

**CONTEMPORARY MASS MEDIA AND THE
COMMUNICATION OF ANTHROPOGENIC CLIMATE
CHANGE IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the media coverage of anthropogenic climate change in the Russian Federation. It achieves this aim by testing Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's Propaganda Model (1988) which argues that media coverage predominately stays within the boundaries defined by the 'elite's' interests. Through media analysis as well as elite interviews, this project has found that in the Russian case, regardless of the newspapers' ownership structure or dependence on advertising, there is little difference in quantity and quality of overall coverage on climate change. Most newspapers rely on Russian officials as information sources, almost none criticize or question Russian climate change policy and Russia's contribution to global levels of greenhouse gas emissions. This subordinate media policy is not the result of any purposeful and overt state censorship or management of media activity on the issue of climate change, but the product of the media's 'genuine' interest in the state elites as the 'main newsmakers' on the problem and a 'genuine' public lack of interest in climate change as an issue. Furthermore, the study concludes that in the Russian case the omission of climate change issues from media discussions is a greater problem than biased coverage as it prevents the issue from entering public debates. However, considering media interest in the state and the recent change in state climate policy (by becoming more tolerant towards climate change mitigation measures) it is argued that coverage of climate change in Russia will steadily increase and in this case, media 'consent' with the elites' interests will eventually benefit the development of public and official discourse on the problem.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBC	British Broadcasting Company
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CDA	Critical discourse analysis
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide
COP	Conference of the Parties under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CPRF	Communist Party of the Russian Federation
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
EIA	Energy Information Administration
FOM	Public Opinion Foundation
G-8	Group of Eight: Canada, France, Russia, USA, UK, Germany, Italy, Japan
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHGs	Greenhouse gases
Goskompriroda (or Goskomekologiya)	Russian State Committee on Environmental Protection
IPCC	The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JI project/mechanism	Joint Implementation project/mechanism
KP	Komsomol'skaya Pravda
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PRC	People's Republic of China
PrM	Propaganda Model
RF	The Russian Federation

RG	Rossiyskaya gazeta
Roshydromet	Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
SR	Sovetskaya Rossiya
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	United States Agency of International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VTsIOM	Russian Public Opinion Research Centre
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

In this thesis, I use a Library of Congress transliteration system for the Russian language. Well-known names appear in their most common transliterated form (for example, Bedritsky instead of Bedritskiy).

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INTRODUCTION

'Change will come about only if people understand the scientific realities of why we need to fight climate change. If you don't get that message clearly, then obviously you are not going to see any changes whatsoever' – P. K. Pachauri, Chairman, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (UNESCO 2009).

'An increase of two or three degrees wouldn't be so bad for a northern country like Russia. We could spend less on fur coats, and the grain harvest would go up' – V.V. Putin, International Conference on Climate Change, Moscow, 2003 (Pearce 2003)

More than 20 years ago two prominent scholars, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1994 [1988]), made a 'splash' among the academic community when they claimed that American mass media do not act as a 'watchdog' for the liberal ideas which the United States is supposed to be based on. Instead they claimed that mass media was just a 'tool' in the hands of economic and political elites. Whilst in its communist adversaries (such as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or the People's Republic of China (PRC)) mass media were straightforwardly governed by the leading party through officially accepted censorship and institutionalised control, in the liberal democracy of the United States, as Chomsky (1989b: 19) said, 'more subtle' means were required to control and influence mass media. It is not very easy to find a Western journalist who would admit that he/she has experienced open censorship by the ruling elites or that words are put into his/her mouth. Indeed this is not what Herman and Chomsky stated in their work. On the contrary, they argued that the political economy of mass media is such that it becomes quite natural for the reporters to cover a news story in one way or another. Herman and Chomsky explained their vision of how mass media operates by introducing the Propaganda Model (PrM) which suggests that before information reaches the pages of newspapers or is broadcast on the Television it goes through five filters, or barriers, (ownership structure, advertising, information sources, flak and anti-communist ideology), each of which

modifies the media message which eventually takes its final form in agreement with the elites' interests.

By questioning the whole system of media production, Herman and Chomsky's model was brought into question and criticized by various scholars. One of the most frequent criticisms concerns the PrM's applicability. Herman and Chomsky successfully applied their model in 1988 to American media coverage of predominately foreign news, and very specific foreign news such as elections in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, the Indochina wars (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) and the murders of religious victims in Poland and Latin America. But will the model work just as well in 2010s? Will it work outside of the United States? Will it help us to understand the peculiarities of media coverage of different kinds of news?

In this research I apply the PrM to the modern mass media coverage of climate change in Russia. Overall, the application of the PrM to the Russian case shows the high level of influence that the Russian state and some corporate entities (that are closely linked to the state) have in each 'filter' suggested by the model. The state and state-related industries are significantly present in the ownership structures of the main media organs, they dominate the advertising market, and produce 'flak' or actually censor the media in one way or another. Furthermore, being an 'illiberal democracy' the dominant ideology of Russia also restricts media activity.

Indeed, in the case of media coverage of climate change issues in Russia, media policy is determined by the state's climate policy, or using the PrM's terms, the 'manufactured consent' in the Russian mass media on the issue of climate change is a result of media adjustment to the state elites' interests. However, the study also shows the limitations of the model and the relative insignificance of certain filters in this particular case of climate coverage. For instance, the media coverage does not drastically change between media outlets depending on their ownership structures or advertising policies. Journalists do not face censorship or 'orders' from the top on how to write and/or how not to write about the climate, whilst Russia's political regime can be described as a 'democracy' with a free market economy. At the same time, analysis of the

PrM filter 'sources of information' demonstrates that with most newspapers relying for information on Russian officials, almost none criticize or question Russian climate policy and its contribution to the world's level of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. We can witness how the coverage on climate change 'naturally' follows the position of the 'main newsmakers' in the country. This observation of the state's influence over media attention towards the climate change issue also helps us to understand the relative omission of the topic from Russian public discourse which correlates with the low priority of the climate change issues on the state policy agenda.

Originality

This research project is unique in its revision and use of a theoretical approach of the PrM and its practical implementation. By applying the PrM filters to the case study of the media coverage of climate change in Russia, it provides testimony for the applicability of the PrM in post-Communist space. It also examines the ways in which the most dangerous and ambiguous environmental risk of our time (climate change) is communicated in one of the world's leading polluters (Russia).

Russia provides an interesting example for testing the PrM's applicability. The Russian mass media system went through 70 years of state control and some argue that this Soviet legacy can still be observed (Oates 2007). Then after the collapse of the Soviet Union mass media gained significant freedom and power that to some extent they influenced the political events of the turbulent post-perestroika years (Zassoursky 2004). Eventually, with the introduction of new political and economic regimes, Russian mass media had to adjust to the realities of the free market economy which their Western colleagues had been dealing with for many decades. The introduction of the free market was not the last modification Russian mass media have had to deal with. When Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000 and started to implement his policy of strengthening and centralising state power, media once again had to adjust accordingly. As a result the Russian mass media system became a unique hybrid of the 'fourth estate' (the fourth branch of power next to the

judiciary, the executive and the legislature)¹ which tries to manage its way through the free market economy; and at the same time has to cope with the restraints imposed by the state. It can be argued that unlike the original research on the American mass media conducted by Herman and Chomsky, in Russia, 'elites' (whose interests influence the media) are defined predominately in political terms (whilst Herman and Chomsky suggested that powerful elites could be represented by business groups as well as the state), which suggests state supremacy in the Russian mass media production process.

Another valuable contribution of this research comes from the significance of Russia in the world's climate change policy. Russia is one of the world's largest producers of GHG (Doyle 2009), mainly from extracting and burning fossil fuels. 'Russia holds the world's largest natural gas reserves, the second largest coal reserves, and the ninth largest crude oil reserves' (EIA 2012) which play a key role in the state's economy. For example, oil and gas exports together are responsible for around 15 percent of overall Russian GDP (Tekin and Williams 2009: 340). Furthermore, due to the vast territory, severe weather conditions and carbon intensive nature of the economy, Russia heavily relies on fossil fuels for domestic consumption (Perelet et al. 2007). The priority of economic development in Russia for the decades moved environmental issues to the background of political discourse and made it very unlikely that Russia will purposefully commit to a reduction of its economic carbon dependency in order to 'save the world' from climate change (which is still relevant). On the other hand, after the split of the USSR, Russia experienced an involuntary drop in GHG emissions. So in comparison to the late 1980s when Soviet industrial production was high, in the early 1990s due to economic collapse Russia's GHG emissions were cut tremendously. Eventually this fact gave Russia significant bargaining power during the major international negotiations on climate change which, arguably, Russia has used

¹ According to Louw (2010: 31) 'the notion of the Fourth Estate media' originates in Locken's 'free-flow of information principle' (which he discussed in *Second Treatise of Government* (1966)). From this point of view, media become an essential element of liberal democracy which allows the public to control the other branches of power and expose them if they deviate from the principles of the democratic state.

and abused to the extent that it was even accused of ‘environmental blackmail’ (Henry and Douhovnikoff 2008: 451).

Recently, the situation has started to change and climate change is more often perceived as a policy of ‘opportunities’ rather than a policy of ‘costs’. The evolution of the perception of climate change risks can be seen through the words of the country’s leaders in different decades, from Putin’s famous remark about less money spent on fur coats (Muenchmeyer 2008) to Medvedev’s recognition of climate change’s anthropogenic character and its threat to Russia’s security (President of Russia website 2010c). More often experts and state leaders started to talk about Russia’s vulnerability to climate change consequences rather than its questionable benefits, by bringing attention to the fact that climate change is happening faster in Russia (Charap 2010) and provoked weather abnormality that causes severe economic losses. Furthermore, former President Medvedev’s statement at the Copenhagen Conference in December 2009, accepting the Climate Doctrine, the appointment of a President’s advisor on climate change, as well as the realisation of Russia’s great potential for the de-carbonisation of its economy through the development and implementation of steps for energy efficiency (which becomes profitable for the country) – arguably all can serve as evidence of alterations in the state’s rhetoric on climate change and policy re-orientation towards ‘*climate pragmatism*’.

If the assumption that the PrM is applicable to the Russian case and if the assumption that the Russian state dominates media coverage of climate change are correct then this change in state climate policy will be mirrored in media coverage.

Overall, this study investigates a number of equally important issues:

- Firstly, it contributes to the existing theoretical studies of the political economy of mass media by deepening the understanding and applicability of the PrM and testing why theoretical approaches which consider other factors of media production (such as journalist professional norms, the characteristics of the described events or the interests of the audience) are less relevant.

- Secondly, it looks closely at the Russian media system and how the years of regime change have influenced it and how it has adapted to the free market economy.

- Thirdly, this project explores how climate change is communicated in Russia and what factors or actors are involved in this process. It should be noted that this study contributes to a rapidly growing body of literature on media communication of environmental risks by adding an analysis of a state which to date has mostly been overlooked. Apart from a limited number of studies (Tynkkynen 2010, Wilson Rowe 2009, Yagodin 2010), Russia is rarely mentioned in this regard.

- Fourthly, in order to test the assumption of the influence of state policy, this project explores Russia's state policy on climate change (which can be seen as extremely questionable and ambiguous, but also vital to the world's climate change mitigation strategy).

- Finally, getting all of these jigsaw pieces together, this research project answers the following questions: if state policy is indeed an independent variable in the media coverage of climate change in Russia, then what can we expect from Russia in terms of communicating one of the most important environmental issues – climate change. Carvalho (2008: 164) claims that 'understanding the evolution of matters such as war, terrorism or climate change, and the ways they are interdependent in relation to the media, is one of the most important contributions to be made by social researchers'. I argue that in the Russian case it is so important because media coverage does not only demonstrate what the audience learns about climate change but also how the state approaches the problem. As Russia plays a great role in the climate change mitigation process, and due to its natural resources, has a large capacity to influence climate change in one way or another, to study the media discourse on climate change in Russia is in itself a great step in the development of this area of study.

Methods

The methods used in this research project for data collection and analysis can be broadly divided into two categories: media analysis and elite interviews.

Media analysis

A detailed explanation of the media analysis methods are presented in chapter five, however, some key points are outlined here. Corresponding to Herman and Chomsky's original study, this project uses both qualitative and quantitative methods of media text analysis. Herman and Chomsky originally looked at coverage of their case studies by what they call 'elite media organs' such as the *New York Times* or *Time*. The time frame for their analysis varied from two months to a year and a half depending on the case study, as well as the selection of media organs. Concluding from the way Herman and Chomsky presented and explained their results, it is suggested here that the use of content and discourse analysis will allow us to follow the PrM's methodological logic. For example, the quantification of the data by the means of content analysis recreates a table close to the one used by Herman and Chomsky, whilst discourse analysis allows us to look at media information within the historical, political or economic contexts and critically assess the factors (or 'filters') influencing the coverage. The 'elitism' of the chosen media outlets was defined through the following categories: territory covered (the whole country rather than one region); circulation; popularity amongst readers (based on opinion polls data); political orientation and their influence on and representation of the opinion makers.

An important aspect of this research is that the 'green' media were purposely excluded from the investigation. Neither during the media analysis nor during the fieldwork were media specialising solely in environmental issues approached. The rationale behind this decision comes not from undermining the role and values of these types of media, but from the understanding that they by definition dedicate their time and efforts to raising awareness about problems such as climate change, hence, their coverage will not be altered as much by state policy or any other external factors. At the same time, the 'green' media have quite specialised (often narrow) target audiences –

people who are already concerned with environmental problems and the future of our planet. Whilst in the non-specialised popular media, the climate change topic has to compete with many others starting with economic news and ending with celebrity gossip, so the way journalists and editors prioritise the news and how they approach the problem provides rich material for analysis.

Elite interviews

The elite interviews became a substantial part of this research project. Overall, 30 interviews with journalists working in different types of media organs (newspapers, TV, radio and news agency) we conducted, including: representatives of environmental NGOs (Russian headquarters of the major international environmental groups Greenpeace, WWF, Oxfam as well as NGOs working closely with government such as the 'Centre for Environmental Policy and Justice); with policy makers involved in environmental control and climatologists who contribute to the development of Russian science on the subject matter, but also provide consulting service to state officials. Half of the interviews were conducted in Moscow due to the significant political and economic influence of the Russian capital. However, considering Russia's vast geography and the substantial differences between the European part of the country and its more remote provincial regions, in addition to Moscow and St. Petersburg, interviews were also conducted with experts based in Barnaul, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk, Petrozavodsk, and Kemerovo. The interviews were carried out in person during fieldwork trips to Russia in July-August 2011, as well as by telephone, Skype, and emails throughout 2011-2012. The average length of the interviews was one hour (for a more detailed reflection on the purpose of the interviews and challenges encountered during the process see chapter three).

Additionally, official documents, such as Russian federal and regional laws, presidential decrees, the state's doctrines, reports prepared by various state agencies and so on, became important sources of data for this research. Furthermore, chapters four and six rely on the content analysis of official presidential speeches made publicly available on the Russian President's

website (the data collection and analysis processes are also explained in the respective chapters).

Research focus and terminology

Conducting research on any dimension of climate change issues tends to suggest a clear understanding of the problem itself. Being a social scientist rather than a natural scientist implies that the researcher has to accept the science of the problem for granted and rely on secondary data provided by the international community of climatologists. A brief overview of how this scientific problem is understood in this research project is presented below.

The Earth's climate is regulated through a balance of energy received from the Sun and energy emitted back to space. Atmospheric gases and clouds are responsible for trapping the energy which is reflected of the Earth's surface, leading to the 'greenhouse effect' (The Royal Society 2010). The research shows that the largest contributors to the 'greenhouse effect' are water vapour and carbon dioxide (CO₂). Climate change, provoked by the modifications in this balance, is the manifestation of the planetary system trying to 'adjust' and regulate the Earth's temperature. According to a Royal Society report (ibid), changes in climate are evident throughout Earth's history due to various natural phenomena. The impact of human activity on these changes is, however, quite a recent cause of climate change that has upset the Earth's ability to naturally regulate the climate system.

This research project is concerned with the media coverage of *anthropogenic* climate change. The international scientific community has reached a consensus that anthropogenic emissions of GHGs from burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial and agricultural activities, are largely responsible for the increase in the average temperature of the Earth by 0.6°C over the past century. Unlike natural phenomena such as volcanic eruptions or sustained variations in the energy emitted by the Sun (the Royal Society 2010), anthropogenic climate change can be mitigated by people through the cuts in GHG emissions. Considering the world's dependence on fossil fuel energy and the global nature of climate change consequences this process involves a clash

of interests where states are supposed to become the main actors or negotiators in the climate change mitigation process.

Another clarification which needs to be addressed with regards to the case study of this research is the confusion between the terms 'climate change' and 'global warming'. Most of the time in mass media these terms are used interchangeably as synonyms. Strictly speaking 'global warming' refers to the overall trend of rising temperatures, whilst 'climate change' is a more general term that includes an increased frequency of extremely cold or hot seasons, increases or decreases in the amounts of precipitation, increases in anomalous weather events (hurricanes, droughts, snow storms and so on). Even though these climatic changes still happen within the context of the overall rise in temperature, in terms of media coverage, the use of this term signals certain trends in understanding the problem. Carvalho (2006 see in Good 2008) states that until the end of the 1980s the term 'greenhouse effect' prevailed in the public discourse, but by the early 1990s it was replaced by 'global warming', Good (2008) points out that now the dominance of the term 'climate change' can be seen even through the name of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) rather than the Intergovernmental Panel on Global Warming (see more on this issue in Linder 2006, Schuldt et al. 2011, Whitmarsh 2009). Russian climatologist Nataliya Kharlamova (presentation, Chemal,² 13 August 2011), pointed out that just five to seven years ago people were talking about 'global warming', however, when Russia recently experienced severely cold winters, the term 'global warming' was ridiculed and the temporary drop in temperature was used as evidence of its falsehood. Then, according to Kharlamova (ibid), for scientists it was a reason to start promoting the term 'climate change' which would cover a broader range of natural abnormalities. In this research project, during the data collection process both terms were used (climate change and global warming ('izmenenie klimata', 'global'noe poteplenie')) due to the scarcity of information on the topic, this approach aimed to broaden the results of the scientific inquiry.

² Referencing of personal communication includes geographical location of where the communication took place rather than where the interviewees are based.

Chapter plan

The outlined problems addressed by the research are depicted in the following chapters:

1. **Mass media and climate change: its role, challenges and trends** – this chapter reviews existing studies on media and climate change. It considers the major agreements and disagreements within the research community, looks at the popular approaches to the subject and the main challenges faced. The chapter also explores the dilemma of the studies of media reporting on climate change which from one side involves complex scientific communication, from another side, considering the impact and complexity of climate change, involves analysis of various factors influencing this coverage. Even though the literature review demonstrates that the considerations of micro-processes (for example, widely discussed journalistic norms and practices) was studied in greater detail, recently, scholars more often turn their attention to the macro-factors influencing media coverage of climate change (such as politics and economy). Furthermore, several researchers refer to the studies of the political economy of mass media and in some cases even specifically to the approach suggested by Herman and Chomsky.

2. **Manufacturing the Propaganda Model: theoretical implications and critique** – this chapter defines the main theoretical approach to the research project – the PrM created by Herman and Chomsky in 1988 and explores why for many years its assumptions about political and economic elites' domination over the US media coverage was criticised and marginalised amongst social scientists. This chapter questions the geographical applicability of the PrM and whether after 20 years it remains relevant in the Post Cold War world order as well as in the world of 'new' media. It also looks specifically at each of the PrM filters: the media ownership structure, advertising, information sources, flak and anti-communist ideology, and examines how, over the years, each of them was contested or updated by a number of scholars who have tried to utilise the PrM in their research. More importantly, the chapter demonstrates

how the model contributes to existing studies of media and climate change and why this approach might be useful in the Russian context.

3. **The political economy of Russian mass media: state and market** – this chapter presents an analysis of media in Russia and explores the major modifications they went through during the years of Yeltsin, Putin and Medvedev, but also it has some reference to the Soviet media system and its legacy. Importantly, the chapter looks at the Russian media system through the perspective of the PrM. It analyses how each filter of the PrM applies in the Russian context. The analysis conducted shows that it can be argued that overall the PrM is applicable to the Russian case with some slight modifications and with the consideration that some filters in the Russian case are more, or less, influential than they were in the US case. On the other hand, it is not entirely clear how this works for climate change coverage, and to what degree the factors neglected by the PrM play a role in the media reporting of environmental issues.

4. **Russian climate change policy: towards ‘climate pragmatism’** – this chapter offers a study of Russia’s climate change policy. Through detailed analysis of various actors and factors involved in policy making, it analyses why, with regards to climate change, Russia can be considered both a ‘de-environmentalist’ and an ‘environmental leader’. Further on the chapter looks at the development of Russian climate policy (towards becoming more concerned with the problem) which coincided with Medvedev’s presidency. Content analysis of his official speeches shows that Russia’s leaders now see it as being in the best interest of the state and leading economic actors to pursue more climate-oriented policies. Indeed, we can already observe this move toward the policy of ‘*climate pragmatism*’, where carbon emissions are cut through the modernisation of the economy and improvement in energy efficiency.

5. **Russian Newspapers and Climate Change** – this chapter offers an analysis of Russian press coverage of climate change. The data are collected from five national newspapers: *Izvestiya* (right-wing newspaper), *Kommersant* (liberal), *Rossiyskaya gazeta* (state-owned), *Komsomol’skaya pravda* (tabloid) and *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (communist). The aim of this chapter

is to study the dynamics of media coverage by looking at how the amount and the character of climate change news has changed over time depending on certain conditions (modifications in state policy, global conferences on climate change, acceptance of international documents and so on). Coverage in the newspapers mentioned above will be studied by focusing on three events: the Kyoto Conference, the Copenhagen Conference (plus acceptance of the Climate Doctrine) and the heat-wave of 2010 in Russia. Since state policy was significantly modified between the Kyoto and Copenhagen Conferences, the analysis in this chapter enables us to see a correlation between this change and media policy, whilst the heat-wave shows that other factors, such as natural disasters, have less influence over coverage than does state policy.

6. Mediating climate change in Russia: passing through the barriers – this chapter draws together the theoretical framework of this research project and the empirical findings of the study. It explores the key role of the state and economic elites in determining climate change coverage in Russia, and discusses the lesser, but still important, role of micro-factors (such as the specifications of the topic, the influence of journalistic professional norms, and the role of experts). Furthermore, this chapter highlights the fact that the research findings show not only a biased media policy towards the problem, but also (at times) the omission of the issue from the media discourse. This has been demonstrated through a comparison of the number of articles devoted to climate change in various countries and Russia as well as through the statements of the people interviewed for this research project. This finding has led to the discussion of Lukes' 'third dimension of power' which in agreement with the logic of the PrM states that the elites' power is also demonstrated through the involuntary withdrawal of issues from public debate. The chapter finishes with a discussion of how media coverage of climate change in Russia can be improved.

CHAPTER 1 – MASS MEDIA AND CLIMATE CHANGE: ITS ROLE, CHALLENGES AND TREND

A recent rapid increase in studies of media coverage of climate change can be observed throughout the world. While ten years ago there was a limited number of research projects conducted in Europe and the USA (e.g., Dirikx and Gelders 2009; Gavin 2009a; Hulme 2009; Lockwood 2009), now studies are carried out all over the world, including in the largest economies and polluters such as China and India (Shanahan 2009; Wu 2009; Xu 2010) as well as in the most vulnerable countries already facing the consequences of the changing climate such as Bangladesh or Pakistan (Ali 2010; Rhaman 2010; Shanahan 2009). Moreover, scholars have moved forward and proposed conducting comparative studies within the same country (Liu et al. 2008).

The importance of the media in communicating environmental risks has been stressed by Ulrich Beck (1994: 23) in his influential monograph on risk society in which he states: '[risks³] can be changed, magnified, dramatized or minimized within knowledge, and to that extent they are particularly open to social definition and construction. Hence the mass media and the scientific and legal professions in charge of defining risks become key social and political positions.' Beck (1994: 197) stresses that 'expensive and extensive scientific investigations are often not really noticed in the agency that ordered them until television or a mass-circulation newspaper reports about them.' The high level of interest in the topic of media coverage of climate change can be explained by the crucial role the media play in translating the abstract threats of climate change reported by science into the language of the general public (Antilla 2005; Boykoff and Boykoff 2007; Carvalho 2007; Carvalho and Burgess 2005), in forming people's opinions (Lewis and Boyce 2009), in shaping perceptions and reactions to the danger posed by climate change (Boykoff 2012; Lockwood 2009); in serving as middlemen between the people, science, business and policy makers (Butler and Pidgeon 2009) and in prescribing responsibility for

³ By 'risks' Beck (1994: 22) understands 'all radioactivity, which completely evades human perceptive abilities, but also toxins and pollutants in the air, the water and foodstuffs, together with the accompanying short- and long-term effects on plants, animals and people.'

the 'creation and resolution of problems' (Olausson 2009). The analysis of media coverage of the 'risks' associated with climate change helps us to understand why some narratives become salient and some remain so (Boykoff 2008a) and what factors or actors shape the created discourse.

In some regimes the media have the potential to bring about change in how the governments and populations perceive and deal with climate change mitigation and adaptation policies (Boykoff 2008a). However, as has been demonstrated (Antilla 2005; Boykoff and Boykoff 2004; Carvalho 2007) quite often mass media do not fulfil these beneficial functions but on the contrary create barriers or obstacles by distorting the information or approaching the topic from a questionable angle or by simply ignoring or undermining discussion of the climate change problem. This chapter critically assesses existing studies on media coverage of climate change, and is divided into three sections: first, the specification of the climate change topic; second, how journalists' professional values shape coverage; and finally, the role played by politics in climate change coverage.

Climate change as a topic

Climate change is indeed one of the biggest challenges of our time and the media are capable of playing a crucial role in popularising the danger of climate change among the wider public. Before we embark on analysis of how the media deal with this task and what social, economic or political barriers they encounter, it is crucial to realise that climate change is an unusual topic and on its own it has the potential to become a barrier for the journalists. As with other environmental topics, climate change is an 'unobtrusive issue' (the term introduced by Atwater et al. 1985 cited in Shanahan and Good 2000). Whilst 'obtrusive issues' such as economic recessions are clearly evident for people and directly affect their lives, climate change is not that apparent and straightforward and demands that journalists do 'an extremely difficult job' connecting 'global warming, weather extremes, flooding and human activity' (Gavin et al. 2011: 433). In this regard, it is useful to refer to Schumpeter's (1943) discussion of the 'classical doctrine of democracy', in which he reaches

the conclusion about foreign news: 'these things seem so far off; they are not at all like a business proposition; dangers may not materialize at all and if they should they may not prove so very serious, one feels oneself to be moving in a fictitious world' (Schumpeter 1943: 261). Further on he continues:

The reduced sense of responsibility and the absence of effective volition in turn explain the ordinary citizen's ignorance and lack of judgement in matters of domestic and foreign policy which are if anything more shocking in the case of educated people and of people who are successfully active in non-political walks of life than it is with uneducated people in humble situations. Information is plentiful and readily available. But this does not seem to make any difference (Schumpeter 1943: 261).

Here if 'foreign news' is replaced by 'climate change', then Schumpeter's arguments will remain relevant without any modifications. For an ordinary person, climate change is an abstract idea and even though it could be stated that there is a very limited number of people who are unaware of climate change or global warming, the rudimentary understanding of the problem prevails as well as the detached perception of its effects.

It often gets forgotten that it is due to the collaborative work of scientists around the world that climate change was discovered. As Dorothy Nelkin (1995: 2) states 'for most people, the reality of science is what they read in the press'. Climate change like any other scientific topic represents 'an encoded form of knowledge that requires translation in order to be understood' (Ungard 2000: 308 cited in Boykoff and Boykoff 2004: 126; also see in Dirikx and Gelders 2009) which involves joint work between scientists and journalists. For journalists to be able to provide proper coverage of the topic, they need to have at least some understanding of the problem, otherwise 'public confusion is exacerbated by reporters who misunderstand the basic scientific principles of climate change' (Wilson 2000a cited in Antilla 2005: 350). Ideally, journalists who specialize in climate change need to have some training or initial background knowledge which will allow them to have a grasp on the development of the science of climate change as well as its politics (Shanahan

2007).⁴ Scientists are also responsible for communicating their findings in an adequate way by adding ‘authority and legitimacy to environmental reporting’ (Taylor and Nathan 2002: 330). Carvalho (2007: 228) argues that in the 1980s ‘scientists were the uncontested central actors and exclusive definers of climate change’ (she refers to original studies conducted by Boykoff and Boykoff 2004; McComas and Shanahan 1999; and Trumbo 1996). As will be discussed below, this situation changed quite quickly in the early 1990s when scientists became more reticent in their communication with journalists and due to the growing complexity of the problem, scientists were replaced by politicians or economists (as information sources).

As Smith (2005) confirms through his research, journalists have often directed accusations at scientists who do not completely fulfil their duty of assisting in communicating climate change threats, which makes Smith (ibid: 1481) conclude that ‘specialists need to be more available and more assertive in relation to what may come to be seen as the century’s biggest story.’ For instance, one of the common misunderstandings between scientists and journalists is the probability of climate change happening (Keeling 2009). Journalists need a clear answer to whether climate change is happening or not and what the human impact on it is. However, in scientific discourse universal agreement is practically impossible, and that is why statements in IPCC reports that argue anthropogenic climate change is happening tend to suggest that it is very likely (say, a more than 90 percent chance). This is quite understandable for scientists, but needs ‘translation’ for journalists. Another very common problem is that often journalists and the broader public do not differentiate between ‘climate’ and ‘weather’. As Bostrom and Lashof (2007) argue this mistaken substitution of the concepts leads to different behavioural and policy outcomes. ‘Weather’ is seen by people as a natural phenomenon which cannot be influenced upon and which is taken for granted, hence, there is no

⁴ Shanahan (2009) states that in non-industrialised countries the problem of the lack of special training on how to write about climate change is also worsened by the journalists’ inability to find local experts on the topic who will communicate their findings and to persuade editors about the climate change importance and also by lack of resources in order to travel to the places for collecting information or attending the conferences.

responsibility for humans. Furthermore, when people see climate change as a change in weather then after one cold month or a 'normal' season in terms of temperature, claims such as 'global warming is not happening any more' or 'climate is stabilised' can be seen in the press.

Writing about climate change journalists have to deal with a strong (or one could rather say 'loud') lobby of climate sceptics (see: Gavin and Marshall 2011b). Arguably because the topic is so controversial the media become even more important in the way climate change is presented and transmitted to the audience (Carvalho 2007). As will be discussed below in length, journalists often struggle to identify how fair the sceptics' attacks are and the strength of the disagreement inside the scientific community about the anthropogenic climate change. Arguably it happens again due to the lack of adequate qualifications or training, and also due to the nature and routine of journalists' work (Stocking and Holstein 2009). When journalists are not able on a daily basis to conduct in-depth investigative analysis on who is right or wrong and which science is funded by whom, eventually, journalists themselves become suspicious of climate change science or twist the topic in a way that fits their interests.

A related problem which also shapes journalists' coverage of the highly scientific topic of climate change, is that journalists tend to employ 'heuristics' that are different to those employed by scientists. As Kahneman et al. (1982) explain 'thinking about risks, people rely on certain heuristics, or rules of thumb, which serve to simplify their inquiry' (cited in Sunstein 2006: 198). Dunwoody and Griffin (2002) state that it is to a large extent due to this hectic journalistic work routine (where they cannot afford to spend too much time on one issue) that journalists are fast to use 'judgemental shortcuts' in the process of making up their mind on complex problems:

In a world of rapidly recurring deadlines, journalists cannot afford to engage in systematic information processing. Instead, the occupation rewards those who can make quick decisions about 'what's news' and decide rapidly how to cobble together a story. Extremely fast decisions are, perforce, heuristic ones. Thus,

journalism is unapologetically a world of heuristic decision making (ibid: 180).

For instance, Dunwoody and Griffin (2002) provide several examples of journalists' heuristic in defining 'news value'. Firstly, they state that for journalists 'size matters' meaning that the larger the impact of the event the more likely it will become of interest to journalists. Secondly, 'the closer, the better': if something will happen in direct proximity to journalists' audience it will be prioritised over events taking place across the globe. Lastly, once something becomes news, it is very likely that it will remain news for some time. Other examples of journalists' heuristics involve the prioritisation of events over the process, negative information over positive information or 'preference for the vivid anecdotal account'. In the case of climate change, the last point would mean that journalists prefer to build their news story around an interview with a person who witnessed the polar bear dying or noticed how energy bills drastically decreased/increased rather than 'utilising systematic or consensus data' (ibid: 187) provided by a group of climatologists. The authors also argue that these heuristics are not unique to journalists, but 'used by most individuals to negotiate daily life [...] journalists' practice reinforces reporters and editors for using heuristics that are integral to problem solving for all of us' (ibid: 178). The specifications of journalists' professional habits or norms will be discussed further on with regards to climate change reporting.

Journalists are not alone in their desire to use scientific knowledge in a way that is convenient for them, as Carvalho and Burgess (2005) argue, politicians also look for ready answers from scientists with further interpretation of the scientific knowledge in order to fit within their political agenda. For example, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher used the scientific uncertainty on the subject as a justification for the government's inaction on the climate change matter and appealed to wait in order to not make a mistake (Carvalho 2005). Hansson (2004: 357) characterises this decision making pattern as 'the delay fallacy' – 'if we wait we will know more about X: no decision about X should be made now'. However, in the case of public decision making on risks (such as climate change) this reaction leads to an

obvious problem – while waiting, the risk gets worse. Hansson himself refers to this type of fallacy as ‘one of the most dangerous fallacies of risk’ (ibid), since resolving the scientific uncertainty on the issues would imply reaching the ultimate position of possessing all the knowledge on the subject which becomes near to an impossible situation (as was noted beforehand scientific certainty is extremely difficult to achieve), then the ‘delay fallacy’ argument ‘can almost always be used to prevent risk-reduction actions’ (Hansson 2004: 357).

Scientific knowledge is also questioned by businesses and activists involved in the climate change regulation processes and as a consequence ‘science has become more exposed to criticism, contestation and deconstruction’ (Carvalho 2007: 224). All of these cases of the misinterpretation, twisting or scrutiny of scientific information leads to the problem of scientists becoming more and more aware of their vulnerability (Keeling 2009) and being cautious in what they say and how they say it.⁵

It is now apparent that climate change is not only a scientific or even environmental topic, but instead the public comprehends it as ‘packaged within more hybrid arrangements that construct scientific and socio-political or moral ordering’ (Zehr 2009: 83). For instance, as Zehr states the ‘US public doesn’t understand climate change solely as a scientific issue’ (ibid), but it looks at it as a part of a bigger picture – how would it influence the economy or what is the role of the state in mitigating the problem and so on. Nielsen and Kjaergaard (2011: 26) share similar ideas and state that ‘climate change [is] making the transition from a scientific hypothesis to an established fact in public debates, the issue became political, financial, and ethical as much as scientific’ and journalists’ roles in interpretation or the framing of these issues becomes to some extent an economic or political tool. Further on the journalists’ professional norms will be discussed with regards to the way they shape media coverage of climate change.

⁵ As an example, Boykoff (2011) points to the situation after the ‘Climategate’ scandal, when scientists did their best to avoid any form of communication with journalists. For more on issues of mistrust between journalists and scientists see Nelkin (1995).

Journalists' views of climate change

Regardless of the specification of climate change as a topic (whether it is a scientific, political or an economic issue), some argue that in order for journalists to start writing about climate news they need to see 'news value' in it or as Carvalho (2007: 224) argues 'novelty, controversy, geographic proximity and relevance for the reader, for example, are important determinants in the selection of science news'. Maxwell Boykoff and Jules Boykoff have also made a significant contribution to the development of the study of media coverage of climate change. One of their most widely held arguments revolves around the idea that media coverage of climate change is determined by the journalists' professional habits or norms (for example, see Boykoff and Boykoff 2004; Boykoff and Boykoff 2007; Boykoff 2007; Boykoff 2008b) which become a natural barrier in the way of transforming scientific description of the process in its professional manner with an unavoidable amount of uncertainty into comprehensible information for the mass public.

The idea of 'journalists' norms' is borrowed from the media scientist W. Lance Bennett, who argues that political news is influenced by political, economic and journalistic norms. Political norms unfold the idea that the media should provide the broader population with information pertaining to political issues, therefore reinforcing political accountability. Economic norms force mass media to act according to the demands of the capitalist society. Journalists' norms specify the constraints or rules that journalists impose on themselves due to the specification of their profession (Boykoff and Boykoff 2004). Even though these three categories of norms are closely interconnected, Boykoff and Boykoff particularly concentrated on the importance of the last group: journalistic norms, which include first order norms – personalisation, dramatisation and novelty; and second order norms – authority, order and balance. The first order norms are superior in the sense that if the conditions are met (the news is dramatic and novel) they are the most likely to be published and then the second order norms would in their turn influence the way the articles were published and on the contrary 'if the first-order

journalistic norms of dramatisation, personalisation and novelty are not met, the chances for extensive, in-depth coverage of this environmental problem are diminished' (Boykoff and Boykoff 2007: 1200). These norms not only serve as the barriers in the way of climate information getting on the pages of newspapers, but also allow journalists to twist information or create 'informational bias', which in turn might give the policy makers the opportunity to postpone their reaction to the problem. These norms will be briefly discussed below.

The norm of 'personalization' characterises the journalists' skills to portray abstract global political or economic processes through stories about particular individuals (Boykoff and Boykoff 2007). This is extremely relevant to the coverage of climate change, which, as was discussed before, is too abstract for people to understand because of the unseen threats it poses and the absence of immediate and obvious connections between the causes and consequences. Another interpretation of this norm can be seen in the work of Shanahan (2007: 2) who suggests that people will be more interested in the climate change topic if it is 'framed to suit diverse audiences'. Animal welfarists might be touched by disturbing images of a drowning or starving polar bear, while other people might be interested in the national security or economic sides of the problem. On the other hand, if people see climate change as something distant from their everyday life, they are less likely to react to it (Lowe 2006 cited in Howard-Williams 2009).

A similar concept of how journalists convey abstract information on climate change is presented by Hoijer (2010) who suggests that journalists use the communicative mechanism of 'anchoring and objectifying' in their coverage of climate change. Through anchoring journalists bring unknown concepts into the known context, for instance, a comparison of climate change to mad cow disease. Objectification is extremely similar to personalisation but it does not only make an abstract concept more concrete through relating it to individuals, but also animals (once again, polar bears) and even the observable process of the melting Arctic ice, basically, anything which makes the problem more visual. Perhaps this norm could be considered as a positive strategy used

by the journalists, by allowing them to make it more relatable to the audience and help to avoid the problem of 'distanciation', defined by McManus (2000) as the situation when the climate change related issues and events that are described by the media do not make any links to the everyday life of the public. From another side, the danger of over-relying on the 'personalisation' norm is that the topic is very likely to disappear from the public arena when, let's say, Obama, Cameron or Britney Spears have nothing to say about it or the judgement of the problem becomes identical with the people's perception of the public figure.

The norm of 'dramatization' allows journalists to bring a remarkable brightness to their work and catch the attention of their audience. Arguably climate change is already an extremely dramatic event with severe (mostly unavoidable) consequences for the whole world, however, the natural prolonged drama of climate change is often not enough for journalists and they tend to exaggerate the reality and focus on the sensationalist nature of the problem⁶ and publish articles under such titles as , 'Global warming will bring Black Plague back to Europe' or 'Humanity will not survive 21st century' (Karavaev 2005) which openly claim that at this point there is nothing people can do, the end of the world is coming and we cannot even postpone it. Partly, the problem comes again from journalists neglecting the uncertainty of scientists' prognoses. It is possible in some scenarios that climate change could kill every human on Earth. But this modality of 'possibility' rather than certainty does not make a catchy headline. This kind of coverage causes a number of problems, such as the audience might remain with two possible options – we should not do anything because it will not change anything or we should not do anything because it is too absurd to be true. As Boykoff (2008a: 562) states 'fear-inducing and catastrophic tones in climate change stories can inspire feelings of paralysis through powerlessness and disbelief rather than motivation and engagement'. In both cases, the coverage does not provoke any

⁶ Interestingly, James Painter (2007) compared the TV coverage of IPCC reports in China, Brazil, Russia, Mexico and South Africa and concluded that the more negative first IPCC reports on the consequences of climate change got much greater coverage than the second report on the mitigation of climate change impact (see in Shanahan 2007).

constructive behaviour from its readers. From another side, it makes the climate change topic more vulnerable to the sceptics' attacks.

There is another way for journalists to talk about climate change in an evidently dramatic, sensational way without distortion or misrepresentation of climate change – to connect the coverage with natural disaster events which sometimes directly or indirectly relate to climate change and which make it extremely visible and relevant to the media audience. However, this approach triggers more problems rather than solutions, since from the scientific point of view the correlation is quite questionable. For example, weather abnormalities per se do not prove the existence of climate change, at the same time the progression of climate change involves the possibility of an increased frequency of extreme weather events (see more in Devine 2012). The research conducted by Shanahan and Good (2000) on the connection between the amount of media coverage of climate change and variations in temperature has demonstrated that there are some relationships between these two variables, but they conclude that temperature is a much weaker factor than the science or politics surrounding climate change issues. Of course one might argue that temperature variation is not as definite as natural disasters.

The last first-order norm, 'novelty', asks journalists to always report brand new information, whereas the continuing problem of climate change might stop being newsworthy. Anthony Downs (1972: 38) argues that since it is difficult to keep the public's attention drawn to one problem for a long period of time, information tends to go through an 'issue-attention cycle'. According to this theory, developing a story on the news does not reflect real developments, but the development of people's attention to the story. The cycle contains five stages. The first one is the 'pre-problem stage': only small groups of people are aware such as experts or involved groups. The second stage is 'alarmed', when the public suddenly gets a chance to learn about the problem and is quite hopeful about solving it without major losses. During the third stage people start to see the problem in a realistic way and realize that a solution might demand great efforts and resources. When more and more people start to understand the actual sacrifices and work that they need to do in

order to overcome the problem, the 'issue-attention cycle' reaches the fourth stage. At this point the public gets scared, unmotivated and simply bored. The final stage is when the problem is no longer a centre for attention, but at the same time it does not disappear from people's lives. Periodically it attracts attention again, mostly because during this stage of the biggest attention some organisations are created or documents are signed to solve the problem and the activity of organisations or conditions of agreements periodically create a base for news.

In the case of media coverage of climate change in order for the topic to achieve the second stage of the 'issue-attention cycle', something extraordinary has to happen in front of the public's eyes: a natural disaster or similar event like flooding or forest fires. However, the nature of the problem of climate change is such that it happens constantly and often does not reveal itself through weather extremes but rather through gradual changes such as temperature increases. Boykoff and Boykoff (2007) argue that their content analysis does not prove the adequacy of Downs' model for climate change issues. The model does not take into consideration the role of the mass media, as well as other factors which influence the coverage of climate change such as political and economic processes, and even, as Zehr (2009: 81) argues 'the controversy and uncertainty that was constructed around it.' Downs suggests that consideration should only be given to the characteristics of the environmental topic itself, which will naturally go through this 'issue-attention cycle', whilst Boykoff and Boykoff (2007: 1195) state that climate change over time becomes a more and more serious problem, hence they conclude that: 'the persistence of environmental problems on the social docket is affected more by the way these problems are constructed in the news media than by a natural history framework.'

The second-order journalistic norm of 'authority-order' describes the journalists' desire to refer to the powerful players as sources of trustful information – 'authority figures – government officials, business leaders, and others – who reassure the public that order, safety, and security will soon be restored' (Bennett 2002 cited in Boykoff and Boykoff 2007: 1193). Howard-

Williams (2009) points out that for such abstract and complicated issues the choice of sources plays a particularly important role. This norm creates a problem when the sources of information for the scientific problems of climate change become not climatologists themselves but policy makers, state leaders and heads of major energy corporations⁷ suggesting that the more powerful source is the better positioned to offer explanations of climate issues, which in many cases is not true. The problem of politicisation of the climate change topic will be discussed further on in this chapter.

The journalistic norm of balance deserves a separate discussion, since arguably after the climate change topic reaches the newspapers' pages the balance becomes one of the most 'damaging' journalistic norms with regards to the media coverage of climate change.

Balancing climate

One of the most basic professional principles that journalists around the world follow in their everyday practice is the principle of objectivity and a balance of facts, which is presented in their works by different and sometimes contradictory news sources. Firstly, a professional reporter needs to detach himself from the problem (Ward 2008), so his personal feelings and ideas do not interfere. Secondly, journalists are expected to 'present the views of legitimate spokespersons of the conflicting sides in any significant dispute, and provide both sides with roughly equal attention' (Entman 1989: 30, cited in Boykoff and Boykoff 2007: 1193). Indeed, from professional articles or news stories we would like to see the information from the different sides in order to make up our own opinions.

In the case of scientific topics, such as climate change, it is much more complicated: 'simply to balance sides gives readers little guidance about the

⁷ Nissani (1999) says that what readers get is an enormous amount of politicians' or businessmen's' presentations, reports from international and national meetings and negotiations, scientists' opinions. The information coming from these sources presupposes that people already have knowledge about the topic and can put it into context without external help, but according to Nissani, most of the people do not have the necessary background and information in newspapers can be useful only for environmental specialists.

scientific significance of different views' (Nelkin 1995: 88). Should the problem be presented equally from the point of view of the scientists confirming the anthropogenic character of climate change and so called climate sceptics that either reject the whole idea of climate change or the human impact on it? As Carvalho (2007: 223) points out 'media depiction of the issues often suggest that the scientific community is divided in the middle' and as a result 'coverage of anthropogenic climate change perpetrates an informational bias by significantly diverging from the consensus view in climate science that human activities contribute to climate change' (Boykoff 2008b: 3). This problem partly concerns the understanding of what 'balance' means. Is it according equal weight to two unequal sides, or is it according *proportionate* weight to each side? For instance, Anderegg et al (2010: 1) state that '97-98 percent of the climate researchers most actively publishing in the field support tenets of anthropogenic climate change', so if journalists quote an equal number of scientists from both sides of the debate and prescribe equal weight to their arguments, does it represent balanced reporting of the problem? On the contrary this journalistic quest for 'objectivity' leads to a 'distortion of the news' (Antilla 2005: 339) and consequently to public belief in the greater divide between scientists (Freudenburg and Muselli 2010).

The damaging character of 'balanced' media coverage of climate change might lead to climate change scepticism amongst the public (Liu et al. 2008) and more importantly might negatively affect national (or even international) policy on climate change by giving policy makers a justification not to act. For example, as Fletcher (2009) states, the controversy created around climate change diverted attention from the Bush administration climate change policy. Antilla (2005) supports the argument established by Zehr and Gelbspan, where they explain how journalists' professional standards such as objectivity makes them present the opinions of 'industry-supported science'⁸ to balance their coverage (Durfee and Corbett 2005: 88).

⁸ One of the examples: 'a coalition headed by the American Petroleum Institute invested \$600,000 in 1998 in a campaign aiming to increase the volume of US news coverage questioning the prevailing climate science' (Cushman 1998 cited in Doulton and Brown 2007: 2).

Lately at least in the United States and Europe the situation is changing and even Boykoff (2007: 470) started to question whether the norm of balance in climate change media coverage still creates problems or is it a 'dead norm'. His later comparative research of US and UK newspapers has demonstrated 'a dramatic increase in the quantity of newspaper coverage of anthropogenic climate change' (ibid: 475). Ward (2008) confirms that since 2006 in the USA more and more coverage is devoted to the scientific consensus on climate change, rather than its sceptics. Doulton and Brown (2007) have also challenged Boykoff and Boykoff's (2004) original research by stating that their media analysis of UK newspapers did not demonstrate a 'balanced' approach to the coverage, but rather the predominant majority of articles were quite alarming and urged an active climate change policy. Media analysis of newspapers from New Zealand and Australia has also demonstrated that media discourse has moved from questioning the science to finding a solution (Howard-Williams 2009). This change towards 'unbalanced' reporting is a positive move in the media coverage of climate change, as Ereaut and Segnit (2006: 25) state 'treating climate change as beyond argument' is one of the greatest steps on the way to popularising the climate change topic and approaching pro-active mitigation policy.

In summary, one of the most popular approaches to the studies on media coverage of climate change introduced by Boykoff and Boykoff argues that the media failure to accurately popularise scientific findings in the field is not accidental but rather is a result of systematic 'micro-processes' (Boykoff and Boykoff 2004: 134) stimulated by journalists' professional norms. Though later researchers have shown that the journalistic norm of balance is losing its relevance, overall, the influence of journalism's nature cannot be underestimated. For the purpose of this research project 'micro-processes' or 'micro-factors' are understood as the variables which are specific to journalists' reporting of climate change such as journalists' norms or the scientific specifications of the topic, whilst 'macro-processes' or 'macro-factors' are seen as the politico-economic and social context within which journalists have to operate, such as the influence of capitalist ideology or state policy on climate change (as discussed below).

Does politics matter in covering climate change?

Arguably throughout the last two decades the science of climate change has been replaced by the politics of climate change. The shift from scientific sources of information to political ones started in the late 1980s and continues today (Bell 1994; Wilkins 1993 cited in Kim 2011), and especially after a scientific consensus (or close to it) was reached (mostly through the IPCC reports), public eyes turned to the politicians as they tried to negotiate on GHG reduction commitments. The goal of trying to keep the temperature rise below 2°C is considered to have a political rather than a scientific base. Various studies have demonstrated the nuances and complexity of the international negotiations around climate change which detracts attention from the scientific research on the subject matter (Doulton and Brown 2007) and that the influence of politics 'complicates efforts to move ahead with any kind of consensus or compromise on climate change despite the urgency of the issue' (Kim 2011: 691). Even scientific uncertainty, as discussed above, becomes 'a powerful political tool' (Boykoff and Boykoff 2007: 1193) where any hesitation in scientific agreements is used in order to postpone or twist the political decisions. The popularity of climate change as a news item has grown proportionately to the influence of politics. Various researchers have demonstrated that media coverage is particularly amplified during major international events (Gavin and Marshal 2011b) which have 'significant attention-grabbing power' (Liu et al. 2011: 415). In media discourse, the role of the political actors overshadows the roles of any other actors, including scientists, businesses or activists (Carvalho and Burgess 2005).

Carvalho and Burgess (2005: 1457) through empirical research of UK broadsheet newspapers coverage of climate change argue that the discourse created by the media around this topic is influenced by 'the agency of top political figures and the dominant ideological standpoints in different newspapers.' The media's stance on climate change certainty or the role of the state in the climate change mitigation process depends on the newspapers' political affiliation. For example, when the first IPCC report was announced in 1990: the conservative paper *The Times* published a series of articles seeking to

discredit the scientific discoveries on climate change risks, whilst the more liberal *Guardian* accentuated the 'danger' of climate change and used it as an opportunity to criticise the government and its official position.

What is even more interesting, as Carvalho (2005: 21) argues in the case of the UK quality press, is that despite the difference between the newspapers' political orientation and its impact on climate change coverage, most of the time they all 'remain within the broad ideological parameters of free-market capitalism and neo-liberalism, avoiding a sustained critique of the possibility of constant economic growth and increasing consumption, and of the profound international injustices associated with the greenhouse effect'. Hence, the media discourse around climate change is not only influenced by the political affiliations of a single studied newspaper, but in general it is to some degree unified by the existing overarching state ideology. This observation is extremely important for the study of media coverage of climate change and for the fate of climate change mitigation policy in general, since arguably climate change is a product of 'a consumer society [...] and a "buy now, think later logic"' (Lewis and Boyce 2009: 5; see also Trumbo and Shanahan 2000; Wilkins 1993), and in order to be able to stop or slow down the tragic consequences of climate change, the whole concept of economic growth and consumerism has to be modified.

Another approach to the study of the inter-relations between media coverage of climate change and state politics has been suggested by Neil Gavin (2009a) who draws our attention to the argument that as much as politics shapes the media, the media can motivate politicians on certain behaviour as well. In other words, we can witness the process of the 'mediatisation' of politics (a term Gavin (2009a) borrows from Meyer (2002)). The idea of 'mediatisation of politics' refers to the media power over politicians' behaviour through the 'third person effect' which states that even if a person was not persuaded by the news, he/she might think that others will be. The same is relevant for the politicians. For instance, even if they do not have evidence of media influence over public opinion on the climate change topic, they might think that this influence exists, which in turn makes them attentive to how mass

media present such problems as climate change. Climate change mitigation policy assumes ‘unpopular political effects in many countries, with the need to reduce power consumption, vehicle use and other “everyday luxuries” which industrialized societies take for granted’ (Bell 1994: 59). Therefore ‘political self-preservation’ (Gavin 2009a: 168) makes politicians very cautious if ‘intervention [into climate change policy]... involves direct or financially burdensome initiatives, awkward and intrusive regulatory policies, or higher taxation’ (ibid: 768). Eventually, one of the conclusions Gavin (2009a: 771) achieves in his research is that in the UK context even if they wanted to politicians would not be able ‘to push climate change further up the media agenda’, but rather they have to think about themselves and how to react to certain media messages. Doulton and Brown (2007) also argue that if government (in the UK) wants to take leadership in the international action on climate change they need to be sure that their actions will be backed by public support, and therefore it is important to understand what information on climate change the public receives.

In conclusion, politicisation of the problem and bringing the national agenda into media coverage of climate change might be considered a powerful tool in attracting attention to climate change. In the case of Russia, as will be seen throughout this study, we face a different set of problems, even though the politicisation of climate change reporting is relevant for Russia. If we are talking about the influence of the state on the media system on climate change discourse, we should take into consideration that there is a different type of regime, a different understanding of climate change problems and consequently a different framing of the problem. The concluding part of this chapter will discuss the existing studies on media coverage of climate change in Russia and what theoretical approach is the most relevant for this study.

