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Remembering and Securitizing Climate Change in Russian and British Media

1. Introduction

In the last decades the concept of 'security' has been significantly modified. In addition to the orthodox understanding of it as military threats to state sovereignty, now we also talk about economic, human or environmental forms of security. Barry Buzan (1997: 7) argues that the environment entered the securitization discourse in the 1960s when scholars began to question the ways in which people impact the environment through often irreversible changes and how this in turn impacts on the human condition (see also Floyd 2008). Since then, the idea of environmental securitisation continued to evolve, including, the introduction of the concept of anthropogenic climate change into the political discourse at the end of the 1980s. By 1995 the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) began to hold annual international conferences dedicated to finding solutions to anthropogenic global warming, and climate change began to appear in the political and security documents of various states.

The negative consequences of climate change can undermine developed economies and bring devastation to less stable states (Mazo 2009). Climate change has already led to economic loss, rising sea levels, changes in agricultural productivity and related processes, freshwater and food scarcities, the emergence of new types of diseases, has caused environmental refugees and migration, and so on (Dalby 2013; IPCC 2013; Purvis & Busby 2004). Even though it is difficult to confirm the direct link between violent conflicts and environmental degradation, environmental change is increasingly becoming one of the factors influencing the military conflicts or at least it acts as a 'threat multiplier' (Depledge & Feaking 2012; Mazo 2009: 126).¹ As Joshua Busby notes 'even taking a narrow definition of national security, there are clearly ways in which climate change already constitutes a national security' threat (2008: 470).

Despite its overall global character, the destructive effect of climate change differs depending on geographical location. For some countries it has already become a pressing issue threatening their existence, whilst other states still treat it as just one of the features of international relations (Barnett 2003). This leads to different perceptions of climate change securitisation. For instance, the European Union (EU) or small pacific island states have become the main advocates of treating climate change as a security issue, but until very recently China paid little attention to climate problems or insisted on discussing it only 'in terms of sustainable development' (Scott 2012: 226). The attempts of European more economically advanced countries to pursue their agendas is still seen as a way to avoid the historical responsibility and shift blame for climate change onto developing countries. Overall, depending on economic and geographical characteristics, responding to climate change can be a choice between adaptation, or survival (Barnett 2003; Barnett & Adger 2007).

Even within the same political entity, such as the EU, different actors perceive the problem in different ways. The 'older' member states (e.g. Germany, France, UK) are more proactive in their move towards low-carbon economies, and take the lead in international negotiations on climate change, whilst the 'newer' members (e.g. the countries of Central and Eastern Europe) are more concerned with their economic stability and energy security. Arguably, due to these internal disagreements, the EU failed to take the lead during the climate change conference in Copenhagen in 2009.² If we look at Europe in a broader geographical context, then it shows even more disperse approaches to climate change problems. This chapter aims to demonstrate these differences through the comparative study of the Russian Federation (RF) and the UK, whose perceptions of climate change are influenced not only by geographical characteristics (territorial size, access to natural resources, climate conditions), but also by the perception of the problem influenced by the states' historical legacies. This is where the concept of memory and temporality comes into play and allows us to

¹ The connection between climate change and an open military conflict should be considered together with other social, economic and political factors (Barnett & Adger 2007: 644).

² The conference was supposed to produce a new legally binding document in its pursuit of mitigating climate change, however, this was not achieved due to major disagreements between the largest polluters as well as between developing and developed countries.

see how this very prolonged and quite obscure (for the general public) problem (climate change) is being affected by the memory of national responsibility, relations with nature and the contemporary issues of economic and social developments.

To achieve this aim, the chapter looks at the media discourse of climate change in the RF and the UK, which, arguably, are situated at opposite 'poles' of the national environmental policies development. Through the application of the Copenhagen School approach to 'securitisation' and through consideration of the temporal aspects of discourse (memory studies), the chapter examines how national news media outlets address climate change issues in terms of memory, risk and security. In order to get a clear sense of official discourse on the memory and securitization of climate change, the cases are approached by studying the news websites *RIA Novosti* and *BBC News*. Contributing to the growing body of literature on discourse analysis of climate change securitization (Detraz & Betsill 2009, Hayes and Knox-Hayes 2014, Rogers-Hayden et al. 2011), this chapter demonstrates that the British and Russian cases share multiple similarities in the way climate change risks are 'remembered' in the media discourse, especially in terms of the employment of the securitizing actor and the referent object. However, they do differ in the proposed solution to the climate change security threat with the Russian news agency paying more attention to adaptation strategies and the British media outlet concentrating on mitigation, thus yielding a difference, which has to do with the historical account of the states' climate policy and national memory of this environmental risk.

