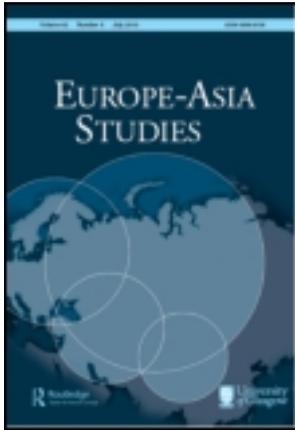


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# Russia's Climate Policy: International Bargaining and Domestic Modernisation

LAURA A. HENRY & LISA McINTOSH SUNDSTROM

## *Abstract*

This article accounts for the gap between Russia's weak initial implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and its more active engagement in climate policy during the Medvedev presidency. We examine the intersection of climate policy and broader efforts to modernise Russia's economy, drawing attention to synergies between domestic and international politics. We argue that international factors alone do not explain the change in climate policy as they have remained relatively constant. Instead, greater attention toward climate policy results from efforts to introduce new technologies and increase energy efficiency, spurred by the recent financial crisis and a shift in domestic policy priorities associated with the Medvedev presidency.

IN 2010 RUSSIA EXPERIENCED A RECORD SUMMER HEAT WAVE, drought, forest and peat fires, and a poor grain harvest. These factors inspired renewed attention to the potential damage threatened by climate change. Some observers have even declared this period Russia's 'climate moment'. At an August 2010 expanded Security Council meeting, President Dmitrii Medvedev appeared to agree. He remarked,

Everyone is talking about climate change now. Unfortunately, what is happening now in our central regions is evidence of this global climate change, because we have never in our history faced such weather conditions in the past. This means that we need to change the way we work, change the methods that we used in the past.<sup>1</sup>

The authors would like to thank Steinar Andresen, Kathryn Harrison, James Richter and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments. Any errors are the responsibility of the authors. The research for this article took the form of detailed comparative analysis of Russian government statements and policy documents on climate change and energy efficiency from 2000 through to 2010, Russian and international media analysis of government positions, official statements of Russian delegations to UN conferences on climate change, and (for the Kyoto ratification period) author interviews with responsible officials in the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Rosgidromet Agency, Ecological Committee of the Russian State *Duma*, and a number of Russian and international environmental NGOs and think tanks in June–August 2005.

<sup>1</sup>Website of the President of Russia, 'Speech at Expanded Security Council Meeting on Fire Safety Measures for Strategic Facilities', 4 August 2010, available at: <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/724>, accessed 11 December 2011.

In this article, we examine the evolution of climate-related policy in Russia's semi-authoritarian context. Despite the country's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in 2005, Russia has largely failed to develop a climate policy. The Russian Federation technically will meet its relatively lenient Kyoto 2012 emissions target, but has done little to implement the agreement, resulting in missed opportunities to further reduce greenhouse gases. During the recent past, however, the Russian government has taken a more active stance toward formulating a climate policy. We ask what explains the gap between Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and its weak implementation measures, as well as why the Russian government has taken a greater interest in climate policy since the middle of 2009. In answering these questions we point to synergies between domestic and international politics that could have far-reaching consequences for Russia's climate policy.

Ratifications of international environmental agreements take place in the spotlight of public attention and are often heralded as significant achievements for the fate of the environment. However, it is the drawn out, behind-the-scenes work to implement the agreement that determines whether or not the agreement will achieve its environmental goals. The Russian government played a significant role in international negotiations to address climate change. In 2004, Russia ratified the Kyoto Protocol, bringing the agreement into force despite the US decision not to participate—a victory for climate change advocates. Yet the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol at first did not result in serious attention to domestic climate change policy, as the issue was not a political priority under the leadership of the former president, Vladimir Putin. International incentives constructed to encourage Russian participation in the climate regime appeared to have relatively little effect.

At the global level, examining the period following ratification of the Kyoto Protocol we can see that the extent and strategies of implementation vary widely across states. For example, European Union member states are likely to meet their collective emissions reduction target under the protocol, relying in part on flexible mechanisms and credits for carbon sink activities; in contrast, in the last inventory report based on 2009 emissions, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions were almost 30% beyond its Kyoto target (European Environment Agency 2009; Environment Canada 2009). Some recent studies have aimed to explain these variations in comparative context, yet most examine climate change policy in democratic industrialised states (Lantis 2006; Busby & Ochs 2005; Zahran *et al.* 2007; Schreurs 2002; Dolšak 2001; Cass 2007; Harrison & Sundstrom 2010, p. 137). In contrast, the motivations for implementation in a semi-authoritarian context are less often tied to the preferences of the public or interest groups and are more dependent on the agreement's potential to reinforce the political priorities of key state actors.

In light of this, why has Russia's effort to implement climate policy changed over time? Most outside observers have focused on international factors influencing Russia's decision to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, citing Russia's hard bargaining for an easy emissions target under the protocol and diplomatic side benefits in return for ratification in order to explain Russia's actions (Andonova 2008; Korppoo *et al.* 2006; Spotts 2003).<sup>2</sup> We argue, however, that external factors are not sufficient to explain the

<sup>2</sup>Russia Traded WTO for Kyoto', *Izvestiia*, 21 May 2004.

state's behaviour in implementing the international climate agreement. International pressure has remained relatively constant or even declined during the recent global recession, while domestic attention to climate policy has changed over time. In the initial years following Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, the lack of active engagement in the treaty's flexibility mechanisms, despite clear benefits that would result from participating in them, illustrates Russian officials' low level of attention to implementation. However, during the recent Medvedev presidency changes in the domestic political and economic environment altered the incentive structure for actors in such a way that could make implementation of future climate change agreements more attractive.

We argue that climate change policy in Russia shifted from being driven largely by international incentives, with relatively little influence by proponents of a strong climate policy on post-Kyoto policy making, to being incorporated into a major domestic initiative to modernise the economy and increase energy efficiency. An intriguing set of factors has converged both domestically and internationally over the last several years to increase the government's interest in climate-related policies, even as Russia remains cautious about taking on the obligations of a new international climate agreement. There are signs that this confluence of circumstances led to the development of significant domestic policies that may control the growth of greenhouse gas emissions even as Russia's economy grows. At the international level, the lead up to the 2009 COP 15 Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change inspired a period of attention to climate change as a foreign-policy issue. Domestically, factors behind this change include efforts to construct a more competitive and innovative economy, intensified by the latest financial crisis, the desire to increase oil and gas reserves available for export, and a shift in domestic policy priorities associated with the term in office of President Medvedev and his efforts to somewhat differentiate himself from Putin. Paradoxically, if the reasons for cutting greenhouse gas emissions now remain rooted in similar domestic priorities, Russia may be more likely to develop its climate policy than it did when Russia was keenly focused on the international costs and benefits of participation in the Kyoto Protocol.

In order to examine and understand these changes in Russia's approach to climate-related policy, we first revisit existing theory on the relationship between domestic politics and international negotiations, including the 'second image reversed' framework and two-level game model, and point out its problematic application to semi-authoritarian cases such as Russia. We then compare Russia's negotiating position at the COP 15 Conference in Copenhagen with its earlier disengagement in the aftermath of the Kyoto Protocol. The sections that follow look more closely at climate policy after Kyoto and contrast that period with the flurry of measures on energy efficiency and joint implementation from 2009 to 2012. Next, we explain these changes based on shifts in the domestic political and economic environment that prompted the modernisation initiative and a greater interest in international climate negotiations, as well as strategic differences between Putin's and Medvedev's efforts to regain Russia's great power status. Finally, we note the limitations to Russia's commitment to emissions reductions and international climate treaty negotiations that are inherent in the country's domestically driven participation. Russia's self-interested domestic agenda may be an inadequate motivation to lead to a reduction in national

greenhouse gas emissions and a renewed commitment to an international climate agreement. Moreover, we acknowledge that the Russian leadership faces significant obstacles in achieving economic modernisation and increased energy efficiency, even with the added impetus of an international climate regime to spur action.