Concluding remarks: media, climate change, Propaganda Model and Russia

Studies of the media and climate change in Russia were virtually non-existent until a few years ago and still their number remains extremely limited. To date only a few authors working on this topic can be identified. One of them,

Dmitry Yagodin (2010), provides a brief analysis of the media coverage of the Copenhagen Conference in 2009 in two newspapers – tabloid *Moskovsky Komsomolets* and a quality paper *Kommersant*, Yagodin (2010) highlights how newspapers mostly follow state official policies on climate change and the state in turn backs up the interests of large industries. The research demonstrates the rising popularity in the media of the idea that climate change negotiations can have a ‘beneficial character’ (ibid: 288) for Russia’s national interests.

Nina Tynkkynen (2010: 182), in a more extensive study of climate change coverage by five Russian newspapers (of various types) draws a connection between the Russian print media framing of climate change and the concept of Russia as a ‘Great Ecological Power’. She relates this idea with the historical concept of Russia considering itself a ‘Great Power’ which she traces back to the sixteenth century and connects it with the modern political situation, such as a restoration of Russia’s ‘greatness’ under the presidency of Putin. Today this concept mostly relies on the country’s vast amounts of natural resources which make it one of the key countries in global environmental policy.

Elana Wilson Rowe (2009) studies the coverage of climate change in the state-owned newspaper *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* in order to analyse the political discourse that has evolved around the problem of climate change and the consequent role of experts in the framing of this issue. The author acknowledges that it is quite difficult to assess how much the expert community influences Russia’s policy on climate change, however, Wilson Rowe (2009: 607) concludes that ‘their [experts’] presence appears to be deemed necessary and appropriate’ and scientists also see themselves ‘as having policy-related roles’ (Ibid: 608). As probably could be expected the role of scientists becomes more prominent when their position coincides with that of the state. Wilson Rowe (2009) concludes that Russia will stay engaged with the international negotiations on climate change as it does not really contradict its political and economic agendas and, as Rowe’s media analysis shows, ‘Russia has succeeded in developing a “domesticated” version of international discourse’ (ibid: 612) on the climate change problem, meaning that Russia has

started to see how the ideas existing within the international discourse can be relevant at the domestic level and eventually as Rowe argues Russia's approach to climate change gets closer to the European one.

Even this limited amount of information on the media coverage of climate change in Russia demonstrates some degree of state influence and the overall consent within media coverage. This project suggests that in order to understand these connections and perhaps illuminate other actors involved in the process, the media coverage of climate change in Russia should be studied through the prism of the Propaganda Model (PrM) developed by Herman and Chomsky in 1988. The model proposes that we look at how the media operate through the perspective of the macro-factors which might influence their production process. The model itself will be discussed in detail further on in the dissertation. What follows is a discussion of some studies which directly or indirectly refer to the postulates of the PrM in their analyses of media reporting of climate change issues, hence they already prove the relevance and adequacy of this theoretical approach for the topic under investigation here.

Carvalho's (2005) research has demonstrated how the UK broadsheet newspapers differ in their ideological orientation, which made the author state that 'factors like ownership and the wider political economy of the media can provide significant contribution to understanding these differences, as well as the press's relations with established interests and the social distribution of power' (ibid: 21). As an example, Carvalho referred to Herman and Chomsky's PrM, which relies on the idea that the media coverage is influenced by the political and economic context. Olausson (2009) also refers to the studies (including Herman and Chomsky's) on the media's conformist position to official policy and confirms the relevance of the argument with regard to the media coverage of climate change, not only on the national, but also international scale of Europe. Eventually she concludes that 'the tight relationship between the political elite and the media implies that the media do not offer any alternative frames, in relation to those established in policy discourse, for understanding global climate change' (ibid: 433).

Holmes (2009: 99) does not directly refer to the PrM, however, he points out 'the surrounding framework of institutional pressures from owners, managers, and major sources of revenue; the capacity of various sources to mobilise 'flak'; and propaganda campaign, PR, and information management' (ibid) which make a substantial contribution to the shaping of the journalistic norms. Wu (2009: 165) also alludes indirectly to some postulates of the PrM by stressing the importance of media institutions' social, economic, and political affiliation' which form the way the media talk about global warming.

Good (2008) and Babe (2005) specifically apply the PrM to the analysis of the coverage of climate change. Babe (2005) through an analysis of the media coverage of global warming and the Kyoto Protocol in Canadian newspapers concluded that the coverage is 'consistent with the PrM [...] [environmental] issues were never addressed in their full range and seriousness; lip-service, we might speculate, served to divert attention from the overall thrust of the reporting, which was one-sided and hardly environmental' (ibid: 219). Good (2008: 234) justifies her choice of research topic and the theoretical approach, by saying of climate change that 'there is arguably no other issue that is on the one hand so fundamentally challenging to the interests of the global elite neo-liberal order, and yet has consequences that are so easily framed, or ignored as something else'. Consequently, the author argued that American media frame climate change issues in a way to correspond to the elite's interests, for instance, 'to avoid critique of the world's largest, and most profitable, industry: oil' (ibid: 235). Such a specific conclusion derives from the analysis of the US role in the climate change policy and where its position lies.

As the foregoing analysis has demonstrated, media reporting on climate change is a complex process which involves consideration of macro-factors (such as politics and economy) and micro-processes (for example, the widely discussed journalistic norms and practices). It seems that the latter arguments have been explored much more in the bulk of the literature, while few have investigated whether these micro-processes could not be enough for understanding why climate change in Russia is covered or not covered in a

certain way. As Carvalho (2007: 225) states 'the role of ideology in media representation of science is still blatantly under-researched', in the Russian case the role of ideology and the state and the way it interacts with other actors influencing media reporting of climate change is not researched at all. This project will allow us to not only understand the way the media and the state coordinate with each other in Russia, but also the political discourse that has evolved around climate change issues and the role of other actors involved in this process.

CHAPTER 2 - MANUFACTURING THE PROPAGANDA MODEL: THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRITIQUE

In 1988, just three years before the Cold War officially ended and the Soviet Union collapsed, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky published their provocative work: *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*.⁹ In this book Chomsky and Herman argued that American mass media are far from the idealistic picture imagined by the masses and no longer act as the 'fourth estate' or the watchdog of the American political and social systems. On the contrary they are subordinate to the existing political and economic elites and their work is nothing more than a product of the elites' machinations and can be explained through the theoretical approach of the PrM. Hence, the US mass media did not look particularly different to the media of the United States archenemy at the time – the USSR (Schlesinger 1992).

The idea provoked much negative reaction among the general public and within academic circles. Herman and Chomsky's model was criticised for its determinism and simplicity, often dismissed on the ground of its conspiratorial nature and ignored in mainstream media studies in the United States (Mullen 2010, Robertson 2010, Jensen 2010). However, the authors kept arguing for the adequacy and high value of their approach to understanding the media system in general and of the PrM in particular, and continued to develop their ideas in a number of other studies (for example, see Chomsky 1989a and 1989b; Herman 1999 and 2000; Herman and Chomsky 2002; Herman and McChesney 1997). The PrM was also discussed by numerous dedicated researchers (Jensen 2010; Klaehn 2003a, 2005, 2009a and 2009b; McChesney 1998; Mullen 2008, 2010a and 2010b; Mullen and Klaehn 2010; Pedro 2011a and 2011b) and tested in a range of various themes and geographical contexts (Doherty 2005; Gibbs 2003; Hackett 2006; Jackson and Stanfield 2004). Whilst Chomsky was proclaimed by some scholars to be 'the leading intellectual figure in the battle

⁹ Both Herman and Chomsky started to write about the ideas which they later articulated into the PrM several years before *Manufacturing Consent* was published, for example, see 'Corporate control, corporate power' by Herman (1981) or 'The political economy of human rights' by Chomsky and Herman (1979). Schlesinger (1992) argues that *Manufacturing Consent* is a synthesis of Herman and Chomsky's previous academic and political works.

for democracy', *Manufacturing Consent* has been called 'the starting point for any serious inquiry into news media performance' (McChesney 2008: 287).

This chapter introduces the main postulates of Herman and Chomsky's vision of the US mass media system and the elements of the PrM. Furthermore, it will look at existing critiques of the PrM and will discuss the arguments behind its marginalization in social science, as well as the reasons why after more than 20 years since the PrM was first published, it is still relevant for contemporary media systems in different geographical areas (and specifically in this research case study – Russia). The chapter concludes with a discussion of the future development of the PrM and the ways it will benefit the analysis of media coverage of climate change in Russia.

The Propaganda Model's foundations

Herman and Chomsky's vision of the media system relies on three main hypotheses, or, as the authors refer to them, 'first and second order predictions.'¹⁰ The first hypothesis, or first-order prediction, states that the media will spread information in favour of the dominant economic, social, and political groups and when they are united on important topics, consent¹¹ among media is more likely to happen. In other words: 'among other functions, the media serve, and propagandize on behalf of the powerful societal interests that control and finance them' (Herman and Chomsky 2002: xi).

The second hypothesis (also belonging to the first-order predictions) proposes that before reaching the audience media information goes through the following filters: the media ownership structure (usually mass media sources belong to a large corporation and have to support its interests), advertising (to

¹⁰ The first order predictions made by Herman and Chomsky are concerned with the way media operate, whilst the second order prediction suggests the way the PrM would be perceived by the academic community and general public.

¹¹ According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2013) 'consent' means 'voluntary agreement to or acquiescence in what another proposes or desires'. Throughout this dissertation 'consent' is understood in precisely this manner, which correlates with the main idea of the PrM where the elite influence the media in a way that they 'voluntarily agree' with the elites' vision of the events.

cover the costs of production and make more profit, the media try to find a way to match their content to advertisers' requirements), information sources (journalists' dependence on newsmakers), flak (negative reaction to media activity; it appears after media publish or broadcast information which is not in favour of some individual, political or business groups) and anticommunist ideology (after the Soviet Union split, it was replaced by other anti-ideologies, such as anti-terrorism).

Finally, the third hypothesis, a second-order prediction, refers to the reaction the PrM would encounter from the wider public and scientific community. Chomsky (1989b) predicted that the PrM would be ignored by mainstream media studies and as he puts it himself: 'if [PrM is] invalid, it may be dismissed; if valid it will be dismissed' (ibid: 11) and as Chomsky (1989a) pessimistically confirms 'one way or another, you can be sure that this model isn't going to be discussed' (ibid: 10, see also in Herman 2000). This pessimistic vision of their own model is explained by the fundamental ideas of the PrM: 'because of the PrM's anti-elitist perspective, it proves unable to pass through the very filters that it identifies' (Pedro 2011a: 1866).

Indeed, some social science researchers have been arguing for years about the value of the PrM and its contribution to media studies, meanwhile, the PrM has been marginalized and its developers seen as 'outsiders' of the mainstream of social science (Mullen 2010b; see also in Mullen and Klaehn 2010) and their approach was not seen as a reliable way of studying media. In order to test the hypothesis of the PrM's marginalisation, Mullen (2010b) studied a sample of 3053 articles from ten journals of media and communication studies and found that only 79 articles referred to the PrM to some extent. Mullen (ibid) also looked through 48 media textbooks and found that only in 11 of them mentioned the PrM (only four of them had a comprehensive discussion of the subject). Arguably, this trend of the PrM's marginalisation developed due to several reasons. On the one hand, the authors of the model were perceived as controversial figures. For instance, Chomsky has been labelled 'an apologist for totalitarian regimes and a self-hating Jew' and his political work is still unpopular in some mainstream circles (Edgley

2009). On the other hand, the PrM has internal features which have been criticized (they will be introduced further on in the chapter). Firstly, the hypotheses of elite and media consensus, and the PrM filters will be discussed in greater detail.

The elites' consensus and media compliance

As mentioned above the foundation of the PrM rests on the idea of media compliance with governmental and/or economic elites and downplays the liberal-pluralist view of the function of the media which claims that 'the media serve as a guardian of the public interest and as a watchdog on the exercise of power' (Mullen 2010b: 674) or in the US case as 'an instrumental defence of the first amendment' (Chomsky 1989a: 2).

The PrM's arguments on questioning the role of the media in the society are arguably close to the ones proposed by the followers of the Marxist-radical tradition (Mullen 2010b; Mullen and Klaehn 2010), who see the media as a tool in the hands of the dominating classes, used in order to achieve certain political goals. In this case the goal is the 'continuation of the capitalist class system' through news content (Pedro 2011a: 1866). From another point of view, Herman and Chomsky's approach to understanding the media production process belongs to the tradition of the political economy of communication studies (Curran and Seaton 1991; Murdock and Golding 1977; Murdock 1982 in Mullen and Klaehn 2010) which looks at the media in the wider politico-societal context. The political economy of communication looks at the same factors which the PrM suggests we analyse, such as ownership, the influence of state policy and dependence on finance sources (McChesney 1998).

In the book 'Necessary Illusions', Chomsky (1989b) develops the ideas of the PrM and goes even further in comparing the US media system with the one in the USSR. He states that in fact propaganda is more effective in the United States due to the false sense of freedom it creates¹² – 'at home [the US],

¹² Klaehn (2002) develops these ideas by stating that the consent of elite and its consequence in media, are more effective in democratic societies, because the elite has the opportunity to come to conclusions naturally in order to gain the same interests (for example, profit), whereas in totalitarian societies some part

more subtle means are required: the manufacture of consent, deceiving the stupid masses with “necessary illusions”, covert operations that the media and Congress pretend not to see until it all becomes too obvious to be suppressed’ (ibid: 19). In its communist adversary (at the time when the book was published) people had a much clearer understanding of how the media operated and whose interests they advocated, whilst in the United States the interests of ‘state and corporate power are closely interlinked, framing [media] reporting and analysis in a manner supportive of established privileges and limiting debate and discussion accordingly’ (Chomsky 1989b: 10). By referring to the work of Edward Bernays, Walter Lippmann and Harold Lasswell, Chomsky (1989b) points out that in their vision of democracy the elite’s ‘supervision’ or ‘influence’ over media messages can only benefit society. In particular American journalist and intellectual Walter Lippmann (to whom Herman and Chomsky owe the name of their book *Manufacturing Consent*¹³) in his work *Public Opinion* (2007 [1922]) elaborates on how public opinion ought to be managed by the more knowledgeable and authoritative ‘specialized class’, rather than letting people whose understanding of the problem is often quite limited to allow themselves to jump to conclusions.

Returning to the PrM’s resemblance with the Marxian vision of the media, Chomsky (1989a) himself stresses that ‘the similarity between this [the

of the elite is always suppressed and forced to agree. He argues that ‘because ‘thought control’ is virtually transparent in democratic societies, the propaganda system is actually more effective and efficient than it is in totalitarian states’ (ibid: 164). This, at first glance seems an absurd idea, but it has its logic. In a democratic society there is an ideology of free media, and even debates which might happen in media only reinforce the main message by showing that it was not only one option, but the best one out of many others.

¹³ Lippmann (2007 [1922]) mentions the term ‘manufacture of consent’ in the context of the discussion on how ‘established leaders’ are capable of defining what information the public should know, and in this sense he [the leader] becomes a censor and a propagandist. Furthermore, Lippmann states: ‘The creation of consent is not a new art. It is a very old one which was supposed to die out with the appearance of democracy. But it has not died out. It has, in fact, improved enormously in technique, because it is now based on analysis rather than on rule of thumb. And so, as a result of psychological research, coupled with the modern means of communication, the practice of democracy has turned a corner. A revolution is taking place, infinitely more significant than any shifting of economic power’ (ibid: 81).

ideas expressed by Lasswell and Lippmann] and Leninist ideology is very striking. According to Leninist ideology, the cool observers, the radical intelligentsia, will be the vanguard who will lead the stupid and ignorant masses on to communist utopias, because they are too stupid to work it out by themselves' (ibid: 6). Even though Herman and Chomsky do not directly situate their work within the Marxist or Leninist traditions, neither do they use any Marxist terminology, but considering the influence and references (even in the title of their book) to the work of Lasswell and Lippmann, Herman and Chomsky indirectly relate and compare their approach with the one developed earlier by Marxists. It can be argued that the PrM does indeed resemble Leninism, but not with its paternalism, rather with Lenin's scepticism about the bourgeois press. Such as Lenin saw bourgeois press as a source of mass deception which through its lies tried to slander the Bolsheviks, furthermore, he argued that despite the possibility of the formal absence of censorship, bourgeois freedom of press is a 'freedom of the rich, the bourgeoisie, to deceive the oppressed and exploited masses' (Lenin 1917: 209 cited in Resis 1977: 282), whilst the genuine freedom of press suggests that the 'press must be liberated from the power of money as well as from the power of the censor' (Resis 1977: 282).

Hearn-Branaman (2009) also finds some similarities between the PrM's ideas and the quasi-Marxist idea of the supreme role of the economy in the news production process 'to such an extent that any activity by the journalists, editors or other actors cannot compare with the influence of capital's institutions' (ibid: 133). Hearn-Branaman (2009) also argues that Chomsky's comparison between Lippmann's idea and Marxist-Leninist theories comes from the mischaracterization of Walter Lippmann's work. Hearn-Branaman (ibid) considers that Herman and Chomsky made a mistake by arguing that Lippmann thought that only small groups within societies can understand what is important for the rest of us and use this knowledge for control, instead he says that anyone can manipulate society as long as he understands the simplicity of the media system.

Despite the apparent similarities between the PrM and the Marxist vision of media – that the mass media follows the dominating economic class in the society – Chomsky does not support the idea of historical materialism – one of the main arguments of the Marxist tradition. Edgley (2009) argues that this disbelief in historical materialism is central to Chomsky’s theoretical approach, since he sees the states as ‘consciously organised bodies of elites’ (ibid: 28), which implies that ‘if individuals are in control (not some logic of capital, or a socially determined group, or an historical dynamic) then these individuals have choices’ (ibid). Hence, it would be wrong to conclude that the PrM completely equates the media systems in capitalist democratic countries such as the United States and the communist states. Chomsky (1989a) claims that despite all of his critique of the US society and its media system, he considers the United States as one of the ‘freest societies in the world’ from the comparative point of view’. To carry on with the comparison between the United States and the USSR, in the latter the media straightforwardly mirrored and supported the interests of the state and its leading party, whilst according to the logic of the PrM, ‘media will protect the interest of the powerful’ (Chomsky 1989b: 149), which might or might not to be represented by the state leaders and managers. The authors of the model call this dominance over the media ‘elite advocacy’ – ‘elites believe that’s the way it ought to be, the media ought to be’ (Chomsky 1989a: 11).

Herman (1999) identifies three ‘merits’ of the PrM that make the model different to other models that describe the propaganda of totalitarian regimes. Firstly, the media system operates so ‘naturally’ that it does not require open measures of censorship. Secondly, even though the PrM assumes that ‘where the elite are really concerned and unified, and/or where ordinary citizens are not aware of their own stake in an issue or are immobilized by effective propaganda, the media will serve elite interests uncompromisingly’ (Herman 1996 in Mullen 2010: 675), but the authors of the model do suggest that there is some flexibility which lets media represent different points of views¹⁴ (such

¹⁴ Freedman (2009) highlights that the PrM does not provide enough evidence of how media would behave during conflicts among elite groups. So, through his research of British media coverage of the Iraq war, Freedman suggests that

as happened during the Vietnam war). Lastly, the media system governed by the logic of the free market allows the existence of 'a dissident media', though it will not be able to reach a vast audience. Another 'merit' of the PrM which Herman did not mention in this list, is that it does not only allow us to identify in whose favour and why media content is shaped one way or another, but also it allows us to see which content, and in whose favour, is omitted from media coverage (see more in chapter six). As will be discussed further later in the dissertation, this omission of the topic of climate change in Russia becomes a much more important issue than any biased or contradictory coverage of it.

The Propaganda Model filters

Herman and Chomsky (1994 [1988]) explain the dominance of the particular elite groups over the media content through the mechanism of the PrM. They state that the media message gets influenced by the elite already during the media pre-production and production processes by going through the five filters: ownership structure, advertising, sources, flak and dominant ideology. Below, each filter will be discussed in more detail. It should be noted that a more specialised analysis of the Russian media system from the perspective of the PrM filters will follow in the next chapter of this thesis, however, some limited references to the Russian media will be made during the current discussion.

Ownership structure

during abnormal social situations the normal structure loses its stability and becomes open to new media messages. The analysis demonstrated that 'social crisis, when elites are divided amongst themselves and the public is willing to challenge and mobilize against these elites, a space can open up in which radical ideas start to circulate' (ibid: 66). As an example, Freedman (2009) discusses the media policy of *The Mirror*. The newspaper during the time of disagreements among international, state and business elites managed to spread information about the illegitimate military actions of the US army in Iraq and Britain's involvement in it. However, when it became apparent that investors, shareholders and government became unsupportive of such a newspaper policy, *The Mirror* lost its interest in the anti-war movement in order not to lose its profit and investors' loyalty.

Nine years after the publication of *Manufacturing Consent*, Herman together with another media scholar, McChesney, in their manuscript devoted to the global media (1997) state that the 'concentration of media power in organisations dependent on advertiser support and responsible primarily to shareholders is a clear and present danger to citizens' participation in public affairs, understanding of public issues, and thus to the effective working of democracy' (ibid: 1). Hence, it could be argued that the first two filters of the PrM devoted to the problem of the corporate influence over the media production process, overreliance on the advertising income and extreme concentration of the media outlets in the 'hands' of a few major media conglomerates are the cornerstones in the capitalist 'propaganda machine'.

Most media outlets cannot exist independently and they have to be part of bigger conglomerates. First of all, there is the necessity for large investments to found a new media outlet; secondly, media organs do not always become profitable businesses, and in some cases are used not for their financial benefits but as a tool to exercise power. The big corporations or governments acquire their own media businesses in order to become a part of the creation of information discourse and be able to dictate their policy. Herman and Chomsky (1994 [1988]) discussing this filter put more emphasis on the business dependence of mass media – 'many of the large media companies are fully integrated into the market, and[...] the pressures of stockholders, directors, and bankers are powerful' (ibid: 5). In support of their argument Chomsky and Herman state that all of these trends were already in place over a century ago (in the United States at least) when the start-up cost of newspapers grew from \$69,000 in 1851 to \$18 million by the 1920s. This condition of large investment for the start of any media outlet has led to a situation where the existing diversity (in the United States at the time of the writing of *Manufacturing Consent*) of newspapers, radio and TV stations was in fact illusory and the ownership structure of these media outlets was limited. Herman and Chomsky (ibid) produced a table with 24 companies which were in control of the major media outlets in the United States in the late 1980s and whose total revenue was counted in billions of US dollars. A decade later McChesney (1998) developed the same ideas in his study of global

communication by arguing that globalisation is one of the main trends of the modern era, which has led to the domination of a 'few hundred of the largest private corporations, which have increasingly integrated production and marketing across national borders' (ibid: 1). This integration erases boundaries between media and market, big media conglomerates start spreading their interests on areas beside media production and vice versa, leading to businesses far from journalism buying media outlets.

Another important element of this filter is the tight connections between media owners and government (or government-related institutions). One of their points of intersection is that government gives licenses for media activity or allows access to satellites and other infrastructure. On the other hand, some owners whose interests spread far beyond the media business also require governmental support in areas of 'business taxes, interest rates, labour policies, and enforcement and non-enforcement of the antitrust laws' (Herman and Chomsky 1994 [1988]: 13), or more specifically assistance in their other areas of business starting with nuclear power and finishing with overseas trade. Lastly, in some countries the government openly owns the media (or controls some shares of it). As will be discussed in the next chapter, in the Russian media system this situation is worse and the boundary between the market and the state in the ownership filter is blurred to the extent that sometimes it is impossible to say where market factors influence media coverage or if it is utterly dominated by the state.

The problem of state influence over the ownership filter was also developed by Doherty (2005) who utilised the PrM in order to support his argument of the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) bias towards the pro-governmental line. He concluded that even though the 'ownership' filter cannot be applied to the BBC in a straightforward way (since it is not owned by a private company but financed through national TV license fees), however, the system in which government ministers recommend who to appoint as the board of governors is quite opaque and assumes tolerance towards powerful interests in the BBC's reporting. Likewise, Hearn-Branaman (2009) (in his studies of the Chinese media system) argues that the 'ownership' filter is very

much connected with state control, which in capitalistic countries is less noticeable and covered with market forces and in less democratic countries is more visible and comes directly in the form of state power. In this sense once again the PrM opposed the plural-liberal approach to the media system in which the same factors (like private ownership and market influence) 'assure diversity and the independence of the media, the PrM holds that these factors lead the media to fully integrate into the structures and logic of power' (Pedro 2011a: 1875).

Similar to the arguments proposed by Doherty (2005) and Hearn-Branaman (2009), during the analysis of climate change coverage in Russia, the ownership filter will be studied not only from the position of market influence and how the media ownership is divided between several media conglomerates, but also to what extent government and state officials control ownership of various media outlets. Another modification which needs to be made is that in Russia we can witness the merger of market and state, and in some cases even though the newspaper or a TV channel are owned by business corporations, it does not mean that there is no 'trace of the state's hand' in its ownership structure. The same business corporation can easily be controlled by the state or have close ties with it.

Advertising

In the context of the free market, advertising becomes another powerful tool in reshaping media content. To be able to get more investments and financial support, the media have to align their policy with advertisers' interests. Basically, at the stage of forming the corporate policy, a media organ might consider such questions as whether it wants to publish information which will be of interest to the biggest percentage of its audience, or it might think of rearranging information in order to attract the attention of a certain segment of the audience. More than 20 years have passed since the PrM was presented by Herman and Chomsky, and some filters do need to be revised and adapted to the modern environment: advertising has become even more important and influential due to the greater dependency of the media outlets on income from this activity, the development of the advertising industry in newly developed

capitalist economies (such as Russia) and also due to 'greater competition among traditional media outlets and between those outlets and the internet' for the same financial pool of advertisers (Herman and Chomsky interview with Mullen 2009: 14).

Advertising lets media make more profit and sell newspapers at below production costs. It is very valuable for newspapers since most do not make a profit (in order to make people interested in buying newspapers media managers are often forced to ask for less money than what was spent on production). Advertising makes media production a participant in the free market where the advertisers' willingness to invest in newspapers depends on the demand. Like other participants of the free market media owners are interested in buyers (advertisers) in order to sell their product (audience) (Chomsky 1989b). So, eventually, newspapers become more interested in wealthier audiences, or the 'audience with buying power' (Chomsky and Herman, 1994 [1988]: 16). In their turn, advertisers do not just choose the media with the most suitable audience but also they try to stay away from politically questionable media outlets. However, as Goodwin (1994) notices 'this sort of conscious discrimination is rarely necessary, given the sort of people who own and manage the media to begin with, but it can have a useful chilling effect, as far as advertisers are concerned' (ibid: 106). On the other hand, according to Herman and McChesney (1997) even though advertisers treat audiences as 'consumers', 'it does not make consumers "sovereign" in the sense of allowing them to choose what is offered' (ibid: 190): owners and advertisers pick the range of programmes within which audiences can exercise their right of 'free choice'.

As a consequence advertisers are not likely to sponsor programmes on environmental issues, which tend not to attract audiences, and environmental groups are very likely to be left unheard. As Hearn-Branaman (2009: 127) explains it: 'in an advertising revenue-based system, groups without a high disposable income are not serviced by a media of their own, nor are their opinions taken as mainstream.' Even though companies become more aware of investing in their environmentally-friendly image, they still try to avoid

sponsoring media which sends disturbing, alarming messages which might contradict consumerism and the policy of advertising. As Lewis (2010) argues 'environmentalists concerned about global warming have to compete against a flood of commercial messages that urge us to consume without worrying about the consequences' (ibid: 344), and largely because of this reason Lewis (2010) states that 'climate change, for all its cataclysmic consequences for large sections of the planet's population, still struggles to become a serious electoral issue'¹⁵ (ibid: 344). Cromwell and Edwards (2006) in their argument of how dependence on sponsors influences media coverage of climate change point to the omission in the media of 'the on-going strategies of corporations to stop any rational action from being taken to combat climate chaos' or 'about the millions of dollars spent on propaganda and corporate advertising' (see in Pedro 2011a: 1882).

In order to represent the 'perspectives and interests of the sellers, the buyers, and the product' (Chomsky 1989b: 8) in their coverage, the media could look for some compromises in the climate change coverage. For instance, from newspapers' pages the public can be convinced to buy a certain product because it was made out of recycled materials or some amount of profit from every sale goes to environmental non-governmental organisations like Greenpeace and so on (which already goes on to a significant extent). This might be seen as an answer for media actors to attract more advertisers and business loyalty, however, 'green consumerism' is still consumerism, and its role in fighting climate change or substituting environmental regulations is very questionable (see more on this in Eriksson 2004).

As was mentioned above, the 'ownership' and 'advertising' filters often interlink and can be perceived as a 'dual threat' to the 'public sphere' or as Herman and McChesney (1997) state, the 'media/advertisers complex' prefers 'entertainment over controversy, serious political debate, and discussions and documentaries that dig deeply, inform, and challenge conventional opinion' (ibid: 6). These arguments are specifically relevant to the implementation of

¹⁵ This takes us back to Schumpeter's (1943) view of foreign news discussed in chapter one.

the 'advertising' filter for the Russian media system, in which 'ownership' and 'advertising' filters are not just interlinked but both are significantly influenced by the 'government filter'. Another specifically Russian characteristic of this filter is likely to make it less significant than it is in the US case. Even though the advertising market has been growing it still is not as big as its American equivalent.

Sourcing

Sourcing shapes media content because it does not matter how big media conglomerates are, they cannot have correspondence staff everywhere and are forced to prioritise their sources and pick the most newsworthy and trustworthy ones and produce news from there on a routine basis.¹⁶ Contemporary changes in technology and society have led to the 'greater sourcing dependence on wire services, public relations offerings, and official and establishment-expert claims and press releases' (Mullen 2009: 14). Usually on the federal scale those news sources would be major government representatives, like parliament, the president's residence, state defence agencies or major business corporations. All of them under normal circumstances hold press conferences on a daily or weekly basis, which are organized by a professional public relations department. It should be mentioned that most government or business organizations spend a lot of resources on managing media relations.¹⁷ They attempt to provide all information in an adequate media format so journalists will have to spend the minimum time on distributing information to the general public.

There are also other reasons for media to refer to aforementioned news sources: they are not only very convenient for journalists to gain newsworthy information but also government and big business are very recognizable for the

¹⁶ Lang and Lang (2004) disagree with Herman and Chomsky on this matter and argue that the restricted number of sources does not reflect the priorities amongst journalists' choice of sources, but simply it shows that (in regards with American foreign news) it is easier for journalists to get access to certain countries due to cultural and strategic ties.

¹⁷ See more on the 'corporate propaganda' and the role of public relations industry in Chomsky (1998).

general public and tend to be considered a credible source. Herman and Chomsky (1994 [1988]: 19) point out that for media, official sources help 'to maintain the image of objectivity, but also to protect themselves from criticism of bias and the threat of libel suits.' Such an approach to picking news sources can possibly lead to major problems of the mass media being dependent on a particular group's opinions. For instance, the government by giving exclusive information to certain media outlets might expect them to return the favour in the form of portraying its activity in a benign way. Furthermore, by constantly providing information, news sources are able to create a certain plot line and lead the coverage of events in a desirable direction because 'part of this management process consists of inundating the media with stories [...] to help chase unwanted stories off the front page or out of the media altogether' (ibid: 23). Hearn-Branaman (2009) argues that 'the sourcing filter shows a great similarity in any capitalist-based media system' (ibid: 127). In research on the application of the PrM to the news production process in the People's Republic of China, he comes to the conclusion that journalists' tendency to use official sources is a 'universal' phenomenon (ibid). Hearn-Branaman (2009) does not restrict sourcing to the state, but mentions that '[the PrM] framework also includes news generated by businesses and corporate-funded think-tanks' (ibid: 128).

Zollmann (2009: 106) discusses the rise of PR in the UK which contributed to the 'new propaganda strategy' in the news media. The effect of the information produced by government or business PR departments is incredible. As was mentioned before, it does not just go to the majority of news outlets, but furthermore it 'spreads like a virus [...] until they [facts] become 'common sense' and what largely constitutes 'the truth' (Hearn-Branaman 2009: 127). As the other elements of the PrM, claims about this filter have been criticized. Cottle (2006) states that the relationship between media and news sources are complicated and under certain conditions, such as crises, media choice of sources might be totally unpredictable, because the crises could call into question the authority of the established sources and make media seek new sources of information (see in Zollmann 2009). Furthermore such factors as the wider political spectrum or journalists' ideology might motivate journalists to

be more critical of the established information sources (Hallin 1994; Spraks 2007 citing in Zollmann 2009).

Besides the tremendous importance of the PR industry within the 'sourcing' filter there are also significant roles played by the 'experts', who 'serve the purpose of legitimizing the elite consensus by virtue of their position of authority and credibility' (Pedro 2011a: 1885). Thompson (2009) through applying the PrM to the financial news analysis brings out the argument that for such topics as the economy and finance, journalists need to have access to expert knowledge in order to understand the issue. The sources (in his case financial analysts working for large corporations) also experience certain constraints and their information goes through 'filters' too before it will reach the journalists. Thompson (2009) concludes that 'in regards to financial markets, the filtering process occurs partially outside and prior to the news production process itself' (ibid: 89). Herman (1999) also brings an interesting example of 'corporate junk science' acting as a 'source' filter for the chemical industry, which according to the author aims to 'reassure the public that pesticides and other chemicals are not a public health threat and are essential to economic growth and welfare [... and] to create enough confusion and uncertainty among legislators and regulators, as well as the public' (ibid: 232). This is interesting in the context of the media coverage of climate change where as was discussed previously (see chapter one) science plays a very important role and sometimes, as in the case of Russia, it is very difficult to distinguish between the position of official science and positions sponsored in the interests of fossil fuel industries or government.

Moreover, implementing the PrM in the Russian case, with regards to the 'source' filter the following issues should be considered. Firstly, as much as the public relations industry keeps growing in the country and interacts with the media, journalists still prioritize the personal connections with sources of information. Also, the official position of the source in the organisation can influence the credibility of the information, and at the same time the NGOs, so powerful in western media, do not play as big a role in Russia and their authority is limited (see more on this in chapter three).

Flak

'Flak' is a negative reaction to media activity and can act as a form of control on media. It can be expressed individually or organized by a group in the form of phone calls, e-mail, petitions and other activities. Cromwell (2002) gives an interesting example of 'flak' in the United States which was created by the Global Climate Coalition (founded by the leading fossil fuel and automobile companies) in order to discredit climate change science. It needs to be mentioned that 'flak' is another opportunity for government or business actors to take control over media policy. Pedro (2011a) distinguishes three 'dimensions' of 'flak'. The first one is concerned not with the flak itself, but the journalists' or editors' apprehensions about it – if they think that an article might cause unnecessary problems with the elite or certain groups of stakeholders, they would prefer not to publish it at all. Secondly, if information that is unsuitable for the elites is published, 'flak' would be there to attack and neutralize it. Lastly, Pedro (2011a: 1886) argues that 'on a more general level, the pressures from powerful entities act as a reinforcement of the media tendency to accept pro-elite opinions and interests'.

In this way, one can also see 'flak' as another method to implement censorship without breaking the law or maybe ignoring the law or even changing the law in a way which leads to more restrictions of mass media policy. Since 'flak' is related to power, it seems that governments produce more often than others, sometimes in the form of threatening and assailing. Hearn-Branaman (2009) points out that even though Herman and Chomsky say that in the United States flak is produced by NGOs, that practice is not that popular in some countries. For instance, in the People's Republic of China, the press functions in a certain frame which does not allow it to cover topics besides the government approved ones and 'if they do step out of line it is often the government [that] creates flak, usually internally and away from the public's gaze' (ibid: 132). The author of the article suggests that such inconsistency in implementing that filter in different countries is explained by arguing that because 'flak' consists of society's reaction to the media information it is 'the only socio-cultural filter in the PrM, [that] is based more

on culture and historical differences' (ibid: 138). Another interesting example of the 'flak' production, was introduced by Jackson and Stanfield (2004) who argue that in their case of the US media coverage of the Iraq war, the media outlet in question (Fox News) acted as a 'flak' filter, by actively criticizing anti-war movements, demonstrations and coverage Fox news led the way for other American media in terms of pro-governmental support during the Iraq war.

As was mentioned above, the 'flak' filter goes very closely with the concept of censorship. If in the authoritarian societies such as China, North Korea or the former Soviet Union we can talk about open and institutionalised censorship, in the capitalist democratic countries such as the United States, we are discussing more subtle forms of press restrictions. As the PrM suggests, its mechanism works in a way that it results in journalists' 'self-censorship without any significant coercion' (Klaehn 2005: 1) when they are not told to do something in a certain way, but rather they cooperate willingly. It should be mentioned that the notion of self-censorship could be considered a key concept of the PrM. Practically, it embraces all of the earlier discussion points of the 'subtle' means of elite control over the media production processes, in which it is very difficult to see open pressure on journalists, but instead they willingly submit to the elites' interests.

In the Russian case, the 'flak' filter is significantly modified. Russian media are still quite restricted and do not produce much information which can elicit a reaction from society. At the same time, Russia does not have a developed system of institutions (representing civil society) powerful enough to produce 'flak', such as strong and authoritative NGOs, hence, as in the case of China, the main producer of 'flak' will be the government. Finally, when journalists do cover topics which are not in favour with the Russian authorities or interested groups they get their portion of 'flak' in the most extreme form, including violent actions (such as being assassinated).

Dominant ideology

The fifth filter, 'anti-ideology', seems to be the most controversial one and has been changed significantly over the years since it was originally created as an ideology of 'anti-communism'. In 1988 Herman and Chomsky wrote 'communism as the ultimate evil has always been the spectre haunting property owners, as it threatens the very root of their class position and superior status' (1994 [1988]: 29). In the United States anti-communist ideology provided a conception of a common enemy against which society, including the media, had the opportunity to be united. The whole idea of communism as an external threat was quite abstract and could be used in all kinds of situations, such as criticizing anybody who was supporting Communist countries or presenting a danger to 'property interests'.

Since the split of the Soviet bloc and the failure of the Communist ideology, this filter lost its actuality and needed to be revised. Herman stated that they should have named this filter 'the dominant ideology' to give it a broader spectrum (see in Alford 2009: 148). In an interview in 2009 Herman and Chomsky gave their new vision of this PrM element (Mullen 2009). First of all, they still think that 'anti-communism' can be applied in some cases and used in the argument against supporters of Stalin, Mao or Soviet Russia. Secondly, whilst 'anti-communism' is fading away, other 'ideologies' are increasing in their popularity, for instance 'anti-terrorism' or the ideology of 'free market'. When Herman and Chomsky introduced their model, they stated that the main idea behind it that the PrM sees the media as a part of the free market economy and an active actor of this capitalist system, in which communist ideology represented everything bad which could happen to American society if it does not support official government policy. Even though the Soviet Union is not there anymore to represent that 'evil' against which American media were fighting, capitalism is still in place and gives media the opportunity to support it. Herman and Chomsky suggest that considering contemporary processes of globalization the fifth filter deserves more attention, as well as the media's 'dependence on government for favours and service, aggressive government news management, the rise or strengthening of right-wing mass media institutions, talk shows and blogs, and

real but thus far weaker growth of other alternative media (including those based on the internet)' (see in Mullen 2009: 15).

Another alternative for the 'anti-communism filter' which became extremely popular in the United States in recent decades is the ideology of 'anti-terrorism' or the 'war on terror'. It works in a very similar way as the 'anti-communism' filter and allows us to see the world in the 'us and them dichotomy' which helps 'to galvanize public support for elite interests since the end of the Cold War' (Mullen and Klaehn 2010: 224). Continuing this theme, Hackett (2006) states that Herman and Chomsky's findings are similar to the postulates of War Journalism¹⁸ – 'double standards consonant with elite perspective, that portray 'our' side as moral and righteous, and 'them' as evil and aggressive' (ibid: 3). Indeed, several scholars applied the PrM ideas to the media coverage of war in Iraq (for example, see Boyd-Barrett 2004; Freedman 2009; Hale 2010; Jackson and Stanfield 2004) confirming its reliability and as Scatamburlo-D'Annibale (2005) determinedly points at the 'egregious' role the media played 'in the terror which has been unleashed on the Iraqi people under the guise of the 'war on terror' (ibid: 52).

Pedro (2011a: 1889) argues that in terms of understanding of how the PrM operates, it is necessary to look at ideology in a broader sense as 'war propaganda, economic indoctrination, or political persuasion' (ibid: 1889). Klaehn (2009b) also believes that the fifth filter of the PrM has not lost its relevance and may be utilized in 'a range of case studies' (ibid: 45). According to him, the dominant ideology filter can be generalized so as to be applicable to a variety of social phenomenon. Klaehn (ibid) also points out that 'the dominant ideology' filter can be relevant for studies focusing on power relations and how this intersects with political, economic and social aspects of society and as one of the issues where the PrM can be of particular use, Klaehn (ibid) names environmental problems. Taking into consideration Pedro's (2011a) and Klaehn's (2009b) arguments, as well as the original ideas behind

¹⁸ In this sense, Jensen (2005) provides an interesting discussion of American journalists' work after 9/11 and 'patriotic journalism' and whether journalists should 'follow the flag' in the time of war or provide independent information in order for people to make their own decisions and judgements of state policy.

the PrM, in the Russian case the 'dominant ideology' filter will be studied from the perspective of the developing ideology of capitalism and the free market, but also of the influence of the strong state. Thus when analysing the media coverage of climate change, the media should potentially be considered a tool for the implementation of state policy as well as a propaganda tool for free market ideas. In terms of this research the 'dominant ideology' filter will also be studied more specifically in the context of Russia's climate change policy, what actors are involved in it and how they influence or maybe gain influence through media policy towards this complicated issue.

Conclusions about the PrM filters

One of the ambiguities with regards to the elements of the PrM which make some researchers question its adequacy and utility is the question of whether all of the named filters are equal with each other (Goodwin 1994). The same issue is raised by Thompson (2009) who points out that it is unclear whether any filter becomes more or less influential in a particular economic or political situation. This statement is quite arguable, since even though the original study of Herman and Chomsky does not give instructions on how to modify the PrM in each specific case, but as the example of Russia will demonstrate the alterations and adjustments of the PrM filters are quite straightforward if one is familiar with the political and economic context of the case study.

Boyd-Barrett (2004) does not argue that one or another filter is less valuable, but insists on adding another filter to the model – 'buying out'. The author acknowledges that originally the PrM did not suggest that one person or a group of people consciously direct or censor the media, but rather explains the system within which the media content is shaped. Boyd-Barrett (ibid) finds it useful to enter the 'buying out' filter into the model which 'suggests the exercise of direct but covert control of news media [...] for the purpose of state manipulation of public opinion and propaganda, a degree of fusion between state and news media practices that goes beyond the dynamics of everyday political economy' (ibid: 437). Applying this modified version of the PrM to the news coverage of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, Boyd-Barrett (2004) admitted that it is extremely difficult for the researcher to find direct evidence

of the 'buying out' filter even though its influence could in some cases be extremely significant such as happened in the case of the *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller who according to the author acted as 'a conduit for stories originating in US military and intelligence agencies' (2004: 438) in her coverage of the US invasion in Iraq. This indeed is quite an interesting concept in extenuation of the model and as will be discussed further on in this dissertation, in the case of Russian media the problem of journalists being bought by interested parties throughout the years has created problems in the development of the democratic media system. Scientifically speaking, this filter would be extremely difficult to prove and also it will put the PrM under even greater attack for its conspiratorial nature, besides, it is not quite clear how it is different from censorship.

Zollmann (2009) does not raise the question of which filter should be removed or added to the PrM per se, but stresses that the strength of the PrM is in interactivity between its filters, whenever in some particular cases one filter becomes weaker or cannot be applied at all, other filters can take the lead in directing media to stay faithful to the needed informational policy. As will be discussed in the next chapter, in the Russian case the same conditions or characteristics of Russian mass media have to be mentioned in the analysis of several filters. For instance, the concept of power or the role of the state enters almost each of them. Chomsky states that there is no way to count the importance of each filter in general, since as much as we need to adapt the PrM to the particular cases, so too we need to vary the importance of the filters to an equal degree (Alford 2009).

Critical evaluation of the Propaganda Model

As was mentioned at the start of this chapter, when *Manufacturing Consent* was published, the book in general and the PrM in particular, did not receive a very warm welcome from the academic community. Even though some of the criticisms are quite specific, and in some cases refer to the personalities of the authors, this chapter has tried to outline the common trends in the critique of the PrM and recommendations for its improvement or further development.

Geographical application of the model

As was mentioned earlier, initially, the PrM was developed for the United States and mostly tested through analysis of US coverage of foreign news. This raised the issue of whether it was possible to apply it in different political, economic or social systems (Hesmondhalgh 2006; Lang and Lang 2004; Robertson 2010; Schlesinger 1992) or was it only useful for the 'exceptional' media system of the United States which is arguably 'the only advanced capitalist democracy without a significant labour or socialist party and, consequently, the one in which large corporations have the freest rein' (Goodwin 1994: 108). Corner (2003) claims that the PrM has 'very little by way of new theoretical insight that the Propaganda Model can bring to European media research' (ibid: 367). He maintains that it is questionable how this model will help us to understand media-political relations in countries with different histories, cultures, institutions and market developments. For instance, ownership structures might drastically differ from country to country, depending on who traditionally is allowed to be in charge of news production. Another important factor is market development, how much media depend on it and what is the role of advertising in particular countries.¹⁹ And of course, such filters as 'sources', 'flak' and 'dominant ideology' are very much rooted in specific state's social and political history.

On the contrary, Herman and Chomsky argue that 'ownership and advertising belong to straightforward institutional analysis' (see in Mullen 2009: 13) and the media will adjust themselves to the processes of 'flak' or 'sourcing' regardless if we are talking about 'the elite US or British media or the elite media under Stalin and Hitler' (ibid). At the same time, Herman (2000) notes that the PrM is analysed within a very complex context and gives a very general base for analysis, therefore when the model is applied to different cases it has to be changed in order to respond to specific local factors (cited in Zollmann 2009: 114).

¹⁹ For instance, Pedro (2011b) cites the case of the Scandinavian public service media model, which is to lesser degree dependent on the media market and mostly serves the interests of its audience.

In reality, several researchers have demonstrated that the PrM can work in different geographical areas (for example see Eglin 2005, Everton 2005, Gibbs 2003, Hearn-Branaman 2009, Herring and Robinson 2009, Klaehn, 2009b, Mullen 2010a, Robertson 2004). Interestingly enough, Herman and Chomsky themselves mentioned that:

globalisation and cross-border integration and the spread and increased importance of commercial media and advertising as a funding source, have made the Propaganda Model ever more widely applicable, but it has to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis given the varying degrees and forms of penetration, and different cultural conditions and levels of government intervention. In some cases, like Russia, we may have a slow merging of an older form of state propaganda with an emerging market-based system (see in Mullen 2009: 18).

By utilising the PrM for his study of the Chinese news media, Hearn-Branaman (2009) concluded that when the model is applied to media systems during their transition stage, ideology becomes of vital importance and, in particular, 'the hegemony of global capitalist ideology' (ibid: 120), which becomes more and more powerful even within post-communist countries. He also demonstrates that some filters such as sourcing and advertising are pretty much universal, but at the same time, filters like ownership structures and flak are quite different and very specific to China with supreme control lying with the state. Furthermore, one of his main conclusions is that 'a capitalism-based economy could have [effects] on any news media system, no matter what its governmental structure' (ibid: 138) and that the model can benefit research on any media system due to the great influence of capitalism. Mullen (2010a) seconds Hearn-Branaman's (2009) arguments by stating that 'the globalizing nature of the media suggests that the PrM may have a much wider, perhaps near-universal, application' (ibid: 230).

Therefore it allows us to suggest that the PrM is applicable to the Russian case and can help to analyse Russian media coverage of climate change.

However, the different filters may be somewhat more or less useful in the Russian case as the specific characteristics of the state have to be considered.

The PrM – another conspiracy theory?

Another popular reason behind the marginalization of the PrM is that sometimes it is perceived as a model based on conspiratorial assumptions about media activity. This view of the model was a result of its central assumption about the media's dependence on state and market. Klaehn (2003a) states that this argument is totally mistaken, since 'conspiracy implies secret controls that are divorced from normal institutional channels' (ibid: 359) and the PrM makes no such claim. Keeley (1999) gives another definition of conspiracy theories, which says that this kind of theory gives explanations of events by redirecting responsibilities to the restricted group of people secretly handling social processes (see in Clarke, 2002). This definition would be even more contradictory with the main principles of the PrM. The model approaches media from the point of view of the free market principles of organising the production process. It talks about a complicated set of institutions, media production principles and ideologies, which eventually create certain conditions under which particular topics become more or less in favour of mass media. Herman and Chomsky also commented on conspiratorial criticism (see in Mullen, 2009) and stated the PrM has no conspiratorial base but is 'rooted mainly in market-oriented processes' (ibid: 17). Klaehn (2002) quotes Chomsky (from their personal correspondence in 1998) 'my work [...] is about as much of a 'conspiracy theory' as a study of GM that suggests that its management seeks to maximize profit and market share' (ibid: 149).

Herman and Chomsky argue that the main idea behind the model is that the market's tools are powerful enough to be able to get the desirable outcome without implementing secret forces into the media production. The PrM can be considered a conspiracy theory only if one considers it to be conspiratorial that institutions involved in media production act in order to pursue their own interests. In some exceptional situations certain media actions are influenced by factors besides economic ones, such as state pressure and 'government or one or more private actors may take initiatives and mobilize coordinated elite

handling of an issue' (Herman 1996). However, in the rest of the cases the market is the main actor.

In his earlier work, Klaehn (2002) provides an explanation as to why Herman and Chomsky were always fighting against attaching that conspiracy quality to their model. One of the reasons is that 'conspiracy theory' is a label which gives an easy reason not to take all the findings and reasoning that the model suggests seriously. Secondly, although the model analyses media activity in correlation with the market, state and social institutions, it does not propose that there is any kind of conspiracy. It works closely with 'institutional imperatives' since it is a 'structural model' (ibid: 360). It gives a framework and explains how social institutions function within this framework and how it comes to the result we can observe.

Media effects

There is another important aspect that the PrM is missing and for which it has been criticized: the model does not take under consideration the effects media have on audiences. As Mullen (2010b) rightfully notices 'the very title of the book *Manufacturing Consent* and the authors' frequent reference throughout to the 'propaganda system', seems to suggest that the PrM is concerned with effects' (ibid: 675) (see also in Hackett 2006). However, the PrM studies how the media are organised and what processes are involved before the actual target audience can see the product, and it intentionally misses out the impact this product will have on them and it does not predict how people will perceive the information (Klaehn 2003a). Klaehn (ibid) argues that the model assumes that the way information is perceived and understood depends on the discourse in which information is circulated. The model does not underestimate how complicated the process of reading media messages is and that their effect depends on various factors such as the personal and social characteristics of the audience. It also includes how often news appears in the paper and how often people will actually see it.

Herman and Chomsky note the audience's limitations in perceiving the media's messages, as it can have freedom of choice to a certain extent (see

Mullen 2009). People still will have to choose among the information that media present, but also if audiences resist some information, *propagandists* can always reinforce the information flow. Moreover, Herman (1996) in his revisions of the PrM points out that 'the PrM is about how media work, not how effective they are' and in support of his statement he refers to the Soviet experience – 'as many Soviet citizens did not swallow the lines put forward by Pravda, this [does not] demonstrate that Pravda was not serving a state propaganda function'. Furthermore, the PrM's authors do not see audiences as 'passive victims of systematic ideology control' (Klaehn 2003b: 379), but on the contrary, as Chomsky (1989b) states, 'citizens of the democratic societies should undertake a course of intellectual self-defence to protect themselves from manipulation and control, and to lay the basis for more meaningful democracy' (ibid: viii). Herman (2000) also specifies that they do accept (as part of the PrM functioning) the role of alternative media, grassroots movements (acting as information sources) or 'public scepticism', as well as the possibility for disagreements within the elites which lead to more diverse coverage.

The audience's effect is quite important in the scholarship in the media and perhaps in order to eliminate this drawback to the PrM, as Miller and Dinan (2010) argue, it needs to be 'supplemented by other sorts of theories and models examining other elements of the circuits of communication and power' (ibid: 2). So, one can consider the lack of interest in media effect as a major limitation to the implications of the PrM on media coverage of environmental problems in Russia, however, this research does not aim to study the effects the media have on the audience, but what factors influence their policy. It looks at the components of media production before the actual newspaper or TV show reaches its reader or viewer and what actors and factors influence this coverage.

Journalists' professionalism

Along with neglecting the media effect on the audience, the PrM demotes journalists' professional norms and treats journalists more like actors without much power to influence the final outcome. Indeed, in their methodological and theoretical considerations Herman and Chomsky ignore journalists' work

routines. They do not include in their research interviews with reporters or editors, they do not try to find out how exactly certain information ended up on the pages of newspapers, but instead they mostly rely on content analysis of the news and the contextual analysis of the political, economic and social situations. As Goodwin (1994) brings to our attention, it is not particularly clear to what extent each filter influences journalists' everyday practices and how much of this is influenced by journalists' personal considerations or by other unrelated factors. Allan (2004a: 55 in Hackett 2006: 4) states even more categorically:

reducing the news media to tired ideological machines confined to performing endlessly, and unfailingly, the overarching function of reproducing the prerogatives of an economic and political elite through processes of mystification. Journalists would then become little more than well-intentioned puppets whose strings are being pulled by forces they cannot fully understand.

In their defence the PrM's authors argue that if journalistic norms played a crucial role in media production and were directly relevant to the PrM, the model would not work and would not be supported by empirical evidence (see in Mullen 2009). By empirical evidence Herman and Chomsky mean their comparative media analysis. For example, they looked at events similar in nature (Indonesian massacres in East Timor and Serb killings in Kosovo) in the same newspapers and argued that if the coverage could be explained by journalistic professional norms then there would not be any difference between these two events. However, the number of articles differed drastically despite the fact that both events were 'timely, interesting and important' (Herman and Chomsky 2004)²⁰ hypothetically have equal value for journalists.