It should be noted that whilst history has some degree of objectivity (as a recollection of past events), its subjectivity is manifested through the 'connection of the past with the present' (Rusen 2008: 1) or in other words through our interpretation or our 'remembering' of the past. Where memory is seen as a selective past which is influenced by current social, economic and political processes. It is also understood here, that the national memory to some extent serves as a foundation for our individual memory practices (Phillips and Reyers 2011) where media play an important role in serving as a communicative bridge between the national past and the present, by recording the state's history they shape our national memory (Edy 1999). Therefore, it could be argued that whilst the individuals living in the studied countries will be subjected to their personal experiences in the way they perceive and understand climate change risks, they also will in some way be influenced by state practices in constructing memory on climate change and media interpretation of these practices.

The chapter begins with an introduction to the debate on securitisation and climate change which is then followed by an outline of the RF and UK's national climate policies and the discussion of the role of media in communicating climate change risks. The chapter proceeds with an analysis of the selected news items and the discussion of the results.

2. Securitising climate change

According to the Copenhagen School, securitization of any issue happens at the moment when it starts to be discussed as a security issue. It has to move from 'ordinary democratic politics' to the realm of urgency, where the 'audience' accepts this repositioning of the issue (Scott 2012: 221; Trombetta 2008). In the case of climate change it means that the problem should no longer be seen as only a matter of economic development or political disagreement, but as a source of direct threat to peoples' wellbeing and/or the safety of the state. This would 'heighten [...] the sense of urgency surrounding the issue and thereby giv[e] impetus to greater commitment and prioritization' (Scott 2012: 229; Busby 2008). Nicole Detraz (2011: 105) notes that 'framing climate change as a threat to human security, is the best option for creating policies designed to address human vulnerability to a changing climate'.

The problem here is that even though numerous studies identify a range of negative consequences of climate change, in practice it becomes quite difficult to estimate the threat from 'the collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet or the failure of the monsoon season in East Asia' (Depledge and Feaking 2012: 576) and, therefore, place climate change within the security realm. Equally, climate change is construed as part of the individual and national memory (Geoghegan and Leyson 2012) due to the unavailability of conceptualisation of global memories of climate change until recently, thus providing a contradictory system of remembering and securitizing in relation to national and cross-national memoryscapes. Despite these obstacles, the notion of security entered climate change discourse as early as 1988 when the conference titled 'The Changing Atmosphere: Implication for Global Security' took place in Toronto (Detraz 2011: 108). It became one of the

very first times when hundreds of climate scientists were able to communicate their findings and discuss them with economists and policy-makers from various countries. The 'security theme' featured in the conference's title also became one of the main messages, as has been recorded in the conference's final statement: 'unanticipated and unplanned change may well become the major non-military threat to international security and the future of the global economy' (WMO 1988). The authors of the statement urged to pay attention to the problem of environmental degradation which might lead to both political and economic instability. Thus, in comparison with other events, the discursive memory around climate change is quite short, which has impact on the process of securitization.

Some scholars do not praise this idea of moving environmental issues into the security realm and argue that the environment should be 'desecuritized' and moved to the sphere of normal politics which will lead to more constructive and productive processes of dealing with the problem (Wæver 1995), where climate change would be dealt with in a deliberative manner instead of a top-down approach of the military order. Nina Hayrynen justifies this process of de-securitization by stating that 'labelling non-military problems as security issues might cause ordinary people to remain passive [...] by using security rhetoric it is easy to legitimate almost anything' (2003: 80). For instance, by hiding behind the securitization discourse 'with its logic of imminent threat and immediate response' state officials can pursue 'short-term policies that lack long-term public support' (Hayes and Knox-Hayes 2014: 86). This way the 'shield' of securitization can be used by governments to delay their actions and responses and keep the problem only in the domain of rhetoric (the domain of memory) where the urgency and fear re-stated in numerous speeches are not transferred into actual deeds (with the exception of recursive memory actions).

Olaf Corry, partly supporting this de-securitisation concept, suggests we treat climate change from the perspective of 'risk' rather than 'security' which will allow us 'to move beyond the dichotomy of "normal" de-securitized politics versus "emergency" securitized politics' and consider 'not just existential threat-based security politics but all forms of appeals to danger and harm' (2011: 256).