*The interaction of domestic and international factors*

In demonstrating the key role that domestic politics play in influencing treaty adoption and, ultimately, implementation, we incorporate theoretical concepts and arguments from both comparative politics and international relations. In the case of Russia, we argue that Medvedev strategically leveraged some foreign-policy sectors in service of his goal of modernising Russia's economy. The modernisation campaign indirectly implicates many policy issues with international significance, including climate change. As we demonstrate below, elements of the economic modernisation initiative have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by pushing the Russian economy to become more energy efficient and less dependent on natural resources. We argue, however, that the relationship between modernisation and climate policy goes beyond one of incidental spillover benefits for mitigating climate change from the drive for modernisation. President Medvedev also appeared to engage strategically in international negotiations over a climate agreement in order to further propel his modernisation agenda—to create greater interest, incentives and institutional commitments to mobilise domestic actors. When the opportunity arose, Medvedev attempted to create a synergistic issue linkage between international climate meetings and modernisation in order to increase the momentum behind his domestic agenda.

Existing literature on the intersection of comparative politics and international relations suggests that there is an interactive relationship between domestic and foreign policies, and the case of climate policy in Russia demonstrates how the relationship can shift over time, so that the relative weights of international and though domestic factors can vary. Scholars who embrace a 'second image reversed' analysis of the international and domestic politics nexus highlight how a state's responses to the incentives and constraints of the international system are driven by domestic political struggles and in turn affect domestic interests (Gourevitch 1978, pp. 905–7). In Russia, though domestic political battles are somewhat muted by the executive-dominated character of the regime in two senses. First, the most significant arena of competition is among elite political actors inside the government and happens out of public view along the lines of informal rather than official authority, and is difficult to research systematically (Ledeneva 2009; Kryshatanovskaya & White 2005). Second, the spectrum of actors who can realistically affect policy outcomes is constrained. In this case, environmental NGOs and many key Russian business interests advocated the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol—the former for its ecological benefits and the latter due to the investment opportunities built in to the agreement's flexible mechanisms—and these actors may grow more invested in climate-related policy over time as a result of engagement with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations and mechanisms (Andonova 2008). Yet the preferences of these interest groups did not appear to be a decisive factor in Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and were not

sufficient to lead to its active implementation or participation in mechanisms such as joint implementation. We argue that, while these experiences may help to build support for Medvedev's policies among significant domestic actors and shift their cost-benefit calculations, these gradual processes that have been taking place for over a decade are not sufficient to explain the sudden shift in policy priorities.

The model of a two-level game introduced by Putnam provides more directly applicable predictions. The metaphor of a two-level game suggests that political decision makers often attempt to reconcile domestic and international goals simultaneously, creating 'synergistic issue linkages', as we see in the Russian case (Putnam 1988, p. 460). In order to reinforce and advance a domestic agenda, political leaders may strategically tie international and domestic objectives. Thus, the influence of an international agreement may serve primarily as a means for the executive to bolster constituencies for domestic policy change (Putnam 1988, pp. 454–55). The effort to achieve domestic and international objectives may require political elites to reformulate the 'national interest' for domestic audiences. The two-level game argument suggests that international and domestic politics interact such that they mutually constitute each other, which would seem to overstate the power of international factors in the relationship we have identified. Instead, we make a narrower argument that when a strategic issue linkage between domestic and international priorities occurs, implementation of international agreements is more likely than when international factors alone motivate treaty ratification.

The evolving relationship between Russia's foreign and domestic policy on the issue of modernisation is one part of a strategic shift in thinking about how Russia might achieve its longstanding aspiration for great power status and the respect and influence that go along with it. This strategic shift requires a redefinition of Russia's national interest in many policy sectors, primarily economic, with secondary effects for climate policy. The financial crisis sharpened the urgency of these questions by threatening Russia's great power status and has spurred the strategic focus on modernisation. The creation of a more competitive, diversified and efficient economy also would make it more feasible for Russia to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The possibility of a less carbon-intensive economy enables Russia to play a more active and assertive role internationally on the climate change issue, enhancing the reputation and prominence of Russia as a negotiating partner. One might even argue that the domestic shift is what creates the conditions under which we might expect Russia's substantive engagement in climate issues, in contrast to the period after Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol during which relatively little action was taken to develop climate change policy.

As president, Medvedev was the most vocal proponent of this strategic shift. In this analysis, we argue that Medvedev's overarching goals did not differ substantially from those of his predecessor (and successor), Vladimir Putin—both leaders hope to regain the international stature that Russia lost in the 1990s and to guarantee steady economic growth—but that the means Medvedev proposed for achieving Russia's re-emergence as a great power were somewhat different. Tynkkynen argues that Russian elites have asserted three different visions of Russia as a 'great power' (or '*velikaya derzhava*' in Russian) with regard to climate policy: (1) Russia as a world leader with a prominent ecological mission; (2) Russia as a great power following its national

interest; and (3) Russia having a duty as a great power to help limit climate change (Tynkkynen 2010, p. 179). While Vladimir Putin asserted a traditional ‘great power’ national interest frame during his first iteration as president, emphasising the potential economic costs of Kyoto Protocol ratification and the side payments that Russia deserved as a result of participating, President Medvedev attempted to shift popular understanding of the national interest to climate as one aspect of more general modernisation. Pressure from a broad international consensus on the need to tackle climate change helped to bolster Medvedev’s agenda at home, as well as to reinforce the image he tried to project of himself as a liberal, modern, Western-oriented leader, in contrast to Putin.

As we argue that Medvedev’s domestic and foreign-policy agendas became intertwined in the area of climate policy, we do not want to overstate our case. The modernisation campaign may not endure. Indeed, if the past is any guide, the reform is likely to be bogged down in bureaucratic in-fighting and administrative inertia. Medvedev stepped aside in the 2012 presidential elections in favour of Putin’s return to the presidency; he may not be able to exert as much influence on climate policy from his position as prime minister, and Putin may not choose to continue the emphasis. Finally, we are not arguing that the Russian government is now a firm advocate of climate policy based on its own merits. While Medvedev publicly stated that the Russian government accepts that human activity contributes to climate change, there is still widespread scepticism about the issue in Russia. Russia’s progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and continued participation in international agreements is likely to last only as long as these measures simultaneously serve the goals of economic modernisation. Any redefinition of Russia’s national interest is unlikely to extend to policies that are seen as placing Russia at a competitive disadvantage against states such as the US, China, India and Brazil.

*Kyoto to Copenhagen: Russia’s engagement with international climate change policy*

In the period from the Kyoto Protocol agreement until the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP 15) in Copenhagen in December 2009, Russia was generally viewed as disengaged from international negotiations over climate policy. Media accounts in the months leading up to the international climate change talks in Copenhagen in December 2009 portrayed Russia as disengaged from climate change negotiations. Critics have pointed out that the head of the Russian delegation was not appointed until late November, and the Russian delegation did not articulate its position on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) or on mechanisms for financing policy efforts through the United Nations Conference of Parties (COP) (Luta *et al.* 2009, p. 20).<sup>3</sup> Aleksei Kokorin of WWF-Russia expressed concern that ‘the [Russian] delegation doesn’t have any real support’ from the government in Moscow (quoted in Digges 2009a).