Once again Klaehn (2003a) points out that the PrM is a structural model and was never intended to test the influence of the organisational aspects of the newspapers on the final outcome. The famous comparison of journalists with

²⁰ At the same time Herman and Chomsky noted that in reality they did speak with several journalists, however, as explained above, did not find it useful or significant for the application of the model (Herman 2000).

workers on the factory floor who cannot really decide for the industry (for example see Alford 2009), catches the essence of the PrM's understanding of the media production process and journalists' place in it and drives the opponents of the model to judge it even more categorically by stating that it underestimates journalists' power and their professional ethics. Interestingly, Zollmann (2009) provides an analysis of the journalists' professional norms and corporate control (which is assumed by the advocates of the PrM) in which he concludes that there is a strong dependence between journalists' professionalism and the 'corporate-market constraints' (ibid: 108) suggested by the PrM'. He describes it as 'two sides of the same coin' (ibid: 110), where professionalism lets journalists be freer and independent in their work, however, the market puts restrictions on it by limiting debate in the mass media. More specifically, Zollmann (ibid) discussed the norm of 'objectivity' and how 'when it comes to the coverage of military aggression and state-terrorism, 'objective' reporting is highly questionable because violators of international law should not get equal space for comment' (ibid). The previous chapter discussed in detail how journalists' norms affect the media coverage of climate change and how more recent studies have started to move away from this approach of concentrating on the micro-factors of media analysis, to look at the macro-structure. Further on in this dissertation, the role of journalists' professional norms and values will be discussed in greater detail and whether they do play a role in coverage of climate change in Russia will partly determine whether the PrM is applicable in this case, or if its implementation is restricted to the previously mentioned geographical areas or socio-political issues.

Determinism, oversimplifying and functionalism

The model's previously mentioned tendency to underestimate the journalists or audience has led to the accusation that it presents a simplistic picture of the media system. The model is also called functionalist due to its tendency not to leave any room for changes within the system. For instance, journalists might want to show independence or social responsibility in informing society or other social actors such as NGOs or activist groups might influence the process.

This critique might seem to be fair, however, as it has been mentioned beforehand the PrM does not insist that the media are always closed to internal disagreement or that the process of media production can never be modified. It also does not undervalue the complexity of some cases or rule out modifications of the model.

Klaehn (2003a) claims that the PrM cannot be considered deterministic or functionalist since it does not ignore debate or in some situations dissent on newspaper pages (ibid: 365). In their turn, the authors of the model argue that the PrM cannot be blamed for being deterministic because all models can be considered deterministic to some extent. It is also normal for a model to be simplistic since it aims to study complicated processes by providing a broad framework. The question is whether their determinism and simplicity are beneficial for describing and understanding particular social patterns or not. So far, it seems that these characteristics did not limit the PrM's potential in describing and predicting the media's behaviour in the cases it was applied to, so that criticism is not fatal to the model (Mullen 2009).

For instance, Alford (2009) analysed the Hollywood movie industry on the subject of its compliance with US foreign policy (in particular its engagement in the Iraq war), and by applying the PrM filters to his case study Alford confirmed and explained the reformist position of Hollywood celebrities and managers. Gibbs (2003) through her extensive content analysis of two Hawaiian newspapers (the *Honolulu Weekly* (an alternative newspaper which was used as a primary object of analysis) and the *Honolulu Advertiser* (as a comparative case)) as well as a series of interviews, concludes how the work of alternative newspapers is also constrained by the factors identified by the PrM: 'the reality of the *Weekly* is that the "alternative" label at best only thinly disguises its deep roots in capitalist modes of production' (2003: 603). Jackson and Stanfield (2004) analysed the US media coverage of the Iraq war and after looking at each PrM filter individually, they confirmed that 'the Iraq War coverage demonstrates the plausibility of the Propaganda Model', moreover they state this coverage was 'an example of extreme patriotism where the media functioned as fine-tuned government propaganda machines'

(2004: 476). Robertson (2004) also looks at the Iraq war coverage but this time in four Scottish newspapers which makes him question the applicability of the PrM since the newspapers analysed to some extent did not comply with the elite consensus, but in some cases took a strong anti-war stance. As Robertson discovers they all failed to look at the problem from the Iraqi point of view: damage to their environment, infrastructures and of course numerous civilian casualties, which makes him conclude that perhaps it 'represents evidence of the kind of unconscious self-censoring to be expected where pressure is hegemonic as opposed to directly coercive and that this is entirely in accordance with the PrM' (2004: 477). However, he suggests that this could also be explained by 'an ethnically based insensitivity and discrimination' (ibid: 479).

Despite these examples of the PrM's applicability, because Herman and Chomsky do not analyse all aspects of media production, their opponents have questioned how much the PrM can be a 'theory of media-political relations' (Corner 2003: 369). Corner (ibid) argues that the PrM does not introduce anything new and the ideas presented in it have already been studied, however, the model differs from the previous studies by emphasizing the importance of its five filters, and oversimplifying the micro-processes of media production. 'Filters' are meant to symbolize the barriers media messages go through and get modified, however, Corner (ibid) says that Herman and Chomsky attribute too much power to them, since according to the PrM, they do not just shape media coverage, but generate it.

The PrM does not refer to any other studies or media models, which might be considered as another weakness (Corner 2003). For instance, some scholars compare or contrast the PrM with the 'gate-keeper' models (McNair 2003), which also aim to explain how media messages are selected and modified before they reach the audience. However, as Klaehn (2003a) argues, unlike the 'gatekeeper model' the PrM does not suggest that journalists or editors ('gatekeepers') consciously decide how to shape the media content in order to respond to someone's interests – '[the PrM] is a structural model and does not theorize social psychological processes. The PrM's overarching

concern with power and social class firmly distinguishes it from the gatekeeper model' (ibid: 226). Further examples of comparisons between the PrM and other models can be found in the work of Robertson (2004) who compared the PrM's approach with the Indexing Hypothesis of Livingston and Eachus (1996) and Said's (1978, 1993) critique of Orientalism, or Ang and Hermes (1996) who referred to the PrM in conjunction with feminist studies (see in Pedro 2011b: 1907), or Klaehn (2002) who brings in the discussion of Critical Discourse Analysis.

Lastly, Klaehn, the main opponent of Corner and a vigorous supporter of the PrM, points out that the model 'offers an analytical, conceptual framework [...] to theorize the operation of power in relation to dominant structural elements' (2003a: 361). It does not talk about the conspiracy of the editorial personnel to rewrite news in a desirable way, however, it talks about meanings which go through filters built in the existing social system until eventually they become common sense. Klaehn (2002) also says that the PrM cannot fully describe all processes which constitute the media production and the authors do realize that it does not take into account several aspects of news creation processes such as some practical issues of the journalists' and editors' professional life. By realizing all the possible changes in the society and the complex process of its development, it does not give a '*finalizing closure*' and leaves some space for adjustments and modifications (Klaehn 2003b: 379). Even though the PrM does not provide all of the answers, it provides the main direction in which many cases could be explained and understood. In spite of all the critique, it can be argued that the model has undeniable logic which is supported by empirical findings and has been proved by a reasonable amount of research and literature on the practicality of the PrM and in the support of its main hypothesis (Klaehn 2003b).

The future of the PrM in the age of the Internet

The PrM was first introduced more than 20 years ago, before the end of the Cold War, re-arrangements of power in the world order, the speedy progression of globalisation and of course before the spread of new types of media.

Specifically the development of the internet and interactive forms of media have led observers to question the effectiveness of the PrM. It seems impossible to maintain consent among media when people seemingly have ample opportunity for alternative sources of information. McNair (2003) states that the PrM 'developed in the very different ideological and political environments of the 1970s and 1980s, no longer corresponds to the openness and diversity of view present in much Western journalism (and certainly, British) in the current period' (ibid: 75).

In the 2002 edition of *Manufacturing Consent*, Herman and Chomsky updated their vision of the model and concluded that the PrM did not lose its relevance, but 'the changes in politics and communication over the past dozen years have tended on balance to enhance the applicability of the Propaganda Model' (ibid: xvii). They argued that the media business had become more monopolised than it was in the preceding decade and competition for advertisers had got fiercer. The sourcing filter had become even more dependent on the PR industry: 'There are, by one count, 20 000 more public relations agents working to doctor the news today than there are journalists writing it' (ibid: xvii). According to Herman and Chomsky (2002), due to the reduction of the resources at their disposal the media became even more dependent on other actors. Lastly, as was discussed before, the 'anti-communism' filter lost its relevance, however, the authors state that it was replaced by the more powerful 'force of the belief in the "miracle of the market"' (ibid). There is only one possible scenario under which Herman and Chomsky believed the PrM would not work: if the class differences were to disappear and social hierarchy were replaced by *egalitarianism*. The PrM stays relevant so long as economic or state elites need a tool to justify their socially unfair policy (Mullen 2009: 20) and as Mullen and Klaehn (2010) argue due to:

the globalizing economy and the ever-increasing (global) power, reach and influence of large, transnational corporate and financial institutions – in the face of growing poverty and powerlessness amongst the vast majority of the world's population - ...the PrM is

even more relevant today than when it was initially advanced (ibid: 225, see also in Klaehn 2005).

As far as the development of the new media is concerned, it could be suggested that the internet as a more democratic way of communicating makes the PrM outdated and irrelevant for the modern world. In support of this argument Rampton (2007) applied the PrM to internet news and concluded that each filter does not act quite as Herman and Chomsky described in their case. With regards to the ownership filter, it does not require great financial investment to set up your own blog or web-site, nor does advertising play as big a role as in the traditional media (on the contrary it can repulse website visitors). The internet gives a space for 'citizen journalism' in which anyone can become an 'information source' by sharing their comments on the events or uploading pictures, likewise, anyone can produce 'flak' against politicians or business elites in the forms of personal blogs or commentaries underneath news items. Finally, where the ideology filter is concerned, in the case of the internet, there is a plurality of various ideologies where anti-Islam co-exists with pro-Islamism and so on. However, Rampton (ibid) admits that such traditional media sources as TV still prevail amongst the American population.

In reply, Herman and Chomsky think the PrM was not threatened by the development of the new media in general. In support of their statement, they also argue that traditional media still have quite a strong position and most of them have their online versions which dominate in internet informative space. They acquired this advantage due to the resources they already had, such as trusting audiences and financial stability (internet media also heavily depend on advertising and other sources of funding) (see Mullen 2009). Moreover, if the media outlet, regardless of whether it is a news website or an alternative newspaper (Gibbs 2003), needs in any way to make profit to sustain itself, then the PrM will always be relevant even though the degree of its applicability might vary.

Concluding remarks

The PrM suggests 'an institutional critique of mass media' (Klaehn 2002: 170). It demonstrates the media's dependence on sources of funds and power and it argues that everyday media practices are bounded by propaganda and media are forced to fit around the interests of the elite. It gives a broad framework of analysis for a very complicated system of social events, so it needs to be modified from case to case.

To sum up, the first two filters, 'ownership structure' and 'advertising', are closely integrated into the political-economic relations which direct media coverage at the macro-level (Klaehn (2009b)). The third filter, 'sources', is the one which shows how news is shaped by social constraints, it demonstrates what social institutions provide news for the media and make them dependent on their version of news. The fourth filter, 'flak', is connected with the concept of power and demonstrates another way of influencing the media's performance by the means of petitions, phone calls, lobbying but also through hidden or open forms of censorship. The fifth filter, 'anti-ideology', went through major changes over the last decade and became 'dominant ideology filter'. The last filter brings out the concept of power, by defining the sources of the dominant ideology and how this ideology is imposed on powerless actors of society. Over all, the PrM assumes that the news discourse in general is closely connected with power, and it makes predictions that the sources of power and sources of information most of the time will be the same.

Despite years of marginalisation and criticism, Chomsky is still convinced that the PrM is 'one of the most tested models within the social sciences' (see Mullen and Klaehn 2010: 215) and should be a vital part of modern academic research. He draws attention to such arguments as that the contemporary mass media more rapidly lose their independence due to changing ownership structures and the increasing influence of advertising, and even in the eyes of their audience are seen as propagandistic organisations (Klaehn 2002). Some supporters of the PrM compare the propagandist functions of mass media with 'cancer' (Everton 2005) which erodes the system from inside, while others blame media for certain policy outcomes (Eglin

2005). One way or another, the media are still considered a key element of democratic society (or its destruction):

The media are the preeminent vehicles of communication through which the public participates in the political process, and the quality of their contribution to the public sphere is an important determinant of the quality of democracy (Herman and McChesney 1997: 4)

Despite the grim picture Hermann and Chomsky drew of how the media are subordinate to the interests of the elites, there is a positive outlook for the future with room for change in the world system. This could be 'based on principles of cooperation, equality, self-government, and individual freedom' (McChesney 2008: 290) and as a consequence there is hope in the possibility for change in the existing media situation at the grassroots level where the set pattern can be broken, and in this case the PrM would help activists to understand how they can find weaknesses in the mainstream media coverage and influence it (Herman 2000; see also Jackson and Stanfield 2004). In developing their work on media systems, Herman and Chomsky do not only aim to describe and analyse the way media operate, but also to represent their vision of democratic media and the ways to reach it. Democratic media from their point of view would be 'controlled by ordinary people' and information flow would go in various directions rather than from the limited number of officials and experts, whilst people would all be actively involved in the communication process instead of passively receiving media messages. Herman (1999) argues that the best way to achieve the 'democratisation of the media' is:

[t]o enlarge the civic sphere by every possible avenue, to strengthen the public sector by increasing its autonomy and funding, and lastly to contain or shrink the commercial sector and work to tap its revenue for the civic sector. Funding this sector properly will require government subvention. Media democrats should be preparing the moral and political environment for such financial

support as they do their utmost to advance the cause of existing democratic media (ibid: 313).

When adapting the PrM to the Russian case of media coverage of climate change it is important to take into consideration the country's political, economic and social characteristics and be prepared to adjust the PrM filters where necessary. Overall it is hoped that the application of the PrM to this case study will not only theoretically benefit the body of media studies literature, but also as Herman and Chomsky idealistically suggested, it will provide an opportunity for environmentalists and grassroots movements to see their way around the system and perhaps to some degree change it.

CHAPTER 3 – THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF RUSSIAN MASS MEDIA: STATE AND MARKET

The applicability of western models to the Russian media system has been questioned by various scholars. Sarah Oates (2007) points out that due to the interdependence of economic and political powers in Russia with regards to the media system it becomes difficult to classify it and even to question whether Russian media can be characterised by Western media models. In particular, Oates claims that it is difficult to compare it to the ‘heavily commercialised media system in the United States’ (ibid: 1279). The PrM was originally developed in order to analyse this ‘heavily commercialised’ American media system, however, as analysis has shown the PrM does not deny the influence of political actors on the media production system. Rather it states that depending on the social, political and economic context of the particular case study, the media will be dominated by state or market forces or both depending on which sector the dominant elite groups belong to. Following Herman and Chomsky’s arguments, this chapter argues that with some modifications to the PrM filters, the model is applicable to the Russian case in general and in particular in the case of media coverage of climate change.

One of the suggested modifications will be mostly concerned with the role of the state in the Russian media production process which has been examined by Russian and international scholars. In the majority of the cases the importance of the state has been confirmed. Since the time when Peter the First founded the first newspaper (*Vedomosti*), the government of the Russian Empire and then of the Soviet Union supported the popularisation of the media, but it could also be argued that Russia became an ‘inventor’ of ‘total censorship’ coming from the top²¹ (Markov 2010: 206). For decades, Russian press freedom had been suppressed by the government to a lesser or greater degree depending on the regime or leader in power.

²¹ Markov (2010) argues that censorship appeared in Russia long before the press was introduced – during the time of Alexis I (1645-1676). However, official censorship of the media appeared at the end of the reign of Catherine II (1762 – 1796) and under Paul I (1796-1801) it became formally institutionalised (see more in Esin and Zasurskiy 2003).

In the second half of the 1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev proclaimed the policy of glasnost²² and after the end of the Soviet state (and probably for the first time in history) there was hope for freedom of speech and independence of Russian media. As a result of introducing the ideology of capitalism and the free market, new actors entered the arena and as Oates (2007) suggests '[i]f the system is consumer-driven, then it is much less vulnerable to manipulation, either by a powerful group of elites or by inchoate masses' (ibid: 1281). However, even in the contemporary era of free market ideology, when censorship was officially banned, the debate surrounding the degree to which Russian media can be considered free is still on-going. The application of the PrM will allow us to understand and justify to what extent this freedom is restricted and by whom. Furthermore, this model will allow for an understanding of the characteristics and peculiarities of the Russian media policy on climate change issues.

The chapter will discuss the Russian media system through the prism of the PrM. Each filter will be applied to the Russian case and consideration given to how it has changed over time and what were the dominating factors which led to the current state of the Russian mass media. Based on data from a series of in-depth interviews the analysis will be situated within the context of the discussion of climate change coverage, hence, before the chapter will embark on the suggested study, it will briefly discuss some peculiarities of the 'elite interviews' method with regards to this research study.

Interviewing 'elites': methodological considerations

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, for this research I conducted 30 in-depth interviews throughout Russia with key figures who are either directly involved in producing information on climate change, influence climate coverage, are connected with the state policy making process in the area of climate change, or represent Russian climate science. It has to be noted, that by using elite interviews for data collection this project contests the ideas of the

²² See more on the role of media during the period of glasnost in Mickiewicz (1999).

main theoretical approach. Herman and Chomsky purposefully did not use interviews in their study since according to their ideas even if some journalists state that they do not feel any constraints in their work, it does not mean that much (see more in chapter two). The whole system, the context in which they operate, influences the media production process everyday and in such a way that journalists would indeed not feel any influence on their work, but willingly adjust information according to elite interests. However, in this research on media coverage of climate change in Russia, elite interviews serve two purposes. Firstly, by diversifying the methods for data collection, elite interviews allow the researcher to not blindly follow the PrM's approach but critically examine its applicability by testing various factors involved in media coverage. For example, all of my respondents pointed out that the main problem of media coverage of climate change in Russia is not that some interested groups actively twist the information, but that there is a general lack of interest in the topic (see more in chapter six). This is something which could not be concluded from either content or discourse media analysis. At the same time, as interviews were conducted with journalists and representatives of NGOs, policy makers and climatologists, a better understanding of what constitutes elite interests as well as what shapes the broader politico-social context of climate change problems in Russia was achieved. Considering the scarcity of literature on the subject, elite interviews also allowed for an understanding of the interviewee's personal attitudes towards the problem as well as to reconstruct events which were missing from the written information (Tansey 2007).

Elite interviews suggest that a low number of respondents is substituted by the interviewees' high rank or their key position and deep knowledge of the subject. Mostly because of the respondents' status and importance to the project, elite interviews require advanced skills from the researcher. A number of researchers outlined various mistakes or obstacles which could be encountered by the interviewer. Among them: difficulties with getting interviews in a sense of identifying the key figures or getting access to high-profile policy makers (Goldstein 2002); defining the purpose and structure of the interview (Aberbach and Rockman 2002, Leech 2002); choice and

construction of the questions (Berry 2002); and ethical aspects of interviews (Woliver 2002). Conducting interviews in Russia also involves some other specific problems which to a certain degree were reflected by Werning Rivera et al. (2002). These include: difficulties in gaining access to key people and arranging interviews (the absence of secretaries or personal assistants for politicians or inefficient use of emails are important challenges); less experience with the interview process (in comparison to Western countries); unfamiliarity with academic research (it is difficult to explain the purpose of your inquiry and to get an adequate response).

All of these problems were experienced and resolved during this research project. Interviews were arranged in advance through emails or telephone calls. The nature and purpose of academic research was explained beforehand, with full disclosure of how the material will be used. All interviewees were asked on questions of anonymity (one of them agreed to speak only if his/her name and position are not mentioned and in some cases only parts of interviewees' responses were anonymised) and they were informed that the transcripts of interviews and any published material would be provided upon request. In one way or another all questions were based around the five filters suggested by the PrM inviting interviewees to share their opinion on how ownership structure, advertising, information sources, flak or ideology might influence the media coverage of climate change in Russia. The interview questions were modified depending on what group an interviewee belonged to (journalists, activists, scientists, policy makers) and respondents were also invited to share their opinions in case they think that none of these factors play any role.

In addition to the above mentioned challenges with conducting interviews, researching climate change media coverage presents another specific obstacle: there is an extremely limited number of people with sufficient knowledge on the subject matter. Only four journalists were identified who regularly work on the problem of climate change in Russia. In other cases, journalists were either generally writing on environmental topics or randomly covering the climate change topic without any specialised knowledge. In the case of policy makers, the situation was even more

pessimistic, as will be discussed in detail in chapter four, in Russia there is a very vague understanding of which institution is in charge of climate policy, hence, once again it makes it complicated to find the 'right' person with sufficient knowledge of the problem (unfortunately, high ranking politicians involved in this process were not reached). An extremely valuable source of information became NGO representatives. Due to their diversity and deep understanding of the problem, they did not only provide the vision of the problem as activists, but also they themselves acted as journalists, news sources, scientists (often they have an advanced academic degree), and some of them actually contribute to developing Russia's climate policy or take part in international negotiations as members of Russia's official delegation.

The data collected by means of 'elite interviewing' will be applied in this chapter in order to demonstrate whether coverage of the climate change topic in Russia can be explained through the application of the PrM, however, the gathered data will also be utilised throughout the dissertation in order to support or clarify certain arguments.

Ownership structure

When talking about the barriers created by the 'ownership' filter Herman and Chomsky (1994 [1988]) warn of the monopolisation of the media market in the United States, where a few major conglomerates own and provide financial security for the major media outlets in the country and occasionally steer their information policy in the 'right' direction. The ownership structure of Russian mass media only distantly resembles the American situation, being significantly transformed over the last 25 years, it has become a hybrid where market forces do play a role but are subordinate to the state.

During the Soviet era the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) was the general manager of mass media in Russia, regulating its activity through official party legislation. The Party strictly controlled all aspects of news production processes starting with volume, frequency, content, design and ending with the editor's relations with the audience. Media was the *propaganda tool* to achieve the aims of the Party (Strovskiy 2011). As Coyne

and Leeson (2009: 9) state the 'media was central to the Soviet propaganda system', supporting this argument they refer to Lenin's understanding of the mass media's role in achieving the revolution and building the new societal order. Indeed, in Lenin's (1969 [1902]) famous work 'Chto delat'?' (What is to be done?) he proclaimed newspapers to be a collective propagandist and collective agitator, but also collective organiser. In his definition Lenin compares newspapers with scaffolding which are not a part of the house, but without them you cannot build it. Voltmer (2000: 478) states that Lenin's vision of mass media is 'in obvious contradiction to western journalistic norms', albeit she also admits that some of his postulates are still relevant in the current situation.

Even when the time of the revolution passed, the ability of newspapers to organise people remained quite similar – 'to implement the directives and policies of the central government' (Mickiewicz 1981: 68). Lenin's ideas were carried on by Stalin and Khrushchev, who were 'using mass media to communicate official news, educate and instill ideology, and present an idealized view of Soviet life' (Coyne and Leeson 2009: 9). Throughout the Soviet era many newspapers were unprofitable but their financial problems were always solved by their owner – the Party. The CPSU committee was also in charge of hiring editors and journalists, practically all of them were the Party's workers and they were achieving the Party's goals through the means of language. Work under such conditions demanded certain behaviour from journalists. Their professional norms were restricted by discipline, acceptance of editorial decisions and fear of breaking rules (Grabel'nikov 2001). Self-censorship is a related problem and is discussed in greater detail below.

After the split of the USSR, the CPSU which used to determine Soviet press policy became part of history. Some argue that after decades of being the propaganda tool of the Soviet government, during perestroika Russian mass media 'turned against' its patron and played a significant role in bringing it down. Not undermining other crucial reasons for the Soviet system's collapse Coyne and Leeson (2009: 11) conclude that 'eroding economic, political, and social conditions were important factors giving media the space to create the

common knowledge required to activate the tipping point necessary for this change'. The new regime and new role of media in society demanded a new type of ownership structure. To be able to speak on behalf of the whole society and critically assess the government's performance, and give different perspectives on the political, economic and societal events, Russian mass media in an ideal situation needed to become as independent as was possible. So, the law of mass media which was accepted in 1990 and then changed again in 1991 established the right to own mass media for not only the Party, but also for non-governmental commercial organisations and even private individuals. As a result the majority of the Party media outlets were replaced by independent press created on the basis of journalists' collectives. The vertical system of media press (from the state central newspaper *Pravda* to regional press), which was functioning on the territory of the USSR for several decades (Richter 1995, see also in Mickiewicz 1981), was replaced by a horizontal structure which was more appropriate for the democratic principles of the new state. Unfortunately, the newspapers did not stay in the hands of journalists for a long time and instead of the CPSU press, Russia got media with various ownership structures. Along with state and NGO ownership, mass media belongs to individuals, closed joint-stock companies, open joint-stock companies, limited liability companies and so on.

The reduction of state control led to a competitive market for mass media. From that point on, media outlets have had to solve problems connected with the economic side of the media production process on their own and find ways to exist in the developing capitalist society and to make profit (Kuznetsov 2003). According to the postulates of the PrM discussed earlier, this sort of pressure should make media find support with more financially stable and powerful actors in the free market system which indeed has happened in the Russian case. Simultaneously, these 'powerful actors' very quickly came to the realisation that mass media can be a source of making a profit, and, perhaps more importantly, it might also be a tool to realize corporate and commercial interests (Zasurskiy 2001).

The law of mass media which brought long-desired freedom also had some loopholes which worsened the situation by not clarifying the role of the media's owner (Zasurskiy 2004), in particular how much the owner can interfere in the news production process. This ambiguity along with other factors led to negative consequences. The media found themselves in a situation where their owner would not openly demonstrate his influence on the news flow, pretending that the media organ is just there to inform people up until the time when he needs to use it in his own interest (such as to conduct an information war against the rivals) (Grabel'nikov 2001). In this period of time Russian media once again started to lose their independence, but this time due to commercial reasons rather than ideological ones, is famous for the emergence of oligarchs into the media market (see more in Lipman and McFaul 2001). For example, at some point Berezovsky's group owned ORT (now the First Channel), TV-6, *Kommersant*, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, *Novye Izvestiya*, *Ogonek* and others. Another infamous oligarch, Vladimir Gusinsky, owned NTV, NTV+, TNT, the newspaper *Segodnya*, magazines *Itogi*, *Sem' dney*, *Karavan istoriy*, radio *Ekho Moskvy*; whilst the newspapers *Izvestiya*, *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, *Afisha* and *Bol'shoy gorod* belonged to Vladimir Potanin. Among the obvious negative consequences of the media monopolies created by these people Mikhail Nenashev (2010b) connects these negative events with the change in Russian mass media towards open manipulation of its audience in the interests of their owners.

Herman and Chomsky's (1994 [1988]) original vision of corporate influence over the American media industry and the monopolisation of the market can be compared with the role of oligarchs in the Russian case, who arguably represent very similar market forces. What seems to be different in this situation is not so much the media's relationship to its owner, but rather the close relationship of the owners to the state. For example, now most of the above mentioned media outlets do not exist or the owner has changed. This mostly happened due to the last dramatic change in the Russian media ownership structure when Vladimir Putin first took the post of Russian

President in March 2000.²³ Shortly after the start of this new era in Russian domestic politics, a series of events restricting press freedom and centralising its ownership in the hands of government started to occur (Zassoursky 2004). Oligarchs who were not in favour with the current leader eventually had to give up their media empires, which then became the property of organisations with tight state connections (governmental or private sector, or something between the two) or another oligarch but one who supported the Kremlin²⁴ (see more in Orttung 2006). Gusinsky's Media Holding owned the last major TV channel without the government's influence but after he was forced to leave the country his media conglomerate was sold out (Pasti and Pietilainen 2008).

Currently, the number of fully independent media organs is very limited²⁵ and they exist only due to their insignificance, restricted target audience or their limited territorial influence (the major TV channels which cover 99 percent of Russian territory are all under government control). Ellen Mickiewicz (2008) refers to a case in 2006 when Putin, in response to the critique of media freedom in Russia, stated that according to his information the state's share in the media market was declining and the number of newspapers is growing, so it seemed impossible (to him) to control over 53,000 periodicals. Mickiewicz (2008) points out that among the impressive amount of

²³ Becker (2004) states that due to Putin's policy, the Russian media situation significantly dropped down in the various ratings measuring freedom of speech. For example, in 2001 the Committee to Protect Journalists included him in the 'Ten Worst Enemies of the Press' list. Russia became one out of only five countries on the list of the states 'endangered with becoming repressive' (International Press Institute's Watch) and 'the Reporters without Borders' referred to Putin's media policy as 'too grotesque to be true' (ibid: 140).

²⁴ Even though the owners of the major media entities often state that they try to stay aside from media policy and their corporate arrangements, recent events which happened with the influential newspaper *Kommersant-Vlast* tell the opposite story. After its provocative coverage of the parliamentary elections in December 2011 (with references to frauds by the United Russia and a photograph of one of the ballots with insults towards Putin), its owner oligarch Alisher Usmanov recommended the dismissal of the editor-in-chief and the general director of the publication's holding company (Schwartz 2011).

²⁵ According to the former Russian Ministry of Press, in 2003 only around 10 percent of press media had relative economic independence (predominately managed through the collective ownership of the journalists), whilst the majority of media organs belonged to the state or private owners (Nenashev 2010b).

Russian press mentioned by the president there were only a very limited number which had 'a decent circulation' and the influential ones were indeed to a great extent controlled by the state or 'clients of the government'.

Besides the vast formal state ownership of media outlets, the state also has influence through the Ministry of Culture and Mass Communication which gives licences, publishes laws and regulations. The state also has a monopoly over information transmitting equipment such as satellites (De Smaele 2007). Coyne and Leeson (2009) argue that the negative picture of Russian media ownership structures is threatening Russia's democratic development and 'could not reinforce political and economic reforms' (ibid: 11). Nenashev (2010a) shares the same views on the problem by stating that the independence of the journalists' professional community is impossible due to the confrontation of the great administrative resources of the state and the financial resources of big business.

As far as the problem of the coverage of climate change goes, the changes which happened during Putin's centralisation of power has also had a long-term effect. The majority of the most important and popular media belong not only to the government and its close partners, but also they belong to the individuals and organisations with heavy interests in the oil, gas or other industries which significantly contribute to Russia's GHG emissions.²⁶ The climate change and economic justice programme coordinator in Oxfam (Russia) Yulia Yevtushok states that these specifications of the Russian media

²⁶ For example, Gazprom-Media Holding owns federal TV channel *NTV*, radio stations '*Ekho Moskvy*', *Relax FM*, magazines *Itogi*, *Karavan Istoriy*, *Panorama TV*, and the newspaper *Tribuna* (Gazprom-Media website 2013). Alisher Usmanov, the main shareholder of Metalloinvest (one of the largest steel producers in the world), co-owns media-holding *Kommersant* and the TV channel *7TV*. ONEXIM Group (a private investment fund with interests in energy, mining and other industries) owns the news agency *RosBiznesKonsalting*, the newspaper *RBK daily*, magazines *RBK*, *M2*, *Nashi Den'gi*, *Autonews*, and *Lifetime*. An even bigger company but with similar interests, Interros, owns media holding ProfMedia which manages TV channels *TV3*, *MTV-Russia*, and *2x2*, the radio stations *Avtoradio*, *Energy*, *Radio Romantika*, and *Humour FM*, newspaper *Afisha*, Russian search engine www.rambler.ru and websites www.lenta.ru, www.afisha.ru, www.101.ru (Media Atlas 2013).

ownership structure are the main reasons why so often (until a few years ago) newspapers and TV would report that climate change is a lie, a deception created by the West (interview, Moscow, 22 July 2011). The media outlets with an ownership structure significantly dominated by the state are obviously much more heavily influenced by it. For instance, the predominantly state-owned information agency *RIA Novosti* (which will be discussed later on in greater detail) started to cover the climate change topic shortly after President Medvedev introduced the Climate Doctrine and made his appearance at the Copenhagen Conference in 2009. As a journalist of another state-owned media outlet 'GTRK-Novosibirsk' Olga Salagina said:

I was almost forced to write about environmental problems around three years ago. My editor told me to do it which has never happened before. I guess there was some kind of task set for my management. When we started our project [series of video news on environmental problems] even people in the city council said that probably 'federals' [state official at the federal level] started to care about it [environment] (interview, Chemal, 13 August 2011).

Nevertheless, in the situation of strong interdependence between the energy sector and the state, it always has to be considered with caution whether it matters if the media outlet is straightforwardly owned by the government or by, for instance, gas giants like 'Gazprom'.

Concluding, with regards to the 'ownership filter' of the PrM, it is important to realise the great influence of the state. In Russia the majority of the media belongs to people or organisations with their main interests outside of the media industry (Koltsova 2006) and since media entities themselves are largely unprofitable businesses, their owners 'see media first of all as weapons to gain political capital' (Koltsova 2001: 322). Even in the original study of the Western (capitalist) media system of the United States, Herman and Chomsky in their discussion of the ownership filter also pointed to the 'impressive political ties with media'. Once again, it should be noted that if in the American situation business can be both influencing and influenced by the state, in Russia it is more of a one way street with government imposing its

rules of the game on businesses. So, because it is very difficult to separate in Russia the state and business then regardless of whether the newspaper is owned by the government directly or by a large corporation, the goals of its owners are the same. Lastly, as was demonstrated by examples in the case of climate change coverage, this filter is also influenced by the fact of the merging of the state and the energy sector – the main contributor to Russia’s GHG emissions.

Advertising

Herman and Chomsky (1994 [1988]) described the ‘advertising’ filter as a powerful free market tool for altering media content. In Russia advertising came into the media sector relatively recently along with the collapse of the old state system. The old ideology of production, which was supported by the state and should have benefited its prosperity, was replaced by the new ideology of consumerism which aims to satisfy individual needs (Grabel’nikov 2001). This thought is echoed by Oates and McCormack (2010: 122) who claim that ‘there are two significant trends in Russian media content, one linked to market forces and the other to political pressures’. Political pressures have been discussed in the section on the media ownership structure and will be discussed further on in the chapter whilst the ‘market forces’ are the most relevant for this section in the context of the ‘advertising filter’.

Due to the emerging ideology of the free market, Russian media have been adjusted accordingly. For instance, politically-oriented newspapers lost their circulation and can exist only by relying on the money of the supporting party. The so called informative-commercial press have the biggest circulations and popularity. This type of Russian media organ is very close in its format to the Western tabloids, which are eager to attract their readers by writing about scandals, show-business or sensationalist stories (including climate change). The informative-commercial press is very flexible and depends on the market’s supply and demand logic and that is why its quantity is always changing. Some papers replace others or change their content to fit audience interests (Grabel’nikov 2001). Ironically, these media organs are considered to be

independent because they can exist without state support by giving lots of space to advertising. However, by getting their independence from state ideology, the media are becoming the most powerful tool for the propaganda of the ideology of consumerism. This said, it should be acknowledged that when advertising was first introduced in Russia in the early 1990s it took some time for people to get used to it and for the industry to adopt it, so for the majority of media organs advertising remained just a supplementary source of income.²⁷

Overall, the advertising market in Russia has steadily grown over the last decade. Krylov and Zuenkova's (2003) analysis has showed that by 2003 advertising growth exceeded the country's GDP growth by five times. Even though advertising budgets still might be lower than in countries where advertising is very important like the United States, the market is increasing and it cannot be ignored. Viktor Kolomiets, a professor at the faculty of Journalism of the Lomonosov Moscow State University, explains the growth of advertising in Russia by such factors as political stabilisation of the society which led to the growth of investments, including in advertising, the growth of the purchasing capabilities of the audience and an increase in the competitiveness among businesses (see in Krylov and Zuenkova 2003).

Grabel'nikov (2006) vigorously argues that throughout the years of market reforms Russian media also acquired the market features of 'bourgeois journalism' by copying the Western models where ratings and advertisers take the first place and move the audience's interests to the background. From another point of view, a Russian 'special way' of doing things could be observed in this case as well, as Russian media did not simply copy the Western way of conducting media business, but reproduced it adjusting for its national context. For instance, in the Russian case the boundaries between the powers of advertisers, owners, sponsors or investors are blurred, but owners still remain at the top of this hierarchy. As was discussed in chapter two

²⁷ Koltsova (2006) names three reasons behind the slow development of advertising in Russia: first, the low purchasing capacity of the audience; second, people were not ready for this new way of goods-promotion and businesses did not have experience of how to use this tool to their advantage; and last, unfavourable legislation which was rather limiting for media which were trying to build their business on income from advertisements.

Herman and Chomsky do not suggest the absolute equality of all filters or on the contrary the domination of one filter over another (and in their research the domination of the owners was not demonstrated), but rather they state that the importance of the filters depends on the politico-economic specifications of the particular case study.

A number of scholars who applied the PrM in their research (for example see Hearn-Branaman 2009, Lewis 2010, Edwards and Cromwell 2006), noticed that according to its logic the 'advertising' filter substantially influences the coverage of environmental topics in general and climate change in particular. For the Russian media this does not seem to be the case. For example, the TV news programme 'GTRK-Novosibirsk' journalist Olga Salagina shared her experience on writing an article which created tension with the channel's advertisers. Some time ago Salagina found out that one of the industries not far from her city had major faults in utilisation of its waste, hence, she decided to raise the alarm, but the channel's bosses asked her 'to be nice' to the company, because they had a good contract with this organisation – 'we help them with PR and they pay'. Despite the 'recommendation' Salagina still prepared her programme, after which they indeed had problems with this company, but it did not last long and their relations were soon re-established and carried on (interview, Chermal, 13 August 2011). Other interviewees also denied noticing advertisers' direct influence on their everyday work. As the former news editor at the Channel One Yuriy Bakhnov suggested, 'I doubt that advertisers are only interested in numbers [ratings], but they want to know a bit about the content, for example, they would avoid programmes with open criticism of the Kremlin. Still, disagreements with the advertisers will not cause much trouble; the media outlet might just lose a bit of money' (interview, Moscow, 22 July 2011). Perhaps this filter is more of an issue for the editors rather than correspondents, or in the Russian case its influence is quite marginal in comparison to other filters.²⁸ Belin (2001: 328) argues that the

²⁸ Interestingly, even the limited influence of advertisers is perceived in Russia much more negatively than the one exercised by the media owners (Koltsova 2001). This may be related to the country's past, in which people were quite

number of media outlets in Russia (in particular in Moscow) does not represent 'the consumer demand or the size of the advertising market', because of the priority of the political use of the newspapers, when owners are willing to have financial losses in order to have access to the 'political' mass media (see more in Vartanova 2012).

Another specific characteristic of the Russian filter is that the advertising market is quite centralised and connected with ratings mostly in the central part of the country or large cities (for example, Moscow or Novosibirsk); on its outskirts it is more hectic and is missing any kind of systematisation (Koltsova 2011). The regional media outlets struggle to maintain contact with sufficient amounts of advertisers and to gain their loyalty media become much more dependent on advertisers and as Koltsova (2001: 324) concludes, from her research based on extensive fieldwork in Russia, that this situation leads to a 'large amount of hidden advertisement'. This way of solving financial problems was especially popular during the early 1990s by writing articles with hidden messages promoting certain interests within them (so called 'dzhinsa' or 'zakaz') (Zhukova 2007). When they did so, journalists or editors were getting extra profit (Belin 2002). These articles were paid unofficially (directly to the editor or a journalist) and unfortunately, sometimes they contained some aggressive accusations against certain political figures²⁹ or businessmen. Since they were disguised as objective journalistic opinion pieces, they would gain greater audience attention than the official advertisements. Currently this problem still exists to some extent, though the quality of articles has significantly improved. Returning again to the PrM, the existence of such

used to state control, whilst attributes of the new capitalist ideology are still new to them.

²⁹ One of the most famous examples would be Sergey Dorenko's 'TV war campaign' against the then mayor of Moscow Yuriy Luzhkov and the Prime Minister Evgeniy Primakov who according to different sources was one of the main opponents of Vladimir Putin (who was running for the presidential post). Dorenko's position was argued by a journalist from another TV channel – Evgeniy Kiselev. As Strovskiy (2011) states this battle was motivated by political ambition of the TV channels owners – oligarchs Berezovsky and Gusinsky (see more in Belin 2001, Zassoursky 2004).

phenomena as hidden advertising makes it difficult to separate advertiser from information sources (Koltsova 2006).

In conclusion, the advertising filter in the Russian media system has some very specific differences to the one introduced by Herman and Chomsky for the United States. These start with the very recent appearance of advertisement as an industry in Russia and its slow development due to the economic problems the country faced in the 1990s, and end with the blurred boundaries between advertisers' and owners' interests and even more with the merging of the state and advertising industry³⁰ (Koltsova 2006). This last point fits within the larger problem of the extremely close interrelations between the state and business, which will be discussed further on in this dissertation with regards to the energy sector. It can be suggested that in the Russian case the advertising filter on its own is quite weak (which was also confirmed by the interviewees) and can quite easily be ignored in some situations.

Sourcing

Referring again to the recent past of Russia, it can be said that the 'sources of information' filter is one of the most modified filters (not considering the advertising filter which did not exist before at all). Under the rule of the Soviet government, journalists have been immensely restricted in the ways they could find information on the topic or receive comments from the parties involved, which led to the situation when 'a limited flow of information was the norm' (de Smaele 2007: 1300). Due to the journalists' inability to fully inform people of the acute problems, the existing informational gap was filling up through the informal ways of communication when Soviet people through their personal connections were trying to make sense out of current political or social events.

After 1990 citizens' right to seek and obtain information (as well as distribute it) was recorded in the new Russian Constitution (1993) as well as in

³⁰ One of the examples of the close connections between the state and advertising markets are companies Premier SV and Video International which throughout the last decade have had exclusive rights to sell the advertising space in major national TV channels and which have demonstrated close ties with the state (Belin 2001).

the Law on Mass Media. Theoretically from that time onwards journalists can 'knock on any door' and ask almost any questions they wish and nobody should prevent them from doing so or refuse to give information as it would be considered illegal (of course apart from some sensitive topics such as personal data, state or military secrets which are specified in the law³¹). Furthermore, the change in the Russian media system at the end of the last century was accompanied by the establishment and development of new professional activity – public relations. The role of PR services has been discussed by various researchers with regards to the 'sourcing' filter of the PrM. Russia as well as other Western countries encountered the same problems here: various 'press centres, press services, press secretaries [...] were intended to facilitate journalists' access to information' (De Smaele 2007: 1301). In reality PR services became another obstacle in the way of obtaining data, since their goal was to provide information which only or largely benefits the organisation. Governmental, commercial and other press centres tend to face opposite problems to the journalists' problems. They compete with each other to be able to get their information published or broadcasted, it is not a secret that to present a company's information as news is a free and more effective way to advertise the company. At the same time, only certain information needs to be popularized whilst other information needs to be hidden or at least presented in the most beneficial way (Chumikov 2001).

The phenomenon of journalism being replaced by PR technologies in Russia has often been criticised by scholars studying the Russian mass media. Skilfully prepared information by corporate media specialists does not leave much space for the journalists' investigation, analysis, or reflection on the problem (Bogdanov cited in Gabel'nikov 2006). Arguably, it leads to the degradation of the profession as such and allows sources of information not only to provide valuable opinions on the subject matter, but also to dictate the way that it will be written and delivered to the audience. It can be suggested

³¹ Interestingly, in the new law ecological data fell into the category of information which requires full exposure so it cannot be hidden from public whilst during the Soviet Union on contrary it was under the taboo (de Smaele 2007).

that because of well-developed PR services, business or state organisations do not need to control media as often (Koltsova 2001), the distribution of information that is needed happens 'naturally'.

De Smaele (2007) argues that one of the specific characteristics of journalism in Russia is the relatively important role in gaining information through personal connections. She refers to a study conducted in Voronezh in 2002 on the subject of the usefulness of personal connections for journalists. The results of this research showed that 70 percent of official written inquiries from journalists and the public were declined, whereas only 36 percent of those inquiries which were made through personal approach got rejected. Interestingly, as Konovalov (see de Smaele 2007: 1303) suggests in the Russian case informal communication is the way to work within the constraints of secrecy mentioned earlier (such as vague definitions of state, military or business secrets). Furthermore, Russian journalists tend to have some kind of a rank attached to each newsmaker. Katja Koikkalainen (2008) suggests that for journalists the most preferable sources would be the ones with the highest position in the organisation or with whom journalists have informal connections.

Another peculiarity of the Russian mass media is that they are concentrated under the large media holdings and controlled by a few owners, hence media outlets are united horizontally (various newspapers share the same owner) or vertically (different types of media such as TV channels, radio and newspapers are part of one media entity). As a result different mass media organs receive information from the same information source (Yushchenko 2007), for instance, from the same information agency such as *RIA Novosti*, which will be discussed below, as one of the major information sources on climate change in Russia.

Informing about climate

Considering the scientific complexity of the climate change topic, the choice of information sources is extremely important and at the same time challenging (Boykoff 2011: 59). In Russia (as in any other country), one of the main

information sources is the 'expert' – climatologists or other natural scientists who directly study the problem on a daily basis and supposedly have the most up-to-date and objective information. Also, representatives of environmental NGOs such as WWF-Russia, Greenpeace Russia, Oxfam-Russia and so on, can act as experts.

Throughout the series of interviews with journalists conducted for this project, several conclusions have been reached with regards to the information sources for the climate change topic. Firstly, Russian climatologists are not very public people and journalists find it quite difficult to get in touch with them besides the time when they meet them during climate change conferences. The main scientific sources of information on this topic in Russia are the Voeikov Main Geophysical Observatory, the Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring (Roshydromet) and the Institute of Global Climate and Environment, whose members often become part of the Russian delegation at the UN conferences on climate change.

At the regional level the situation is much worse, journalists struggle to identify who they need to approach. A correspondent of the regional newspaper 'Svobodnyy kurs' (Altay region) admitted that when she started to write about climate change she could not find any experts in her city and she was forced to look for sources in other cities and regions (interview, Chermal, 13 August 2011). Sometimes journalists cannot get the necessary information because scientists do not want to give their opinion if it goes against official interests (various interviews, July-August 2012). As a result journalists often remain alone with their problem: 'even if we [journalists] understand that officials or businessmen do something wrong like damage the environment, we cannot object to them because our opinion is not qualified on the topic' (Salagina, interview, Chermal, 13 August 2011). Another problem of addressing scientists and experts as information sources was voiced by the correspondent of BBC-Russia Oleg Boldyrev (interview, Moscow, 25 July 2011), he stated that one of the main reasons behind the low coverage of climate change in Russia is a disagreement within the scientific community and even a great degree of

scepticism among Russian scientists which was quite popular until very recently (for more on this problem see chapter four on Russian state policy).

In the case of climate change coverage NGOs play a great role, for instance, the prominent climate change spokesperson and climate change programme coordinator at the WWF-Russia, Alexey Kokorin, has become one of the most quoted people on climate change in Russia. His expertise on the subject as well as skills to communicate with the mass media helps him to build long-term and mutually favourable relations with journalists. Kokorin states that his motto in communication with media is 'never say 'no' to them', so he always tries to explain and advise journalists on the problem, which will hopefully contribute to better coverage. However, he adds that this rule does not apply to TV talk-shows or some scandalous cases when journalists try to create a scary spoof story rather than discuss the real problem (interview, Moscow, 27 July 2011). Caution when providing information for TV journalists was also raised by another NGO representative. The manager of the project on energy efficiency in Greenpeace Russia, Igor Podgorny, said that it is easier for him to deliver his message to print media where he has more control over the final outcome, whilst in the TV programmes words often get taken out of context and do not fit within the overall content of the programme (interview, Moscow, 27 July 2007).

Interestingly enough, in some cases during the major international conferences on climate change when the official Russian delegation fails to provide any kind of information for mass media through NGO representatives, even Russian journalists themselves help to deliver the Russian official position on climate change to journalists from other countries. This paradoxical situation is a result of the poor publicity of the official Russian delegation at the UN conferences. As Olga Dobrovidova from RIA Novosti noticed 'it seems that the Russian delegation has a position that it is better not to say anything at all in order not to get unwanted questions' (interview, Moscow, 22 July 2011). Another criticism of the Russian official delegation as an information source relates to the composition of the delegation: 'during the conference on climate change in Bonn, the American delegation which did not sign the Kyoto

Protocol had 25 members whilst the Russian one only 7, and they simply did not have expertise on some questions' (Yevtushok, Oxfam-Russia, interview, Moscow, 22 July 2011). In some cases NGOs even try to defend Russian officials. Kokorin explained this paradox: 'when we are here, in Moscow, I always criticize our officials, but in front of media from other countries, it becomes more important to explain Russia's position rather than let it be blamed for all the sins' (interview, Moscow, 27 July 2011). In general Russian environmental NGOs 'use' international conferences to attract as much attention to the problem as possible by creating special web pages, blogs, press-releases and other print or electronic material. It seems that only in exceptional situations Russian NGOs find themselves in demand by journalists, whilst during 'quiet' times attracting their attention becomes a struggle: 'especially until the end of 2009, almost nobody was interested in the topic despite all of our 'inventions'. We tried to organise various events and action days, but the results were almost negative', – said Yulia Yevtushok from Oxfam-Russia (interview, Moscow, 22 July 2011).

The above mentioned organisations are mostly located in the central part of Russia (mostly Moscow), in other regions the situation is even less optimistic. The attention of mass media is even more difficult to attract especially because it is more difficult to make the topic relevant to specific geographical areas. However, NGOs have found another way to provide information on climate change and attract attention to the problem by organising seminars devoted to climate change problems for journalists. In August 2011 the NGO 'Centre of environmental innovations' (Tsentr ekologicheskikh innovatsiy), with the financial help of the United States Agency of International Development (USAID) and with the local support of the NGO Altai Regional Public Fund 'Altai – 21st Century' organised a media-training event: 'Les i izmeneniya klimata: problemy i resheniya' (Forest and climate change: problems and solutions (which this author attended)). The training took place in the picturesque village of Chermal in the Republic of Altai, where over four days journalists from the various central and regional media outlets learnt how to cover climate change related topics and also had a

chance to talk to experts and get information first hand on climate change consequences for Russia.

According to one of the organisers of the seminar, Elena Surovikina, their goal was to bring together journalists from different regions (centre and periphery) and different types of media (print, TV, radio) so in addition to other outcomes of the seminars they would share with each other their own experiences of working on this topic (interview, Chermal, 14 August 2011). By the end of the seminar each journalist prepared at least one article devoted to climate change, but for the organisers of the training the main goal was to educate journalists about the problem and interest them in the long-run, so that they would pay greater attention to the problem throughout their careers. They are convinced that the seminars they organised before significantly improved not only journalists' knowledge and understanding of the problem but also the general level of awareness of the problem among the population (Andrey Stetsenko, Centre of Environmental Innovations, interview, Chermal, 14 August 2011). Journalists-participants also consider this kind of activity a way to solve the problem of scarce sources of information on climate change, since it allows journalists to understand what the problem is about and who they should approach in case they want to cover it and also what the consequences of climate change are for everyone, including people who read their articles or watch their programmes (various interviews and observations, Chermal, 12-15 August 2011).

State official information sources – main newsmakers on climate change?

'Impenetrable!' ('Neprobivaemye!'), – this was how the journalist of the regional radio station 'GTRK-Altay' and a host of the radio-programme 'Perekrestok' ('Intersection') Yuliya Mikhaylova described the local officials in their role as information sources (interview, Chermal, 13 August 2011). She added that when she tries to talk to officials about such sensitive topics as environmental change it is extremely difficult to get through to them:

In our city – Barnaul (Altay region), there is a divide: representatives of the city authorities are very closed for

communication (they demand endless confirmations with their press-service) whilst regional authorities easily agree to give a comment, but their usual response is that everything is good and that they are working on all problems, so it is almost impossible to get the real information out of them.

Mikhaylova admitted that eventually she stopped trying to organise meetings with them since it always comes down to the official line rather than any kind of discussion. The climate change host at the radio station, 'Voice of Russia', John Harrison shared a similar opinion:

It is very difficult to find somebody in the government to take part in my programme. Because until recently [Medvedev's announcement of the anthropogenic character of climate change], half of the government did not consider that climate change would be a problem at all, therefore appearing on the programme on climate change would be counterproductive to them, and the other half are afraid to take part in any media show or articles (Skype interview, 18 June 2012).

From another side, quite often interviewees stated that in one way or another the main 'newsmakers' in the country, which for the topic of climate change includes President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin (their posts at the time of the interviews). There is a mutual agreement that in the last few years the climate change topic caught on mostly due to the 'right' information coming from the heads of state: 'it is already good news for us that Medvedev started to admit the existence of the problem – the Conference was somehow covered only because at the last moment Medvedev decided to go there' (Podgorny, the energy efficiency project campaigner at Greenpeace Russia, interview, Moscow, 27 July 2011); 'the situation has changed after the Copenhagen Conference, Russia saw economic benefits and the President announced a new direction' (Davydova, correspondent for the newspaper 'Kommersant', Skype interview, 7 July 2011); 'I would like to believe that our main newsmaker [Putin] will change the situation and make

climate change a public problem' (Dobrovidova, *RIA Novosti*, interview, Moscow 20 July 2011).

All of the above mentioned interviewees and a few others also expressed hope that more attention will be paid to the climate change topic with the appointment of the President's advisor on climate change issues, Professor Alexander Bedritsky (see chapter four for more about this appointment). Because of the importance of the Russian official elite in the question of climate change coverage, one of the main concerns which arises out of this situation is whether the newly elected President Putin will continue Medvedev's more educated and more coherent policy and stance on climate change and will keep Bedritsky, as his advisor or if we will witness more comments such as: 'wind turbines kill worms' or 'less money will be spent on fur coats'.

