high dependence on professional NGOs with autonomous sources of funding for their implementation.

The second part of the chapter then focuses on the second part of the research question and examines why the protection of migratory species in the framework of the CMS has become a form of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. It first examines the initial steps towards regional environmental cooperation which were initiated by endogenous drivers, notably networks of researchers and conservation NGOs. Initially research was important because it led to the realisation that certain groups of species are endangered and that they regularly migrate across national boundaries. This established the

scope of the issue and defined the boundaries for cooperation in ecological terms, i.e. the countries sharing the habitat for particular species. Regional environmental cooperation on migratory species thus clearly started from cooperation in practice in the form of regular meetings and exchanges of information, as well as joint research and conservation activities between researchers, conservation NGOs and, in some cases, national park administrations in neighbouring countries. During the 2000s the CMS started to turn into the institutional framework for the protection of migratory species. This was actively promoted by the regional conservation networks that had formed earlier, primarily because the CMS offered a way of strengthening formal cooperation between governments which had been only weakly developed until then. Regional conservation networks benefitted from the relatively open institutional framework of the CMS which provides important possibilities for the involvement of professional conservation NGOs and also opens up ways to access national governments. Simultaneously, the CMS Secretariat itself turned its attention towards the Southern Cone region and thus worked together with nonstate actors in the region in order to promote the convention with national governments.

Overall, the links between the endogenous and exogenous drivers promoting regional environmental cooperation are strongest in this case study, making this the most robust example of cooperation. Moreover, although the activities that make up cooperation in practice are also heavily dependent on external funding, this comes from a variety of different sources. Consequently, cooperation is less dependent on one single donor and its characteristics are less shaped by any particular donor. At the same time, it is important to note that this comparatively higher level of robustness is linked to very specific conditions. Most importantly, as examined in the last section of the chapter, the endogenous drivers involved in this case study are professional conservation NGOs which have significant resources to offer to governments and have approached the environmental issue at stake more from a technical perspective that does not openly question the development model pursued by governments.

6.2 The Convention on Migratory Species as a framework for regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone

This section focuses on the first part of the research question and examines the characteristics of regional environmental cooperation on the topic of migratory species.

The case study differs from the other two cases in particular in relation to the institutional framework and its political purpose. While in the other two case studies the institutional framework is provided by regional regimes where environmental concerns are only one among several objectives, in this case study a global regime targeting a specific environmental concern serves as a framework. The scope of issues addressed focuses specifically on the protection of endangered migratory species and is thus narrower compared to the other two case studies. Conversely, the link to the regional level is less obvious because the institutional framework is provided by a global convention rather than a regional regime. The section thus first introduces the CMS in general and then outlines why the convention also represents a framework for regional cooperation in the Southern Cone. Furthermore, the section examines how the boundaries of cooperation are defined in this case study. It finds that while ecological criteria play a role in this, political considerations are equally important as some countries have opted out of cooperation in the CMS framework. This also demonstrates that, like the other case studies, the protection of migratory species is also marked by marginality. This is also evident in the non-binding nature of the agreements that have been signed and the high dependence on professional NGOs with their own sources of funding for their implementation.

6.2.1 The Convention on Migratory Species

The Convention on Migratory Species, sometimes also called the Bonn Convention, is part of the broader group of global environmental treaties. These address environmental concerns which are seen as globally important and they are open to all countries. Global environmental conventions have two characteristics that make this a very different framework for regional environmental cooperation from the other two case studies. First, the political purpose of the institutional framework is to address environmental concerns. Consequently, most global environmental conventions have a relatively narrow focus, concentrating on one particular environmental concern or set of concerns. This is a crucial difference to the other two case studies. For both, regional organisations and regional freshwater resource regimes environmental concerns were introduced in addition to other political and economic objectives. The objective of the institutional framework is thus not to solve environmental problems as is the case for global environmental conventions. In addition, the environmental agenda is much broader in the other two case studies. As the previous chapter has shown, Mercosur has addressed many different and often unrelated environmental concerns. In the case of the La Plata basin regime, the environmental agenda is more coherent than in Mercosur as it always relates to the management of shared

freshwater resources, but it still relates to a wider set of environmental concerns, including water quality and pollution, biodiversity or floods and sedimentation.

The concern for migratory species was taken up at the global level at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 due to serious concerns regarding the significant loss of some migratory species because of excessive hunting, destruction of habitat and contamination of feeding grounds. Consequently, the Federal Republic of Germany started to draft a convention which was concluded in 1979 and entered into force in 1983 (Caddell, 2005: 114). Migratory species is an issue that per se requires transboundary cooperation, at least according to its definition by the CMS. The CMS thus states that "'Migratory species' means the entire population or any geographically separate part of the population of any species (…), a significant proportion of whose members cyclically and predictably cross one or more national jurisdictional boundaries" (CMS 1979: article I). With this definition the CMS thus excludes species whose migratory range falls within one country only (de Klemm, 1994: 70). Migratory species are particularly vulnerable because they often travel huge distances and cross one or more political boundaries. As a consequence it is not sufficient to protect them and conserve their habitat in one country, but a minimum of conservation and protection along their whole migratory route is necessary in order to conserve the species (Caddell, 2005: 113–114). Similar to other global environmental conventions, the most important decision-making forum is the so-called Conference of the Parties which brings together representatives of all the member states and takes place every two to three years. In addition, the CMS includes a secretariat to provide administrative support on a daily basis. The secretariat has no formal decision-making powers, but can make recommendations or shape implementation through its daily work.

6.2.2 Regional cooperation in the framework of the CMS

While in the other two case studies existing regional regimes serve as institutional frameworks for environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone, the link to the regional level is less obvious in the case of a global environmental convention. Nevertheless, global environmental conventions can also play a role in regional environmental cooperation. Governments may thus choose to reinforce the implementation of a global environmental convention at the regional level because this promises to be more practical or effective. Regional arrangements under the umbrella of a global environmental convention can also help to address regional differences and deal with specific issues of particular regions more

effectively (Bauer, 2009; Najam, 2004; Selin, 2012). In the Southern Cone, regional environmental cooperation also takes place in the framework of other global conventions, such as the UNCCD, but as set out in chapter 3, this is less developed than in the case of the CMS.

The environmental issues addressed by the CMS in fact lend themselves more to being addressed at the regional level even though they may be a concern for countries all over the globe. While the CMS thus provides a global framework for the protection of migratory species in general, the migratory route of a specific species determines which countries are required to cooperate in order to conserve that specific species. As neighbouring countries have to work together the protection of specific species is thus much more a regional than a global concern. In fact, the protection of migratory birds was one of the first topics for environmental cooperation between states and initially it took place at the regional rather than the global level (Balsiger et al., 2012: 12–13).

The CMS promotes and facilitates agreements for specific species or groups of species through additional agreements under the umbrella of the convention. The most developed of these agreements are legally binding and have their own institutional structure, including a secretariat and regular meetings. This is the case for example for two regional agreements relating to cetaceans or the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (Caddell, 2005: 126–134). Other agreements are non-binding, so-called Memoranda of Understanding whose aim is to attain immediate conservation objectives and coordinate measures in relation to administration and scientific research, often in cooperation with relevant NGOs (Caddell, 2005: 119; CMS, 2006: 3). Agreements should cover the whole range of the species concerned and are therefore open to all range states, including those countries that are not parties to the CMS (CMS, 1979: article V). In addition to these species-specific activities, the CMS also promotes cooperation on a regional level more generally and has, for example, supported several meetings for countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. These have served to provide information about the CMS and exchange experiences on topics that are particularly relevant to this region.

The CMS now has 118 parties and most South American countries are members, with the exception of Brazil, Colombia, Guyana, Suriname and Venezuela. Chile joined as the first South American country in 1983, the other South American countries joined mostly throughout the 1990s with the exception of Bolivia and Ecuador which joined in 2003 and 2004 respectively (CMS, 2013b). Active participation of Southern Cone as well as some

neighbouring countries has increased significantly since 2006 and since then the convention has developed into a framework for cooperation in the region. In the space of only four years (2006-2010) four memoranda of understanding were signed between South American countries. These are the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Ruddy-headed Goose signed between Argentina and Chile in November 2006; the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Southern South American Migratory Grassland Bird Species and their Habitats between Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay signed in August 2007; the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of High Andean Flamingos and their Habitats signed by Bolivia, Chile and Peru in December 2008; and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Argentine Republic and the Republic of Chile on the Conservation of the Southern Huemul signed in December 2010. This development is remarkable in two respects. First, it represents a significant and unprecedented increase in activity on the part of South American governments in relation to the CMS. Second, the memoranda are quite concentrated in geographic terms and mostly cover migratory species and their habitats in the Southern Cone.

Ecological criteria, i.e. the location of the habitat of the different migratory species thus play an important role in defining the boundaries for regional environmental cooperation. As outlined in more detail in the second part of the chapter, as far as cooperation in practice is concerned activities have generally covered the whole migratory range with regional conservation networks including partners in all relevant countries, even if organisations in some countries are more active than others. However, formal cooperation, i.e. written and public agreements between governments, which in this case study are the four memoranda of understanding, is also very much determined by political considerations, as some range states have decided not to join a particular memorandum. The memorandum on the Andean flamingos has thus only been signed by Bolivia, Chile and Peru. Argentina is a range state, but has so far chosen not to sign, although Argentinean researchers and national park administrations regularly participate in research and conservation activities. Similarly Bolivia participated in the grassland birds memorandum from the beginning, but only signed it two years later in 2009. Moreover, Brazil as the largest and most powerful country in the region is not yet a member of the CMS, although it has signed the memorandum on grassland birds and actively participated in its development.

The precise reasons of why some countries have abstained from making formal commitments, although some of their environmental agencies do engage in cooperation in practice, have been difficult to establish. Interviewees have thus mostly pointed to rather general internal administrative or coordination difficulties, rather than specific obstacles or disagreements (interviews environmental NGO Asunción, 2011; government official, Montevideo, 2011). However, it is important to note that the protection of migratory species and their habitats often conflicts with important economic activities and this is likely to play a role in preventing or delaying formal commitments on the part of governments. For example the habitat of Andean flamingos often corresponds to areas that are important for mining while one of the main threats to the grassland birds is intensive agriculture and in particular soybean monocultures as well as pine and eucalyptus plantations for the paper industry (BBC, 2011; Caziani et al., 2007; CMS, 2012: 4). One of the threats to the huemul on the other hand is the fragmentation of its habitat due to large infrastructure developments such as hydropower installations (The Guardian, 2011).

The fact that some range states have chosen not sign certain agreements and that Brazil is still not a member of the CMS are all indications that, despite the recent increases in cooperation under the CMS umbrella, the protection of migratory species remains a low political priority in the Southern Cone region. What is more, the four memoranda that have been signed are all non-binding and do not entail any financial commitments (interview, CMS Secretariat, Bonn, 2011). Governments have thus not made the step towards establishing legally binding agreements with their own institutional structures and financial contributions as is the case for CMS agreements in other parts of the world. In addition, interviewees have also pointed to other significant challenges which still remain. Interviewees working on the protection of the Andean flamingos for example have pointed out that it is very difficult to establish new protected areas and national as well as provincial authorities constantly need to be reminded of existing protected areas in order to avoid the development of economic activities in these areas. The conservation of the flamingos is thus very much dependent on the work of the regional conservation network and leading figures within the group and would not be guaranteed by national or provincial governments on their own, even if they have on paper made relevant commitments (interviews, researcher, Salta, 2011; national park administration, Salta, 2011). Similarly, in relation to the grassland birds memorandum one NGO representative stated that the governments still find it difficult to implement the action plan by themselves and if there is not constant support from another actor or organisation things would not move a lot. Another issue is the constant lack of funding, which means that even with the action plan

agreed there is no money from the government to implement it and NGOs or other actors have to look for funding for the different activities (interview, environmental NGO Asunción, 2011).

While this case study thus differs significantly from the other two case studies in terms of the institutional framework and the scope of the issues addressed, the marginality of regional environmental cooperation, evident in the reliance of governments on external sources for support and the non-binding nature of agreements, remains a shared element. Having examined the different characteristics that describe the form of cooperation in relation to the protection of migratory species in the Southern Cone, the second part of the chapter examines how cooperation on this topic developed and why the CMS has become a channel for regional cooperation. This process is remarkable in two respects. First, it shows how a global environmental convention that was initially very much promoted by Europe, increased its significance in the Southern Cone. Second, given the marginality of environmental concerns in regional cooperation in the Southern Cone, it is surprising that governments would use a convention whose main focus is clearly environmental protection, as a channel for regional cooperation.

6.3 Why has the protection of migratory species in the framework of the CMS become a form of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone?

This part focuses on the second part of the research question and examines why the protection of migratory species in the framework of the CMS has become a form of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. Of course, as outlined in chapter 2, many studies have focussed on global environmental conventions, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change or the Convention on Biological Diversity, and examined how environmental cooperation comes about. Yet, in this case it is not the process of regime formation itself that matters, but rather the question of how a global environmental regime, which had already existed for over two decades, relatively suddenly became a framework for regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone.

The section first examines the initial steps towards regional environmental cooperation. These were largely taken by endogenous drivers, notably networks of researchers and conservation NGOs together with the staff of national parks in some cases. Initially

research was important because it led to the realisation that certain groups of species are endangered and that they regularly migrate across national boundaries. This established the scope of the issue and defined the boundaries for cooperation in ecological terms, i.e. the countries sharing the habitat for particular species. Regional environmental cooperation on migratory species thus clearly started from cooperation in practice in the form of regular meetings and exchanges of information as well as joint research and conservation activities between researchers, conservation NGOs and in some cases also national park administrations in neighbouring countries. After all the Southern Cone countries with the exception of Brazil had joined the CMS in the 1990s, the global environmental convention gradually turned into the institutional framework for the protection of migratory species during the 2000s. This was actively promoted by the regional conservation networks that had formed earlier, primarily because the CMS offered a way of strengthening formal cooperation between governments which had been only weakly developed until then, and thus achieve more robust cooperation. Regional conservation networks benefitted from the relatively open institutional framework of the CMS which provides possibilities for the involvement of professional NGOs and also opens up ways to access national governments. Simultaneously, the CMS Secretariat itself took the initiative to promote the convention outside Europe and Africa where most of its activities had taken place initially. As part of this the secretariat actively sought links to Southern Cone governments and worked together with conservation networks in the region to convince governments of the value of the convention. The development of robust forms of regional environmental cooperation on migratory species and in the framework of the CMS was thus the result of the confluence of two factors; the activities of regional conservation networks on the one hand; and policy changes as well as the initiatives of particular members of staff within the CMS Secretariat which brought the focus to the Southern Cone on the other.

Overall, this case study is characterised by relatively dense links between the different endogenous and exogenous drivers promoting regional environmental cooperation. To a large extent, this is due to the existence of an epistemic community committed to species protection which has members in NGOs, universities, national park administrations and environmental agencies of national governments as well as the CMS Secretariat. Moreover, several members of this network are also “bilateral activists” (Steinberg, 2001: chap. 1, 2003) who are well-connected internationally and thus able to access international sources of funding and expertise, but also know the domestic policy context very well to promote species protection with national governments and other domestic actors. This is one of the key reasons why regional environmental cooperation is the most robust in this

case study. Moreover, although the activities that make up cooperation in practice are also heavily dependent on external funding, this comes from a variety of different sources. Consequently, cooperation is less dependent on one single donor and its characteristics are less shaped by any particular donor. In addition, regional conservation networks have also used a variety of tools and strategies and thus addressed the issue from different angles. Nevertheless, this comparatively higher level of robustness is only possible under very specific conditions. First, the CMS provides a relatively open institutional framework only to conservation NGOs which are deemed qualified in the protection of migratory species and which have been approved by governments. This suggests that professional NGOs which can offer significant expertise and resources to governments are much more likely to be able to link cooperation in practice to formal cooperation than grassroots movements or openly critical groups. Second, the protection of migratory species is not a particularly salient or politically sensitive topic.

6.3.1 The first steps: developing cooperation in practice

Although the four memoranda were mostly developed in isolation from each other with little interaction between the different groups working on each agreement, there are significant commonalities in terms of how the memoranda were developed. These include the type of actors involved and their objectives as well as their motivations for working in the framework of the CMS. Moreover, the time frame is very similar. In all four cases regional networks of researchers and NGOs as well as cooperation between state agencies, notably national park administrations, started to increase significantly from the 1990s onwards. As in the other two case studies, it is thus likely that regional environmental cooperation in the framework of the CMS also benefited from the return to democracy which resulted in greater possibilities for interaction between non-governmental networks from different countries and an environment generally favouring regional cooperation. In the following section I will first outline the origins for each memorandum and then examine the process as a whole in order to explain why regional environmental cooperation developed on this particular issue and in this geographical area.

In the case of the ruddy-headed goose from the late 1990s onwards the NGO *Wetlands International* through its office in Buenos Aires, carried out several projects in order to get more precise information regarding the species, to raise awareness, and carry out concrete protection measures. The different project reports show a clear evolution over the years. While at the beginning the main objectives were to establish where the main breeding and

nesting as well as wintering sites were and how many birds there were, later research focussed on more specific details such as habitat use and the migratory route as well as comparing new figures of abundance with old ones. Throughout the different projects the NGO and their partners also included more people in the awareness-raising and education campaigns, from establishing first contacts with authorities and hunting associations to education campaigns and developing brochures and distributing them as well as articles in scientific journals (Wetlands International, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2009). At the later stages the NGO worked with authorities in order to update geese hunting regulations in the province of Buenos Aires where the geese spend the winter, elaborating a national conservation plan as well as carrying out workshops with the National Fauna Direction (Wetlands International, 2009: 3).

In the case of the grassland birds memorandum the local branches of an international NGO equally played a crucial role. As set out in chapter 4, large parts of the Southern Cone have since the 1990s increasingly been turned to intensive agricultural production, and, in particular, soybean. This has radically changed the natural grasslands that characterised this region previously. Many of the species inhabiting these grasslands are therefore facing the loss or degradation of their habitat and are also starting to disappear. This includes several species of migratory grassland birds which live in the grasslands of the Southern Cone part of the year on their migratory routes. The international NGO *BirdLife International* and its local partner organisations became aware of the issue and started to be concerned about the conservation of grassland birds. In the early 2000s, the local partner organisations of *BirdLife International* in the Southern Cone thus started some activities regarding monitoring and research of grassland birds as well as developing more sustainable cattle ranching models to preserve the grasslands. These activities were led from the *Aves Argentinas* office, the Argentinean partner of *BirdLife International* and initially *Aves Argentinas* also received CMS contributions for this (CMS, 2002: 15, 2005a: 15–18). To strengthen this further *BirdLife International* developed the idea of a memorandum of understanding under the umbrella of the CMS and started looking for ways to achieve this. As examined in more detail below, the relationship between their local partner organisation and the CMS was particularly strong in Paraguay because a member of their partner organisation, *Guyra Paraguay*, was nominated as the Scientific Councillor for the CMS by the government. *BirdLife International* thus chose Paraguay as the entry point to introduce the idea and work towards the development of a memorandum of understanding. The NGO worked closely with the Paraguayan government in order to promote the memorandum (interview environmental NGO, Asunción, 2011).

In the case of the memorandum on Andean flamingos, initial research played a crucial role in exposing the need for further protection. Until the late 1990s very little was known about all three species of flamingos living in the high Andes. While there was incomplete information regarding the summer distributions, the movement of the flamingos during the winter was largely hypothetical (Caziani et al., 2007: 277). This only started to change with a series of simultaneous surveys carried out in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru. The first census took place in 1997 and was then repeated every year until 2000 and then continued at five-year intervals (interview, researcher, Salta, 2011). The first census was initiated by the Peruvian NGO *Perú Verde* and one of their researchers who got into contact with colleagues in the other countries and organised a first meeting to exchange information. Two months later the first simultaneous census was held. Both the census and the preparatory meeting were supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society (GCFA, 2011; Marconi, 2010: 37; interview, researcher Salta, 2011).

The first exchanges also resulted in the creation of the *Grupo de Conservación Flamencos Altoandinos* (High Andes Flamingo Conservation Group or GCFA). The GCFA is an international working group consisting of scientists and specialists of conservation and protected areas of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Peru coming from the public sectors, civil society and the private sector. It consists of a permanent council and secretariat which changes every two years (Marconi, 2010: 3, 37). While the main objectives of the first censuses was to gather basic data on abundance and distribution, the researchers carrying out the work soon also became aware of problems regarding the conservation of these species (interview, researcher, Salta, 2011). As a result the objective of the GCFA is not only to improve knowledge and scientific research on the flamingos of the high Andes, but also to promote the active participation of local communities, develop and implement management plans, awareness-raising and the creation of protected areas (GCFA, 2011). The group thus has two areas of work, research on the one hand and administration and political issues on the other (Marconi, 2010: 37–38; interview, researcher, Salta, 2011; interview, national park administration Salta, 2011).

