

# **Continuity and Change in Russia's Climate Negotiations Position and Strategy**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines the continuity and change of Russia's position in international climate negotiations. We argue that the key to understanding Russia's recent shift towards a more positive rhetoric and constructive role in climate negotiations are the changes in domestic elite and bureaucratic politics. These changes reflect greater recognition of vulnerabilities to climate change, expected economic benefits for influential actors from carbon markets and offsets, and a positive linkage between maintaining low carbon emissions and advancing energy systems modernization and efficiency. The traditional volatility and conditionality of the Russian position also persists, however. Climate change continues to be an issue of limited public salience and the Russian government remains concerned primarily with advancing unconstrained economic growth. The paper shows that the potential positive role of Russia in future cooperation is highly contingent on the broader course of negotiations and in particular on the positions of the US, China, and the Umbrella Group. From a theoretical perspective, the analysis lends support to negotiations theories that emphasized the two-level interplay between international and domestic politics in shaping countries' positions, and the relevance of endogenous resources and contingent strategizing for advancing preferred outcomes.

**Keywords:** Russia, climate cooperation, climate negotiations, two-level games, energy policy

## *1. Introduction*

Russia's position and strategy in climate negotiations often takes unexpected directions. After the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol (1997), for example, observers were perplexed by how long it took Russia to ratify the Protocol (2005) given the clear economic benefits for the country. More recently, the international rhetoric of the government has shifted from its earlier scepticism about the human dimensions of climate change to recognition of potential vulnerabilities and statements seeking to project a more positive role in climate cooperation. What accounts for the changes in Russia's rhetoric and negotiation strategy, and what are the implications for the future of climate cooperation?

This paper examines the domestic and international determinants of Russia's climate position to account for its evolving role in the negotiations and the seemingly unexpected turns in rhetoric and strategy. Russia is an important player in climate collaboration, being the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHGs) after China and the US, or the fourth if the EU is taken as a single entity. The country controls a large share of the world's known fossil fuel resources and thus has high stakes in climate cooperation as it pertains centrally to the energy future of the planet. Russia's coalition and balancing strategies can thus influence multiple characteristics of future institutions governing climate change. Understanding the potential conditions for a positive or obstructionist role in the climate negotiations is of high policy relevance.

Our analysis of this case is guided by theoretical approaches that emphasize the two-level interplay between the domestic and international planes of politics and negotiations (Putnam 1988; Bailer 2011; Milner and Rosendorff 1996; Fearon 1994). It also draws on negotiation theories that consider the sources of countries' bargaining leverage beyond structural power (Young 1994; Elms 2006) and the variable menu of strategies through which countries seek to influence negotiations outcomes (Sibenius 1983; Odell 2011).

We argue that key to understanding Russia's shift towards a more constructive role in climate negotiations are changes in domestic elite and bureaucratic politics, which reflect greater recognition of vulnerabilities to climate change, expected economic benefits for influential industrial actors from carbon markets and offsets, and a positive linkage between maintaining low carbon emissions and advancing energy systems modernization and efficiency. The traditional volatility and conditionality of the Russian position also persists, however. Climate change continues to be an issue of limited public salience and the Russian government remains concerned primarily with advancing unconstrained economic growth. As a consequence, the executive branch faces very limited, if any, domestic constraints and has considerable space to adjust the country's position to international opportunities and to link climate cooperation and broader foreign policy objectives (Putnam 1988).

Russia has thus gained bargaining advantage on the international plane over time as a result of its relative importance for climate cooperation and its relative indifference to negotiations failure (Bailer 2012, Young 1994). In such a context of broadly defined preferences and substantial bargaining leverage, the country cares more about getting a good economic and political deal in whatever climate treaty might emerge (or not), rather than pressing strongly for particular pre-defined institutional options. This approach is different from the negotiations strategies of actors such as the EU, the OASIS group, or the US and G77 countries which typically enter negotiations with relatively fixed preferences on the parameters of cooperation and develop strategies to pursue them. On the international front, the country seeks, as before, to maintain maximum space to manoeuvre by emphasizing that the next climate regime will have to involve an agreement among all major polluters (most notably the US and China) as well as signalling a commitment with a relatively wide margin.

The importance of strategy in shaping Russia's climate position and negotiations behaviour resonates with theories which emphasize the role of bargaining leverage and negotiating tactics (Sibenius 1993, Young 1994, Odell 2011, Elms 2006). It presents a dynamic that is counterintuitive from the point of view of linear models, which either assume or derive country preferences from structural characteristics and domestic politics, and then examine under what conditions countries are able to achieve negotiation outcomes. Russia's case illuminates an iterative model of broad preference formulation at the domestic level and strategic bargaining which interplay to shape the country's position with respect to specific parameters of cooperation and its success in achieving them. This iterative dynamic implies that the changes in the Russian position can be best understood by considering simultaneously changes in domestic politics that can result from international signals (Andonova 2008) as well as the options that become available on the international arena as a result of coalition formation, behaviour of other actors, and institutional choices.

In the case of Russia, therefore, we believe that exogenous power matters to some extent, given the size and impact of the Russian economy on greenhouse gas emissions, but that understanding Russia's position and negotiations approach requires a careful assessment of its domestic politics and the endogenous resources that the country projects on the negotiations table such as bargaining skills, diplomatic experience, expertise, and coalition strategies.

The analysis of the Russian case, similar to several other papers in this issue, proceeds to examine in comparative perspective the changes in domestic and international variables that may account for the recent shift in Russia's strategy towards a mix of value claiming and value creating positions (Bailer 2011; Michaelowa and Michaelowa 2011; Odell 2000), while keeping its traditional space to manoeuvre. We begin with an overview of Russia's engagement in the climate regimes to establish its traditional sources of structural power and bargaining leverage. Section three then examines in greater depth the domestic and foreign policy determinants shaping the country's evolving and open-ended position on

climate cooperation. The fourth section provides new empirical evidence on the different dimension of the strategies employed by the Russian negotiators at the 2009 Copenhagen Conference of the Parties and beyond, reflecting the broad and contingent position pursued by the country. The comparative perspective is both temporal by considering the evolution of the country's strategy over time and cross-country by situating Russia's strategy and its determinants within broader sample of data. We draw on multiple sources and methods. These include text analysis of primary documents and international reports, published studies, and comparative quantitative data. The cross-country databases used for the analysis were created on the basis of coding of interviews with negotiators, official countries submissions, and Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB) reports during the period between the negotiations rounds from Bali, December 2007 to Copenhagen, December 2009 (see Wailer 2011, Annex 1, for details on the datasets). The conclusion draws relevant implication of the analysis for the types of incentives and frameworks that are most likely to engage Russia in a meaningful way in climate cooperation in the future. Moreover, it highlights which outcomes on general position formation, strategy choice and determinants of success (Bailer 2011; Weiler 2011) are relevant for Russia and where Russia represents a more atypical case that could account for its often unexpected shifts in negotiation strategy, as well as relative success in advancing preferred institutional options.