Scepticism about Russia’s intentions toward negotiations in Copenhagen was linked to the country’s behaviour during the negotiation and debate over ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. When the Kyoto Protocol was being negotiated in the 1990s, Russia

<sup>3</sup>‘Moscow Prepares a Secretive Hand for Climate Talks—Report’, *ClimateWire*, 12 November 2009.

lobbied strongly for the most favourable and least stringent targets for itself, arguing that transitional economies deserved some flexibility in targets for greenhouse gas reductions (Kokeyev 2005; Henry & Sundstrom 2010, p. 108). In fact, the target that was designated for Russia to meet by the 2008–2012 Kyoto period was a 0% increase in its carbon dioxide emissions relative to 1990 levels. Once the United States government announced in 2001 that it would not ratify the treaty, Russia found itself in a position of being the only remaining Annex 1 state with a sufficient proportion of annual greenhouse gas emissions to bring the treaty into force. Thus, Russia held the trump card during negotiations and took full advantage of this position. The Russian government finally did ratify the protocol in November 2005, saving the agreement; but in the period from 2001 to the end of 2004, Russian government spokespeople gave varying signals about the state's intentions, at times doubting the scientific evidence for anthropogenic climate change or the seriousness of its consequences for the country, while at other times emphasising Russia's intention to ratify. Moreover, over those years the government used its key position to acquire international diplomatic concessions on other issues such as conditions of entry into the World Trade Organisation (Henry & Sundstrom 2010, pp. 105–37). Thus, Russia's eventual decision to ratify the Kyoto Protocol did not appear to be based on concern about the specific problem of climate change. Indeed, Russia's limited participation in the agreement's mechanisms, as described in the next section, demonstrated low attention to climate policy.

Yet around the time of the Copenhagen conference in December 2009, the Russian government again became somewhat more proactive in negotiating its stance. Before the conference, President Medvedev reiterated the three major points that form the basis of Russia's current negotiating position: first, that major economies must 'simultaneously make the necessary commitments' to tackle climate change; second, that 'commitments must not conflict with economic opportunities or, most importantly, the development priorities of each country'; and third, that the international community recognises that Russia 'is already a world leader in emissions reduction' due, in part, to the country's forests which absorb carbon emissions.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the Russian Federation entered the Copenhagen negotiations having taken a clear position on emissions targets in advance of the conference. President Dmitrii Medvedev committed Russia to limiting its emissions to 25% below 1990 levels by 2020, if other countries would do the same.<sup>5</sup> Russia's public pledge was made before those of states such as the US and China, the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases, which had not announced their commitments until just prior to the opening of the conference. In fact, Russia's commitment was a significant improvement over an earlier announcement that Medvedev made in June 2009 stating that Russia would cut emissions by 10–15% from 1990 levels by 2020 (Novikova *et al.* 2009, p. 1). Russia's commitment must be seen in light of its unique historical position, however. In 2009,

<sup>4</sup>Website of the President of Russia, 'Dmitrii Medvedev's Blog: World's Major Greenhouse Gas Emitters Must Simultaneously Make the Necessary Commitments', 14 December 2009, available at: [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/12/14/1947\\_type207221\\_223329.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/12/14/1947_type207221_223329.shtml), accessed 15 January 2010.

<sup>5</sup>'Russia's Carbon Credit Surplus Could Threaten Climate Pact', *Greenwire*, 30 November 2009; 'UN Officials Optimistic About "Political" Climate Pact', *ClimateWire*, 20 November 2009.

the most recent year of available UNFCCC data, Russia's greenhouse gas emissions were 57% below 1990 levels.<sup>6</sup> As long as 1990 remains the baseline, Russia can commit itself to seemingly generous reductions while leaving substantial room to increase greenhouse gas emissions.

Around the time of the Copenhagen conference, there were also domestic signs of growing government engagement in international climate policy. The government-run newspaper *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, typically viewed as reflecting the government's perspective, published a number of articles that promoted international mechanisms and agreements on climate change. In that newspaper just prior to the Copenhagen conference, Vladimir Sliviyak, leader of the environmental group Ecodefense (Ekozashchita), emphasised the economic opportunities of any effort to avert climate change, calling an international climate agreement a 'locomotive for renewing the economy, for development new types of businesses in which Russia today lags behind the rest of the world' (Shmelev 2009). The newspaper also published an editorial piece by Mikhail Gorbachev on 8 December 2009 that advocated decisive action to prevent climate change, although Gorbachev did not mention Russia's particular role (Gorbachev 2009). Most tellingly, the Federal Public Chamber, created in 2005 by the former president Vladimir Putin to represent Russian civil society, but heavily weighted towards voices sympathetic to the government, issued a statement advocating Russia's participation in international climate policy and emphasising the domestic benefits that such participation could entail. The Public Chamber stated: 'Russia, which is currently the leading energy power, should become an environmental donor and play a leading role in international negotiations on climate change. This will contribute to global progress, attract significant funds for reforming industry, energy efficiency, and the sustainable development of Russia . . .'.<sup>7</sup>

Although Russia appeared to be more actively engaged in climate negotiations in the run up to Copenhagen than in the past, Russia's actual influence at the COP 15 conference was characterised by some observers as 'minimal' (Filatova 2009)—perhaps not surprising given that disagreements between the US and China, and developing states and the West more broadly, generated the main obstacles to a comprehensive agreement. Russia was not included in the drafting of the final document, the Copenhagen Accord, which was hammered out by the United States, China, India, Brazil and South Africa. Some of Russia's concerns were implicitly acknowledged in provisions of the accord. For example, it recognises 'the crucial role of reducing emission from deforestation and forest degradation and the need to enhance removals of greenhouse gas emission by forests' (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2009). The accord did not set specific targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; delegates to the conference also did not formally adopt the accord, but simply 'took note' of it. Speaking to the press after the conference, Medvedev stated, 'Honestly, I am dissatisfied with the results of

<sup>6</sup>UNFCCC, 'Total Aggregate Greenhouse Gas Emissions of Individual Annex I Parties, 1990–2009 (including LULUCF)', available at: [http://unfccc.int/ghg\\_data/ghg\\_data\\_unfccc/items/4146.php](http://unfccc.int/ghg_data/ghg_data_unfccc/items/4146.php), accessed 15 May 2012.

<sup>7</sup>'Rossiya dolzhna stat' ekologicheskim donorom—Obshchestvennaya Palata RF', *RIA Novosti*, 7 December 2009.

Copenhagen. The result was “*pshik*,” an empty sound. Unfortunately, we could not agree. And, to be accurate, this is not the fault of Russia’.<sup>8</sup>

*Ratification with little implementation: Russia's climate change policy after Kyoto*

Despite Russia's engagement with climate issues in the period since the Copenhagen summit, Russia's climate policy record is weak. Policy making in Russia is frequently characterised by a significant gap between presidential rhetoric and the adoption of new laws, on the one hand, and implementation and enforcement of policies on the other (Kochtcheeva 2009; Kotov & Nikitina 2002). Following ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, Russia was slow to develop policy to allow participation in the agreement's flexible mechanisms. As one Russian commentator, Andrei Fediashin, critically depicted the situation:

Russia both signed and ratified the Protocol in 2005, but the treaty simply wasn't implemented in the country's territory. As often happens, we weren't able to prepare for its implementation in any respect. We didn't even develop the mechanisms for selling our CO<sub>2</sub> quotas in time, for which we could have received many multimillions in profit.<sup>9</sup>

The Russian government devoted little attention to developing broader policies to cut greenhouse gas emissions until 2009, after Dmitrii Medvedev came to power as Russian president, replacing Vladimir Putin as his hand-picked successor (Henry & Sundstrom 2010, pp. 105–37). This lack of attention indicates the degree to which Russian elected officials and bureaucrats did not see climate change as an important or urgent policy problem. The government issued a ‘National Action Plan on Kyoto Implementation’ in February 2005, but the plan was exceedingly vague, giving little sense of what policies the government would actually pursue. Russia also was slow to fulfil its international commitments. For example, the government did not submit a full national emissions inventory to the UNFCCC until early 2007 and was the last Annex 1 state to do so (Henry & Sundstrom 2010, pp. 119–20).

Early misgivings about Russia's participation in Kyoto's flexibility mechanisms focused on the country's huge number of emissions credits, some derived from so-called ‘hot air’—reductions that were primarily a result of Russia's post-Soviet industrial collapse rather than policies directed toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Many promoters of carbon trading feared that should Russia decide to sell these credits, the country potentially could flood the market and lower the price of carbon on the European Trading System.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to these fears, in 2008 the Russian government announced that it would cap emissions trading to only 300 million tonnes of carbon over the 2008–2012 period in order to ‘promote norms of ecological responsibility’ (Shuster 2008).<sup>11</sup> That is, Russia would avoid glutting the

<sup>8</sup>‘Konferentsiya po klimatu v Kopenagene zakonchilas’ “*pshikom*”—Medvedev’, *RIA Novosti*, 24 December 2009.