The last memorandum that has been signed so far, in 2010, addresses the protection of the huemul, a species of deer living in the Southern Andes. The two range states, Argentina and Chile, have been cooperating on the issue already for two decades. Since 1992 bilateral technical meetings have been held on a regular basis. These meetings were attended by staff from official institutions and NGO representatives from both countries and they

resulted in recommendations on various topics, including legislation, research, management, education and conservation (Serret, 2001: 104). This has also resulted in cooperation on the ground, for example with park rangers participating in activities in national parks of the neighbouring country (Corporación Nacional Forestal, 2010; Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable de la Nación - Argentina, 2002: 14; Serret, 2001: 110). Overall, the national park administrations have thus been one of the main driving forces and they play a crucial role in hosting meetings, organising education and awareness-raising campaigns as well as collaborating with research (interview government official Buenos Aires, 2011; Corporación Nacional Forestal, 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable de la Nación - Argentina, 2008, 2009; Serret, 2001: 103, 109–111; Vila et al., 2006). In addition to the national park administrations, NGOs and private foundations have also been involved in research and conservation activities and campaigns (Comité Nacional Pro Defensa de la Flora y Fauna Chile, n.d.; Huilo Huilo Foundation, n.d.).

The trajectories of the four memoranda clearly show several commonalities although there has been no notable interaction between actors working on the different agreements. First, in all memoranda except for the last one on the huemul, the extent of the threat to the different species mostly became evident in the 1990s. In these cases researchers thus played a fundamental role in two respects. Research was the basis for realising that the species were endangered and it also helped understand the distribution and behaviour of the different animals better. The latter was crucial for realising that the animals in question regularly cross national borders which in turn established them as species that fall under the remit of the CMS. The case of the huemul is different, perhaps because both the threat to the survival of the South Andean deer and awareness of the need for protection, go back longer. The abundance and distribution of the huemul has been declining since the arrival of the European colonisers, but some form of legal protection of the huemul also dates back as far as the 1930s (Vila et al., 2006: 263). However, in the other cases research on the extent of the problem and its transboundary dimensions was crucial as a first step. Following on from this, researchers have then also taken the initiative to promote the protection of the different species.

Regional environmental cooperation on the protection of migratory species thus clearly started from cooperation in practice and joint activities of networks including researchers, NGOs and staff working for national parks were well-developed before the Southern Cone governments signed the different memoranda of understanding. In this case the CMS as an

institutional framework was thus added after the other characteristics of cooperation, i.e. the environmental issue addressed and the geographical boundaries had already been established. The next section thus outlines the processes that led to the establishment of formal cooperation in the form of agreements between governments and examines why it was the CMS that became the institutional framework for regional environmental cooperation.

6.3.2 Striving towards robustness: linking cooperation in practice to the CMS framework

The CMS as a framework for regional environmental cooperation on migratory species in the Southern Cone has been promoted from two angles. First, regional conservation networks have been concerned with strengthening cooperation and making it more robust. Consequently, they have looked for ways to ensure continuity in species protection and safeguards to make sure the achievements so far remain in place. Agreements between governments are regarded as a way of ensuring continuity as they remain in place even if governments, donors or individual activists change. Moreover, they can help in sourcing funding and strengthen the work of NGOs working on those topics. In addition, the CMS offered good possibilities for the participation of professional conservation NGOs and thus also helps to establish access to governments. This is an important aspect to understand why it was favourable for regional conservation NGOs to work with this particular convention. Second, the CMS Secretariat itself turned its attention to the Southern Cone and promoted the convention with governments. The CMS thus became a framework for regional environmental cooperation as a result of several coinciding factors.

In fact, in several cases agreements between government agencies already existed previously. Prior to signing the memoranda of understanding under the umbrella of the CMS for both the ruddy-headed goose and the huemul, Argentina and Chile had already signed a treaty on the environment in 1991. However, the objectives were very broad and included amongst other things coordinated action for the protection, preservation, conservation and restoration of the environment as well as the commitment not to carry out unilateral actions that could cause damage to the environment in the other country. The means in order to achieve this include exchange of information regarding legislation and institutions for the protection of the environment, organisation of seminars and bilateral meetings of scientists and experts. In 2002, this was further strengthened with an additional protocol on the conservation of the wild flora and fauna shared between the two countries

(Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Comercio Internacional y Culto de la Republica Argentina, 1991, 2002). While neither the treaty nor the additional protocol refer to any species in particular, the additional protocol does make reference to the CMS and states as one objective the development of memoranda of understanding in the framework of the CMS. Similarly, in the case of the protection of the Andean flamingos agreements between technical institutions of the different countries already existed before the memorandum under the CMS framework (CMS, 2005b, 2008: 14). While these pre-existing agreements are examples of formal cooperation, they were either not very specific or at a lower political level.

Consequently, interviewees clearly saw the CMS as an additional tool to strengthen their objectives, in particular by providing a stronger framework for states to keep their commitments as well as increasing credibility which in turn helps to attract external funding. Interviewees from both, the government and the NGO sector working on the ruddy-headed goose, for example, stated that the added value of the memorandum under the CMS umbrella consists, on the one hand, of providing continuity and a better enforcement of implementation as states would feel more committed if they are accountable to an international organisation, and on the other hand, it helps in providing funding or advice on how to get funding for projects carried out by NGOs (interviews environmental NGO, Buenos Aires, 2011; government official, Buenos Aires, 2011). Several interviewees working on the grassland birds memorandum saw the fact that there is a signed commitment by all the states as a major achievement and given the subsequent development of a formal action plan they were positive that it would be more than just a commitment on paper (interviews government official, Buenos Aires, 2011; government official, Asunción, 2011). Having an agreement signed by the governments also helps promoting the regional work of the NGOs and these refer to the memorandum in their activities (interview, environmental NGO, Buenos Aires, 2011). It is also easier to get funding from external bodies if something has been signed and potential donors can see that the topic is a priority of the state and not just an NGO (interview, environmental NGO, Asunción, 2011).

Furthermore, the CMS also helps to coordinate and provides some monitoring tools by asking for regular country reports which are publicly available on its website. In addition, governments that sign a memorandum have to outline which actions they will take, for example particular conservation measures or further research, and develop an action plan accordingly. Such public international commitments thus open up the possibility of

"accountability politics" (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 24) by holding governments to account and reminding them of their commitments.

At the same time NGOs also use a variety of strategies to pursue their objectives. Of course many NGOs do not necessarily work only on endangered migratory species, but are interested in conservation more generally. Consequently, they have also worked with other global environmental conventions, such as the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Several of the main sites where the flamingos come together have been declared Ramsar sites and the regional network therefore also works a lot with this convention and has received support on several occasions (interview researcher, Salta, 2011). Although some initiatives are thus also linked to other global environmental conventions, for the Southern Cone region as a whole cooperation has become most robust in the case of the CMS. This is due to two factors. First, the CMS institutions offer good possibilities for the participation of professional conservation NGOs and these also help to gain access to national governments. Second, the CMS itself has shown more interest in the Southern Cone region over the last decade.

The CMS strengthens the position of epistemic communities and professional conservation NGOs through its institutional set-up. The convention thus explicitly states that international and national non-governmental organisations which are deemed as technically qualified in relation to the conservation of migratory species may participate as observers unless one-third of the member states object (CMS, 1979: article VII, 9.). In addition the CMS also includes a Scientific Council which was established to provide scientific advice and make recommendations regarding research activities as well as conservation and management measures, and in relation to which species should be covered by the CMS. Each member country may appoint a qualified expert as a member of the Scientific Council (CMS, 1979: article VIII). The scientific councillors appointed by the member states can also be experts that do not directly work for the government, but are for example members of NGOs. In the three memoranda where NGOs have played a prominent role, this has been the case for at least one of the countries involved.

In the case of the ruddy-headed goose, the scientific councillor for Argentina was for a long time the director of the *Wetlands International* Office in Buenos Aires (interview, environmental NGO, Buenos Aires, 2011). In Bolivia, the link between the GCFA working on the Andean flamingos and the CMS is particularly strong as the scientific councillor appointed by Bolivia is a member of the group. Finally, as mentioned before, in Paraguay a

member of *Guyra Paraguay*, the Paraguayan branch of *BirdLife International*, was nominated as the Scientific Councillor for the CMS by the government. In this case the link that the CMS provides between national governments and NGOs was crucial in the development of the memorandum on grassland birds. The scientific councillor from *Guyra Paraguay* whom the government nominated in 2005, had a good relationship to the official in the Paraguayan government dealing with the CMS. Using this opportunity the NGO started to promote the development of a new CMS memorandum relating to a group of grassland birds. These species were already protected under the CMS and regional networks had already carried out various activities for their conservation. Following the lobbying by the NGO and the scientific councillor, the Paraguayan government took up the issue and proposed the development of a new memorandum which was signed in 2007. After the signing of the memorandum the NGO continued its activities to keep the memorandum alive and to promote the development of an action plan. This included for example organising meetings, identifying potential sources of funding and keeping partner NGOs in the region informed (interviews, environmental NGO, Asunción, 2011; environmental NGO, Buenos Aires, 2011).

While regional conservation networks have been fundamental in working on conservation and awareness raising as well as cooperating with governments, pressure from the CMS Secretariat itself was also crucial in further promoting the convention with national governments and thus establishing the CMS as a framework for regional cooperation. In relation to this two developments are important. First, in the last decade the CMS has undergone some internal changes that are not directly related to the Southern Cone, but which have had an impact on the region. While in the early 1990s commentators pointed out that a decade after the Convention entered into force, only a few agreements were signed (de Klemm, 1994: 71), ten years later a drive towards the further implementation of the convention and the conclusion of new agreements has been noted. However, Caddell (2005: 140) also points to the Eurocentricity of the convention as most of the agreements signed by 2005 still related to species that passed through European countries on their migratory routes. Nevertheless, the objective of the CMS Secretariat is to attain a global coverage and the number of agreements as well as the number of countries joining the CMS has increased even more from 2006 onwards (CMS 2007, 2; Lee, Filgueira, and Frater, 2011: 18, 24; interview CMS Secretariat, Bonn, 2011). The sudden increase of memoranda signed between Southern Cone countries from 2006 onwards thus also has to be seen in the context of a general trend where the CMS Secretariat promoted the convention beyond Europe and Africa where most of its activities had been taking place

initially. At the same time cooperation between the CMS and Southern Cone governments was helped significantly by a second aspect.

A member of staff of the convention's secretariat came from the Southern Cone and had been working in the region previously. A biologist by training, the official had been working on migratory species and in particular grassland birds already before working for the CMS and was thus already part of the epistemic community that had developed in the region on this issue. Moreover, being a native Spanish speaker also made it easier to interact with governments in the region. Consequently, the official put a lot of effort into contacting the governments to try and convince them to come to meetings and make them aware of the funding possibilities through the CMS (interview CMS Secretariat, Bonn, 2011). With an official who knew the Southern Cone context well, the CMS Secretariat was thus in a much stronger position to approach the Southern Cone governments and promote the convention. Overall, this confirms findings of other studies on the autonomous influence of international bureaucracies (Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009a). The CMS Secretariat as a whole has thus had an important influence on agenda-setting by actively promoting the convention outside Europe. However, in addition the individual people working for a bureaucracy matter as well and this explains why the CMS was particularly successful in targeting Southern Cone governments. This case study thus also demonstrates how international bureaucracies can contribute to shaping the characteristics of regional environmental cooperation by promoting a particular institutional framework or environmental concern and turning their attention to certain governments or regions.

However, it is more likely for international bureaucracies to develop an independent influence if a particular environmental concern is not perceived as very urgent or salient by governments and in particular the most powerful governments (Biermann and Siebenhüner, 2009b: 335). This is clearly the case for migratory species in the Southern Cone and stands in stark contrast with the issue of water which is a much more prominent and sensitive issue in the region as presented in the next chapter. This is arguably one of the reasons why regional conservation networks together with the CMS Secretariat were able to exert significant influence and promote the protection of migratory species with governments in the region. In the other two case studies civil society organisations have been much less successful in linking their initiatives to formal cooperation by governments and there is a division between regional civil society initiatives on the one hand and cooperation involving governments on the other. The relatively strong links between governments, NGOs and the CMS itself are thus the main reason why this case study

represents the most robust example of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone, although this is also possible only under very specific conditions. The final section thus examines in more detail the elements that make cooperation more robust in this case, as well as the context in which this takes place.

6.3.3 Understanding robustness better

The relatively dense links between the different endogenous and exogenous drivers promoting regional environmental cooperation in this case study are to a large extent due to the existence of an epistemic community committed to species protection which has members in NGOs, universities, national park administrations and environmental agencies of national governments as well as the CMS Secretariat. Moreover, in some cases, individual members of an epistemic community have also moved between different positions. A government official working for the Argentinean environment secretariat and dealing with the CMS amongst other things was for example a biologist by training and had previously worked for an NGO (interview government official, Buenos Aires, 2011). In another case, an ornithologist had previously worked in Uruguay and then moved on to work for the CMS Secretariat in Bonn (interview, CMS Secretariat, Bonn, 2011). Finally, the scientific councillor of Paraguay, equally a biologist by training who previously worked for the NGO *Guyra Paraguay*, was appointed Minister of Environment in August 2013 (CMS, 2013a).

This means that although different agencies have been involved in the development of the four memoranda, they cooperate quite closely and this is facilitated by the existence of epistemic communities with members working for the different organisations. Moreover, researchers are often also part of international epistemic communities in their area of expertise and participate in international conferences, exchanges of information and so on. This means some members of regional conservation networks are also “bilateral activists” (Steinberg, 2001: chap. 1, 2003) who are well-connected internationally and thus able to access international sources of funding and expertise, but also know the domestic policy context well enough to promote species protection with national governments.

Networking is further facilitated by the CMS itself. The fact that governments can appoint NGO members as scientific councillors strengthens the link between NGOs and governments institutionally going beyond personal connections. This set-up provides advantages for both sides. NGOs and epistemic communities gain a position that is very

close to policy-makers and are thus able to bring in their ideas and remain updated for the latest developments with regards to policy-making. Even if only one country designates a scientific councillor from a particular network, information can then be quickly shared among the whole network. On the other hand, the position of scientific councillor is voluntary and unpaid (interview, environmental NGO, Asunción, 2011). This means governments which may not have a lot of resources to dedicate to species conservation can benefit from the expertise and resources of a particular NGO and the personal commitment of individual researchers and this helps governments keep international obligations or demonstrate their commitment to an environmental concern. However, the close cooperation between regional conservation networks and state agencies also blurs the boundaries of the governmental and the non-governmental sectors.

Dense networks are thus one of the key reasons why regional environmental cooperation is the most robust in this case study. Moreover, conservation networks have been successful in securing external funding for their activities. It is notable that funding comes from a variety of different sources, including international conventions such as the CMS and Ramsar, development banks, international NGOs and foundations as well as Northern government agencies and private companies. While there are some larger projects, in many other cases funding consists of relatively small amounts. Consequently, the influence of any single donor on the characteristics of cooperation is much more limited than in the other two case studies, although donor priorities have also had some influence. It is, for example, easier to get funding for species which migrate between North and South America as there is more funding available for these from US and Canadian bodies. As a result these species are also much better researched and understood than species that migrate within South America only (interview environmental NGO Asunción, 2011; interview environmental NGO Buenos Aires, 2011; Di Pangracio, Rabufetti, and Grilli 2011: 494). Another example is the case of the grant that the Argentinean NGO *Aves Argentinas* received from the GEF. While the original project proposals included the south of Brazil, Uruguay and parts of Paraguay, this was rejected twice. At the third attempt, the NGO received significant feedback from the World Bank, including the recommendation to apply for one country only and finally received the funding for Argentina which has the biggest share of the ecosystem concerned. The World Bank thus did not support a regional approach, which from an environmental point of view would have made more sense, because it would have been more complicated in terms of administration (interview, environmental NGO Buenos Aires, 2011). These examples demonstrate donor preferences on individual issues, but the overall influence of any one donor on the characteristics of

cooperation remains relatively low compared to the other two case studies. In addition, because funding comes from a variety of different sources it is also less dependent on any one single donor and thus less vulnerable should funding from one donor stop.

Furthermore, regional conservation networks have also used a variety of tools and strategies going beyond the CMS framework, and this further contributes to a higher level of robustness. This is particularly well-developed in relation to the protection of grassland birds and their habitats. In this case the species' habitat is largely in private areas, so that here the NGOs involved have used different strategies and have looked for ways of working with land owners. Overall less than 1% of the grasslands in the Southern Cone are protected areas (BBC, 2011) and the majority are in private hands. The NGOs therefore quickly realised that the only way to preserve the grasslands was to continue agricultural production and to work with the producers (interview, environmental NGO Montevideo, 2011). As an alternative, the NGOs in the region have thus looked for a way to continue using the land for agricultural purposes while at the same time preserving it and protecting the species that live there. Instead of using the land for monocultures or intensive cattle ranching, the NGOs are developing models for raising cattle on the natural grasslands in a sustainable way. In order to make this idea attractive for land owners and farmers they have established links with the governments of Uruguay and Paraguay as well as the governments of several provinces and federal states in Argentina and Brazil with the objective of creating economic incentives to support this way of cattle ranching. These include financial or tax incentives for farms which are managed in such a way that they provide ecosystem services, but also the development of a certification scheme for beef produced in natural grasslands in order to increase the market value of the product. To give more structure to this work at a regional level the partner organisations of *BirdLife International* in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay have created the *Alianza del Pastizal* (Alliance for the Grasslands) with the objective of monitoring grassland birds and working with rural producers in order to achieve more sustainable production. The alliance builds on the idea that more sustainable production is possible if corresponding models and policies exist. Moreover, it draws strength from the fact that many farmers have reluctantly turned to producing soybean as this provides a better income, but in fact prefer raising cattle as their families have done for generations. Some rural producers are thus very keen on the prospect of finding an alternative, economically viable, way of returning to cattle ranching. The *Alianza del Pastizal* works with a range of experts and universities in the region and holds regular meetings with producers and other stakeholders. Regular updates are made available on its website. In order to support these activities and to carry out pilot

projects the NGOs have successfully applied for funding from different bodies, such as the GEF or the IDB (interviews environmental NGO Buenos Aires, 2011; environmental NGO, Montevideo, 2011; government official, Buenos Aires, 2011; Alianza del Pastizal 2013).

In addition, regional conservation networks have in several cases also cooperated with and received financial support from large transnational companies whose activities are also a main threat to the species concerned. The group of conservationists working on the Andean flamingos has thus received funding from Rio Tinto, a mining company operating in the Andes. *BirdLife International* had already established a programme with Rio Tinto and they approached the GCFA in order to monitor the flamingos and find ways of mitigating the negative impact of mining on the birds (BirdLife International, 2008; Marconi, 2010: 38). Similarly, *Aves Uruguay*, the Uruguayan partner of *BirdLife International* had approached the Finnish company UPM, one of the largest companies producing pulp for the paper industry in Uruguay, to discuss possible cooperation. While *Aves Uruguay* is generally not in favour of the paper industry because of the resultant monocultures and contamination, it recognises that the industry is an important part of the country's economy that has had strong support from the government, making policy changes very difficult. However, some of the paper companies have bought significant areas of land in Uruguay, not all of which are suitable for forestry plantations. *Aves Uruguay* has thus started discussions with one of the companies in order to discuss whether it is possible to use the land that is not suitable for plantations for conservation (interview, environmental NGO Montevideo, 2011). Finally, *Guyra Paraguay* benefited from funding of the binational power company Yacyretá that constructed a large hydropower dam on the border between Paraguay and Argentina resulting in the flooding of a large area (interview environmental NGO, Asunción, 2011).

Overall, the density of networks which link NGOs, governments and the CMS Secretariat, as well as the diversity of funding sources and strategies used all contribute to making cooperation more robust. Nevertheless, this higher level of robustness is also dependent on particular conditions. Most importantly, in all cases NGOs work with governments and open and public criticism of governments is very rare. One interviewee made this particularly clear by stressing that the approach of the NGO is to work with the government and to make recommendations and give advice this way rather than openly criticising the government and that this constituted an important difference in comparison to other environmental organisations (interview environmental NGO, Buenos Aires, 2011).

Although several of the initiatives, most notably the *Alianza del Pastizal,* in fact work towards constructing alternative models, the issues tend to be framed in technical and scientific terms rather than as political issues. The *Alianza del Pastizal* thus frequently refers to the value of ecosystem services which natural grasslands provide, but does not publicly engage in wider debates on the development model adopted by the Southern Cone governments. This is a noticeable difference in particular in comparison to the regional civil society networks working on issues related to water presented in the third case study, which build their arguments around water and land rights and thus reflect broader environmental justice discourses combining environmental and social questions. Moreover, as outlined above, in some cases NGOs have also worked with large transnational companies in order to mitigate some of the environmental damage.