## *2. Russia and the international regime on climate change*

Russia is among the top five emitters of GHGs, if we consider the EU as a single entity, which together contribute over 65% of global emissions. Of these economies, Russia is also significant in that it is one of the world's main depositories and exporters of fossil fuels. It has a 5.8 percent share in the world's proven oil reserves, with close to 24 percent share in the global gas reserves (British Petroleum 2011). In 2008, oil and gas exports accounted for two-thirds of all Russian exports by value, while oil and gas revenue amounted to a third of the general government revenue. In addition to being a significant source of foreign exchange, oil and gas earnings play an important role in macroeconomic management (Godsworthy and Zakharova 2010). According to the World Bank, oil rents amount to 13.4 percent of Russia's GDP while overall rents from natural resources amount to 20.7 percent of GDP (World Bank 2011). The status of a large economy rich in fossil fuels is a source of structural power for Russia in climate negotiations. However, the realization of this structural power into negotiations influence has been dependent on the country's strategy and ability to coalesce with other mid-range but significant emitters.

During the early 1990s, when the UNFCCC was negotiated, climate change had little salience for Russia as a consequence of the painful economic transition on which it had just embarked and the relatively sceptical view of parts of its influential scientific establishment on the anthropogenic impacts on the climate system. As a consequence, the country remained largely irrelevant in negotiations of the

UNFCCC, which were shaped primarily by the US, European countries active on the issue and developing countries acting en bloc to secure special treatment and exemption from emission reduction or stabilization commitments. Russia ratified the UNFCCC shortly after its adoption in 1992, which reflected an overall foreign policy strategy of keeping an active profile and positive engagement in international institutions. Later, it aligned with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which opposed any quantitative emission limits in subsequent protocols.

As we shall see in the analysis of Russia's current position on climate cooperation, some fundamental determinants of the country's policy approach have remained the same since the early 1990s, namely low domestic concern with climate change, emphasis on unrestrained economic growth, and interest in climate cooperation as an arena to advance broader international objectives and prestige. At the same time, Russia's coalition strategies and bargaining leverage have evolved considerably across the different episodes of the climate negotiations, impacting the bargains it could achieve and the more specific and often unexpected positions that the country has taken.

Russia's structural power materialized in some bargaining leverage for the first time in the run-up to the negotiations of the Kyoto Protocol. It aligned with the Umbrella Group countries, thus joining leverage with other key players with similar magnitude of contributions to GHG emissions, such as Japan, Canada and Australia that were similarly not eager to take up stringent emission reduction targets.

While Russia negotiated together with large industrialized countries, it could also credibly claim economic weakness which in environmental negotiations increases the ability of developing and transition countries to demand concessions both in normative terms as well as via a credible threat of incapacity to implement stronger commitments (Young 1994). By 1997, the Russian economy had shrunk by 39 percent and its GHG emissions by 34 percent compared to 1990, which was the baseline year used for the negotiation of quantitative emission reductions for industrialized countries in Kyoto. The Russian position – that it would not commit to any target beyond stabilization at 1990 levels in order to regain its pre-1990 economic strength – prevailed, and the country emerged from Kyoto with one of the most favourable deals (Nikitina 2001; Korppoo, Karas and Grubb 2006). It could either increase its emissions by 34 percent until 2012, which was unlikely, or sell a large portion of its emission reduction allowances for economic gain. The Russian surplus and the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol flexible mechanisms provided also a potential avenue for the US to meet its obligation at a relatively low cost via reliance on a bilateral emission trading deal.

The withdrawal of the US in 2001, which was the largest potential buyer of Russia's allowance surplus, reduced somewhat the attractiveness of the regime but at the same time increased further the country's bargaining leverage by essentially

giving her a veto power with respect to the treaty's ratification and entry into force.<sup>1</sup> Russia used this leverage to further advance its position and potential economic gains at the 2001 Marrakech Conference of the Parties which conceded additional emission allowances of approximately 37 Metric Tons of Carbon (MtC) for GHG absorption from land use and forests (Grubb 2004). In the negotiations of the Kyoto Protocol and its economic instruments, the country employed a consistent strategy of manoeuvring around treaty options tabled by the actors with the highest stakes in the negotiation to achieve an outcome that it deemed most beneficial economically and politically.

Russia's long-drawn ratification of the Kyoto Protocol demonstrated the relevance of two-level politics and strategy in shaping its position rather than a specific and clearly defined interest in climate cooperation. The puzzling refusal to ratify for a lengthy period of time a treaty that appeared clearly to its benefit reflected, on the one hand, the strong influence of the climate sceptics among the former President Putin's chief scientific and economic advisors. Both Andrei Ilarionov, as the chief economic advisor of the President, and Yuri Izrael as his chief scientific advisor, considered the Kyoto Protocol as an unnecessary constraint on the country's economy (Andonova 2008; Henry and Sundstrom 2007; Korppoo et al 2006; Korppoo 2008). On the other hand, the ratification presented Russia with a bargaining chip which could be linked to broader foreign policy objectives. Ultimately, the adjustment of domestic economic and bureaucratic interests in favour of the treaty in view of potential benefits from the Joint Implementation (JI) and emission trading mechanisms, and the leadership of the Ministry of Economy and Trade in facilitating issue linkage with EU support for Russia's WTO membership, helped to sway the domestic negotiations plane in favour of ratification (Andonova 2008; Korppoo 2008).

In contrast with the nay-saying on the benefits of climate cooperation that came from influential policy circles surrounding the Russian presidency around the Kyoto ratification, Russia's position formulated in the run-up to the 2009 Copenhagen meeting on the post-2012 agreement is characterized by a more positive framing and a specific pledge for emission reductions, though conditional on the participation of all significant emitters and accounting for the Russian forest sinks. Nevertheless, it is still not certain whether and under what conditions the more constructive approach to climate cooperation will actually yield substantive results in terms of implementing domestic measures to reduce the country's contribution to GHG emissions. The next section examines in greater detail both the continuity and change in domestic and foreign policy determinants of Russia's current position.

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<sup>1</sup> The Kyoto Protocol required 55 ratifications and the accession of countries contributing no less than 55 percent of total emissions by industrialized countries in order to enter into force. In the absence of the US, this implied that all major Annex I emitters needed to ratify, including Russia.

### *3. Negotiation Position: Domestic and Foreign Policy Determinants*

Participation of all major emitters is one of the main conditions that Russia attaches to its involvement in a post-Kyoto climate agreement. Its pledge of 15-25 percent emissions reduction compared to 1990 levels stated in the country's submission to the Copenhagen Accord is contingent on this condition. Russia has traditionally maintained that the effectiveness of the Kyoto Protocol is undermined by imposing emission ceilings on industrialized countries only and that developing countries have been granted unfair advantage in the access to flexible instruments without equivalent restrictions (Westphal 2010; Rowe 2009). If anything, Russia has hardened its demand that all major economies, including the United States and China, be made part of the new regime (Douma et al 2010; Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation and Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring 2010). To this end, it suggests regrouping of the parties while taking into account each country's starting conditions, their socio-economic parameters and capabilities to establish national targets, which in turn will inform aggregate global targets through a bottom-up approach (Korppoo and Spencer 2009; Westphal 2010). Russia further flags the need for continuity as a rationale for keeping the new agreement under UNFCCC and conserving 1990 as a base year for future commitments which, as already discussed, has been highly advantageous in allowing Russia to meet its Kyoto obligations without an actual cut in emissions.

Apart from the broad and strongly communicated preference for broadening participation to include all major emitters, Russia has tabled two more specific demands since the start of the negotiations on a post-2012 regime in Bali in 2007. It has requested the transfer of its surplus allowances to the future regime (Lioubimtseva 2010). This condition, however, has been muted and does not formally appear in the country's submission to the Copenhagen Accord, most likely since such transfer depends to a great extent on the now unlikely continuation of the Kyoto framework. Russia also demands credits for its forests and their function as carbon sinks, which is another condition for its emissions cut pledge (Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology 2010).