3. The Russian Federation and climate change

The RF is one of the biggest Green House Gas (GHG) emitters in the world and is one of the most difficult actors in international climate change politics. For example, it had been causing obstacles in the way of developing responses to global climate change such as the Kyoto Protocol negotiations (Afionis and Chatzopoulos 2010; Andonova 2008; Buchner and Dall'Olio 2005; Korppoo 2008). However, during Dmitry Medvedev's presidency³ (2008-2012) there was a shift in the official rhetoric on climate change and even some changes in relevant domestic policies. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009, President Medvedev referred to the RF as the *leader* of GHG reduction (President of the RF website 2009). Even though he decided not to mention the fact that the RF was still among the leaders in GHG emissions, Medvedev's speech showed how the Russian Federation wanted to be perceived. Around the same time, at the federal level, the Russian Climate Doctrine (2009) was adopted. This was followed by the acceptance of the Climate Doctrine Implementation Plan (2011) and the appointment of a presidential advisor for climate change Alexander Bedritsky. This change was reinforced in March 2010 at the meeting of Russia's State Security Council which focused 'on measures to prevent threats to national security in relation to global climate change' (President of the RF website 2010). In his address to the Council, Medvedev stated that 'it cannot be forgotten that climate change can cause not only changes in the environment, but also interstate disagreements connected with energy security, use of sea routes, natural resources, deficits in water and food' (President of the RF website 2010).⁴ He further underlined the necessity to ensure the environmental security and the economic security of the country: 'We should be ready for any scenario and use it to the benefit of our economy in order to reinforce the power of our state and defend our citizens from

³ When Dmitry Medvedev came into power in 2008 and Vladimir Putin subsequently assumed the post of Prime Minister, there was a slight change towards a more liberal way of governing. Whilst in practice not much changed and Putin was still extremely influential, Medvedev was able to popularise the idea of modernisation in politics and economics.

⁴ In this case Medvedev refers mostly to the changes in the Arctic (the internationally-recognised Russian part as well as the disputed territories), which due to the active policy of other circumpolar states might threaten Russia's economic plans in the region, once again prioritising economic interests over environmental concerns.

the negative consequences of climate change' (President of the RF website 2010). Medvedev's speech indicates that climate change is mostly associated with economic risks or advantage, in case of the Arctic trade route. This connection between climate change and economic development can be seen as a positive trend for Russian climate change policy as it finally allowed state's officials to see the profitable side of dealing with climate change. However, there is a danger in diminishing the climate change problem. As David Toke and Sevasti-Eleni Vezirgiannidou notice 'the "green economy" frame is another attempt to avoid the implication that the economy will have to "sacrifice" in order to deal with climate change' (2013: 542). Following the Security Council meeting, the Deputy Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, Iurii Averianov, in his interview with *Rossiiskaia Gazeta* listed all possible security risks which climate change might bring to the RF (Kozlova 2010).⁵ Bringing climate change to the agenda of the Russian Security Council has established a relative equality between this environmental problem and other traditional security issues such as military conflicts or terrorism.

4. The UK and climate change

As regards its political discourse, the UK views itself as one of the world's leaders in terms of involvement in international climate change policy and in promoting and sustaining a successful climate policy at the national level (Harris 2012). In 2008 the UK passed 'The Climate Change Act' which committed the country to an 80 percent reduction in GHG emissions by 2050. The Act became the first of its kind in the world and 'has come to play a central role in the UK's image as a leader on climate change' mitigation (Lockwood 2013). Climate policy in the UK is well institutionalised, with the Department for Energy and Climate Change leading UK GHG reduction policy, the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs being responsible for the UK adaptation policy and the Committee on Climate Change advising the government on national GHG emissions reduction targets (gov.uk 2014). The UK was also an initiator to bring climate change to the security dimensions by insisting on including it into the UN Security Council's agenda (Depledge & Feaking 2012: 577). At the national level, since 2008 the UK has included climate change in the National Security Strategy (NSS 2008). The alarming narrative surrounding the climate change discussion within the UK Security Strategy has placed the problem not just among other security risks outlined in the document, but as one of the 'drivers of insecurities' (NSS 2008: 16) which should be at the top of the state's priorities.

In 2005 David Cameron made the environment (and climate change in particular) a central theme in his attempt of 'decontamination' of his party's brand which previously was known for its reluctance towards environmental problems (Carter 2009).⁶ However, in 2009 with the financial crisis taking its toll on the state's economy, the UK has actively pushed the climate change agenda to the background due to people becoming more concerned with growing energy costs. As Matthew Lockwood notes 'since the Climate Change Act was passed, the political visibility of the cost of climate policies in the energy sector passed through to consumers via energy bills has increased, mainly due to hostile media coverage and comment by opponents' (2013: 1343). Consequently, during the 2010 elections, climate change yielded its political appeal for the parliamentary candidates making them concentrate on other issues (Rootes and Carter 2010). However, despite the decline in interest among politicians, climate change managed to remain amongst the government's security concerns which is supported by the UK climate change risk assessment report (2012). The social and political dilemma between economic stability and environmental concerns can be illustrated through the debate around shale gas development in the UK. This unconventional fossil fuel (extraction of which involves the controversial fracking technology) provoked polar responses among UK politicians and the general public. Some people actively support the ban of shale gas extraction due to its environmentally harmful nature and negative contribution to climate change. Whilst others see it as a source of energy security and cleaner energy which will serve as a 'bridge fuel' towards the development of renewable energy sources (O'Hara et al. 2013).