The role of information agencies as information sources – case study of RIA Novosti

According to Koltsova's (2006) research on the Russian media system, the hierarchy of the information sources is headed by the information agencies. Indeed, information agencies very often become the starting point for journalists writing articles or conducting independent investigations. The Russian international news agency *RIA Novosti* is one of the biggest agencies in the country, it also became one of the first media outlets which has devoted a separate sub-section to climate change problems ('Pogoda i klimat' – 'weather and climate')³² within its bigger section on the environment. *RIA Novosti* has been providing news for over 70 years and started as the Soviet Information Bureau in 1941 with the main purpose of delivering news from the battlefields of the Second World War. Currently, it provides information for Russian and foreign mass media, the presidential administration, Russian central and regional governments, various ministries and diplomatic services, NGOs as well as numerous business organisations (*RIA Novosti* 2012c). Through its

³² After the modernisation of the website in 2012, *Ria Novosti* does not have sub-sections within its main section, hence, climate change news is now published together with other environmental news under the heading 'Ecology' (Ekologiya).

website the agency's information *RIA Novosti* targets ordinary people who prefer to look for their news on the internet. In spite of *RIA Novosti*'s long history and an impressive record of service, the climate section was launched quite recently in 2009. On a weekly basis the agency usually publishes one or two information articles on climate change or a topic related to it, excluding times when something extraordinary happens such as the international conferences on climate change, in these cases the number of news articles might rise significantly.

All news could be divided into several thematic blocks: Russia's involvement in the problem (acceptance and realisation of the Climate Doctrine, the work of Hydromet, Joint Implementation projects), international negotiations, scientific findings, reports produced by the UNEP or IPCC and so on. According to the *RIA Novosti* special climate correspondent Olga Dobrovidova, since these news items are very narrow and quite complicated, only specific people are involved in covering them (interview, Moscow, 20 July 2011). Thus around two years ago (when the section on climate was opened) Dobrovidova was appointed to work specifically on this topic, which made her one of the very first (and very few) journalists in Russia who specialise on topics related to climate change. The extremely limited number of Russian journalists writing about this topic is shown by their representation (or under-representation) at the UN conferences on climate change, where occasionally Dobrovidova meets a couple of her countrymen but mostly gets 'attacked' by her colleagues from other countries who are genuinely surprised to see a Russian journalist and very curious to hear how this topic is covered in Russia. The initiative to create such an unusual position for Russia as a 'correspondent-climatologist' was triggered by the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009 (COP-15), as Dobrovidova said:

before it nothing was practically written about climate change (in Russia), but after the Copenhagen [Conference] it became apparent that from now on it will be discussed a lot. Before nothing was happening in Russia, but after the Climate Doctrine acceptance, it

became a topic... however, I am not sure if there was an 'order' [by the state] on the topic per se (ibid).

Dobrovidova describes one of the main challenges in writing about climate change as the 'high entry barrier' – the topic demands an understanding of quite sophisticated issues and at the end without a degree in natural sciences 'you just have to believe that there is a consensus that climate change is happening' (ibid). Even though *RIA Novosti* acts as an information source for many other mass media entities, finding its own sources on climate change issues becomes a problem for the agency. According to Dobrovidova, it is impossible to get a press-release from the Institute of Global Climate and Ecology of the Roshydromet and the Russian Academy of Sciences and most of the time she has to spend lots of time looking for the necessary people. Also, it is difficult to provide a balanced picture, since climate sceptics in Russia are 'insane' and they mostly think that climate change is a plot against Russia.³³ 'So in the end we just translate the official flow of information, trying to add some information from abroad but we cannot create a proper discussion on the topic, though that is not our job to do. We are just an information agency' (ibid). Perhaps at the moment *RIA Novosti* is one of the most influential media outlets in terms of covering climate change problems. However, since the agency is also partly owned by the government their impartiality is often questioned. Thus Yulia Yevtushok (Oxfam-Russia) admitted that their world famous organisation Oxfam is struggling to get the attention of *RIA Novosti*, as Yevtushok puts it: 'They are used to working with the WWF-Russia and Greenpeace-Russia, but they are not sure if we are not 'harmful' [for the state]' (interview, Moscow, 22 July 2011).

In conclusion, as much as the 'sourcing' filter has some internationally common features due to the nature of journalism and the growing institution of PR, when analysing media coverage of climate change in Russia it is important

³³ Interestingly, a few other journalists also evaluated the difficulty in finding an adequate sceptical position on the problem as a negative one. As was discussed in chapter one, by internalising the 'balance norm' which rather distorts the information on climate change, Russian journalists follow the trend which was observed in the Western media several years ago and which has been acknowledged as no longer relevant.

to keep in mind the specifications of the Russian media. De Smaele (2007) argues that due to the restricted access of information during the Soviet period, information became an 'elitists' commodity whose flow was controlled by a 'powerful minority' (ibid: 1310, see also in de Smaele 2002). In the modern era the situation drastically changed, however, the selectivity of the information flow and privileged access to it remains. Even in the case of global problems like climate change, which affects absolutely everyone regardless of their social status and level of knowledge on the subject, Russian journalists struggle to find information. Experts possess valuable knowledge but prefer not to get involved in such politicised issues. News agencies are very useful, but most of the time they are good only for journalists to get a general idea (it is a starting point for further development of the story). Russian NGOs are not so authoritative (especially on the regional level and especially in comparison to their foreign colleagues), so the media often discount them, or are reluctant to work with them. At the end the most authoritative newsmaker becomes the state, which to a great degree (on purpose or not) manages the information flow on climate change. Once again, Russia's specification is not alien to the PrM concept. Herman and Chomsky also mentioned that mass media protect themselves by referring to official sources which, arguably, are more trustworthy among the public. Perhaps, in the Russian case (especially in the climate change situation) this trend is taken to the extreme.

Flak

As discussed in the previous chapter, Herman and Chomsky (1994 [1988]) connect the 'flak' production process with the concept of power. In other words, in order to produce the media critique, the institution or individual has to have some substantial administrative or financial resources and authority to do so. The PrM authors as well as other scholars who utilised the PrM (for example see Cromwell 2002, Hearn-Branaman 2009, Pedro 2011a) give various examples of the 'flak' producers starting with NGOs, business lobbies and finishing with the media outlet themselves, however, Herman and Chomsky (1994 [1988]: 28) conclude that 'the government is a major producer of flak'. This chapter argues that in countries like Russia this statement is

particularly relevant, and the 'state' is by far the major source of 'flak'. It should be noted that other actors who also might produce 'flak' are not disregarded and will also be mentioned in this section.

In the USSR 'flak' was a well established practice. Methods of Party control could have included editors' regular meetings and reports to the Party representatives or, on the other hand, presentations by the Party's secretaries at the editorial meeting with the clarification on what should be featured in the new issues.³⁴ During the *perestroika* these methods started to lose their effectiveness (from the point of view of CPSU leadership); and in the cases when they did work they were slowing down the democratic processes that had appeared in the media. Specifically, it was apparent when media tried to follow the principle of a plurality of opinions. Local Party committees still preferred to see on newspaper pages the ideas which would not discredit the Party's leaders. At times they would even destroy all issues of the newspapers which they found outrageous. Voltmer (2000: 472) points out that 'the press under Gorbachev was still controlled, albeit the style of supervision changed from a confrontational to a cooperative relationship.'³⁵ Grabel'nikov (2001) argues that these control methods, in the end, played against the Party. The more media were forced to be a propaganda tool in support of the state, the more this backfired against the government. The media became one of the first institutions which turned against the Party and criticized it with even more power.

³⁴ Interestingly, during the time of total censorship by the Soviet government, freedom of speech existed in the form of the samizdat: 'This involved the underground production and distribution of a wide range of media including political and social commentary, full length manuscripts on a variety of topics [...] the underground media provided alternative ideas to those the state disseminated through official media' (Coyne and Leeson 2009: 9). Quite often people involved in it were prosecuted, however, the existence of samizdat shows how people try to find a way to express their opinion and fight the system, even if they do not succeed.

³⁵ Former chairman of the Gosteleradio USSR and former editor of the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* professor Mikhail Nenashev in his opinion piece for the newspaper Pravda in 1990 (see Nenashev 2010a) wrote that party members and its leaders were not ready for being so actively criticised by media and advocated that critique (therefore freedom) should be limited and it would be better if it actually was coming from the party itself.

As perestroika progressed the media gained more and more freedom and, arguably, a few years after 1989 can be called the 'honeymoon' (Voltmer 2000: 472) period of press freedom in Russia.³⁶ In 1991 for the first time in history freedom of speech and expression was legally defined in the form of the state law on mass media which 'prohibited censorship and barred government from shutting down media outlets... except by court order' (Coyne and Leeson 2009: 10). Unfortunately, this fundamental change did not bring the expected freedom and despite legal restrictions, it is commonly accepted that though during the hectic years of the 1990s Russian media experienced some degree of freedom, eventually for different reasons it kept losing its autonomy. Currently many agree that censorship does exist in Russia, and it can be more or less obvious depending on the importance of the covered topic, whose interests are involved in it and significance of the media outlet.

Dewhurst (2002) quotes six types of censorship in Russia (which were first discussed in print in 1996 by Russian scholar Aleksei Simonov). They are administrative and economic censorship (the officials' power to control resources needed for media operation such as printing plants or their influence on businesses to advertise or not to advertise their products in media), censorship resulting from actions by or threats from criminals (there were various cases of Russian journalists' murders which arguably were connected with criminal showdowns),³⁷ censorship resulting from editorial policy and editorial taste (which might range from how an article fits within the media outlet's overall information policy to personal preferences of managerial boards which then get imposed on journalists)³⁸ and, finally, self-censorship.

³⁶ Mikhail Nenashev (2010b) states that now 20 years after the collapse of the USSR, it became obvious that press was the main opposition and the most important tool in destroying the Soviet societal order. Ellen Mickiewicz (1999) also describes media during perestroika as a 'central component' (ibid: 11), she refers to her interviews with Gorbachev and other members of his Politburo where they all confirmed that 'every Politburo meeting started with the mass media' (ibid).

³⁷ The good discussion of the 'state and non-state agents of violence' in regards to the Russian mass media system see in Koltsova (2006).

³⁸ Perhaps this type of censorship can be met in all countries around the world and, on some definitions, this would not be 'censorship'.

Self-censorship was discussed earlier with regards to the original study of the PrM, where it was concluded that this type of censorship does not just fit within the 'flak' filter, but can be seen as a key concept of the PrM, since it assumes that regardless of the presence of institutionalized censorship, journalists 'willingly' adapt to the elites' interests. Oates (2007: 1288) states, 'Russian journalists have a finely developed sense of self-censorship and self-survival' and this awareness of their own limits derives from 'the Soviet experience of journalists, in which the action of a censor was rarely needed, as Soviet journalists understood the party "line" and the way all stories should be formulated by the time they received their first job' (ibid: 1286). Supporting evidence of this can be found in an article written by the former Soviet journalist Somov, in which he confessed that a censor was "planted" by the party inside everyone's soul, and this inner censor was worse than the official censor from outside. He explains it as follows: you could have tried to argue against censorship from outside, but nothing could have been done, when you sincerely believed in the necessity of the rules imposed by the system (see in Strovskiy 2011). As a result 'according to a survey conducted by RUJ in 2005-2006, more than 80 percent of Russian journalists [...] faced different forms of censorship in their everyday work, and almost all admitted to self-censorship' (Yakovenko 2006 see in Azhgikhina 2007: 1259). The chief editor of Ekho Moskvyy, Alexei Venediktov stated that with regards to self-censorship 'the key taboo topics are corruption among the elite and Chechnya, particularly the abuses by the Russian troops and pro-Moscow Chechens' (see in Orttung 2006). Further on, by referring to the data collected throughout the series of interviews, it will be argued that any open or direct forms of censorship are not quite relevant for the media coverage of climate change, however, self-censorship may still be important.

Censoring climate

During interviews with journalists from various media outlets and different geographical locations, interviewees often stated that in their work of covering environmental problems in general and climate change in particular, they do not experience any kind of censorship. 'Climate change is such an abstract

topic, I cannot imagine the situation when an editor would tell me not to write about it', – says TV-journalist Salagina (interview, Chermal, 13 August 2011). She admitted, however, that she had extremely negative experience with covering another environmental topic, when she was threatened by the managers of the organisation she was writing about. Salagina also noted that there are some 'political issues' which are implemented into the editorial policy, but journalists (especially ones who write about the environment) do not really notice it. For instance, if 'tomorrow the governor wants to come to our studio and talk about his work, he will be able to do it; of course money is involved, but it does not concern us (journalists)' (ibid). Journalist, Dobrovidova (*RIA Novosti*) also said that it is difficult for her to say if there is any censorship, and that she always tries to discuss problems as objectively as possible, though she did admit the possibility of censorship amongst her colleagues (interview, Moscow, 20 July 2011). The situation of the censorship on writing about environmental problems was well summarised by a correspondent of the Altay regional newspaper 'Svobodnyy kurs', Tamara Dmitrienko, who confessed that nobody stays above her, nobody will tell her what to write and how: 'they trust me and think that I am more knowledgeable about this subject', however, she also admitted that if she goes too far and topics intersect the interests of the big industries, military forces or government, she finds herself alone in the confrontational situation:

Once I wrote an article about waste management problems in the city and my editor was very happy with me; he even took my article to a presentation at an international symposium. But when people involved in this problem started to threaten me and filed an action against me, my editors said to accept the charges and pay the fine even though I was right, and of course the fine would come out of my pocket; the newspaper would at best pay half of it. So, I feel that I am free in my actions, but in the situation like this I find myself one-on-one with the problem (interview, Chermal, 13 August 2011).

Of course the example given by the Altay journalist might be more relevant for the regional media outlets, as correspondent of the newspaper *Kommersant* Davydova confirmed – the further away from the centre, the more journalists are restricted in their work (Skype interview, 7 July 2011) (see also Belin 2001).

The internet – a road to freedom?

The internet's role and place in the Russian media system deserves a separate discussion, especially in the context of the PrM filter 'flak'. As was argued before, from one side, the internet can be seen as a free platform for the production of 'flak' – public reaction to media activity through various social networks, blogs, and online comments. From another side, if 'flak' is studied from the perspective of censorship and the state is considered its main producer then the internet can be seen as a way to avoid this state control. The internet was confirmed to have a capacity for altering the fundamental principles of the PrM, to the extent that even Herman and Chomsky (2002) appeal for civil society actors to make more use of it.

In Russia just a few years ago high expectations had been assigned to this new form of communication (for example see in Vinogradov 2006). As Yushchenko (2007) concluded even though in modern Russia the political and financial elite dictate the rules of the media production process, the internet might serve as an alternative. Its interactivity, lack of censorship and possibilities for open discussions attracts a broad audience. As time goes by, it becomes more apparent that the internet's role and degree of freedom was exaggerated and it did not really become a 'saviour' of Russian freedom of speech.

It is quite obvious that all of the types of censorship mentioned earlier to some extent contribute to Russia being placed by the Press Freedom Index (2011-2012) in the 142nd position out of 179. A couple of years ago the reasons behind such a negative situation were explained by the state's influence over media information and journalists' inability to freely perform their work and by the extreme situations of journalists' struggle for freedom of speech such as the

numerous cases of reporters getting killed while their murderers are not always punished.³⁹ Among other reasons the lack of diversity in TV and radio news were named by the Press Freedom Index, but recently the internet is becoming more and more restricted (Reporters without Borders 2012). In 2012 an article describing press freedom in Russia paid close attention to the censorship which now has spread to the internet, which arguably was provoked by state officials' realisation of the internet's growing significance. For instance, it is widely accepted that massive civil protests against the results of the Duma and presidential elections in December 2011 and March 2012 respectively were to a great degree organised through various social networks and blogs. This in turn led to negative reaction from the government as a result of which many websites got banned and bloggers got sued.⁴⁰ Furthermore, sometimes online activity or the independence of online media is simulated by officials. For instance, Kemerovo's 'independent' or 'alternative' city website is actually unofficially supported by the regional administration (anonymous source, Skype interview, 27 May 2011). As Oates and McCormack (2010: 133) notice 'Russia is shaping the internet, rather than Russian society being shaped by the internet. This is a particularly clear and compelling image of how the internet is constrained by domestic, rather than international, political communication norms'.

As far as media coverage of climate change goes, the internet also does not play as great a role as could be imagined. Traditional media duplicate information on their web pages or blogs.⁴¹ There are some discussions on

³⁹ See the report 'Partial justice' on murderers of Russian journalists from 1993 until 2009 produced by the International Federation of Journalists in 2009.

⁴⁰ One of the most notable scandals raised around the infamous Russian activist and blogger Aleksey Navalny who due to his online activity against corruption in Russia and more recently against the unfair parliamentary and presidential elections became 'the enemy of the state' which led to his arrest and imprisonment for 15 days and numerous cyber-attacks on his website (Ennis 2012).

⁴¹ The limited role of the Internet in the climate communication process is not unique for Russia. For example, Neil Gavin (2009b: 130) in his research on the role of the Internet in UK climate change politics, states that 'for British citizens to make effective use of the web, they need to be a good deal more connected, interested, persistent, and "web-savvy" than they actually are.'

social networks which are usually started by the relevant NGOs and serve as another resource for not only expressing opinion on the topic, but also for journalists to get in touch with the necessary experts and to learn new information about the problem. The programme coordinator for climate change and economic justice at Oxfam (Russia), Yulia Yevtushok, shared her negative experience of an attempt to create a website about climate change for the younger audience – www.clicr.ru. The idea was to unite resources of various Russian NGOs working on this problem (something like <http://tcktkctck.org>) and make it accessible for the youth. However, Russian NGOs could not agree on how it should look and some of them confirmed that original websites of their organisations with webpages devoted to climate are enough (interview, Moscow, 22 July 2011).

Another aspect connected with the implementation of the ‘flak’ filter in the Russian context and the role of the internet is that from one side Russian NGOs are not very powerful, so they cannot be institutions which actively produce flak, at least in a way that it can be noticed (in chapter four the role of environmental NGOs in Russia’s climate change policy is discussed in more detail). The internet allows them to express their reaction to some questionable media articles or programmes. Thus when in 2009 Channel One broadcast the documentary ‘The History of a Certain Lie, or Global Warming’ (‘Istoriya Odnogo Obmana, ili Global’noe Poteplenie’), which debunked the ‘myth’ of climate change. Greenpeace Russia immediately reacted and published online

Consequently, its influence on climate change politics may still only be marginal.’ The Internet does provide an open space for various opinions and a vast amount of information on the topic, however, as Gavin (2010: 469) argues ‘the web perhaps generates more heat than light, its contribution to informed debated being mixed at best, and very unedifying, or even distasteful, at worst’, and not many people have the skills and patience to work their way through the questionable or sceptical information on climate change. On the other side, often the Internet just re-duplicates the messages popularised by the conventional media (Gavin and Marshall 2011a), the dominance of traditional media over the Internet was also noticed by Herman and Chomsky in their argument on the PrM’s relevance in the new age (see chapter two).

video responses and articles in which it explained how the documentary was misleading (Greenpeace 2009).⁴² The WWF-Russia reacted the same way.

In conclusion, scholars and practitioners agree on the presence of censorship in Russia, which indeed leads to a situation where in the weak civil society 'flak' or reaction to media products is produced by the state and even the development of the relatively new way of communication – the internet did not break this pattern. Herman and Chomsky (2002) suggested that the internet can provide a good opportunity for grassroots movements to communicate their message, but it is very unlikely that the internet will make the PrM irrelevant. It should be stated that the degree of censorship in any type of media depends on the importance and sensitivity of the topic, such as climate change, being so 'abstract' and until recently being ignored in the state's policy, does not require much control. However, it is very difficult to prove or disprove whether the coverage of climate change has been influenced by journalists' self-censorship. In this sense, the PrM is extremely relevant with its idea of the 'subtle ways' of media control, unlike with other sensitive topics such as Chechnya or corruption, journalists write about climate change in a certain way not because they are forced or told to do so, but because, as the PrM authors explain, working in a certain political and economic context reporters willingly respond to the elites' interests.

Dominant ideology

The initial name of this filter was 'anti-communist' ideology. Herman and Chomsky (1994 [1988]) explained how the sense of a common enemy (communism) united American society, including the media which directed their coverage of foreign news in a particular (anti-communist) way. After the

⁴² According to Igor Podgorny from Greenpeace-Russia, they also got in touch with journalists and with the producers of the TV channel with the appeal that such information should not be broadcast (personal communication, 27 July 2011). A year later a documentary with an absolutely different message on climate change was broadcast and Russian NGOs took a big part in its production, however, it is extremely difficult even for NGOs themselves to judge whether it was solely their achievement or a result of the change in state policy.

end of the Cold War Herman and Chomsky broadened the concept of 'anti-communist ideology' to the 'dominant ideology'. Regardless of the name this filter still represents 'a political-control mechanism' (Herman and Chomsky 1994 [1988]: 29) and relations between media and the agents of power. Hence with regards to the PrM 'dominant ideology' filter, Russian media will also be looked at in the context of their relations with the actors of power which in the Russian case are often defined by the state.

Just over 20 years ago, the dominant ideology of Russia was very clearly defined and its constraints on the media system were acknowledged and even institutionalised. The understanding of the media as a powerful tool of propaganda was central for the government of the Soviet Union and if in the US case the media had to operate within the ideology of 'anti-communism', in Russia it was 'pro-communism'. The mass media were not a subject of socio-economic relations, but middlemen which would accumulate ideas about the main doctrine and then would pass them on to the people. It is quite interesting in the context of the discussion of the PrM's applicability to the Russian context, which according to its authors explains the 'manufactured consent' within media, refer to Jonathan Becker's (2004) discussion of the 'manufactured diversity' created by the Soviet media. Becker explains this concept through the examples of 'small differences in press coverage encouraged by the state in order to appeal to audiences of different regions, education levels and occupations' (ibid: 155), and in his opinion this was 'a tool to make media messages more effective' (ibid). Arguably, both of these concepts ('manufactured consent' and 'manufactured diversity') describe the same idea of the media's dependency on external actors or factors and their role in propagating someone's ideas.

During the perestroika when the 'country was slowly moving from the totalitarian towards the fragmented political culture' (Strovskiy 2011: 235), the role of mass media changed and their everyday work routine was influenced by the surrounding ideological transformation. Further on, when the old state ideology ceased to exist, the media got an opportunity to become a member of the society powerful enough to influence the processes happening in the state

and to become a political institution on their own. Indeed, the media can be a way for people to express their view of the political situation. The media can also inform and educate people and, therefore, help them to build a democratic society.

The new ideology and, in particular, plurality in party representations in modern Russia made it possible for each political movement to be able to have their own media outlet and, hence, be able to state its ideas and programmes. However, these new political media did not have much power, they did not have enough *mass* to be noticed and to be able to make a change or convince people to be supportive of any particular political movement. Grabel'nikov (2001) also mentions the so-called hidden political affiliation of the media, which would not admit that they supported a certain side but would quite obviously deliver information in favour of that hidden owner or investor. *Nezavisimaya gazeta* (Independent newspaper) or NTV (Independent television channel) were independent only in name. In support of this, Grabel'nikov cites the words of NTV's former manager, Malashenko, who admitted that the word 'independent' in the abbreviation of NTV does not mean anything. The channel belonged at that time to the Russian oligarch Vladimir Gusinsky, who, according to Malashenko, had the right to exercise his power and fire the manager anytime he wanted to.⁴³ This situation gets worse depending on how far away regions are from the centre. During an interview, an anonymous source from Kemerovo's⁴⁴ city council who on a daily basis works with the media claimed that:

⁴³ Currently NTV belongs to the Russian gas giant corporation 'Gazprom' (Media Atlas 2011). Incidentally, the politicians and businessmen of the new Russia very quickly came to the conclusion that if you own television station then you have power. In the middle of the 1990s, when 80 percent of the population reached the poverty line, people did not have an opportunity to buy subscriptions of newspapers and magazines; therefore radio and television became only sources for free information. So, in spite of the freedom of speech coming into power, business and state elite took under their control almost all radio and television channels (Grabel'nikov 2001).

⁴⁴ Kemerovo is the capital of the Kemerovo Oblast which is situated in the biggest coal mining area in Russia (Kuznetsk Basin).

we do not have independent media; they all have their political agenda which is defined by the municipal or regional administrations. Journalists write according to our press-releases, and their articles should not deviate from the 'party line'. Everyone knows about environmental problems in our region [high level of air pollution due to coal mining industry] and how it damages our health but nobody wants to touch this topic. It is out of the ideological frame (Skype interview, 27 May 2011).

According to the ideas of the PrM, from one side the media have to fit within the state official ideological framework, from another side, the media have to operate within the dominating ideology of capitalism. Hence, at different stages of state-development, the Russian media also needed to find their place inside the state ideology: whether it was the implementation of the communist ideas or popularising ideas of the free market, ideology of consumerism and so on, but as the PrM predicts the media never really becomes an independent power on its own – a 'fourth estate', where it does not fit into the ideology, but starts to create it. This kind of power was only possessed by the media for a relatively short period of time during the first Chechen war (Grabel'nikov 2001). In 1994 the conflict in Chechnya brought major disagreements in society where people took sides depending on their pro- or anti-war moods, the mass media took a very strong anti-war stance and generated a strong campaign against the government and army (Zassoursky 2004). Grabel'nikov (2001) even reveals that in the zone of war in Chechnya, the government was trying to intercept the signal of the radio stations because their messages had a negative influence on soldiers. The government lost the information war by failing to explain to the people inside the country and abroad what the purpose of the war was.⁴⁵ This exceptional case in some ways supports the legitimacy of the 'dominant ideology' filter, even though for some time the media behaved as actors in domestic politics, quite soon the state understood its mistake. After this war the media ownership structures were all

⁴⁵ See more on the Chechnya coverage in Mickiewicz (1999).

reorganised again (see the section 'ownership'). People in power realised that media can be just as powerful as they are, so they need to be taken into account.

The current regime in Russia is often characterised as 'a managed democracy', in which all formal attributes of the democratic regime are in place (such as elections, a constitution, divided branches of power, plurality of political parties and active civil society), however, they do not properly perform due to the corruption, centralisation of power by the small group of elite (or even worse by one person – an extremely powerful president or prime minister, depending on the period). Richard Sakwa (2011a) studies this duality of Russia's modern political regime and even defines Russia as 'a dual state' in which 'the legal-normative system based on constitutional order is challenged by shadowy arbitrary arrangements' (ibid: viii). For instance, when Putin throughout his two terms centralised and strengthened his presidential power, he did not break constitutional law and did not run for a third consecutive term, but instead found an obedient successor for his policies and after allowing Medvedev to be elected as president for one term, Putin again came into office in 2012 without officially breaking any laws. The same example of duality can be used in describing the Russian media system. Maria Lipman (2009: 3) in her report on Russian media for Chatham House claims that 'in today's Russia [...] the media are reduced to being a political tool of the state or marginalized to a point of making no difference in policy-making'. She explains this by 'the lack of an enabling environment' in which there is no place for 'political pluralism, the separation of powers and the rule of law' (ibid). Becker (2004: 149) also argues that a state controlled media system like the one which can be observed in Russia is a sign of democratic degradation (the author defines this system as 'neo-authoritarian').

In this type of system, ownership of media is not restricted (as discussed above, Russian law allows anyone to own a media outlet), however, whilst state-owned media are quite openly controlled, media with other types of owners can be influenced through economic pressure or ambiguity in the law. Oates (2007: 1296) notes that due to the 'new controls and pressures on [Russian] journalists, notably market forces' the system of Russian media can

be called 'neo-Soviet'. Whilst many changes have happened after the collapse of the USSR, the media remain 'a tool for the elites rather than a watchdog of the masses' (ibid: 1297). This idea is also echoed in the co-authored work of Oates and McCormack (2010) in which they state that neither society nor journalists or politicians see the Russian mass media as 'objective' or 'balanced', and 'while there is no overt system of top-down state censorship in Russia today, the media are not free to contribute to the democratic process' (ibid: 118).

Nevertheless, despite all the criticism of the Russian modern mass media, Becker (2004) still stresses that the 'neo-authoritarian' media system should not be equated with a 'totalitarian' or even a 'post-totalitarian' one since despite all of the restrictions and 'hiccups' discussed earlier, there is clear media variety, the legally supported media and journalists enjoy independence, and also the new ideology, which even now (with Putin in his third term) does not fully parallel the former communist regime. In the words of Yuriy Bakhnov, the former news editor of Channel One:

Putin and Medvedev both support the atmosphere of freedom of speech, so you cannot deny its existence. If you want to criticize Putin, do it, but you need to support your statement. So it is all within the ideas of the 'law-based state', but then you might be called to the court to hold a response for your article and there because of the corruption and vague laws, you might pay for your words. So, freedom of speech exists, Putin and Medvedev – it is not a bloody regime, it is Pinochet with a human face (interview, Moscow, 22 July 2011).

But the contradictions described do not just exist in the system as such, but are even demonstrated throughout the statements of its main mastermind. Burrett (2011) provides an example of one of Putin's speeches on media given in 2000, where he states that 'without truly free media, Russian democracy will not survive' and at the same time shares his concern that by following their owners' (the oligarchs') interests, media become 'means of struggling against the state' (ibid: 5).

As Strovskiy (2011) concludes, one of the reasons for restrictions on press freedom is that Russian media were unable to maintain their independence during the transformation phase from the ideology of socialism towards the ideology of the free market. In the course of two decades, most Russian media organs did not manage to find a way to achieve financial independence and became severely dependent on businesses, which in turn (in the 2000s) were taken over by the state. Once again we return to the specific characteristic of the current Russian political and economic system: the tight connection between the Russian state and business, where 'the state clearly rests on top of the food chain' (Becker 2004: 152). Soldner (2008) argues that these strong connections between state and economy in Russia are typical characteristics of 'political capitalism'. He borrows this concept from Max Weber, who makes a distinction between 'rational market-oriented capitalism' and 'politically oriented capitalism' (Weber 1980: 158 see in Soldner 2008). For example, in Russia people go into politics to make profit in their businesses or control major industries in order to maintain political power. In this situation the media are treated as a 'political resource' (ibid: 172) and their functions are 'to provide information support, to establish communication contacts with voters, to mobilize resources and to lobby political decision-makers' (Zasurskiy 1999: 133). Soldner (2008: 160) argues that 'one of the most important consequences of 'political capitalism' is that it suppresses the emergence and establishment of alternative societal actors, such as political parties, trade unions, independent mass media and NGOs' and this is the exact problem which was discussed in the section on the 'flak' filter.

It is suggested here that in regard to the research of media coverage of climate change in Russia, the dominant ideology filter has to be studied in greater detail, but in the context of the state's climate policy, which will be presented in the next chapter. The importance of the state has already been demonstrated in shaping other filters of media coverage of climate change, and a detailed study of the climate policy will show whether media policy indeed was in consent with the state's position on the issues.

Concluding remarks

Starting with Lenin's appeal to use mass media as a 'propaganda tool', in order to mobilise the masses for the purpose of the revolution, in Soviet Russia media indeed served as a 'tool' in the hands of the state leaders. During perestroika and especially during the early 1990s, the media reached its 'golden age' (Belin 2002) when it even managed to influence some political and social processes, but as a prominent Russian journalist, Nadezhda Azhgikhina (2007: 1248) states, 'clearly, after the temptation of being the 'fourth power', the media lost its real independence and quite quickly became a convenient tool for elite power and structure'. So, once again media are seen as and called a 'tool' (even by journalists themselves) and their freedom is questioned, but now there is no revolution to make and no communist state to build. Russia is supposedly an emerging democracy with, among other attributes legally established and guarded freedom of speech. But despite the democratic reforms as Azhgikhina (2007: 1246) pessimistically concludes, 'the media are becoming more and more primitive, combining propaganda and entertainment which is steadily edging out serious analysis and free voices are hardly audible.'⁴⁶

The key to this riddle of the controversy lies within the structure of the current media system. In summary, the analysis has shown that the Russian media as well as the American media in Herman and Chomsky's original research have to fit with elite interests. However, if in the US case Herman and Chomsky talked about the PrM in terms of the ideology of capitalism and the free market, in Russia, we can talk about *political* capitalism, where market and state are not just largely interlinked but the state rests at the top of the system and the elites to whom media are subordinate are significantly dominated by the state.

⁴⁶ Vartanova (2012) sharing a similar view notices that 'entertainment became an attractive and politically risk-free content concept for many Russian media'. Journalist Grigorii Pasko, who himself was imprisoned for reporting on the environmental threat of nuclear waste and nuclear submarines of the Pacific Fleet, goes even further by referring to the Anna Politkovskaya's posthumous article and the activity of Russian journalists as 'farce of "clowns"', whose purpose is 'to entertain the public' and 'if they do write about serious matters, then they only say how great the "power vertical" is in all its manifestation' (Pasko 2006: 8).

The state or large industries with close connection to the state own the majority of the influential media in Russia. In the case of climate change, this factor plays a crucial role since the state policy for a long time was very controversial and these industries, predominately, come from the energy sector. The advertising market in Russia is not as significant as it was in the original case study of the PrM – the United States. The key difference between the United States and Russia is that even though in both cases the media are dependent on financial investments from the business sector, in the United States these corporations are more independent from the state, whilst in Russia the line is blurred. As Bagdikyan (cited in Zhukova 2007: 42) states, the United States media has 'holy cows' (owners, their family or friends, advertisers) which can influence any article, whilst in Russia these 'holy cows' mostly exist in the form of the state authorities. With regards to the filter 'information sources', despite the fact that climate change is a scientific topic, state leaders were acknowledged to be amongst the main newsmakers in Russia. The filter 'flak' was studied from the perspective of censorship and it was concluded that indeed de jure censorship is banned in modern Russia, but de facto it exists in various forms. Even though, the climate change topic is not significant enough for the state to censor it and, as Soldner (2008: 170) admits 'where power is not at stake, the Russian mass media can and sometimes do offer a wide range of viewpoints', but quite often journalists writing about various environmental topics face or choose to face 'self-censorship'. Finally, the last filter, 'dominant ideology', pointed out that the new regime in Russia ('dual' or 'managed' democracy) puts the media within constraints where from one side they have to adjust to the new ideology of the free market, and from another side, still have to coordinate to some extent with the authoritative power of the state.

As the PrM demonstrates in the case of media coverage of climate change in Russia, the process of 'manufacturing consent' does not need to be purposely controlled or forced, but because of the way the Russian media system operates then coverage would go up when Medvedev accepts the climate doctrine, when gas companies see economic benefits from climate change mitigation or when NGOs are not opposed by the government and being heard by the journalistic community. With the rising threat of global

environmental problems such as climate change, media can be seen as a mechanism to stimulate or protect sustainable development. As Shumilina (2010) argues, eventually, the media can lead to a change of paradigms of values and turn mass consciousness towards the new societal model (supposedly with the environment being more prioritised and being included into other spheres of life). I argue that change is happening, as various interviews demonstrated, but the question remains: what is the rationale behind it and for how long will it last? In order to answer these questions I propose looking at the changes and rationale behind the state's climate policy (which will be discussed in the next chapter) and the actual media coverage of climate change in Russia by analysing media texts devoted to this topic in chapter five.

CHAPTER 4 - RUSSIAN CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY: TOWARDS 'CLIMATE PRAGMATISM'

As has been argued in the previous chapter, the Russian state has a significant influence over media activity, following this logic in order to understand the media coverage of climate change in Russia we first need to study the state policy on this issue. Hence this chapter examines Russia's climate change policy in order to conclude whether it has changed in the past decade or so and if it has in what ways this can affect alterations in media coverage of climate change.

Russian climate change policy is an ambiguous and complex phenomenon, which can be interpreted in different ways. During the interviews conducted for this research project, the same introductory question which aimed to invite interviewees to discuss Russia's climate policy provoked polar responses: from the straightforward 'it does not exist' to the optimistically sarcastic 'now it does exist, and that is already a positive sign'. Indeed, signing agreements, implementing laws and creating special inter-institutional committees coexist in Russia with very limited practical outcomes, a lack of coordination and persistence as well as sometimes contradictory policy decisions.

As one of the key controversies, Russian state officials have a history of referring to Russia as an 'environmental leader' or an 'environmental donor'. Russia was labelled an 'environmental leader' in the 1990s because of its drastic, but involuntary, drop in GHG emissions (after the collapse of the Soviet Union) (President of Russia website 2009a). It was referred to as an 'environmental donor' due to its natural geographical resources, in particular the vast areas of boreal forest (which act as a 'carbon sink') (Medvedev 2012). At the same time, national and international environmental communities characterise Russia as an 'anti-leader' of climate change mitigation policy (RSEU 2012) which, along with other countries including Canada and Poland, were 'honoured' with the 'fossil of the day' anti-award during the Doha Conference (2012) due to its resistance to the negotiation process (Ekoreporter 2012).

Indeed, due to Russia's geographical position, its heavy reliance on the export of fossil fuels and the low energy efficiency of its economy Russia is now one of the main emitters of GHG (CRS 2008, Perelet et al. 2007). It has been argued that the environmental situation is worsened by its subordinate position towards the state's economic interests (Henry and Douhovnikoff 2008, Porfiriev 1997, Yanitsky 2009) which has resulted in the downgrading of environmental institutions and the concentration of power in a limited circle of the ruling elite (Crotty 2003, Kotov 2002, Oldfield and Shaw 2002, Peterson and Bielke 2001). These factors have contributed to the development of a policy of 'de-environmentalism' ('de-ekologizatsiya') (Yablokov 2010).

On the other hand, due to the significant drop in GHG emissions seen in the 1990s and its vast natural reserves, Russia has the capacity to be considered an 'environmental leader' (Klyuev 2002, Tynkkynen 2010) with the ability to influence the world's climate change policy. The Russian government exercised this influence to a great extent during the Kyoto Protocol negotiations (Afionis and Chatzopoulos 2010, Andonova 2008, Buchner and Dall'Olio 2005, Korppoo 2008).

This chapter contributes to the debate outlined above by examining how Russia has hitherto prioritised economic growth over environmental protection. However, it is increasingly in Russia's own economic interest to cut its carbon emissions, which also helps the country to promote its global integration. Based on content analysis of 72 presidential speeches made by Medvedev (2008-2012), this chapter argues that the governing elite, especially Medvedev, have started to recognize the economic benefits of Russia's proactive climate policy. These economic considerations are driving Russian climate policy, in two ways: the direct benefits from mitigation (for instance, by improving energy efficiency), and the indirect benefits from integration with the global community (for example, bringing 'green' investments into the country or portraying Russia as a modern trade partner that cares about its 'green' image). Hence with regard to Russia's climate policy we can witness the evolution of '*climate pragmatism*', where the state can see the benefits from remaining 'faithful' to its economic development plans and at the same time becoming a

'real' environmental leader that actually cuts its emissions rather than relying on a fortuitous drop in emissions, as in the past.

This chapter first looks at the evolution of Russia's climate change policy through the perspective of two competing views: firstly, Russia as 'de-environmentalist' and secondly, Russia as an 'environmental leader'. Then it explores the new course in climate policy in Russia which has coincided with Medvedev's presidency, hence, through the analysis of his official speeches, the chapter explores how the new emphasis on economic modernisation has become beneficial for climate policy.

Between 'de-environmentalism' and 'environmental leadership'

The concept of 'de-environmentalism' or 'de-ecologisation' (de-ekologizatsiya) has been popularised by the former special adviser to President Boris Yeltsin on environmental and public health affairs and a current chairman of the Green Party faction of the political party 'Yabloko', Alexey Yablokov. He states that 'Russia's environmental problems are the result of the state policy of 'de-environmentalism', where dealing with environmental problems is postponed until the country reaches a certain level of wealth, and until then it serves as a "reservoir of natural resources"' (Yablokov 2010: 3). Yablokov argues that this approach began to develop under the rule of Yeltsin and advanced during the time of Putin (1st two terms) and Medvedev. He identifies several stages which constitute the process of 'de-environmentalism', among them are 'the dissolution of The Environmental Protection Agency[...], a weakening of environmental protection legislation[...], the obstruction of environmental NGOs[...], a reduction of funding for environmental programmes' and so on (ibid: 4). Even though Yablokov does not specify the particular area of environmental problems which could be characterised by the phenomenon of 'de-ecologisation', he explores the country's general environmental degradation (starting with air pollution and finishing with public health problems associated with it). It can be argued that this concept accurately describes the Russian climate policy.

Another leading Russian scientist, Nikolay Klyuev (2002) states that the academic and public debate emerged at the end of the 1980s (to talk about Russia's ecological situation in a highly pessimistic way) lacks any foundation and damages the country's investment and recreational appeal. Furthermore, he argues that Russian territory is the main natural purification system of the planet, it compensates global pollution and overall acts as an environmental donor (ibid: 19). Vladimir Zakharov (2011: 6) shares a similar opinion – '[because of the recent] economic growth, rich natural resources, and the search for ways of optimal development[...] [t]his will make it possible to rank Russia not only as an energy power but also as an environmental donor.' In Klyuev's (2007) later work on the comparative analysis of states' 'eco-industrial pyramids' (the correlation between a country's industrial capacity, resources consumption and waste production) he concludes that in order to become an environmental leader Russia still needs to improve its industrial production process. The argument of Russia's environmental leadership was promoted by Russian officials and covered by the media during the Kyoto Conference in 1997 to the extent that it was claimed that 'the Russian delegation performed a diplomatic miracle' (Izvestiya 1997) and led the negotiations (see more in chapter five). As has been mentioned before, Nina Tynkkynen (2010) suggests that the media exploitation of the 'Great Environmental Power' concept in the coverage of Russia's climate change policy diverts attention from Russia's resistance to the Protocol's ratification and the carbon intensity of its economy, and highlights Russia's drastic drop in GHG emissions and its natural capabilities (due to its forests) to solve climate change problems – 'a source of environmental solutions rather than a source of environmental problems' (ibid: 182).

The outlined controversies in Russia's climate policy to some extent are embedded in its geographical specifications where, as discussed below, the wealth of natural resources coexists with extreme vulnerability to the effects of climate change.

Russia's geography and climate change consequences

Russia's rich natural resources reserves and vast territory define the state's economic orientation and its influence on the global environmental situation. In fact, even after the split-up of the USSR, Russia remains the largest state in the world, containing such different climate zones as arctic, sub-arctic, temperate and subtropical zones (Perelet 2007; Shaw 2009). Russia holds the record for the maximum temperature range in the world: 116.6C. Natural zones vary drastically from polar desert, tundra, taiga, mountains, and mixed forest to steppe and semi-desert. Another key geographical characteristic is Russia's leading position in reserves of natural resources such as natural gas, oil, coal, iron ore, bauxite, nickel, tin, and so on (Orlenok et al 1998). Significantly, most of these resources are situated in predominantly permafrost territory (which covers 65 percent of Russia's territory) and in severe climatic conditions leading to the high cost of their extraction and transportation.

There is the possibility that the large size and geographical nature of Russia's territory, the diversity of climate zones, the location of natural resources as well as the country's very low population-density might lead to positive consequences from climate change for Russia. For instance, the majority of Russia's territory is situated in the area of maximum warming and so the softening of climate conditions could extend the zone of 'comfortable living' to the Northern border, reduce energy expenses during the heating season, facilitate access to natural resources, prolong harvesting seasons, decrease cold-related illnesses and deaths, improve transportation through the Arctic seas and facilitate the development of the Arctic shelf (Kattsov et al. 2007; Perelet et al. 2007; see also in Fay et al. 2010). This promotes a largely falsely-optimistic vision of climate change among many Russians. However, lately more and more people in government and science come to the realization of climate change's damaging character for Russia's ecosystems, economy, security, infrastructure and so on. In this case, the climate zone diversity of the country is considered a weakness rather than a strength. Renat Perelet, Sergey Pegov and Mikhail Yulkin (2007) in a Human Development report describe in detail what the vulnerabilities of each zone could be. For example, the most fertile regions will suffer from droughts. Russia's famous forest zones such as taiga, and tundra will shrink and be exposed to outbursts of forest diseases. The

steppes will also experience more droughts, loss of harvest, and replacement by other ecosystems. Deserts will suffer from increases in strong winds and storms.

Some scientists state that climate change is taking place quicker in Russia than in the rest of the world⁴⁷ (Charap 2010), and that its impacts can readily be observed (Bogdan et al. 2009). For example, 2010 was an extreme year which exceeded the 'normal' temperature (the norm being 1961-1990) by 0.65°C. Even though it can be characterised as only slightly anomalously warm, it consisted of an extremely cold winter, extremely hot summer and extremely warm autumn (Kattsov et al. 2011). These extremes led to severe consequences for Russia's economy, nature and people's health. Moreover, some areas of Russia are more vulnerable to temperature increases than others, as climatologist Nataliya Kharlamova stated, that without the moderating factor of the sea, climate change is particularly apparent in the Altay region, Tyvy and next to the borders with China and Mongolia (email communication, February 2012).

Another fact stressed by climatologists is that climate change in general happens quicker in the polar territories, which means that Russia, with its large proportion of territory of permafrost, might see wide-spread permafrost melting which could lead to severe economic and social damage (most of the oil and gas industries are located in this type of territory, for example)⁴⁸ (for more see Gotz 2007). It will also make it impossible to transport timber by 'winter roads' which will lead to more expenditures on building new routes (Roshydromet 2008).

This introduction to the geography of Russia highlights the factors which initially put the country into an ambiguous position where resource wealth exists parallel to severe weather conditions. This, along with industrial production and other economic activities, has resulted in Russia being the third biggest CO₂ emitter in the world after the United States and China (if the EU is considered, then Russia is fourth) (CRS 2008) so the way Russia deals with

⁴⁷ From 1907 until 2006 the global average temperature rose by 0.74C, whilst in Russia it increased by 1.29C (Bogdan et al. 2009)

⁴⁸ Tsalikov (2009) stresses that the biggest danger of melting permafrost is in the region of Novaya Zemlya – an area of nuclear waste storage.

this complex situation and governs its assets naturally makes it one of the leading countries influencing global climate policy.

The next specification that needs to be considered in the analysis of Russia's climate change policy, is the country's administrative structure which does not only explain the heterogeneous attitude towards the problem amongst various subjects of the state, but also the supremacy of Russia's executive branch.

Russia's administrative structure and climate policy

Russia is a federation consisting of 83 federal subjects with different status and degrees of autonomy (Constitution of the RF 1993). The importance of the acknowledgment of the federal structure of Russia goes along with the consideration of the particular region's distribution of powers to enact and implement its budget and laws. Depending on the status of the particular region (whether it is a republic or an oblast) it will have a certain degree of autonomy from the federal budget and laws. Moreover, authorities at the regional level might be more aware of the ecological problems in the area. Some regions are heavily populated by fossil fuel industries, some areas are more vulnerable to the impact of climate change, and so on (Firsova and Taplin 2007). This diversity of regions to a degree influences their support for climate change policy which was demonstrated by the WWF survey conducted prior to Russia signing the Kyoto Protocol (see in Buchner and Dall'Olio 2005). The central and European parts (especially Northwest) of the country were mostly pro-Kyoto, whilst more remote areas of Siberia demonstrated a lack of support.⁴⁹

The federal structure of the country has also influenced its legislative branch. The Russian Constitution (1993) established divisions between areas of federal and regional jurisdiction and confirmed the priority of federal law in areas where they overlap. The environmental protection legislation falls into

⁴⁹ For instance, in the Arkhangelsk region the necessity to import coal and oil for its industrial needs from other regions, has led to a great interest in cooperating with the 'energy saving and environmental investment agencies in order to improve the attractiveness of implementing the Kyoto mechanisms' (Buchner and Dall'Olio 2005: 363).

the area of joint jurisdiction (Buchner and Dall'Olio 2005). In this case the blurred boundaries between federal and local responsibilities could really damage the development of environmental protection actions, as occurred after the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. As an environmental activist from Altay region admits: 'frankly speaking even though we now have a presidential advisor on climate change, it did not change much here in our region. I am not even sure who is in charge of this problem. I suspect that it is spread throughout different departments and it has become (for them) just another line in the report' (Oksana Yengoyan, interview, Barnaul, 9 August 2011).

Laura Henry and Lisa Sundstrom (2007: 62) have pointed out that after the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol 'the fundamental question of property rights' was not defined. It was not clear who would be allowed to trade carbon emissions and get the profit if Russian businesses stayed below the permitted level: the federal or regional governments, or maybe business. One of the interviewees mentioned that local authorities would be very interested in the benefits the Kyoto Protocol might bring for the region, but that due to the absence of a legislative base nothing could be done. There was also a fear that without working laws on the subject matter, it might lead to abuses of power and corruption. So, in the case of the Kyoto Protocol the necessary legislation at the domestic level were not signed until 2007, and then they were changed in 2009, which led to the first joint implementation (JI) project⁵⁰ in the country not being approved until July 2010 (Henry 2010a).

Even if legislative problems are clearly solved through different laws at the federal and regional levels another peculiarity of the state's legislative system is that Russia has very strong presidential powers (and when Putin exchanged this post for the Prime Minister position [2008-2012], it had a very powerful Prime Minister too) (see more in chapter three). It means that though the Federation Council is supposed to represent all subjects of the federation on

⁵⁰ JI mechanisms (or projects) allow a country with an emission reduction or limitation commitment under the Kyoto Protocol (Annex B Party) to earn emission reduction units from an emission-reduction or emission-removal project in another Annex B Party, which can be counted towards meeting its Kyoto target (UNFCCC 2011).

legislative matters the president has power to 'unilaterally overturn regional acts and laws in his role as a protector of the constitution' (Buchner and Dall'Olio 2005: 363).

Interestingly enough, many NGO representatives referred to Putin's 'special attitude' towards climate change problems. One of them mentioned that Putin did not even like the word 'Kyoto' (Anonymous source, interview, Moscow, July 2011a), whilst another environmentalist claims that while Putin is in power, climate policy will remain in its infancy: 'Whatever Medvedev says, it is just plans which are not getting fulfilled, while for Putin Gazprom and Rosneft are his interests which he will never abandon' (Anonymous source, interview, Moscow, July 2011b).

Unfortunately, even when other actors express direct interest in climate change affairs, in most cases it comes down to the decision of the country's leader or leaders. Moreover, even the president's advisor on climate change Alexander Bedritsky, just before the UNFCCC in Qatar, stated that the decision of Russia's position on the continuation of the Kyoto Protocol was made at the 'highest political level' and could be changed only by the President himself (*RIA Novosti* 2012d). Dobrovidova (2012b) goes so far as arguing that Russian experts on climate change are 'in essence taking part in a ceremony' and all of the debates around Russia's climate policy do not really effect the final decisions or as Dobrovidova states 'in climate policy terms – discuss all you want, as the real decision makers are as far from the debate as Europe is from New Guinea' (ibid). This pessimistic picture of the fate of climate change concentrated in one set of hands is worsened by the cumbersome structural changes of the environmental institutions and the state's dominance over the energy sector.

Institutional change: ministerial paradox

When the new state of the Russian Federation was created in 1991 it inherited a poor environmental record which had led to the degradation of the environment in Russia (Feldman and Blokov 2009, 2012). Even though in the early 1990s the idea of environmental protection grew and among other concepts became

quite fashionable, it was also employed as cover in order to recreate the country's image and position internationally as a liberal country which followed modern world trends. The euphoria did not last long, as is shown by the institutional change in environmental protection that the state has experienced over the short period of time since the 1990s (Henry and Douhovnikoff 2008).

Some argue that this transformation and degradation of the relevant environmental institutions became one of the stages in the development of the 'de-ecologisation' policy (Oldfield 2001; Yablokov 2010; Yanitsky 2011). However, looking at the changes happening within the Soviet and Russian environmental institutions, the concept of 'de-ecologisation' raises a number of questions. For instance, the term suggests that Russian policy was at one time 'ecological', but this idea of the superiority of the economic development over the environment and the use of nature as a means in order to achieve the state's goals is very much a Soviet concept⁵¹ (Feldman and Blokov 2009). As Yanitsky⁵² (2009: 754) states 'until the 1970s, the dominant worldview rooted in Soviet culture was strictly utilitarian. Nature was seen as an unlimited resource pool that had to be (re)constructed in accordance with the goals of the construction of a socialist society' (see more in Oldfield 2005). In his extensive research of the shift in environmental debate in Russia, Yanitsky states that this utilitarian approach to the nature in the mid-1980s to early 1990s was replaced by the 'greener' idea of Russia as being a 'limited space [which] must be kept clean and safe' (ibid). From the mid-1990s and early 2000s the concept of Russia as an area of 'unlimited resource' re-appeared in the public space. The findings of Yanitsky's research discussed above and the following discussion of institutional change, lead us to the conclusion that the so-called policy of

⁵¹ As an example, one might think of the 'grand' Soviet idea of the Siberian river reversal: when instead of allowing northern rivers to 'uselessly' fall into the Arctic Ocean, Soviet scientists came up with a plan of diverting them towards the densely populated and agriculturally valuable territories of Central Asia.

⁵² Yanitsky has based his conclusions on the extensive field research he has conducted over two decades (1985-2007), his personal experience of working in UNESCO's 'Man and the Biosphere' programme, as well as participation in a number of international research projects (Yanitsky 2009).

'environmentalism' could only be traced back to the time of Gorbachev's policy of glasnost and perestroika (see also Feldman and Blokov 2012).

Historically, in the USSR environmental issues were the responsibility of different ministries, so there was not one legal authority responsible for environmental protection. It was only in 1988 that the State Committee on Environmental Protection (Goskompriroda) was founded. Many saw this as a governmental response to the recent environmental catastrophe at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 1986 (Henry and Douhovnikoff 2008). After the collapse of the Soviet Union for a short while environmental protection advanced in the hierarchy of the political agenda as well as the Goskompriroda, which in 1991 became the Ministry of the Environment. Already by 1996 the importance of environmental protection was downgraded and the Ministry became the State Committee on Environmental Protection (under a slightly different name – Goskomekologiya). In 2000 even this committee was dissolved whilst some of its functions were transferred to the Ministry of Natural Resources (Henry and Douhovnikoff 2008; Oldfield 2001; Peterson and Bielke 2001). Finally, in 2008 the Ministry of Natural Resources became the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, and until now it remains the main authority in the country which at the state level deals with environmental problems.