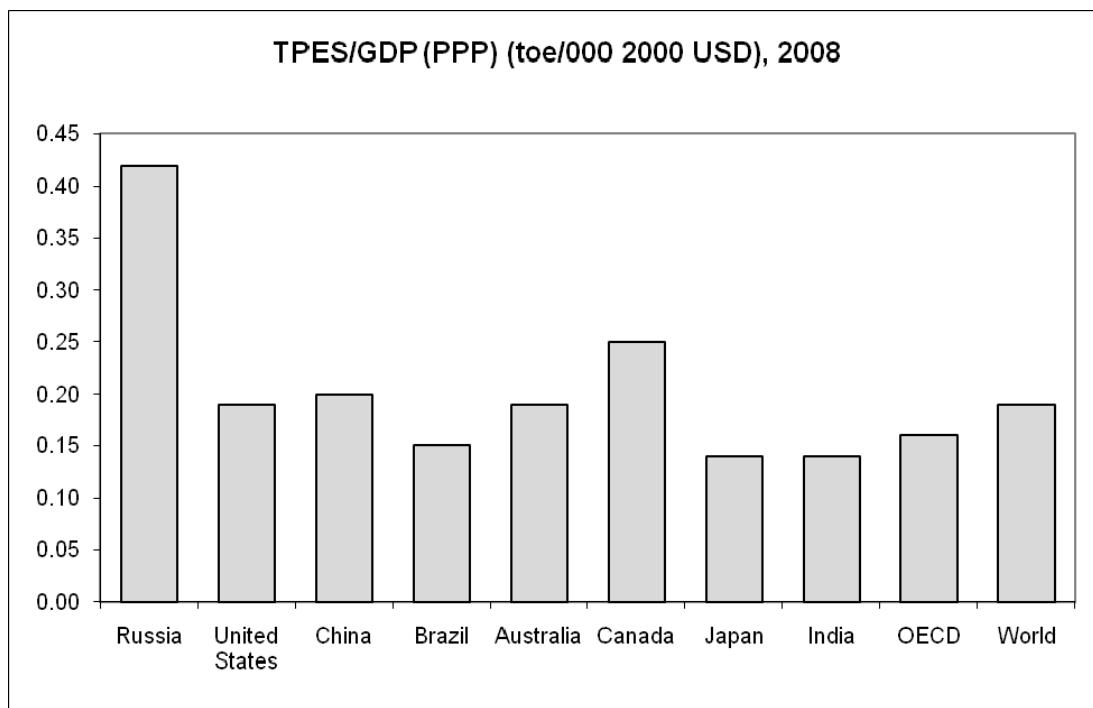
Reluctant to sacrifice economic growth or reliance on fossil fuels for meeting environmental obligations, the government has opted for a modest commitment of 15-25 percent emission reductions compared to 1990 level,<sup>2</sup> whose lower end translates to an effective 30 to 35 percent emissions increase from the 2007 level (Charap and Safonov 2010; Korppoo et al 2009). As President Medvedev explained, "in this way, we would not deprive ourselves of development opportunities, while at the same time making our contribution to the international efforts to fight climate change" (in Douma et al 2010). In addition, recognizing Russian forests as carbon sinks may yield 5 to 10 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions credits compared to 1990, thus further softening Russia's reduction commitments (Westphal 2010).

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<sup>2</sup> See Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation and Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring, 2010.

Several changes in domestic politics stand behind Russia's willingness to project a positive rhetoric on a post-2012 regime and a specific emission ceiling pledge, while retaining its traditional objectives of unrestrained economic growth, low-cost compliance and flexibility to negotiate further conditions. The proposed targets are largely compatible with Russia's development strategy and its new energy policy which envisages 40 percent reduction in energy intensity per unit of gross domestic product by 2020 against 2007 levels. Indeed, the coupling of Russia's energy strategy which emphasizes efficiency and modernization with climate policy is one of the most significant domestic drivers behind a more progressive climate policy. The priorities of improved efficiency and modernization of the economy have been defined in the context of a growing domestic consensus on the excessive waste of energy (Westphal 2010). Of the world's top ten economies, none consumes more energy per unit of GDP than Russia (Charap and Safonov 2010). Figure 1 below, based on the latest available data from the International Energy Agency, illustrates that Russia's energy intensity of GDP measured in purchasing power parity is approximately 2.6 times higher than the average for industrialized countries, and more than double the energy intensity of the US, China or the global average.

*Figure 1. Energy Intensity of Russia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in comparative perspective*



*Source of data: International Energy Agency 2010*

While the objective of improved energy efficiency is not new and has featured in previous energy strategies of the country, President Medvedev highlighted this as a priority and issued a decree in June 2008, stipulating the 40

percent improvement target. A year later, the implementation of energy-saving policies became part of the government's Anti-Crisis Action Plan (Douma et al 2010), followed by a three-stage Energy Strategy aimed at achieving highly efficient use of traditional energy and an increased role of alternative energy by 2030 (Charap and Safonov 2010). Arguing that such measures are in the national interest since they would enhance the competitiveness of Russia's industry and enable it to meet the foreign demand for its oil and gas reserves more easily, the Medvedev administration linked these goals to climate policies in the run-up to the Copenhagen meeting (Medvedev in Istomin 2010; Douma et al 2010, Korppoo, Sakonov and Lugovoy 2010; Norwegian Ministry of Environment 2010). This position has been echoed by the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources who declared that climate protection is fully coherent with Russia's economic interests (Korppoo 2010), reflecting further adjustment of bureaucratic politics towards greater recognition of the potential economic benefits of positive, although still limited, commitment to climate mitigation.

Perhaps the most significant development in Russian climate policy took place on the eve of the Copenhagen Conference in December 2009 when the President signed the country's climate doctrine. Though deficient in concrete targets, the document acknowledges climate change as a dangerous anthropogenic phenomenon, which is in stark contrast with claims made by high ranking officials prior to the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol about the dominant role of solar activity or other natural causes (Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2009; Rowe 2009). The Climate Doctrine specifies the potentially negative effects of climate change for Russia, such as increased occurrences of drought, forest fires and floods, permafrost degradation, disruption of the ecological balance, increased prevalence of infectious and parasitic diseases. It further underlines the need to prioritize the strengthening of the adaptive capacity of the country (Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2009; Norwegian Ministry of Environment 2010). The broad mitigation strategies outlined by the climate doctrine include, not surprisingly, improved efficiency across sectors and in the production and consumption of energy, increased share of renewable, and preserving the absorptive capacity of forests. For the first time the document also recognizes climate change as a national security threat which, along with the title of the document – 'doctrine' rather than 'policy' or 'strategy' – signals that climate is taken up as a foreign policy issue by the highest ranks of the administration. It illustrates the way in which Russia's international negotiations position is an extension of the principles and preferences embedded in its domestic policy.