Overall, the case study thus confirms findings from other studies. Previous studies have thus noted that NGOs have more influence if their arguments do not contradict dominant discourses and if there are lower levels of contention over economic interests (Betsill, 2008: 201–202). Similarly, the influence of an epistemic community increases if there are ways of accessing decision-makers more easily and if the objectives of the epistemic community correspond to existing norms and are not too disruptive. Moreover, it helps if the issue at stake is seen as scientific and technical (Cross, 2013: 145). The emphasis on technical expertise is also shared by the CMS. Participation in meetings is thus not open to any civil society organisation with an interest in the issue. Instead, the convention clearly specifies that organisations need to be "technically qualified in protection, conservation and management of migratory species" and approved by the country in which they are located (CMS, 1979: article VII, 9.). This gives national governments sufficient scope to exclude organisations which they do not wish to gain any influence. On the whole the case study thus suggests that professional NGOs who can offer significant expertise and resources to governments and who are willing to work with governments are able to link cooperation in practice fairly well to formal cooperation and thus achieve higher levels of robustness. However, it remains to be seen whether more robust cooperation will eventually lead out of marginality and towards a commitment by governments to make funding available and make and implement much more specific agreements, or whether an acceptance of the continuing marginality of regional environmental cooperation is a precondition for more robust cooperation.

6.4 Conclusion

The second case study presented in this chapter has examined how the protection of migratory species in the framework of a global environmental convention has become a form of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. Regional conservation networks bringing together researchers, NGOs, national parks and some government officials played a crucial role in developing cooperation in practice as a first step and then lobbying governments to make formal commitments as well. This was supported by the CMS Secretariat which turned its attention towards the Southern Cone in the 2000s and promoted the convention with governments as well. The dense links between endogenous and exogenous drivers make this the most robust example of regional environmental cooperation. However, a comparison with the third case study presented in the following chapter also shows that professional NGOs with significant resources and expertise who are willing to work with governments seem to be much more likely to gain access to policy-making and thus link cooperation in practice to formal cooperation than more critical groups emphasising social and environmental justice.

Chapter 7: Regional Water Governance: The La Plata Basin Regime

Figure 7.1: La Plata basin (Source: (Musser, 2010). *Note : The darker area shows the catchment area of the basin.*

Figure 7.2: Guaraní aquifer (Source : http://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/map3.jpg)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines environmental cooperation in the framework of the La Plata basin regime as a third case study. The first part of the chapter once more focuses on the first part of the research question and examines the form of regional environmental cooperation. The La Plata basin regime is an example of a regional resource regime and the section

outlines what this consists of, analysing the institutional framework and its political purpose, the scope of the issues covered and the way the boundaries are drawn. Subsequently, the section focuses specifically on environmental cooperation and outlines how both, formal cooperation and environmental cooperation in practice have increased since the 1990s. Nevertheless, environmental cooperation in the framework of the La Plata basin is still marginal which is evident in contradictory environmental regulations, the lack of specificity in regional agreements and the high dependence on external funding.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the second part of the research question and examines why the La Plata basin regime, which was created in the late 1960s to early 1970s, became a framework for regional environmental cooperation two decades later. A first important factor in this was the changing domestic and international context. Globally, environmental concerns thus became more prominent in the governance of river basins during the 1990s. Domestically, the return to democracy in the previous decade meant that civil society organisations could express their views regarding the governance of the basin much more openly, resulting in pressure on governments to take socio-environmental concerns into account. However, while these changes in the context conditions were important in terms of providing a more favourable climate for regional environmental cooperation, on their own, they are not sufficient to explain why environmental cooperation, and in particular cooperation in practice, developed in the framework of the La Plata basin regime.

A second crucial factor are thus different types of endogenous and exogenous drivers which promoted joint research, monitoring and conservation activities in the basin. In several cases the work of regional university networks was important in laying the basis for regional environmental cooperation by developing a better understanding of environmental problems in the basin and the transboundary nature of these. In addition, international donors, most importantly the GEF, have been a crucial source of funding supporting several environmental projects in the basin. While there are some links and interchanges between regional research networks and donors, these are not as strong and more contentious than in the previous case study on migratory species. In addition, there have been some public concerns over the GEF's role in the basin management. Finally, the position of national governments was crucial in terms of linking these new initiatives of regional environmental cooperation to the La Plata basin regime rather than Mercosur. This also had the effect of reducing possibilities for civil society participation and excluding more critical points of view. Overall, the links between endogenous and

exogenous drivers as well as national governments are thus weaker and more contested than in the previous case study, leading to a comparatively lower level of robustness.

7.2 The La Plata basin regional resource regime as a framework for environmental cooperation

The aim of this section is to examine the La Plata basin regime as a form of regional environmental cooperation in more detail. The analysis of the origins of the regime and its characteristics, including the institutional framework and its political purpose, the scope of issues covered and the way the membership of the regime was determined, shows that the La Plata basin regime is an example of a regional resource regime where environmental concerns are one among several objectives. The section then examines the increase in environmental cooperation in the La Plata basin from the 1990s onwards. This has been evident in a series of new agreements where environmental concerns have gained a more prominent position and which provide evidence of written and public commitments by governments and thus demonstrate formal cooperation. In addition, a series of projects, for the large part funded by the GEF, reflect an increase in cooperation in practice as well. As both formal cooperation and cooperation in practice have increased, the La Plata basin regime has become a framework for robust regional environmental cooperation. Nevertheless, there are still important limitations such as contradictory environmental regulations, the lack of specificity in regional agreements, the weakness of regional institutions to address shared environmental concerns and the high dependence on external funding, which clearly demonstrate that environmental cooperation in the La Plata basin remains marginalised.

7.2.1 The La Plata basin regime

The La Plata basin is one of the five biggest basins worldwide and the second biggest in South America after the Amazon. It consists of a number of sub-basins which flow into the Rio de la Plata and eventually into the Atlantic Ocean. Overall, the La Plata basin covers a big part of central and northern Argentina, southeast Bolivia, almost the whole of southern Brazil, all of Paraguay and a big proportion of Uruguay (see Figure 7.1). In addition to the surface waters, ground waters are an important part of the basin, among them the Guaraní aquifer, one of the largest underground water reserves worldwide which is shared between all the La Plata basin countries except Bolivia (see Figure 7.2) (del Castillo Laborde, 2008; Elhance, 1999: 25–52; Gilman et al., 2008; Tucci and Clarke, 1998).

The basin is at the economic and political centre of each of the five basin countries. The capital cities of all five riparian countries are thus located either on the banks of one of the basin's rivers or in the catchment area of the basin. As a consequence about 70 percent of the per capita gross domestic product of the five countries is generated in the area of the basin. Moreover, with 75 large dams the rivers are crucial for the generation of energy as well as transportation (Pochat, 2011: 497–498; Tucci and Clarke, 1998). Modifications of the rivers for these purposes as well as urban, industrial and agricultural pollution are thus among the main environmental concerns and, in many cases, they directly impact on the quality of life of the people living in the basin. In 2007 the WWF listed the La Plata as one of the ten most threatened rivers worldwide (Gilman et al., 2008: 208; Tucci and Clarke, 1998; WWF, 2007). However, while there has been significant international pressure to preserve the Amazon, the La Plata basin has received comparatively little attention. Moreover, the politics of environmental cooperation in the La Plata basin have been researched in much less detail.

Cooperation in relation to the La Plata basin accelerated significantly in the late 1960s and 1970s. An overall framework was provided by the La Plata Basin Treaty signed in 1969 between the five countries sharing the basin. The overall objective of the treaty is the "balanced and harmonious development and the physical integration" of the basin in particular in relation to navigation; the rational use of water; the preservation of animal and plant life; transport, energy and communication infrastructure; promotion of industry; education and health; knowledge and other projects of common interest ("Tratado de la Cuenca del Plata" 1969, author's translation). While the La Plata Basin Treaty establishes an overall umbrella for cooperation on the basin, it explicitly states that countries may also carry out projects within their respective territories and sign additional bilateral or multilateral agreements. In addition, the Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee of the La Plata Basin Countries (*Comité Intergubernamental Coordinador de los Países de la Cuenca del Plata* or CIC) was set up with a permanent secretariat in Buenos Aires as a mechanism to implement the treaty. With political and technical representatives from all five countries the CIC is an overarching multilateral commission for the basin as a whole. It is particularly important for environmental cooperation in the basin as currently one of its main tasks is to coordinate the different initiatives of environmental cooperation in the basin and centralise information on these. Moreover, in 1974 the Development Fund of the La Plata Basin (*Fondo Financiero para el Desarrollo de la Cuenca del Plata* or FONPLATA) was created as a funding mechanism. In addition to these basin-wide instruments, several other bilateral or trilateral treaties were signed for specific aspects of

the basin and in many cases complemented with technical commissions to implement the treaty objectives (del Castillo Laborde, 2008: 277–278; Gilman et al., 2008: 205; Pochat, 2011: 500). Although there are some variations in the organisational structures and tasks, the river commissions generally consist of technical experts designated by the riparian countries. This web of different treaties and technical commissions makes up the La Plata basin regime.

The La Plata basin regime is an example of a regional resource regime where interdependency and the desire to develop joint projects of mutual benefit were the main motivations behind the creation of the regime. During the 1960s and 1970s the focus of cooperation was mainly on economic development and in particular the generation of energy. Governments in the region were keen to catch up with the economic development of the so-called developed countries (Kempkey et al., 2009: 262). Moreover, following the 1973 oil shocks the countries were looking for independent sources of energy (interview river commission, Asuncion, 2011)[11]. To achieve these objectives cooperation between the basin states was necessary for two main reasons. First, the projects that were planned were enormous and several of them were in border areas, thus requiring the cooperation of at least two of the basin countries. The Itaipú dam between Brazil and Paraguay for example was at the time of its construction the largest dam and hydroelectric installation worldwide which was overtaken only later on with the construction of the Three Gorges Dam in China (Elhance, 1999: 25–26; Gilman et al., 2008: 207). This means one of the reasons for the development of the La Plata basin regime was the prospect of developing mega-projects with benefits for two or more countries.

Second, the regime established in the late 1960s and 1970s also played a crucial role in ensuring stability by providing written agreements to regulate the usage of the rivers. This is important because projects developed in one part of the basin can have major impacts on downstream countries. Moreover, the period of the 1960s and 1970s was characterised by military dictatorships and a climate of mutual distrust and this was also evident in relation to the usage of the rivers[12]. The rivers of the La Plata basin thus did not only provide a valuable resource, but also led to “bitter confrontation between riparian states” (del

[11] see also: Da Rosa, 1983: 79; Elhance, 1999: 31; Gilman et al., 2008: 207

[12] For examples of rivalries between the basin countries and military operations in relation to the rivers of the La Plata basin see: Elhance, 1999; Kempkey et al., 2009; Da Rosa, 1983

Castillo Laborde, 1999: 183), in particular between the two biggest and most powerful states of the basin, Argentina and Brazil, which had been competing for regional dominance since gaining independence. Overall, cooperation in this phase was very successful in the sense that it achieved its aims of promoting economic development and stability (Gilman et al., 2008: 207–208). The La Plata Treaty also opened up new communication channels and set a precedent for cooperation in the region in a broader sense by providing a channel to resolve conflicts politically rather than militarily (Kempkey et al., 2009: 269).

With all riparian countries being members of the La Plata basin regime, the boundaries of the regime have clearly been shaped by ecological criteria as well as political and economic considerations. Although there have been some initiatives to develop a global framework for the sustainable management of freshwater, these have remained rather general and ratification is low (Biswas, 2008: 15; Conca et al., 2006: 266–267). This means freshwater resource regimes are a form of regional cooperation where contents and structures vary depending on the specific context, rather than a global regime. The La Plata basin is a central element of the Southern Cone region and many elements of cooperation in the region are linked to the basin. This means the La Plata basin also gives meaning to the Southern Cone region and contributes to defining it. This also shows that the boundaries of the region are not completely fixed, as the La Plata basin also includes Bolivia which is not one of the core Southern Cone countries.

Overall, the political purpose of the institutional framework was thus to achieve important political and economic objectives. In this respect the La Plata basin regime is similar to the regional organisation Mercosur, but a key difference is that the latter was not created in order to manage a shared natural resource. The scope of environmental issues addressed is narrower in the La Plata basin regime compared to Mercosur and is always related to the river basin in some way. Nevertheless, the La Plata basin regime is not an environmental regime and environmental concerns are only a subset of the overall objectives. This distinguishes it from the CMS as a framework for regional environmental cooperation, as presented in the previous chapter. This also confirms the argument made in chapter 2 that it is important to examine also broader forms of environmental cooperation, where environmental concerns are not the only or the primary objective.

7.2.2 Environmental cooperation in the La Plata basin

While the La Plata basin regime dates back to the late 1960s, both aspects of environmental cooperation increased significantly from the 1990s onwards. In relation to formal cooperation a shift occurred in the 1990s when several more treaties were signed mirroring the pattern of activity of the 1970s.[13] This time environmental sustainability became one of the key aspects and some agreements refer to specific environmental concerns such as soil conservation or water quality (del Castillo Laborde, 2008: 281–282; Gilman et al., 2008: 208; Kempkey et al., 2009: 271; Pochat, 2011: 505).

This was complemented with a significant increase in cooperation in practice in the same time period. From the 1990s onwards six large environmental projects with funding from external donors have thus been carried out in different parts of the basin[14] some of which are still ongoing. With the exception of the Pantanal and Upper Paraguay River Basin project, which was mostly carried out in Brazil and only had smaller international components (OAS, 2005c), all of these projects have involved government agencies in at least two countries, thus making a clear contribution to regional environmental cooperation in the La Plata basin. While most projects have addressed surface waters, i.e. the different rivers of the La Plata basin, the Guaraní aquifer project related to underground water resources shared by four countries (OAS, 2005a). The GEF is the most important donor for these projects and has provided funding for all projects, with the exception of the Pilcomayo River which received support from the EU.

The various projects have been carried out in different parts of the basin with large variations in both the environmental problems to be addressed and the socio-economic context. Nevertheless, the types of issues addressed in the different projects are relatively similar. In all projects an important component is thus the joint generation and management of information through joint research and monitoring. The FREPLATA project between Argentina and Uruguay in relation to a part of the Rio de la Plata thus included research projects with universities for pollution prevention and control as well as initiatives to raise awareness and promote public participation (del Castillo Laborde, 2008: 285). In the north of the basin a project for the Pilcomayo River shared by Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina, laid the basis for joint monitoring and a flood warning system

[13] See appendix G for an overview of all agreements signed between 1969 and today.

[14] For an overview see: Del Castillo Laborde, 2008: 284–286; Pochat, 2011: 505–507.

which still continue to operate after the end of the project. In addition, information about the activities of the Trinational Commission for the Pilcomayo River is publicly accessible on its website which is regularly updated. This includes technical information such as data and readings from the different monitoring stations as well as meeting documents and an extensive online library. Access to some of this information requires authorisation through the Trinational Commission, but if this is requested it is usually granted (interview river commission, Formosa, 2011). The project on the Guaraní aquifer was equally very successful in significantly increasing the scientific knowledge of the aquifer system (interview government official, Montevideo, 2011; Giraut et al., 2010: 3; Sindico, 2011: 257; Villar and Ribeiro, 2011: 649).

Finally, the so-called "framework project", which relates to the basin as a whole and is carried out by the CIC, aims at monitoring and controlling the effects of climate variability such as floods and droughts, both of which have caused severe problems in parts of the basin. A second important objective of the project is to centralise information from all the projects in the basin (CIC, 2009: 3; del Castillo Laborde, 2008: 284; OAS, 2005b; Pochat, 2011: 502, 505). On the whole the framework project is thus important for promoting a dialogue on environmental concerns in the La Plata basin between technical experts as well as political representatives from the five countries. Moreover, as one interviewee pointed out, the project is also important because it strengthens the CIC itself (interview, government official, Montevideo, 2011).

Generating and sharing information through joint research and monitoring are thus crucial elements of cooperation in practice in the La Plata basin. Some of the projects have also included smaller pilot projects on specific issues and many of them have included components for awareness raising and environmental education. Moreover, in most cases the projects were only seen as a first step in order to develop a more comprehensive water management strategy to be implemented in the long run. The overall objective of the Guaraní aquifer project was thus the development and implementation of an institutional, legal and technical framework to preserve and manage the Guaraní aquifer system (OAS, 2005a). By the end of the project in 2009 this had not yet been achieved, but a year later the heads of state of the four countries used the occasion of a Mercosur meeting to sign the agreement on the Guaraní aquifer (Villar and Ribeiro, 2011: 651). In relation to the Pilcomayo River the main outcome of the cooperation project with the EU was a master plan for the integrated management of the basin. The aim of the plan is to strengthen the process of transboundary integration by addressing concerns shared by the three countries

such as water quality and availability of water, erosion and sedimentation, fish, risk management, establishment of monitoring systems, exchange of experience, communication and dissemination of information, institutional strengthening and sustainable economic and human development (Proyecto de Gestión Integrada y Plan Maestro de la Cuenca del Río Pilcomayo, 2008: III, 11).

Similarly, the first stage of the framework project was to develop an analysis bringing together important information, outlining the main challenges and developing a common vision of how the basin should be managed with an emphasis on environmental sustainability. This then serves as a basis for developing a more detailed strategy. For the FREPLATA project too, the main outcome of the first phase was the development of an analysis which serves as the base document for the development of a more concrete action programme to prevent and mitigate transboundary environmental problems in the area (FREPLATA, 2005). The second phase is now ongoing with the objective of reducing and preventing pollution from land-based sources through the implementation of the action programme developed after the first phase. Although the issues addressed and the institutional frameworks are very different, in several respects environmental cooperation in this case study has followed similar processes to those on migratory species examined in the last chapter. In the La Plata basin, initially joint research and monitoring was thus also important to understand the nature of the environmental problems and the transboundary elements in this better. As a second stage, the development of joint plans to address this follows.

Overall, the different projects have made some important achievements. The second phase of the FREPLATA project involves 37 key stakeholders, including nine ministries, navy, coast guards, provincial and local authorities as well as private sector representatives. This is the broadest support of a strategic action programme in the history of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) International Waters programmes and also an important achievement for the GEF (GEF, 2009: 9–10, 16–17)[15]. In addition, the project made an important political achievement in a very different way. While Argentina and Uruguay were engaged in the pulp mill conflict, the FREPLATA project was delayed, but ultimately

[15] For more information see: FREPLATA n.d.; Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable de la Nación n.d.; UNDP n.d.

continued. The project thus significantly contributed to maintaining a dialogue on the topic of environmental concerns in a shared river, even though the two countries were at the same time involved in a serious dispute over the very same topic (interviews, international organisation, Montevideo, 2010; project office, Montevideo, 2011).

In relation to the Pilcomayo River, what stands out is the emphasis on public participation and the way this is institutionalised in the basin management. The institutional set-up thus includes a political and a technical entity, as well as a Trinational coordination committee (Comité de Coordinación Trinacional) which is made up of five representatives of each country to ensure the participation of civil society (Proyecto de Gestión Integrada y Plan Maestro de la Cuenca del Río Pilcomayo, 2008: 11). The Pilcomayo management structure is exceptional not only in the La Plata basin regime, but also worldwide (interviews, river commission, Formosa, 2011).

In relation to underground water reserves the treaty on the Guaraní aquifer is noteworthy because it is one of only a few agreements signed in relation to transboundary underground water resources worldwide (Cassuto and Sampaio, 2011: 664). A Uruguayan government official pointed out that the Guaraní aquifer is now a model, not only for the region, but also at the global level (interview government official, Montevideo, 2011). The preamble of the Guaraní aquifer agreement refers to Resolution 63/124 of the UN General Assembly on the Law of Transboundary Aquifers and reflects the main principles and commitments of international law: equitable use of water resources, the obligation not to cause harm and cooperation (Sindico, 2011: 266; Villar and Ribeiro, 2011: 654). It is also worth noting that the agreement was not sparked by any transboundary conflicts over the aquifer and the initiatives taken are mostly precautionary, as so far both exhaustion and pollution of the aquifer are not a major problem yet, but they are concerns for the future (Cassuto and Sampaio, 2011: 661–662; Sindico, 2011: 257; Villar and Ribeiro, 2011: 646).

7.2.3 Signs of marginality: Unclear regulations, delays and dependence on external funding

On the whole, both formal cooperation and cooperation in practice have thus increased over the last two decades, making the La Plata basin regime a framework for robust environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. However, despite the important achievements noted above, environmental cooperation in the La Plata basin remains marginalised. Regulations and agreements thus remain contradictory or vague while

regional institutions to address shared environmental concerns are weak. Moreover, there is a high dependence on external funding as well as a lack of political will to develop stronger forms of environmental cooperation in the basin. This becomes evident in particular in four interrelated aspects. First, several of the projects examined above have experienced significant delays. This demonstrates the extent to which environmental cooperation is negatively affected by political and economic crises in the region and the low political priority of environmental cooperation. Second, in several cases the information which the projects gathered in relation to environmental governance of the La Plata basin uncovered conflicts between environmental concerns and economic objectives which remain unresolved to the benefit of the latter. This means commitments to environmental concerns are still vague and riddled with contradictions and thus hard to implement. A similar criticism has also been made in relation to the most recent agreement, the agreement on the Guaraní aquifer signed in 2010. Third, while cooperation on other aspects, notably improving the transport and energy infrastructure of the basin, has received funding from sources within the region, cooperation on environmental concerns is still highly dependent on external funding and in particular support from the GEF. Finally, regional institutions to address environmental concerns are very weak as demonstrated most clearly by the pulp mill conflict.