<sup>9</sup>‘Chem blizhe k Kopenagenu, tem trudnee dyshat’, *RIA Novosti*, 5 November 2009.

<sup>10</sup>‘Russia Reassures it Will Not Swamp Carbon Markets’, *Reuters*, 14 December 2009.

<sup>11</sup>‘Russian JI Framework Finalised—Almost’, *Carbon Finance*, 30 January 2008, available at: <http://www.carbon-financeonline.com/index.cfm?section=lead&action=view&id=10994>.

world market with cheap carbon credits that would facilitate states' and companies' abilities to purchase 'hot air' to delay or substitute for their own emissions reductions.

Furthermore, Russia dragged its feet in implementing even mechanisms that seem to offer the country significant material benefit, such as joint implementation (JI) projects and Green Investment Schemes. Joint implementation projects allow Annex 1 states to acquire emissions credits through investments that reduce emissions or enhance carbon sinks in other states. In Russia, procedures to allow domestic (Track 1) approval of joint implementation projects plodded through multiple draft cycles before finally being approved in May 2007 by government decree. That decree was amended in November 2009, with the major change being the appointment of Russia's largest bank, Sberbank, rather than the Ministry of Economic Development (MED), as the 'operator' entity that accepts JI project documentation, organises an expert council to adjudicate projects and executes JI transactions. MED, however, still provides final approval of projects and acts as a bureaucratic oversight body.<sup>12</sup> It also determines the appropriate sum of money paid and credits transferred for each project upon implementation. The reasons for this change were unclear, but the uncertainty engendered by glacial evolution of the necessary legislation and frequent bureaucratic reorganisations significantly slowed the approval of any JI projects using the Track 1 process for a long period. Finally in February 2010, Sberbank began accepting proposals for joint implementation projects. Thirty-nine proposals were received and the first 15 projects were approved in July 2010, valued at approximately \$3.5 billion and offering a potential 30 million Emissions Reduction Units (ERUs, the equivalent of one tonne of carbon dioxide reduced).<sup>13</sup> In late August 2010 the first of these projects, a new generator for a power plant outside Moscow, was sent to the UNFCCC Joint Implementation Supervisory Committee (JISC) for final approval.<sup>14</sup> In June 2011, President Medvedev expressed frustration with the slow pace of JI approvals, stating, 'We need to approve [the resolution to issue ERUs] as quickly as possible because the term of the Kyoto Protocol is in fact expiring and we have not done anything useful in this respect' (Kruppa 2011a). After that Sberbank accelerated its activities, announcing several more tenders for joint implementation projects before switching to an *ad hoc* approval process in October 2011 in order to speed up the issuance of credit. By early May 2012, the bank had approved 71 projects that would issue approximately 180 million ERUs and had another 66 projects representing 203 million ERUs in the application pipeline (Kruppa 2012a). This flurry of project approvals represents a clear acceleration from Russia's past inactivity, but far less carbon trading than many observers originally anticipated.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup>MED's responsibilities include reviewing expert council reports, managing an online registry of JI projects, and verifying the implementation of projects as a 'coordinating centre'.

<sup>13</sup>For a list of projects, see the Sberbank website, available at: <http://www.sbrf.ru/moscow/ru/concurs/2010/index.php?id114=11002977>, accessed 15 May 2012; 'Russia Approves New Projects for Kyoto Credits', *Reuters*, 27 July 2010.

<sup>14</sup>RF predstavila dlya mezhdunarodnogo utverzheniya pervy "kiotskii" proekt', *RIA Novosti*, 31 August 2010.

<sup>15</sup>Sberbank, available at: <http://sberbank.ru/moscow/ru/legal/cfinans/sozip/>, accessed 17 May 2012; Kruppa (2011b). By June 2012, there were in fact active government discussions of lifting the earlier approved 300 million tonne cap to allow increased emissions trading before the Kyoto period expired (Kruppa 2012b).

The UNFCCC JISC oversees the Track 2 approval process for projects. Russia is the host country for more than 106 JI projects in the JISC pipeline, representing nearly 60% of the ERUs proposed for Track 2 projects.<sup>16</sup> To date, however, there has been only one Russian JI project approved by the JISC's Track 2 procedure, in part because Russia failed to pay its United Nations dues for several years prior to October 2010 and was thus slow in its eligibility to obtain any approvals.<sup>17</sup> While time has passed during the long period of policy development and refinement, other East European states have become eligible for JI projects and had numerous projects approved and completed under both Tracks 1 and 2. For example, at the time of writing, Ukraine and Lithuania had received final verifications of emissions on a significant number of Track 2 projects (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Joint Implementation Supervisory Committee 2010b).

The fact that Russia has not, until very recently, participated more actively in international mechanisms that seem to offer significant material and ecological benefits is puzzling. Even climate change sceptics such as Yuri Izrael, the Director of the Institute of Global Climate and Ecology, Russian Academy of Sciences, expressed astonishment about this lack of activity. In an interview with a *RIA Novosti* correspondent, Izrael responded to a question about why Russia has not sold emissions credits, stating, 'It is unclear to me, too. They promised mountains of gold. When Putin ratified the Kyoto Protocol at the cost of tremendous effort, we did not even receive kopecks. And now we are not gaining' (Strong 2009).

As the clock winds down on the 2008–2012 period for the Kyoto Protocol, Russia's emissions remain well below its target, but Russia until very recently has not played a significant role in assisting other states' ability to achieve their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions targets through active use of flexible mechanisms or through the sale of AAUs and has only begun to take advantage of these opportunities. Ratification of the Kyoto Protocol did not appear to prompt Russian policy makers to prioritise—or even actively engage with—the issue of climate change domestically or internationally. In part, this lack of attention may be due to the role of external incentives that led to ratification and that provided externally generated templates for Russia's participation in the agreement. There were few domestic incentives for developing policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, the spectacular revenues that the Russian economy enjoyed during the years of peak oil prices in the 2000s undoubtedly rendered the potential income from Kyoto mechanisms relatively insignificant. However, recent evidence of new engagement with the Kyoto Protocol's flexible mechanisms indicates that the domestic political environment may have undergone a shift that made it more favourable to climate change policy.

<sup>16</sup>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Joint Implementation Supervisory Committee (2010a); United Nations Environment Programme Risoe, 'CDM/JI Pipeline Analysis and Database', available at: <http://cdmpipeline.org/>, accessed 16 May 2012.

<sup>17</sup>Russia's Sberbank Takes Bids for 30 mln CO<sub>2</sub> Credits', *Reuters*, 17 February 2010; Kruppa (2010).