Russia's climate doctrine reflects also an important transformation that has taken place among the Russian scientific discourse and the type of expertise that has gained policy influence. Most notably, the climate scepticism that reigned among scientific and economic advisors surrounding the Presidency at the time of the Kyoto ratification has given way to more assertive voices among the scientific community and more nuanced analysis on the anthropogenic sources and vulnerabilities associated with climate change. The Russian Hydrometeorological Service

(Roshydromet) published a report in February 2009, just prior to the government's climate doctrine, which states unambiguously that climate change is taking place and is human-induced. Even though it highlights many of the positive impacts of global warming, such as shorter heating season, expansion of arable farmland, and opening of the northern sea routes, the report also points to the high probability of warming-related droughts, water shortages, increased runoffs from rivers, and changes in the ice conditions (Roshydromet 2008). It warns that the latter might cause significant pipeline damage and provoke oil spills and gas leakages with severe environmental and economic consequences. It further emphasizes the need for adopting a set of domestic mitigation and adaptation policies as well as engaging in international cooperation. Elements of climate scepticism persist among some scientific circles and in the broader media and public discourse.<sup>3</sup> However, the Roshydromet report has been central to the development of Russia's climate doctrine and exemplifies the position shift that has taken place in the scientific discourse that supports the climate policy formulation of the Russian government. This shift in scientific discourse can be attributed at least in part to the prominent role taken by the former head of Roshydromet Alexander Bedritsky both as chief scientific advisor of President Medvedev since 2009 and long-term leader of the Russian delegation in climate negotiations. As former head of Roshydromet, Bedritsky has signed off on all of Russia's National Communications to the UNFCCC submitted since 1995, which generally present a more balanced perspective on the anthropogenic sources and impacts of climate change compared to the more sceptical discourse that dominated domestic climate politics between 2000 and the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol (Andonova 2008). Because of his long term engagement in international climate negotiations, Bedritsky is furthermore well positioned to navigate the international and domestic planes of negotiations towards a policy perspective that reflects an overlapping "win-set" across the two plains (Putnam 1988).

While it is indisputable that a stronger climate policy has become more compatible with Russia's national agenda in the past years, its advances should not be exaggerated either. Apart from energy efficiency, there is no real focus on climate friendly targets in the energy policy which also entertains the possibility of increasing gas exports through substitution of certain domestic uses by coal (Norwegian Ministry of Environment 2010). According to several analysts of Russia's climate policy and discourse, the government has neither made significant advances with the implementation of its targets for energy efficiency improvements nor identified specific policy measures to implement its climate doctrine (Charap and Safonov 2010; Bellona in Charap 2010; Potarov in Korppoo 2009).

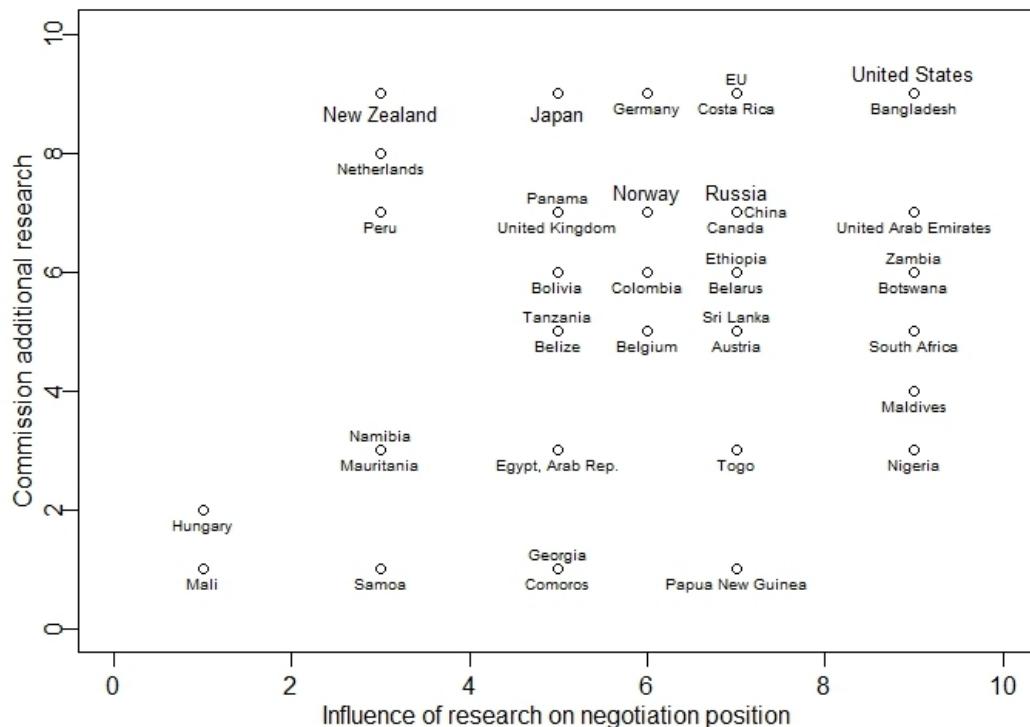
Nonetheless, the shift towards a more assertive scientific recognition of the climate problem and its multiple implications is essential for sustaining a more positive Russian position in the climate negotiations. Scientific experts and

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<sup>3</sup> For example, on the eve of COP-15, the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Oceanography issued a report claiming that human activity was not a major factor in climate change. Similarly, the director of the research institute of the Ministry of Energy attributed global warming to the slowing of the Earth's rotation (Charap and Safonov 2010).

researchers can play an influential role in this regard. Figure 2, which is based on data collected via interviews on countries' position and delegation characteristics at the 2009 Copenhagen meeting, indicates that the Russian delegation was characterized by a relatively high reliance on scientific research, with a score of 7 on a scale of 0 to 10, which is compatible or higher as compared to many of its coalition partners in the Umbrella Group, such as Norway, New Zealand and Japan, also interviewed as part of this project. Apart from government officials, its delegation to COP-15 also included representatives of the scientific community. In addition, Russia has a relatively high propensity to commission additional research to inform its position (see Figure 2 below). While Figure 2 shows that in the larger sample of countries for which interview data is available there is no consistent correlation between the influence of research on the delegation's position and the propensity to commission further research, certain delegations, among those of Russia, Japan, China, Canada, the United States, and the European Union, exhibit strong engagement with the scientific establishment both in justifying negotiations positions as well as in advancing additional studies. These findings are supported by earlier research indicating that the contribution of scientists to Russian policy making is at its peak preceding decisions on issues where science is of relevance (Rowe 2009).

*Figure 2. Relationship between commissioning research and influence of research on country's position.*



Source: Coding of Interview Data, see Weiler 2011, Annex 1.

Analysis of the interview data collected at the Copenhagen meeting further suggests that while the research establishment and the coalition Umbrella Group exert high impact on Russia's negotiation position, along with relevant governmental ministries with moderate to high impact, other stakeholders, including domestic emitters and green industry, NGOs and even the Russian Parliament, have low influence on Russia's position. This finding is not surprising as the country's climate policy has traditionally been elite-driven, with a strong role of the government bureaucracy and control by the Presidency (Andonova 2008; Henry and Sundstrom 2007).

Private sector interest in climate cooperation has been growing due to the range of investment opportunities that JI projects present to Russian corporations (Korppoo 2009). Industrial influence on Russia's international position is projected indirectly, however, via the sector and economic ministries or advisors close to the President (Andonova 2008). It is indicative that despite Russia's late accession to the Kyoto Protocol, its industry has already prepared carbon accounting systems and projects, often in cooperation with international financial and industrial partners, thus making Russia the largest beneficiary of JI activities. Currently, it hosts a total of 134 projects – the highest number for any Annex 1 country – which amounts to roughly 30 percent of all JI projects (UNEP Risoe Center, accessed 2011).<sup>4</sup> The turnaround of major energy and utility companies (e.g. United Energy Systems, Gazprom) in favour of climate cooperation created a powerful industrial lobby at the time of the Kyoto ratification (Andonova 2008). For the past years, this corporate engagement has been growing, as evident from the participation of six Russian giants in the energy, utilities and telecommunications sectors in the Russia 50 Carbon Disclosure Project Report.<sup>5</sup> Four of them indicated that climate change presented some form of opportunity for their businesses in terms of providing technology incentives, imposing process/product standards, or participation in JI projects (Carbon Disclosure Project 2009). Only one mentioned the existence of regulatory risks arising from national and global climate policy.