The framework project as well as the FREPLATA project and the project on the Pilcomayo River all experienced significant delays which weakened environmental cooperation. The causes for these delays were mostly unrelated to the projects themselves, so this shows the extent to which environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone is affected by other political and economic problems in the region. As outlined above, the FREPLATA project was thus delayed with the pulp mill crisis, although it is noteworthy that this did not stop the project altogether. The start of the project on the Pilcomayo River coincided with the severe economic crisis in Argentina at the start of the millennium which affected the whole region. As a consequence it was not possible to receive the co-funding of the countries at that time and this delayed the actual start of the project until 2005 (river commission, Formosa, 2011; “Dirección Ejecutiva de la Comisión Trinacional Para el Desarrollo de la Cuenca del Río Pilcomayo”, n.d.; Proyecto de Gestión Integrada y Plan Maestro de la Cuenca del Río Pilcomayo, 2008: 10). Finally, the framework project has faced challenges which also led to significant delays. In this case these were not sparked by external events, but related to the project planning itself. While the planning was done from 2003 until 2005, the project only started five years later due to various difficulties related to changes on the part of the GEF as well as the co-funding. As a consequence of this delay activities

were disrupted, the funding from the GEF was reduced and the project first had to be updated before it was possible to start again (interviews basin organisation, Buenos Aires, 2011; government official, Montevideo, 2011). This long delay and downsizing of the project clearly indicates the low political priority of environmental cooperation.

In most projects, the first step of environmental cooperation has consisted of an analysis of the existing environmental problems as well as the institutions to address these. In several cases this initial analysis uncovered unresolved conflicts between different objectives, most importantly economic aims and environmental concerns. What is more, the division of responsibilities between different authorities at the national and the regional level is often unclear or very complex. This means moving onto the next step in environmental cooperation and creating more effective institutions is much more difficult.

As an interviewee involved in the FREPLATA project explained, the second phase of the project is much more political. Whereas the first phase brought together important technical information, the aim of the second phase is now to define how to use this information and set up the necessary institutional structures in both countries. One of the main challenges of the second phase is to achieve that the governments take over the work and responsibilities in the long-term rather than just relying on the project (interview, project office, Montevideo, 2011). One of the political challenges that the initial analysis identified is the lack of coordination between different regulations. Many instruments overlap, but on the other hand the objectives are sometimes contradictory. Moreover, the analysis points out that sometimes the implementation of norms is in fact impossible because the appropriate technology is not available and a strict application would lead to the closure of major industrial plants with high social costs. Consequently, many norms are not implemented at all. Moreover, as a result of the state reforms of the 1990s staff was cut down leading to a reduced capacity for monitoring and control. The results of this incoherent system of norms and instruments are that the general public and the private sector do not receive clear signals nor adequate incentives for better environmental management (FREPLATA, 2005: 203–210).

Furthermore the agreement on the Guaraní aquifer equally has been criticised for the lack of specific arrangements with regards to protection and water extraction as well as enforcement. Although the treaty mentions a Commission to be established under the La Plata River Basin Treaty consisting of representatives from the four states which is to

coordinate the compliance with the agreement, this Commission has not been established yet (Cassuto and Sampaio, 2011; Villar and Ribeiro, 2011).

Overall, perhaps the most important obstacle to moving on to more specific and effective regulation and stronger regional institutions is the conflict of interests between different users of the river basin and the lack of consensus. As water is used for many different purposes this also generates many different interests that have a stake in how regional environmental cooperation takes place. As one Argentinean researcher noted, water is one of the most important issues for the region, but because of conflicts of interests it is also extremely difficult to find a consensus (interview, researcher, Rosario, 2011). For example, the analysis prepared as part of the framework project noted land use changes, in particular the extension of the agricultural frontier due to intensive grain plantations, as an important barrier to the sustainable management of the La Plata basin (CIC, 2009: 15–17, n.d.). Civil society organisations working on the Guaraní aquifer have made very similar points. Yet, as set out in chapter 4 powerful business interests are clearly in favour of maintaining or even increasing agricultural production. Moreover, governments derive important state income from this sector. This means developing more adequate regulations and stronger institutions for environmental protection of the basin's water resources is a difficult and highly political issue which requires not only technical expertise, but also requires an ability to negotiate between different interests. In this case the more important conflict of interest is not between different states, but rather within states or within the region between economic interests on the one hand and environmental and social concerns on the other.

Moreover, the case of the Guaraní aquifer also shows that tasks and responsibilities of different regional institutions are not always clearly defined. The regional organisation Mercosur was thus partly involved in the discussions on the management of the Guaraní aquifer, but eventually excluded as discussed in more detail below. Overlaps also exist between the La Plata basin regime and IIRSA whose aim is infrastructure development in South America, and which includes developments in the La Plata basin. Overlaps between different institutions are of course not unusual, but in the case of the Southern Cone tasks and responsibilities between different organisations are often not clearly defined and this makes environmental cooperation more difficult. Moreover, regional institutions to address environmental concerns remain very weak. As set out in chapter 4, the weakness of regional institutions and the lack of political will to strengthen them, became very obvious and was reinforced with the pulp mill conflict between Argentina and Uruguay during the 2000s.

Finally, environmental cooperation in the La Plata basin is very dependent on external funding. While technical experts have frequently mentioned that the lack of funding is a main concern for cooperation in the La Plata basin in general (interviews river commission, Asuncion, 2011; project office, Montevideo, 2011; river commission, Formosa, 2011)[16] this is particularly evident in relation to environmental concerns. The three regional development banks in South America, i.e. the IDB, the Andean Investment Corporation and FONPLATA, are thus important sources of funding for infrastructure developments in the framework of IIRSA, yet environmental cooperation relies heavily on funding from outside the region, and in particular the GEF. As a consequence, regional environmental cooperation is very much project-based which also makes it vulnerable and fragmented. The dependence on external funding makes long-term planning far more difficult and there is always the risk that cooperation stops or is delayed when projects finish or when there are disagreements between donors and recipients. So far, governments have not made the move from co-funding to full funding and have not committed the necessary resources to keep activities and institutions dedicated to addressing environmental problems running in the long-term. Taken together, these different elements clearly demonstrate that although environmental cooperation in the La Plata basin has increased significantly since the early 1990s and made some important achievements, it is still a marginal phenomenon which is overshadowed by other objectives.

7.3 Why has regional environmental cooperation developed in the framework of the La Plata basin regime?

While the previous section has examined the form of regional environmental cooperation that the La Plata basin regime represents, this section focuses on the second part of the research question. Consequently, this section examines why, two decades after its creation, the La Plata basin regime has become a form of regional environmental cooperation. First, changes in the domestic and international context resulted in a more favourable climate for regional environmental cooperation on shared freshwater resources. At the global level there was thus a shift towards taking environmental concerns more into account in water governance while still pursuing economic development. This was enshrined in the principle of "sustainable development" which appeared to provide a way to address both,

[16] See also: Del Castillo Laborde, 1999: 198; Pochat, 1999: 144, 2011: 507

economic development and environmental sustainability. As such environmental protection became compatible with the objectives of the Southern Cone governments at the time. Domestically, the return to democracy in the previous decade increased the possibilities for civil society to express their views and this also resulted in greater pressure on governments to take socio-environmental concerns into account in the governance of the basin. While these changed context conditions led to a more favourable climate for regional environmental cooperation, on their own, they are not sufficient to explain why environmental cooperation, and in particular cooperation in practice, developed in the framework of the La Plata basin regime.

A second crucial factor are thus different types of endogenous and exogenous drivers which promoted joint research, monitoring and conservation activities in the basin. In several cases the work of regional university networks was thus important in laying the basis for regional environmental cooperation by developing a better understanding of environmental problems in the basin and the transboundary nature of these. In addition, international donors, most importantly the GEF, have been a crucial source of funding supporting several environmental projects in the basin. While there are some links and interchanges between regional research networks and donors, these are not as strong as in the previous case study on migratory species. In addition, there have been public disagreements over the GEF's involvement in the basin. Finally, the position of national governments was crucial in terms of linking these new initiatives of regional environmental cooperation to the La Plata basin regime rather than other institutional frameworks. The decision of the Southern Cone governments not to involve the more accessible regional organisation Mercosur in questions of transboundary freshwater governance also increased the distance to citizens and at the same time excluded more critical points of view. On the whole, different endogenous and exogenous drivers have thus promoted cooperation on shared environmental concerns in the basin while governments have given preference to the La Plata basin regime as an institutional framework. Although there are some links between endogenous and exogenous drivers as well as national governments, these are weaker and more contested than in the previous case study, leading to a comparatively lower level of robustness.

7.3.1 Changing context conditions and the emergence of a more favourable climate for environmental cooperation in the La Plata basin

To some extent the development of a more favourable climate for environmental cooperation in the La Plata basin reflected global trends. Whereas social and environmental costs were not considered much in the first projects on river basins which focussed mostly on issues such as transportation, hydropower generation, irrigation or flood control, this started to change from the 1970s onwards. With the rise of the concept of integrated water resource management in the 1990s ecological and social concerns moved to the centre of attention (Huitema and Meijerink, 2012: 20; Molle, 2009; Mukhtarov and Gerlak, 2012: 8). During the same time period the principle of sustainable development developed into a key guiding norm for environmental governance. This was crucial for the Southern Cone countries as well as for other countries of the South because the concept seemed to provide a way of reconciling the objective of economic development with environmental concerns (Vogler, 2007).

Similar to other parts of the world, initially environmental concerns were barely taken into account in the La Plata basin regime. Consequently, the success of the regime in terms of promoting stability and economic development was dependent on significant environmental costs (Gilman et al., 2008). Reflecting global trends over the last two decades, technical experts became increasingly aware of the environmental costs of large-scale projects carried out previously. Some technical experts who had worked on dams in the region for several decades for example stated that some of the dams built in the past were “environmental barbarities”, but that environmental aspects are being taken into account much more nowadays (interview, river commission, Buenos Aires, 2011, author’s translation). An example of this is the Paraguayan-Argentinean Joint Commission of the Paraná River (Comisión Mixta Paraguayo-Argentina del Río Paraná - COMIP) which, apart from administering and studying hydropower projects on the river, also studies the fish in the river and examines ways of how fish migration can be enabled despite the dams (interviews, river commission, Buenos Aires, 2011 and river commission, Asuncion, 2011; COMIP 1994).

In addition, the negative effects of previous developments in the basin were of course not only realised by technical experts, but often had an immediate impact on the lives of affected citizens. In this respect the return to democracy was crucial because it lifted the

large-scale repression of critical voices that was common during the dictatorships and thus increased the possibilities for citizens to express their concerns. Consequently, during the 1990s pressure from civil society to take socio-environmental concerns into account in the governance of the basin increased.

Given that water is of such central importance to the lives of people, it is not surprising that the attention of citizens also turned to the rivers of the La Plata basin. Despite the abundance of freshwater in the region and the many projects that had already been developed in the basin, it has been estimated that in the mid-1990s around 20 percent of the population in several of the basin countries did not have access to safe drinking water, although there were important geographic variations (Elhance, 1999: 32). Moreover, the social and environmental costs and benefits of large-scale projects that were carried out in the La Plata basin previously were often distributed highly unequally with those groups with less political and social power, such as indigenous groups and the poor, bearing a disproportionately large share of the disadvantages. Large hydropower installations for example required the flooding of large areas with severe impacts on the ecosystem and leading to the displacement of tens of thousands of people (Bartolome and Danklmaier, 2012; Elhance, 1999: 36). Resentment of such projects was made worse by the fact that in particular for projects developed under military dictatorships participation of affected communities in planning was nonexistent. Moreover, large-scale projects like the Yacyretá dam between Argentina and Paraguay as well as Itaipú between Brazil and Paraguay acquired a reputation for mismanagement, over-inflated costs and corruption which meant they benefited elites and companies engaged in their construction disproportionately while having significant negative impacts for people living in those areas (Elhance, 1999: 40–47; O'Shaughnessy and Ruiz Díaz, 2009: 86–87). In addition, the extent of the costs for individuals can be very uncertain. In Argentina, for example, there is no general policy framework regulating the displacement and resettlement of communities affected by large-scale development projects, so that each project develops its own policy for resettlement and compensation and in the past this has been rather chaotic in some cases (Bartolome and Danklmaier, 2012: 124). Overall, this means that there was a history of negative experiences and a number of reasons for dissatisfaction when democratisation brought an end to repression. The following three examples demonstrate how affected or potentially affected communities together with environmental NGOs, made their voice heard in relation to large-scale projects that were planned in the La Plata basin in the 1990s and 2000s.

A first example was the strong opposition to the so-called *hidrovía,* or water superhighway, which was planned during the late 1980s and aimed to make over 3000km of the La Plata basin navigable all year round. This would have had significant social costs and a large environmental impact in particular on the Pantanal, one of the world's largest wetlands. Because of this an alliance of local and international NGOs came together in the 1990s opposing the project. This alliance came from a wide range of backgrounds including environmentalists, indigenous groups, unions and professional organisations as well as universities and research centres. The coalition emphasised the negative social and environmental impact of the project which presented a threat to jobs and ways of life as well as ecosystems, biodiversity and water quality. Following the protests, the IDB eventually withdrew its funding for the project which stopped the initial plan, although individual parts of the *hidrovía* have been developed (interview, environmental NGO Asuncion, 2011; Bucher and Huszar, 1995; Elhance, 1999: 48–49; Gottgens et al., 2001; Hochstetler 2002; Tussie and Vásquez, 2000: 194).

Public opinion and opposition of citizens have also prevented the construction of another major bi-national hydro-power dam on the Paraná River between Argentina and Paraguay. The Corpus Christi dam had been planned since the 1970s but its construction was delayed for various reasons. It became a subject of debate in local politics and was put to a referendum in the Argentinean province of Misiones in 1996. The vote resulted in a clear "no" to the dam (interviews, river commission, Buenos Aires, 2011 and river commission, Asuncion, 2011; civil society representative, Buenos Aires, 2010). However, staff of the technical commission for the Paraná River have also argued that this outcome was linked to local elections that were held at the same time as the referendum and not just the issue of the dam itself (interviews, river commission, Buenos Aires, 2011 and river commission, Asuncion, 2011). So far studies continue, but the construction of the dam is not agreed definitely yet and environmental considerations as well as public opinion play a much more important role than during the first phase of hydropower developments in the region. In this case the legacy of the past and the unequal distribution of costs clearly had an impact. As some technical staff pointed out the current plans for the Corpus Christi project have a much smaller environmental and social impact and this has been studied extensively in the initial assessments. However, because previous projects and in particular the Yacyretá dam on the same river, had such devastating environmental and social consequences, people fear this might happen again and now have very little trust in governments or technical staff (interviews, river commission, Buenos Aires, 2011; river commission, Asuncion, 2011).

Thirdly, the protests against the pulp mills on the Uruguay River which led to the conflict between Argentina and Uruguay discussed in chapter 4 are of course another significant example of public pressure. The high visibility and the large impact of the protest helped raise public awareness of environmental concerns and of pollution problems in the region. In addition, one of the companies changed its plans, so that in the end only one pulp mill was constructed in the original location by the Finnish company Botnia (interview, researcher, Rosario, 2011)[17]. The conflict also strengthened the case for developing better national and regional environmental regulations as well as environmental impact assessments and monitoring which has been put forward by several environmental NGOs and commentators (interview environmental NGO, Buenos Aires, 2010; Daneri, 2009; Moreno, 2011: 71–72; Onestini, 2010; Rodríguez, 2011). There is also some evidence that, fearing public disapproval, other pulp mills operating the region started to upgrade their production processes (Dudek, 2013: 118–120). Finally, the protests also brought up questions regarding North-South relations and the development model adopted by the Southern Cone governments, in particular in relation to the role of Northern companies and the regulation (or lack thereof) of foreign investment. Members of the protest movement thus on several occasions brought a wider global context into the debate. They pointed to global consumption patterns because the paper that will ultimately be produced is likely to be used in the global North whereas it is the global South that is left with the environmental pollution. Moreover, the members of the local protest movement as well as representatives of environmental NGOs pointed out that the company is European, but such a big factory does not exist in Europe (interviews citizen assembly, Gualeguaychú, 2010)[18].

Overall, this means that protests by affected communities and environmental groups benefiting from the greater openness that democratisation brought have resulted in greater pressure on decision-makers to take socio-environmental concerns into account. With no effective channels for participation in decision-making these have often resorted to "outside strategies" (Uhlin, 2011: 854) such as protests, or involved Northern NGOs to increase pressure (Hochstetler, 2002). The main impact of this has been in stopping or downscaling planned developments in the basin as well as generally putting pressure on governments to socio-environmental concerns into account. Yet, this type of pressure on its

[17] See also: Bueno, 2010: 171–187; Newell, 2008: 64–65; Reboratti, 2008: 111–115.

[18] See also: Daneri, 2009.

own is not sufficient to understand why environmental cooperation in practice also increased significantly from the 1990s onwards. In order to explain how specific environmental cooperation initiatives developed it is thus necessary to consider the drivers behind these.

7.3.2 Regional research networks and donors: Promoting environmental cooperation in practice

In the early 1990s international agencies were very important in terms of raising awareness of the existence of the GEF and its funding possibilities, while the Rio summit raised the profile of environmental concerns generally. In this context the first projects were developed (interview, project office, Montevideo, 2011). Simultaneously, regional research and university networks worked on establishing better knowledge on the transboundary dimensions of water governance in the basin. At least two of the larger projects were thus preceded by the work of regional research networks who were also involved in the first project proposals involving partners in different countries. While there were some links and exchanges between endogenous and exogenous drivers, there were also important disagreements regarding the role of the GEF which surfaced in particular in relation to the project on the Guaraní aquifer. Overall, the relationship between different drivers is thus weaker and more contested in comparison with the previous case study.

The idea for the framework project, for example, partly built on research on climate-related aspects of the basin that public universities in the region had been working on since the 1990s (interview government official, Montevideo, 2011). The project became concrete at the start of the new millennium with the CIC acting as the local institution executing the project. In the case of the Guaraní aquifer the existence of underground water resources had been known for some time, but it was only in the 1990s that the transboundary nature of the aquifer was discovered and researchers realised that what they thought were separate aquifers, was in fact one connected aquifer. This initiative initially received funding from a Canadian agency, but when this finished the group of universities that had been working on the topic proposed a regional research project to increase the knowledge of the aquifer and presented this to the World Bank (interview government official, Montevideo, 2011)[19]. The World Bank decided that it was not its role to finance a research project. At the same time, however, the governments of Brazil and Uruguay through the Organization of

[19] See also: Celiberti and Taks, 2009; Iglesias and Taks, 2009; Villar, 2007: 67–68

American States (OAS) had presented a proposal to the GEF for a joint project for the management of the Cuareim River, a tributary of the Uruguay River, shared between the two countries. The GEF considered that the Cuareim River was very small and not of global importance. Although both these project proposals were turned down individually, because they were developed in the same period of time and in relation to related topics, the GEF analysed the proposals together and eventually this led to the GEF project on the Guaraní aquifer (interview government official, Montevideo, 2011). This clearly shows how two elements, the work of regional research networks and the GEF as a new funding mechanism for international waters, coincided and produced a window of opportunity that significantly advanced regional environmental cooperation in the La Plata basin.

At the same time the relationship between endogenous and exogenous drivers is more contested in this case. In addition, the role of the GEF has also sparked some public criticism and suspicion. Specifically in relation to the Guaraní aquifer project some researchers from public universities criticised the decision to employ private consultancies instead of public universities to carry out the project (Guterres, 2009: 38; Novoa, 2009: 43). Although the project included a fund for public universities, researchers have pointed out that this only made up a very small proportion of the total budget (Augé, 2009: 18). However, as one interviewee also pointed out, individual researchers nevertheless continued working for the project as they were contracted by the consultancies (interview researcher, Montevideo, 2011). For several of the projects on rivers the same happened and researchers or people who had previously worked at a university became involved in the projects (interviews project office, Montevideo, 2011; international organisation, Montevideo, 2010). Cooperation between endogenous and exogenous drivers is thus also an important element in this case study, but this has been more contested compared to the previous case study on migratory species.