The UK election campaign of 2015 again showed the political leaders' ambiguous attitude towards climate change. In February 2015 the representatives of the Coalition government, David Cameron and Nick

⁵ For example, damage to buildings and infrastructure situated in permafrost (due to the prolonged thawing season), depletion of water resources, increasing risks of floods.

⁶ In 2006 the Conservative party launched a new logo depicting a green tree to emphasize its commitment to the environment and equality.

Clegg, and the leader of the opposition, Ed Miliband, signed a cross-party pledge on climate change (Harrabin 2015). Simultaneously, the environment was downplayed throughout the election campaign by all parties (even, relatively speaking, by the Green Party) (Evans 2015) with priorities, once again, given to the economy. However, in summer 2015 the Conservative Party—now having a majority in the parliament and being free from the constraints of their previous coalition with Liberal Democrats—made a U-turn on their previous environmental pledges. For example, the Coalition government introduced general subsidies to encourage households to install solar panels; in August 2015 the Conservative government decided to slash the ‘feed-in tariff’ by nearly 90 per cent, a decision, which *The Daily Telegraph* reported as ‘the end of Britain’s “solar revolution”’ (Dominiczak 2015). The newspaper, which supports the Conservative party, critiqued Cameron for his attitude to environmental issues by citing him saying ‘get rid of the green crap’ to his aides in 2013. These comments emphasize the complex nature of official discourse over climate change in the UK and demonstrate how economic concerns often take over environmental ones.

Similar processes but on a different scale were observed in the latest developments of Russian climate policy. In 2010 the RF confirmed that it will not be a part of the second commitment period to the Kyoto Protocol. The official position is that Russia will support a future agreement only if it follows the principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ (Bedritsky 2014). Since 2014 the Russian political situation has created unfavourable conditions towards environmental policies, with priorities placed on the international tension provoked by the Ukrainian conflict and the subsequent economic crisis. In 2015 the Russian government withdrew its support for the energy efficiency plans and have set quite modest goals for carbon emission reductions (25-30 percent to the baseline year of 1990) (Davydova 2015). At the same time the latest Russian *Assessment Report of Climate Change and its Consequences* confirmed the country’s vulnerability to the negative consequences of climate change by stressing that the average temperature in the RF has been increasing faster than the global temperature rise (Roshydromet 2014).

The UK and Russia’s oscillating interest in climate change has to be considered in relative terms with regards to the states’ own previous history of climate policy. Despite climate change’s prolonged and constantly increasing damaging character, it fails to maintain the states’ constant attention. Whilst other more acute and, from policy-makers’ points of view, more timely problems such as elections, military conflicts or economic slowdowns catch the attention of power elites and the general public. In both the Russian and British cases at some point in time the state has come to the decision to bring climate change into the security realm, however, again in both cases climate change could not compete with economic and energy security and has to be either framed within these concepts or ‘lose’ to them. The danger here is that when climate change is interlinked with economic or energy security concepts, then the perception of the problem can be altered drastically from seeing ‘climate change as a threat’ to ‘environmental policy as a threat’ (Trombetta 2008: 596). The latter contributes to the further perception of economic vulnerability which provokes political actors to ensure the stability of the situation. The specific steps might include modest commitments under the international agreements, low carbon taxes or state support of fossil fuels industries. Whilst, as has been stated before, treating climate change as one of the biggest problems for the state is more likely to stimulate pro-active responses from the interested parties. Arguably, governments have a task of reacting to current events and short-term problems which are in the centre of media discourse (the effect of short-term memory), whereas climate change belongs to the doing of long-term memory events, thus requiring a specific mode of representation in media.

5. Communicating climate change

The significant role of mass media in popularising the environmental risk has been outlined by Ulrich Beck, as follows: ‘[risks] can be changed, magnified, dramatized or minimized within knowledge, and to that extent, they are particularly open to social definition and construction’ (1994: 23). Since 2005 the topic of ‘social construction’ of climate change through media coverage has generated significant interest among scholars.⁷ Indeed media play an important role in popularising climate change and the risks associated with it. However, climate change is traditionally considered to be a difficult topic for journalists to write about.

⁷ See, for example, Antilla 2005; Bell 1994; Boykoff 2008; Boykoff & Boykoff 2007; Butler & Pigeon 2009; Carvalho 2005; Carvalho & Burgess 2005; Doyle 2011; Doulton & Brown 2007; Lewis & Boyce 2009; Liu et al. 2011; Lockwood 2009; Olausson 2009; Pidgeon 2009; Poberezhskaya 2014.