Despite the limited direct engagement of the private sector in the formulation of Russia's position, it is believed that it can play an increasing role in the course of the negotiations, especially if participation is linked to lucrative potential for emission trading and technology transfer via project-based mitigation instruments similar to the JI. This suggests that Russia is likely to lend strong support for an unrestricted reliance on economic instruments in the formulation of the next climate agreement along with modest mitigation commitment that will provide its industry with room for low-cost offsets and trading.

Contrary to the relative importance of industrial interest for the direction of Russia's climate policy, the Russian public has remained largely disinterested in the

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<sup>4</sup> For comparison, the share of JI projects of a few other selected countries is as follows: Ukraine, second largest holder (18%), Bulgaria (8.5%), Poland (5.5%), Romania (4.3%), France (3.8%), Germany (2.7%), Spain (0.7%)

<sup>5</sup> Center Telecom, Federal Grid Company of Unified Energy System, Gazprom, Irkutskenergo, Novatek and Tatneft

topic of climate change, with marginal influence on policy formulation. A public opinion poll conducted in late 2009 reveals that only 30 percent of citizens thought that global warming represented a serious problem. Less than a quarter considered it an urgent issue, and less than a fifth were willing to make it a priority and sacrifice economic growth and jobs for the sake of dealing with the climate (World Bank poll in Russian Analytical Digest 2010). Moreover, 45 percent of Russians do not agree with spending government money on cutting emissions, while 28 percent believe that only limited resources should be used for tackling global warming (Korppoo et al 2009). Rising prices, increased unemployment, poverty, and the effect of the economic crisis are the leading issues worrying Russians; the ecological situation of the country only ranks eleventh. In another public opinion poll, a mere 1 percent of the respondents mentioned climate change as an issue of concern (Public Opinion Fund poll in Russian Analytical Digest 2010)! The overall level of climate salience is thus relatively low, which allows the government to formulate its position instrumentally in ways that link economic and foreign policy goals as well as to adjust its negotiation strategy depending on opportunities for issue-linkage and projection of broader foreign policy objectives.

Therefore, more assertive climate science, priority attributed to improved energy efficiency, and expected gains of domestic industry from market mechanisms are among the key domestic factors that inform the current willingness of the Russian government to project a positive position on climate cooperation and formulate a specific, albeit not very ambitious, target for emission limits. The fragmentation of bureaucratic politics and relative disinterest among key agencies remains a significant concern for the subsequent consistency with which this position will be followed or implemented. Climate change and energy efficiency issues are split among the competence of ten different governmental bodies (Douma et al 2010). The Interagency Commission on Climate Change created just prior to the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol ceased to operate with the resignation of its chairman from the post of Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade in 2009. The Ministry of Economic Development has been involved in developing the country's position and mitigation measures, while the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology has been assigned to take over the negotiations leadership from the previously independent agency Roshydromet, currently placed under its authority (Westphal 2010). Indicative of this bureaucratic fragmentation is the fact that representatives of various agencies implicated in climate policy have expressed opinions which are sometimes contradictory to the official government line or earlier position of the agency itself.<sup>6</sup> The bureaucratic picture is further complicated by the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which deals with the climate issue at the

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<sup>6</sup> For example, Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin, who is connected to the state-owned Rosneft oil company, is said to strongly oppose a new climate pact (Westphal 2010). The Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko is also considered to be an opponent of a post-2012 regime. The Ministry of Economic Development has clearly benefited from the flexible Kyoto mechanisms but its Vice Minister, Andrey Klepach, has been cited in the press as commenting that the costs of the Kyoto Protocol to the Russian economy will reach 2 percent of GDP (Korppoo and Spencer 2009).

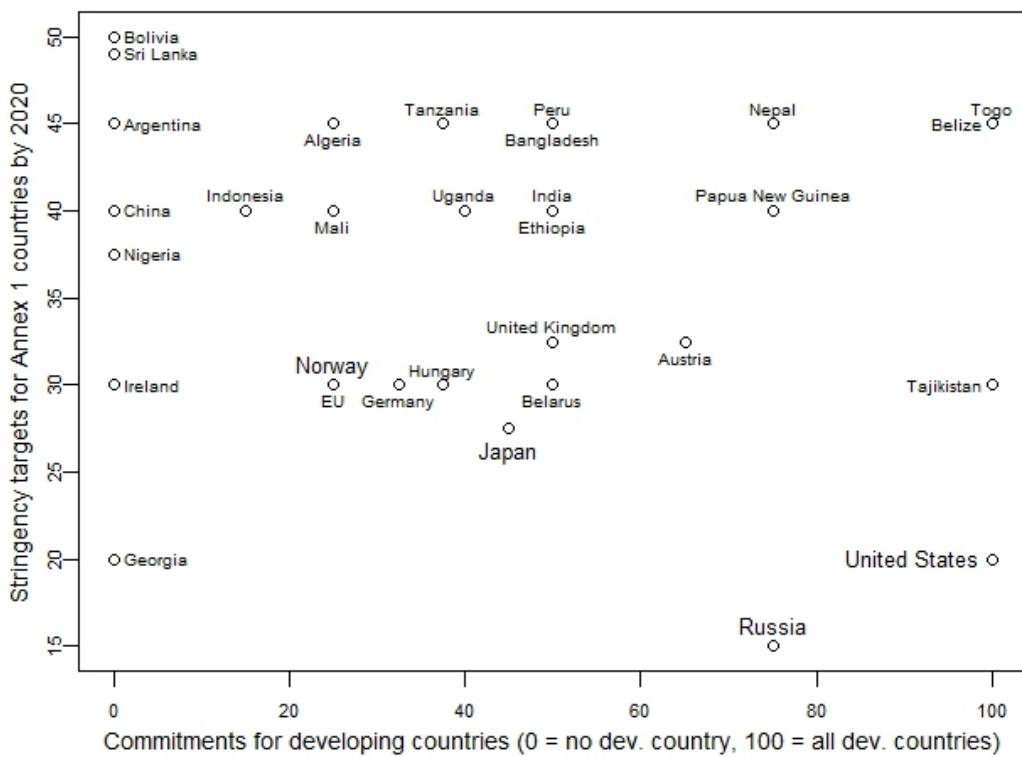
international level but lacks a well-developed mandate (Korppoo and Spencer 2009). Therefore, it would not be very surprising if Russia suddenly reverts to speaking with multiple voices on climate cooperation, especially if climate change drops down from the presidential foreign policy agenda either in this administration or following the presidential elections in 2012.