Moreover, the GEF's significant involvement in the basin also sparked public criticism and suspicion due to its links to the World Bank which had become extremely unpopular in the region following its promotion of structural adjustment packages during the 1980s and 1990s. A growing awareness of water scarcity at the global level together with earlier pressure on the Southern Cone states by the World Bank and the IMF for an economic transformation, including privatisation of water management, thus led to suspicions of plans for foreign dominance over the aquifer (Villar, 2007: 69). In this context several rumours started to circulate according to which foreign companies buy land above the aquifer in order to exploit the water if water becomes scarce globally, although many

NGOs and researchers do not put forward this position (interviews NGO, Buenos Aires, 2010; researcher, Montevideo, 2011; civil society representative, Buenos Aires, 2010)[20]. Nevertheless, what this does demonstrate very clearly, is the public interest and the political sensitivity and contentious nature of the issue.

A representative from an Argentinean NGO which received a small part of the project funding in order to carry out activities involving civil society, for example explained that initially it was very difficult to convince people to come along to events organised by the NGO regarding the Guaraní aquifer. Although the NGO was Argentinean with local staff, because the overall project on the aquifer was funded by the GEF, which is associated with the World Bank, people assumed that they would not be free to express their opinion and were sceptical because they had heard so many stories of foreign actors trying to take control of the aquifer (interview NGO, Buenos Aires, 2011). The distrust was reinforced by the fact that many of the project documents were only available in English which is not an official language in any of the countries (Villar and Ribeiro, 2011: 657).

At the same time, the different projects carried out in the La Plata basin also demonstrate the significant impact that donors have had in terms of determining where cooperation takes place and on which topics. Although other agencies have also supported individual initiatives and of course the La Plata basin countries themselves also contribute their share of co-funding, the GEF emerged as the most important donor. One of the main objectives of the GEF is to support projects of global rather than local importance[21]. As the description of the Guaraní aquifer project shows, this meant that the GEF turned down project proposals for parts of the La Plata basin that it did not consider important enough. The same project also shows the GEF's impact on the contents of projects as it also did not accept a project that was based only on research. As the single most important donor, the GEF has thus had a significant impact on regional environmental cooperation, determining what kind of projects and which parts of the La Plata basin receive funding to the detriment of more remote areas.

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[20] See also: Sindico, 2011: 262

[21] As outlined in chapter 2 the debate over what kind of environmental problems should be addressed under the GEF has been marked by serious North-South disagreements, see for example: Fairman, 1996; Gupta, 1995; Streck, 2001.

The project on the Pilcomayo River which was the only one that received support from another donor, the EU, is an interesting comparison in this respect. With the EU's priorities being rather different from those of the GEF, the project developed very differently. This only underlines the influence of donors on regional environmental cooperation in the La Plata basin. In the 1990s the *Trinational Commission for the Development of the Pilcomayo River Basin* consisting of all three countries sharing the Pilcomayo River was created to promote the integrated development of the basin (del Castillo Laborde, 1999: 192–193, 2008: 285–286). The creation of this commission reflects a rapprochement between the three countries and the shared desire to improve the quality of life of the people living in the basin while at the same time conserving the environment. From the start this process was supported by the EU in an effort to promote regional integration and in 2000 the Trinational Commission asked for technical and financial support from the EU resulting in a project which ran from 2002 until 2008. The EU first emphasised the importance of participation of local communities, but now the technical experts working on the issue are also convinced that this is an essential element of river management (interview river commission, Formosa, 2011). Consequently, participation mechanisms are still more institutionalised in the Pilcomayo case than elsewhere in the basin.

However, the experience of the Pilcomayo River has not had a large impact on the La Plata basin regime as a whole. On the one hand there is relatively little communication and exchange of information between the experiences in different parts of the basin and the Pilcomayo River is relatively far from the political centres within the La Plata basin. Moreover, the Trinational Commission of the Pilcomayo River still faces considerable challenges. Most importantly, it does not have its own financing mechanism. Initially each of the three basin countries was supposed to make the same contribution, but now this varies according to the social and economic reality of the countries and is not assured beyond the very short-term future. In addition the participatory approach, although valuable, also brings challenges. More and different interests need to be taken into account and fair representation has to be ensured. Moreover, governments are not familiar with community participation (interviews river commission, Formosa, 2011).

Overall, regional university networks and donors have thus been crucial in terms of promoting specific initiatives of regional environmental cooperation in the basin. Moreover, donors have had a large impact in determining how and where cooperation takes place. As the single most important donor, the GEF has been particularly influential, but its approach to regional environmental cooperation and its significant involvement in

the region have also been criticised, demonstrating the contentious nature of the issue. The final element to understand why these different initiatives have become linked to the La Plata basin regime rather than other institutional frameworks is the position that national governments have taken.

7.3.3 National governments: strengthening the La Plata basin regime as the institutional framework

The creation of the regional organisation Mercosur in 1991 threatened to make the La Plata basin institutions redundant. However, in 2001 the foreign affairs ministers decided to reform and strengthen the CIC in addition to Mercosur rather than abolishing it (Kempkey et al., 2009: 263; Pochat, 2011: 502). Nevertheless, since then tasks and responsibilities between the two organisations have not always been very clearly defined leading to confusion and institutional rivalry. This was most evident in relation to the governance of the Guaraní aquifer. As the countries sharing the aquifer corresponded exactly to the Mercosur member countries, several Mercosur forums expressed interest in the Guaraní aquifer. Yet, Mercosur's environmental forums, the Mercosur working subgroup on environment SGT6 as well as the Mercosur Meeting of Environment Ministers were never involved in the work on the Guaraní aquifer or the GEF project despite the fact that they had asked to be informed (interview government official, Buenos Aires, 2011; Hochstetler, 2011: 137; Mercosur, 2008: 18; Moreno, 2011: 73; Villar and Ribeiro, 2011: 651). In the end the GEF project was implemented largely separate from Mercosur structures and Mercosur was sidelined in the agreement that was signed in 2010 (Villar and Ribeiro, 2011: 656). This means Mercosur does not address some of the region's most important environmental issues, which clearly weakens the regional organisation as a forum for environmental cooperation as discussed in more detail in chapter 5. However, the decision of the Southern Cone governments to deal with the governance of the aquifer in the framework of the La Plata basin regime and the CIC rather than Mercosur also limited the possibilities for citizen involvement. As one interviewee explained the Mercosur Parliament is much more accessible to civil society than the technical forums (interview researcher, Montevideo, 2011).

The recognition that the four countries share an important aquifer also led to important debates and workshops among civil society organisations and some Mercosur institutions. Social movements and networks defending the right to water and denouncing privatisation of water have used the debate on the Guaraní aquifer as a context to bring forward different

visions of development and regional integration and linking the debate on the Guaraní aquifer to questions of environmental and social justice. Many of these ideas were reflected in joint declarations resulting from civil society meetings. Organisations have also drawn attention to land use changes that have already caused significant deterioration of surface waters and eco-systems and are likely to present a threat to the aquifer in the future. These include intensive agriculture, the expanding soybean monocultures, pine and eucalyptus and sugar cane plantations. In relation to these, civil society organisations have discussed not only the environmental impact, but also social problems such as forced displacement of people and effects on human health for example from the unregulated use of agrochemicals (Celiberti and Taks, 2009; Iglesias and Taks, 2009). It is notable that most of these debates have taken place in the same time period, but outside the GEF project with few possibilities of interaction with the project. This has led to criticism that the Guaraní aquifer project did not take civil society into account enough (Guterres, 2009: 38; Segovia, 2009: 90), as well as demands for a more accessible information system on the aquifer, expressed for example in the conclusions of an international conference on the management of the Guaraní aquifer (CIGSAG, 2011).

Civil society organisations also established links with the Mercosur Parliament. With regards to the Guaraní aquifer the Parliament was one of the first to suggest a joint agreement. Moreover, it proposed creating a commission to examine and compare the water resource legislation of all four countries in detail in order to recommend changes to the national governments to be able to protect the aquifer. It also suggested the creation of a regional research institute, but neither of these were implemented (Villar and Ribeiro, 2011: 651; Villar, 2010: 2–3). The debate on the Guaraní aquifer in the Mercosur Parliament was led in particular by Dr. Florisvaldo Rosinha, a Brazilian member of the Parliament who was one of the first presidents of the Mercosur Parliament and an enthusiastic supporter of the Mercosur Parliament. Rosinha already had links to researchers and environmental groups working on the Guaraní aquifer in his home town and he used the space that was created with the establishment of the Mercosur Parliament in order to take the topic forward to a bigger audience and a higher political level (interview researcher, Montevideo, 2011; Drummond, 2011; Pasquariello Mariano, 2011; Rosinha, 2009). Even though the Mercosur Parliament is quite weak and can only make recommendations (Drummond, 2011; Pasquariello Mariano, 2011), this provided greater visibility of civil society debates on the aquifer.

By giving preference to the CIC rather than Mercosur as the regional institution dealing with the Guaraní aquifer, the Southern Cone governments have thus played an important role in limiting the possibilities for civil society participation. Despite the interest that citizens and various organisations have expressed, there are overall few effective channels for civil society participation in environmental governance of the La Plata basin. Although the GEF projects generally include a component for education, increasing public-awareness and participation of stakeholders, this rarely translates into any real influence over decisions that are taken. An interviewee working for an NGO that had carried out some activities as part of the GEF project on the Guaraní aquifer as well as the FREPLATA project for example explained that for both projects they had funding for some seminars and workshops and there was no interference in the opinions expressed at these. However, the results were not taken into account later on (interview NGO, Buenos Aires, 2011). Another interviewee noted that the CIC meetings are closed and the only way for civil society to interact was to lobby their national representatives in the CIC (interview environmental NGO, Asuncion, 2011).

On the whole, environmental cooperation in the framework of the La Plata basin regime is thus an example of cooperation on an issue which has received a high level of public attention and is a politically sensitive issue with many different interests at stake. As such, it also provides evidence of how power relations shape cooperation. On the one hand, despite criticism of the GEF on various aspects, as well as public distrust of parts of the population, the GEF has had a significant impact in terms of determining the kind of projects that receive funding and their location. On the other hand, the decision of governments to address the governance of the underground freshwater resources in a regional institution dominated by technical experts and with little access for citizens has led to the exclusion of alternative points of view and voices critical of the development model adopted by the Southern Cone elites. This can also be read as an attempt at depoliticising the governance of water which has been a highly contentious issue in the region, as demonstrated on several occasions, including the pulp mill conflict as well as the Cochabamba water wars in Bolivia outlined in chapter 4. Overall, more profound debates regarding the governance of the basin and the development model adopted in the region have thus been sidelined, reinforcing the marginality of regional environmental cooperation.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the characteristics of the La Plata basin resource regime and outlined how this has become a framework for robust regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. The crucial factors in this process were more favourable context conditions as well as different endogenous and exogenous drivers promoting specific initiatives of environmental cooperation, although the relationship between the two is weaker and more contested than in the previous case study. Furthermore, the position of the national governments explains why these initiatives became linked to the La Plata basin institutions. Overall, the governance of water is a much more contentious issue with many different visions of what regional cooperation should look like, than the issues examined in the previous two case studies. The final chapter builds on these findings and makes a more detailed comparison of the three case studies in order to outline implications of the thesis as well as some directions for further research.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis was to contribute to a better understanding of environmental cooperation at the regional level and in particular in regions of the South. While environmental cooperation more generally has been researched extensively, the focus of most studies has been on approaches of the North with little research focussing specifically on the regional level and even less on regions in the South. The thesis thus examined the Southern Cone of South America where robust examples of regional environmental cooperation have developed over the last 20 years in relation to different environmental problems and in different types of institutional frameworks, but which have received relatively little attention in previous studies on environmental cooperation.

This final chapter pursues three objectives. The first part of the chapter gives a comparison of the three case studies and summarises the key findings. The second part of the chapter examines the implications of the findings in relation to the literature on regional cooperation in the Southern Cone and South America more broadly. In particular, it highlights how the focus on environmental cooperation, which is a marginal policy area and has not received much attention in other studies on the region, helps to draw out important contradictions between the stated objectives of regional cooperation and actual outcomes. These contradictions point to important limitations of neo-extractivism as a strategy for social development in the region.

The third and final part of the chapter acknowledges the limitations of the study and outlines avenues for further research. In particular, this section relates back to the initial motivation to understand environmental cooperation in regions of the South better. While the thesis is a valuable starting point because it presents one of the first in-depth exploratory studies of environmental cooperation in a region of the South and has developed several key concepts in relation to this, further research and comparisons with other regions in the South are needed to test and refine these further.

8.2 Comparison of the case studies and summary of key findings

The research question was formulated in two parts in order to examine first, the forms that regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone takes, and second to understand why it takes particular forms. This research question has been explored in three different case studies as well as a chapter focussing on the overall political and economic context examining the preconditions for regional environmental cooperation. The three case studies clearly demonstrate that regional environmental cooperation does exist in the Southern Cone and takes place in three main forms which vary in terms of institutional framework and its political purpose; the scope of issues addressed; and the way the membership is determined or the spatial boundaries are drawn.

The first case study examined Mercosur as an example of a regional organisation. Mercosur had been the focus of most earlier studies on regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. The regional organisation was created in the early 1990s in order to strengthen the region's position globally through economic cooperation and trade liberalisation within the region. Moreover, the EU as a role model for what was regarded as successful regional integration played a large part in the shaping of Mercosur and this was promoted by Southern Cone as well as European policy-makers. Consequently, ecological criteria have not played any role in the definition of the membership and this is determined by political and economic considerations alone. The inconsistency in environmental topics addressed and the weak position of Mercosur's environmental forums suggest that environmental concerns made it onto Mercosur's agenda mostly for other political reasons rather than out of a desire to address a particular shared environmental problem. Southern Cone policy-makers thus used Mercosur environmental declarations as a way to demonstrate a commitment to international norms. EU policy-makers promoted environmental cooperation in Mercosur as part of a package promoting EU-style integration in other regions which links regional economic cooperation to particular norms, including environmental sustainability. All of this suggests that environmental cooperation in Mercosur is not an objective on its own, but rather a step towards achieving other objectives. What is more, civil society organisations which have an interest in addressing common environmental problems from a regional perspective have found themselves excluded from the most significant Mercosur institutions, while those forums that do allow a minimum of participation do not have much power in Mercosur's institutional set-up and do not address many of the region's most important environmental issues. In addition, the

EU model has over time become a source of disagreement between Mercosur policy-makers and European donors with the former arguing that Mercosur is different from the EU and that this needs to be recognised. Overall, the links between endogenous and exogenous drivers are thus not well-developed and there are some important frictions in the donor-recipient relationship. This, together with Mercosur's declining relevance for regional environmental concerns over time, makes this the least robust out of the three case studies.

However, the thesis clearly shows that Mercosur is not the only example of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone. The second case study thus examined the CMS, a global environmental convention which has become a framework for regional cooperation with the signing of four memoranda of understanding on different species between Southern Cone and some neighbouring countries. Regional cooperation on migratory species initially started as cooperation in practice when regional networks of professional NGOs, researchers and national park staff carried out joint research activities which showed that several groups of species were in decline and that they regularly cross national boundaries and thus classify as migratory species according to the CMS. This led to common conservation measures as well as regional coordination with regards to raising public awareness and lobbying national governments. The CMS proved a valuable tool in relation to the latter, as it recognises the expertise and added value of professional conservation NGOs and helps to build links between these organisations and governments.

Furthermore, during the 2000s the CMS Secretariat took the decision to actively promote the convention beyond Europe and Africa, where most of the initial activities had taken place. With a member of staff who knew the Southern Cone networks on species conservation and the political context well, the CMS Secretariat was successful in approaching the governments in the region to promote the convention and turn it into a framework for regional cooperation. This resulted in the signing of the four memoranda which made regional environmental cooperation on migratory species a formal commitment as well. In this case the scope of the environmental issue is thus the narrowest focussing on species protection and more specifically migratory species. The location of the habitat of the different species has been important in defining which countries cooperate, but political criteria have played a role as well with some governments opting out of formal cooperation. Overall, the links between the different actors promoting regional environmental cooperation are strongest in this case study, making this the most robust example of cooperation. This is due to the institutionalised participation channels

that the CMS offers for professional NGOs as well as the existence of an epistemic community whose members work in universities, NGOs, government agencies and national parks as well as the CMS Secretariat itself. Robustness is further increased by the fact that funding comes from a variety of different sources making cooperation less dependent on any one individual donor.

In the third case study regional environmental cooperation is again linked to a regional regime which was initially created for political and economic reasons. Cooperation on the La Plata basin thus takes place in the framework of a regional resource regime whose initial main aim was the peaceful management of the shared basin and the development of projects with joint gains, in particular large hydropower installations. Nevertheless, ecological criteria have also shaped the membership of the regime with all five riparian countries being members. Environmental considerations became more prominent about two decades after the creation of the regime following global changes in basin management with higher importance given to environmental concerns as well as domestic changes, notably the return to democracy. Consequently, environmental concerns were more prominent in the wave of new treaties signed in the 1990s and a number of GEF projects have been implemented in the basin. The scope of environmental issues addressed goes beyond single issues, but is always linked to shared freshwater resources. Similar to Mercosur, the La Plata basin regime provides few possibilities for civil society participation and civil society groups have been more influential in stopping or downscaling particular developments in the basin through protests, than in shaping the practices of environmental cooperation. Moreover, although there are some links and examples of cooperation between regional research networks which constitute an important endogenous driver, and the GEF as the most important exogenous driver, these are weaker and more contested than in the case study on migratory species. Moreover, the GEF's involvement in the basin has sparked some public criticism and suspicion. Overall, environmental cooperation in the framework of the La Plata basin regime is thus an example of cooperation on an issue that has received a relatively high level of public attention and is a politically sensitive issue with many different interests at stake.

On a very general level, the thesis suggests that the different forms that regional environmental cooperation takes in the Southern Cone, is an outcome of three different elements; the objectives of different types of endogenous drivers as well as those of exogenous drivers together with the preferences of national governments. A more detailed analysis of the three case studies provides a more nuanced picture. First, it is notable that in

all three case studies endogenous drivers are present in the form of different types of civil society organisations with an interest in a particular environmental issue and/or institutional framework. Yet, a comparison of the three case studies shows that only in one of the cases, the case study on migratory species, have these endogenous drivers gained considerable influence in shaping the content and characteristics of regional environmental cooperation. Meanwhile, in the Mercosur case study, civil society influence is extremely limited while in the La Plata basin regime there is some evidence of civil society protests stopping certain projects and regional research networks playing an important role, at least in initiating cooperation, but overall the characteristics of cooperation have been shaped much more by donors and national governments.

On the one hand, this difference is due to the relatively more open institutional framework of the CMS. However, as the case studies on Mercosur and the La Plata basin regime show, governments can play a large role in determining how open a particular institutional framework is. Other important factors are thus the salience of a particular issue as well as the approach taken by endogenous drivers. Whereas water is a very sensitive political issue in the region, the protection of migratory species is much less contested. This is likely to give civil society organisations more scope for promoting the issue and getting involved in regional environmental cooperation. Moreover, it is notable that the NGOs involved in the latter are mostly well-resourced professional conservation NGOs that have presented their work more as a technical issue than a critique of the development model adopted by governments. The comparatively higher influence of these NGOs thus appears to confirm findings of other studies according to which governments tend to grant more access less radical organisation who can offer them important resources in return (Raustiala, 1997; Uhlin, 2011: 854).

Second, the most important exogenous driver in the region, are no doubt different types of donors. Only the case study on migratory species has provided some evidence that another exogenous driver, namely the bureaucracy of an international environmental convention, also had significant influence over the characteristics of cooperation. However, even in this case funding plays a role, as the CMS has also provided some, albeit smaller, grants. Moreover, one of its support mechanisms is to find funding from other sources. External funding is thus a crucial factor in regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone, but a comparison of the three cases also shows that there is considerable variation in the donors involved, their objectives and their impact. In the case study on migratory species, the influence of any single donor was thus the most limited due to the involvement

of many different donors. This also made cooperation less vulnerable which suggests that the constellation of donors matters for robustness. The case study also confirms findings from earlier studies that strong ties to local actors and good knowledge of local conditions are at least as important as the amount of aid (Fairman and Ross, 1996: 50). This also underlines the importance of domestic political resources highlighted by Steinberg (2001, 2003). The Mercosur case study on the other hand, provides evidence of the limitations to norm diffusion if norms reflect donor priorities more than those of recipients. Again, this echoes findings of previous studies on the challenges of norm diffusion (Grugel, 2007a) as well as the decreasing effectiveness of environmental aid if objectives are not shared between donors and recipients (Connolly, 1996: 334–335; Gutner, 2002: 42, 2005: 30; Keohane, 1996: 8). The criticism and suspicion of the GEF in the third case study draws attention to the importance of recognising that donor involvement is much more than technical support and can be a contested political issue.

Overall, the findings from the three case studies thus demonstrate that different types of drivers play important roles in shaping the forms of regional environmental cooperation. Moreover, the relationships between different drivers and with national governments are important factors that affect the level of robustness. However, the three case studies also suggest that the marginality of regional environmental cooperation is not determined by the presence or absence, or the objectives, of particular drivers. Instead, the marginality of regional environmental cooperation is an outcome of more general political and economic structures and the development strategy adopted by governments.