*Domestic policy shift: modernising the economy, addressing climate change?*

Unlike the period of debate over ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, recent international climate negotiations occurred as Russia undertook a number of domestic policy initiatives related to economic modernisation. As president, Medvedev sponsored a series of policies aimed at increasing energy efficiency as an aspect of modernisation—policies that simultaneously may reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As we argue below, however, the momentum behind these new policies is largely a result of domestic concern about regaining and sustaining economic growth rather than concern about global climate change. Despite President Medvedev's promises in Copenhagen to be a leader in emissions reduction commitments, Russian government officials, including presidential assistant Arkadii Dvorkovich, continued to maintain their longstanding position that Russia is unwilling to sacrifice economic growth in the wake of the recent global financial crisis in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>18</sup> The economic modernisation agenda may provide the potential to address these seemingly contradictory principles. A leaner, more efficient economy may actually yield growth while cutting emissions, realising domestic and international goals simultaneously.<sup>19</sup>

Modernisation is a perennial theme in Russia's political discourse, echoing the past efforts at transformation undertaken by Peter the Great in the early 1700s, the Soviet industrialisation of the 1920s and 1930s, and even Gorbachev's *perestroika* programme. Prior to becoming president, Putin ordered the creation of a 'development strategy' for Russia, a document that was revised to become 'The Concept of Long-term Socioeconomic Development of the Russian Federation' in 2007. The concept document argues that Russia is too dependent on energy exports and envisions Russia's emergence as a global leader through modernisation, including the adoption of technologies from the West and the creation of new technologies (Kuchins *et al.* 2008, p. 5). As early as 2002, Vladimir Kotov identified 'modernisation' as a policy initiative that could have major implications for climate policy. Kotov differentiated among economic modernisation (2002, pp. 27–28), institutional modernisation—or reforms that simplify and minimise bureaucratic obstacles for firms and strengthen property rights (2002, pp. 28–30)—and the modernisation of the energy sector. However, Kotov warned that, despite Russia's efforts to modernise, climate policy is likely to remain 'subordinate' to economic growth and energy policy (2002, p. 37). This difference in emphasis recalls the distinction between the goals of ecological and economic modernisation in recent scholarship and implies that an agenda centred primarily on the latter form of modernisation may lead to only limited climate policy results. Scholars argue that ecological modernisation extends beyond a narrow focus on new technology and increasing energy efficiency. Instead, ecological modernisation is a process that includes transformative political and socioeconomic

<sup>18</sup>'Svoia doktrina blizhe', *Vzglyad*, 17 December 2009.

<sup>19</sup>Charap and Safonov (2010, p. 126) also recognise the link between climate policy and energy efficiency, although they note Medvedev's predilection for 'making grand, forward-looking speeches, most of which seem fanciful and generally produce little substantive change'.

changes and institutional capacity building that support improved environmental outcomes (Andersen 2002, pp. 1395–96; Kotilainen *et al.* 2008, pp. 60–61).

In his second term, Putin's rhetoric shifted to emphasise political stability as much as modernisation, as evidenced by the Kremlin's '2020 Strategy' and the admittedly vague 'Putin's Plan' which seemed to propose gradual change that would avoid political and economic upheaval (Skyner 2010, p. 1402; Trenin 2010). Dmitrii Trenin characterises this approach as 'conservative modernization' which envisions the maintenance of a strong state and traditional values in Russia (Trenin 2010). This has meant, in part, a lack of structural economic reforms to shift away from commodity dependence (Skyner 2010, p. 1402).

In slight contrast, modernisation and efficiency were themes of President Medvedev's administration almost from the moment of his inauguration in May 2008. Although he made only a passing reference to modernisation in his inaugural address, the goal of improving the efficiency, technological capacity and competitiveness of the Russian economy dominated presidential rhetoric thereafter.<sup>20</sup> In September 2009, Medvedev authored a widely read editorial entitled 'Go, Russia!', published online in *Gazeta.ru*, a news outlet that is sometimes critical of the government. In the article, he offered a negative assessment of Russia's current stage of development, including the country's 'humiliating dependence on raw materials'. As the first of five modernisation goals, Medvedev argued that Russia must 'become a leading country measured by the efficiency of production, transportation and use of energy'.<sup>21</sup> In his November 2009 annual speech to the federal parliament, Medvedev reiterated that point, stating, 'In the 21st century, our country again needs comprehensive modernisation . . . Instead of the primitive economy based on raw materials exports, we will build an intelligent economy producing unique knowledge, new goods and technologies useful to people' (Medvedev 2009). Medvedev also established a new Commission for Modernisation and Technological Development to coordinate the work of various state bodies.<sup>22</sup>

Medvedev's rhetoric was reinforced by new policies related to energy efficiency. On 4 June 2008, in one of his first presidential acts, President Medvedev signed a decree declaring the ambitious goal of reducing energy intensity of GDP by 40% by 2020, as compared to 2007.<sup>23</sup> The decree served as the basis for a law on energy efficiency which President Medvedev signed in mid-November 2009 (Government of the Russian Federation 2009a). The law includes a variety of energy efficiency measures to be implemented with deadlines between July 2010 and 2013, with greater emphasis on regulatory measures than voluntary incentives. In the regulatory range, the law

<sup>20</sup>Website of the President of Russia, 'Speech at Inauguration Ceremony as President of Russia', 7 May 2008, available at: [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2008/05/07/1521\\_type82912type127286\\_200295.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2008/05/07/1521_type82912type127286_200295.shtml), accessed 8 June 2010.

<sup>21</sup>Website of the President of Russia, 'Go, Russia!', 10 September 2009, available at: [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/09/10/1534\\_type104017\\_221527.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/09/10/1534_type104017_221527.shtml), accessed 16 May 2012.

<sup>22</sup>See Commission for Modernisation and Technological Development, available at: <http://state.kremlin.ru/commission/20/news>, accessed 16 May 2012.

<sup>23</sup>Website of the President of Russia, 'By 2020 the Energy Consumption of the GNP Should be Lowered Not Less Than 40% in Comparison with 2007', 4 June 2008, available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/313>, accessed 16 May 2012.

mandates the transition to use of only high-efficiency light bulbs and the installation of meters for water, heat and electricity consumption in all homes. It also requires manufacturers and importers to provide information on energy usage for all household electrical appliances and computer equipment. More significantly, the law obligates state-funded organisations to decrease their consumption of water, diesel, natural gas, coal and heating and electrical energy from 2009 levels by 3% a year for five years, with the financial savings from such conservation to be reinvested into the organisations' own spending budgets (including for salary increases). Among voluntary measures, the law provides for tax benefits and subsidies to encourage industrial enterprises to invest in energy-saving technology or manufacture energy-efficient products. It also designates authority to the Russian federal government to set regulations regarding energy usage limits for different classes of homes and buildings and stipulates that if builders have constructed or renovated a building with energy usage that exceeds government standards, the building owners are entitled to receive monetary compensation for the excess energy usage they have paid for. In June 2010 the Russian government budgeted more than \$17 billion for energy efficiency projects, including a project named 'Count, Save and Pay' to install electricity meters and the 'New Light' project to develop a supply of energy-saving light bulbs (Pyatokov 2010). The magnitude of energy savings these measures will yield towards the 40% reduction goal is unclear.

Other energy-related measures have been announced as well. In November 2009, the Russian government approved 'Russia's Energy Strategy through 2030'. The primary purpose of the strategy is to develop a plan for the 'effective utilisation of natural energy resources and the potential of the energy sector for steady economic growth'.<sup>24</sup> One of the major ways in which the strategy aims to achieve an effective energy system is through development of a market infrastructure for energy trade and development, in part through integrating Russian domestic energy pricing with world energy prices and introducing a competitive market environment domestically. The document outlines investment strategies encompassing more than \$1 trillion for projects that will increase the production of oil by approximately 10% and of natural gas by 33%. It also includes some energy efficiency measures. For example, the strategy calls for measures to modernise and stimulate greater efficiency in household energy provision. In August 2009, following the adoption of the draft of the document, Prime Minister Putin lamented the fact that due to inefficiencies in the supply of utilities to residential housing, 'we continue to "heat the street", as they say, which costs tens of billions of rubles' and he called for a 'special federal targeted programme of reforming and modernising the housing and utilities sector in the period until 2020'.<sup>25</sup> The Energy Strategy also advocates changing the structure of Russia's energy balance so that 'non-fuel power generation', such as nuclear power, hydropower and other renewable sources, account for 13–14% of production by 2030. Russia is currently constructing

<sup>24</sup>Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation, 'Energeticheskaya Strategiya Rossii na Period do 2030 Goda', 13 November 2009, Russian text available at: <http://minenergo.gov.ru/documents/zakon/>, accessed 13 November 2009; Paxton (2009).