Despite the considerable impact of domestic factors, the Russian stance is also influenced strongly by broader foreign policy considerations. Participation in the climate change regime has been a mechanism for the country to gain prestige by showing itself as a responsible global player (Henry and Sundstrom 2008), contingent on domestic political and economic considerations. Ever since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and especially since ascendance to power of Vladimir Putin, Russia has been seeking to re-establish itself as a global actor through membership in great power clubs and visibility on the international scene. In the years since the Bali Conference of the Parties, climate change has been increasingly established as an issue of high politics that powerful country clubs, such as the G8 or the Major Economies Forum have pushed up on their agenda, though primarily in rhetoric than in action (Rowe 2009). Therefore, it is not surprising that President Medvedev passed legislation establishing the new energy intensity target exactly before the G8 meeting in l'Aquila in 2009. Russia wants to avoid being the only member who blocks a global consensus on the post-2012 regime (Korppoo et al 2009). At the same time, some G8 members such as Japan, Canada, and the United States, along with the major emerging economies, have also acted reserved with respect to leadership in the absence of developing country participation, which provides a lot of space for Russia to advance a positive position while guarding space to manoeuvre. It is notable that Russia labelled the G8 goal of 50 percent global emission reduction by 2050 as "aspirational" and the collective goal of 25-40 percent reduction from the 1990 level by 2020 as "unreasonable" (Afionis and Chatzopoulos 2009; Korppoo et al 2009).

Independence from, and equality with, the world's principal power centres of the United States, China, and the European Union is a second Russian foreign policy goal (Trenin 2010, Korppoo et al 2009), which is visible in the country's climate negotiations. In an attempt to avoid ending up worse off in relation to the US and China, Russia pushes for broad participation in the next climate agreement. This approach is evident in the comment made by Russian experts about the solution to the talks lying between the United States and China (Charap and Safonov 2010). It also presents a climate stance that appears within the range of the positions advanced by other major industrialized countries within the Umbrella Group. Figure 3 below compares the Russian position on developing and industrialized countries' commitment to that of other countries for which interview data was collected. The figure illustrates that similar to other Umbrella countries Russia insists on broadening participation to developing countries, although to a larger extent as compared to Japan and Norway and not as far as the US demand for universal participation. The figure also reveals fairly clear differences between Umbrella countries and other states with respect to stringency of industrialized countries

emissions, but a much broader spread of positions with respect to developing countries participation. This is significant since apart from the US and Russia, we observe a more loose coupling, at least in the sample of 58 countries, between expectation for industrialized countries leadership and developing countries participation, and thus greater potential for flexibility in negotiations strategy and issue linkage, which is evidenced for example by the India case study presented in this volume (Michaelowa and Michaelowa 2011).

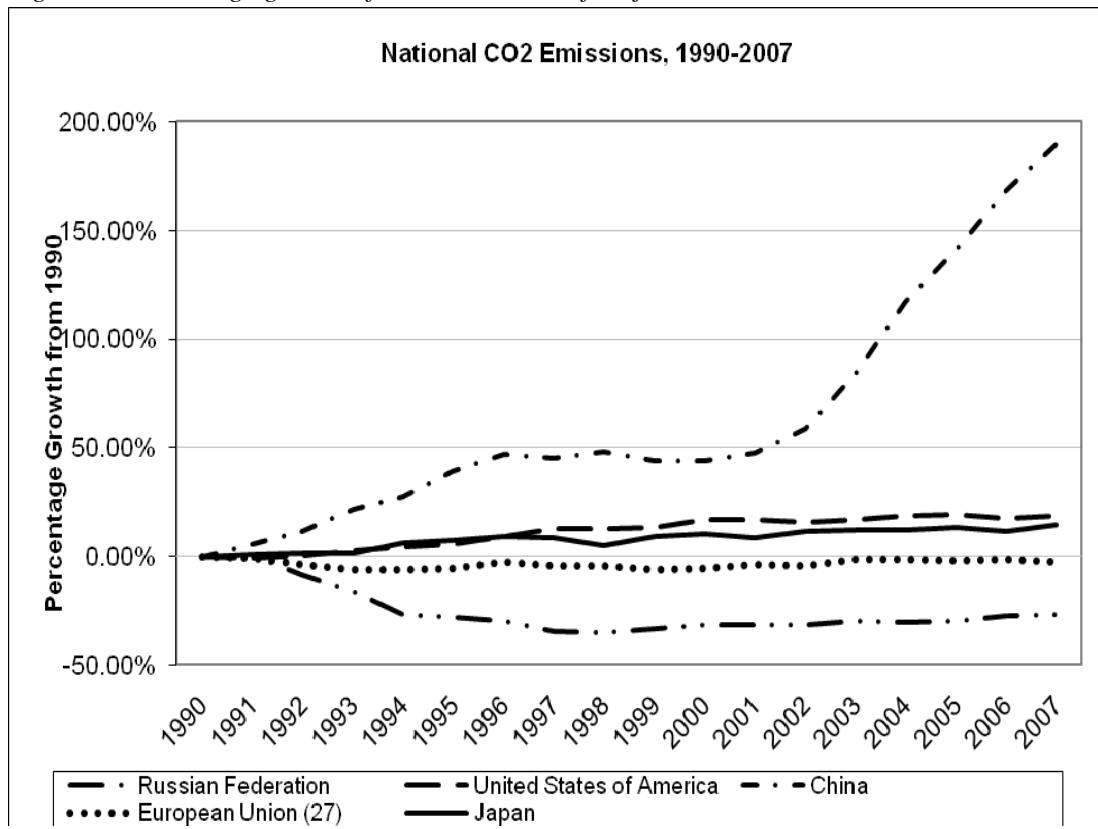
*Figure 3. Targets for developing countries (answer to the question which developing countries should take up emission reduction targets) relative to industrialized countries (question about size of aggregate emission reductions by Annex I countries).*



advancement made at Copenhagen in engaging the US and China with ambitious emission reduction targets, along with Russia's traditional strategy to keep maximum flexibility and avoid costly commitments. With regard to Europe, the targets that Russia agreed upon in the Copenhagen Accord's Annex of 15-25 percent of 1990 level approaches in its upper bound that of the EU's strategy (Westphal 2010), albeit at a different cost implied. Korppoo, Sakonov and Lugovoy estimate that Russia will reach 79 percent of the 1990 level by 2020 if the Russian economy recovers from the economic crisis by 2011 and returns to high growth of 6.5 percent per year. If plans for modernization and improved energy efficiency start being implemented, Russian emissions will reach a maximum of 73 percent of 1990 levels by 2020, implying high economic growth (6.5 percent per annum in 2012-2020) and relatively stable energy balance. In the case of lower GDP growth, GHG emission will unlikely exceed 65 percent of 1990 levels by 2020 (Korppoo, Sakonov, Lugovoy 2010).

Russia further maintains that its contribution to climate mitigation is disproportionate compared to other emerging countries which have been exempt from any binding commitments. Its argument justifying its position on broad participation and modest emission target is illustrated by Figure 4 below, which shows that apart from the EU, Russia is the only major emitter that has maintained GHG emissions below 1990 levels even after 1998 when economic growth resumed. The rate of emission increase, reflected by the slope of the lines on Figure 4, also appears one of the lowest, particularly if compared to that of China or the US, which are the main reference points in Russia's current negotiations position.