8.3 Uncovering contradictions: the limitations of neo-extractivism as a strategy for social and environmental development in South America

Studying the marginal policy area of environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone which has not received much attention in other studies on the region, has also proved fruitful to better understand the complex nature of regional cooperation in the Southern Cone and South America more widely. Reflecting changing priorities at the domestic level, the pink tide governments of the 21st century have thus argued that regional cooperation should equally serve to enhance social development and improve democracy. Yet, in many ways regional cooperation has had the opposite effect. It thus appears that resource-driven integration has reinforced existing inequalities while natural resource exploitation which

provides the basis for social development under the neo-extractivist model, has simultaneously led to increased health problems and social conflicts. At the same time civil society participation is granted unevenly and selectively and there are very few effective institutionalised channels for access to decision-making on national or regional natural resource governance strategies. Consequently, citizens affected by resource exploitation are left without a say or have to resort to protest strategies that take place outside the formal decision-making channels. This section thus highlights important contradictions in regional cooperation as well as limitations of neo-extractivism as a strategy for social development in the region. While the thesis has focussed on the Southern Cone as this presented a more appropriate scale for the analysis of environmental cooperation, the concept of neo-extractivism was developed in reference to South America as a whole (Gudynas, 2009). Similarly, regional cooperation more generally has seen a shift in the scale of cooperation from distinct regions within South America, such as the Southern Cone or the Andean region, towards cooperation at a larger South America-wide scale. This has been evident in the creation of two new regional organisations, Unasur and Alba, and the joint infrastructure project IIRSA, but it has not been notable in the area of environmental cooperation. Here, different regions within South America often partly defined by ecological criteria are still the most important level of cooperation. Overall, this section thus uses the findings from the study of environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone to point out some implications regarding the nature of regional cooperation in South America more widely.

With the arrival of a wave of Leftist presidents all over South America over the last 15 years, the nature of regional cooperation has changed in important aspects. Most importantly, there have been notable changes in the content and objectives of regional cooperation as well as the rhetoric of political leaders. Reflecting developments at the national level, pink tide leaders have thus also stressed the importance of domestic social objectives and autonomy from external pressure, and in particular US influence, in regional cooperation. This contrasts starkly with regional cooperation a decade earlier which focussed much more on trade liberalisation and has often been seen as a response to external circumstances, either in the form of US pressure or as a way of strengthening the region's position in the face of economic globalisation. These new developments have also found interest among scholars of regional cooperation with some scholars proclaiming a new era of "post-neoliberal", "post-hegemonic" and "post-trade" regional cooperation (Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012c; Riggirozzi, 2012b). These studies have argued that while economic and trade considerations continue to be important, they are not the only or the

most important concerns anymore. Regional cooperation in South America in the 21st century is thus much more a response to domestic demands and needs than external pressures and global developments leading to a "new rhetoric about what regionalism *is* and *is for*" (Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012c: 6). Regional cooperation then can be seen as "national politics by other means" (Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012a: 188).

In particular, reflecting new social priorities in domestic policy-making, regional cooperation under Leftist governments has equally turned towards social objectives. This is evident in old regional organisations, notably Mercosur, where gradually political objectives such as labour rights or a structural convergence fund to address some of the asymmetries within Mercosur also gained ground (Briceño Ruiz, 2012; Riggirozzi, 2012b: 10; Serbin, 2012). A shift towards social concerns is equally evident in the new regional organisations Alba and Unasur where health and education are important pillars of regional cooperation (Riggirozzi, 2012b: 18). Moreover, following the widespread protests against the neoliberal reform agenda and its elitist practices of decision-making, the pink tide leaders have also made a commitment towards democratic innovation and new possibilities of engaging civil society in decision-making (Cannon and Kirby, 2012a: 191; 193). Again, this is mirrored in regional cooperation where democracy is also one of the main concerns (Riggirozzi, 2012a: 31, 2012b: 12).

At the same time, the analysis presented in chapter 4 of why regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone has remained marginal over the last two decades, has highlighted the central position of natural resource exploitation for national and regional projects. Just as domestic social policies depend on high economic growth rates and revenues from natural resource exploitation, regional cooperation in South America is thus to a large extent "resource-driven" (Saguier, 2012b) with IIRSA being a crucial element of regional cooperation. However, the central position of resource exploitation in national and regional projects also leads to tensions and reinforces old social problems or creates new ones. These include conflicts over the use of land and resources mostly between governments and citizens, but also between countries (Bebbington, 2011; Haarstad, 2012; Hogenboom, 2012a; Saguier, 2012b). While many studies have focussed on mining in the Andes or oil exploration in the Amazon, the pulp mill conflict analysed in various sections of the thesis clearly shows that conflicts also exist and pose challenges for governments in the Southern Cone. In an effort to avoid a conflict with civil society within the country, the Argentinean government thus turned the conflict into an international problem which affected the region for almost a decade (Waisbord and Peruzzotti, 2009).

Moreover, the protests against the construction of pulp mills on the Uruguay River have clearly shown concerns regarding the potential negative impact of neo-extractivist activities on human health. Meanwhile, civil society organisations have presented evidence of already existing health problems, for example, due to the widespread use of chemicals in agricultural production (Branford, 2013; Gudynas, 2008: 514; Robinson, 2008: 89; Wandscheer, 2009). What is more, the costs and benefits of regional projects of natural resource exploitation have been highly unequal between countries as well as within countries. The role of Brazil in resource-driven integration and the comparatively larger advantages for Brazil have thus been criticised in neighbouring countries (Burges, 2005: 451; Malamud, 2012: 175; Phillips and Cabitza, 2011) as well as the high costs for affected local communities within a particular country (Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012a: 184; Saguier, 2012b: 134). Regional strategies of resource exploitation have thus in important ways reinforced existing inequalities.

Altogether this points to important discrepancies between the stated objectives of regional cooperation, namely to respond to domestic demands, especially in the social sphere, and the unintended outcomes of regional cooperation. It seems that while using natural resources as a strategy to address some important social demands, the effects of resource exploitation at the scale and intensity in which it is implemented in the region, simultaneously creates new ones. The analysis of the marginal policy area of environmental cooperation thus highlights significant vulnerabilities in regional cooperation and neo-extractivism as a development strategy for the region which are less obvious when focussing only on the high economic growth rates in the region or the successful social policies, for instance in reducing poverty. Moreover, it seems that governments in the region have not been able to develop coherent strategies to address negative impacts of neo-extractivism.

What is notably absent in regional cooperation are therefore programmes or institutions to address ecological or socio-environmental concerns. In this respect Mercosur has the most developed institutions, although, as chapter 5 has clearly shown, the autonomy of Mercosur's environmental forums is very limited and they are weak compared to other Mercosur institutions and compared to environmental institutions of regional organisations elsewhere (Hochstetler, 2003: 12–13). Moreover, as governments have decided not to address many of the region's most important shared environmental concerns in Mercosur, the regional organisation has become less relevant for regional environmental cooperation over time.

Yet, an analysis of studies on Unasur and Alba as well as the websites of these organisations shows that environmental concerns are addressed even less than in Mercosur (Alba, 2013; Colombo and Roark, 2012; Riggirozzi and Tussie, 2012b; Riggirozzi, 2012b; Secretaría General de la UNASUR, 2013). Meanwhile, a recent Unasur meeting in relation to natural resource governance has reiterated the discourses of abundant resources which need to be exploited to guarantee the well-being of the people and which are so vast that they can satisfy the demands of the region and requirements of countries outside the region (Secretaría General de la UNASUR, 2013). It seems then that socio-environmental concerns gain less attention in the new regional organisations while natural resource exploitation takes a more prominent position.

Moreover, Serbin (2012) has found that possibilities for civil society participation are more limited in Unasur and Alba, the two newest regional organisations, than in Mercosur. This seems to suggest that despite the rhetoric to the contrary, there is in fact a trend towards less civil society participation. While Mercosur appears to have more developed consultation mechanisms, this does not necessarily translate into influence over decision-making (Briceño Ruiz, 2012: 183; Serbin, 2012: 155). Moreover, consultation takes place more in relation to other social issues, such as social security and labour issues than the highly sensitive topic of natural resource governance. As outlined in chapter 5, civil society organisations that have an interest in addressing common environmental problems from a regional perspective, have found themselves excluded from the most significant Mercosur institutions, while those forums that do allow a minimum of participation do not have much power in Mercosur's institutional set-up and do not address many of the region's most important environmental issues.

Similarly, the other two case studies examined in the thesis have equally demonstrated important limitations to access to decision-making for civil society. While the term "civil society" of course includes many different groups who have achieved varying degrees of influence in the different case studies, none of the cases demonstrates institutionalised channels for universal access to decision-making. In relation to the governance of the La Plata basin civil society organisations have thus mainly gained influence through "outside strategies" (Uhlin, 2011: 852), i.e. well-organised protests against particular issues, but institutionalised and regular consultation mechanisms remain underdeveloped and ineffective. In the case study on migratory species conservation NGOs have gained considerable influence through the relatively open institutional structures of the CMS. However, it has to be noted that this does not include all interested civil society

organisations, but only those deemed as "qualified" in the protection of migratory species by the CMS and governments. Professional conservation NGOs with a high level of expertise and resources have thus had a relatively high level of access, but this is also limited to the question of species protection and does not extend into policy-making on economic questions.

Overall, this echoes findings from previous studies, that although progressive governments have opened up to pressure from below and introduced some more possibilities for civil society participation, this remains uneven and selective (Cannon and Kirby, 2012a: 196–197) with governments retaining their central position. Decision-making has thus opened up on some topics and for some groups, but an analysis of the marginal policy-area of environmental cooperation very clearly demonstrates the limits. In particular, there is very little space for alternative ideas on natural resource governance and with the exception of the Brazilian Green Party and Marina Silva as a presidential candidate in the last election, this is not an issue that is taken up by political parties. This also means that it is difficult to say how wide-spread the consensus on neo-extractivism as a development strategy really is. Even though it perhaps represents an extreme case, the example of Paraguay, where the interests of agri-business elites were a crucial factor in bringing down a democratically elected president in dubious circumstances demonstrates further important tensions between democracy and neo-extractivism.

Overall, this raises the question of whether neo-extractivism as a development strategy for the region can be regarded as democratic, in particular if taking a perspective that goes beyond elections and formal democratic institutions, and includes also the right to participate in decisions which affect citizens as an element of social citizenship (Grugel, 1999: 159). Although progressive governments have shown a commitment towards reducing poverty through various important social programmes, these have not extended to the provision of citizen rights in relation to decision-making on natural resource governance.

On the whole, the analysis of regional environmental cooperation thus points to important limitations in national and regional projects, both in relation to increasing socio-environmental problems and conflicts, and regarding decision-making mechanisms and the quality of democracy. Using a marginalised policy area as an analytical lens has thus been valuable to contribute to the literature on regional cooperation in South America in the 21st century and develop a more nuanced understanding of this. Furthermore, the thesis has

highlighted the need to examine neo-extractivism critically and take into account that it has important limitations despite the achievements it has undoubtedly brought in some sectors.

8.4 Limitations of the thesis and avenues for further research

The thesis has provided one of the first in-depth studies comparing several cases of regional environmental cooperation in a region of the South. With important elements of inductive research using grounded theory, the thesis presents an exploratory study which opens up many avenues for further research. This final section focuses in particular on the relevance of the thesis for the further study of environmental cooperation in regions of the South. In relation to this, it is important to first pay attention to the limitations of the thesis. Although a key objective of the thesis was to contribute to a better understanding of how environmental cooperation takes place in regions of the South, this should not be taken to mean that the findings from the thesis are directly applicable to other regions. Even if countries of the South have been relatively united in global environmental politics (Williams, 2005), "the global South" evidently includes a huge range of countries and regions as well as experiences and contexts of environmental cooperation. This means that the thesis can only be seen as the study of one example of regional environmental cooperation in the South. Nevertheless, the thesis makes an important contribution to the study of regional environmental cooperation in the South in that the framework and concepts developed in the thesis can be tested and refined in other contexts.

The thesis has used three key dimensions to examine differing forms of regional environmental cooperation; i.e. the institutional framework and its political purpose; the scope of issues addressed; and the way the membership is determined. These different dimensions can also provide the basis for the development of further hypotheses regarding the forms that regional environmental cooperation takes (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012: 9). As outlined in previous chapters, many governments of the South have prioritised environmental issues of local concern and been concerned to take into account social and economic development when addressing environmental concerns. Further research on the scope of issues addressed in regions of the South, or the political purpose of institutional frameworks would thus be interesting. Studies could for example examine whether environmental issues considered as local problems are more likely to be addressed or whether institutional frameworks with broader mandates offer better possibilities to

address economic and social development together with environmental protection and are thus more attractive or more common in regions in the South. Further research could also pick up on the issue of political salience outlined in the first part of this chapter and examine if there is a general tendency to address politically sensitive issues in institutional frameworks that are less accessible to civil society.

Furthermore, to understand regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone better, the thesis has developed the concepts of "cooperation in practice" and "formal cooperation". The main rationale behind this was to conceptualise two distinct elements of regional environmental cooperation that may or may not be linked. This was based on the finding of two important vulnerabilities early on in the research process. On the one hand, written and public agreements between governments often exist, but are not necessarily implemented and on the other hand, regular activities of cooperation are often highly dependent on external funding and thus run the risk of stopping if funding runs out. Furthermore, the thesis has found that if both elements are present and linked in the same institutional framework, regional environmental cooperation is more robust and more likely to continue beyond an initial starting period.

Further research could apply the two concepts of cooperation in practice and formal cooperation to other regions and compare the findings in order to examine whether the concepts are also useful in other contexts and if so, how they could be strengthened and refined through further empirical research. Similarly, it would be useful to examine if the linking of the two forms of cooperation also makes cooperation more robust in other contexts, or if not, how the concept of robustness could be further developed. Given the concern with the weakness of regional environmental cooperation described in several studies, this would be a useful step towards understanding different levels of strength better.

Moreover, the thesis has used a broad framework of endogenous and exogenous drivers to examine how different actors have shaped the forms that regional environmental cooperation takes. Again, this could be refined much further through systematic comparisons with other regions. The prominent role of exogenous drivers has also been noted in other studies, in particular in relation to donors coming from outside a particular region (Elliott and Breslin, 2011: 7). However, the range of donors involved in different forms of regional environmental cooperation is huge and includes UN agencies, international organisations and international development banks as well as national

government agencies of Northern countries, NGOs and private foundations. There are also significant variations in terms of objectives, priorities and the relationships with domestic actors as well as the type of support offered and the amount of money involved or the duration of projects. Further research and comparisons to establish whether the same types of donors are active in different regions, what their objectives and relationships to governments and domestic nonstate actors are and how these affect the characteristics of cooperation would thus significantly advance the understanding of environmental cooperation in regions where there is a high dependence on external funding.

What is more, the prominent role that exogenous drivers and in particular donors play in environmental cooperation in regions of the South also raises important questions regarding the legitimacy and accountability of cooperation. Both of these are concepts which describe norms and standards on the one hand and relations between different actors on the other. Accountability thus provides a link between those who are held accountable and those who have the right to hold to account according to a particular standard of behaviour (Biermann and Gupta, 2011: 1857). Legitimacy relates to the acceptance and justification of authority and equally relates to accepted rules or principles and standards of behaviour. Again, there is a relational element and a crucial question is who regards something, in this case regional environmental cooperation, as legitimate (Biermann and Gupta, 2011: 1858). Accountability and legitimacy are important as values on their own, but also affect the effectiveness of environmental governance as cooperation arrangements can be expected to be more effective if they are seen as legitimate and accountable (Biermann et al., 2010: 286–287).

Theoretically, in a strictly intergovernmental process governments are accountable to their voters and this constitutes the main source of legitimacy (Biermann et al., 2010: 286). International bureaucracies, such as the CMS Secretariat or the CIC in the La Plata basin regime thus gain legitimacy through the mandate from the governments who are their principals, but this leads to very long lines of accountability which have been questioned (Biermann et al., 2010: 286). Moreover, as some scholars have rightly pointed out, many governments lack democratic legitimacy themselves (Uhlin, 2011: 853). The involvement and influence of actors from outside a particular region further complicates lines of accountability and thus raises more questions regarding the legitimacy of cooperation. It is therefore not at all clear who donors are or should be accountable to: their home constituencies or the institutions who provide the funding; the recipient governments; or the people whose daily lives are affected by projects with external funding? Similar

questions can be raised with respect to NGOs that engage in cooperation in a particular region, but receive a large part of their funding from sources outside the region. As the case study on the La Plata basin has shown, the involvement of particular donors can be a political issue and spark public criticism or distrust. Other scholars have also noted that the legitimacy of the GEF can be limited because it addresses concerns seen as globally important, but not necessarily those issues which are seen as most important by governments or citizens in the South (Biermann and Gupta, 2011: 1861).

While it has been argued that the regional level has the potential to become a more legitimate scale for environmental cooperation compared to the global level (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012: 3; Elliott and Breslin, 2011: 8–10), this is thus by no means automatic. Instead, the degree of legitimacy is closely related to participatory institutions (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012: 10). On the whole, the prominent role of donors in environmental cooperation in many regions of the South thus sparks many important questions regarding the democratic credentials of cooperation which deserve attention in further studies.

In addition, there are some reasons to assume that the influence of donors might change depending on whether aid is targeted at immediate neighbours or at regions that are geographically further away. On the one hand, the incentives to provide aid to neighbouring regions are much stronger if there are significant transboundary environmental effects as was the case with Western European support for issues of nuclear safety or air pollution in Eastern Europe following the fall of the Iron Curtain (Andonova and VanDeveer, 2012; Connolly and List, 1996; Connolly et al., 1996). On the other hand, donors may also be able to offer stronger incentives to upgrade environmental institutions and regulations and comply with them in neighbouring regions than in regions further away. For many Eastern European countries the prospect of EU membership was thus a powerful incentive. However, studies have also found that the EU's ability to promote compliance with certain standards decreases with geographical distance (Andonova and VanDeveer, 2012: 301–305; Börzel and Risse, 2012a). Again, more detailed and systematic research on different donors and their relationship to a particular region would thus significantly advance the research programme on environmental cooperation in regions of the South.

While the activities of donors are often more visible, endogenous drivers from within a particular region are by no means less important. The case studies provide evidence of the existence of very different endogenous drivers, including networks of researchers and

epistemic communities, networks of government officials as well as civil society organisations ranging from more critical organisations taking an environmental justice perspective, to professional conservation NGOs. These different endogenous drivers have also used very different strategies, including both "outside strategies" consisting of protests and "inside strategy" involving direct discussions with governments and lobbying (Uhlin, 2011: 852).

Furthermore, as outlined in more detail in the first part of this chapter, the thesis suggests that well-resourced professional conservation NGOs which present their work more as a technical issue than a critique of the development model adopted by governments, have more access to governments and influence over the characteristics of regional environmental cooperation. Comparing these findings with in-depth studies of the role of endogenous drivers in other regions of the South would be useful to develop more general conclusions regarding the role of endogenous drivers in shaping the characteristics of regional environmental cooperation. Moreover, comparisons could bring out more clearly under which conditions domestic actors can shape regional environmental cooperation and what their influence consists of. Some studies have thus noted that regional environmental cooperation is much more driven by external actors than domestic ones (Compagnon et al., 2011: 107; Kulauzov and Antypas, 2011: 113). Yet, the findings from the thesis suggest that this does not necessarily mean that domestic actors with an interest in promoting regional environmental cooperation do not exist. Instead, the lack of involvement of endogenous drivers could also reflect a lack of access for interested civil society organisations. This provides an important avenue for further research in cases where endogenous drivers for regional environmental cooperation appear to be absent. Conversely, in cases where endogenous drivers do play a role, it is worth investigating further how these have gained access and under which conditions. All of these questions are also important in relation to the accountability and legitimacy of regional environmental cooperation.

Finally, the thesis has identified three key elements which characterise the marginality of regional environmental cooperation in the Southern Cone; first the absence of new regimes created specifically to address regional environmental concerns; second the vague or non-binding nature of many agreements and the absence of specific commitments; and third the high dependence on external funding. Again, this could be used in other regions to examine whether this combination of elements more generally presents a useful threshold to assess the level of political commitment and strength of cooperation.

The first element on its own is not necessarily an indication that environmental cooperation has a particularly low political priority. As some studies point out, although most regional environmental cooperation initiatives still focus on individual environmental concerns, there is an increase in agreements covering sustainable development more broadly (Balsiger and VanDeveer, 2012: 5). Consequently, the absence of regimes created specifically to address particular regional environmental concerns may simply reflect a more general trend and not necessarily indicate marginality. Moreover, institutional frameworks addressing both sustainability and development may be more attractive for governments in regions of the South. As Meadowcroft (2012: 82) points out leaders in non-OECD countries will not and cannot ignore security concerns, economic growth and social welfare when they are asked to deal with environmental concerns.