<sup>25</sup>Government of the Russian Federation, 'Prime Minister Vladimir Putin Chaired a Meeting of the Government', 27 August 2009, available at: <http://www.premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/4805/>, accessed 16 May 2012.

nine new nuclear power plants.<sup>26</sup> In December 2009, President Medvedev announced that his government had set the even more ambitious goal of increasing nuclear energy to 25% of energy production.<sup>27</sup> Prime Minister Putin affirmed plans to expand the nuclear power sector even after the nuclear disaster at the Fukushima reactor in Japan.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the Energy Strategy's goal of moderately increased oil and gas production, the strategy holds some promise for decreasing greenhouse gas emissions since many of the planned gains in production would be reaped through minimising waste of hydrocarbon resources during extraction and refinement. Shifting to the use of renewable energy sources and increasing domestic prices to harmonise with world energy prices would also lead to decreased consumption of fossil fuels, although the document forecasts that domestic demand for oil will rise by 15–30% by 2030 and demand for natural gas will rise by 30–40% in the same period (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation 2009, pp. 4, 8). One of the points in the strategy calls for limiting the 'impact of the fuel energy industry on the environment and the climate' by decreasing emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases, dumping of polluted waters, production waste and energy usage.

New domestic initiatives with significance for climate policy continued to develop prior to the Copenhagen conference. A week before attending the conference, President Medvedev signed a new 'Climate Doctrine' for Russia, a document that does not have legal standing but did serve to make the government's position on climate policy more clear.<sup>29</sup> Prime Minister Putin had ordered the Federal Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring Service (Rosgidromet) to prepare the document in 2008 and environmentalists had repeatedly called for its adoption, but it languished until December 2009. The doctrine goes well beyond the Russian government's past equivocal statements about climate change, recognising that 'climate change is one of the major international problems in the twenty-first century' and acknowledging that human economic activity contributes to climate change.<sup>30</sup> The doctrine states that there are four main objectives of Russia's climate policy: to develop the scientific basis for climate policy; to develop and implement measures to adapt to climate change; to develop and implement measures to mitigate the human contribution to climate change; and to engage with the international community to address climate change. In March 2010, Medvedev once again linked climate policy and modernisation. He also framed climate change as an issue related to 'national security' and asked the

<sup>26</sup>Vybor RIA Novosti: glavnye ozhidaemye sobytiya-2010 v nauke i ekologii', *RIA Novosti*, 31 December 2009.

<sup>27</sup>Website of the President of Russia, 'Dmitry Medvedev's Blog: World's Major Greenhouse Gas Emitters Must Simultaneously Make the Necessary Commitments', 14 December 2009, available at: [http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/speeches/2009/12/14/1947\\_type207221\\_223329.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/speeches/2009/12/14/1947_type207221_223329.shtml), accessed 15 April 2011.

<sup>28</sup>Russia's Putin: No Threat of Global Nuclear Disaster', *Reuters*, 14 March 2011.

<sup>29</sup>Website of the President of Russia, 'Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation', 17 December 2009, available at: <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2009/12/223509.shtml>, accessed 16 May 2012.

<sup>30</sup>Website of the President of Russia, 'Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation', 17 December 2009, available at: <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2009/12/223509.shtml>, accessed 16 May 2012.

government to take the necessary steps to implement Russia's climate doctrine by October 2010.<sup>31</sup> A more specific 'action plan', entitled 'A Comprehensive Plan of Implementing the Russian Federation's Climate Doctrine for the Period until 2020', finally followed in April 2011, listing specific tasks for different state agencies, but it did not establish emissions targets (Government of the Russian Federation 2011). This flurry of policy making under the umbrella of economic modernisation constitutes Russia's most significant, albeit indirect, effort to address domestic greenhouse gas emissions to date.

*Explaining Russia's new direction in climate policy*

What has motivated this new direction in policy making on climate? Energy efficiency policies offer many potential benefits for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but climate concerns do not appear to be the government's primary motivation for several reasons. International incentives related to the Kyoto Protocol that have been in place for over a decade cannot explain recent shifts in policy; neither can pressure from major business interests which have generally remained pro-Kyoto since prior to ratification. A more nuanced explanation highlights the government's growing concern about the sustainability and competitiveness of Russia's natural resource economy—a concern which has been sharpened by the global financial crisis. Following Medvedev's inauguration in 2008, he articulated a shift in domestic and foreign-policy rhetoric concerning how Russia can regain its political and economic stature. Russia, Medvedev argued, needs more diversified economy, focused on innovation and technology. Yet while the country attempts to modernise, the economy still relies heavily on the export of oil and gas; greater efficiency and lower domestic consumption would free energy supplies for export. In addition, although the executive dominates Russia's political system, implementing this modernisation agenda is challenging. Any attempted systemic reforms are hampered by grinding bureaucracy and corruption.

As we argue below, together these factors contributed to recent interest in climate change policies in Russia, both at the domestic and international level. Domestically, there is a natural affinity between increasing energy efficiency for the purposes of modernisation and reducing the greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Internationally, President Medvedev used negotiations on a new climate regime as a means of reinforcing his modernisation agenda at home. Continued participation in an international climate regime creates opportunities for the Russian leadership and strengthens ties to key international actors such as the European Union. International commitments and domestic policies on climate may also serve to reorient bureaucratic actors to develop a greater stake in energy efficiency and bind them to new objectives and systems of evaluation. Implementation of the current climate regime creates possibilities for technology transfer and investment and engages constituencies which

<sup>31</sup>Website of the President of Russia, 'Opening Remarks at Security Council Meeting on Climate Change', 17 March 2010, available at: [http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/speeches/2010/03/17/1931\\_type82913\\_224806.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/speeches/2010/03/17/1931_type82913_224806.shtml), accessed 16 April 2012.

are crucial to modernisation—interested natural resource firms, entrepreneurs and young professionals.

The sustainability of Russia's economic development is the primary motivation for the government's concern with energy efficiency and economic competitiveness. Although Russia's economy had grown steadily, averaging 7% annual growth rates from 1999 to 2007, the economy contracted by 8% in 2009 due to the global financial crisis before returning to more modest growth of 4% in 2010.<sup>32</sup> The fear that economic recession and unemployment could cause social instability has been sharpened due to the global financial crisis (World Bank 2009). Russia also faces significant constraints on its future growth and stability if it is not able to diversify its economy. The World Bank identifies Russia's 'structural vulnerabilities' as 'dependence on the oil and gas sector, a narrow industrial base and limited small and medium-size enterprise sector' (World Bank 2009).

In 2006, Russia was responsible for more than 20% of global gas exports and lagged behind only Saudi Arabia in its oil production (Hartley & Medlock 2008, pp. 1–2). An IMF publication described the significance of these exports, stating, 'By 2008 the share of oil and gas in export receipts had reached 68%, and natural resources directly accounted for half of federal government revenues' (Berglöf *et al.* 2009, p. 16). However, increasing domestic and international demand for energy resources, and natural gas in particular, has forced Russia to increase imports from other former Soviet states to meet its commitments. In October 2006, the Ministry of Energy and Industry announced that Russia could face natural gas shortages in the future (Blagov 2006). Although Russia's energy intensity declined by 5.3% annually between 1999 and 2004, its economy still consumes more than twice as much fuel and energy resources per dollar of GDP (measured at PPP) when compared to the United States' economy and more than three times that of European economies (Volkonskii & Kuzovkin 2006, pp. 35–37). Russia's economy is growing rapidly, as is public consumption, including automobile ownership, and thus Russia is one of a handful of countries that increased emissions by more than five million tons in 2008 (Borenstein 2009).<sup>33</sup>

In response, the government has been gradually increasing domestic prices and seeking other ways to conserve gas for the lucrative export market. Recent government interest in increasing the proportion of domestic power generated by nuclear and renewable sources may have a similar motivation. A 2008 World Bank report argued that if Russia pursues an array of energy efficiency measures, it could save as much as 45% of its 'primary' energy consumption, gaining \$120–150 billion annually from savings in energy costs and increased natural gas exports (World Bank 2008, pp. 5–6).