The dissolution of the Goskomekologiya was perceived as a partially positive decision, as it lessened the amount of bureaucratic obstacles in the way of environmental management (Kotov 2002) as well as giving to one organisation the opportunity to have expertise and responsibility on environment-related issues⁵³ (Firsova and Taplin 2007). On the other hand, the

⁵³ After the dissolution of Goskomekologiya Jo Crotty (2003) conducted research in one of Russia's regions – Samara Oblast – and she argued that at the regional level the institutional restructuring was not that noticeable; 'the monitoring and control function of the old environmental bureaucracy had been largely retained, albeit with some staff cuts, under the new Ministry' (ibid: 473). In a more recent article, Crotty and Rodgers (2009) reinvestigate the case of Samara Oblast and conclude that after the merger of Goskomekologiya and Ministry of Natural Resources 'there has not been a subsequent decline but in fact an expansion of bureaucratic controls and regulatory bodies in the area of environmental protection in Russia (ibid: 12).

fact that its functions were transferred to the Ministry of Natural Resources weakened the state's domestic policy towards environmental protection (Firsova and Taplin 2007, Oldfield and Shaw 2002) and stimulated to an even greater degree the growth of the economy heavily based on the exploitation of natural resources (Henry and Douhovnikoff 2008). When the final institutional transformation took place, the former chair of the Goskomekologiya, Professor Viktor Danilov-Danilyan (who along with Yablokov claims that Russia is pursuing a policy of 'de-ecologisation') declared:

[it] is a signal for thieves. The law says, 'Hey guys, there is no one watching over nature so come and take what you want! [...] Authorising the Natural Resources Ministry to deal with environmental problems is like asking an alcoholic what the price of vodka should be' (see in Peterson and Bielke 2001: 69).

The fate of domestic climate change policy was also influenced by the confusion between institutions of environmental protection and the ones which would somehow be responsible or concerned with it. As the head of the department of the sustainable development and partnership at the Sustainable Energy Development Centre, Vladimir Berdin, noted, 'any changes in such institutions lead to the temporary stagnation of all processes; it takes time for people to distribute responsibilities and get back to the routine work' (interview, Chermal, 13 August 2011). Even at the time when the Ministry of the Environment and later the Goskomekologiya still existed and had some powers, climate change policy had involved various ministries and interest groups. In order to manage relationships between different institutions on the issue, the Interagency Commission of the Russian Federation on Climate Change was established in 1994 (Climate Change Action Plan report 1999). The commission united representatives from 21 ministries and interest groups such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring (Roshydromet⁵⁴), Gazprom

⁵⁴ Roshydromet is a federal executive authority that provides public services in hydro-meteorology, environmental monitoring, pollution, observation of the influence on the meteorological and other geophysical processes. It

and so on (ibid: 15). The commission was supposed to be the supreme authority in deciding climate change issues. At the same time, it did not have any legal authority and could not regulate concrete projects or deal with investments. Its powers were weakened when the Goskomekologiya was abolished. Buchner and Dall'Olio (2005) argue that, at first, Goskomekologiya had a much bigger interest in climate change policies than its successor the Ministry of Natural Resources and, secondly, Goskomekologiya simply had more expertise and resources on the topic.

Eventually, the Interagency Commission proved to be inefficient and even though officially it was supposed to be the main approval body for documents on climate change regulations its functions became part of the Roshydromet. The Commission did not meet at all for several years, and then was dissolved. Vladimir Kotov (2002) has commented on the inefficiency of the commission that '[it] was a typical institution of the transitional period: old form but without old possibilities, a remainder of the old system not adapted to the new institutions' (ibid: 16). The idea of inter-Ministry and interagency collaboration is still very popular and discussed by the scientific community as well as representatives of the government and NGOs. For example, Kattsov, Meleshko and Chicherin (2007) give examples of how exactly different ministries and state agencies will be interested in dealing with issues connected with climate change (see table 4.1.):

Table 4.1. Examples of possible climate change-related problems which might concern different Russian federal institutions

Ministry	Examples of interests related to climate change
Minister of the Interior	Migration processes
Ministry for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural	Increase in natural disaster frequency

ensures that Russia fulfils obligations under international treaties including the Convention of the World Meteorological organization, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (Roshydromet 2011).

Disasters	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	International agreements on environment and climate change.
Ministry of Defence	Defence of the borders in relation to changes of the geopolitical situation and, in particular, defence of Russia's sovereignty in the Arctic region
Ministry of Health and Social Development	Climate change related threat to the population's health
Ministry of Education and Science	Preparation of qualified scientists in order to serve Russia's interests
Ministry of Natural Resources	Climate change negative impact on natural resources; easier access to the resources in Arctic and as a consequence its environmental pollution.
Ministry of Energy	Problems of energy saving, alternative energy sources, sustainable technology. Monitoring of GHG emissions.
Ministry of Regional Development	Climate change impact on regional economy and local infrastructures such as melting of permafrost.
Ministry of Agriculture	Change in harvest, land used for agriculture, fishing and new types of parasites.
Ministry of Transport	Development of the new Arctic route. Impact of melting permafrost on motorways and railways.
Ministry of Information Technology and Communication	Participation in IT support for climate research and monitoring of the climate.
Ministry of Finance	Financing the priority scientific research on the climate.
Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	Economic justification of political and economic decisions on climate change issues.

Source: Kattsov, Meleshko and Chicherin (2007)

To sum up, the dissolution of the State Committee on Environmental Protection and the transfer of some of its functions to the Ministry of Natural Resources led to 'an institutional paradox' in which the institution responsible for the exploitation of natural resources also has to be in charge of its

protection. It leads back to the theoretical paradox discussed above, where the state's resource wealth and capabilities of becoming an 'environmental donor' are undermined by the downgrading of the environmental institutions which once again contributes to the development of a policy of 'de-ecologisation'. At the same time the multifaceted nature of climate change problems and the interests of different state organisations presents an opportunity (rather than a burden) for inter-institutional collaboration and not only at the state but at the international level as well. Realising and using the benefits of climate change collaboration will not be possible without a consideration of Russian economic interests and in particular the peculiarity of its energy sector, which also works in both directions: heavy reliance on natural resources stimulates the degradation of the environment, but their vast amount gives Russia power in international discussions of climate change regulation.

The role of the energy sector

In the introduction of this chapter the importance of economic interests was listed among the major factors which affect Russian climate change policy. Over the decades, 'the legacy of the conservative command-and-control processes' and 'the transitional state of development in Russia' contributed to the prioritisation of economic growth over environmental protection which relegates environmental protection to the background or postpones dealing with it until 'better times' (Porfiriev 1997: 148, see more in Henry and Douhovnikoff 2008).

The natural resource wealth of the country (especially gas, coal and oil) carried on playing a significant role in the transition of Russia's economy after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russia has the largest reservoirs of natural gas in the world and it heavily depends on these for domestic consumption and as an export commodity.⁵⁵ Sergey Aleksashenko (2012: 43) argues that the

⁵⁵ According to the EIA report (2010) these reserves contain 1,680 trillion cubic feet (Tcf), representing about 25 percent of the world's reserves. Most of these reserves are in Siberia. Russia is not only one of the world's largest gas producers, but it is also the biggest exporter of gas in the world. Oil reserves are also the second largest in the world, making up 60 billion barrels, which again are mostly situated in Siberia (specifically the western part).

Russian economy is 'de facto monocultural' since 'more than 85 percent of Russian exports are either raw materials or primary commodities' and 'during 2010-2011 the share of hydrocarbons in Russian exports fluctuated between 63.5 and 65 percent'. Russia's resource-oriented economy is reinforced by its carbon intensity (the amount of GHG emissions per unit of GDP) which 'exceeds the leading European countries by 3.8 times, the average for transition economies by 2.6, the USA by 2.4 and Canada by 2 times'⁵⁶ (Perelet et al. 2007: 10) making Russia one of the most polluting economies.

The significance of the energy sector in domestic policy on climate change should also be considered from the perspective of the close connections between the energy sector and the state. Nowadays, major gas, oil and electricity companies are either partly owned by the government directly or by entities which are close to the Kremlin.⁵⁷ It was not always like this, and for a short period of time private ownership prevailed (Buchner and Dall'Olio 2005). For instance, during the early 1990s the oil and gas industries were privatized and this era in the country's history is famous for the rise of the 'new class' (the 'oligarchs'). After acquiring fortunes through monopolizing the state's essential infrastructures, very soon some of these oligarchs crossed the line by not focusing as much on reinvesting profit into their businesses. Instead they avoided paying taxes and began 'moving cash offshore' (ibid). The era of Putin's government was characterized by the policy of centralizing the energy sector and increasing the state's influence over it.

At the time of writing, the major actor in the energy sector is the state. It owns all shares in the second largest oil company Rosneft. Another oil company, LUKoil, has a mostly private ownership structure where only 14 percent of shares belong to the government, but it retains close connections

⁵⁶ One of the reasons for this is the severe weather conditions in which most of the industries are situated making the production process more energy-intensive (Perelet 2007; Shaw 2009). Another reason is that along with being a leader in the gas and oil industry comes leadership in the amount of gas flaring. This side effect of oil production is responsible for 84,000 tons of GHG emissions a year (Cnews.ru 2007).

⁵⁷ King (2012) states that according to the 2008 UN report 'Russia was the most generous country in the world when it comes to fossil fuel subsidies, spending \$40 billion annually to support those industries'.

with the government. Buchner and Dall'Olio (2005: 365) point out that 'individual companies have very different relations with the state that do not always reflect the state's share in the enterprise'. Overall, the state is in charge of 30 percent of oil production in the country, however, if all informal connections are considered, that figure might be higher. Gas production in Russia is dominated by Gazprom, of which approximately 51 percent of shares belong to the government. It is not only Russia's largest gas company, which controls 90 percent of domestic gas production (ibid), but it is also one of the world's dominant players in the energy sector and has become one of the most powerful tools in Russia's foreign policy.

The role of the energy companies in Russia's climate policy is quite ambiguous. For instance, Henry (2010a: 767) highlights the aspect of businesses' reluctant attitude towards environmental issues by quoting some Russian environmental activists: 'most commercial firms do not want to be associated with 'democracy, human rights or the environment' and the wealthiest firms are 'too dependent on exploiting natural resources' to give funding for environmental causes'.

According to a climate change activist who has approached (and has been approached by) a number of energy companies during his NGO's energy efficiency campaign (Anonymous source, interview, July 2011c), business firms clearly understand that climate change is not a 'PR-campaign' but a serious science. At the same time they understand they cannot refuse to follow the government's orders, so they are trying to sabotage the fundamentals of it, by popularizing the idea that there is no anthropogenic cause to climate change. In Russia there are no threats to business coming from the climate change policy (no laws restricting them or judgmental public opinion) and because of it they are not very active. However, they all have complete information of the problem and some companies even have calculated their emissions,⁵⁸ but 'sit quietly' so long as it does not directly concern them. Another climate change campaigner (Anonymous source, interview, July 2011b) shares his experience

⁵⁸ Amongst them are Gazprom, LUKoil, Norilsk Nickel, UES 'Rossiya, joint-stock company 'Rusal' and Arkhangelsk Pulp and Paper Mill (Bogdan et al. 2009).

working with one of Gazprom's companies: 'They openly talked to us about the problem and said that they already include climate change costs into their projects, because their infrastructure is based on permafrost and changes have already forced them to reinforce their buildings and structures'. His colleague (also coming from his work experience) in support of this argument adds that Gazprom managers understand the danger of climate change for their business, and their scientists tell them that climate change might make their project unprofitable, but Gazprom people do not want to discuss this topic in public in order not to diminish the value of their shares on the market (Anonymous source, interview, July 2011d).

Indeed, Gazprom's Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors, Alexey Miller keeps referring to climate change as having been created by the media as a 'PR-campaign' (Mason 2011). At the same time this gas giant company, according to Buchner and Dall'Olio (2005), was supporting the Kyoto ratification process and was 'keen to maintain a green image'. So, once again we see a paradoxical situation: as much as Russia's economy is heavily based on exploitation of fossil fuels, the companies involved in these industries could treat climate change regulations not as a threat to them, but also as a profitable venture and a way to attract more investments and to modernize their production processes⁵⁹ (Mandrillon 2008, *RIA Novosti* 2012a).

The vast reserves of natural resources that Russia possesses can be seen as a double-edged sword. Over-dependence on them in the economy contributes to Russia's leading position among GHG emitters. On the other hand, the contraction of Russia's economy in the 1990s gave it significant status during international negotiation processes. As Oldfield and Shaw (2002: 392) state: 'uncertainties about Russia's future must translate into uncertainties about the future well-being of the global environment in general'. The way the factors outlined above influence Russia's climate policy is evidenced by the

⁵⁹ Sberbank (The Savings Bank of the Russian Federation) (which was authorized by the Russian government to approve and select JI projects) estimated that Russian projects have a potential to cut 1.2-1.5 billion tones of CO₂ and bring into the country direct carbon investments of 250-300 billion rubles (around 50-60 billion pounds) by 2020 (Men'she Dvukx Gradusov 2012).

case study of Russia's involvement in the Kyoto Protocol ratification process. For six years the official Russian position on Kyoto ratification swung back and forth, demonstrating the inconsistencies in the government's agenda.

The Kyoto Protocol negotiations or Russia's 'environmental blackmail'

The Kyoto Protocol (1998) was the first document which forced signatory industrialised countries to 'commit' to certain GHG emissions obligations. It also acknowledged the developed countries' historical responsibility for the current accumulated amount of GHG in the atmosphere, and applied more rigorous restrictions to them. Even though the protocol was adopted on 11 December 1997, it came into force only six years later, on 16 February 2005. Strangely enough and quite unexpectedly at that time, Russia became one of the key reasons for the delay in the agreement's implementation (Tipton 2008).

Due to the conditions under which the protocol could enter into force, it had to be ratified by at least 55 countries and the participants should be responsible for at least 55 percent of global GHG emissions (Kyoto Protocol 1998). When Australia and the United States refused to sign the agreement, stating that the Protocol would damage their economic interests, the fate of the document ended up in the hands of the Russian government, since with its contribution the percentage of GHG emissions the protocol covered would attain the required level. One might argue that during the time of the Kyoto negotiations, the actual 'ecological power' of Russia could be seen particularly clearly as well as how it could be converted into political power utilised by the Russian government in its own national interests (Buchner and Dall'Olio 2005).

During the difficult years of the early 1990s, the new state of the Russian Federation tried to re-establish its role in the new world order. It went through the period of committing itself to numerous international agreements and trying to join various international institutions. In the sphere of environmental cooperation Russia signed '30 bilateral environmental agreements and [joined] more than 25 regional environmental regimes' (Henry 2008). In 1992 Russia was among the first countries to sign the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and ratified it in 1994. Russia was classified as an 'economy

in transition' and ratification did not imply any obligations. Very shortly after the convention came into force, Russia changed its position by raising concerns over the climate change mitigation policy's impact on its energy policy. Furthermore, it took the side of the members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which questioned the limits set by the Convention (Afionis 2009; Andonova 2008).

By the time the conference in Kyoto, Japan, took place in 1997, Russia had left the OPEC camp and was already in the camp with the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Japan, who lobbied for lower emission restrictions for industrialized countries. When in 2001 the United States announced its withdrawal from the Kyoto negotiations, Russia faced two outcomes. On the one hand, it lost the largest potential buyer of spare emission quotas (Oldfield et al. 2003). On the other, Russia suddenly gained greater negotiating power due to its possible impact on the protocol's fate. Afionis (2009) argues that the EU realized straight away that in order to make the Kyoto Protocol a reality it had to comply with the demands of Russia, Japan, Canada and Australia (after the United States and China, the world's largest GHG emitters). Eventually in 2001 at the conference in Bonn, the EU offered such compromises that it became impossible to say 'no' without damaging the countries' international reputation. One of the conditions was to consider 'sinks' towards the estimation of the state's GHG emissions. For example, countries with massive forests zones (such as Russia), would be considered less polluting, since a certain amount of GHG emissions would be sunk by their natural carbon absorbing reservoirs.

The wave of enthusiasm in Russia that followed the Kyoto Protocol's ratification soon disappeared, when President Putin radically changed his position once again and asked for agreement on certain sums to be invested into emissions trading or JI mechanisms. In addition, a few years later at the COP-9 (Milan 2003), Russia managed to announce during a very short period of time, first, its firm intention not to ratify the protocol, and second, that the ratification was still very much under consideration and the country was

moving towards it (Buchner and Dall'Olio 2005). It took another year before Russia finally signed the Protocol on 18 November 2004.

As demonstrated above, before Russia signed the Protocol it achieved certain political and economic bargains. Andonova (2008) argues that Russia managed to maintain such 'considerable bargaining power' (ibid: 489) because its participation was vital for the protocol to come into power, whilst Russia did not have any national interests in the climate change negotiations as the country's economic development was the top priority. So, Russia stated many times that it would not commit to any other targets which were under the 1990 level. It must be explained that compared to the post-perestroika years, in 1990 Russia was still in its peak period of industrial capacity, which was accompanied by a high amount of GHG emissions. After the collapse of the USSR, the country went through major economic decay, which consequently decreased its GHG emissions by approximately 40 percent⁶⁰ (Afionis 2009; Andonova 2008; Henry 2008; Oldfield 2005).

Another explanation why it took so many years for Russia to sign the protocol arguably was due to the fact that the Kyoto Protocol was opposed by a group of very influential scientists and economists who were not so sure of the human contribution to climate change and its negative consequences for Russia, whilst they were convinced that the protocol would restrict the economic growth of Russia. Two in particular, due to their positions and authority, had been the most vigorous opponents of Kyoto's ratification: Yuri Izrael, a former scientific adviser to President Putin and a director of the Russian Academy of Sciences' Global Climate and Ecology Institute, and Andrei Illarionov, at that time the President's chief economic adviser. Izrael was (until 2008) also a vice-chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). However, his confidence in Kyoto's useless and damaging character for the Russian economy persisted even after Russia's ratification – he asked the President to annul his signature. Illarionov refusing to acknowledge the anthropogenic character of climate change, referred to "Kyotoism" as a new "totalitarianism"

⁶⁰ Missfeldt and Villavicencio (2000: 382 cited in Oldfield 2005: 81) suggest that the GHG emissions drop would have been even more significant at that time if Russia's energy efficiency had not worsened.

and said that its implementation would be an “Auschwitz for civilisation” (Rosbalt 2004 cited in Mandrillon 2008: 135). Two years before the ratification took place, Illarionov announced an economic model in which he projected the doubling of Russia’s GDP, which would lead to a situation in which Russia would exceed the GHG emissions limit prescribed by the protocol and would be forced to buy quotas (Buchner and Dall’Olio 2005). After the protocol was ratified, Illarionov,⁶¹ together with Natalia Pivovarova (director of the Economic Analysis Institute), published an article on the economic consequences of the ratification (2004). They stated that the risks and danger of the Kyoto ratification for Russia had become a reality, and that the government had to deal with them. The authors supported their statement by looking at the correlation between such positions as the amount of financial resources which Russian businesses might receive from emission trading, the amount of money that Russian companies would need to spend to meet the quotas (and fines for exceeding them), the amount of resources needed to respond to the protocol’s requirements, and the slowing of economic growth which would be unavoidable in order to meet the protocol’s requirements.

Sergey Kuraev, from the Russian Regional Environmental Centre, does not concentrate on the role of these two prominent scholars, but rather argues that the general decline in Russian science and in particular in the research area of climate change was crucial to the state’s policy. Kuraev (2011) says that when in 1992 Russia signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, it took only two years to ratify it at the national level, which was possible due to Russia’s scientific community, who provided all the necessary scientific information on climate change’s impact on people’s health, the country’s economy, ecosystem and biodiversity. After the Kyoto Protocol was adopted and was waiting for Russia’s signature, the academic community took firm anti-Kyoto positions and it became, according to Kuraev, almost

⁶¹ As was unofficially stated amongst the people involved in Russia’s climate change affairs, it was almost certain that Illarionov’s work and position was funded by international fossil fuel companies (anonymous source, Moscow, July 2011), in this sense the role of this scientist could be compared with the role of the Conservative movement in the United States in advocating the climate sceptic position (McCright and Dunlap 2003).

fashionable among scientists to say something against its ratification. Among the reasons he names are personal preferences, academic disputes, organisations' rivals and also, the decline in the number of new enthusiastic academics in the field who could have changed the trend.

Peter Haas (1989), in his study on the role of epistemic communities in the implementation of Mediterranean pollution control, states that 'epistemic communities may introduce new policy alternatives to their governments, and depending on the extent to which these communities are successful in obtaining and retaining bureaucratic power domestically, they can often lead their governments to pursue them' (Haas 1989: 402). It could be argued that due to the high positions of these two Kyoto opponents in Russia (Illarionov and Izrael), their opinion was often perceived as the Kremlin's official position (Henry and Sundstrom 2008). On the other side of the domestic debate of the protocol's ratification were environmental NGOs, other representatives of scientific communities (some argue it was a majority⁶²) and in fact some of the biggest businesses in the country. Even though some companies such as Yukos and Norilsk Nickel were against it (fearing that it would restrict the development of their industries in the Arctic), companies such as United Energy Systems, Russian Aluminium, Gazprom, the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs and others admitted the advantages of the ratification and supported the protocol (due to the prospects for foreign investments in these industries through the JI mechanism) (Henry and Sundstrom 2008). Russia's ministries were opposing each other on different sides of the debate as well. The Ministry of Energy saw it as a way to bring money into the modernization of the energy sector (Buchner and Dall'Olio 2005). The Ministry of Natural Resources feared the protocol would restrict the use of natural resources. The Roshydromet, even though it was affiliated with the Ministry of Natural Resources, was mostly pro-Kyoto and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade changed its opinion from negative to

⁶² During the Kyoto negotiations 250 representatives of Russian science signed a document in support of the protocol and in the media more and more statements from Russian academics could be found seeking to change the Russian people's and government's attitude towards the problem.

neutral when it realized that the procedures required by the protocol could be managed by the Ministry of Energy. However, as Henry and Sundstrom (2007) discovered after the president signed the Kyoto Protocol, the ministries united in the support of his decision. They concluded that 'bureaucratic battles among ministries, parliamentary debates, and regional interests are less important than the overwhelming power of the executive branch of power' (ibid: 56).

Overall, when the protocol was signed and ratified, Russia managed to achieve favourable conditions out of the agreement, under which it was not obliged to do anything, as it was very unlikely that it would reach the level of emissions at the 1990 benchmark. Secondly, it got the opportunity to sell its spare quotas and bring investments into the country through the JI mechanism. And last but not least, Russia's final decision to sign the protocol coincided with the EU's support for Russia's application for World Trade Organisation (WTO) membership ⁶³ (Andonova 2008; Afionis 2009; Henry and Douhovnikoff 2008).

The process of Russia ratifying the Kyoto Protocol demonstrated how climate change policy was moved to the background of the state's other political and economic interests, and the 'climate card' was used when necessary. As discussed earlier, the rebirth of the concept of Russia as a 'world power' has been mentioned by several scholars during the discussion of Russia's behaviour at the Kyoto negotiations (Afionis and Chatzopoulos 2009; Henry and Sundstrom 2007). However, since Russia's ambiguous strategy during the Kyoto negotiations managed 'to reduce the credibility of the whole country in the international arena' (Korppoo 2008: 7) then the Copenhagen Conference could be seen as a second chance for the country to use its climate change policy to rebuild its image as a modern liberal state.

⁶³ Joining the WTO was one of Russia's key policy goals. Throughout the 1990s it made several attempts to negotiate its entrance to the organisation, however, it kept failing to do so. One of the EU's demands was for Russia to even out its gas prices between its internal and external markets. In May 2004, during the EU-Russia summit, agreement was reached that Russia would liberalize its banking and telecommunications sectors, decrease its import tariffs, even out its gas prices by 2010 and ratify the Kyoto Protocol (Buchner and Dall'Olio 2005).

A new chapter in Russian climate policy?

If the Kyoto negotiations brought Russia under the spotlight and made it one of the key players in climate change politics, Anna Korppoo (2008: 7) argued that during the post-Kyoto negotiation period Russia became a 'reluctant party'. After signing the Protocol Russia partially lost the attention it had previously fostered due to new actors coming into play: the United States with a new administration, along with China, India and other newly industrialising countries. On the other hand, the Kyoto Protocol's rather tolerant requirements of Russia were not likely to be maintained under a new agreement where in order to comply with new GHG emission reduction goals Russia might have to actually reduce its emissions intentionally through specific policy mechanisms. Korppoo argued that Russia's government would continue to insist on 'differentiated responsibilities' (ibid: 7) and lobbying to be categorized as an emerging country so its emissions would not be restricted until it reached a certain level of development.

At the Copenhagen Conference⁶⁴ 'global but differentiated responsibilities' became one of the main messages in the Russian president's speech. However,

⁶⁴ The Fifteenth Conference of the Parties under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-15) was held from 7 December until 18 December 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Taking into account that the Kyoto Protocol was due to expire at the end of 2012 and that a new document needed to be introduced, many politicians, scientists and NGOs set big hopes on the Copenhagen Conference, expecting that countries would be able to compromise and reach some degree of agreement. However, even before the conference started, it was already apparent that it was very likely that agreement would not be achieved. When the conference was over, the word 'failure' was commonly used to describe it. The main problem was that the conference did not manage to produce any legally binding document with positions similar to those of the Kyoto Protocol. One of the major problems was the disagreement between industrialised and developing countries, as well as within the industrialised countries camp. On the other side, the Copenhagen Conference could not be called a complete fiasco. The Copenhagen Accord was produced, while not with the legal power of the Kyoto Protocol, it signified a level of agreement between more than 25 countries. The Accord concluded that the world's goal is to keep temperature rises under 2°C (Bodansky 2010) and it allocated the budget for the mitigation and adaptation processes. But it did not set concrete emission reduction targets, the 2°C temperature limit is quite questionable, and has a more political than scientific

once again, Medvedev talked about Russia as the *leader* among the countries reducing their emissions. Even though in large part it was just a facade (Russia's carbon emission reductions were still massive, but not due to any specific measures, but rather to economic problems in Russia), it demonstrated the way the government wanted Russia to be presented. Medvedev also announced that regardless of the outcome of the conference, Russia would commit to the 25 percent emissions reduction rate by 2020 (baseline year is 1990) (President of Russia website 2009a).

At the national level the day before Medvedev's speech at the conference, the Russian Climate Doctrine (2009) was adopted. The Doctrine acknowledged the importance of the anthropogenic influence on climate change and analysed the risks it might bring for Russia. It states that the consequences of climate change can be seen at global, regional and national levels. Global climate change creates a situation which demands a planned governmental strategy for managing climate change problems (especially considering Russia's geographical characteristics, climatic diversity, economic structure, demographic problems and geopolitical interests). The Climate Doctrine states major principles in Russia's climate policy, such as the orientation of Russia's national interests in relation to climate change, acknowledgment of the necessity of international partnership in scientific research, precaution in planning and implementing measures on protecting humans, the economy and the state from the undesirable consequences of climate change and a clear and open information policy on climate change issues. The openness in informational policy also includes popularizing scientific discoveries in this area through the mass media. Furthermore, the Doctrine acknowledges the mass media as one of the actors in climate change regulation policy. According to this document – realising a possible clash of interests in climate change policy – the mass media will have to be socially responsible and enter the process of preventing conflicts and social tension, and lobbying of certain actors such as oil companies (Climate Doctrine 2009).

basis, and the Accord does not place countries under an obligation but only recommends sticking to its positions.

The adoption of the Doctrine (just as any other document on climate change) caused heated debate in Russia's scientific and political community. When the Doctrine was accepted many saw it as a positive move in domestic climate change policy. The rector of the Russian State Hydrometeorological University, Professor Lev Karlin (2010), in an opinion piece for the website of the Russian Environmental NGO 'Bellona', said that it was definitely upbeat news, the fact that the state had turned towards the opinion that climate change problems would stimulate scientific research. However, a few years after it became obvious that the Doctrine did not produce any practical outcomes, the opinion on the Doctrine became more pessimistic – 'the doctrine seems as irrelevant and abandoned now as a framework document can possibly be' (Dobrovidova 2012c).

In this sense, Russia's position as announced at the Copenhagen Conference can also be considered as a positive shift in its climate change policy. Alexey Kokorin from WWF-Russia stated (Moscow, interview, 27 July 2011), 'it is difficult to judge whether Russian climate change policy is good or bad. Probably by the European standard it is awful, but for Russia the fact that the anthropogenic character of climate change is admitted already means a lot'.

Other manifestations of the change in Russia's climate policy are represented by the approval of the Climate Doctrine implementation plan (2011) and the creation of the position of Presidential advisor for climate change. Prior to the conference on 27 November 2009 Alexander Bedritsky was appointed as the President's advisor on climate change and he himself noted his own appointment in this new position demonstrated that the importance of state climate policy was rising⁶⁵ (Bedritsky 2011). This change was reinforced in March 2010 at the meeting of Russia's Security Council⁶⁶ which focused 'on measures to prevent threats to national security in relation to global climate

⁶⁵ Referring again to the work of Peter Haas (1989) on the role of epistemic community, the appointment of Bedritsky could be paralleled with the penetration of marine scientists in the Algerian government and the consequent growth of their influence over the state's marine environmental regime.

⁶⁶ Russia's Security Council draws up the major official documents on Russia's national and international policy where security threats are evident (Presidential Decree on the Security Council 2011).

change'. Here, Medvedev stated that even though it was unclear what the prospects of international negotiations on the problems of climate change were, Russia, as a responsible state would follow its chosen strategy – the development of a sustainable economy and 'so-called green technologies' by creating a modern energy sector and reducing carbon emissions. Medvedev underlined that it was necessary to develop a strategy which would help to prevent or minimise climate change and would also preserve the country's economic competitiveness in its major export positions (President of Russia website 2010c).

In addition, it also must be noted that unlike several years ago during the Kyoto ratification negotiations, Russian scientists also became more unified in their opinion on the threat climate change posed for Russia and the world, as Vladimir Berdin said in an interview (interview, Chermal, 13 August 2011), 'We [scientists] absolutely agree with the IPCC conclusions and we have our own contributors to their reports, so at this moment the position of Russian scientists is identical to the majority of their colleagues around the world.' Perhaps a slight change in state policy will give scientists as well as other members of the 'epistemic community' on the issue of climate change – a 'policy window'⁶⁷ (Evangelista 1995) in order to lobby their interests.

Some scholars connect this modification in the state's climate change policy with Medvedev's presidency and his policy of economic modernisation including improvement in energy efficiency. Henry and Sundstrom (2012) argue that during Medvedev's presidency we can observe that climate change policy was shaped and influenced by his overall drive for modernisation and the development of energy efficiency, which makes them conclude that Russia's climate policy depended on 'Medvedev's authority, the degree to which energy efficiency goals have been institutionalised, and the economic

⁶⁷ Looking at the role of transnational actors in the security policy of the Soviet Union in the 1980s Matthew Evangelista (1995) comes to the conclusion that even though the majority of these transnational actors were scientists with an extensive level of expertise and competence on the issue, their opinion was only taken into account when the Soviet domestic structure was shaken due to the 'severity of the economic crisis, the challenges of the Reagan administration, and the advent of a strong reformist leader' (ibid: 36).

incentives and constraints of a post-Kyoto agreement that induces Russia to participate' (ibid: 1316). The following section looks at Medvedev's official speeches during his time in office which relate to climate change. It is argued that the official political discourse was not linked specifically to Medvedev's presidency, but rather it reflects embedded ideas pertaining to the economic benefits that should remain even after the change at the executive level.

Presidential speeches on climate change: 'either we all should contribute, or we should abandon all attempts'

There are a number of scholars who analyze policy speeches and official documents to study Russia's domestic and foreign policies (for example see Angermueller 2012, Kratochvil 2008, Kratochvil et al. 2006, O'Loughlin et al. 2004). Jensen and Skedsmo (2010: 441) in their comparative study of Russian and Norwegian Arctic policies justify their choice of data on the grounds that 'the selected texts are all articulated by formal political authority [and] intend to represent the countries' approaches to the European Arctic [...the texts] set the agenda and shape the issues at hand, and they frame and produce representations of foreign policy.' For the purpose of this research presidential speeches are treated as the written representations of the state leaders' approach to Russia's climate change policy.

The analysed texts were collected from the official website of the Russian President (<http://kremlin.ru>) and include publicly available transcripts of the President's statements at press conferences, interviews, meetings with government officials (foreign and domestic) and the general public. The 72 speeches studied cover Medvedev's presidency (May 2008-May 2012) all mention 'climate change'. The data were further analysed using qualitative content analysis. While Krippendorff (2004) questions the categorisation of content analysis as quantitative and qualitative, in this case the 'qualitative' attribute means that the relatively small number of texts were individually studied and specified keywords ('climate change') were analysed within the textual context. Further on, other content analysis methods are employed – 'taking a sample of media, establishing categories of content, measuring the presence of each category within a sample, and interpreting the result'

(Bertrand and Hughes 2005: 198). As the content analysis here is ‘problem-driven’ (Krippendorff 2004), the defined textual categories are influenced by the research questions aimed at exploring Medvedev’s approach to the problem of climate change and whether the change in Russia’s climate policy could be solely ascribed to his presidency. Six categories were identified within the studied texts follows: ‘global cooperation’, ‘environmental leadership’, ‘economic benefits’, ‘helping the environment’, ‘global security’ and ‘responsibility’ (several categories have been attributed to the same text), the results are presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Percentage of speeches (Medvedev, 2008-2012) by identified categories

Category	%	Examples of quotations
Global cooperation	78	‘the topic has not left anyone indifferent’; ‘obviously, regardless of anyone’s attitude, everyone should get involved based on scientific knowledge and objective predictions’
Economic benefits/ Green economy	38	‘we must improve our energy efficiency, which at the end will help to solve global problem of climate change and reduce the GHG emissions’; ‘we should be ready for any scenario and use it for the benefit of our economy’
Global Security	21	‘another area of our cooperation is environmental security’; ‘climate change is one of the main threats and challenges’
Helping the environment	18	‘our goal is not only improve our lives, but also to think about future generations; that is why the problem of climate change stays in the centre of our attention’; ‘we all have an interest in radical improvement of our environment’
Environmental leadership	14	‘currently Russia is a world’s leader of GHG emissions reduction’; ‘some time ago we took very serious responsibilities, whilst a significant part of developing economies did not do it, such as China, India, Brazil; Americans did

		not take, but we did'
Responsibility	7	'we are all responsible for climate change'; 'we understand our responsibility for GHG emissions along with other major emitters'

The least frequent category proved to be 'responsibility' (7 percent, N=5) representing only a few cases of Medvedev acknowledging Russia's contribution to climate change and with only one case when Russia was specifically referred to as one of the biggest emitters in the world. This result, together with the relative unpopularity of the category 'helping the environment' (18 percent, N=13), is quite predictable, based on the earlier discussion of the Russian government's neglect of environmental policy. The concept of 'environmental leadership' also does not enter presidential discourse too often (14 percent, N=10). Recurring throughout the speeches along with reminders of Russia's 'great commitments' to the Kyoto Protocol or 'drastic' goals of GHG emissions reduction, it yields to the more popular concept of presenting climate change as another 'global security' issue (21 percent, N=15). This category acknowledges the importance of the climate change problem and stresses the urgent necessity to deal with it or adjust the state's policy, in view of climate change consequences. The latter message was largely provoked by the devastating consequences of the heat-wave in Russia in the summer of 2010 – 'considering what is happening this summer, we do not know what is going to happen next year, the climate is changing, we have to take it into consideration and allocate some budget for it' (President of Russia website 2010a).

The top two results deserve more detailed discussion. Firstly, the majority of speeches (78 percent of them, N=56) referred to climate change within the context of global cooperation. Also, 35 speeches from the category 'global cooperation' were presented during global summits (G8, G20, BRICS) or bilateral meetings with various state leaders where climate change was mentioned in the same sentence with other global challenges such as global poverty, illegal immigration, energy and food security and so on. It could be

argued that in the Russian case climate change is used in order to demonstrate the state's involvement in processes of international cooperation and development as 'a modern and liberal state.' Another frequently repeated message in this category promotes the idea of global responsibility, where Medvedev appeals to every country to take part in the fight against climate change, as without global efforts solutions will not be found anyway. In this context Russia's desire not to commit to the second period of the Kyoto process does not come as a surprise – it does not involve all countries. It should be noted that the majority of the speeches in the category 'global cooperation' only mention climate change in one or two sentences.

A more explicit discussion takes place within the 'economic benefits' category (38 percent, N=27), in which the main message given by Medvedev is 'we will win no matter what', thus climate change will be addressed in the manner most beneficial for the country. For example, during the meeting with the managerial staff of Russia's Academy of Science just prior to the Copenhagen speech, Medvedev stated that 'development of an energy-efficient economy is a definite priority, regardless of our [Russia's] attitude towards climate change' (President of Russia website 2009b). A similar message was presented in Medvedev's official speech at the Copenhagen summit: a 'global climate "deal" is a real chance for "green" economic development and investments around the world. In the end measures for mitigating climate change will assist in solving global environmental and socio-economic problems, in practice achieving those "millennium goals" we set some time ago' (President of Russia website 2009a). In his blog on 5 June 2010 (World Environment Day), Medvedev published a piece with a title 'Environment and economy do not contradict each other. A normal economy is environmentally friendly.' In this article Medvedev states that 'unfortunately with some delay, we have finally realized that it is vital to protect our environment and that economic and environmental developments are inextricably linked.' Further on in the article he once again talks about 'energy efficiency' and 'green economy', and how these ideas have become a trend which he finds quite sensible – 'I have always said that people start dealing with environmental problems when they feel the economic necessity.' At the meeting with the state

security council 'on questions of environmental protection' (President of Russia website 2010c), Medvedev claimed that countries such as the United States and China got involved in climate change mitigation (and in general problems of environmental development) because they saw the 'opportunity to make money, and we [Russia] should have the same attitude.'

The analysis of the presidential speeches mentioning 'climate change' suggests that whilst the categories such as 'environmental leadership' and 'responsibility' do not enter the official discourse that often, the category of 'economic benefits' proposes the most elaborated and explicit vision of climate change problems within the state's national interests and the most frequent referral to the climate topic happens within the category of 'global cooperation.' It can be argued that Medvedev's presidency signified a shift from the policy of 'de-environmentalism' to '*pragmatic environmentalism*', which holds that the environment will eventually benefit from the state's actions but only if it brings obvious benefits for Russia's state policies and/or economy.

*'Climate pragmatism': 'without sensible pragmatism we won't solve environmental problems.'*⁶⁸

Several years ago Russia's environmental 'greatness' was just a 'cover' in the speeches of the country's leaders and state officials. In business terminology this is what is called a 'green-washing technique' – 'tactics that mislead consumers regarding the environmental practices of a company' (Parguel et al. 2011: 15 cited in Mason and Mason 2012). Consumers here are the international community in front of which Russia tried to demonstrate its importance in the climate negotiation process as seen in Russia's involvement in the Kyoto negotiations. Fear of possible economic losses due to international obligations to cut GHG emissions along with the underestimation of the negative effects of climate change resulted in Russia's peculiar involvement in the international negotiation processes and reluctant domestic climate change policy. Korppoo and Vatansever (2012) state that this (largely) superficial 'environmental leadership' does not work anymore. Firstly, the international community has realised that the reduction in GHG emissions was not a result

⁶⁸ President of Russia website (2010c).

of governmental policy; secondly, Russia (as the successor of the USSR) has significant historical responsibility for the world's GHG emission record; and thirdly, that the Russian economy is still extremely carbon-intensive (the carbon intensity of its GDP is 81 percent greater than the world average).

Recently, as the analysis of Medvedev's official speeches shows, there is a move to an understanding of climate change policy not as a policy of 'costs' but as one of 'opportunities' (Giddens 2010). As the Director of the Centre of Environmental Policy, Vladimir Zakharov summarised, 'for the next 20 years nobody will be able to operate their economies without fossil fuels, so nothing threatens Russia's economic interests. Now we need to start thinking about how we can provide environmental services and get investments in the "greening" of our economy' (interview, Moscow, 21 July 2011).

Beside the involuntary drop in GHG emissions of the 1990s and a rather fictitious environmental leadership in climate change mitigation policy, Russia possesses the ability to lead the way in sustainable development without significant economic costs. Russia does have potential to de-carbonise its economy through an increase in energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources (Bagirov and Safonov 2010; Overland and Kjarnet 2009), which might benefit both Russia's economic development and global GHG reduction goals. Averchenko (2009) argues that merely following its plans for the improvement of energy efficiency might be enough for Russia to fulfil its carbon reduction obligation by reducing GHG emissions by 40 percent (2007 is taken as a baseline) by 2050. There are a number of sectors which have potential for energy saving, for example, the municipal/utility sector (through the modernisation of central heating systems), the oil and gas sector (reduction of gas flaring or a decrease in leakage during gas transportation), transport (renovation and popularisation of public transport or implementation of fuel efficiency standards), residential buildings (through enforcing energy standards onto new or renovated buildings as well as raising public awareness about energy saving and promoting the use of electricity meters) and so on (Averchenko 2009, Opitz 2007, World Bank 2008). The extensive list of measures for developing the energy efficiency of the Russian economy were

formalised in a federal law (23/11/2009, N261). The law was updated throughout the past several years with the latest version, signed by the re-elected President Putin, extending measures for improving energy saving in the automobile sector.

Energy efficiency plans are already included in the Russian Energy Strategy towards 2020 (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation 2003) and considered to be a priority not only for the energy sector in particular but the whole economy as well (Bogdan et al. 2009). In this sense, it is interesting how even the role of 'Gazprom' in Russia's state policy can be presented as a tool for economic and environmental development. At the ceremony celebrating the start of building the offshore pipeline of the Nord Stream gas project Medvedev stated that "Nord Stream" is not just a major transnational project, but also in our view, [Russia's] input into the global solution of environmental and climate problems[...] which will allow us to reduce GHG emissions without economic sacrifice' (President of Russia website 2010b).

With regards to renewable energy the Deputy Director of the Russian State Institute of Energy Strategy, Pavel Bezrukikh, states that 'renewable energy sources in Russia could cover 35 percent of the country's total primary energy supply. [...Currently] renewable energy sources account for less than one percent of Russia's energy' (cited in Overland and Kjarnet 2009: 7). Based on calculations of the technical and economic potential of renewable energy sources in Russia Overland and Kjarnet (2009) state that the development of alternative energy sources could also 'contribute greatly to the structural changes needed for the country to assume tougher [GHG reduction] commitments without slowing [Russia's] economic growth' (ibid, 5). The 'optimal use of renewable energy sources' is included in Russia's 2020 Energy Strategy, in which they are seen as a way to ensure energy supplies in regions with 'decentralised energy supply systems' (such as the Far North of Siberia) and also as a solution to environmental problems (through the 'lessening of the volume of harmful substances produced by current energy use'). The strategy aims to increase the share of renewable energy sources in Russia by up to 4.5 percent by 2020. The policy of development of renewable energy sources was

also stimulated by the acceptance of the Presidential Decree 'On some measures to improve energy and environmental performance of the Russian economy' (2008), a decree of the Russian government '[O]n the main directions of the state policy in the sphere of energy efficiency of electric power from renewable energy sources by 2020' (2009) and the earlier mentioned Federal Law 'On energy saving and energy efficiency'.

According to a report by the World Bank (2008), these savings through improvements in energy efficiency⁶⁹ will benefit the economy by approximately \$120-150 billion per annum through an increase in oil and gas exports. Russia will also decrease its GHG emissions, improve its air quality and as a consequence will lessen the health risk from pollution for the population. McKinsey Global Institute's report (2009: 7) states that Russia 'has the largest relative potential among all the BRIC[S] countries to reduce emissions through implementing only measures that are economically attractive'. The McKinsey Global Institute proposes 60 measures which would require investments of €150 billion (over twenty years), but the energy savings achieved would result in €345 billion (over the same timeframe), energy consumption would be reduced by 23 percent and GHG emissions by 19 percent.

Furthermore, another issue connected with the economics of climate change should also be highlighted: Russia's economic losses due to the consequences of climate change. Arguably, this idea was implicitly or in some cases explicitly present in Medvedev's speeches in the category of 'global security' in which climate change is treated as another major threat to national security. Indeed, as was mentioned earlier in this chapter, Russia is extremely vulnerable to the consequences of climate change, including threats to the economic stability of the country. According to data provided by Roshydromet (2012) every year Russia's economy loses 60 billion rubles (around £1.27 billion) due to extreme weather events and climate change increases this amount every year by 6 percent. For instance, in summer 2010 the central part

⁶⁹ The report states that 'Russia's current energy inefficiency is equal to the annual primary energy consumption of France' (World Bank 2008: 5).

of Russia saw continuous records for highest temperature and was subject to massive areas of toxic smog. The heat led to significant damage to the agricultural sector, resulting in 41.6 billion rubles (around £0.832 billion) of losses (RIA Novosti 2010b). The negative consequences of the anomalous weather event also led to severe social losses: during these months the death rate in Moscow alone increased from 360-380 people dying a day to 700 (RIA Novosti 2010a). Yulia Yevtushok of Oxfam-Russia (interview, Moscow, 22 July 2011) stated that 'even though the connection to climate change was not proven, because the fires happened in Moscow it forced our government to doubt their position towards climate change.'

Overall, as the above analysis has demonstrated, for Russia climate change mitigation policy has become increasingly beneficial in both environmental and (perhaps more importantly for the state) economic terms. Commitment to the GHG emission reduction goals is a 'low hanging fruit', where by modernising its economy and getting more income into the budget, Russia can also contribute to the global fight against climate change and become a more genuine 'environmental leader'. Moreover, there is also a realisation of the economic losses which Russia is already facing due to the consequences of climate change, which is arguably, also pushing the issue up the priority ladder. As the content analysis of Medvedev's speeches has showed, Russian state leaders become more and more aware of the economic side of climate policy.

Concluding remarks

On 1 January 2013 the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol came into force. Russia became one of the few Annex I parties (along with Japan and New Zealand) who refused to take on new targets in GHG emissions reduction within this international framework (RIA Novosti 2012e), which was announced at the UNFCCC in Doha, Qatar (2012). Two months earlier, the Russian President's advisor on climate change, Bedritsky, justified the state's position by stating that Russia advocated the adequate involvement of all

countries without any exception in finding solutions to the problem of climate change (RIA Novosti 2012a, see more in International Affairs 2010: 237).

This most recent Russian participation in the international climate change negotiations in Qatar should not come as a surprise or be seen as a totally negative development. First, Russia did not 'go Canadian' (Dobrovidova 2012a), meaning that unlike Canada, Russia did not completely abandon the Protocol. At least until 2015 it will be (along with other parties) calculating the results of GHG emission reductions during the first period (2008-2012), and even after that it will keep reporting its emissions levels according to the Protocol's requirements (RIA Novosti 2012e). Since the Copenhagen Conference the rhetoric used by Russian officials in addressing climate change has changed: even though they remain reserved towards international commitments, all recent statements confirm domestic dedication towards GHG emissions reduction which will be achieved through economic modernisation and improvements in energy efficiency. The recent changes in climate change policy emerged because of the realisation that Russia can develop its economy and cut GHG emissions (what is summarised here as '*climate pragmatism*'). This again leads us to the deep connection between the economy and the environment in Russia (Henry 2010a). Under new circumstances this correlation can actually be seen as a positive tendency. Practically speaking, the idea of treating climate change mitigation as profitable and beneficial as well as understanding the nature of economic losses from climate degradation and the importance of climate change as a topic of global concern is moving the policy beyond the point of rhetoric. This is encouraging Russia to take steps towards a more sustainable and 'greener' economy and consequently making Russia a more realistic 'environmental leader'. If the hypothesis that the media coverage of climate change issues correlates with the state's policy, is correct, then it will be possible to observe this change in the state's policy on the pages of newspapers.

CHAPTER 5 - RUSSIAN NEWSPAPERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In the previous chapters it was shown how the PrM is applicable in the context of the Russian media production process. As all five PrM filters (ownership structure, advertising, sources, flak and ideology) can be defined and explained in this context it was suggested that they should work in a similar way as they did for the United States but with some modifications (as discussed in chapter three). According to this idea a number of hypotheses were posited to be tested through a range of methods, including media analysis.

This chapter offers an analysis of Russian press coverage of climate change which allows us to identify the priority themes within the coverage, changes in these priorities and even omissions of certain events or facts. More importantly, it allows us to test for a correlation between state policy and media policy, one of the chief hypotheses in this project. Data was collected from five national newspapers: *Izvestiya*, *Kommersant*, *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, *Komsomol'skaya pravda* and *Sovetskaya Rossiya*. The aim of the chapter is to study the dynamics of media coverage by looking at how the amount of climate change news changed depending on certain conditions over time (modifications in state policy, global conferences on climate change, acceptance of international documents and so on). Through discourse analysis the chapter will also look at how the character of these articles varied under the specified conditions (how climate change and state policy on it were portrayed, who were the main newsmakers and opinion leaders on the topic and so on). Coverage in the newspapers mentioned above will be studied by focusing on three events: the Kyoto Conference (1997), the Copenhagen Conference (plus acceptance of the Climate Doctrine) (2009) and the heat-wave in Russia (2010). The rationale behind these choices is that state policy changed tremendously between the Kyoto and Copenhagen Conferences, so it allows us to see if there was a correlation between this change and media policy, whilst the heat-wave allows us to explore whether other reasons, such as natural disasters, have more influence over the coverage rather than the state policy.

Following the theoretical approach of the PrM (explained in the previous chapters), the methods used in this analysis will to some extent duplicate the

ones used by Herman and Chomsky in their original research and will allow for the examination of media policy from a similar perspective.

Methodological considerations: analysing media texts

Before discussing methods used for the analyses of the Russian press, it is relevant to go back to the postulates of the PrM and to discuss the original methods used by Herman and Chomsky to test their hypotheses.

The methods of the PrM

Herman and Chomsky suggest using both qualitative and quantitative methods in applying the PrM. Their findings in *Manufacturing Consent* (1994 [1988]) were at first acquired by quantitative techniques. The PrM analyses how particular techniques in arranging and physically shaping information stimulates the 'preferred readings' (Klaehn 2009b: 44,). For instance, front page coverage, big headlines, catchy wording in the lead paragraph⁷⁰ and graphics can be powerful tools in captivating the reader's attention. These quantitative data give an overall understanding of how coverage of certain topics differ from one newspaper to another, or how they are covered in comparison to other topics. Even so, Herman and Chomsky do not stop at analysing results gained from mathematical calculations. Klaehn (2009a) in his interview with Herman suggests that the PrM uses methods similar to critical discourse analysis (such as the one developed by Teun van Dijk). Herman agrees with him and it is quite clear why. The PrM proposes looking at the media articles in the context of the historical, political or economic situation. Alike Teun van Dijk (1991: 116) argues that 'discourse analysis of news is not limited to textual structures' and that text on its own does not possess any specific meaning, but only after it is read and interpreted by the reader, from his/her social or cultural background within the previously mentioned current

⁷⁰The lead paragraph is the first couple of sentences of the article, which 'captures the essence of the event, and it cajoles the reader or listener into staying awhile' (Mencher 2006). The message carried in this few words has a big influence on the reader, as much as the headline or conclusion.

historical, political or economic situation, is a particular meaning assigned to the article. Discourse analysis will be discussed in more detail below.

Another method Herman and Chomsky use in their book is the '*paired example*', in which they compare similar cases which involve different political or economic interests. For instance, they analysed media coverage of religious victims. One case was about the Polish priest Jerzy Popieluszko who was killed by Polish police – which they contrasted to the numerous cases of priests killed in Latin America. The results of the analyses showed a big difference in the media coverage of the Polish priest and priests from the area of US influence. The murder in the Communist state by far received the prevailing amount of coverage. Herman and Chomsky explained this difference by characterising the Polish priest as a 'worthy victim' (victims of the enemy Communist state), in contrast to the 'unworthy victims' (victims of the states favourable to US policy). They suggested that media coverage will be in favour of the news which suits dominant political interests and makes people sympathise with the victims of the opposed regimes and at the same time, the media try to distract the public's attention from the information about unpopular state policies (Klaehn 2002).

Giving some specifications, Herman and Chomsky predict that not only the quantity of the news on the worthy and unworthy victims will be different, but also the quality of information will differ ('crudely in placement, headlining, word usage, and other modes of mobilizing interest and outrage' (1994 [1988]: 35)). They suggest that worthy victims are depicted in a more 'humanized' fashion in order to appeal to the audience's empathy and make them interested in the development of the story, whilst the unworthy victims are presented very briefly with minimal emotions, preferably with no context. Herman and Chomsky also anticipated that journalists would mostly be using official sources of information, such as sources in the government of the United States, in the case of covering unworthy victims so unwanted information could be avoided. Overall, according to Herman and Chomsky the coverage of convenient and inconvenient news would systematically differ in quantity and quality 'in ways that serve political ends' (ibid).

After summarising the quantitative results of the media analysis, Herman and Chomsky look at the motives presented in the coverage, but in doing so they continue to present each separate theme mentioned by journalists in historical context, and they also point out how some facts which were played up in one case were downplayed in another. For example, in the case of the Polish priest, the media kept mentioning the government's responsibility for the crime. In the Latin American cases on the contrary this aspect was not covered. The model assumes that the quality and quantity of the media coverage depends on the interests of the power elite (Klaehn 2009b). So, in order to understand those interests the media analyses need to be undertaken with diverse methods which can give a complete picture of the power framework of the case studied.

With regards to the media analysis of climate change issues in Russia, the method of 'paired examples' and the comparison of 'worthy' and 'unworthy' victims, to some extent was reconstructed through the comparison of the coverage of the Kyoto and Copenhagen Conferences. As will be discussed in detail below, during the first conference, climate change is expected to be an 'unworthy' topic and during the second conference it should become a 'worthy' topic due to the changes in the elites' interests. It is expected that this dichotomisation will alter the coverage quantitatively and qualitatively. Based on the provided outline of the PrM's original methods and the modifications of the model discussed earlier for the case study of media coverage of climate change in Russia, this study utilises the methods of content and discourse analysis, which are discussed below.