Regarded as an 'unobtrusive issue' (Shanahan & Good 2000) climate change creates additional barriers for journalists. For instance, 'obtrusive issues' such as financial crises, directly influence people's lives and therefore create a clear picture of their negative impact. Climate change, being quite abstract in terms of its impact on our everyday activities, puts pressure on journalists to draw links between 'global warming, weather extremes, flooding and human activity' (Gavin et al. 2011: 433). In this process journalists have to negotiate local and global concerns as well as shape the collective memory of environmental risks by "'lean[ing]" on the past in order to give meaning to the present' (Zandberg 2010: 7).

This issue relates to the overall problem of journalists determining the news value of climate change topics, where to be published topics need to have personal relevance for the audience, a dramatic edge, clear storyline and, preferably, be supported by authoritative information sources (Boykoff & Boykoff 2007; Carvalho 2007; Poberezhskaya 2015). Being such a prolonged scientific phenomenon with a highly politicised nature, climate change often struggles to meet these criteria. Even the characteristic of high-quality journalism – the representation of all views on the subject matter – creates a controversial situation where one side is supported by the majority of the scientific community, and another by a small but very vocal group of climate sceptics or deniers. Lately, this has become a less significant problem in the West (Boykoff 2007; Doulton & Brown 2007; Grundmann & Scott 2014), but it still can be found in countries like the RF where the climate change debate is lagging behind (Poberezhskaya 2015). Finally, the media coverage of climate change problem is influenced by politics. Media attention peaks around major political events (e.g. international conferences on climate change) (Schafer et al. 2014) and climate discourse is often shaped by socio-political factors where media 'remain within the broad ideological parameters of free-market capitalism and neo-liberalism' (Carvalho 2005: 21). The latest advancement of new media offers a chance for more diverse climate discourse in a particular temporal framework. As information on the internet cannot be deleted—the so-called 'web-presentism'—it makes memory of past environmental events readily available for use, thus blurring the boundaries between short-term and long-term memory events. In addition new media allows for the diversification of the sources of information and the diversion of attention from politicians and the scientific community towards civil society groups and the general public (Hestres 2014; O'Neil & Boykoff 2011). But, as studies demonstrate, the freedom of the internet leads to some negative outcomes, for example, by stimulating another wave of climate scepticism and questioning of the scientific findings (Martin & Rice 2014).

Media outlets can be considered as the 'collective memory agents' (Zandberg 2010: 7) whose approach to recording information creates and re-creates the way climate change is remembered and consequently perceived by the audience. Currently, there are a very limited number of people who have not heard of global warming (World Bank 2010), however, for many it remains an abstract idea with unclear causes and consequences where mass media maintain their prominent role in 'translating' climate change risks. The media has a capacity to connect people's scattered recollections of various weather events which they experience throughout their lives and form the concept of climate 'normality' (for their geographical region) or 'abnormality'. The latter then can be evolved into the idea of climate as a 'threat' to personal or national security.

6. Methodological considerations

Barry Buzan states that in order for issues to become securitized 'they have to be staged as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor' (1997: 13). Buzan develops his argument by stating that 'the process of securitization is what in language theory is called a speech-act. It is not interesting as a sign referring to something more real, it is the utterance itself that is the act: by saying it something is done' (1997: 14). This research project suggests analysis of media discourse as a representation of a 'speech-act'. Jarrod Hayes and Janelle Knox-Hayes in their application of discourse analysis to their EU-US comparative study demonstrate that the way climate change is connected with the concept of security can explain states' responses to climate threats (2014). Whilst Tee Rogers-Hayde et al. through the application of critical discourse analysis conclude that by bringing climate change to energy security realm has provided justification for advancing nuclear energy in the UK (2011). These findings feed directly into the idea that different 'conceptualisations of climate security' lead to 'different responses to climate change as a security concern' (McDonald 2013: 42). Hence, studying and understanding the security discourse within the climate change debate allows us to achieve a greater comprehension of various climate policies.