Medvedev's modernisation initiative also created an important platform for strengthened policy cooperation between Russia and the European Union. The EU is motivated to engage with Russia on this front, given its role as a crucial supporter of global efforts to halt climate change, as well as its intense reliance upon Russia for its

<sup>32</sup>International Monetary Fund (2010); World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators/>, accessed 2 December 2011.

<sup>33</sup>The other countries in this category are China, India, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, South Africa, South Korea, Indonesia, Iran, Poland, Mexico, Canada and the Netherlands.

own fossil fuel energy supplies. In June 2010, at the EU–Russia Summit in Rostov-on-Don, Russia and the European Union launched a ‘Partnership for Modernisation’ that includes a number of priority areas, including ‘promoting a sustainable low-carbon economy and energy efficiency, as well as international negotiations on fighting climate change’ (Council of the European Union 2010).

At home, international and domestic climate policies offer a potential way to further bind the bureaucracy to the goals of energy efficiency and modernisation—to create incentives for and exert additional pressure on domestic actors to implement modernisation policies. Although ministries have not initiated the modernisation campaign, the success or failure of its implementation depends heavily on bureaucratic actors. In an extended article on climate change negotiations, the Russian business newspaper *Kommersant* reported that many Russian ministries that have jurisdiction over climate-related policy areas previously ignored the issue, in part because it was not seen as having a significant impact on the economy (Hvostunova 2009). Other ministries, such as the Ministry of Energy, have tended to lobby the government on behalf of related industrial sectors (Charap & Safonov 2010, p. 146). The government’s new emphasis on energy savings attempts to alter how state ministries and agencies operate in the future, however. In November 2009, Prime Minister Putin ‘ordered the Energy Ministry, the Economic Development Ministry, the Natural Resources Ministry and state-run nuclear power corporation Rosatom to secure the fulfilment of the new [energy] strategy and make annual reports to the government’.<sup>34</sup> The plan to implement the climate doctrine also sets out specific tasks related to climate forecasting and mitigation for government agencies. In a sign that the Medvedev presidential administration saw a link between climate policy and energy efficiency, there has been some personnel overlap between the two sectors. For example, Oleg Pluzhnikov, one of the key bureaucratic actors and spokespersons for the government on climate change issues, who was earlier involved in the drafting of Russia’s Track 1 JI procedures, later became the Deputy Director for Government Regulation of Tariffs, Infrastructure Reform and Energy Efficiency in the Ministry of Economic Development. He was heavily involved in the drafting of the new law on energy efficiency and announced Russia’s first Track 1 JI projects in July 2010.

Among the non-state actors most engaged in energy and climate policy in the past have been business groups hoping to benefit economically from mechanisms such as joint implementation, which offer investments for updating technology and increasing efficiency. These groups are vital to the modernisation of the economy and have expressed disappointment in the government’s earlier policy. In a December 2009 interview, Yuri Fedorov, head of the business coalition called the National Carbon Sequestration Foundation (Natsional’naya organizatsiya podderzhki proektov pogloshcheniia ugleroda) lamented that Russia was not taking advantage of JI or green investment scheme opportunities. He estimated that Russia could have earned €2 billion through these mechanisms (Shmelev 2009). Medvedev has shown an interest in cultivating entrepreneurs to support his initiatives, including making numerous pledges to improve Russia’s investment climate, appearing at the annual St Petersburg International Economic Forum since 2008, supporting plans to build a high-tech

<sup>34</sup>‘Russia Approves Energy Strategy Until 2030’, *China View*, 26 November 2009.

research centre in Skolkovo and making a highly publicised visit to Silicon Valley in June 2010, designed in part to promote the return of Russian-born entrepreneurs.

Public concern over climate change has not been a major factor behind changing climate policy, although many citizens are interested in modernisation more generally. The Russian policy-making process generally does not include consultation with organised groups in society or take public opinion into account. Prior to the Copenhagen conference, three of the largest Russian environmental organisations—WWF, Greenpeace and Ecodefense—stated in an announcement on the Greenpeace website that ‘Russia should play a leading role in the negotiations. We can and must continue to maintain the level of greenhouse gas emissions at a constant level—near minus 30% from 1990. And then we should start actual emissions reductions’.<sup>35</sup> However, with the exception of a small but active number of environmental NGOs, Russian citizens generally have not appeared very concerned about climate change; the recent economic recession may have further suppressed the salience of climate change for the Russian population. An October 2009 survey conducted by GlobeScan for the BBC found that only 46% of Russians surveyed see the problem of climate change as ‘very serious’.<sup>36</sup> While this number compares favourably to only 45% of Americans who agree that climate change is a very serious issue, the number is low relative to European populations and represents a significant decline from the 59% of Russians responding that the problem was ‘very serious’ in a similarly worded World Public Opinion survey conducted in 2005–2006 (Henry & Sundstrom 2010, p. 120; World Public Opinion 2007). Public opinion may be influenced by the vigorous debate over the scientific validity of climate change predictions and the persistence of some sceptical views about climate science in Russia (Wilson Rowe 2009). Even Russia’s new climate doctrine lists the anticipated benefits of climate change, including a decline in the energy needed for heating, easier access to Arctic seas, and increased productivity in agriculture and boreal forest growth.<sup>37</sup>

However, a significant proportion of Russian citizens, and disproportionately those who self-identify as young economic and intellectual ‘elites’, appear more concerned about modernisation. In a July 2010 Tsirkon poll, 65% of all respondents and 91% of elite respondents agreed that in order to successfully develop, Russia needs to modernise in all spheres of life.<sup>38</sup> The same poll revealed that in addition to combating corruption and minimising the state apparatus, 38% of elite respondents (compared to 21% of all respondents) believed modernisation should involve developing new

<sup>35</sup>Greenpeace (2009); ‘Rossiya dolzhna igrat’ rol’ lidera v klimaticheskikh peregovorakh—ekologi’, *RIA Novosti*, 6 November 2009.

<sup>36</sup>Plan—na vybros: Tol’ko gotovye proekty rossiiskogo biznesa po poglosheniyu ugleroda mogut privlech’ bole dvukh milliardov evro’, *RIA Novosti*, 7 December 2009; Globescan (2009).

<sup>37</sup>Website of the President of Russia, ‘Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation’, available at: <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2009/12/223509.shtml>, accessed 16 May 2012.

<sup>38</sup>‘Russians on Modernisation’, *Tsirkon*, 27 July 2010, available at: <http://www.zircon.ru/upload/File/russian/publication/6/100726.pdf>, accessed 16 December 2001. ‘Elites’ (*peredovaya gruppа naseleniya*) were those who self-identified as middle–upper class, high income, highly educated, urban and young (age 25–44).

economic and ecological sources of energy for housing and municipalities. A March 2010 Levada poll also showed that respondents saw updating Russia's technology and borrowing technology from the West as crucial to modernisation (Levada Center 2010). Therefore, aspects of international climate agreements that increase access to new technology are likely to meet with the approval of the public, and particularly those to whom Medvedev looked for political support.

Thus, despite relatively low public concern about climate change *per se*, there may have been political motivations—domestic and international—for President Medvedev's focus on modernisation, energy efficiency and climate. Domestically, Medvedev has appeared to distinguish himself from Putin by offering a political platform that has been seen as somewhat more liberal, friendly to small and medium-sized business, and focused on technology than that of his powerful predecessor and now successor. Some observers likened Medvedev's modernisation initiative to a manifesto or campaign strategy that may have been intended to propel him to the 2012 presidential elections if necessary (Shevtsova 2009; Frolov 2009).

Medvedev was criticised for trying to modernise and revitalise the economy without addressing Russia's corrupt and closed political system (Ryzhkov 2010; Aron 2010). Nonetheless, even if it does not achieve the intended political or even economic result, the goal of modernisation still may accrue benefits in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. At the international level, the modernisation of the domestic economy, and the increase in Russia's political strength that would result, may counter-intuitively imply more engagement with the rest of the world. Presidential advisor Vladislav Surkov has reportedly said, 'The more money, knowledge and technology we can get from advanced countries the stronger and more sovereign our democracy will become' (Shevtsova 2009).