Content and discourse analysis of climate change reporting

Cotter (2005: 416) argues that 'the discourse of news media encapsulates two key components: the news story, or spoken or written text, and the process involved in producing the texts.' She notes that the first dimension has been closely studied by many scholars whilst the second one is often overlooked. Applying the PrM to the Russian case of media coverage of environmental issues incorporates both of these dimensions. It looks at the complex production process of news, but at the same time, by means of content and

discourse analysis, it studies the outcome of this process – written or spoken text produced by journalists under or in spite of the influence of the surrounding context. Content and discourse analysis can be interpreted and used very differently depending on the purpose of specific research, therefore, the use of these methods here will be outlined below.

Being a very popular method in studying media messages, content analysis allows the researcher to break the data into ‘bits and pieces’ (Pierce 2008) and gives a measure of ‘quantifiability’ to the project. Complexity of the content analysis depends on the particular case and purpose of the research and how researchers understand it. This study will use the definition given by Neuendorf (2002: 1): ‘[content analysis] defined as the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics’, a characterization which can be supplemented by Krippendorff’s (1980) definition, which refers to content analysis as ‘a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context’ (cited in Bertrand and Hugues 2005: 177). Thus, the application of content analysis will allow us to follow the methodological logic of the PrM.

It should be noted that the data collected for this research project will not precisely reproduce the type of data collected by Herman and Chomsky for their original study. For example, as the articles are collected through a computer database it is impossible to calculate column inches and there is no equivalent of editorials in the researched Russian newspapers. However, for this part of the research, content analysis will allow us to identify the salience of the topic throughout the selected timeframes and within the range of the studied newspapers. Furthermore, it will demonstrate whether the quantity of the articles devoted to climate change alters depending on such variables as ownership structures, advertising policy or political orientation.

Discourse analysis allows us to explore the uniqueness of the text produced by media (van Dijk 1991) where the meaning of words can be altered and understood completely differently depending on the context. So, discourse analysis will be used to look at the language as a whole, including the non-linguistic categories, such as who is presenting the news, who is the audience,

what types of non-verbal communication are involved and how information is situated in the bigger context of social interactions. It again leads us back to the methods used by the authors of the PrM, where after analysing the quantitative characteristics of the text they go into the depth of the news information and investigate the real intentions behind the messages. For example, Herman and Chomsky's research of the peculiar coverage of the Polish priest's murder which is not just interpreted as another criminal report, but as taken in the political context, it is seen by the researchers as an influence of the Cold War on the US media. Herman and Chomsky come to this conclusion by providing a comprehensive analysis of the situation behind the events described in the articles and by referring to specific sentences or paragraphs, they try to explain why this might be biased or, even more, why it can be a product of a 'propaganda machine'. In some places their method reminds us of detective investigative techniques. For instance, Herman and Chomsky go as far as to characterize the media coverage of the Polish priest's murder and a hundred religious victims in Latin America as a 'knowing lie' (1994 [1988]: 49) the statement made by the State Department representative about the political situation in El Salvador, and present a logical argument as to why they think so by bringing in evidence from different sources.

Discourse analysis has several interpretations,⁷¹ hence, there are quite a variety of schools and approaches to understanding and implementing discourse analysis and even the definitions of discourse differ drastically. Van Dijk (2011: 3-4) points out that discourse can be seen as 'social interaction, [...]as power and domination, [...]as communication, [...]as contextually situated, as social semiosis, as natural language use [or], [...]as a complex layered construct'.

Due to the specific nature of this research project (explained below) and the original postulates of the PrM, a methodology inspired by 'critical

⁷¹ Schiffrin et al. (2005: 1) note that generally for linguists 'discourse' means anything 'beyond the sentence', whilst for some other researchers discourse analysis is an analysis of 'language use'. While both these understandings of discourse involve language, critical theorists go beyond these definitions and look not only at the linguistics characteristics of discourse, but also its non-linguistic characteristics (the social context in which language has to operate).

discourse analysis' (CDA) will be applied for this study and in particular the work of two prominent linguists, Teun van Dijk and Norman Fairclough, will be drawn upon. Even though they do differ in some of their views on discourse, in this case they could be referred to as representatives of one approach to discourse studies (Gillespie 2006). CDA considers discourse to be inseparable from its social context, however, as much as discourse is influenced and transformed by the surrounding interactions or environment, in turn it also possesses power and may change that context: 'the discursive event is shaped by situation, institution and social structure, but it also shapes them' (Fairclough et al. 2011: 357). For this research, discourse will be seen as 'a form of social practices (economic, political, cultural and so on)' (Fairclough 2001: 122) which does not only consider the nominative function of the language (defining the objects) but the 'linguistic conceptualization of the world' (Fairclough et al. 2011: 358). As Fairclough et al. (ibid) state that discourse:

may have major ideological effects[...] [it] can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic groups, through the way it represents things and positions people.

In the case of climate change coverage in Russia the following 'forms of social practices' will be considered – the state's position towards climate change policy, media dependency on the state, businesses' position towards the problem and again media dependency on it, as well as the unclear messages produced by the scientific community, NGOs' struggle to lobby successfully on environmental issues, public reluctance to face the problem as well as the growing influence of international actors on Russia's climate change policy (see more in chapter four). So within this complex discourse created by various actors, journalists' choice of words does acquire special functions – 'linguistic conceptualization'. For instance, if a state-owned newspaper after the Copenhagen Conference starts referring to climate change as a well-known fact rather than a lie created by Western scientists then it can be argued that because of the political context this choice of words is very likely to be connected with

the state's policy and journalists do not just show the change in their beliefs or knowledge (from unknown to known), but also the change of how the situation is perceived or 'conceptualised' by the main actors of the existing discourse.

The previously outlined understanding of language suggests looking at the words as carriers of certain purposes and even as a medium of ideology or power. As Fairclough et al. (2011: 358) point out discourse produced through this language can be 'racist, or sexist'. CDA tries to expose these hidden messages and reveal relationships of power. This approach to discourse analysis has been influenced by the Frankfurt School of thought and Marxism: the source of the word 'critical' and also the idea of not only studying and analysing power relationships in society by the means of language, but also trying to change and influence it. That is why the research topic in CDA is vitally important. As Fairclough et al. (ibid) state '[CDA] openly and explicitly positions itself on the side of dominated and oppressed groups and against dominating groups.' Topics most popular among followers of CDA include gender, discrimination, globalisation, democracy, racism, and the environment, or as Teun van Dijk (2001: 353) puts it, '[CDA] focuses primarily on social problems and political issues.'

In this context Klaehn's (2009a) previously mentioned remark about the connections he saw between the PrM methods and CDA could once again be considered fair and justified. The issues which Herman and Chomsky were looking at were concerned with the relations between the oppressed and oppressors, whether it was the coverage of the priests' murder or the Vietnam War. At the same time, as mentioned before, they looked at the language used by media in the social context, and also in the context of power, which in their case belonged to the 'elite' of the American society or in the majority of cases, to the US government.

Discourse analysis is also widely used by scholars studying media coverage of climate change (Boykoff 2009a, Carvalho 2005, Carvalho and Burgess 2005, Doulton and Brown 2007, Fletcher 2009, Olausson 2009). For

example, Amy Fletcher (2009: 801) through the application of 'frame analysis'⁷² states that this methodological approach:

[d]eepens our understanding of why nation-states respond as they do to various large-scale environmental challenges and enables the identification of pathways by which even intractable policy conflicts might be successfully re-framed towards consensus solution.

Anabela Carvalho (2005) applies CDA to study media representation of climate change in British media which has allowed her to track the changes of the climate change discourse over time:

[t]he greenhouse effect evolved from a strictly scientific problem in the mid-1980s to a controversial political matter at the end of that decade, and from there to an object of regulation dominated by techno-corporatist governance.

Similarly, Carvalho and Burgess (2005: 1458) used CDA to conclude that in the case of the UK broadsheet newspapers 'political actors have played by far the most powerful and effective role in shaping climate change in the public sphere over the last 20 years'. CDA has allowed Ulrika Olausson (2009: 433) to confirm that there are 'close bonds between policymaking and the media' in her study of climate change coverage by Swedish newspapers. However, in this case the 'relationship between media frames and the structures of power seems to expand beyond the borders of the nation-state into the transnational sphere of Europe' (ibid).

When applied to media coverage of climate change issues in Russia, the PrM approach closely resembles the main ideas of CDA. Russian journalists have to operate in the complex environment of the increasing governmental centralisation of media, diffused boundaries between big business and the state, the worsening environmental situation and alarming messages from the NGOs

⁷² As Fletcher (2009: 801) states, frame analysis allows us to 'expose the role of political language and worldviews in the construction of plausible, meaningful and socially relevant pathways that can enrol a majority of stakeholders and citizens in collective actions'.

and international communities. Carvalho and Burgess (2005: 1461) state that 'CDA attempts to understand the links between texts and social relations, distribution of power, and dominant values and ideas'. As can be seen there are various social and power relations that coexist in the post-communist society with the developing ideology of free market economics and the persisting ideology of the strong state. So, the analysis of Russian media will be conducted with consideration of this context. As Teun van Dijk (2008) argues, 'discourse is not produced without context and cannot be understood without taking the context into consideration' (cited in Fairclough et al. 2011: 372).

In summary, the information collected will be used to provide an understanding of coverage. Then articles will be studied on the subject of how often they refer to official sources, NGOs, business and scientists in their information on climate change. Furthermore, samples from different newspapers and different events will be analysed by means of discourse analysis within specific politico-economic contexts. The hypotheses along with the choice of media organs and events will be explained before presenting and examining the results of the analysis.

Media analysis of climate change coverage in Russia

If the PrM is applicable in the Russian case of communicating climate change issues, then the following outcomes can be expected:

1. Russian media organs owned by actors with an interest in continued carbon emissions will take a more sceptical/hostile view toward climate change and/or produce less coverage.
2. Russian media organs relying heavily on advertising by actors with an interest in continued carbon emissions will take a more sceptical/hostile view toward climate change and/or produce less coverage.
3. The Russian media will be 'drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest' (Herman and Chomsky 1994: 18). When either

these sources of information change, or when those sources change their position, Russian media coverage will change accordingly.

4. Coverage of climate change will increase when it is in the interest of the 'dominant elites', for instance, after governmental acceptance of climate change regulation policy, ratification and approval of international documents, participation in international negotiation and demonstration of a pro-active climate change mitigating policy.
5. Micro-factors of media production such as journalists' professional norms or journalists' writing style to approach the problem do not result in major interference, and are subordinate to macro-factors such as ownership structure or dominant ideology (which are described in the PrM's discussion of the ideology filter). So, the coverage of climate change during the extreme weather conditions (which arguably can satisfy journalists' desire to write about a sensational story) will not be greater than the coverage during the period of major international negotiations or national activity on climate change.

The PrM filter 'flak' cannot be examined in this part of the research since it is difficult to investigate its effect by the means of media analysis, so it was studied through other appropriate methods.⁷³

Testing of these hypotheses will allow us to see the influence of economic and state elites (where they exist) as well as the influence of each PrM filter over media coverage. Furthermore, if the chief hypothesis as stated above (that of the dominant influence of the state over the Russian media) is correct, then in this case coverage of climate change issues in Russia should change depending on the state's policy. For instance the coverage before the Copenhagen Conference in December 2009 should not really be significant and

⁷³ As was explained in chapter two, the presence of the filter 'flak' suggests reaction to media activity by civil society, influence by the elites or censorship by the authoritative groups, the analysis of the media texts cannot demonstrate whether the information was influenced or not, censored or provoked some negative reaction from outside, hence, the influence of this filter was explored during the series of interviews and findings reported in chapter three.

qualitatively it should be presented in a way which ridicules climate change, seeks to diminish the belief that humans are to blame, or maintains that Russia has nothing to do with it. Just before the Copenhagen Conference when the Russian government changed its position towards being more sensitive to climate change and adopted the Climate Doctrine, the quantity and quality of news should have changed. The statements acknowledging human impact and the negative effect for the country will become more frequent (further on in this chapter more predictions about the analysed events will be spelled out and tested). Nevertheless, the commercial unpopularity of the topic among businesses (media owners or advertisers) will still be an obstacle to the popularising of the problem, as will be tight connections between the Russian state and businesses (especially the energy sector).

On the other hand, if the PrM does not work then those filters will not influence the coverage, whilst some other processes neglected by Herman and Chomsky might interfere with news production. It might be unforeseen weather conditions such as extremely hot/cold summers/winters or, perhaps, journalists' professional norms such as the necessity to cover something which has a direct influence on people's everyday lives, or the requirement to present the problem from different angles which prove to be important. For the purpose of testing all of these suggestions in this chapter, five Russian newspapers will be analysed through content and discourse analysis. The timeframe of the news coverage will be limited to two months around the selected events.

The choice of media organs

When explaining how they chose media organs for their research, Herman and Chomsky talk about the *elite* media organs that lead the regional and local media outlets due to their obvious benefits, such as a better financial base, bigger audience and larger number of, and sometimes more qualified, staff. The 'elite media' are at 'the top of a tiered system' (Hearns-Branaman 2009: 125, see also Chomsky 1997) which gives them the opportunity to determine their policy and shape media content. Furthermore, the media which happen to be closer to the centres where major economic and political decisions are made have more chances to be at the top of the informational hierarchy (Klaehn

2002). In this research project it is vital to consider characteristics of the analysed media organs such as whether they have federal or regional distribution, the size of the actual audience, and what media organs are the most popular among the intellectual, business and political elite of the society, as well as who owns them, how much they depend on advertising revenue and how much they are financially independent.

One of the central challenges in gathering data for this research and conducting media analysis is to find adequate representatives of all Russian media. It should be noted that any selection will have some limitations. For instance, as mentioned above, it seems obvious to base the selection of studied material on its popularity and audience size. At the same time some of the newspapers are read only by a small group of members of the intellectual or business elite who cannot be ignored during the analysis. It is obvious that it limits the research if one type of mass media are analysed, for example, only newspapers or internet sources. This might be the most practical way to gather information but considering how much larger TV audiences tend to be, and television's influence, analysis of TV news could benefit this study. Nevertheless, considering the time constraints of the project, this source of information will be omitted and only print media available through electronic databases will be analysed.

In order to gain an insight into the popularity of the Russian media outlets and their actual audience size, the opinion polls of the Public Opinion Foundation (Fond 'Obshchestvennoe mnenie') are helpful. The poll 'Mass media: preferable channels of information' conducted by FOM in 2007 has demonstrated that Russian people are actively interested in news about Russian and world affairs. They get most of their information through national television (90 percent of respondents see TV as a major news source). National newspapers were in second place with 30 percent of respondents citing them. Regional TV, national radio, local newspapers and local TV follow one another, with little difference of one or two percent (29, 26, 26 and 25 percent respectively). The internet had quite a low position, with only 9 percent of respondents using it as a preferred channel of information. More recent FOM

(20013) data shows that even though TV and newspapers remained in the same positions (with 89 percent and 27 percent of population resorting to these media for news), the internet's audience has expanded significantly with up to 29 percent of Russians using it as a news source⁷⁴. Considering these data, it would be desirable for this research project to analyse the representatives of the most popular categories such as national television and national newspapers as well as internet news web sites. However, because the popularity of the internet in the years of the selected events (for the purpose of media analysis) is very different (being very unpopular in late 1990s and becoming quite popular after 2009), internet sources were omitted. As already mentioned, for practical reasons TV also will not be considered in this work.

Following the same logic of identifying the most popular media outlets amongst these two categories, let's go back to the poll's results. The top two results of the newspapers' popularity belong to the newspaper *Argumenty i fakty* (*Аргументы и факты*) and *Komsomol'skaya pravda* (*Комсомольская правда*),⁷⁵ both of which can be considered tabloids. However, as will be discussed later, the history of the *Komsomol'skaya pravda* makes it difficult to equate the newspaper to, let's say, British tabloid newspapers. The same goes for *Argumenty i fakty*: in the 1980s as it was one of the trendsetters in the perestroika movement. Even though *Argumenty i fakty* according to this opinion poll is one of the most popular newspapers, it will not be used in this research, since it is a weekly newspaper, whilst all other studied media are published on a daily basis.

⁷⁴ Sarah Oates (2013: 6) states that 'according to the measurement by the World Telecommunications/ICT Indicators Database, 43 percent of the Russian population was online by March 31, 2011. The organization reported an increase in usage of 1,826 percent between 2000 and 2010'.

⁷⁵ Another way of comparing the papers' popularity and reach is to compare their circulations, where again *Argumenty i fakty* and *Komsomol'skaya pravda* take the leading roles. For example, *AiF* is the world's 17th largest newspaper (Newspapers24.com 2011) with its 2.3 million circulation, whilst *KP* daily publishes 655,000 newspapers, its Friday issue comes up to 3 million. Even though the other newspapers' circulation is much more modest, they are still considered to be *mass* newspapers.

Due to its popularity the analysis of *Komsomol'skaya pravda* is important for understanding what kind of information about climate change the majority of Russia's population receive. However, smaller-circulation organs such as *Rossiyskaya gazeta* (*Российская газета*), *Izvestiya* (*Известия*), *Kommersant* (*Коммерсантъ*) and *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (*Советская Россия*) (identified as a number one choice by 3 percent or fewer of respondents) cannot be ignored due to their special ownership structure, target audience or political affiliation. *Rossiyskaya gazeta* is an official newspaper of the Russian government, and its coverage heavily depends on the state's official policy. *Izvestiya* and *Kommersant* belong to the quality press and position themselves as independent press aimed at the so called elite or decision-makers: highly educated people, managers, politicians, members of the *intelligentsia* and so on. *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, in turn, is a left-wing⁷⁶ newspaper which is popular among senior citizens who proudly carry on the ideals and traditions of the Soviet legacy or use the newspaper as an arena to disagree with the current government policy or more generally with the modern capitalist world order.

So, the choice for the analysis of Russian print media organs are *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, *Izvestiya*, *Kommersant* and *Sovetskaya Rossiya*. Relevant information about the chosen media outlets is presented below.

Komsomol'skaya pravda (KP)

Type: Newspaper –tabloid

Frequency: Daily

⁷⁶ 'Left' and 'right' are quite ambiguous in the Russian context. During the Soviet Union the government identified themselves as 'left-wing' 'by its [USSR'] leaders hostility to "rightist reactionary" regimes abroad' (Evans and Whitefield 1998: 1024). During perestroika 'right' and 'left' acquired absolute opposite meanings – 'the "left" came to denote the free market democrats and liberals, and the "right" the devotees of socialism and the communist system' (ibid). In the modern Russia, these terms were inverted once again, and for the purpose of this research, it is understood that newspapers that characterize themselves as 'left' are supporters of communist ideals, whilst 'right-wing' newspapers advocate the development of capitalism and liberalism, but at this moment the 'left' has become the opposition rather than the ruling party.

Circulation: 655,000, Friday issue – 3,000000

Ownership structure: Belongs to the group of companies 'ESN' (mostly concerned with energy production) (Media Atlas 2011) and has close ties with the Russian railways company (OAO RZHD) which is considered the second largest monopoly in Russia.

Additional information:

The majority of the audience are women. The newspaper is mostly read by married people in the age group 45 or older (Atlas SMI 2011). Even though now the main aim of the *KP* is entertainment, which includes capturing the audience's attention with coverage of various scandals and celebrity news, it was first established in 1925 as a main media organ for Soviet youth (Komsomol). By using the language of its direct audience (Strovskiy 2011), in less formal ways than other newspapers, it would spread news about the best representatives of the Soviet youth (true communists and hard workers who would build a better future for the country). Over time the *KP* became increasingly popular and the newspaper did not act only as an outlet of the party's line, but also during the years of Khrushchev's thaw it heavily criticized the individual institutions of the Soviet government or people in charge of them. Strovskiy (2011) points out that at that period of time the influence of the *KP* was really significant and even ministers and party members were afraid of its critique. After perestroika the newspaper moved away from politics to the infotainment sphere. According to the BBC news website, 'it [*KP*] has built its reputation on a gentle nostalgia for the Soviet period, firm backing for Kremlin policy and a keen interest in celebrity news and scandal from home and abroad' (The Press in Russia 2008), which might be explained by the newspaper's historical heritage and ownership structure dominated by the energy companies.

Rossiyskaya gazeta (RG)

Type: Official newspaper of Russian government.

Frequency: Daily

Circulation: 179,240

Ownership structure: Government of the Russian Federation

Additional information:

The majority of the audience are men. The newspaper is mostly read by married people with higher education in the age group: 55 and older (Atlas SMI 2011). According to the official website of the newspaper it 'enjoys official status, because acts of state come into effect upon their publication here' (Rossiyskaya gazeta website 2011). At the same time, the *RG* does not restrict itself to publishing only official documents, but also tries to attract the attention of the general reader by covering various types of domestic and international news. The newspaper defines its readership as an 'even-tempered adult inclined to conservative views'. Even though over time, the newspaper has published some criticism of some state institutions, it is expected to cover the state's official position in a manner which would appeal to the supporters of state policy.

Izvestiya

Type: Social-political and business newspaper

Frequency: Daily

Circulation: 234,500

Ownership structure: Until May 2008 the media was owned by Gazprom (The Press in Russia 2008). The latest information on the ownership of the *Izvestiya* claims that it is part of the NMG media holding whose shares belong to OAO 'AB 'Rossiya' – 54.96 percent (co-owner Yuriy Kovalchuk is widely reported to be a close associate of Vladimir Putin), OAO 'Surgutneft' 19.49 percent, OAO 'Severstal' 19.49 percent, group SOGAZ 6.06 percent (Media Atlas 2011).

Additional information:

The majority of the audience are men. The newspaper is mostly read by married people with higher education in the age group: 65 and older (Atlas SMI 2011). The *Izvestiya* is considered a centrist newspaper with a predominantly liberal readership. As the *KP*, *Izvestiya* was also first founded at

the birth of the Soviet era in 1917. At first just a mouthpiece of the Communist Party, it eventually became popular among intellectuals and academics. During and after perestroika, it criticised the Kremlin's policy on various occasions, however, it has been noticed that since the newspaper had been bought by SOGAZ, its media policy went through changes once again (The press in Russia 2008).

Kommersant

Type: National business newspaper

Frequency: Daily

Circulation: 125,000-130,000

Ownership structure: 1999-2006 belonged to oligarch Boris Berezovsky, in 2008 was bought by oligarch Alisher Usmanov (owner of Metalloinvest) (Online gazeta 2011).

Additional information:

Audience demographic characteristics: men 57 percent, women 43 percent, managers 29 percent, professionals 19 percent, office workers 13 percent, workers 12 percent, students 4 percent (Kommersant website 2011). *Kommersant* positions itself as a rightwing liberal newspaper, which is mostly aimed at businessmen or would-be businessmen. From the beginning when it was founded in 1989, the newspaper was plotted as an analogue of the Western quality press, and its articles would lack evaluations or judgements of the events described, sharing only facts and information which would not interest ordinary readers, but would appeal to managers or specialists (Strovskiy 2011). It characterises itself as 'one of the most authoritative and influential publications for Russia's decision-makers' (Kommersant website 2011).

Sovetskaya Rossiya (SR)

Type: National left-wing (communist) newspaper

Frequency: 3 times a week

Circulation: 300,000

Ownership structure: Its editor Valentin Chikin claims that 'economically the newspaper is independent from any power structures, parties or financial groups. The basis of its budget comes from the subscription and readers' donations. Profit from advertising is negligible' (SR official website 2012).

Additional information:

SR was launched in 1956 as an official media organ of the CPSU (RSFSR) and Council of Ministers of the RSFSR. In 1990-1991 its editor-in-chief turned the newspaper into an opposition organ and channel to transmit the ideas of the Russian Communist Party which makes it (in this sample of media organs) a representative of the left-wing media. One of the specific features of this newspaper in comparison to the other studied media organs is that three quarters of every issue of *SR* consists of articles written by its readers, rather than professional journalists.⁷⁷ According to the opinion poll taken by the Public Opinion Fund (FOM 1997) in Moscow, 61 percent of its readers are retired people (to compare, the same research for other newspaper showed on average 31 percent of readership of all newspapers are seniors).⁷⁸ Also, in comparison to 'an average Muscovite', readers of *SR* are quite politicised: they

⁷⁷ This is the so called 'Lenin's principle' which originates from his idea of how media organs function. Besides journalists working and writing for the newspaper there also should be a network of regular people contributing to the issues who are not particularly educated to work in the newspaper but who share similar political views and have a 'grasp from the field' (more on this in Strovskiy 2011).

⁷⁸ It is interesting that the readership age profiles seem to show that the print media is mainly consumed by a considerably older audience (typically +45 for KP, +55 for RG, and +65 for *Izvestiya*, 61 percent of the readers of *SR* are retired). The public opinion poll (FOM 2008) shows that there is only a small difference between respondents' attitude towards climate change problems depending on their age, such as out of the age group 18-35 70 percent of people consider climate change to be an important problem, 36-54 years old – 72 percent and 65 percent of people over 55 years old. Based on this information the argument that the print media orients its coverage towards its audience's interests is not very convincing, however, it needs further study. From the point of view of the PrM itself, the issue of audience preference based on age specifications is not considered worthy of exploration. As has been mentioned before, Herman and Chomsky, intentionally, left out the impact of the audience over the media coverage.

show interest to political news, comments on political news and also news from other regions twice as much as other readerships.

The *Kommersant*, *KP*, *RG* and *Izvestiya* were accessed through an online database: Public.ru, whilst *SR* was accessed through the database Integrum World Wide.⁷⁹ These organisations are commercial and collect mass media information in order to sell access to business, government and academic organisations so they can monitor their press ratings or conduct other research relevant to them. In order to find news/articles applicable for this project a set of keywords was specified. They all refer to climate change in one sense or another. The options include: 'climate change', 'global warming/cooling', and the 'greenhouse effect' (изменение климата, глобальное потепление, глобальное похолодание, парниковый эффект). Depending on the analysed event, keywords include: the Kyoto Conference, the Kyoto Protocol, the Copenhagen Conference and the Climate Doctrine (Киотская конференция, Киотский протокол, Копенгагенская конференция, Климатическая доктрина).

The choice of events and expected results of media coverage

The media analysis will cover a two month period covering three events related to climate change issues. The events selected are considered to be 'critical discourse moments', as Carvalho (2008: 166) states '[c]ritical discourse moments are periods that involve specific happenings, which may challenge the "established" discursive positions. Various factors may define these key moments: political activity, scientific findings or other socially relevant events'. In order to test the main hypothesis of Russian media dependency on Russian state climate policy, the choice of events is, predominately, determined by what position towards climate change regulations at the specific point in history the Russian government held. The analysed events are:

⁷⁹ The use of different databases raised a concern for the comparability of the researched data, however, it was noticed that both databases use the same principle of collecting and exporting articles. The controlled search was conducted where the same newspaper (which was on both databases) was searched with the same keywords and the results were identical.

1. The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Kyoto, Japan, 1-11 December 1997
2. The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, 6–18 December, 2009 and acceptance of Climate Doctrine of Russian Federation on 17 December 2009
3. The heat-wave in Russia in August 2010

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Kyoto, Japan, 1-11 December 1997

The Third Conference of the Parties under the UNFCCC is famous for the announcement of the Kyoto Protocol, in which for the first time states agreed to legally restrict the amount of GHG emissions allowed for the signatories. The principle and significance of the Kyoto Protocol is discussed in detail in chapter four. For this section it is important to understand that in December 1997, Russia had a strong anti-Kyoto position and together with the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Japan was lobbying for lower emission restrictions for industrialized countries. Also, at this time there was a strong negative attitude towards the Kyoto Protocol among the Russian scientific community and the president's advisory team (the opposition was led by economic advisor Andrey Illarionov and academic Yuriy Izrael). So, for this event the media coverage is expected to be low, since the climate change topic was very far from the state's agenda, and the character of the news is expected to be very negative. For instance, the origins of climate change should have been questioned: whether people have anything to do with it or not and whether it was happening at all. The Kyoto Protocol is expected to be seen as a danger to Russia's economic development, or even more as a conspiracy among the Western countries against Russia, with the view that Russia should abstain from signing it. The sources of information are expected to be dominated by government representatives and academics closely working with the Kremlin.

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, 6 - 18 December, 2009 and the Climate Doctrine, 17 December 2009

The Copenhagen Conference and Russia's position during its negotiation also have been discussed in detail in chapter four. The main issues connected with this event are that at this conference countries were supposed to come to an agreement and produce a new document in order to replace the Kyoto Protocol which was supposed to expire after 2012. Eventually, for the global environmental and scientific community who had big hopes for the conference, it turned out to be a fiasco, since major disagreements did not allow countries to finalise their decisions and produce a new legally binding document on climate change policy. In spite of the negative outcome of the conference the Russian government announced its firm position that it would be working on reducing GHG emissions regardless of whether the global community came to an agreement or not. Closer to the end of the conference the Russian Climate Doctrine was adopted which officially stated that climate change had an anthropogenic character and that its negative consequences could damage the country's wellbeing.

Media coverage of climate change in this period of time is expected to mirror the official vision of the problem and also accept the anthropogenic character of climate change and the position that mitigating climate change will benefit the country. In particular, the positive change in coverage should coincide with Medvedev's visit to Copenhagen and acceptance of the Climate Doctrine. The news mentioning the acceptance of the Climate Doctrine is expected to be slightly more extensive than that devoted only to the conference since the doctrine was a direct initiative of the Russian government, whilst the conference until the very last moment was not favoured by the head of state,⁸⁰ however, due to the time overlap between these two events, it will be difficult to separate them. State officials are still expected to dominate among information sources. Representatives of NGOs and different academic institutes are also expected to act as sources since the more government

⁸⁰ Medvedev was advised not to go to the conference and nobody knew if he would go until the last moment, so NGOs tried to do their best to influence him to take part in it (Yuliya Yevtushok, interview, Moscow 22 July 2011).

changes its policy towards climate change regulation, the closer it gets to the position of NGOs and scientists working on this problem.

Russian heat-wave in August 2010

The anomalous heat-wave of the summer of 2010 led to some very severe consequences in the central part of Russia. The temperatures in Moscow broke previous records. The heat-wave provoked vast forest fires around major cities in central Russia, and official forces could not gain control for several weeks. As a consequence extreme weather conditions moved climate-related topics up the news hierarchy. This event is interesting in two ways. Firstly, it happened after the president and government took the course of supporting climate change regulations after accepting its existence and its negative character for Russia. The media coverage, as in the previous case, should have been in favour of climate change regulation and mitigation. Secondly, if this natural disaster provoked much greater coverage than the state's participation in the UN conferences then it would bring into question the functioning of the PrM, which does not consider such factors as journalists' interest in covering extraordinary events which closely affect their audience (see chapter two).

If the PrM is correct, then the amount of articles during this period of time cannot be higher than during the Copenhagen Conference and it is expected to be consistent with the official position on the problem: that Russia is supporting climate change mitigation programmes and will take part in them. The information sources are expected to be the same as for the previous event, but with greater contributions from NGO and academia (see the previous section for explanation).

These three events are good cases to consider in order to see how media coverage has changed along with the differing political contexts. The Kyoto and Copenhagen Conferences, being 12 years apart from each other, demonstrate almost polar positions of Russian official policy towards climate change issues. The heat-wave brings into the analysis an aspect which was ignored by the PrM, journalists' norms, which tend to cover vivid events directly related to their audience.

Content analysis of media coverage of climate change in Russia

The first stage of media analysis consists of content analysis, which considers the numbers of articles mentioning climate change in all the studied newspapers across three selected events. The results of the content analysis are presented below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Number of articles mentioning climate change within the cases studied

Newspaper	Kyoto Conference 1.11 - 1.12.1997	Copenhagen Conference 1.11 - 31.12.2009	The heat-wave 1.07-31.08.2010
Komsomol'skaya pravda	4* (Moscow**) 0.2%***	19 0.54%	13 0.43%
Rossiyskaya gazeta	2 (federal issue) 0.1%	41 0.84%	32 0.63%
Izvestiya	3 (Moscow) 0.18%	30 0.55%	22 0.48%
Kommersant	3 (Main) 0.1%	22 0.61%	6 0.18%
Sovetskaya Rossiya	1 0.2%	15 3%	7 1.4%
Total	13	127	80

* Absolute number of articles on climate change published within the studied timeframe in the selected newspapers.

** 'Moscow' – articles were published in newspapers distributed in the Moscow area; for the '*Rossiyskaya gazeta*' and '*Izvestiya*' – 'federal issue' includes articles distributed throughout the country; for '*Kommersant*' – 'main' category excludes the articles published in specialised issues of the newspaper such as '*Kommersant-den'gi*' and so on.

***Percentage of articles on climate change towards overall number of articles published within the studied timeframe in the selected newspapers.

In order to test the first two hypotheses (whether the coverage changes depending on the media ownership structure or advertising policy) a series of

two sample proportion tests was conducted (with STATA software). The test aimed to assess the statistical significance of differences between various newspapers within the studied timeframes. For instance, the proportion of articles published by *KP* during the 'Kyoto' period was compared to the proportion of articles published by *Kommersant* within the same timeframe. Then to the proportion of articles published by *RG* and so on (the test was run for the all possible pairwise combinations). During the 'Kyoto' period the test did not show a significant difference over all five newspapers ($p\text{-value}>0.05$), regardless of whether we are talking about the state-owned *RG* or profit-oriented *KP*. During the Copenhagen Conference and heat-wave periods, the communist newspaper *SR* significantly stood out with publishing more articles than the other newspapers (whether this significant difference in the number of published articles represents a different media policy on climate change by this media organ will be studied below through discourse analysis). Furthermore, during the summer of 2010, *Kommersant* published significantly fewer articles than the other newspapers.

The analysis demonstrated the following results: *Kommersant* and *RG* ($p\text{-value}=0.0034$), *Kommersant* and *Izvestiya* ($p\text{-value}=0.0313$).⁸¹ As has been mentioned earlier *Kommersant* characterises itself as a quality newspaper for professionals, which tries to maintain its image as a serious business media outlet. As will be discussed below the heat-wave in 2010 produced mostly sensational articles, which might be a reason for *Kommersant's* reserved coverage during this particular period (it is important that during other periods it did not show this difference). The conducted analysis shows that the first two hypotheses were not quite borne out. Whilst the supposedly independent *SR*, indeed, published proportionately more articles on climate change, the other four newspapers did not show significant differences over all three periods (with only *Kommersant* being relatively reserved during the heat-wave). The

⁸¹ Given the high number of observations (more than 3,000 articles per newspaper) our statistical power, i.e. our ability to discern population differences from the sample is remarkably high. Therefore, the lack of statistical significance in most of the tests is unlikely to be due to a type-two error.

similarities as well as acknowledged differences will be analysed further through discourse analysis.

With regards to the fourth hypothesis, that media would follow the interests of the dominant elites, all newspapers did follow the same trend where 12 years after the Kyoto Conference the coverage of climate change had changed tremendously, from almost no representation in 1997 (cumulative number of 13 articles) to some representation in 2009 during the Copenhagen Conference (127 articles). The argument of the significant influence of the Russian government over media coverage can be also supported by the comparison of the last two events. Even though many argue that unusual weather conditions bring attention to climate change, the highly politicised events of December 2009 (Copenhagen Conference and the acceptance of the Climate Doctrine) provoked 47 articles more than the heat-wave. However, it should be noted that within the 'Copenhagen' case that there is no alteration of coverage before or after Medvedev's attendance at the conference or the acceptance of the Climate Doctrine. For instance, only three out of five newspapers mentioned Climate Doctrine and only did this once (this finding is discussed in more detail later in this chapter).

The fifth hypothesis appears to be partially correct. One of the possible reasons for journalists' lack of interest in climate change is that it does not have direct relevance to the audience (for more see chapter one), so the events of summer 2010 with its direct effect on millions of Russians could have been a 'perfect' situation for journalists when climate change quite literally entered the houses of much of the audience. Indeed the coverage of climate change at this time was relatively high (compared to the Kyoto coverage), however, it was still 37 percent less than during the politicized events of December 2009 and, as will be discussed in more detail below, in many cases it did not refer to the direct correlation between natural abnormalities and the climate change phenomenon. At the same time coverage of the Copenhagen Conference and the Climate Doctrine were much clearer on climate change issues and their relevance to Russia's interests. This observation confirms the PrM's view of the minor role of micro-processes over media coverage, meaning that even

when journalists find professional interest in the topic, coverage maintains ‘consent’ with the elites. It also confirms that the decisive factor in coverage is whether the relevant elite groups (in Russia’s case, the government) take an interest in an issue or not. This hypothesis will also be tested by means of discourse analysis, which will demonstrate to what extent coverage of the heat-wave in 2010 was influenced by state policy. If the majority of articles still reflect state policy rather than trying to independently explore this issue, then the role of ‘micro-factors’ will be even more diminished in the case of Russian media.

The third hypothesis of the choice of information sources needs to be analysed in greater detail. The summary of the choice of sources appears below in Table 5.2. The articles were categorized according to their types of sources, defined as: Russian official sources (ROS), foreign official sources (FOS), business, science, NGOs, international organisations (IO) and others.

Table 5.2 Number of ‘sources of information’ in the newspapers studied

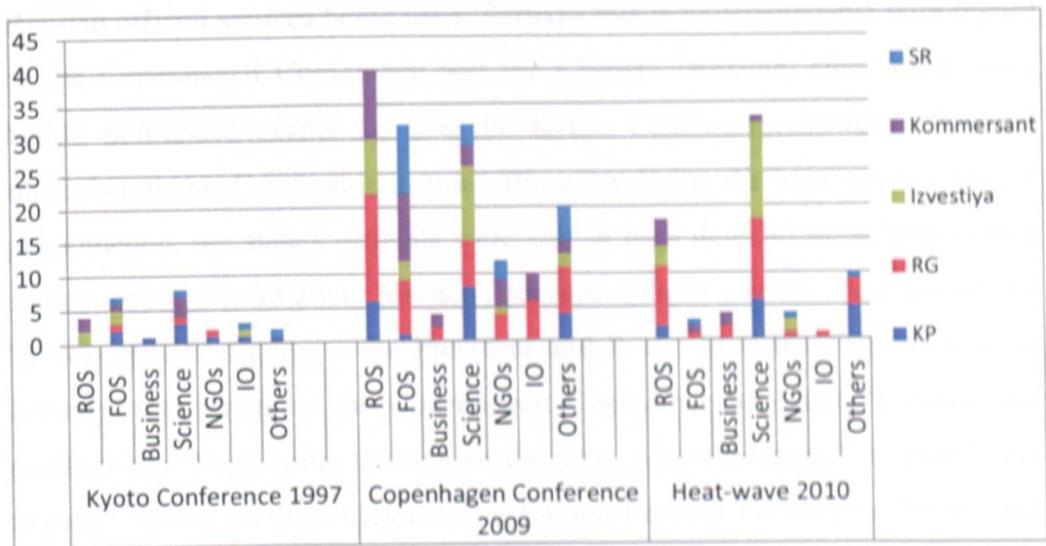
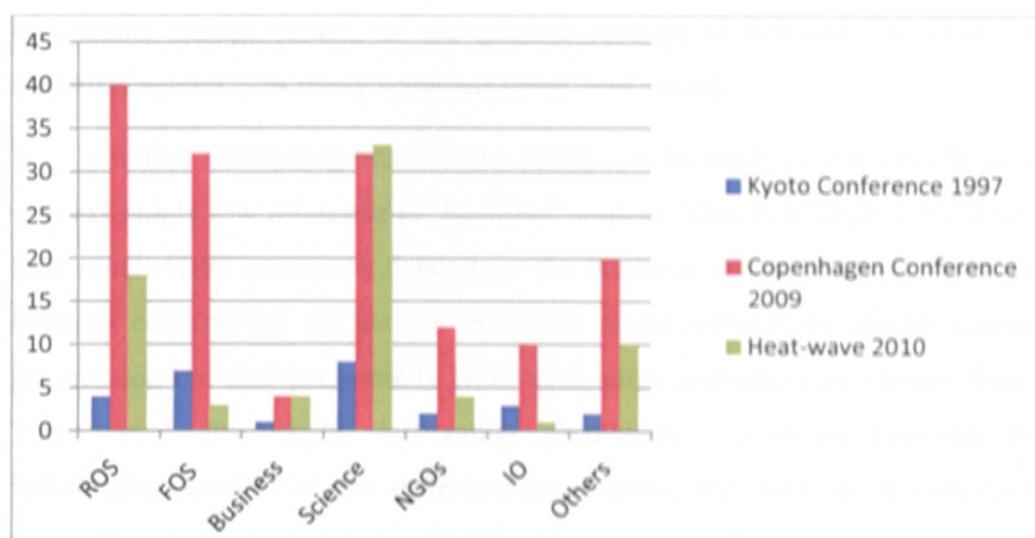


Table 5.3 Total number of ‘sources of information’ over the three events



During the Kyoto coverage some references to foreign sources (businesses, scientists or international organisation) appeared, with few references to Russian official sources, which can be explained by the state's disinterest in climate change at that time. The coverage of the Copenhagen Conference and the heat-wave was overall characterised by a high number of Russian official sources being used. Perhaps this is understandable with regard to the Copenhagen Conference and the Climate Doctrine, since these were highly politicised events (as was the Kyoto Conference, however, Russian officials remained quite at that time). But even during the heat-wave, a natural phenomenon, the state's officials were still in high demand as an information source, being second after 'Science'. Russian official sources were dominated by two specific figures – the President and Prime Minister. For example, in *Izvestiya's* coverage of the Copenhagen Conference Medvedev's words and position kept reappearing throughout the texts, where he appeals to people not to panic, 'not to let them trick us' ('ne dat' nas razvesti') (Farizova 2009b), and also not to forget about the country's national interests.

After the Russian government, the second most popular source across all events and all newspapers examined was 'Science', which included both Russian and foreign representatives. It should be noted that quite often it was either scientists of the Hydrometeorological centre of Russia (the head of which for a long time was Alexander Bedritsky, the current president's advisor

on climate change issues) or the general concept of scientists as such ('as scientists agreed', 'as many scientists think' and so on).

Another interesting observation which can be made is that overall there was extremely low reference to 'business' sources. This is strange, considering how much GHG emissions depend on the business sector and how much (in Russia's context) the gas and oil industries might suffer from climate change progression but also presumably from mitigation measures (see chapter four). There were also slight, but rather predictable, variations between the information sources of the different newspapers, for instance, *Kommersant* more often than others refers to 'business' sources and *Komsomol'skaya pravda* more often uses non-standard sources of information (for example, regular people as witnesses of climate change). In contrast to the other newspapers *Sovetskaya Rossiya* made no references to Russian officials at all, but instead made frequent use of foreign state officials (such as Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez or Bolivian leader Evo Morales). Another peculiarity of this newspaper is that quite often the authors of the articles were themselves significant figures with a very strong opinion on the subject (the leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation Gennady Zyuganov or the former leader of Cuba Fidel Castro). In some ways they became journalists and information sources in one.

Overall, the third prediction on the media's dependency on sources of information has proven to be correct. In particular, all newspapers (apart from *Sovetskaya Rossiya*) have demonstrated the correlation between the change in the state position on climate change and media dependence on the 'Russian officials' as sources of information. This finding was demonstrated not only by the number of mentions of Russian officials in the articles, but also the way they enter the discussion – as saviours of the negotiation process, the highest source of authority on the subject or as defendants of national interests.

Discourse analysis of media coverage of climate change in Russia

The methodology for the analysis of Russian articles on climate change is inspired by the approach suggested by Mautner (2008: 30) for the analysis of

print media, which as she mentions 'draw[s] on the tradition of both critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics',⁸² and it also fits within the methodology proposed by van Dijk. Even though the toolkit of Mautner's method suggests studying seven elements of the text, only six will be used for this research.⁸³ They are *lexis, transitivity, modality, sources, textual coherence* and *argumentative devices establishing rapport between author and reader* - each of these assesses the different levels of the discourse created by the texts.

Mautner states that 'on the level of lexis, the analyst will try to identify patterns in the choice of words, and in particular those with a distinctive 'evaluative meaning' (2008: 38). For instance, she gives an example of how Eastern European migrants have been portrayed by the journalist through the use of such highly negatively evaluative words as 'crooks, gangsters, mob, undesirables' (ibid) and so on. Furthermore, migrants are described as a big threat which is stressed by the emphasis of their large numbers - '45,000 crooks on the way here' or 'more than SEVEN million more on their way' (ibid). The negativity of the situation is also transmitted through an accusatory (towards the government) choice of adjectives and verbs - 'border patrols will be powerless', 'the shambolic immigration service' (Mautner 2008: 38). So, the example demonstrates how the atmosphere of the migrants' intervention and government's weakness is depicted through the specific choice of words. In the case of media coverage of climate change in Russia, it is also necessary to study what kind of words are used to describe climate change, whether it is referred to as a 'fact', 'lie, plot or fiction' and 'disaster or apocalypse' can create three very different pictures and messages for the audience.

⁸² 'Corpus linguistics encompasses the compilation and analysis of collections of spoken and written texts as the source of evidence for describing the nature, structure, and use of languages. This work typically brings a quantitative dimension to the description of languages by including information on the probability with which linguistic items or processes occur in particular contexts' (Kennedy 2002: 2816).

⁸³ The nonverbal message components will not be analysed due to technical reasons. It suggests the study of photographs, page layout, font size and type, however, for this research data was accessed through computer databases but contained only the text and not the form of the articles

Carter and Simpsons (1989: 290) state that 'transitivity [...] shows how speakers encode in their language their mental picture of reality and how they account for their experience of the world around them.' For instance, Mautner (2008: 41) in her analysis on migration points out the different ways of portraying the same situation but with different object-subject relations – 'The immigrant left', 'The immigrant was deported' and 'Immigration officers deported the immigrant'. It is apparent that these three phrases imply the journalist's different visions of the problem and send different messages to their audience. The first example implies that the immigrant left willingly without causing any trouble, whilst in the second case it can be understood that he was fighting against his departure and perhaps trying to remain in the country illegally, and in the end the third version brings in an additional actor (a representative of authority) who takes control over the situation and gets rid of the immigrant. In the case of climate change coverage in Russia, in order to analyse texts on the transitivity level, the following analysis looks at how climate change is pictured, for example, is it an uncontrollable natural force or a consequence of anthropogenic influence? How are decisions made to control climate change? Is Russia an active participant, an observer or a victim? Such analysis of subject-object relations will not only allow us to see who is perceived to be in charge of the situation, but also who is there to be blamed for it, of course, if there is any (if climate change is indeed seen as an uncontrollable force then it takes responsibility away from people).

Stubbs (1996: 202 cited in Mautner 2008) defines *modality* as 'the ways in which language is used to encode meanings such as degrees of certainty and commitment, or alternatively vagueness and lack of commitment, personal beliefs versus generally accepted or taken for granted knowledge.' Modality can vary not only according to authors' personal uncertainty about the described events, but also because of the general 'tradition' of a certain type of writing, such as advertising, is usually very affirmative in its strategy to sell the products, whilst academics quite often try to avoid words of 'high modality' (for example 'must', 'definitely', 'absolutely'), but tabloids on the contrary are also very confident in what they are saying (Mautner 2008). In the study of media coverage of climate change, this stage of analysis will be able to

demonstrate whether the coverage is still sceptical and journalists are unsure about climate change's reality, or whether its existence is no longer questioned.

Textual coherence refers to the structure of a text, how certain information is emphasised through repetition or on the contrary omitted from the text, or two issues which are not obviously related are mentioned in the same text. In her case study of newspaper coverage of immigration, Mautner (2008) demonstrates this with the example of how migrants are portrayed as being linked to crimes. For instance, if at the beginning of the text the journalist talks about criminals and gangsters and several paragraphs later the word 'migrants' first appears, a reader naturally perceives it in the criminal context described earlier and links crime and migration together. In the case of climate change, the example of such textual linkage could be seen, for instance, in the articles when the climate is mentioned in the same row with other global problems such as child labour, Somali pirates, education in the developing world and so on. In this case, even if climate change is not familiar to a reader, he can still make an educated guess that it is as important as other problems mentioned next to it.

The last level is the level of argumentative devices, which show the relations between the author and his audience. Mautner (2008: 43) states that these relations can be achieved 'through the use of rhetorical questions [...] appealing to the supposedly unifying force of common sense, [...] and the construction of a "we" group.' Indeed, in the Russian case the journalist's appeal to the common sense of the audience is quite frequent (for example, 'it is obvious that any kind of warming in Russia's severe climate will only benefit the country'), which implies that the author and the audience are in full agreement with each other and there is no room for challenging the journalist's statement. Another common demonstration of the unification of the author's and the audience's attitudes towards the climate change problem in Russia is the repetitive use of the pronoun 'we' ('we all know', 'we saw').

Further on, the analysis will be applied to the collected data. It should be mentioned that only articles which discuss climate change as one of the central topics will be analysed in this section. As approximately half of the studied

articles mention the keywords used in a context not quite related to climate change, and the overall content of the articles was devoted to something either unrelated (for example, a celebrity mentioning climate change as one of her fears) or related in a distant way (for example, government negotiations mentioning the Kyoto Protocol as one of several forms of cooperation). Hence, for discourse analysis articles which do not just mention but also discuss the problems of climate change in some detail were selected. Table 5.4 presents a summary of the main themes underlined by the discourse analysis of the data collected, it is followed by detailed case-by-case analysis.⁸⁴

Table 5.4 Main themes in the media coverage devoted to climate change

	Kyoto Conference	Copenhagen Conference	Heat-wave
KP	Conference = 'battle'; Alarmist messages; Surprise of Russia's successful trend of reducing GHG emissions; Sarcastic way of portraying Russia's successes in GHG reductions; No mentioning of Russia's resistance to the Kyoto Protocol.	Variety of topics; Choice of words with high emotional value; Journalists - 'one of the people'; Russia - a leader of the climate change negotiation process; Reoccurring theme of a 'western plot' against Russia's interests; A vague picture of climate change (cc) nature and consequences; 'Win-win' situation.	Sensational nature of the heat-wave and its consequences; Questioned the link between cc and the heat-wave; Impossible to stop cc - the economy 'must' develop; Greater attention to the idea of a 'climate weapon';
RG	N/A	Russia – a leader in the negotiating process; Russia's stable position vs. the chaotic behaviour of other states; Confirmation of cc existence; Sometimes its anthropogenic character is questioned; Cc pictured from an upbeat position;	Direct links between cc and the heat-wave; Confirmation of cc; Some uncertainty or its consequences or nature; No conspiracy theories; Issue of public opinion; Government was prepared; The Kyoto Protocol - benefits and possibilities for Russia.

⁸⁴ Even though each of the selected articles was carefully studied through the methodology proposed by Mautner (2008), due to the word limit in the chapter only the most frequent and prominent characteristics of the analysed texts are presented.

		Benefits for Russia;	
Izvestiya	Conference = 'battle'; Alarmist messages; Surprise of Russia's, so far successful trend of reducing GHG emissions. Russian government - defenders of national interests; No mentioning of Russia's resistance to the Kyoto Protocol	Questioned the existence of cc or its anthropogenic character; Cc - 'a plot?'; Russia's firm position on cc and its leading role in the negotiations; Other countries cause difficulties on the way of reaching an agreement.	Almost none of the articles discuss cc to a great extent; 'Horrrifying' consequences that the weather brought upon Russians; Cc - one of the possible explanations of heat-wave; Existence of cc was not certain; Cc's anthropogenic origin was brought into question even more. More sensationalists messages; Questions the Kyoto Protocol.
Kommersant	Conference = 'battle'; Alarming messages; Scepticism towards anthropogenic climate change; Russia 'the most sensible' position; US hostile position.	Economic aspect of the problem; 'win-win' situation; Impersonal style (reporting of facts); A number of articles shared the climate sceptic position; Questions the activities of the Russian government (but not its leaders!)	Economic context; Resemblance with the business report; Criticisms of the government; President's behaviour - 'absolutely correct'; 'Win-win' situation;
SR	No reference to Russia, 'Main polluter of the planet' - the US (criticism of its citizens and government).	Destructible nature of capitalism - cause of cc; Heroes (e.g. Latin America) vs. villains (e.g. the US); Fidel Castro - author of several articles; No references to Russia or the Russian government.	None of the articles discussed climate as a central topic Leader of the Communist Party blames the party in power for burning Russia; Main reason for social-environmental apocalypse - the current financial system; Cc - a definite threat, a danger for the whole world and everyone should unite to fight it. No direct mention of specific Russian state officials.

The Kyoto Conference coverage

The limited amount of articles devoted to climate change during this period of time does not really present much material for analysis. The omission of the topic speaks louder about the attitude towards climate change problems. However, applying the methodology described above to the collected data, some conclusions can be drawn. For *Kommersant*, *Izvestiya*, *KP* and *SR* (*RG* only mentioned climate change among other scientific topics discussed in its articles) the Kyoto Conference became the starting point for the articles. All newspapers compared the conference with some kind of a battle or a scandal – ‘scientists acted on the offensive’ (Kabannikov and Potapov 1997), ‘general abuse’, ‘arguments continue’ (Golovnin 1997), ‘heavyweights’ (*Izvestiya* 1997) or ‘fierce disputes’ (Motskobili 1997). The *Izvestiya*, *KP* and *Kommersant* reproduced the alarmist messages which aimed to raise major concerns among their audience – ‘God, what do we inhale!’ (Chizhikov 1997), ‘Japan will sink’ (Kabannikov and Potapov 1997) or ‘we are all hostages in climate thriller’ (Motskobili and Maksimenko 1997).