*Figure 4. Percentage growth of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of major economies*



*Source of data: World Resources Institute, 2011*

Prestige and foreign policy considerations have also influenced the Russian position on carbon sinks and financial assistance. According to the Minister of Economic Development, the Kyoto Protocol has failed to take the Russian forests, and thus its contribution to climate stabilization, fully into account (Korppoo 2009). Russia has also assumed the role of a donor to the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund. A few Russian experts have already been cited as commenting that the USD 200 million which the country agreed to contribute to the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund may be earmarked for assisting the poorer nations of the former Soviet Union (Korppoo and Spencer 2009; Korppoo 2010), thus again linking climate cooperation to its broader foreign policy objective of maintaining soft dominance in the immediate post-Soviet neighbourhood (Trenin 2010). In this way, Russia manages to balance among its varying interests and identities (G8 member, rapidly growing economy, ambitious great power). It commits sufficiently to curb criticism and to support the prospects of climate cooperation, while not burdening itself too much as to limit its options and space to manoeuvre.

#### *4. Negotiation Strategy: Stable Coalitions and Waiting for the Best Deal*

Russia maintains a stable coalition with the Umbrella Group countries, a strategy that has not changed much compared to the Kyoto Protocol negotiations. Analysis of the Earth Negotiations Bulletins' protocols between COP-13 in Bali (2007) and COP-15 in Copenhagen (2009) indicates that Russia has most often agreed with statements made by Australia and Canada, supporting approximately 3 percent of the statements of these countries (Table 1). Umbrella group countries, most notably Japan, Australia, Canada and Ukraine, are in turn most frequently in agreement with Russia and to a lesser extent the US. However, compared to its coalition partners or other countries with relative active negotiations strategies such as India, Russia has taken an overall passive role in the negotiations (Charap and Safonov 2010). The data in Table 1 shows that Russia's support for the statements of key coalition partners including Japan, Ukraine, or New Zealand has been approaching zero. By ways of comparison, India has supported 15 percent and 10 percent of the statements of its main negotiation partners, China and Brazil, respectively (Michaelowa and Michaelowa 2011 in this volume), while Japan and Australia have supported 12.86 percent and 11.48 percent of Russia's statements, respectively. The relatively passive stance taken by Russia speaks again of a certain cautiousness to commit. At the same time, it very clearly aligns with actors with common interest in requiring greater commitment by developing countries and less ambitious commitments to industrialized countries. The Earth Negotiations Bulletin data also supports the expectation that Russia would tend not to align with other BRIC countries (Brazil, India, China) as it does not share their focus on historical or per-capita equity or developing countries' insistence on significant financial transfers from the North to the South. It is therefore not surprising that BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and

China) emerged as more relevant in the 2009 Copenhagen negotiations (Michaelowa and Michaelowa 2011).

*Table 1. Joint statements with Russia during public negotiation session*

	Joint statements in % of partner's statements	Joint statements in % of Russia's statements
Australia	2.81	11.43
Canada	2.78	8.57
EU	1.3	10
USA	1.26	4.29
Japan	0.03	12.86
Ukraine	0.5	10
New Zealand	0.02	5.75

*Source: Coding of ENB reports, see Weiler 2011, Annex 1.*

Despite these divergences, Russia is successfully using its multiple identities to support its negotiations position. It wants to reclassify itself as an emerging (transition) economy like other countries of the G-77. At the same time, it wants to be treated as a major economic power worthy of its G-8 membership. Finally, it seeks to avoid being locked into a commitment that could be potentially burdensome and restrictive on growth. The Umbrella Group combines well all these goals and aspirations by including the US, which Russia continues to view as its great power counterpart, and other major economies which are equally wary of taking up climate responsibilities. So far, no alliance based on allegiance to the former Soviet bloc is noticeable. Apart from Ukraine, which is part of the Umbrella Group, and Belarus, which have agreed somewhat often with Russia's oral statements, other former Soviet countries have rarely or never made joint statements with Russia.

In terms of negotiation strategy, Russia's current approach is perhaps best described as waiting for the best deal. In the absence of any clear commitments from other key actors, the government prefers to avoid making premature vows. While Russia has recognized the differential vulnerability of different parts of its vast territory to climate change and the need for collective action at the global level, it maintains that such collective action will be meaningless in the absence of commitments by all major emitters and particularly the US and China. It furthermore expects some short and medium term benefits from global warming associated with the opening of Northern shipping routes and possibilities for further oil exploration as reflected in a recent deal with Exxon. While Russia has signalled willingness to contribute to global emission stabilization by drawing on its substantial scope for energy efficiency improvements, modernization and development of renewable energy, it remains primarily concerned with maintaining a wide margin for economic growth, and therefore demands low stringency of emission reduction targets.

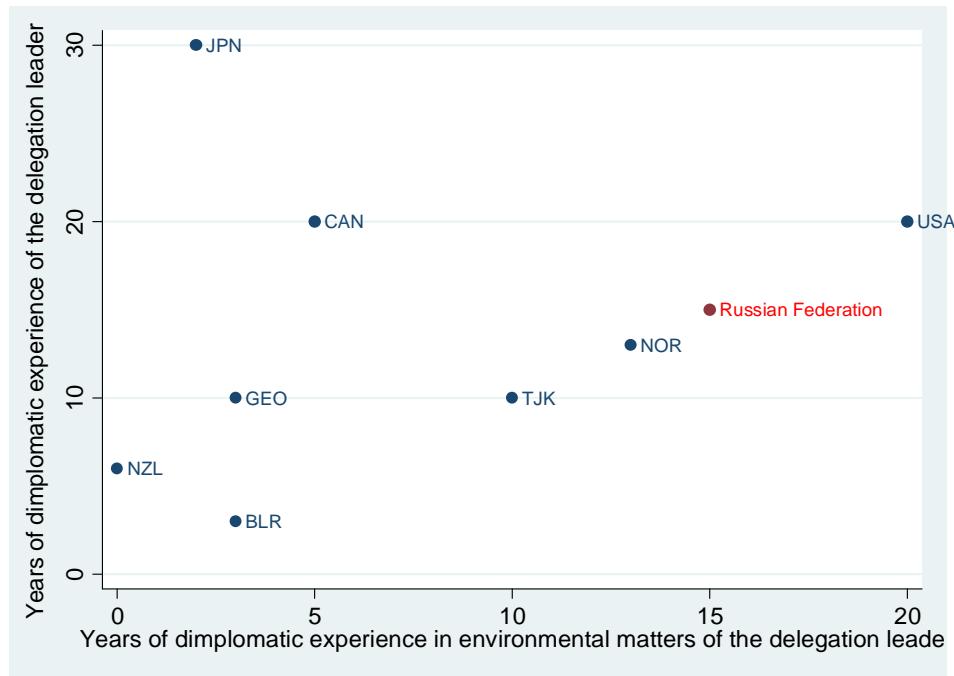
The primacy of strategy in fine-tuning the Russian position and the contingency of its strategy is reflected in the country's submission to the

Copenhagen Accord. Its proposed target of 15-25 percent is broad and flexible as well as conditional on its fundamental demand for the participation of all major emitters along with taking into account the absorptive capacity of its vast forests. By contrast, the submission omits an earlier demand entertained by Russia for the transfer of unused emission allowances from the first commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol. Russia has dropped, at least temporarily, a condition which would further diminish the stringency of the proposed targets, but which is less likely to be met given that major emitters are clearly moving away from the Kyoto Protocol framework. At the same time, Russia has maintained its strong demand for full accounting of its forests' absorptive capacity as problems in claiming credits for forest sinks are unlikely given the strong political support for the REDD+ instrument as a mechanism to engage major emerging countries.