On climate change more narrowly, Russia's reduction commitment at Copenhagen, although contingent upon similar actions by other states, may have indicated the Russian government's—and specifically President Medvedev's—concern with enhancing the perception of Russia as an important and engaged global actor. Some Russian media sources focused on this aspect of participation in Copenhagen. For instance, an article in *Vzglyad* newspaper stated that 'many countries involved with this [climate] question have the biggest influence on the world agenda; therefore Russia, which is trying to confirm its status as a leading world power, could not remain on the sidelines of this conference'. The same article quoted political commentator Maksim Minaev as stating that 'the absence of Medvedev at the Copenhagen summit would be a serious blow to Moscow's claims to be globally engaged'.<sup>39</sup> For President Medvedev, who acted in the shadow of his powerful predecessor, international meetings on climate change provided further opportunities to highlight his leadership role on domestic and foreign affairs. Whether this dynamic continues beyond the Medvedev presidency and beyond the Kyoto period will, in part, depend on Medvedev's authority in any future administration, the degree to which energy efficiency goals have been institutionalised, and the economic incentives and constraints of a post-Kyoto agreement that induces Russia to participate.

<sup>39</sup>Ekspert: Vnimanie k problemam klimata dokazhet status RF kak mirovoi derzhavy', *Vzglyad*, 17 December 2009.

*Conclusion*

We have argued in this article that the chief impetus for the Russian government to implement policies to combat climate change has come from the synergy between domestic and international factors rather than from international pressures alone. Recent scholarly work on other states' actions has also indicated that domestic factors are the primary ones shaping policy adoption (Harrison & Sundstrom 2010, p. 137). Unlike other Annex 1 states under the Kyoto Protocol, however, Russia does not have meaningfully democratic political institutions; the government is not constrained by public opinion and remains relatively insulated and autonomous from elite interest groups beyond the Kremlin. Even so, the Russian public remains less concerned about climate change than are citizens of most other industrialised countries. Instead, the key determinant of the Russian government's attention to climate change has been the policy priorities of the president himself, shaped partly by the close advisors he consults, and the ability to use international climate negotiations to reinforce his domestic agenda. Under the presidency of Dmitrii Medvedev, a synergy between the interests of climate change mitigation and economic modernisation facilitated a period of greater attention to climate policy initiatives.

These dynamics suggest a modality of two-level games in international agreement negotiations that may be especially relevant for authoritarian or semi-authoritarian contexts like Russia. In such contexts, the domestic bargaining environment may be shaped by different power dynamics than in institutionalised democratic regimes where interest groups have significant influence on policy decisions. Instead, in Russia, approaches to international bargaining are heavily influenced by the executive leader's framing of national interest for other domestic actors. Implementation of international agreements is more likely to result when executive leaders see an opportunity to advantageously link domestic and international challenges to further compel other actors to advance their agendas. We expect that this lesson may apply to other emerging key states for environmental governance, including China. This relationship also would imply that Russia's climate policy, if not well-institutionalised, is vulnerable to changing presidential agendas in the future.

Under Medvedev's leadership and the rigours of the global financial crisis, the Russian government appeared to undergo a shift in its domestic political priorities and to increasingly see foreign policy as a means of facilitating and accelerating domestic change. A 2009 *Novaya Gazeta* editorial argued that Medvedev 'is trying to lean on the foreign-policy department, striving to turn it into one of the locomotives of modernisation' and cited the president's suggestion that Russia develop 'modernization alliances' with the US and EU (Kolesnikov 2009). Medvedev also expressed enthusiasm for a new kind of strategic partnership that involves importing capital, technology and ideas to speed along modernisation, rather than relying on arms and energy sales (Mankoff 2010, p. 10; Tsygankov 2010, pp. 184–87). The EU–Russia Partnership for Modernisation is a good example of such opportunities. This marked a shift from earlier policies in which Russia often saw close relations with Western states as demeaning its great power status rather than enhancing it.

Although Russia has opted out of a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol, Russian officials have stated a number of times that the country must

participate in negotiations on climate change based on its 'national interest'. Medvedev's initiatives suggested a redefinition of in the content of this national interest. In contrast, in his first terms as president, Vladimir Putin did not develop a concept of Russia's national interest that encompassed climate change specifically or energy usage more broadly; as a result, once Kyoto Protocol ratification finally occurred, very little policy implementation took place. President Medvedev's formulation of national interest based on economic modernisation and energy efficiency has offered potential benefits for reducing greenhouse gases. Medvedev recognised synergies between his primary policy goals and climate change negotiations. At the very least, climate agreements provide an opportunity to access investment and technology. In December 2009, the Russian president stated, 'Even if all of the talk of global climate change and other environmental impacts turns out to be wrong, at the very least we lose nothing by increasing our energy efficiency, and the environment will benefit. This is a good thing. This is part of our responsibilities'.<sup>40</sup> Yet with all of the enthusiasm President Medvedev injected into the modernisation agenda, and by extension climate policy, to continue this approach in a future administration Medvedev, or another pro-modernisation leader, would need to appeal to and mobilise key constituencies in government ministries, relevant state-run enterprises, the private sector and civil society.

At the Copenhagen conference in December 2009, Medvedev characterised Russia as the 'world leader in emissions reductions'<sup>41</sup> and the guarantor of global energy security.<sup>42</sup> This self-presentation, combined with the government's framing of energy efficiency as an economic opportunity that Russia must embrace rather than as an economic sacrifice that the country is forced to undertake, has the potential to substantially change Russia's approach to climate change policy, domestically and internationally. In his speech at the Copenhagen conference, President Medvedev publicly committed Russia to continue to work on climate change. He proclaimed, 'Russia is ready to play the most active part in all of these processes', and continued by stating,

I want to stress that we will pursue these efforts regardless of whether or not we manage here to agree on the basic principles and regardless of whether or not we reach a legally binding agreement. We will do this for the simple reason that it is in our own best interests.<sup>43</sup>

According to our argument, elements of future international agreements that are most amenable to 'synergistic issue linkages' with Russian modernisation initiatives are

<sup>40</sup>Website of the President of Russia, 'Transcript of Meeting on Energy Development', 14 December 2009, available at: [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/12/14/1810\\_type82913type82917\\_223360.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/12/14/1810_type82913type82917_223360.shtml), accessed 10 April 2011.

<sup>41</sup>'Rossiya budet uchastvovat' v novom soglashenii po sokrashcheniyu emissii parnikovykh gazov', *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 18 December 2009.

<sup>42</sup>Website of the President of Russia, 'Speech at Climate Change Conference Plenary Session', 18 December 2009, available at: [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/12/18/1840\\_type82912type82914\\_223431.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/12/18/1840_type82912type82914_223431.shtml), accessed 18 January 2010; 'Rossiya budet uchastvovat' v novom soglashenii po sokrashcheniyu emissii parnikovykh gazov', *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 18 December 2009.

<sup>43</sup>Website of the President of Russia, 'Speech at Climate Change Conference Plenary Session', 18 December 2009, available at: [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/12/18/1840\\_type82912type82914\\_223431.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/12/18/1840_type82912type82914_223431.shtml), accessed 18 January 2010.

likely to attract the support of the Russian executive and to result in greater implementation of the agreement. Reconceptualising Russia's national interest—and institutionalising this new approach—creates an opportunity for domestic incentives, along with external mechanisms, to drive climate change policies in Russia into the future. It remains to be seen whether President Putin will build upon these steps or return to an earlier vision of Russia's national interest. Notably, Medvedev, in his farewell speech departing the presidency in 2012, did not refer to the concept of modernisation, generating speculation among observers about the fate of the modernisation agenda in the second iteration of Putin's presidency (Samarina 2012). Whatever the fate of the modernisation agenda, it is clear that Russian climate policy was given new weight through the emphasis on modernisation in the Medvedev administration and the future of Russian climate initiatives and approaches to international negotiation depends on the domestic policy incentives of Russian political leaders in the future.

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