In both *Izvestiya* and *KP* there was the reappearing theme of the surprise of Russia’s (so far successful) trend of reducing GHG emissions. Whilst the *KP* talks about Russia in a more sarcastic way by pointing out that reduction has happened unintentionally due to the economic decline of the 1990s, *Izvestiya* pictures the Russian government as defenders of national interests who are trying to achieve mutually beneficial results (*Izvestiya* 1997). *Kommersant* also praised Russia’s ‘realistic’ goals (Motskobili and Maksimenko 1997) and very ‘sensible approach’ to the problem (Motskobili 1997). Interestingly, whilst one of *Kommersant*’s articles provides a very clear and rational description of the climate change problem and its anthropogenic character with even slightly alarming messages of climate change’s negative consequences (Motskobili and Maksimenko 1997), another article purposefully debunks the anthropogenic character of climate change (Shvarts 1997). Even the title states that ‘there is no one to blame’ (‘kraynikh net’), the article continues with arguments against industries’ impact on climate change, supporting this statement by the opinion of scientists at Harvard University.

In the *SR's* article, on the contrary, there was no reference to Russia, instead the article was devoted to the 'main polluter of the planet' (the United States) whose citizens lack 'environmental awareness' and whose government refuses to follow through its initiatives to develop sustainable energy sources (Popov 1997).

Conclusion on the Kyoto Conference coverage

To sum up, the coverage of climate change during the Kyoto Protocol was low, as expected, so in this sense the earlier prediction proved to be correct. Few articles which were published at that time in the studied newspapers did not give an adequate picture of the problem, rather, they speculated about the sensational features of it (disastrous nature of climate change or the political fight around climate change). Russia's performance was never questioned and it was not articulated how unwilling Russian authorities were in their cooperation on mitigating climate change. On the contrary Russia was portrayed as a leader of the negotiating process or in the case of the oppositional media organ the *SR*, it was absolutely ignored and instead attention was diverted towards the United States. It could be argued again that the mass media were defending the state's position or at least not challenging it. At the same time rather than coverage of climate change being biased or sceptical, the real issue was a striking overall absence of information on climate change.

*The Copenhagen Conference and the Climate Doctrine coverage*⁸⁵

Izvestiya

The reason for *Izvestiya* publishing the articles during this period of time became either the conference (predominantly) or the initiatives by Medvedev or the Russian government. All articles could be roughly divided into two groups. The first one questioned and debated the existence of climate change or its anthropogenic character. In this case the article 'Osnovy naturfilosofii' in *Izvestiya* (Sokolov 2009) was especially interesting since its disbelief in the

⁸⁵Since more articles were available for events of 2009 and 2010, the analysis will be divided into subcategories of different newspapers, unlike in the case of the Kyoto Conference, where such separation would be rather pointless.

existence of climate change backed up by referring to it as a matter of faith and the negotiations on climate change as religious wars. Also, quite often in these articles journalists appeal to the abstract universal concept of 'common sense' or confirm their position by using the term 'opinion of many scientists'. The second group is devoted to the report of Russia's firm position on climate change and its leading role in the negotiations (Farizova 2009b) whilst other countries were described as the troublemakers which slowed down acceptance of the agreement.

Komsomol'skaya pravda

In contrast to *Izvestiya*, the *KP* had a greater variety of the reasons for the articles to be written including the conference, the government's initiatives, weather anomalies, opinions of climate sceptics and even competition for readers which the newspaper initiated. Probably due to its tabloid nature, the style was also quite different to other newspapers, and the choice of words often had higher emotional value: 'disaster film "Day After Tomorrow" might become a reality' (Moiseenko 2009), 'major myth of 21st century' (Kovyneva and Moiseenko 2009), 'unbelievable natural abnormality' (Smirnova 2009) and so on. Furthermore, journalists tried to represent themselves as 'one of the people', which could be observed through the numerous repetition of the personal pronoun 'we', and also to engage their audience by appealing to them through questions, which were frequently used as titles of the articles – 'Have Russian hackers exposed the myth of global warming?' (Kovyneva and Moiseenko 2009) or 'Global warming – climatologists' fiction?' (Smirnova 2009) and so on.

Like *Izvestiya*, *KP* also depicted Russia as a leader of the climate change negotiation process, whilst Medvedev was described as one of the saviours who would prevent the 'climate catastrophe'. Despite all disagreements in the scientific and international communities, the Russian president reassured his citizens that there was no reason to panic and the country would benefit from the situation in any case even if 'God forbid, [...] climate change is really happening' (Krivyakina 2009). There was also the reoccurring theme of a 'western plot' where western countries were trying to exploit the rest of the

world and western scientists exaggerate the seriousness of the problem. Overall, the discourse created by the articles of *KP* drew a vague picture of climate change where it was not really confirmed whether it was happening or not and to what extent, and where only the Russian government's position was clear, and in any case would not damage the country's national interests.

Kommersant

The discourse created by *Kommersant* slightly differed from the other newspapers studied, mainly because in most articles, climate change issues were discussed from the economic perspective where GHG emissions became another currency in the modern world ('global warming was announced as profitable for Russia' (Granik 2009b)). Another peculiarity of this newspaper was its generally impersonal style where the main role of journalists was supposedly to present the facts and describe events from different points of view.

There were also two articles which shared the climate sceptic position and even referred to the opinion of Illarionov, whose role in Russia's anti-climate change position has been discussed earlier ('British scientists underestimated Russian climate' (Sapozhkov and Butrin 2009) – the article was provoked by the Climategate scandal) or made fun of this environmental abnormality ('[e]ven if climate change does not exist we still had to invent it, so hundreds of bureaucrats were able to spend the state budget on their crusade against cars' emissions' (Kharnas 2009)). Another interesting feature of this newspaper was that, like others, *Kommersant* quite often referred to the state in discussing climate change problems. But more than other newspapers it tried to question the activities of the Russian government, perhaps not so much its chief executives (which also was present here but in a more indirect way, for example through the sarcastic choice of words 'Medvedev pogody ne sdela', meaning 'Medvedev did not play a role'⁸⁶) (Granik 2009a), but the civil

⁸⁶ Interestingly, both *Izvestiya* and *Kommersant*, with a two-day difference in articles published with almost the same title – as mentioned, *Kommersant* produced an article with the title 'Medvedev did not play a role' ('Dmitry Medvedev Pogody ne Sdelal' by Granik 2009a), whilst in *Izvestiya* produced one titled 'Copenhagen did not play a role' ('Kopengagen Pogody ne Sdelal'

servants and ministries were criticised quite openly (for example, in the article 'Protocol of the missed opportunities' (Shapovalov 2009), bureaucracy was blamed for causing insurmountable difficulties for business to be able to use benefits from selling unused GHG quotas).

Rossiyskaya gazeta

Predictably, the *Rossiyskaya gazeta* in its coverage of climate change during the period studied was following the steps of the Russian government. Even more than in the previous newspapers, Russia was presented as a world leader in the negotiating process ('in GHG reductions, Russia is already a world leader' (Petrov 2009), 'Russia is extremely interested in concluding a new agreement' (Merinov 2009)). Another concept which is promoted by these articles is Russia's stable position against the background of the chaos of the Copenhagen Conference which was created by other participants. In several articles, after journalists described the battle between the rich North and poor South, or the emotional behaviour of the Latin American leaders, or the hopelessness of the conference organizers, there followed a paragraph which stated the clear position of the Russian president – 'we are committed to the GHG reduction process, but we will protect national interests' (Elkov 2009). Another distinguishing feature of the *RG*'s texts was, even though they almost always confirmed the existence of climate change, in some cases its anthropogenic character was called into question.

On average it pictured climate change from an upbeat position ('solutions are possible', 'existing technologies are enough') and also as a process full of positive opportunities for Russia ('potential', 'benefits', 'opportunities', 'investments') (for example see Shmeleva 2009). Again, as in other

by Farizova (2009a)). Literal translation of this expression means that somebody or something did not 'fix the weather' (which obviously correlates with the climate change topic). The actual meaning tells us about the unimportance of the actor or the inability to achieve something. In spite of the disparaging attitude towards the head of state in the *Kommersant* publication's title, both articles carried very similar messages. *Izvestiya* highlighted that about 'the only leader who announced his country's commitments on carbon emissions regardless of the conference outcome was Dmitry Medvedev' and *Kommersant* also wrote about Medvedev's 'clear position on climate policy' and 'pacificator' character of his presentation.

newspapers, the idea that Russia would benefit in any scenario kept reoccurring. One of the most interesting and unusual articles was written by the former president of the USSR Michael Gorbachev (2009). This piece ('Kto povyshaet gradus?' – 'Who is raising the temperature?') was full of very emotional appeals to solve the problem, and that it should be done by the states that were the most responsible for it. He blamed the current economic system ('irresponsible race for extra profit at any price', 'blind faith in the invisible hand of the market' and 'states' inaction') for the catastrophic environmental situation. He saw the solution in an intellectual breakthrough, moral re-education of business, active role of civil society, but what was more important, states' leaders should become 'real' leaders.

Sovetskaya Rossiya

As in the previous case, the character of this newspaper's coverage could be predicted, of course in its own way, different from the *Rossiyskaya gazeta*'s. The common theme of all the articles was the destructible nature of capitalism, which had brought climate catastrophes upon us. In the invective writing style, the authors tried to accentuate who was a hero (normally a representative of Latin America) and who was a villain (normally American or Western European politicians). In one out of several articles written by Fidel Castro (2009a), already in its headline 'The truth about what happened at the summit' ('Pravda o tom, chto proizoshlo na sammite') implied that everything people heard before was not quite correct. The article was written in a very emotional manner, with frequent use of such strong phrases as 'before we discussed in what type of society we will live, now we discuss will humanity live at all', 'the last thing that people can lose is hope', 'men and women armed with truth' and so on. The speech of Barack Obama was described as 'deceptive and demagogic', whilst Evo Morales and Hugo Chavez both produced 'wise and meaningful' speeches which would be remembered in history as 'concise and relevant'. Then Latin American leaders completed their mission at the conference and Barack Obama, on the contrary, left without its completion. These remarks followed with the description of the 'amazing battle' where

countries of the third world rebelled against Obama's and other 'rich countries' representatives' attempt to impose the document proposed by the United States.

The peculiarity of *Sovetskaya Rossiya's* authorship was discussed earlier on in the section on the information sources, however, this factor had a significant influence over the coverage of climate change in this newspaper. Fidel Castro was an author of three out of nine articles that discussed climate change as a central topic, and seven out of all 15 articles published in the *SR* over the studied period with some mention of climate change. There is no publicly available information on how exactly the *SR* got hold of his articles, whether he writes specifically for them or they just re-print them from somewhere else. What is more important is that in his articles he is not just an ordinary journalist who passes information to his readers, but he shares his very active political position, he appeals to his fellow comrades and tries to disgrace his ideological opponents. In another of Castro's articles 'Chas Istiny' ('Moment of truth') (2009b), he concluded with a highly emotional statement: 'For the heads of empires, in spite of their cynical lie, the time of truth comes. Their own allies trust them less and less. In Mexico [at the time of the publication it was the next location of the UN climate change conference] as in Copenhagen and as in any other country, they will encounter growing peoples' resistance from those who have not lost their hope to survive.' Other articles were slightly more neutral, but still stressed the opposition between the developed and developing countries, also they paid great attention to regular protestors who were manhandled by the Danish police.

Another very interesting point, especially in contrast to the coverage of all the other studied newspapers, was that in the *SR* there were again no references to Russia or the Russian government at all, either in a positive nor negative way, which could be seen as extremely odd. First of all, as an oppositional newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* could have used this opportunity to point out the destructive policy of current Russian officials or on the other hand to praise Russia's natural resources such as boreal forest and appeal to it as a possible environmental leader (but perhaps under a different government). One might argue that it is the former policy of the Soviet Union that brought Russia

to be one of the greatest CO₂ emitters in the world and that the Soviet legacy of environmental neglect further stimulates Russia's environmental degradation.

Conclusion on media coverage of the Copenhagen Conference and the Climate Doctrine

The pictures created by the five newspapers differed to the extent that they differ in their nature, such as *Kommersant* more often portrayed climate change from the economic point of view, the *KP* brought out the sensational nature of the problem, *Izvestiya* shared a slight scepticism about climate change but mostly backed up the government's position, the *RG*, following the tradition of the Communist newspapers, praised the state's leaders, whilst the actual communist newspaper which currently is in opposition (*Sovetskaya Rossiya*) used this opportunity to underline the destructive nature of capitalism.

There were overarching themes throughout all the articles and no major contradictions between them were observed. All newspapers contributed to the creation of the same discourse or it could be argued that they were all influenced by the same political, economic and social discourses. It supports the earlier prediction about the media coverage of these events. All newspapers to some extent did mirror state policy on climate change, and in the majority of the articles, climate change's existence was accepted and even its anthropogenic origins were too.

One of the earlier stated hypotheses did not prove to be correct: the coverage after the acceptance of the Climate Doctrine did not change significantly, though three out of five newspapers (*KP*, *Izvestiya* and *RG*) mentioned its acceptance and its positive influence. It could be explained by the fact that the change in the state's policy on climate change did not happen during the Copenhagen Conference as such, but some time before it (after Medvedev's appointment to office), hence, the Doctrine or Medvedev's speech at Copenhagen did not signify the start of the policy but were logical steps in its continuation.

Overall, there were some disagreements in the coverage and not all articles fully concurred with the above mentioned statements, however, on

average similarities prevailed. None of the articles openly criticised the state's policy on climate change. Even when *Kommersant* did try to point out some drawbacks, the victim of its critique became the country's bureaucratic apparatus instead of its leaders. *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, which actively criticised the US and Western European climate policies, did not mention the Russian government at all and did not use this opportunity to demonstrate its oppositional nature. Furthermore, in the majority of the articles (except for those in the *SR*) Russia was portrayed as a leader of the negotiating process and it was noted how much the national economy could benefit from it. In contrast, there was hardly any mention that it was not a long time ago that the 'environmental leader' was one of the major obstacles in the way of the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, and signed it only due to the certain benefits it was promised.

The heat-wave coverage

Izvestiya

With only five articles directly related to climate change issues, almost none of them were actually about climate change. Most of the time discussion started with the 'horrifying' consequences that the weather brought upon Russians ('Temperature records were broken' (Obraztsov 2010a), 'Why do we hear more often messages from the Ministry of Emergency Situations?' (*Izvestiya* 2010), 'climate of mass destruction' (Obraztsov 2010b)) whilst climate change would enter the articles further on in the texts as just one of the possible reasons which were constantly emphasized ('surely, global warming is only one of the reasons' (*Izvestiya* 2010), 'it would be too banal to explain temperature rise by global warming' (Obraztsov 2010a)).

The climate change's anthropogenic origin was brought into question even more ('climatologists still do not offer one explanation about climate change' (*Izvestiya* 2010), 'it is unclear who should be blamed for climate change – Earth or human beings' (Savinykh 2010)). Journalists tried to explore different theories about why the heat-wave happened: for example, an increase in solar activity or even such an extraordinary one as a 'climate weapon' which explored the old concept of the Cold War where the United States was trying to

destroy Russia's wellbeing. Not only were the reasons of the heat-wave disputed but also the ways to cope with it, for instance, there were some questionable proposals for 'geoengineering' (Obraztsov 2010b). Russia's decision to join the Kyoto Protocol was discussed in the context that it did not require anything from the country and even promised some benefits, however, *Izvestiya* stated that how 'right' the decision was remained to be seen (Obraztsov 2010b).

Kommersant

For *Kommersant* only two articles were distinguished which did not just mention climate change but discussed it in a more significant way. One of the articles talked about climate change in the economic context, mentioning the difficulties associated with the approvals of the JI projects in Russia (Shapovalov 2010). The article resembled business reports, full of economic terminology and analysis. It should be noticed that the article did offer some criticisms of the government. For instance, it talked about the 'negative expectations' business had that approved projects would go to the major state corporations, however, the author noticed that these 'negative expectations were met only partially'. Whilst some approved projects were presented by such major companies as 'Gazprom oil' and 'Rosneft', they were 'diluted' by a smaller projects.

A second article titled 'Summer will call us to account' ('Leto sprosit strogo') (Sborov 2010) connected the heat-wave and climate change but also mentioned it in the economic context. The author quotes the Presidential advisor on climate change, Alexander Bedritsky: 'if climate risks are miscalculated, than economic losses are unavoidable'. The article goes on to discuss whether the Russian Ministry of Energy should budget the possible risks of natural disasters (such as the heat-wave of 2010) each year. It concludes with information on insurance companies which do not take into consideration the problem of global warming and will not adjust their tariffs.

Rossiyskaya Gazeta

Overall, the texts were full of very strong statements confirming climate change and its anthropogenic character (the ‘majority of scientists confirm that global warming is happening [...] anthropogenic influence objectively contributes to climate change’ (Elkov 2010)) and discussions about the consequences for Russia (‘Russia is huge, so climate change will show itself in different ways’ (Rossiyskaya gazeta 2010)), there was some place for uncertainty. In this case it is interesting to look at the interview with Izrael (a prominent Russian climatologist and also infamous climate sceptic). Izrael denied the connection between the heat-wave and climate change, but he admitted that climate change was happening, however, there was no reason to worry – ‘The process of melting will not take decades like the authors of environmental horror stories claim, but thousands of years. In this time, I think, human beings will find a solution’ (Medvedev 2010).

One of the leading themes in this coverage was a demonstration of the possibility that Russia could take a leading role in finding solutions to the problem (‘Russia should lead by example’ (Shmeleva 2010)) and also climate change was often accompanied by the discussion of national interests (‘modernisation and energy efficiency of the Russian economy’ (Pertsovskiy 2010)).

The *RG* raised the issue of public opinion by stating that the heat-wave had managed to change the low level of awareness of the problem, however, the government was prepared for it (interview with Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Trutnev: ‘I reported to the government about possible threats [...] I myself of course believed scientists, but there was a hope maybe it would not happen tomorrow’ (Smol’yakova 2010)). The Kyoto Protocol was mostly discussed in the context of the benefits and possibilities for the country (‘a tool for modernization and energy efficiency of the Russian economy’, ‘number of opportunities’ (for example Pertsovskiy 2010)).

Komsomol'skaya pravda

Due to the nature of the *KP* (being a popular tabloid), as in other cases, it often uses highly emotive words and sensationalist expressions (‘Why did nature decide to fry us?’, ‘we are getting fried by a gigantic anti-cyclone – atmosphere

monster' (Smirnova 2010), while some articles also pointed out the sensational consequences of climate change ('jellyfish in the Moscow River' (Mironov 2010)). Like other newspapers the *KP* questioned the direct link between climate change and the heat-wave (Komsomol'skaya Pravda 2010), then in the same piece it would jump to the conclusion that even though people do influence the climate, it is impossible to stop climate change since the economy 'must' develop. The coverage of the *KP* also paid greater attention than other newspapers to the idea of a climate weapon, devoting the whole article to look at the different aspects of its possibility and only at the end in a brief paragraph mentioned a counterargument (Kuzina 2010).

One out of the six articles devoted to climate change covers Vladimir Putin's trip to the far north and his meeting with scientists studying permafrost. The article shows Putin's concern with climate change problems: 'I just saw how fast the sea is "eating" the land, this is really impressive. However, nobody explained to me whether these changes are connected with human being's influence'. After scientists re-assured the Prime Minister (at that time) of the anthropogenic character of climate change, Putin shared one of his 'typical' climate jokes:

A thousand years ago mammoths started to die out around these territories, it is said, that it was connected with global warming and the shrinkage of the food supply. So mammoths aggregated on these islands. It all was without any anthropogenic character! It would be good, if you [scientists] would tell us what is going to happen not only here in Russia, but also around the world, to which islands we need to migrate (Gamov 2010).

The author of the article remarks after this quotation of Putin's words, that 'everyone understood it was a joke and had a laugh. Putin also laughed with everyone "[...] when will we be flooded or get frozen? Tell us in advance, so we know where to run", continued to joke Putin' (Gamov 2010).

Sovetskaya Rossiya

SR published seven articles during the studied period mentioning climate change and even though none of them discussed climate change as a central topic there are still some valuable observations to be made. Gennady Zyuganov (2010), leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, wrote an article 'Politics of catastrophes' ('Politika katastrof'), where he argues that the climate, peat development or regular people were not the ones to be blamed for fires, but the current ruling party, whose 'incompetence' was burning Russia. Another article went even further and firmly stated that the main reason for social-environmental apocalypse was the current financial system, which must be destroyed. Climate change was described as a definite threat, as a danger for the whole world and everyone should unite to fight it (Khanzhin and Khromov 2010).

There were also three articles written by Fidel Castro where once again he mentioned that problems such as climate change are the consequences of neo-liberalism (Castro 2010). Although in *SR* coverage there were some aggressive statements towards state leaders, the current financial system and even the Russian government (Kramich 2010) including reference to 'soulless' bureaucrats and businessmen who are responsible for climate change due to their interest in immediate profit), once again there was no direct mention of specific Russian state officials, or criticism of them.

Conclusion on mass media coverage of the heat-wave

Once again the media coverage was influenced by the newspapers' defining characteristics. *Kommersant* looked at the economic aspect of the problem, the *KP* highlighted in its coverage the sensational facts, *Izvestiya* stayed quite sceptical towards the problem and at the same time sensationalist, the *RG* pursued a clear line of relations between climate change and the heat-wave and used it as evidence of the right decision made by the government admitting the existence of climate change, whilst the *SR* did not have any articles on climate change as a central topic and in the articles where climate change was at least mentioned, the *SR* again blamed the current world political and financial system for the global problem.

Again common conclusions can be drawn. In support of the predictions stated above, overall there was much less uncertainty on reporting about climate change since it became more apparent and more vivid, to the extent that for the first time *RG* mentioned Russian public opinion on climate change and in particular, how low the level of concern was, and suggested that such unpleasant abnormal acts of nature might help to change this situation. All newspapers apart from *SR* pronounced the state's position and its decisions correct on the grounds that they would benefit Russia whatever happened. Once more, only *Kommersant* openly questioned the government's performance on climate change problems, however, it was not concerned with the country's leaders but ministers or other officials, and the *SR* questioned the capitalist policy in general. It should be noted that not all of the articles on climate change during this time were provoked by the heat-wave, but on the contrary some dealt with unrelated issues such as the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

Another interesting observation was made that was not apparent and noted in the predictions. It seems that the media coverage of climate change during the heat-wave was much less structured and adequate⁸⁷ than it was during the time of the Copenhagen Conference and the Climate Doctrine. The issues which prevailed before in the political and economic context were raised again, such as uncertainty about its anthropogenic character and climate change's positive consequences for Russia. Furthermore, it provided more opportunities for sensationalist and alarmist messages, such as the climate weapon explanation of the heat-wave (a conspiracy against Russia).

⁸⁷ One might argue that 'adequate' coverage of climate change is a vague concept. Such as there is a difference between improving media coverage of climate change by making it more sophisticated or by making it more sympathetic to taking action to mitigate climate change. Even though for the environmental activists and supporters of the active climate change mitigation policy the latter would be the most desirable outcome, but talking about the problem in terms of the freedom of speech and Russian media becoming something different than just a propaganda tool, blind commitment to either side can be considered a step back for the development of democratic media.

Discussion

The Kyoto and the Copenhagen Conferences happened 12 years apart and in this period of time Russia's state policy went through drastic changes. For a number of years it was sceptical of climate change and tried to stay aside from international negotiations; at the same time Russia had a strong anti-climate change lobby. A decade later Russia changed its priorities and just at the time of the Copenhagen Conference accepted at the state level climate change's anthropogenic character and admitted that it was in the country's interests to take action on it. A limited selection of media organs was taken into consideration, due to practical reasons this was an optimal way of conducting the analysis. However, for future research it could be interesting to study not only print media, but also TV, radio and internet sources, and perhaps rather than selecting certain events looking at a longer duration might reveal other interesting conclusions.

The analysis conducted showed that in the Russian case the media coverage of climate change has indeed stayed within certain boundaries. One of the most striking findings demonstrated that the coverage of climate change in the studied newspapers has changed throughout the years from 13 articles during the Kyoto Conference to 127 in the time of the Copenhagen Conference. Even though during the heat-wave the coverage stayed pretty high with 80 articles, the event attracted less attention than did political affairs. It can be concluded that in the Russian case of climate change coverage, the state acts as an independent variable by directly or indirectly altering the media policy on the subject. Neither different ownership structures nor the degree of advertising dependency of Russian newspapers had much influence over the newspaper coverage. Even during the scarce coverage of the Kyoto Conference and especially during the Copenhagen Conference, the Russian state was presented in a beneficial way as a saviour of the negotiating process and Russian leaders were praised for their tactical approach to benefit the Russian economy in any scenario. Overall, the difference in the amount of articles between the newspapers was insignificant, with a few exceptions.

Kommersant published fewer articles on climate change during the heat-wave. Perhaps it could be argued that the lower coverage in this newspaper might be explained by its ownership structure – Alisher Usmanov (Metalloinvest) owns it. Hence, it could be said that due to the industrial interests of the owner *Kommersant* limited the coverage of climate change, however, this does not explain why *Kommersant*'s coverage did not differ in its amount during the other two events. Hence, we can argue that the explanation is in the newspaper's writing style, which tries to present information in a rational more business-like manner (which is also supported through discourse analysis of its articles). Objectively speaking, even though scientists do say that climate change makes extreme weather more likely, they are generally reluctant to assert a causal link in particular cases.⁸⁸

The left-wing *Sovetskaya Rossiya* published more articles than the other newspapers (during time of the Copenhagen Conference and heat-wave) (if we look at how many articles it produced in proportion to the overall number of its news per newspaper). Interestingly enough, despite the quantitative difference, *qualitatively* it also confirmed the Russian media's conformist position towards the Russian government with regards to climate change topics. Being a left-wing newspaper with strong support from Russia's communist party (the opposition party), it in fact presented a vast critique of the capitalist world and in particular blamed US President Barack Obama for all the problems. However, the *SR* did not exploit this opportunity to condemn Russia's government for its quite questionable climate policy or on the hand for its rapid shift. So, indeed the *SR* coverage differs from other newspapers, but it still stays within the 'manufactured consent' produced by the surrounding political, economic and social discourses.

These results could be explained, firstly, by the fact that the environmental degradation which Russia is currently facing is to a large extent a legacy of the Soviet Union's policies (see more on it in chapter four); and,

⁸⁸ Gruza and Ran'kova (2011) argue that in the case of the Russian heat-wave the main reason was a 'slow moving anti-cyclone', however, global warming contributed to this disastrous weather event by increasing the created anomalous high temperature by 2-3 degrees.

secondly, that there is a problem of the political opposition and its role in Russia. For instance Luke March (2009) explains how the Russian government 'manages the opposition' by 'creating' political parties (he provides an example of 'Just Russia'). Richard Sakwa (2011b: 526) states that in Russia:

the role of political opposition is marginalized. Parties have limited political reach and fail to provide the framework for the institutionalization of political competition or the integration of regional and national politics. They are not the source of governmental formation, personnel appointments or policy generation; neither are they, more broadly, 'system-forming', in the sense of providing the framework for political order.

With regards to the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), Sakwa (2008) argues that it 'deserves the title of "party"' the most. However, he spells out a number of key problems within the communist party itself. For example, for a number of years the CPRF has struggled with its own political identity, political goals and position towards the state leaders and ruling elites ('Do they need to overthrow them?', 'How party policy is compatible with the free market economy and capitalism?' and so on).

The analysis shows that after the change in the state's policy in the majority of the cases newspapers relied on Russian officials as the information sources and this correlation is evident even during natural disasters. To be more specific, it was dominated by the two most influential state officials – Medvedev (predominately) and Putin. The significance of the state's influence over media coverage is also supported by the observation that the state's position (especially its leaders) has rarely been questioned by any newspaper. Even during the scarce coverage of the Kyoto Conference and especially during the Copenhagen Conference, Russia was presented as an environmental leader and a saviour of the negotiating process.

Overall, after conducting this media analysis it can be concluded that there is a correlation between state policy and media policy on the subject of climate change. But other factors cannot be disregarded. For instance, coverage during the heat-wave, even though it was not as high as during the Copenhagen

Conference, was still quite significant and anomalous weather conditions did bring additional attention to the problem. On the other side, as the discourse analysis demonstrates, and as mentioned above, the coverage during this time provided more opportunities for climate sceptics (which is rather strange considering that the consequences of climate change were demonstrated) and more space for sensationalist ideas about climate change. In contrast, when politicians became the main source of information, and when the state's position was clearly articulated, the coverage followed that lead. It became more supportive of the climate change thesis and less sensationalist whilst the climate change mitigation process was perceived as a subject of greater importance and as a 'win-win' situation for Russia.

With that said, the comparison of media coverage in 1997 and 2009 shows that in the earlier period, when the government was resistant to taking action on carbon mitigation the media reaction was not to primarily cover climate change from a hostile or sceptical perspective, but simply not to cover it at all. Even though the increase in coverage between the Kyoto and Copenhagen Conferences correlated with the rise of climate change as an important issue on the state's agenda, if the data collected are compared with other countries (see chapter six), coverage of all three events still shows the insignificance of environmental issues in Russia. Within five national newspapers during two months around some major events related to the climate change topic, the accumulated amount of articles did not exceed 127 articles per event. The next chapter explores this finding and argues that in the Russian case, the omission of the climate change topic is a greater problem than biased coverage of it could be.

Concluding remarks

One of the main messages of Herman and Chomsky's (1994) analysis of the political economy of the American mass media states that the mass media are an actor in the free market economy and function according to its laws, by satisfying demands of owners, advertisers and information sources due to their economic dependence. The application of the PrM's filters to the Russian case

of media coverage of climate change has demonstrated that whilst newspapers can be in private hands, the state can still shape their coverage. This was especially evident through the analysis of the 'information sources' filters, which showed that Russian state officials act as a dominant informational source on the subject matter, and whenever they enter the discussion there is hardly any journalists' critique following their statements, which ultimately makes the Russian state the most authoritative newsmaker on this subject.

Furthermore, the application of the 'dominant ideology' filter (that the media will follow the lead of the strong Russian state) has showed that when the state slightly changed its stance on the problem and finally publicly acknowledged the anthropogenic character of climate change and Russia's commitments to GHG emissions reduction goals, the climate change topic entered the media discourse with the overarching message of Russia's leading position in the international negotiation process and a 'win-win' situation for the state. Besides the biased coverage of climate change in Russian newspapers and the absence of almost any critique of the elites' position on the problem, the preceding analysis has revealed the clear omission of the climate change topic from the Russian media discourse. Following the Russian position on climate change or not questioning its stance, the Russian media fail to create a full discussion of one of the most important and controversial environmental issues of our time.

CHAPTER 6 - MEDIATING CLIMATE CHANGE IN RUSSIA: PASSING THROUGH THE BARRIERS

Concluding their analysis of media coverage of the Polish priest's murder and the hundred religious victims in Latin America, along with the elections in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua; 'the KGB-Bulgarian plot to kill the Pope'; and the wars in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia – Herman and Chomsky stated that the PrM demonstrates that:

the “societal purpose” of the media is to inculcate and defend the economic, social and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state. The media serve this purpose in many ways: through selection of topics, distribution of concerns, framing of issues, filtering of information, emphasis and tone, and by keeping debate within the bounds of acceptable premises (Herman and Chomsky 1994 [1988]: 298).

Concluding the analysis of media coverage of climate change in Russia, it is claimed here that media coverage on the issue stays within the broad politico-economic framework which is influenced and controlled by the elites and that the media hardly ever challenge the elites' position on the problem. Similarly to Herman and Chomsky's study, the findings of this research show that with regards to climate change, Russian journalists do not face open forms of censorship or state orders, but the whole politico-economic system of the country works in a way that it encourages coverage to stay within certain boundaries. In summary it could be stated that in the case of climate change, the state seems not to be a main 'client', but rather a main newsmaker that takes the lead. This conclusion was reached through the adaptation and application of the PrM filters to this case study, which has demonstrated that whilst it is not clear how different ownership structures, advertising policies or 'flak' influence environmental communication in Russia, the filter 'sourcing' became of great use. As discussed in more detail below, after the Russian government changed its position on the climate change issue, the Russian media turned their attention towards the problem which was signified by an

increase in their coverage of climate change and the dominance of the Russian state officials as sources of information.

However, the PrM fails to give further details of journalists' approaches to such a complex subject. In this sense it is useful to return to the debate (see chapter one) on the influence of micro-processes in the media coverage of climate change (such as the specifications of the topic and the role of journalistic norms). During the interviews conducted for this project, journalists noted that interest in climate change is often stimulated by natural disasters or abnormal temperatures (which was also confirmed by the media analysis data) and on the contrary the lack of interest in some cases can be explained by the complexity of the scientific data and abstract nature of the problem (which does not contradict the PrM's ideas as long as the coverage agrees with the elites' interests).

As will be discussed in greater detail below, in the Russian case silence on the climate change problem speaks louder than any biased or unbiased coverage. I argue that the omission of the climate change topic demonstrates what Lukes (2005) calls the 'third dimension of power' which the Russian state has exercised. Once again this fact fits perfectly well within the PrM's logic. As was mentioned earlier in this dissertation, Herman (1996 in Mullen 2010) states that it is one of the 'merits' of the PrM that it allows us to not only see how the media content is shaped and why, but also what is omitted and why?

The PrM proves to be a great tool for the analysis of media systems and in the way it addresses various topics. It shows how the system adjusts to the natural processes of the capitalist economy and the way the interests of the political, economic and societal elites are considered. Interestingly, in the last few pages of their original study Herman and Chomsky (1994 [1988]: 306) state that the 'system is not all powerful' meaning that there is a chance for grassroots movements and civil society to find the loopholes and to overcome the obstacles imposed by the elites and actually be able not only to communicate their own messages but steer the discussion in a different direction as long as they know the mechanics – the way the media operate. Coming from this proposition and based on the conducted research at the end

of this chapter it is possible to suggest a number of ways in which the climate change issue in Russia can be popularised and how adequate discussion can develop.

Adopting the PrM to the Russian case: the media and power, or the powerful media?

As Oates rightfully notes 'social scientists remain unsure as to whether the media tend to lead political change or (more cynically) if they merely reinforce the consensus of the political victors' (2007: 1279). In the Soviet Union (especially at its beginning) 'the media had a particularly important role for the Soviet leadership in the creation of a fully communist society' (White and Oates 2003: 32). Even though the media were considered a powerful 'propaganda tool', with total control and institutionalised censorship they were a factor rather than an actor in the state's communication strategy. The distribution of power was quite straightforward, from the top down, with the state dictating to the media what to do and the media helping the state to mobilise and 'organise the masses'.

More recently, during the period of perestroika and especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of the new state (with a supposedly democratic regime) many (including journalists themselves) saw an opportunity for the Russian media to become the fourth estate. Furthermore, media would be capable of altering the political regime, to bring attention to the problems and place them on the agenda and actually be able to influence the outcomes of the elections. In this sense the media would become a 'watchdog' for democracy and their main role would be 'to act as a check on the state [...] monitor the full range of state activity, and fearlessly expose abuse of official authority' (Curran 2002: 217). Indeed, as Ivan Zassoursky puts it 'the press in the early 1990s genuinely perceived itself as a "fourth estate", that is, as one of the governing institutions wielding enormous influence in society' (2004: 57). It could be argued that for a few years this was the case, and one of the most famous examples of the Russian media being an active actor of the political process is the case when they organised an influential campaign against the first military action in the Chechen Republic

(see chapter three). This 'golden age' of Russian media did not last very long and soon it turned into a neo-Soviet media system (Oates 2007) where newly acquired freedom of speech in many cases remained just a formality and additional constraints dictated by the free market were added.

One of the main postulates of the PrM voiced in Herman and Chomsky's work (1994 [1988]) states that the mass media are part of the free market system and like any other market actor want to make profit and act accordingly. Fourteen years later, in the new introduction to their book, Herman and Chomsky restated that 'among their other functions, the media serve, and propagandize on behalf of, the powerful societal interests that control and finance them' (2002: xi). Mass media seek to satisfy the interests of their main investors or in other words media want to make themselves financially attractive. However, even for the US case this simplified vision of the media production process did not cover all aspects of this complex institution. Making media business sustainable in many cases does not just come down to the idea of achieving the greatest circulation numbers, highest sales or the biggest ratings. As the PrM demonstrates even in the United States there are multiple actors in the media production process (which influence the media within the frame of the model's filters) and all of these actors have some sort of connections with each other, and the outcome of the media strategy depends not on their individual influence but also on the agreement between these actors. Hence 'media consent' depends on the 'consent amongst elites'.

The analysis of the media system in Russia by the means of the PrM demonstrates that if we break this system into elements according to the filters then it becomes clear that all of them are dominated by the most powerful actor in Russia – the state. The conducted research showed that the state in one way or another owns the most important media outlets, it has close connections with the advertising market, it contributes to the reaction on media activity in some form of censorship, it often becomes the dominant information source and it creates a certain political or ideological regime in the country which some might call political capitalism, managed democracy or a dual state. In this superior role the state became one of the key differences between the original

study by Herman and Chomsky and the Russian case, as Chomsky (1989b: 149) specifies 'the model argues, from its foundations, that the media will protect the interests of the powerful, not that it will protect state managers from their criticisms'. Whilst in Russia, 'the powerful' are the 'state managers'. In the study of media coverage of climate change through the series of interviews and the content and discourse analysis of the selected newspapers, the hypothesis of the state being a dominant independent variable has been proven to be correct.

These results were achieved through content analysis of the published articles mentioning climate change. The quantity of the articles changed significantly after the change in the state's climate policy (which was demonstrated through the comparison of coverage of the Kyoto and Copenhagen Conferences). The coverage provoked by the official events such as the Copenhagen Conference and acceptance of the Climate Doctrine provoked almost twice as many articles as the natural disaster event (the heat-wave of the summer of 2010). Since the analysed newspapers were selected according to the logic that they represent different types of ownership structures, the conducted research also has shown that the newspapers which are owned by the state quite predictably follow the state's agenda, however, the more interesting and unexpected results that were achieved through this analysis show that the newspapers owned by big companies or oligarchs are not so different in their media policy to the state-owned ones.

An interesting case study was presented through the analysis of the oppositional newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* which claims to be independent. In terms of how many articles each newspaper publishes per issue and how many articles were devoted to climate change, *Sovetskaya Rossiya* talked about climate change quite frequently and every time it accused the capitalist system (often simply the United States) for its destructive force and for global environmental degradation. At the same time *Sovetskaya Rossiya* was not that different to the other studied newspapers, in the sense that it also did not question Russia's climate change policy and its contribution to the world's level of GHG emissions. Arguably this fact does not characterise the applicability of the PrM in a negative or positive way, but rather raises a

separate discussion of the role and existence of opposition in modern Russia (see chapter five).

This analysis has also unfolded the limitations of the PrM in the case of media coverage of climate change in Russia. Indeed, external factors do play a role and coverage does stay within the boundaries, however, not all filters have proven to be equally useful for the explanation of the communication of climate risks in Russia. For example, both media analysis and interviews with journalists did not show significant evidence of advertisers altering the way climate change is portrayed. Use of the filter 'flak' is more complex in the Russian case. As discussed in chapter three, Russian journalists do face various forms of censorship (even after it was officially banned), however, it should be realised that 'climate change' is not 'corruption' or 'war in Chechnya', thus Russian elites do not pay as much attention to it and to date there are no known cases of journalists being imprisoned for reporting a story about CO₂ emissions, or media outlets facing other kinds of prosecutions or threats. At the same time, the journalists interviewed agreed that there is almost always some degree of self-censorship in their work, regardless of what they write about. In Herman and Chomsky's discussion it is apparent that 'self-censorship' is a common characteristic of journalism, whilst the degree might vary depending on the economic-political situation journalists work in and topics they cover.

The influence of the filter 'ownership structure' in the Russian case of climate change coverage is slightly more difficult to identify. On the one hand, as mentioned above, the content and discourse analysis of the selected newspapers has not shown much of a difference in the coverage by the newspapers representing various owners – even oppositional newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* did not fall out of the common trend. However, further analysis has shown how the state plays a crucial role in various media ownership structures. Even when the media outlet does not officially belong to the state, there is almost always some connection between the government and the owners. The interviewed journalists have also confirmed that they need to take into consideration their media owners' interests.

The 'dominant ideology' filter is also quite an ambiguous one, as discussed in chapter two, in Herman and Chomsky's original study this filter was named 'anti-communism' and it was clearly defined. It provided the idea of a 'common enemy' which encouraged the media to stay within the boundaries of capitalist ideology. Over the years the 'anti-communist' agenda has lost its relevance in the United States and the filter has been modified into the 'dominant ideology'. However, the authors still argue that the idea of promoting a free market economy and capitalism has remained. In the Russian case, experiencing a rapid change of political and economic regimes has resulted in an uncertain condition with regards to dominant ideology driving Russian policy – is it capitalism, consumerism or nationalism and so on? Unlike in the original study of the American media, in Russia the ideology is much more difficult to pinpoint. As discussed above, Russia is often characterised as a managed democracy or political capitalism, these two different concepts coincide in the description of the influential role of the state in modern Russia. Indeed, as has been repeatedly concluded in the application of the PrM to the Russian case of climate change coverage, even the most insignificant filters have been significantly influenced by the state. Hence, even though in a similar way to the US, in Russia we can also witness the development of capitalist ideology at the same time Russian ideology has been and continues to be shaped by the influence of the strong state.

As this research has shown, the most straightforward and helpful filter in this case study, became the filter of 'sourcing'. The newspapers' overall consensus on climate change coverage can be explained through the dominance of the state's official sources, and how the journalists follow the steps of the state on climate policy. For instance, the coverage during the Copenhagen Conference and the Climate Doctrine (the so called politicised or official events) was much more structured and some might say more adequate (see chapter five). There were less sensational messages, less scepticism and more analysis of the problem. Hence, in this case the consent among the elites about the anthropogenic character of climate change and a more pro-active stance on the mitigation policy resulted in the more sophisticated and knowledgeable coverage of the problem.

In summary, the application of the PrM to the Russian case has showed that whilst newspapers can be active actors in a free market economy, the state can still influence their coverage. Furthermore, applying the PrM to the Russian case of climate change coverage does not only allow us to see the bias in the media reporting which often has culminated in praise towards the country's leaders as saviours of the climate change negotiation process or the presentation of any outcome of the international negotiations as a 'win-win' situation for Russia, it also demonstrates that biased coverage of climate change is a lesser evil in the Russian case, whilst the more serious problem is presented through the omission of the topic.

No presentation of climate change versus misrepresentation

In the first chapter of this dissertation the importance of the mass media in the process of mitigating or adapting to climate change consequences was highlighted. As Kokhanova states: 'before we will be able to mitigate or solve any kind of global environmental problems, firstly, we need to define those problems – an exchange of information should happen' (2007: 19). The same idea is shared by Anders Hansen (2010), who argues that the media need to explain to people what the environmental problems are, especially in the case of climate change – 'whatever 'symptoms' of climate change, that we see around us, they are of course only just that because we have been told that this is what they are, manifestations of climate change' (ibid: 170). As has been discussed before (see chapter one) climate change is characterised as an 'unobtrusive issue' which cannot be noticed and understood without specialised knowledge of the subject or without it being 'translated' and 'broadcast' by the media.

The reluctance of the Russian media to cover climate change was picked up during the interviews. For example, Igor Podgorny from Greenpeace Russia noticed that it could be considered a positive sign that now media have started to mention climate change, whilst a few years ago even this was not the case (interview, Moscow, 27 July 2011). Aleksey Kokorin from WWF-Russia supports this position by stating that in Russia 'mass media cover climate

change awfully, but before they did it even worse' (interview, Moscow, 27 July 2011).

A study of the worldwide collaborative research network 'MediaClimate' (Eide et al. 2010) managed a comparative study of the media coverage of the Bali Summit (December 2007) and the Copenhagen Conference (December 2009) in 13 and 19 countries (respectively), in both cases Russia ended up with the lowest amount of articles devoted to the topic.⁸⁹ For instance, during the conference in Bali there were only 13 articles published in two Russian newspapers, (*Kommersant* and *Moskovsky Komsomolets*). For the Copenhagen Conference the number was slightly higher, and Russian media outlets studied together managed to publish 32 articles, whilst the top positions were occupied by Denmark (the host country) with 710 pieces, Bangladesh with 317, Norway with 264 and Canada with 262. The countries closest to Russia in their coverage rate are El Salvador with 55 and Chile with 48, which is still at least 16 articles more than in the Russian case. Furthermore, only 17 articles in the analysed Russian newspapers were directly devoted to the Copenhagen Conference, whilst the other 15 just mentioned it in the discussion of other topics, mostly in the context of the new strategic weapons agreement between the United States and Russia (negotiations about which were happening simultaneously) (Yagodin 2010).

The analysis of the newspapers' coverage of climate change in Russia conducted for this research has confirmed these findings. As has been demonstrated even within five national newspapers during two months around some major events related to the climate change topic, the total amount of articles did not exceed 127 articles per event. The number of articles which were specifically devoted to climate change (rather just mentioning it in a non-related context) is even less. During two months around the Kyoto Conference in 1997 five newspapers managed to produce only nine articles discussing

⁸⁹ The data was collected from 1 December 2009 to 22 December 2009 in the studied year, from two national newspapers. One of which is supposed to 'have a rather close relationship to the local power elite' and another one is 'a "tabloid" paper or a more consumer-oriented outlet of journalism' (Eide et al. 2010: 19).

climate change; during the Copenhagen Conference in 2009, it was 68 articles and during the heat-wave events of summer 2010 only 30 articles were written on climate change.

For the purpose of comparison a similar search was conducted, through the electronic database Nexis, of UK newspapers. The result showed that in the five selected newspapers (*The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Observer* and *The Daily Mirror (The Sunday Mirror)*) 337 articles devoted to climate change were published during the Kyoto Conference and 1744 articles were published during the Copenhagen Conference. To get comparative data from a country which did not join the Kyoto Protocol *the New York Times* and *the Washington Post* were searched. During the Kyoto Conference they respectively published 133 and 112 articles. During the Copenhagen Conference *the New York Times* produced 291 articles and *the Washington Post* produced 260.

So, one of the factors characterising the media policy on climate change in Russia which has been confirmed by this research is the relative omission of information on this controversial problem. Many scholars struggle to find explanations of why journalists write about climate change in a sensational manner, why they devote the same space and time to the arguments supported by climate sceptics as to the arguments supported by the dominant majority of scientists and so on. In the Russian case, one might say the problem is more complex – why this debate on climate change has not even entered the public discourse in any serious way.

As was discussed before, the PrM ignores the significance of the public's influence over the media production process. Herman and Chomsky also state that 'the Propaganda Model describes forces that shape what the media does; it does not imply that any propaganda emanating from the media is always effective' (2002: xii). As James Curran (2002), in his discussion on the 'limited media influence' (from the perspective of the liberal approach to media theories), states: 'audiences selectively attend to, understand, evaluate and retain information from the media' (ibid: 132). So regardless of how well the

media propaganda machine operates people do not simply absorb, without questioning everything the media drops upon them:

This is because the public is not an empty vessel waiting to be filled by media propaganda. On the contrary, most people possess values, opinion and understandings, formed by early socialization, membership of social networks and personal experience, which structure their responses to the media. Even when people are exposed to communications from the media on a topic they know nothing about, they have core beliefs and general orientations – ‘interpretive schema’ – which results in selective assimilation of information (Curran 2002: 132).

Taking into account all of these limitations and the fact that media’s effects over the audience are on its own is a grand area of research. However, in the Russian case of climate change coverage, the correlation between the low coverage of the problem and the low level of awareness of climate change among the general population is quite striking.

The problem was demonstrated by the Public Opinion Fund (FOM 2008) which conducted an opinion poll where the respondents were asked to choose not more than five out of 25 options of the problems they are most concerned with. Whilst the most popular answers were ‘inflation, price increase’, ‘high housing prices’ and ‘expensive medical care’, ‘environmental problems’ took 19th place leaving behind only problems connected with the immigration situation, public transport and delays with pay days (the last three places were taken by marginal answers falling into categories ‘other’, ‘do not have any problems’ and ‘do not know’). What is interesting is that when people were directly asked whether they are concerned by the environmental situation and if they think global warming is an important problem, 78 and 70 percent (respectively) answered affirmatively. Another study was conducted by Greenpeace Russia in 1999 which aimed to find out the public’s attitude towards the NGO and charities in general and it showed that people did not mind supporting ‘actions to protect the environment near their home or neighbourhood; the actions they were least likely to support were “pressuring

the authorities and business for the goal of resolving environmental problems” and “the battle against global climate change” (Greenpeace Russia 1999, cited in Henry 2010b: 198).

The World Bank (2010) commissioned a more specific opinion poll which aimed to determine public attitudes across the globe particularly towards climate change. The research was conducted in 16 countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Russia, Senegal, Turkey, the United States and Vietnam. Even though the results summary of the report states that overall people in all the studied countries demonstrated a high level of concern about climate change, Russia in almost all question categories occupies one of the last places, showing the lowest level of concern amongst its citizens. For instance, 30 percent of respondents in Russia consider climate change to be a ‘very serious’ problem, whilst the opinion poll average is 60 percent. Only 18 percent of Russian respondents ‘strongly agree’ that ‘dealing with the problem of climate change should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs’, whilst the average among 16 other countries is 35 percent. Russia had the least number of people who think that the majority of scientists ‘think the problem is urgent and enough is known for action’, at 23 percent, whilst this multi-country poll shows that on average 51 percent of people agree with this statement. Once again Russians are the most negative with regard to the question of whether their country ‘has responsibility to take steps to deal with climate change’, 58 percent, whilst the world average shows that 87 percent of people think their state should be responsible for dealing with the problem.

Arguably, this rather low level of concern with environmental problems in general and climate change in particular, can serve as a justification of the limited media coverage of climate change in Russia. As is discussed further on in this chapter, this is a questionable statement – is press coverage limited because readers are not interested, or are readers not interested because coverage is limited? The role of media in forming public opinion and generating public interests is explored to a great extent in the studies devoted to the media’s ‘agenda-setting’ capabilities. For example, McCombs and Shaw

(1972: 176) argue that with a 'help' of mass media 'the readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue' (See also Carroll and McCombs 2003; McCombs 2004, 2005). Considering the relatively significant influence of the Russian media over their audience, and the low level of general awareness of the problem, an increase in the level of coverage can lead to an increased understanding of the problem. As White and Oates state, 'the media are more trusted than any other social institution in contemporary Russia – more than the armed forces, the Church, political parties or government itself' (2003: 33), hence, even though the public influence over media coverage of climate change is debatable and is not considered by the PrM, the possibility of media power increasing people's awareness of the problem in Russia is rather high. Nenashev (2010b) states that in contrast to Western media, where objective information and impartial coverage are priorities, Russian journalism has always differed in its preferences for commentary and analysis of events, which often included a direct appeal to solve the political or social problems or provide people an option of not only what to think about but also how to think.

Indeed, throughout the history of Russian media regardless of the degree of their dependency on the state or other actors, they have always possessed the specific characteristic of not just being an informer but rather an educator. Interestingly enough, the Russian public is mostly content with the nurturing role of media. As White and Oates (2003) found in their extensive empirical research on the public's attitude towards media in Russia, – 'many [respondents] thought it was simply irresponsible of the mass media to present information in a neutral way, without any kind of reference to wider moral or patriotic values' (ibid: 33). Another of White and Oates' interesting findings showed that 'Russians are often more distressed by the portrayal of violence and chaos on their television screens than by pro-government bias' (ibid) and even more shockingly according to this research, Russian people have a more positive attitude toward media coverage after the centralisation processes of Putin's regime rather than in the era of media 'freedom' in the early 1990s (mostly due to the fact that media coverage of the time was also quite chaotic

and devoted large amounts of space or time to topics with violent or sexual content).

Due to these concerns with media abusing these questionable topics the public opinion poll conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VTsIOM) showed that around 70 percent of respondents are in support of some kind of censorship over mass media (Tarusin and Fedorov 2009). Interestingly enough, the same ideas were voiced by a number of interviewees in conversations about Russian media policy and climate change, where they said the problem is not in state policy:

‘the problem is in the media themselves, they like to shout about their freedom but it comes down to the talk about scandals, so we need some kind of control from the civil society, from the expert community. I do not argue in support of control over the media (we already had it), but something has to change, they need to become more responsible’ (Zakharov, interview, Moscow, 21 July 2011).

The public vision of the censorship of media activity comes down to a very simplistic concept – the media can do anything if they do no harm (by exposing too much of the above mentioned controversial topics).

Coming back to the discussion of the PrM’s applicability in the Russian context, it is useful to return to the PrM vision of this question. As Curran (2002) mentions Herman and Chomsky’s study, he notices that ‘while it is not anchored to a Marxist, class-based view of society [...] it is similar in that it assumes that controls within media organisations mesh with wider controls in society to render American media “effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out a system-supportive propaganda function”’ (Herman and Chomsky 1988: 306 see in Curran 2002: 138). So, from the perspective of the PrM the media are considered a powerful *factor* which supports the existing disposition of the power in society by reproducing or at least not challenging the existing consent amongst the elites. This exact situation we can witness in Russia, where even though the media possess a significant power over the audience, which still expects from the media a guide to action rather than just information, overall the media do not challenge the existing discourse of power.

Furthermore, all other types of actors such as businesses, civil society or the state are in some instances merged (such as in the case of the energy sector) or one actor is much more powerful than the others (the state and the NGOs). In this case the consensus amongst the so called 'elite' is very strong, whilst dissent is negligible.

'Climate silence' and the state

The explanation behind the phenomenon of the media's reserved reporting of climate change was unfolded throughout the previous chapters, which have demonstrated the way Russian media operate and the correlation between media coverage of climate change and state policy towards climate change. Despite the recent modifications in the state's climate change policy, it is still a low-priority issue. For example, at the end of the 1990s (around the time of the Kyoto Conference), the Russian government was concerned more with the economic crisis of 1997 and Yeltsin's relations with strong political actors at the time – the oligarchs. The new chapter in Russia's political history and its influence on media has been studied in detail beforehand, but in general, Yeltsin's rule and the start of Putin's time were mostly characterised by an orientation towards economic problems and Chechnya whilst all other issues (including environmental problems) were postponed until 'better times'.