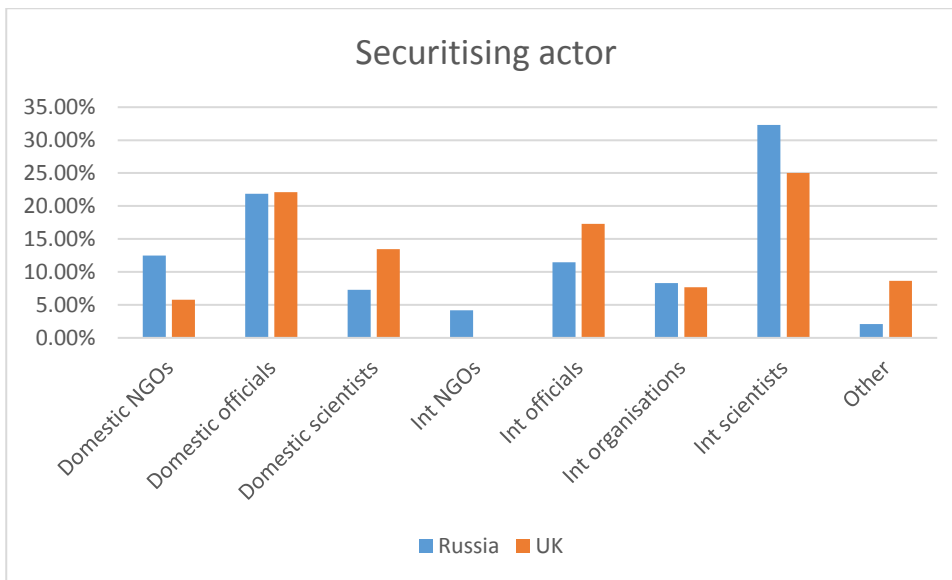
In order to get the closest sense of official positions on the securitization of climate change, I approach the Russian state-owned news agency *RIA Novosti* and the British *BBC News* which predominately reproduce the central and the most popular discourses in the country (it is accepted that the selected media's ideological stands and relations to the official discourse do differ to some extent). Even though *RIA Novosti* and *BBC News* belong to different types of media (with the former operating as a news agency, and the latter being part of a larger broadcasting corporation), both reveal how notions of memory, security and climate change, are articulated by respective government, find their way into media discourse. In both cases only the news which were published on their publicly accessible websites (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news> and <http://ria.ru/>) were analysed. The data was collected from 1st June 2013 until 31st May 2014. A random sample of 100 articles from each source included news stories which, firstly, contained extensive reference to the subject of climate change or global warming (not just mentioning it among other discussed issues) and, secondly, referred to the topics of security. A combination of the following keywords was used: 'climate change, global warming, risk, threat, security, danger'. Acknowledging that the selected number of articles is of an arbitrary nature, the study pursues an explorative task of determining existing security themes in the media discourses of respective countries and it does not aim to generalise its results. However, it is believed that the conducted analysis provides a strong foundation for future studies.

By applying the methodological approach of discourse analysis (van Dijk 1991), the linguistic characteristics of the texts were assessed: choice of vocabulary, structures of the sentences, use of metaphors and so on. This allowed for the analysis of news dedicated to climate change in terms of the way this environmental issue is associated with the concept of security. James Gee (2011: ix) states that 'anyone who engages in their own discourse analysis must adapt the tools they have taken from a given theory to the needs and demands of their own study', hence, this research study concentrates on the particular elements of the analysed media discourse. In each article the following components of a 'speech act' were identified: a securitising actor (who in the news articles connects climate change with the security concept), a referent object (who is in the article presented as a victim or an object of climate threat) and also what response is proposed within the studied text (adaptation or mitigation). Within each of the elements a number of relevant categories were identified, which are presented with the findings in the following sections

7. Identifying the 'securitising actor' in the news discourse

Both UK and Russian media outlets refer to a diverse range of actors when climate change is addressed as a memory and security issue. During the coding process eight categories were identified: international and domestic officials (including various rank politicians), international and domestic scientists, NGOs, community members and international organisations (see Table 1).

Table 1. Percentage of the various types of securitising actors in the studied media outlets



The identified actors would either directly refer to climate change as a memory and security issue, or allude to its destructive consequences. The legitimacy of these information sources which allows them to act as securitising actors comes from either their official position (e.g. members of the government or parliament), their knowledge/expertise (scientists/activists) or personal experience of climate change threats (community members). There are several interesting findings which were discovered in this part of the analysis. Both *RIA Novosti* and *BBC News* coverage was dominated by scientists as the media outlets' main securitising actors. One of the reasons behind these results is that in 2013-2014 three Working Group reports for policymakers (as part of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report) were released. They provided more evidence of human induced climate change and its already observed consequences, such as melting of polar ice and a subsequent rise in sea levels as well as its potential risks (IPCC 2013). These events jolted our memory of climate change manifestations and altered the public's attitude to them. However, the media outlets do differ in the way they utilise scientific data. Whilst *BBC News* predominately quotes the opinions of the domestic scientific community, the Russian news agency concentrates on international sources. The difference can be explained by the history of national climate science. The UK, being at the front of climate research, is famous for its very strong institutionalisation of climate change studies (Hulme and Turnpenny 2004). Russian scientists, although greatly contributing to the world's research on climate change (e.g. Aleksander Voeikov, Michael Budyko, Yuri Izrael or 14 Russian authors of the latest IPCC report), have a history of either encountering barriers in the form of the rather uncooperative government, being torn apart by disagreement over the anthropogenic nature of climate change and its consequences for the country or generally having a feeling of mistrust towards journalists community and sometimes being reluctant to communicate their findings and ideas (Poberezhskaya 2015; Wilson Rowe 2013). Russia's preference of international science over domestic science could also be explained by the country's overall perception of its role in global politics. Constantly trying to re-establish itself as an important geopolitical player, the RF seems to be in persistent need of external confirmation: in this case confirmation by the global scientific community of what climate change means for the world and subsequently for Russia. Once again, we are encountering the influence of memory or temporality where the contemporary discourse of the problem has to be considered within the longer historical context of Russian and British political history and climate science.