In other words, Russia has neither made any strong promises nor resorted to any strong threats yet. Its demand that other emerging economies and the United States join the international regime has allowed it to leave the heavy lifting to others while keeping its complete freedom to manoeuvre (Korppoo 2010). It has also opted to let everyone guess what its next move will be. For example, Alexander Bedritsky, an adviser to the President, has commented that Russia will endorse a global deal only if it is allowed to transfer its permits. At the same time, Arkady Dvorkovich, an aide to the President, has declared that Russia wants to abandon the Kyoto Protocol and has nothing to carry over (Korppoo, Sakonov and Lugovoy 2010). While these contradicting statements may indicate conflicting views within the Kremlin or lack of bureaucratic coordination, they may also be interpreted as aiming to keep the country's tactical options open in order to negotiate a more favourable deal.

Russia's strategizing and fine-tuning of position in the course of the negotiations is supported by a relatively large delegation comprised of experienced negotiators, which according to negotiations theories strengthens the bargaining power of states via 'internal' resources (Bailer 2010). Our research reveals that of the 58 countries for which systematic interview data had been collected, Russia was among the 15 countries with the largest delegations: 119 (pre-COP document)/ 81 (post-COP document) sent to the COP in Copenhagen. This was a mid-size delegation compared to other Umbrella Group countries but larger than the delegations of most emerging and developing countries apart from China, Indonesia, Bangladesh or South Africa. Probably more importantly for its negotiations capacity, the leadership of the delegation was characterized by long experience in environmental matters (15 years, see Figure 5 below), above average diplomatic experience, and inclusion of scientific experts.

*Figure 5. Diplomatic experience versus environmental experience of head of delegation, compared to other Umbrella or former Soviet Union countries.*



*Source: Coding of interview data, see Weiler 2011, Annex 1.*

It is also interesting that Russia seemed to use a mix of hard and soft negotiations strategies within the Umbrella Group and in the open negotiations. Table 2 shows that on a frequency scale of 1-9, Russia combines soft and hard strategies within a relatively narrow range around the median. There is only a slight prevalence of hard strategies in comparison to the means of the Umbrella group and the sample as a whole. While we do not have comparable data for earlier negotiations periods, the aggregate scores reported in Table 2 support observation based on qualitative analysis that Russia has moved towards including a wider range of integrative bargaining strategies that may include proposing new solutions of mutual interest or exchanging concessions for mutual benefits (Bailer 2011; Odell 2011), compared to earlier periods particularly around its siding with OPEC in the early 1990s and around the Kyoto Protocol accession when Russia advanced narrow understanding of economic interest and distributive bargaining to achieve them. As analyzed in earlier sections, we attribute this movement toward mixed and more subtle and integrative strategies of position advancement to greater recognition of the domestic economic and adaptation benefits associated with climate cooperation. The closer cooperation between the leadership of the Russian delegation to climate negotiations and the Russian President has further enabled a more positive issue linkage between advancing a positive, although cautious and easily reversible, position on climate cooperation and the foreign policy objectives of the country.

*Table 2. Hard vs. soft negotiations strategies of the Russian delegation at COP 15, compared to the sample and Umbrella Group average.*

Country	soft_strategy_group	soft_strategy_open	hard_strategy_group	hard_strategy_open
Russian Federation	4.0	4.3	5.3	4.7
Umbrella Group Mean	6.2	5.9	3.8	4.1
All Countries Mean	6.3	5.6	4.0	4.1

*Source: Coding of interview data, see Weiler 2011, Annex 1.*

Russia's relative passivity in the most recent rounds of negotiations, coupled with strongly communicated preferences primarily on two main dimensions of the agreement, participation and forests, suggests that the country still retains its traditional strategy of waiting for the other players to approach an agreement, and then decide whether to participate and on what terms (Charap and Safonov 2010; National Intelligence Council 2009). For this reason, some experts anticipate last-minute demands and issue-linkages as part of evolving negotiations strategy (Korppoo, Sakonov and Lugovoy 2010). Russia may also attempt to position itself as a swing player or to act as a broker between the West and the developing world (National Intelligence Council 2009).

### *5. Conclusion*

Russia's current position in climate negotiations reflects a promising shift toward recognizing the human-induced nature of the problem, outspoken support for global cooperation efforts, and willingness to make win-win economic and technological adjustments to mitigate its contribution to GHG emissions. This is hopeful departure from the relatively obstructionist positions the country took only ten years ago. The analysis of the Russian case thus confirms the relevance of domestic politics in shaping countries' negotiations positions as well as strategies (Bailer 2011). We observe an interesting parallel between the cases of Russia and India presented in terms of gradual position adjustment to reflect domestic benefits from the flexible mechanisms facilitated by the Kyoto Protocol, greater recognition of domestic vulnerabilities and the need of international cooperation to address them, and the role of skilful environmental leadership in linking climate cooperation to broader policy objectives. These two countries traditionally come from very different starting positions with respect to issues such as developing country participation and industrialized countries commitments. However, in both instances, there seems to be movement to include more integrative and flexible strategies than traditionally exhibited, as a consequence of interplay between international and domestic incentives.

The analysis of this paper has shown, however, that the potentially positive role Russia could play in future cooperation is highly contingent on the broader course of negotiations and in particular the positions of the US, China, the EU, and

the Umbrella Group. The analysis further illustrates the relevance of negotiations theories that emphasized the two-level interplay between international bargaining strategies and domestic politics in shaping countries' more specific preferences with respect to cooperative outcomes at any given point in time. The domestic politics leading to recognition of the vast potential for improved competitiveness via energy efficiency and the implied vulnerabilities to climate change have informed Russia's more assertive approach. This domestic policy shift enabled her to take a more prominent international position on the issue and remain relevant to the climate dialogue among the major economic powers. The combination of adopting a positive rhetoric and commitment, mixed negotiation strategy and leaving ample space for manoeuvre have contributed to a relatively high degree of negotiation success for Russia in the period since the COP in Bali 2007 examined by our project. Data presented by Weiler (2001, Annex 2 and 3) shows that Russia attained outcomes close to its preferred positions on a variety of dimensions related for example to Annex I emission reduction targets, the use of market instruments or allocation of mitigation finance. Its aggregate score for negotiation success is estimated as 77.9 on a scale of 0-100 (with a maximum of 95 for the sample, a minimum of 0 for the sample of 58 countries interviewed), ranking Russia seventh in overall success of attaining outcomes at close distance to preferences (Weiler 2011, p. 33).

The contingency of Russia's position implies that Russia's enthusiasm for climate cooperation can deteriorate quickly if the major players, most notably the US and China, drop out of the game completely. Russia is also unlikely to be pushed to accept an emission ceiling stricter than the upper level of its pledge of 25 percent below 2010 for reasons of prestige and concerns about what Russia views as unfair competitive advantage of other emerging economies. In such context, efforts by the EU or other actors to shame Russia for relatively soft pledges are likely to be counterproductive, as they could backfire if used by opponents to further climate commitments in the bureaucracy or elsewhere in the elite politics of the country to harden its position in ways that it was done during the Kyoto ratification processes. By contrast, the drivers of the Russian position and strategy imply that if large carbon emitters start to engage in club-like technological cooperation or soft emission reduction clubs, Russia is likely to be a willing player. The Russian case further suggests that linking domestic and foreign policy incentives to global climate mitigation via carbon markets, forestry programs, and instruments for technology cooperation and adaptation may be important existing vehicles for engaging other emerging markets in relatively soft but verifiable commitments.

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