Nevertheless, if such broader regimes are combined with vague or non-binding agreements and a lack of budgetary commitments for environmental cooperation as is the case in the Southern Cone, this raises the question of whether they are in fact able to reconcile environmental sustainability with economic development. While the rise of the concept of sustainable development was thus an important element to make environmental cooperation more feasible for governments in the South, the thesis also demonstrates the difficulties in implementing it. Again, comparisons with other examples of regional environmental cooperation where the institutional framework is targeted at sustainable development more broadly would be useful to examine this in more detail and to draw out whether, and if so, under which conditions, it is possible to address both economic development and environmental sustainability. This is also relevant for donors and once more reflects findings from earlier studies. Recognising that for developing countries economic objectives will remain a higher priority than environmental ones in the foreseeable future, Fairman and Ross thus argue that greater coordination between environmental and non-environmental objectives and projects is needed as well as a search for compatibility between the two (1996: 41, 48).

Furthermore, the thesis has found that, in the case of the Southern Cone, the marginality of environmental cooperation is largely the outcome of the political and economic context, and in particular the adoption of a strategy for economic and social development which relies heavily on intensive and extensive natural resource exploitation and which leaves very little space for environmental concerns. This is interesting because it relates to structural issues regarding the position of Latin America in the global economy which has

often been regarded as unfavourable, although this has changed somewhat over the last decade.

In the Southern Cone the marginality of regional environmental cooperation is closely related to a particular position in the global economy where the Southern Cone countries act mainly as providers of primary commodities for global markets. European powers forced South America into the global economy as a provider of primary commodities during the colonial period (Galeano, 1973). This had devastating social and environmental impacts at the time, but it also contributed to the economic and political marginalisation of South America which lasted beyond independence. As Latin American dependency theorists have argued in great detail in the 1970s, the periphery countries in the South remained subordinate and dependent on the core in the North (Cardoso and Faletto, 1979).

The return to export-driven growth in the 1990s which is continued under the neo-extractivist model, has reinforced the position of the Southern Cone and South America as a whole as providers of primary commodities in global markets (Green, 1999; Murray, 1999). Some analysts still regard this as a subordinate position (Gudynas, 2009: 198; Sotero, 2010: 79) or point to the vulnerabilities in terms of price fluctuations in global commodity markets as well as the risk that the price of imports, including food and electrical goods, may increase (Castañeda, 2006: 39; Oliva, 2010: 106; Riggirozzi and Grugel, 2009: 223–224). Others have argued that globally the demand for commodities is likely to be stable (Blanke, 2013: 3). Moreover, the rise of China also offers alternative sources of investment and trade relationships, making the region less dependent on the global North (Fernández Jilberto and Hogenboom, 2010; Hochstetler, 2013: 39). In addition, Brazil in particular has been able to strengthen its position globally and build new links with other regions in the South, such as Africa (Bastos Lima and Gupta, 2013: 51).

Whatever the interpretation of South America's position in the global economy, the case of the Southern Cone suggests that the marginality of regional environmental cooperation is shaped much more by global developments, including economic structures, than any particular actors involved in regional environmental cooperation. A comparison of the preconditions for environmental cooperation and the development model adopted in other regions of the South would be useful to examine this further and could potentially lead to a better understanding of why cooperation is stronger or weaker in some regions than in others. Overall, the concepts and frameworks developed in the thesis as well as some of the

findings thus open up several new questions and avenues of research for regional environmental cooperation in the South more generally.

Even though the main objective of the thesis was to examine environmental cooperation in a region of the South, global linkages and relationships whether in the form of donors, international NGO networks and epistemic communities or trade relations, are clearly important. This also means that regional environmental cooperation in the South cannot be regarded as something that only concerns governments and citizens in the South, but is as much linked to politics and choices made in the North.

Appendix A: Sample interview outline

As the interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, the topics below only give an indication. The questions were adjusted depending on who the interviewee was and the topics discussed during the interview. During the pilot study the questions were more general to get an overview of what the most important regional environmental issues are and how they are being addressed. Following the case selection they focussed more on specific topics and relationships between different actors and I followed the more general questions up with more specific questions on the different cases.

- Introduction of myself and the research topic
- Explanation of how the data will be handled, who will have access to it, considerations regarding publishing
- Explanation and signing of consent form; clarification how I can be contacted after the interview and that I will be happy to provide feedback on overall research results
- Can you give me a brief description of the role of your organisation and your own work within that organisation?
- Do you also work together with other organisations or governments? What is your relationship with them?
- Can you describe areas of cooperation on environmental issues between the Southern Cone countries?
- When did this start and how was it initiated? What are the objectives?
- In your opinion: is this successful, why, why not?
- What is the position of the different Southern Cone countries?
- Do regional organisations play a role in this or are these mainly bilateral initiatives or initiatives of civil society organisations?
- Which actors do you think are the most important in cooperation on environmental issues between the Southern Cone countries?
- What would you say are the biggest achievements and the biggest challenges?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?
- Can you suggest anyone else I could talk to?
- Do you have any other questions you would like to ask me?
- Thanking research participants for their time and repeating that I can be contacted any time if participants have more questions

Appendix B: Sample information sheet for interviewees

Interviewees were provided this information sheet prior to the interview. The information sheet was also available in English.

"Cooperación Ambiental en el Cono Sur de América Latina"

Información para el entrevistado - Por favor, lea esta página cuidadosamente antes de completar el formulario de consentimiento

El objetivo de este proyecto de investigación es examinar la cooperación entre los países del Cono Sur de América Latina en cuestiones ambientales. El objetivo de las entrevistas es desarrollar una mejor comprensión de las diferentes formas de cooperación, los actores involucrados y la manera de ejecución.

Las entrevistas forman parte de mi tesis doctoral en la Universidad de Glasgow en el Reino Unido. La duración total del proyecto de investigación es de cuatro años, septiembre de 2009 hasta septiembre de 2012. La investigación se financia a través de una beca de doctorado de la Facultad de Derecho, Ciencias Empresariales y Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad de Glasgow y una bolsa de viaje de la Sociedad de Estudios Latinoamericanos (Society for Latin American Studies – SLAS) en el Reino Unido. La información obtenida de las entrevistas puede ser publicada en revistas académicas o libros de acuerdo con el grado de consentimiento indicado en el formulario de consentimiento.

El formulario de consentimiento ofrece tres grados de anonimato con respecto al uso de datos procedentes de la entrevista en mi trabajo futuro. Si el entrevistado autoriza la grabación, el entrevistado tiene la opción de solicitar que los datos recogidos de la entrevista sean destruidos una vez que la investigadora haya tomado notas de la entrevista (el entrevistado no será identificable en tales notas). El entrevistado tiene derecho a interrumpir la entrevista en cualquier momento sin tener que dar una razón.

Datos de contacto

Abajo encontrará los datos de contacto pertinentes para la investigadora y los supervisores de la investigadora. Si tiene alguna duda o pregunta sobre la investigación o el proceso de entrevistas, por favor no dude en ponerse en contacto para discutirla. Dr. Kollman y Dr. Hume están disponibles para atender consultas o quejas sobre la investigadora o el proceso de entrevistas. Los datos recogidos en esta entrevista sólo estarán disponibles para la investigadora y las directoras de tesis de la investigadora (ver información de contacto más abajo).

Investigadora

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Appendix C: Sample consent form for interviewees

Interviewees were provided this consent form prior to the interview. The form was also available in English.

Consentimiento para ser entrevistado para el proyecto de doctorado
"Cooperación Ambiental en el Cono Sur de América Latina"
Por favor, lea la hoja de información adjunta antes de rellenar el formulario.

INFORMACIÓN DEL ENTREVISTADO

Nombre: _____

Cargo: _____

Organización: _____

Lugar: _____

CONSENTIMIENTO DEL ENTREVISTADO

Por favor, marque la opción que prefiera

Doy mi permiso para citar mi nombre en el trabajo publicado, excepto cuando especifique lo contrario ☐

Doy mi permiso para citar o parafrasear mis palabras en el trabajo publicado, pero sin mencionar mi nombre, excepto cuando especifique lo contrario ☐

Mis comentarios son "off the record" y no pueden ser publicados, excepto cuando especifique lo contrario ☐

PERMISO PARA GRABAR LA ENTREVISTA
Por favor, marque la opción que prefiera

Doy mi permiso para que esta entrevista sea grabada ☐

No autorizo que esta entrevista sea grabada ☐

PERMISO PARA LA CONSERVACIÓN DE DATOS DE LA ENTREVISTA
Por favor, marque la opción que prefiera

Doy mi permiso para que la investigadora conserve una copia de los datos por tiempo indefinido ☐

Solicito que la grabación sea borrada una vez que la investigadora haya tomado notas de la entrevista ☐

Entiendo que puedo terminar la entrevista en cualquier momento sin dar explicaciones ☐

_____ _____

Firma Fecha

Appendix D: List of interviews

Organisation	Location	Date
Mercosur		
Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable	Buenos Aires, Argentina	18.6.2010
Ministerio do Meio Ambiente – Assessoria de Assuntos Internacionais	Brasilia, Brazil	28.7.2010
Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable	Buenos Aires, Argentina	14.4.2011
Consejo Consultivo de la Sociedad Civil, Comisión de Cambio Climático, Ambiente y Desarrollo sustentable	Buenos Aires, Argentina	26.4.2011
Academia de Ciencias del Ambiente*	Buenos Aires, Argentina	28.4.2011
Centro Tecnológico para la Sustentabilidad	Buenos Aires, Argentina	2.5.2011
European Union Delegation to Uruguay and Paraguay	Montevideo, Uruguay	3.5.2011
Laboratorio Tecnológico del Uruguay (LATU)	Montevideo, Uruguay	4.5.2011
Centro de Formación para la Integración Regional (CEFIR)	Montevideo, Uruguay	6.5.2011
Centro Latinoamericano de Ecología Social (CLAES)*	Montevideo, Uruguay	6.5.2011
Ministerio de Vivienda, Ordenamiento Territorial y Medio Ambiente, Dirección Nacional de Medio Ambiente (2 interviewees)	Montevideo, Uruguay	10.5.2011
Secretaría del Ambiente	Asunción, Paraguay	24.5.2011
Ministerio de Industria y Comercio	Asunción, Paraguay	27.5.2011
Sobrevivencia / Amigos de la Tierra Paraguay*	Asunción, Paraguay	30.5.2011
CMS		
Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable	Buenos Aires, Argentina	18.3.2011
Aves Argentinas – A.O.P.	Buenos Aires, Argentina	11.4.2011
Aves Uruguay	Montevideo, Uruguay	9.5.2011
Ministerio de Ganadería, Agricultura y Pesca	Montevideo, Uruguay	12.5.2011
Fundación Humedales (Wetlands International)	Buenos Aires, Argentina	19.5.2011
Asociación Guyra Paraguay	Asunción, Paraguay	24.5.2011
Secretaría del Ambiente	Asunción, Paraguay	25.5.2011
Administración de Parques Nacionales (2 interviewees)	Salta, Argentina	10.6.2011
Universidad Nacional de Salta	Salta, Argentina	10.6.2011
United Nations Environment Programme / Convention on Migratory Species	Bonn, Germany	16.9.2011
UNCCD regional coordination unit Santiago de Chile	E-mail communication	31.10.2012
La Plata basin regime		
Iglesia Evangélica del Río de la Plata (2 interviewees)	Buenos Aires, Argentina	14.6.2010
Iglesia Evangélica del Río de la Plata Asamblea Ciudadana Ambiental (group discussion with 4 interviewees)	Gualeguaychú, Argentina	19.6.2010

Greenpeace*	Buenos Aires, Argentina	22.6.2010
Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN)*	Buenos Aires, Argentina	25.6.2010
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2 interviewees)	Montevideo, Uruguay	6.7.2010
Consejo Nacional del Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET)*	Rosario, Argentina	11.3.2011
Universidad de la República	Montevideo, Uruguay	14.3.2011
Comisión Mixta Argentino Paraguaya del Rió Paraná (COMIP) (2 interviewees)	Buenos Aires, Argentina	7.4.2011
Comité Intergubernamental Coordinador de los Países de la Cuenca del Plata (CIC)	Buenos Aires, Argentina	11.4.2011
Academia de Ciencias del Ambiente*	Buenos Aires, Argentina	28.4.2011
Centro Tecnológico para la Sustentabilidad	Buenos Aires, Argentina	2.5.2011
Comisión Técnica Mixta del Frente Marítimo (CTMFM)	Montevideo, Uruguay	5.5.2011
Ministerio de Vivienda, Ordenamiento Territorial y Medio Ambiente, Dirección Nacional de Medio Ambiente	Montevideo, Uruguay	11.5.2011
Ministerio de Vivienda, Ordenamiento Territorial y Medio Ambiente, Dirección Nacional de Agua	Montevideo, Uruguay	12.5.2011
Proyecto FREPLATA II	Montevideo, Uruguay	13.5.2011
Presidencia de la República, Departamento de Cooperación Internacional*	Montevideo, Uruguay	13.5.2011
Comisión Trinacional Para el Desarrollo de la Cuenca del Río Pilcomayo – Dirección Ejecutiva (2 interviewees)	Formosa, Argentina	23.5.2011
Sobrevivencia / Amigos de la Tierra Paraguay*	Asunción, Paraguay	30.5.2011
Comisión Mixta Paraguayo - Argentino del Rió Paraná (COMIP)	Asunción, Paraguay	31.5.2011
Comité Intergubernamental Coordinador de los Países de la Cuenca del Plata (CIC)	Buenos Aires, Argentina	28.6.2011
General information regarding environmental politics in the region		
Greenpeace*	Buenos Aires, Argentina	22.6.2010
Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN)*	Buenos Aires, Argentina	25.6.2010
United Nations Development Programme	Brasilia, Brazil	23.7.2010
British Embassy	Brasilia, Brazil	26.7.2010
Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	5.8.2010
Consejo Nacional del Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET)*	Rosario, Argentina	11.3.2011
Academia de Ciencias del Ambiente*	Buenos Aires, Argentina	28.4.2011
Centro Latinoamericano de Ecología Social (CLAES)*	Montevideo, Uruguay	6.5.2011
Presidencia de la República, Departamento de Cooperación Internacional*	Montevideo, Uruguay	13.5.2011
Administración de Parques Nacionales (2 interviewees)	Buenos Aires, Argentina	19.5.2011
Sobrevivencia / Amigos de la Tierra Paraguay*	Asunción, Paraguay	30.5.2011

Table D.1: List of interviews. Note: In some cases interviews were relevant for more than one category, these interviews are listed more than once and marked with an asterisk.*

Appendix E: List of treaties selected from the ECOLEX database

Name of Treaty	Member states	Date of document	Treaty ID number in ECOLEX database	Subjects (as specified in ECOLEX database)
Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of High Andean Flamingos and their Habitats	Bolivia Chile Peru	2008	TRE-146959	wild species and ecosystems
Memorándum de Entendimiento entre el Gobierno de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela y el Gobierno de la República Federativa del Brasil para la implementación de un Programa de Producción de Soya	Brazil Venezuela	2008	TRE-151662	cultivated plants
Memorándum de Entendimiento entre el Gobierno de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela y el Gobierno de la República Federativa del Brasil para la implementación de un Programa de Agricultura Familiar	Brazil Venezuela	2008	TRE-151665	cultivated plants; food
Acuerdo de Cooperación en materia de Soberanía y Seguridad Alimentaria entre la República Bolivariana de Venezuela y la República Argentina	Argentina Venezuela	2008	TRE-151668	food
Tratado de Seguridad y Soberanía Alimentaria entre la República de Bolivia, la República de Cuba, la República de Nicaragua y la República Bolivariana de Venezuela en el Marco de la Alternativa Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (ALBA).	Bolivia Venezuela Nicaragua Cuba	2008	TRE-153718	food
Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Southern South American Migratory Grassland Bird Species and their Habitats	Argentina Bolivia Brazil Paraguay Uruguay	2007	TRE-146845	wild species and ecosystems
Acuerdo Complementario para la implementación del Proyecto de Capacitación Técnica en Producción Integrada con Énfasis en el Manejo de Plagas y Enfermedades de Frutas Tropicales y de Especies Amazónicas y Andinas	Brazil Ecuador	2007	TRE-151269	cultivated plants
Acuerdo Complementario para la implementación del Proyecto de Desarrollo de Procesos Agroproductivos para Biocombustibles	Brazil Ecuador	2007	TRE-151266	energy; cultivated plants
Acuerdo entre el Ministerio de Energía y Minas de la República del Ecuador y el Ministerio de Planificación Federal, Inversión Pública y Servicios de la República Argentina sobre Cooperación en el campo de los Hidrocarburos y Energía	Argentina Ecuador	2007	TRE-151272	energy

Acuerdo entre el Ministerio de Energía y Minas de la República del Ecuador y el Ministerio de Planificación Federal, Inversión Pública y Servicios de la República Argentina sobre Cooperación en el campo de los Recursos Mineros	Argentina Ecuador	2007	TRE-151275	mineral resources
Acuerdo Marco de Cooperación entre la República del Paraguay, la República Argentina y la República de Bolivia, relativo al Programa de Acción Subregional para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Gran Chaco Americano	Argentina Bolivia Paraguay	2007	TRE-153539	wild species and ecosystems; land and soil
Acuerdo entre el Gobierno de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela y el Gobierno de la República de Suriname sobre Cooperación en materia de desarrollo y manejo de recursos hidrobiológicos marinos	Suriname Venezuela	2007	TRE-151659	fisheries
Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Ruddy-headed Goose (Chloephaga rubidiceps)	Argentina Chile	2006	TRE-148523	wild species and ecosystems
Acuerdo de cooperación entre el Gobierno de la República del Paraguay y el Gobierno de la República Federativa del Brasil para el desarrollo sostenible y la gestión integrada de la Cuenca Hidrográfica del Río Apa	Brazil Paraguay	2006	TRE-151485	water
Decree No. 5.865 approving the Cooperation Agreement between Brazil and Peru for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Forest Fauna and Flora within Amazon Territories	Brazil Peru	2006	TRE-151110	forestry
Resolución Conjunta de la Comisión Administradora del Río de la Plata y de la Comisión Técnica Mixta del Frente Marítimo Nº 1/2006 - Fija provisionalmente una captura total permisible para la especie corvina, en toda el área geográfica del Tratado del Río de la Plata y su Frente Marítimo, para el año 2006	Argentina Uruguay	2006	TRE-150219	fisheries
Resolución de la Comisión Técnica Mixta del Frente Marítimo Nº 3/06 - Establece la fecha de apertura del período de captura para la especia calamar en la Zona Común de Pesca	Argentina Uruguay	2006	TRE-150153	fisheries
Protocolo adicional al Acuerdo Marco sobre Medio Ambiente del MERCOSUR	Argentina Brazil Paraguay Uruguay	2005	TRE-153713	environment general
Resolución Nº 13/05 de la Comisión Administradora del Río Uruguay - Estándares de calidad de las aguas	Argentina Uruguay	2005	TRE-149862	water

Protocolo Adicional al Tratado sobre Medio Ambiente entre el Gobierno de la República Argentina y el Gobierno de la República de Bolivia	Argentina Bolivia	2004	TRE-149565	Land & soil; Water; Waste & hazardous substances; Wild species & ecosystems; Environment gen.
Protocolo Adicional al Acuerdo de Alcance Parcial para la Promoción Económica, Comercial y de Inversiones entre la República Argentina y la República de Bolivia para la cooperación sobre medidas sanitarias y fitosanitarias	Argentina Bolivia	2004	TRE-149589	Cultivated plants; Livestock; Food
Protocolo modificatorio del Acuerdo marco para la conservación de los recursos vivos marinos en la alta mar del Pacífico Sudeste	Chile Colombia Ecuador Peru	2003	TRE-146942	Sea; Wild species & ecosystems
Resolución Nº 3/02 - Medidas de manejo de la especie anchoita (Engraulis anchoita) en la Zona Común de Pesca	Argentina Uruguay	2002	TRE-150528	Fisheries
Acuerdo Marco sobre Medio Ambiente del MERCOSUR	Argentina Brazil Paraguay Uruguay	2001	TRE-153663	environment general
Acuerdo Complementario al Acuerdo de cooperación técnica agrícola, ganadera y pesquera entre la República del Ecuador y la República del Paraguay	Ecuador Paraguay	2001	TRE-149424	fisheries; agriculture
Acuerdo de cooperación en materia antártica entre el Gobierno de la República Argentina y el Gobierno de la República del Perú	Argentina Peru	2001	TRE-148986	wild species and ecosystems
Convenio marco de cooperación pesquera y acuícola entre la República del Perú y la República del Ecuador	Ecuador Peru	2001	TRE-148983	Fisheries
Acuerdo por notas reversales sobre la creación de una franja de seguridad de mil metros aguas abajo y aguas arriba del eje de la presa en toda su extensión, de la Central Hidroeléctrica de Yacyretá	Argentina Paraguay	2000	TRE-151119	water; energy
Reglamento Unificado de Pesca según el Convenio sobre conservación y desarrollo de los recursos icticos en los tramos limítrofes de los ríos Paraná y Paraguay entre la República Argentina y la República del Paraguay	Argentina Paraguay	2000	TRE-151677	Fisheries
Framework Agreement for the Conservation of Living Marine Resources on the High Seas of the South Pacific	Chile Colombia Ecuador Peru	2000	TRE-001924	sea; fisheries
Acuerdo sobre cooperación minera entre la República Argentina y la República Bolivariana de Venezuela	Argentina Venezuela	2000	TRE-149595	mineral resources
Acuerdo de cooperación y coordinación en materia de sanidad agropecuaria entre el Gobierno de la República del Ecuador y el Gobierno de la República del Perú	Ecuador Peru	1999	TRE-148678	Cultivated plants; Livestock