With regards to the official figures performing the role of securitizing actors, the following difference has been observed. In the Russian case, in 13 of the 100 articles studied, the Russian Ministry for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters proclaimed the danger of climate change. In four articles the exact same information was reproduced with claims that 'risks of emergency situations, due to the process of global climate change and economic activity, carry significant threats to people and the state's economy' (e.g. RIA Novosti 2013a). Due to the high authority of the Ministry of Emergencies in Russia, the fact that it confirmed the dangers of this environmental problem is a very clear signifier of climate change entering the securitisation process (at the same time, media have played a critical

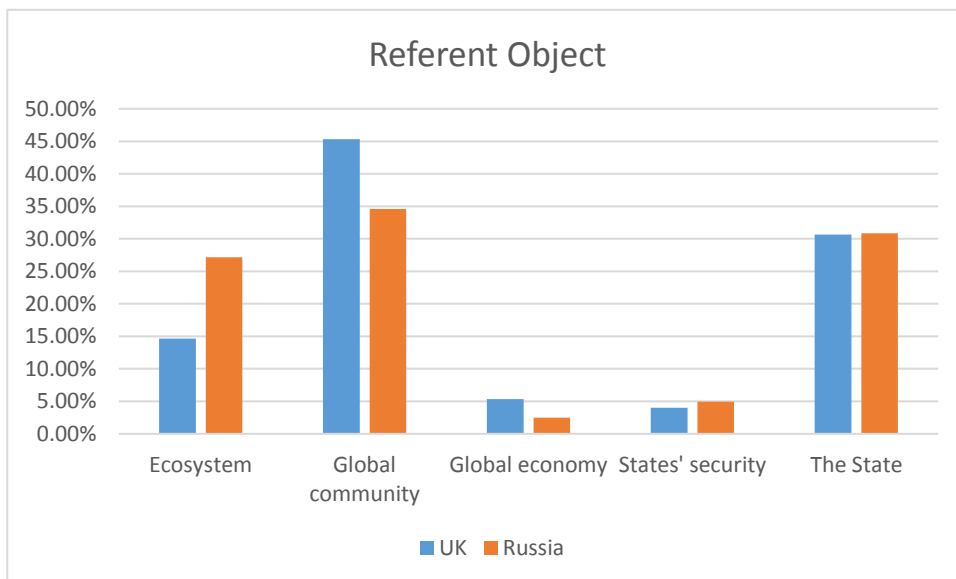
role in inscribing climate change events such as the Novorossiisk floods of 2002 into the national memory, therefore creating a singular space of memory and trauma). This official institution is important not only because it is responsible for ensuring the protection of the state against natural disasters, but also because it is closely connected to Russia’s overall security policy. For example, in 2012 Sergey Shoygu who served as the Head of the Ministry of Emergencies for 11 years, was removed from this position and appointed as Minister of Defence. In the British media outlet, the official sources represented a range of political actors in the country starting with the PM David Cameron, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change Ed Davey, and the Leader of the Opposition, Ed Miliband representing all major political parties in the country. It can be argued that whilst in the Russian case the voice of ‘domestic officials’ is quite unified, in the UK we can witness the example of how *BBC News* pursues its conventions and represents a wide political spectrum in climate coverage.

Overall, contrary to the expectations which stem from our knowledge of the political and media systems of these two countries, both *BBC News* and *RIA Novosti* follow the same pattern in identifying securitising actors in their coverage of climate change by giving priority to a scientific community which is then followed by ‘domestic officials’, whilst representatives of civil society and international organisations play a somewhat less significant role. The aspect of temporality was evident in the rhetoric of climate change commemoration among the analysed securitizing actors where environmental risks were interpreted within the states’ scientific traditions and related to the present manifestation of climate change in order to ensure relevance for the target audience.

8. Identifying the ‘referent object’ in the news discourse

During the analysis of *RIA Novosti* and *BBC News*, the identified ‘referent objects’, which are proclaimed to be under threat by the securitising actors, were divided into five categories: ecosystem, global community, global economy, states’ security (any state besides the UK and Russia), and all references to the UK (by *BBC News*) and the RF (by *RIA Novosti*) were put into the category – ‘the State’.

Table 2. Percentage of the various types of the referent objects of securitisation in *BBC News* and *RIA Novosti*.