The same attitude could be witnessed amongst the general public. As the deputy editor-in-chief of the 'Fund for Independent Radio', Elena Uporova stated, 'we all know well that poverty goes along with the lack of interest in environmental topics as well as the fact that the power elite does not give signs that this [environment] is important' (presentation at the seminar 'Forest and Climate', Chermal, 14 August 2011). A similar view was expressed by an editor of the newspaper 'Priroda Altaya' Sergey Malykhin: 'our country was going through the long-term crisis of its political regime and it had to prioritise – in a hungry country nobody cares about the environment' (interview, Chermal, 14 August 2011). So like the pieces of the same jigsaw picture, the public's, the state's and the media's diminution or underestimation of the climate change problem all contributed to the same outcome where the problem remains at the

bottom of the hierarchy of needs and interests, and does not get closer to its solution.

In order to break this pattern, this research project has tried to answer the question: who is leading whom in ignoring climate change? During the interviews, journalists often claimed that they do not write about climate change because the audience is not interested in it. Rather it is very difficult to make the problem look or sound relevant to people's everyday interests or needs, and it is also difficult to give people a clear and straightforward answer about what climate change is and what it means for them. Indeed this argument is consistent with the findings which were made by researchers studying problems of media coverage of climate change in various countries (see chapter one). However, this does not explain why, if Russian journalists face the same problems of public ignorance as their foreign colleagues, Russia is so far behind in the amount of articles written on this topic compared with other countries. American, British or Norwegian journalists facing the same problems in their professional activity manage to write about climate change up to ten times more often than their Russian colleagues. And why do Russian journalists not use the climate change topic as an opportunity to question the politicians' performance on the matter (which indeed is quite questionable), as their foreign colleagues do? If this could be explained by the better economic situation in other countries (since often Russian journalists and policy makers state that environmental discourse will enter public space in Russia after key economic problems are solved), what about such countries as Chile or El Salvador? In this case the theoretical framework utilised for this research (the PrM) becomes of great use.

As discussed in depth in chapter two, the PrM rejects the influence of the audience on media coverage as a dominant factor, it also rejects the idea that the topic itself might explain why journalists write about it in one way or another. Rather, the PrM rather asks us to look for other macro 'filters' which alter the media production process, such as who owns the media or provides its financial stability, and as was suggested, according to the PrM in the Russian case one of the main factors influencing media coverage might be the state's

policy on climate change. As the energy efficiency project campaigner at Greenpeace Russia, Igor Podgorny, stated:

[i]nterest appears when something happens at the state level. For instance, when the Climate Doctrine was accepted, questions arose. The same happened during the announcement of the action plan for the Doctrine. We [Greenpeace] can clearly see now that journalists started to follow the climate problem, even though their interest is still very episodic (they only react on certain events) but at least it is not only based on sensationalism' (interview, Moscow, 27 July 2011).

Prominent Russian scholar Oleg Yanitsky (2009: 759) also concludes that in the third phase⁹⁰ of the environmental debates 'top state officials together with top media managers decided who would have access to the media .

The relative omission of the topic could also be explained by the state's influence, or more precisely but the state success in taking this topic 'off agenda' by exercising the 'less apparent face of power'. This thesis, introduced by Bachrach and Baratz in 1962, points out that even though it is commonly accepted that 'power is exercised when A participates in the making decision that affect B', they also argue that 'power is exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of political process to public consideration', or as the authors further quote Schattschneider's famous remark: 'some issues are organised into politics while others are organised out' (ibid: 949). Herman and Chomsky also argue that 'bias in the media is evidenced not only in relation to what is covered and how it is covered, but also in terms of what is omitted' (Babe 2005: 216). Robert Babe refers to this in his study of the media coverage of global warming in the Canadian newspapers where he confirms the

⁹⁰ According to Yanitsky (2009), the third phase starts after 2000, whilst the first and the second one occurred in the 1960s-1970s (when only restricted amount of prominent scientists dominated the environmental discourse in media) and the late 1980s-early 1990s, when any group could have raised the issue (see more in chapter four).

adequacy of the PrM which predicts that 'the daily press, financed by advertisers and usually owned by multimedia organisation will downplay the conflict between economic system and environment' (ibid: 187), which was shown both by the biased coverage and the omission of certain aspects of the problem. In the Russian case, 'the conflict between economic system and environment' should be 'replaced' by the 'conflict between the state interests and environment', then the conclusion of the omission of the 'inconvenient' topics would be very similarly re-affirmed.

However, whilst in Bachrach and Baratz' vision of power, the state's role in media coverage in Russia would suggest that state officials purposely remove controversial issues from the agenda, Steven Lukes' (2005: 25) 'three dimensional' extension of this power debate argues that power is exercised not only when certain decisions were consciously made or were not made – 'the bias of the system can be mobilized, recreated and reinforced in ways that are neither consciously chosen nor the intended result of particular individuals' choices'. Lukes suggests various ways in which potentially controversial issues are 'kept out of politics, whether through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through individuals' decisions' (ibid: 28). For instance, Lukes (2005: 144) refers to the Gramscian idea that "submission and intellectual subordination" could impede a subordinate class from following its "own conception of the world". Lukes further continues 'Gramsci viewed civil society in the West as the site where consent is engineered, ensuring the cultural ascendancy of the ruling class and capitalism's stability'. In Heyward's (2007) revision of Lukes' three-dimensional view of power, in the first two approaches to power the 'agents can always identify and articulate their own interests, the radical view [developed by Lukes] refused to take that for granted. If the third dimension of power was successfully exercised, even a slave might be content with his exploitation'. Lukes' arguments do not contradict the PrM postulates, as has been repeated throughout this thesis, the model states that in order for media to cover information in a certain way, the elites do not have 'to decide' or 'not to decide' on something, but the system is organised in a way that power does not have to be exercised and the 'agents' (journalists) 'play' according to the rules willingly. As Chomsky (1998)

argues:

[y]ou cannot be a good propagandist unless it's in your bones [...] you don't even make it into those circles unless you're already so deeply overwhelmed by doctrine and propaganda that you can't even think in other terms. So when people talk like this, you'll read liberal columnists in the New York Times very angrily saying, 'nobody tells me what to write. I write anything I feel like,' which is absolutely true. If people with real power weren't sure that they were going to say the right things, they wouldn't be in a position to say anything they feel like (ibid: 187, see more on this in chapter two and three).

In this respect it is useful, to refer to Lukes' explanation of the 'inactive power':

'the features of agents that make them powerful include those that render activity unnecessary. If I can achieve the appropriate outcomes without having to act, because of the attitudes of others towards me or because of a favourable alignment of social relations and forces facilitating such outcomes, then my power is surely all the greater' (Lukes 2005: 79).

Hence, in this situation the powerful elites do not have to control every step of the journalists, they do not need to enforce sanctions, threaten correspondents or dictate the news agenda. Rather the topics will 'naturally' enter or leave the public discourse such as happened with the abandonment of the climate change issues in Russia, the topic was removed from the agenda and still remains relatively unpopular due to the elites (the state) and consequently the media being preoccupied with other issues. Evidently, this dependence on the state's attention to the problem makes climate change coverage extremely vulnerable, and as discussed below the fears were raised that the recent modest burst of activity in communicating climate risks will again disappear from the agenda with change at the Russian executive level which might handicap the state's climate policy.

The role of personalities – will the situation get worse in Putin’s third term?

The application of the PrM (in particular its filter ‘information sources’) as well as analysis of Russia’s climate change policy has also allowed us to conclude that in this case we witness the dominance of certain elite groups over media coverage of climate change. Specifically, the significance of the role played by Russia’s main ‘newsmakers’ in the country – the state leaders – is clearly demonstrated. Like many others, a journalist of *RIA Novosti* Olga Dobrovidova, stated: ‘As soon as the president started to talk about it, everyone started. Yes, I think the peak of media activity [media coverage of climate change] does coincide with the position of the Kremlin’ (interview, Moscow, 20 July 2011).

The specific characteristics of the Russian political system discussed earlier in this dissertation confirmed that at the start of ‘Putin’s era’ in 2000 the system once again was modified with the rapidly strengthening powers of the presidential post. After Putin’s second term it became apparent that it was not about redistribution of powers towards a more presidential-focused type of political regime, but towards Putin himself (see more in Hanson 2010). As many have noticed after Medvedev’s succession to the post in 2008, Putin still maintained a significant amount of weight in Russian politics (arguably not proportionate to his post as the Prime Minister at that time). With regards to this problem Monaghan argues that ‘Medvedev was more liberal and more inclined to Russia’s modernization, yet was the weaker figure and without a political support base, whereas Putin was stronger, with a well-established support base, and was more focused on maintaining the status quo’ (2012: 2).

The renewed interest in environmental problems at the state level has been associated with the start of the election campaign of the first Vice-Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, when he included the issues of environmental degradation and protection into his speeches (Bogdan et al. 2009). After Medvedev become President, multiple signs of Russia’s more active climate policy followed (see chapter three). The influence of the personalities (heads of state) over the existing discourse around climate change problems was also

demonstrated through the media analysis conducted for this research, which showed that the filter 'information source' was overall dominated by 'Russian official sources'⁹¹ and in particular by two specific individuals – Putin and Medvedev (see chapter four). So, one of the logical questions which arises from the results is what will happen to climate change policy in general, and particularly after the presidential elections of 2012 and the second swap of offices between the two men, with Putin returning to the presidency (possibly for another 12 years).

One of the fears which were voiced during this research was concerned with Putin's 'special attitude' towards climate change issues (see chapter four), which with his comeback might lead to an age of stagnation in climate change policy, or the Russian media's loss of interest in the topic which has just started to develop. Andonova (2008: 491) argues that seeing changes in climate policy solely as a result of changes at the executive level of government would be 'an oversimplification of political reality'. Chapter four demonstrated that Medvedev's policy was not only moved by his striving for economic modernisation, but by the ideas which will remain relevant for any Russian leader. In order to test this hypothesis, the similar analysis (see more in chapter four) was conducted which has included the study of official speeches and statements after Putin resumed his Presidential position. Taking under consideration the fact that he has been in the post for less than one year (at the time of writing), this analysis suggests that in Putin's official discourse we can witness the re-appearance of the same messages of '*pragmatic environmentalism*' rather than the previously evident ignoring of climate change issues. However, it is acknowledged that a more extensive research should be conducted towards the end of his term.

Overall, since May 2012 (the start of Putin's current term) and until April 2013, 13 texts with some references to climate change were identified. This

⁹¹ The same results for the Copenhagen Conference were achieved by the research of the network 'MediaClimate'. For the Russian case the analysis of the 'principal groups of actors quoted' in the newspapers showed that the category 'national political system' was twice as large as the next largest category – 'science, expertise' (Yagodin 2010).

figure on its own shows that the climate change topic has remained relevant to the new administration. By comparison, during Medvedev's presidency there were on average 18 texts in a year mentioning climate change, with peaks coinciding with the Copenhagen Conference (there were 27 texts identified in 2009 and only five in 2011) and acceptance of major documents concerning climate policy. However, unlike in Medvedev's case, during the first year of Putin's third term there were no texts completely devoted to climate change or that discussed it at length, rather, they mentioned climate change among other items. Indeed, Putin's rhetoric on climate change differs to Medvedev's, whilst Medvedev explicitly talked about Russia's position on climate issues, in Putin's statements we can only observe brief references to the problem. At the same time, it is also evident that the messages which Medvedev popularised in his official discourse have remained relevant for the new administration. Among the categories previously identified (Table 4.2), only two were discovered in the texts of Putin's presidency (Table 6.1), however, they were among Medvedev's most popular themes – 'global cooperation' and 'economic benefits'.

Table 6.1 Percentage of speeches (Putin, 2012-2013) by identified categories

Category	%	Examples of quotations
Global cooperation	54	'Russia and Bangladesh negotiated to continue their co-operation on the issues of global climate change' 'The international community is facing an urgent need to find a way to effectively fight global challenges (such as climate change)'
Economic benefits/ Green economy	39	'We are convinced that economic development should not contradict the interests of environmental protection' 'The "Nord Stream" will work fully automatically under constant supervision of the control centre, without intermediate compression stations, which will reduce operating costs and reduce CO ₂ emissions'

Hence, the economic benefits which follow from the policies of energy efficiency stayed salient for the new Russian government. The messages of sustainable development and the green economy repeatedly enter Presidential statements. Interestingly, one of the statements during the first year of Putin's

presidency (latest) also discussed the negative consequences of climate change and in particular its effect on food security (however, as in the majority of the texts no significant details are presented on this account). As the negative influence of climate change is almost certain to grow over the coming decades, this factor will force the government to abandon its policy of 'de-environmentalism' and think of ways to diminish the negative consequences of climate change.

Lastly, the majority of Medvedev and Putin's speeches mentioning climate change discuss it within the context of global cooperation. As the president of the NGO 'Centre of Russian Environmental Policy' Vladimir Zakharov said:

'the change [swap between Medvedev and Putin] will play a certain role, but I think, it is now impossible for Russia to turn back in its climate policy (unless it drastically changes its political regimes and closes up to the West again), we will keep integrating into the world community. The pace might differ depending on circumstances, but overall the forecast is optimistic; we will keep paying more and more attention to environmental problems' (interview, Moscow, 21 July 2011).

Igor Podgorny from Greenpeace Russia (interview, Moscow, 27 July 2011) admitted that he believes that the situation is currently at such a stage that it cannot be ignored anymore. Furthermore as Podgorny states, it is impossible for Russia to keep taking part in international negotiations (not necessarily connected with the climate change topic) and to claim that the problem still does not exist, 'considering that Russia is among the biggest GHG emitters – the world community will not leave us alone' (ibid). Correspondent John Harrison (radio 'Voice of Russia), said that he has not noticed the 'climb down' of climate change issues after Putin's return (Skype interview, 18 June 2012). Another influential figure in Russia's climate change policy Alexey Kokorin from the WWF-Russia suggested the possibility of 'climate stagnation' in Russia and the decline of journalists' interest in the topic (considering that Putin again will not be treating the problem as a serious

one and reproducing jokes such as the one on 'fur coats'). At the same time he repeats the ideas expressed by other interviewees that it should not affect Russia's overall plan in reducing its GHG emissions, because this is connected with its technological development (interview, Moscow, 27 July 2011).

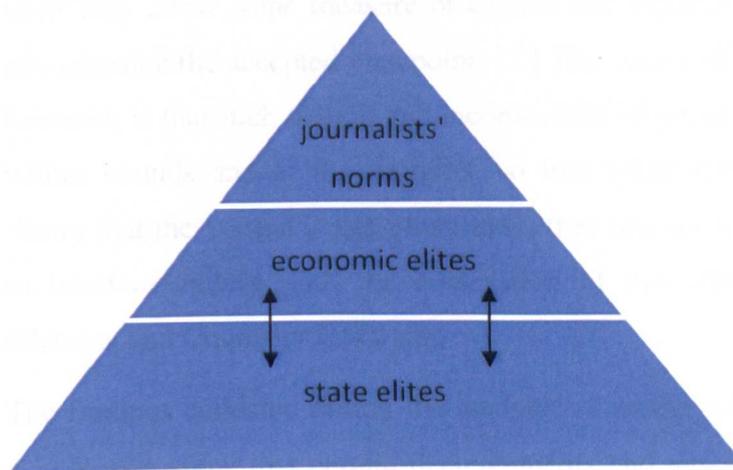
Reasons for optimism about Russia's climate policy can be seen in such 'deeds' as Putin's preservation of the President's climate change advisor post, the development of laws and initiatives on energy efficiency, and economic modernisation as mentioned above, as well as the appointment (by Presidential Decree 13/12/2012) of the Interagency Working Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development. Furthermore, on 23 March 2013, for the first time, the Kremlin (the President's residence) and Red Square took part in the global event: 'Earth Hour' (the main aim of which is to attract attention to the climate change problem by switching electricity off for one hour). The official announcement on the Presidential website stated that the decision of Vladimir Putin to join this event 'is due to his traditional attention towards environmental problems, such as the declaration by Presidential Decree, 1157 (11/08/2012) that 2013 is the year of environmental protection in Russia' (President of Russia website 2013).

Can media coverage of climate change in Russia be changed?

Returning to the PrM's main postulate, media consent is led by agreement among social, political and economic elites. In the Russian case of media coverage of climate change it can be concluded that, yes, indeed in order for the issue to become more evident it should fall into the area of interests of the state. Then it should comply with the interests of the economic elites: the financial organisations on which the media might depend (however, as discussed, the interests of economic elites should not contradict the interests of the state). As was mentioned on numerous occasions in Russia these elite groups are extremely difficult to separate, or speaking more precisely, it is difficult to see the economic interests without the government's influence over them.

Further on, after the media pass these ‘barriers’ and reckon that the climate change topic is now in the interests of the ‘main newsmakers’ in the country and it does not interfere with the major political and economic interests, then the other factors start to have an influence. For example, difficulties connected with understanding the scientific information, making information more interesting and relevant for the audience, finding the legitimate information sources (beside the official ones) and so on. Graphically these processes could be pictured in the following way:

Figure 6.1 The three-stage model of media coverage of climate change in Russia



The foundation of the pyramid has been explained on multiple occasions throughout this dissertation, but a few extra words need to be said about the top level. Though the collected data demonstrated the impact of the state’s climate policy and position on these issues, but in some cases it is not that straightforward, for example, the number of articles mentioning climate change related issues during the non-politicised event of the heat-wave in summer 2010 was still quite high and a certain amount of government critique was presented on the pages of newspapers (for instance, with regards to the bureaucratic obstacles on the way of the implementation of JI projects in Russia). During the interviews quite often journalists stated that sometimes they do not write about climate change because of various reasons such as the complexity of the topic, the difficulty of making the topic sound relevant to their audience, the desire to write about ‘hot topics’ rather than the prolonged

process of climate change and overall the audience's lack of interest in or ignorance of the climate change.

All of these issues are not considered by the system of the PrM filters, which neglect such minor issues and concentrate only on the greater picture of the economic and political discourse according to which mass media have to adjust. However, in the latest edition of *Manufacturing Consent*, the authors state:

[...] that the various parts of media organisations have some limited autonomy, that *individual* and *professional values* influence media work, that policy is imperfectly enforced, and that media policy itself may allow some measure of dissent and reporting that calls into question the accepted viewpoint. [...] The beauty of the system, however, is that such dissent and inconvenient information are kept within bounds and at the margins, so that while their presence shows that the system is not monolithic, they are not large enough to interfere unduly with the domination of the official agenda (Herman and Chomsky 2002: xii).

The findings collected during the analysis of media coverage of climate change in Russia show that certain disagreements and variations in reporting on climate change can be witnessed. But overall they did stay within the greater consensus, characterized by the extremely limited attention to the problem among journalists and the absence of a sound critique of Russian state climate change policy. Even though in the end in order to write about climate change journalists do have to consider various micro-factors, as this research project has shown it is very unlikely that the interest in the problem will be maintained if it falls out of the powerful elites' area of interests.

The PrM suggests that media coverage of certain events might be altered if the elites change their position on the problem, or if the elites fall out among themselves, allowing various messages to enter the media space. In the Russian case due to the significant dominance of the state over other actors that might be involved in climate policy, disagreement is less likely to happen. On the other hand, as was also demonstrated, climate policy not being the most

important policy area for the state also has some benefits, for example, there is much less understanding of how the topic should or should not be covered, hence, there is less possibility of control or in the case of media activity, there is less possibility of censorship.

As Herman and Chomsky originally stated (see chapter two), one of the ideas behind the PrM is not only to expose the media production process, but also for activists or anyone interested in the subject matter to be able to see the gaps and loopholes in the system so their messages could also be heard. Based on the research conducted and the assumption that currently the idea of developing a greater discussion of climate change issues coincides with the state's more pro-active climate policy, several conclusions were reached on what could be changed in order for Russia to bring the topic of climate change to the same level with other topics of national interest. The first two suggestions are concerned with the state and economic interests, and they were addressed due to their superiority (as was demonstrated by the PrM), the other two suggestions on the increasing role of the expert and activist communities address the issues which concern the 'top' of the pyramid presented above. That is to say they address the problem of how the debate on climate change in Russia could become more sophisticated in the case where it *does not* contradict the elites' interests.

A more defined and visible state position on climate change

Experts from the Russian Regional Environmental Centre state that one of the main problems of Russia's climate change policy is the weak connection between scientists, politicians and the public, as well as low media coverage of climate change (Bogdan et al. 2009). In order to change the situation for the better, first of all, cooperation between all members involved should be established, however, due to the state's overriding influence, perhaps change in this area is of greater importance.

Russian climate change policy has indeed become more active in recent years. It is especially important that one of the most recent documents in this area – the comprehensive plan for implementation of the Climate Doctrine

(2011) – includes such action points as dissemination of knowledge on energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy as methods to solve the problem of anthropogenic climate change. Another point of the plan prescribes providing public access to information on climate change and its influence on life (the organisation responsible for the first action is the Ministry of Economic Development; for the second, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection). So the necessity of communicating the state's policy on climate change to the media has been officially acknowledged and the next step would be to establish and maintain the channels of communication between the state organisations and the media outlets.

For instance, one of these channels became the post of the president's advisor on the climate change issues, which fortunately was preserved after Putin's return to office. The appointment to the post of a prominent scientist, Alexander Bedritsky, strengthened the ties between the state and science and resulted in a qualitative improvement of the President's speeches and remarks on the subject matter, which in turn, improved communication with the media. The next step could be the establishment of a special state department working on this problem (for instance, as the Department of Energy and Climate Change in the UK), which would develop the idea of recently created the Interagency Working Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development. Of course, quite obviously, attention to the problem will rise significantly if President Putin will become more proactive and explicit in his rhetoric on climate change issues (at least in the way Medvedev did by clearly articulating Russia's GHG emission reduction goals and attending international conferences).

Another possible solution brings us back to the specific characteristics of the Russian media system. As Yasen Zasurskiy (2004) states, the Russian media system is one of the very few media systems in the world where the state plays such a significant role. Perhaps, in the case of climate change another way to solve the problem of media covering climate in a certain way (or not covering it) is to look at it from different angles and take it to the level where the coverage does not contradict the 'consent' amongst the elites. For instance,

to talk about climate change on a personal level of how people can contribute to the fight against climate change, or on the contrary bring it to the international arena, and talk about climate change considering how it might improve or damage Russia's image and international relations.

For instance, Russia has a unique position in being part of key international organisations such as the G-8 (which includes highly developed countries with vast interests in climate change negotiations),⁹² but also belonging to industrialising countries' organisations such as the BRIC (the actors with an ambivalent stance on climate change mitigation policy) and, finally, being one of the biggest energy exporters, it can relate with energy-rich developing countries (which are mostly extremely sceptical or even hostile to the negotiations on GHG reduction goals) (Bagirov and Safonov 2010). So, in this sense Russia could be portrayed as an ambassador for the conflicting sides involved in the climate negotiation process. This is basically what Russian media has already been trying to do but in a very restricted way. Of course all of these issues are also political and to some extent controversial. However, hypothetically they allow media actors to present the topic in a less divisive way where attention is removed from the state and the issues are discussed from a personal point of view or in a way that is beneficial for Russia.

In conclusion, in order to popularise the climate change topic in Russia, the media could not only focus on the powerful domestic actors but also at other levels of analysis. For example, Yanitsky states that 'Russian society today needs a strategic dialogue with Europe' (2009: 764), and he also sees this as a way to bring the environmental debate in Russia to the next level: 'the dialogue should be taking place on continental as well as regional and local levels'.

Climate change as economic news

The next possible way to improve media coverage of climate change is strongly connected with the previous one, since it once again involves the state,

⁹² For example, members of the EU with a strong pro-climate change mitigation policy.

but this time from the perspective of its close ties with the country's economic system. As Uporova (2012) states, 'editors-in-chief do not like social topics, if nothing particularly interesting is happening in there. That is why you [journalists] need to trick them – to present environmental information as, let's say, an economic one' (seminar presentation, Chermal, 13 August 2012). Moreover, many researchers argue that the common misperception among the people in charge of the climate policy is that they treat the problem as purely environmental and keep it separate from economic issues. They do not see the dual direction of the climate mitigation programmes, which do not just allow for solving the problem of climate change but also stimulate energy efficiency programmes, development of renewable energy and so on (Bogdan et al. 2009).

This idea of Russia being able to gain a double benefit by following climate change mitigating policy through economic growth and achieving environmental development has been discussed in chapter four as well as how this approach is becoming more pronounced in the statements of the state officials picked up by the media (see chapter five). Perhaps, even more reinforcement should be made in this direction, since it seems to be the least controversial and contradicts the interests of neither the state and industry, nor of the environmentalist and scientific communities. As the director of the Centre of Environmental Policy, Vladimir Zakharov suggested, 'We need to understand that for the next 20 years nobody will be able to operate their economies without fossil fuels, so nothing threatens Russia's economic interest and Russia will keep fulfilling its mission of providing these services. Now we need to start thinking how we can provide environmental services and get investments in the "greening" of our economy' (interview, Moscow, 21 July 2011). In this case the exploitation of the idea of Russia being a 'Great Ecological Power' or an 'environmental donor' (see chapter four) could be especially beneficial. Such as since the state policy in improving energy efficiency would tremendously contribute to the state's and world's carbon emission reduction goals, in this sense, Russia would really lead the way in climate mitigation policy (rather than keep referring to its involuntarily emissions' drop).

The NGO activist, Yulia Yevtushok of Oxfam-Russia, shared her experience of changing the approach to the problem of climate change:

Through our [unfortunate] experience in working on climate change problems in Russia we realised that we should not be so direct with this topic since it does not work. So, now we are working through the problem of food security and we already can see that it is much easier to get to people [including journalists] through this topic, which is also affected by climate change, but is more tangible (interview, Moscow, 22 July 2011).

So, food security would be another economic and social topic which is also connected with climate change, but, perhaps, easier for the media and general public to comprehend and relate to. Finally, another potential economic side of the climate change problem which also would be relatively easily popularised by mass media is carbon trading, for which Russia has great capacity, especially, if it follows a policy of energy efficiency and development of the renewable energy sources as discussed earlier. 'Being realistic, I should admit that as soon as carbon trading starts developing in Russia, journalists will follow the money. For instance, look at the experience of the serious federal newspaper *Kommersant*: they usually write about climate change in terms of some economic problems. I think most of the media outlets can adopt the same strategy', - Dobrovidova, correspondent at the *RIA Novosti* (interview, Moscow, 20 July 2011). However, Russia's exit from the Kyoto-2 makes the fate of carbon trading in the country unclear (though there is some possibility of developing the national carbon trading market).

In summary, the economic 'card' could arguably be the strongest one in attracting more attention from the Russian media to climate change. As Zakharov stated 'now that economic growth is working on us [Russia], the richer we will get the more attention will be diverted to environmental problems' (interview, Moscow, 21 July 2011). Also, if the topic is approached from the position of potential benefits or elimination of losses, then it will not contradict the wishes of either the state or business elites.

Publicising Russian science

Until a few years ago the Russian scientific community was creating additional barriers in the way of popularising the climate change mitigation policy. Mandrillon characterises their performance during the Kyoto ratification process as follows: ‘scientists have not only failed to issue any warnings but, when their opinion has officially been sought, they have expressed opposition to the Kyoto Protocol’ (2008: 143). On the other hand, one of the reasons behind the positive change (in a quantitative and qualitative sense)⁹³ of coverage of climate change issues in Russia is attributable to the shift in the role scientists played in addressing this problem. This shift was signified by the appointment of the climate change advisor to the President in 2009, or by Russian scientists’ contributions to the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report on Climate Change in 2007, which included the most up-to-date information on climate change and its consequences in Russia (Bogdan et al. 2009).

Furthermore, climatologists have become more proactive in communicating their knowledge on the subject and making it more accessible for the wider public including journalists. A successful example of scientists’ attempts to share their information on climate change is the launch in April 2009 of a monthly electronic newsletter ‘Izmenenie Klimata’ (‘Climate Change’) by Roshydromet. According to the editor of ‘Izmenenie Klimata’, Dr. Pavel Vargin (email communication, April 2013), the idea to create the newsletter ‘was in the air’ for a while – ‘to improve the communication of climate change risks is an acute problem for all countries including Russia.’ Vargin notices that ‘often you can see in the mass media pseudo-scientific discussion about climate, hence, we try to publish opinion and comments of the most prominent scientists in the area of climate change from Roshydromet, Russian Academy of Science and so on’. As the founders of the newsletter state, its main purpose is to communicate complicated messages about climate

⁹³ Once again it should be noted that the positive qualitative and quantitative trend in media coverage of climate change is not understood in the sense that the media should start to publish more articles in favour of taking action toward climate change but maintain its rudimentary level of analysis. Instead the positive change is the one signified by the more sophisticated and knowledgeable understanding of the problem.

change to the broader public and raise general awareness and understanding of the problem. Anyone, whether a journalist or an ordinary person interested in climate change affairs, can subscribe to it for free. Currently the newsletter has 435 subscribers, including various academic organisations, NGOs, international organisations, foreign diplomatic missions in Russia, and (particularly important for this research) the Russian central and regional mass media (Roshydromet 2012). During the fieldwork for this project several respondents (journalists and representatives of NGOs) noted that this newsletter had been of great use to them, and that they would like to see more initiatives like that coming from the scientific community.

Despite the increase in such positive practices by scientists, another obstacle to improving the media coverage of climate change needs to be addressed. As was discussed in chapter four for a long time Russian science was dominated by climate change sceptics. However, after the change happened the voices actively supporting recognition of the anthropogenic character of climate change and the necessity of its urgent mitigation became more evident and in some cases even went to the other extreme. For example, a journalist of the newspaper *Svobodnyy Kurs*, Tamara Dmitrienko, said 'I was at one seminar where a host was constantly referring to Al Gore's movie [An Inconvenient Truth]. He was convincing us of one point of view, which I did not like. I think they should not adjust facts but present various arguments' (interview, Barnaul, 13 August 2011).

A climate change reporter for the Russian news and information agency *RIA Novosti* noted that journalists try to give an opportunity for sceptics to share their point of view in order to write a more balanced (objective) article (Olga Dobrovidova, interview, Moscow 20 July 2011). The problem of journalists' desire to cover climate change in a balanced manner and to what consequences it leads has been widely discussed in the literature (see chapter one). In the Russian case this problem should be addressed in a more cautious way due to the state's history of climate scepticism and also with the state history of the very open propaganda of the Soviet time, in which case the presentation of one point of view might lead to its total rejection. Hence this

problem could be solved through the improvement of journalists' ability to evaluate scientific controversies.

In conclusion, the importance of the role of experts in this topic cannot be underestimated, and it was stressed on many occasions by journalists themselves. For example, the editor of the newspaper 'Priroda Altaya' Sergey Malykhin said that in order to write about climate change, journalists do not have to become experts themselves, but they just need to have a reasonably good understanding of the issues, know the main trends and the expert community' (interview, Chermal, 14 August 2011).

Environmental NGOs as spokespeople for climate change

Environmental NGOs became one of the best sources of information during the field work conducted for this research project. Due to the specifications of their work they had a vast knowledge on the various aspects of Russia's climate change policy, such as the position of the state, business, science and of course their experience of working with journalists. As the experts of the Russian Regional Environmental Centre confirmed, NGOs play a great role in educating people and disseminating information. Furthermore, NGOs see themselves as at the centre of interactions between various actors of the climate change policy, 'as a unique keeper of climate information in Russia' (Bogdan et al. 2009). However, as media analysis (chapter five) demonstrated even though NGOs are the third popular source of information for journalists writing on climate change, they lag quite far behind and overall they are mostly dominated by two influential NGOs: WWF-Russia and Greenpeace Russia.

Nevertheless, environmental NGOs indeed serve as a 'unique' source of information on climate change, or at least on how to find this information. Quite often members of NGOs themselves become, or already were, academics or they integrate the scientific community in their work or collaborate together on the problem.

Oleg Yanitsky (2009), drawing on 20 years of research on environmental movements in Russia, classifies scientists involved with the work of the NGOs into five categories: neutral, aware, involved, partner and fully integrated. In

sum, 'neutral' scientists only provide some expertise for certain projects. The scientists who fall into the 'aware' category in addition to sharing their knowledge on the subject also get concerned with the problem. The type 'involved' is relevant to scientists who remain affiliated with their academic institution but also share the NGO's ideas and even take part in their actions. The fourth type, 'partner', brings collaboration between the scientist and the NGO to the next level and in this case scientists are officially affiliated with academic institutions but also with the NGO. The final type, 'fully integrated', characterises scientists who no longer work in academia but are fully employed by the NGO.

There is no data on how many scientists are involved with the NGOs working on climate change issues in Russia, and at what level. For instance, Podgorny from Greenpeace Russia shared the experience of initiating a Greenpeace project on climate change together with scientists, but they struggled to find scientists who will cooperate. The problem was that when scientists find out that they will have to work with Greenpeace, they were very cautious. As Podgorny said 'they just did not know much about us and thought we only throw paint at fur coats' (interview, Moscow, 27 July 2011). It seems that in the interest of promoting the topic in the media, collaboration between these two groups [scientists and activists] needs to be at least at the third level of Yanitsky's classification. In this case it could be suggested that science and the NGOs might become one unified and consequently stronger voice in their communication with the media and will illuminate possible problems. There is the possibility of another problem arising – the merger between the scientific and activist communities might compromise the objectivity of the scientific information.

Another problem which at the moment stops the NGOs from being a stronger voice in the climate change discourse is their ambiguous relations with the state. On the one hand, activists themselves share their negative experiences of trying to communicate with state officials involved in climate change policy (even if it is just to get access to the Russian official delegation at the international conferences on climate change) (various interviews, 2011). On the other, state officials acknowledge the existing problems, such as during

Medvedev's speech at the conference 'Rio+20'. The former president stated: 'there are around 80 environmental NGOs in Russia [...] but of course it is not easy to work with them: environmental organisations are *difficult* partners, but because of this the state needs to support them' (Medvedev 2012).

Perhaps the NGOs are considered '*difficult*' because they are one of the few groups of Russia's civil society who constantly question and try to scrutinise the government's performance. As an example, Medvedev's speech at the 'Rio+20' and overall Russian performance at the conference⁹⁴ were described by the NGO 'Ekologicheskaya Vakhta po Severnomu Kavkazu' (Environmental Watch in the North Caucasus) (2012) as a total failure. On their website the NGO's activists published an article under the title 'At the Summit "Rio+20" Russia became one of the countries unable to make environmentally responsible decisions.' In the subheading they go even further by directly insulting the newly appointed Prime Minister: 'Dmitry Medvedev *lied* to the international community about Russia's successes in the sustainable development sector.'

Unfortunately, sometimes the NGOs themselves act as a barrier in disseminating knowledge on climate change by being resistant to communicating with journalists – 'I often fight or argue with our journalists, because they often call when some disaster happens and ask us what does it mean and what to do, in this case I re-direct them to the Ministry for Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters, because with us [environmentalists] they should talk about how to prevent these disasters, not what to do when they have already happened' (Anonymous source, interview, Moscow, July 2011). The frustration of this environmental activist can be understood, since it seems rather useless in some cases to talk

⁹⁴ At the UN conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) which took place from 20 June 2012 until 22 June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) (*RIA Novosti* 2012b), Dmitry Medvedev acknowledged once again the necessity to develop sustainable economic models which will allow for neutralising the environmental threat. He also reported that Russia is successful with its commitments to the Kyoto Protocol and that GHG emissions will be reduced by 25 percent by 2020 (of the level of 1990) and that Russia expects the same from other countries and will participate in a global agreement only if all countries will take part in it (Medvedev 2012).

about a disaster which has already happened and when there is nothing that can be done by the NGO to fight its outcomes, whilst at the same time the NGO's messages of warning are ignored by mass media. It could also be seen as a wasted opportunity to attract and maintain journalists' interest in the subject, especially, if the topic is connected with global climate change (a prolonged process) which is characterised by the numerous natural disasters and which requires constant attention.

In conclusion, the NGOs indeed have great potential for popularising the problem of climate change in Russia and they have already been doing so for many years in the forms of special conferences, events, seminars, trips to places where consequences of climate change can be observed and so on. However, there are still multiple problems which to some extent could be solved through enhancing communication links between the NGOs and other actors involved in the process of disseminating information on climate change.⁹⁵

Concluding remarks

The application of the PrM to the Russian case of media coverage of climate change has demonstrated the theoretical validity of this approach. Russian journalists write about climate change not because they were commanded to do so, but because the environment in which they operate everyday is constructed in a way that the 'manufacturing of consent' happens 'naturally'.

The main difference which was observed between the original analysis of the US case study and the analysis of Russian climate change coverage is the different position of the state. In the US case both economic and state elites were a vital part of the context created. However, the hierarchy between these

⁹⁵ For an extensive study on the environmental NGOs in Russia consult Laura Henry (2010b) *Red to Green: environmental activism in post-Soviet Russia* and David Feldman and Ivan Blokov (2012) *The Politics of Environmental Policy in Russia*, which outline, on the basis of extensive empirical evidence, the major problems environmental NGOs face in their work and also how they cope with them and adjust to the existing political, economic and social environment.

two groups was not determined. In the Russian case, the state is clearly at the top of the hierarchical ladder. The state dominates media discourse and plays a significant role in elite consensus. Hence even though modern mass media in Russia need to operate according to the logic of the free market, before the economic factors 'take off' and start to take part in shaping media messages, the information passes through state elite consensus. This is evident in the case of climate change when the state slightly changed its stance on the problem and finally publicly acknowledged the anthropogenic character of climate change and Russia's commitments to GHG emissions reduction goals, the climate change topic has entered the media discourse with the overarching message of Russia's leading position in the international negotiation process and a 'win-win' situation for the state.

With regards to the specific PrM filters, it has been concluded that in the case of media coverage of climate change in Russia, not all filters are equally useful in explaining the particularities of the media activity. For example, newspapers with different ownership structures, advertising policies and political stances did not show significant differences in their approach to the problem. However, with the analysis of the 'sourcing' filter it became quite clear that the coverage follows the agenda of the information sources used in the articles which are, in turn, dominated by official Russian sources. Another specification of the studied case which led to the modification of the PrM, is that the climate change topic in Russia has not reached the same level of controversy and popularity as in other countries, hence, the 'powerful elites' do not invest much effort or time in controlling or adjusting coverage.

Besides the biased coverage of climate change in Russian newspapers and the absence of any critique of the elites' position on the problem, the PrM has allowed us to see the clear omission of the topic from media discourse. 'Climate silence' was demonstrated by the small number of articles published on the subject, through the interviews with people involved in these processes and by the data presented in public opinion polls. It has been argued that the topic was involuntarily removed from the public discourse since it did not fall into the sphere of elites' interests, hence we can talk about the 'third dimension

of power' which does not refer to the 'decision making' or 'non-decision making' processes but rather describes the situation where the social system is organised in a way that the interests of the powerful elites are met effortlessly.

The specifications of the climate change topic itself have also influenced the applicability of the PrM. It was argued that after media information passes the greater barriers created by the state and economic elites, further on the micro-factors start to be important. Journalists still have to find a way to access complicated information, to understand the various arguments on the subject, to make it appealing for the audience and to be able to maintain the audience's interest in the prolonged problem of global environmental change.

Finally, Herman and Chomsky (1998) believed that the media system which is restricted and twisted in many ways by the elites is still capable of some change and dissent and the interested parties, such as grassroots movements or other members of civil society, are capable of finding the loopholes in the system and affecting it. In the case of media coverage of climate change in Russia these possibilities can be presented in the following ways: since open critique of the government is risky and undesirable, the discussion could be brought down to the local level or raised to the international level; the economic benefits of climate change mitigation policies could be popularised; and the scientific and activist community need to become more vocal and find ways of cooperating with each other and other interested parties. Most of these practices have already been taking place for a couple of years, however, in order for Russia to bring the discussion of climate change to the next level, they need to be developed further.

CONCLUSION

For almost 70 years in Russia political, economic and social life was determined by the communist nature of the state, where a centrally planned economy was managed by a one-party government whilst the mass media and other social institutions served the interests of the ruling elite by defending and propagandising the ideals of communist society. While the methods of building and sustaining this political regime were openly criticised by the West and sometimes silently questioned by Russian citizens, in general hardly anyone would be surprised to find out that *Pravda* would not publish journalists' investigations on issues such as the CPSU's budget policy or that Western Europe provided better welfare than the USSR.

After the split of the Soviet Union, it was expected that with the fall of the old regime Russia would move to become a liberal democratic state, however, instead of this the state fell into a 'grey area'. Russia is qualified as a democracy, but as one with a 'managed' or 'illiberal' nature. It is a capitalist state but the scale of state interference and the level of corruption often intercept the invisible hand of the market. The protection of human rights is not always ensured due to the faults in the state's legal system. Finally, the long awaited freedom of speech, which at the birth of the new state was recorded in the Russian Constitution, is questioned on a regular basis especially as a result of the murder of prominent journalists, the threatening of their lives, forceful closure of media outlets and financial sanctions towards the 'Fourth Estate'. In the modern Russia mass media have also become participants of the free market economy and have to adjust to market mechanisms. However, it is not always clear when the media is guided by external actors and is being censored or suppressed, or when it is just following the logic of the free market and fitting within the new capitalist society. In order to understand the ways the Russian media operate it has been suggested that the PrM developed by Herman and Chomsky in 1988 should be applied.

The PrM belongs to the political economy of communication studies and recommends analysing media systems within the broader politico-societal context within which they exist. Throughout their case studies Herman and

Chomsky debunked the myth of the liberal nature of the American mass media and the 'watchdog' role in the democratic society and proved the legitimacy of their model. Despite their empirical testimonies for many years Herman and Chomsky's study was contested or neglected by the broader academic community. Amongst the reasons for critique, some scholars shared a concern about whether the PrM can be applied in different geographical and political contexts and whether its postulates will be re-affirmed if a different subject of the media coverage will be analysed. In this sense, studying the Russian media system through the filters of the PrM and analysing the media coverage of climate change in Russian newspapers allows us to test the theoretical validity of the PrM.

According to Herman and Chomsky, the main argument of the PrM states that media 'consent' is manufactured by the elites through the implication of a straightforward system of five filters which embrace major factors influencing the media production process. The filters look at the media ownership structure, the influence of the advertising market, their dependence on information sources, who react to the media messages and in what way ('flak'), and how the dominant ideology of the state constrains media activity. The application of the PrM to the Russian case broadened the theoretical debate on the controversial study of Herman and Chomsky. In turn the PrM has allowed for the identification of the main actors and factors influencing climate change coverage in Russia and provided a new tool for the analysis of the communication of environmental risks in the post-Communist society.

Climate change is one of the biggest and the most ambiguous challenges for the world, bringing together science, politics, economics and people who are directly influenced by its consequences. In Russia the climate change topic becomes even more complicated since according to the most recent data the country is extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change, but also it finds itself amongst the largest GHG emitters in the world which occasionally has made it one of the key figures during the international negotiation process (for instance in the Kyoto Protocol). Russia 'earned' its high status of being one of the biggest contributors to climate change due to the fact that its

economy heavily relies on the extraction and export of fossil fuels and in general the Russian economy is extremely carbon intensive (due to climate conditions and the obsolescence of its infrastructure). To make the case even worse the Russian energy industry is closely connected with the state to the extent that it becomes virtually impossible to separate the state from business interests where climate policy is concerned.

Furthermore, Russia inherited the 'Soviet legacy' of neglecting environmental problems and sacrificing the environment to economic development. In the late 1980s and early 1990s for a short period of time environmental issues moved up on the Soviet/Russian agenda, however, after two decades of major political transformation which included economic decay and social destabilisation they were pushed down again. For a long time (and still to this day) economic development became the priority, placing all other problems and especially environmental ones, to the background, leading to the policy of 'de-environmentalism'. All of these factors are important because as the PrM argues media coverage is directed by the consensus achieved amongst the political and economic elites of the country. To predict the direction of media coverage of climate change in Russia, we need to know the priorities of the main actors involved in the climate policy.

The application of the PrM filters to the Russian case has demonstrated that the Russian media production process is heavily influenced by external actors. The state and big industries (with close connections to the state) own major media outlets in Russia, they dominate the advertising market, Russian journalists often rely on official sources in their pursuit of information, the state often becomes the monopolist in the production of 'flak' or negative reaction to media messages and, finally, as already mentioned the regime or dominant ideology of Russia is classified as an 'illiberal' democracy where powers often get abused. In this sense it can be argued that the PrM is very much suited to explain media production processes in Russia and why they get influenced and even managed by the consensus among elite groups. However, the analysis of media coverage of climate change in Russia has demonstrated that in this particular case, the situation is not that drastic. Journalists are not

killed for writing about GHG emissions, newspapers do not have quotas on how many articles they should produce on climate change and Russia's climate policy is not classified information. Furthermore, the coverage is not significantly altered depending on differences in newspapers' ownership structures or advertising policies. At the same time we can see how the media follow the state's position on climate change policy – this is particularly obvious when considering the analysis of the 'sources of information' filter which has been dominated by official Russian sources (especially after the change in state policy towards becoming more pro-active in climate change mitigation).

The correlation between the state's climate policy and journalists' interests towards the topic was also re-affirmed during the interviews with experts working in the media or with the media. Indeed, until a few years ago the problems were not on the agenda of the Russian government and were addressed only at international negotiations in order to receive some benefits from external actors, whilst at the domestic level climate change was often ridiculed and its anthropogenic character was not accepted. At the same time media coverage and media interest towards climate change issues were practically non-existent. It has been argued that the state has succeeded in removing the issue from the agenda, or in other words, it has successfully exercised its 'third dimension of power'. Thus, it did not force journalists to write or not to write about the problem, but since the state acts as a 'main newsmaker' on the topic and due to its reluctant attitude towards climate change, this issue did not even enter public discourse.

A few years ago (around the time of the Copenhagen Conference in 2009), attention to the problem had risen on both sides – the state and the media. The most important change was the official acknowledgement of climate change and its anthropogenic origins and the announcement of Russia's commitments to GHG emissions reduction goals. Arguably, these changes in the state policy were motivated by the realisation of the economic benefits of following a low emission policy. Russia has a great capacity to cut its carbon contribution to climate change and at the same time keep developing and

modernising its economy. This approach has been described as 'climate pragmatism', where the environment is still assessed from an economic point of view, however, this time it leads to a pro-environment oriented economy. In the media the change was signified by an increase in coverage on climate change and the appearance of journalists specialising on the topic. Which once again brings us to the authors of the PrM, who on multiple occasions stated that the system they described was not a totalitarian one and the PrM does not suggest that the media are openly managed by the ruling elite, but rather the 'manufacturing of consent' happens unintentionally. Journalists willingly follow the rules of the game, or in our case they follow the lead of their most important 'source of information' without any specific orders from the top: 'journalists are not paid by somebody to report climate change news in the way they do (that climate change is made by space aliens or we are all doomed), but they do it because they write what they are interested in [or because it sells]. It is not a political order. And to be honest if something indeed was "ordered", it would be impossible to prove it (as happened in the case of Andrey Illarionov⁹⁶)' (Kokorin, interview, Moscow, 27 July 2011).

Indeed the PrM does not assume some kind of conspiracy, but rather helps to reveal how the major forces influencing the media work. Other factors do play their role, but predominantly they are overshadowed by 'elite consent'. Coming from this proposition, it was suggested that in the particular case of climate change coverage in Russia the state elites serve as the initial barrier or even motivators or de-motivators of the journalists' interest in the topic. Further on, economic factors play a part in shaping media discourse on the subject (journalists still need to consider how to sell their newspapers and also not to create unnecessary conflicts with their owners or advertisers (even though these factors matter to a lesser degree than state elites' interest in the topic)). If the topic falls in the sphere of interests of these elite groups then the micro-factors start to play their part and journalists begin to think about how

⁹⁶ Illarionov is famous for promoting his climate sceptic position and for years he actively lobbied against the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, some argued that his point of view was paid for by Western Hydrocarbon companies (see more in chapter four).

they have to deal with the problem. Hence, the changes described in the media coverage of climate change in Russia should not be simplified to the straightforward relations between the state and the media outlets. The journalists did mention that climate change as a topic dictates its own rules – it requires specialised knowledge, it has low appeal to the public as being a prolonged and intangible process, it takes extra time to find the right information sources and so on.

Overall, this research project has demonstrated the theoretical applicability of the PrM in the Russian case of media coverage of climate change issues. It has helped us to understand and explain the ways ‘consent is manufactured’ among Russian media on the subject of climate change. The limitations of the model were also re-discovered. For example, some filters of the PrM were not as powerful or did not show their influence (for instance, the ownership structure and advertising filters). The filters ‘dominant ideology’ and ‘flak’, though were useful to some extent, but their effects could be interpreted in different ways. In the case of ‘ideology’, it is unclear and quite debatable as to what ideology in Russia we are talking about and what impact it has. With regard to ‘flak’, journalists did not confirm that they face any kind of censorship when they write about climate change, however, they did admit that there is some degree of ‘self-censorship’ they are exposed to when working on any kind of issue. At the same time, the filter ‘sourcing’ was extremely useful and allowed us to confirm the important role of the state in media coverage. It can be argued that for future studies on media coverage (in perhaps any country), theoretical approaches such as the PrM (which belongs to the study of the political economy of mass media) are useful, since they allow us to identify the main political and economic factors involved in the controversies surrounding climate communication processes, but on the other hand, as Herman and Chomsky mentioned themselves, the model does have to be adjusted according to each particular case study.

In conclusion, the Russian media system still is in a state of great dependency on the government and often has to play by its rules, adjust its content or to pay the price. In the case of climate change, the media are not

'ordered' to write about environmental change, but rather they just follow the interests of the 'main newsmaker'. Naturally, this seems to be a negative situation, where the media do not question state performance (such as its extremely weak domestic policy on climate change) but rather re-state the elites' vision of the problem that Russia has great potential to become an environmental donor and, as Medvedev claimed before the Copenhagen Conference, 'we will win, no matter what'. As previous studies on media and climate change have shown, sometimes unrestrained media coverage of climate change can be counterproductive. There is the possibility of the abuse of alarmist messages, controversy, and tendency to cover the problem in a supposed-balanced way by providing too much space to climate sceptics and so on (even though they are very much a minority in the scientific community). The Russian case demonstrates that following a single actor is likely to result in greater orthodoxy, the coverage becomes more coherent, but does it make it more adequate? As Bakhnov (interview, Moscow, 22 July 2011) put it: 'our main official TV channel reproduces the state's messages, which is not always bad. Many of Medvedev and Putin's decisions are good, they also understand that Russia needs to develop. But, in my opinion, they should sometimes step aside.' Naturally this tendency of the media following the state's lead on climate issues is somewhat dangerous since if the state policy will again become even more reluctant then the topic will disappear from the agenda as well.

Climate change is a problem which will not be solved in a few years' time and we will eventually understand this fact more clearly, as will the Russian government. Regardless of whether the Russian state will try to modernise its economy and attract more investments by making it more sustainable, positioning itself as an 'environmental leader' due to its vast reserves of natural resources and potential for carbon sinking (through its forest) or trying to reduce economic loss from the consequences of climate change due to its great vulnerability, there is an extremely small chance that the topic will disappear from its agenda and therefore from media discourse. Hence, it is up to civil society and the journalists themselves to find the loopholes in the system in order to diversify and improve climate change coverage.

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3. Belova, Valentina, Specialist in State Environmental Expertise, Department of Nature and Environmental Protection in Altay Region, 10 August 2011.
4. Berdin, Vladimir, Head of the Department of the Sustainable Development and Partnership at the Sustainable Energy Development Centre, Chermal, 13 August 2011
5. Boldyrev Oleg, Correspondent, BBC-Russia, Moscow, 25 July 2011.
6. Chouprov, Vladimir Manager of Energy Department, Greenpeace Russia, Moscow, 27 July 2011.
7. Chuguev, Mikhail, Chief Federal Inspector in Altay region of the Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of the Russian Federation in the Siberian Federal District, Barnaul (Skype interview), 4 April 2013.
8. Davydova, Angelina, Correspondent, Newspaper 'Kommersant', St. Petersburg (Skype interview), 7 July 2011.
9. Dmitrienko, Tamara, Correspondent, Regional Independent Newspaper 'Svobodnyy kurs' (Altay region), Chermal, 13 August 2011
10. Dobrovidova, Olga, Special Climate Correspondent, News Agency 'RIA Novosti', Moscow, 22 July 2011.
11. Dr. Dobrynin, Dmitriy, Moscow State University, Chermal, 14 August 2011.
12. Harrison, John, Climate Change Host, Voice of Russia (radio), Moscow (Skype interview), 18 June 2012.
13. Kharitonov Leonid, Head of the Department of Nature and Environmental Protection in Altay Region, Barnaul, 10 August 2011.

14. Dr. Kharlamova, Nataliya, Associate Professor, Geography Faculty, Altay State University, Barnaul (email communication), February 2012.
15. Kokorin, Alexey (PhD), Climate Change Programme Coordinator, WWF-Russia, Moscow, 27 July 2011.
16. Dr. Kolotov, Alexander, Manager of the Online Environmental Project 'Plotina.Net!', Krasnoyarsk (email communication), July 2011.
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20. Podgorny, Igor, Energy Efficiency Project Campaigner, Greenpeace Russia, Moscow, 27 July 2011.
21. Dr. Safonov, Georgiy, Director, NGO 'Centre of Environmental Innovations', Chermal (seminar presentation), 13-14 August 2011.
22. Salagina, Olga, Journalist, the TV News Program 'GTRK-Novosibirsk', Chermal, 13 August 2011.
23. Dr. Stetsenko, Andrey, NGO 'Centre of Environmental Innovations, Chermal, 14 August 2011.
24. Surovikina, Elena, PR consultant on environmental issues, United Nations Development Program in Russia, Chermal, 14 August 2011.
25. Uporova, Elena, Deputy Editor-in-Chief 'Fond Nezavisimogo Radioveshchaniya' (Fond for Independent Radio), Chermal (seminar presentation), 14 August 2011
26. Dr. Vargin, Pavel, Research Scientist in Laboratory of Experimental Middle Atmosphere Research of Central Aerological Observatory, Editor of

the Newsletter 'Izmenenie Klimata' ('Climate Change), Moscow (email communication), April 2013.

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