Protocolo Adicional al Acuerdo para la conservación de la fauna acuática en los cursos de los ríos limítrofes, entre el Gobierno de la República del Paraguay y el Gobierno de la República Federativa del Brasil	Paraguay Brazil	1999	TRE-149562	Fisheries
Protocolo de Enmienda al Tratado de Cooperación Amazónica	Bolivia Brazil Colombia Ecuador Guyana Peru Suriname Venezuela	1998	TRE-001825	Wild species & ecosystems; Environment gen.
Acuerdo Zoosanitario suscrito entre el Perú y la República Argentina	Argentina Peru	1998	TRE-148663	Livestock
Acuerdo en materia de sanidad y cuarentena vegetal suscrito con la República Argentina	Argentina Peru	1998	TRE-148666	cultivated plants
Acuerdo de Alcance Parcial sobre integración energética entre la República Argentina y la República de Bolivia	Argentina Bolivia	1998	TRE-151131	Energy
Tratado de Comercio y Navegación entre los Gobiernos de la República del Ecuador y la República del Perú	Ecuador Peru	1998	TRE-152439	Water
Octavo Protocolo Adicional y su Anexo al Acuerdo de Complementación Económica con Bolivia Nº 22, en materia de sanidad silvoagropecuaria, suscrito por los Gobiernos de las Repúblicas de Chile y Bolivia	Bolivia Chile	1997	TRE-149307	forestry; cultivated plants; livestock
Noveno Protocolo Adicional al Acuerdo de Complementación Económica con Bolivia Nº 22, en materia de normalización, suscrito por los Gobiernos de las Repúblicas de Chile y Bolivia	Bolivia Chile	1997	TRE-149310	Agriculture
Acuerdo entre la República Argentina y la República de Chile sobre Cooperación en materia de catástrofes	Argentina Chile	1997	TRE-148805	forestry; environment general
Protocolo Adicional al Convenio sobre conservación y desarrollo de los recursos icticos en los tramos limítrofes de los ríos Paraná y Paraguay entre la República Argentina y la República del Paraguay	Argentina Paraguay	1997	TRE-152937	Fisheries
Acuerdo sobre Transporte fluvial transversal fronterizo de pasajeros, vehículos y cargas entre la Republica Argentina y la Republica Federativa del Brasil	Argentina Brazil	1997	TRE-149001	Water
Ajuste Complementario al Acuerdo de Cooperación entre el Gobierno de la República Oriental del Uruguay y el Gobierno de la República Federativa del Brasil para el aprovechamiento de los recursos naturales y el desarrollo de la cuenca del río Cuareim	Brazil Uruguay	1997	TRE-152433	Water

Acuerdo para la Cooperación entre la Prefectura General Naval del Paraguay y la Prefectura Naval Argentina	Argentina Paraguay	1996	TRE-151116	Water; Forestry; Wild species & ecosystems; Environment gen
Convenio sobre conservación y desarrollo de los recursos icticos en los tramos limítrofes de los ríos Paraná y Paraguay entre la República Argentina y la República del Paraguay	Argentina Paraguay	1996	TRE-152934	Fisheries
Acuerdo de cooperación en materia ambiental	Argentina Brazil	1996	TRE-149469	environment general
Acuerdo para el aprovechamiento múltiple de los recursos de la alta cuenca del Río Bermejo y del Río Grande de Tarija entre la República Argentina y la República de Bolivia	Argentina Bolivia	1995	TRE-152958	Water
Agreement constituting the National Commission for the Development of the Riverbed Rio Pilcomayo	Argentina Bolivia Paraguay	1995	TRE-001235	Water
Acuerdo entre el Gobierno de la República del Paraguay y el Gobierno de la República Federativa del Brasil sobre cooperación para el combate al tráfico ilícito de Madera	Brazil Paraguay	1995	TRE-150876	Forestry
Acuerdo entre el Gobierno de la República del Paraguay y el Gobierno de la República Federativa del Brasil para la conservación de la fauna acuática en los cursos de los ríos limítrofes	Brazil Paraguay	1994	TRE-149556	Water; Fisheries; Wild species & ecosystems
Acuerdo por canje de notas por el que se adopta el Estatuto de la Comisión Binacional Administradora de la Cuenca Inferior del Río Pilcomayo, entre la República Argentina y la República del Paraguay	Argentina Paraguay	1994	TRE-149490	Water
Acuerdo entre Ecuador y Colombia sobre pesca artesanal	Colombia Ecuador	1994	TRE-151152	Fisheries
Tratado sobre medio ambiente	Argentina Bolivia	1994	TRE-149472	Land & soil; Water; Air & atmosphere; Waste & hazardous substances; Wild species & ecosystems; Environment gen.
Acuerdo en materia de recursos naturales y medio ambiente entre los Gobiernos de la República del Paraguay y la República de Bolivia	Bolivia Paraguay	1994	TRE-149733	Wild species & ecosystems; Environment gen.
Convenio de cooperación en materia de salud entre el Gobierno de la República Oriental del Uruguay y el Gobierno de la República del Paraguay	Paraguay Uruguay	1993	TRE-149559	Environment gen.; Food
Notas Reversales relacionadas con la creación de la Autoridad Binacional Autónoma de la Cuenca del Sistema Lago Titicaca, Río Desaguadero, Lago Poopó, Salar de Coipasa (TDPS)	Bolivia Peru	1993	TRE-152436	Water

Acuerdo entre la República Oriental del Uruguay y la República Federativa del Brasil sobre Cooperación en materia ambiental	Brazil Uruguay	1992	TRE-152796	environment general
Protocolo sobre el Programa para el estudio regional del fenómeno El Niño en el Pacifico Sudeste	Chile Colombia Ecuador Peru	1992	TRE-001956	environment general
Convenio entre el Gobierno de la República Argentina y el Gobierno de la República del Paraguay en materia de salud fronteriza, y su Protocolo Adicional	Argentina Paraguay	1992	TRE-149487	water;food
Acuerdo de Transporte Fluvial por la Hidrovía Paraguay – Paraná	Argentina Bolivia Brazil Paraguay Uruguay	1992	TRE-153813	Water
Acuerdo entre los Gobiernos de la Republica Argentina, de la Republica de Bolivia y de la Republica del Paraguay sobre Aprovechamiento Multiple de la cuenca del Rio Pilcomayo	Argentina Bolivia Paraguay	1992	TRE-001234	Water
Tratado entre La República Argentina y la República de Chile sobre medio ambiente	Argentina Chile	1991	TRE-149484	Land & soil; Water; Sea; Air & atmosphere; Waste & hazardous substances; Wild species & ecosystems; Environment gen.
Convenio de Cooperación Técnica y Científica entre la República de Colombia y la República de Chile	Chile Colombia	1991	TRE-152790	Agriculture
Acuerdo Complementario al Acuerdo Básico de Cooperación Científica y Técnica entre el Gobierno de la República Oriental del Uruguay y el Gobierno de la República Federativa del Brasil sobre cooperación en el área de recursos hídricos	Brazil Uruguay	1991	TRE-152427	Water
Acuerdo de Cooperación entre el Gobierno de la República Oriental del Uruguay y el Gobierno de la República Federativa del Brasil para el aprovechamiento de los recursos naturales y el desarrollo de la cuenca del río Cuareim	Brazil Uruguay	1991	TRE-152430	Water
Protocol for the Conservation and Management of Protected Marine and Coastal Areas of the South-East Pacific	Chile Colombia Ecuador Peru Panama	1989	TRE-001085	Sea; Waste & hazardous substances; Mineral resources; Wild species & ecosystems
Convenio entre los Gobiernos de la República Argentina, de la República Federativa del Brasil, de la República de Chile, de la República del Paraguay y de la República Oriental del Uruguay sobre la constitución del Comité Regional de Sanidad Vegetal	Argentina Brazil Chile Paraguay Uruguay	1989	TRE-001997	cultivated plants

Protocol for the Protection of the South-East Pacific against Radioactive Pollution	Chile Colombia Ecuador Peru Panama	1989	TRE-001084	Land & soil; Sea; Waste & hazardous substances
Acuerdo entre el Gobierno de la República de Colombia y el Gobierno de la República Federativa del Brasil sobre Sanidad Animal para intercambio de Animales y Productos de Origen Animal	Brazil Colombia	1988	TRE-152883	Livestock
Agreement between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the Republic of Venezuela on the establishment of a non-aedificandi zone at the boundary between the two countries	Brazil Venezuela	1988	TRE-152283	Water
Exchange of Notes constituting an Agreement for the construction of a hydroelectric plant in Cachuela Esperanza, supplementary to the Agreement on economic and technical cooperation	Bolivia Brazil	1988	TRE-152286	water; energy
Convenio de cooperación entre la República Argentina y la República Oriental del Uruguay para prevenir y luchar contra incidentes de contaminación del medio acuático producidos por hidrocarburos y otras sustancias perjudiciales	Argentina Uruguay	1987	TRE-149493	water; sea
Acuerdo entre la República de Colombia y la República Federativa del Brasil sobre sanidad animal en áreas de frontera	Brazil Colombia	1985	TRE-152892	Livestock
Fishing Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Suriname and the Government of the Republic of Venezuela	Suriname Venezuela	1985	TRE-151749	Fisheries
Agreement concerning the Cachuela Esperanza hydroelectric plant, supplementary to the Agreement on economic and technical cooperation between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the Republic of Bolivia	Bolivia Brazil	1984	TRE-152289	water; energy
Protocol for the Protection of South-East Pacific against Pollution from Land-Based Sources	Chile Colombia Ecuador Peru Panama	1983	TRE-000768	water; sea
Supplementary Protocol to the Agreement on Regional Co-operation in Combating Pollution of the South-East Pacific by Hydrocarbons or other Harmful Substances	Chile Colombia Ecuador Peru Panama	1983	TRE-000769	Sea; Waste & hazardous substances

Decree No. 88.441 promulgating the Agreement for Water Resources Exploitation within the Uruguai River and its effluent Pepiri-Guaçu River, between the Government of the Federal Republic of Brazil and the Government of the Republic of Argentina	Argentina Brazil	1983	TRE-152622	water; energy
Exchange of notes constituting an agreement on delimitation of the frontier along the thalweg on the Uruguay River in the area of the Basic Garabi Development Project	Argentina Brazil	1983	TRE-152319	Water
Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Area of the South-East Pacific	Chile Colombia Ecuador Peru Panama	1981	TRE-000741	Land & soil; Sea; Fisheries; Waste & hazardous substances; Environment gen.
Agreement on Regional Cooperation in Combating Pollution of the South-East Pacific by Hydrocarbons or other Harmful Substances in cases of Emergency	Chile Colombia Ecuador Peru Panama	1981	TRE-000742	Sea; Waste & hazardous substances
Convenio Complementario del Básico de Cooperación Técnica entre el Gobierno de la República de Colombia y Gobierno de la República Federativa del Brasil, sobre Cooperación Técnica, Científica y Tecnológica en el Area de Saneamiento Básico y Protección del Medio Ambiente	Brazil Colombia	1981	TRE-152898	environment general
Tratado para el aprovechamiento de los recursos hídricos compartidos de los tramos limítrofes del río Uruguay y de su afluente el río Pepiri-Guazu	Argentina Brazil	1980	TRE-152619	Water
Convenio para la conservación y manejo de la vicuña	Argentina Bolivia Chile Ecuador Peru	1979	TRE-153777	Wild species & ecosystems; Environment gen.; Livestock
Treaty for Amazonian Cooperation	Bolivia Brazil Colombia Ecuador Guyana Peru Suriname Venezuela	1978	TRE-000515	Water; Wild species & ecosystems
Reglamento Interno de la Comisión Técnica Mixta del Frente Marítimo	Argentina Uruguay	1977	TRE-151695	Fisheries
Maritime Boundary Agreement between Ecuador and Colombia	Colombia Ecuador	1975	TRE-152844	Sea
Estatuto del Río Uruguay	Argentina Uruguay	1975	TRE-149766	Water
Tratado de Yacyretá	Argentina Paraguay	1973	TRE-150174	water; energy
Estatuto de la Comisión Técnica Mixta del Frente Marítimo	Argentina Uruguay	1973	TRE-151692	Fisheries
Tratado del Río de la Plata y su Frente Marítimo	Argentina Uruguay	1973	TRE-151833	Fisheries

Convenio para el estudio del aprovechamiento de los recursos del Río Paraná	Argentina Paraguay	1971	TRE-149730	Water
Treaty on the Rio de la Plata Basin	Argentina Bolivia Brazil Paraguay Uruguay	1969	TRE-001020	Land & soil; Water; Wild species & ecosystems
Convenio sobre Resguardo de bosques fronterizos contra incendios	Argentina Chile	1961	TRE-148808	Forestry
Convención Preliminar para el estudio del aprovechamiento de las aguas del Lago Titicaca y el Convenio para el estudio económico preliminar del aprovechamiento de las aguas del Lago Titicaca	Bolivia Peru	1955	TRE-147203	Water
Convenio sobre Zona Especial Fronteriza Marítima	Chile Ecuador Peru	1954	TRE-001939	Sea
Convenio sobre las Medidas de Vigilancia y Control de las Zonas Marítimas de los Países Signatarios	Chile Ecuador Peru	1954	TRE-001940	Sea
Convenio Complementario a la Declaración de soberanía sobre la Zona Marítima de 200 millas	Chile Ecuador Peru	1954	TRE-153179	Fisheries
Convenio sobre la Organización de la Comisión Permanente de la Conferencia sobre Explotación y Conservación de las Riquezas Marítimas del Pacífico Sur	Chile Ecuador Peru	1954	TRE-001942	Sea
Convenio sobre la Organización de la Comisión Permanente de la Conferencia sobre Explotación y Conservación de las Riquezas Marítimas del Pacífico Sur	Chile Ecuador Peru	1952	TRE-153175	Fisheries
Declaración sobre Zona Marítima	Chile Ecuador Peru	1952	TRE-153191	Fisheries
Agreement on the Exploitation and Conservation of the Maritime Resources of the South Pacific	Chile Colombia Ecuador Peru	1952	TRE-000098	Sea; Wild species & ecosystems

Convention on Nature Protection and Wild Life Preservation in the Western Hemisphere	Argentina Bolivia Brazil Chile Colombia Ecuador Paraguay Peru Suriname Venezuela Uruguay Costa Rica Cuba Dominican Republic El Salvador Guatemala Haiti Mexico Nicaragua Panama Trinidad and Tobago US	1940	TRE-000085	Wild species & ecosystems

Table E.1: List of treaties selected from the ECOLEX database. Note: The name of the treaty is presented in the same language as it was entered in the ECOLEX database.

Appendix F: Analysis of ECOLEX database

In order to put together my own database with all relevant treaties for this research topic I conducted several searches on the ECOLEX database and entered the results into a new database. This appendix outlines the search criteria as well as the decisions I took in terms of which treaties to include. This exercise was conducted in November 2010 as part of the case study selection process.

1) In the category "treaties" I entered "South America" as the geographical area and "exclude superseded or obsolete treaties" as a search setting.

This resulted in 177 treaties. From these I entered into my database only the ones that include at least two South American countries. Agreements that included only one South American country and one or more other countries were left out (i.e. Chile – Russia; Venezuela – Costa Rica etc.) because these represent bilateral relations with countries outside South America rather than regional cooperation within South America. This resulted in 89 treaties between 1949 and 2008. Nine of these treaties include countries outside South America as well as at least 2 South American countries. I left these in if a majority or half are South American states. I took out those cases where a majority were not South American states as I was interested in regional cooperation between South American states and not wider (i.e. inter-American) regional cooperation. However, I saved some of them as examples in a separate workbook for my records.

2) In the category "treaties" I entered the name of each South American country under "parties" ("any words") and "exclude superseded or obsolete treaties" and "regional/restricted" as the field of application.

This resulted in 230 treaties most of which overlapped with the first search, but also some others. In some cases these were treaties with only South American states which did not appear under the first search. I added these. There were also some treaties that included at least two South American countries and other countries. As under the first search I left them in if a majority or half are South American states. I took out those cases where a majority were not South American states as I was interested in regional cooperation between South American states and not wider (i.e. inter-American) regional cooperation

3) In the category “treaties” I entered the name of each South American country under “parties” (“any words”) and “exclude superseded or obsolete treaties” and “global” as the field of application.

This resulted in 123 treaties. Reading through all the treaty titles confirmed that these are global conventions that at least one South American country has signed. However, as the scope is global and they include a majority of non-South American countries, I did not add them.

The final result after these three searches were 104 treaties between 1940 and 2008.

Appendix G: Overview of the most important agreements in the La Plata basin 1946-2010

Year	Agreement	Countries	Main points
1969	La Plata Basin Treaty	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay	Establishment of a framework for a balanced and harmonious multilateral development and utilisation of the basin's water resources
1971	Agreement for the study of the development of the Parana River resources	Argentina, Paraguay	Creation of the Argentinean-Paraguayan Joint Commission of the Parana River (COMIP) for the administration of the shared stretch of the river and the development of the Corpus Christi multiple-purpose hydraulic project
1973	Itaipú Treaty	Brazil, Paraguay	Creation of Itaipú Binational for constructing Itaipú hydropower development
1973	Treaty on the La Plata River and its Maritime Front	Argentina, Uruguay	Settlement of a controversial situation about the exercise of jurisdiction over the river's waters; the treaty also deals with navigation, fishing, bed and subsoil, pollution prevention and other issues and sets up the Administrative Commission for the La Plata River (CARP) and the Joint Technical Commission for the Maritime Front (CTMFM)
1973	Yacyretá Treaty	Argentina, Paraguay	Creation of Yacyretá Binational Entity (EBY) for constructing Yacyretá hydropower development
1974	FONPLATA Constituting Agreement	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay	Creation of the Financial Fund for the Development of the La Plata Basin (FONPLATA) in order to lend financial support to the activities envisioned in the La Plata Basin Treaty
1975	Uruguay River Statute	Argentina, Uruguay	Creation of the Administrative Commission for the Uruguay River (CARU) for dealing with the regulation of navigation, works, pilotage, bed and subsoil resources, fishing, pollution prevention, jurisdiction and settlement of dispute procedures
1979	Tripartite Agreement on Corpus and Itaipú	Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay	Setting of the maximum operating level for Corpus Christi dam and conditions for the operation of Itaipú power plant
1980	Binational Boundary Treaty	Argentina, Brazil	Agreement on the use of their shared stretch of the river; establishment of principles related to energy production, mitigation of extraordinary floods, improvement of navigation, water uses, and keeping of health conditions
1989	Resolution of the Foreign Affairs Ministers incorporating the Paraguay-Parana Waterway Programme to the La Plata Treaty System	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay	Creation of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Paraguay-Parana Waterway, Cáceres Port-Nueva Palmira Port (CIH)

1991	Cooperation Agreement for the Utilisation of the Natural Resources and the Development of the Cuareim/Quaraí River Basin	Brazil, Uruguay	Creation of the Joint Uruguayan-Brazilian Commission for the development of the Cuareim/Quaraí River Basin (CRC)
1993	Pilcomayo Lower Basin Agreement	Argentina, Paraguay	Creation of the Administrative Binational Commission of the Lower Basin of the Pilcomayo River, for its integral management, including use and regulation of discharges, project and execution of works and water quality
1995	Pilcomayo Trinational Commission Constituting Agreement	Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay	Creation of the Trinational Commission for the development of the Pilcomayo river basin
1995	Agreement for the Multiple Development of the Resources of the Upper Basin of the Bermejo River and the Grande de Tarija River	Argentina, Bolivia	Creation of the Binational Commission for the Development of the Upper Basin of the Bermejo River and the Grande de Tarija River (COBINABE)
2006	Cooperation Agreement for the Sustainable Development and Integrated Management of the Apa River Hydrographic Basin	Brazil, Paraguay	Creation of the Brazil-Paraguay Commission of the Apa River Basin
2010	Guarani Aquifer Agreement	Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay	Reaffirmation of the sovereignty of the four states, inclusion of norms of general international law that regulate the use of shared natural resources and creation of a Commission with the aim of coordinating the cooperation

Table G.1: Most important agreements in the La Plata basin (1946-2010), adapted from Gilman et al, 2008 and Pochat, 2011

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