As can be seen in table 2 both national media outlets followed the same pattern. The greatest concern was related to the fate of the ‘global community’ – how will humanity survive the negative consequences of climate change, which is a long-term memory effect. Whilst *BBC News* mostly concentrated on particular events such as a typhoon in the Philippines, *RIA Novosti* provided more general discussion of the threats posed by climate change within the context of the next climate conference or a global agreement on climate change. Possibly, again due to the influence of the publication of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, in both cases great attention was paid to the threat to people’s well-being and economic development enacted by

the potential shortage in food supply. For example, BBC environmental reporter Matt McGrath (2014a) claims that ‘food security is not just about developing countries’, but also the leaders of the economic and socially developed states (e.g. Japan) have to figure what to do about it. Looking at the whole world as an object of climate change threat is understandable and quite logical due to the nature of this problem. However, it can be argued that by distancing it from the audience and speaking about more general problems of drought, floods, food shortage (without making the connection with the reader’s specific needs and fears) it can make climate change seem irrelevant to people’s everyday problems (McManus 2000), either because it is happening too far away or it is not happening yet (so it is perceived as a problem of the future).

With regards to the category of ‘the States’ security’, it has been noted that a few articles, which were coded under this title, have shown an interesting tendency. The UK news mostly discussed the vulnerability of the poor states and potential disappearance of them due to sea level rise or the inability to fight extreme weather events (for example, Siddle’s (2013) article on Kiribati island). Whereas the Russian news have talked about states’ security in a traditional way of discussing potential links between climate change and the war with some articles referring to the research studies conducted by the international scholars on linking climate change and conflicts in Africa as well as an overall connection between military conflicts in human history and climatic changes (RIA Novosti 2014a; Telishev 2013).

Table 2 indicates, there is a slight difference between UK and Russian news coverage in terms of designating the security referent object. For example, Russian news media dedicated more articles to the dangers imposed on the global ecosystem (degradation of water systems or negative impacts on non-human animal life, whereas almost half of Russian media coverage discussed either the overall fragility of the Arctic or its animals (in particular polar bears)). The British news more often discussed the concerns of the global community (for instance, people struggling with extreme weather events in various places, environmental refugees, health risks and so on). This finding can be a sign of a slight difference in the media outlets’ vision of climate change risks. Going back to the historical differences in Russian and British climate policies discussed above, it has been revealed that in the UK climate change as a security risk has entered the political discourse much earlier and has even managed to establish itself in national legal documents. Therefore, climate change has trespassed the territory of national memory and security as not only a threat to the state’s natural environment, but also as a danger to human security. In the Russian case, the climate debate is still evolving within both political and public discourses and whilst it might be difficult to explain how a ‘warmer climate’ can be seen as a danger for northern countries, it is much easier to refer to Russia’s beloved Arctic and its wild life which play an important part in Russian official discourse (Khrushcheva and Poberezhskaya 2016).

BBC News and *RIA Novosti* conveyed worries about the dangers imposed by climate change to their respective countries. In both cases the main drive for the rising security concerns was a number of extreme weather events which had happened in the RF and the UK over the studied period. Even though, in most cases journalists were very careful in linking certain episodes of ‘bad weather’ to climate change (e.g. McGrath 2014b), the floods and storms in the RF and the UK have triggered an alarming coverage. This type of coverage has arguably led to an increase in the ‘news value’ (Harcup and O’Neill 2001) of climate change by making it more relevant to the audience in terms of its geographical location (climate change is affecting ‘your’ country) and time (underlining the urgency of addressing climate change problems). For instance, in one of the articles for *BBC News*, journalist Ross Hawkins quotes the political leader of Green Party, Natalie Bennett: ‘This is an emergency situation we’re facing now’ (2014). At the same time, *RIA Novosti* (2014e) raises the alarm that ‘climate change has already led to a significant increase in the number of large scale natural disasters in Russia’. Interestingly, in one of the studied articles, *RIA Novosti* refutes the opinion of the Russian Minister of Agriculture Nikolay Fedorov who stated that climate change would be beneficial for Russian agriculture. By quoting a representative of the WWF-Russia, the news article concludes that whilst the RF will not suffer as much as more southern states, the positive consequences will pass very quickly and the Russian agricultural industry should be ready for substantial losses (Dobrovidova 2013). In some way the Russian news agency acts as an opposition force by indirectly critiquing the opinion of the Russian Minister, something which the *BBC* does not have to do due to the existing political spectrum. This is particularly interesting, because of the official status of *RIA Novosti* and its pro-governmental stance.

In both cases the economic security of the states was also discussed. Russian articles mostly re-stated information on current and potential economic losses, and in the British news the problem of climate change regulations threatening the state's energy and economic security was touched upon (e.g. Harrabin 2013a, 2013b). Both *BBC News* and *RIA Novosti* often refer to the vocabulary carrying connotation of security threats (e.g. climate change dangers, imposed threats, risks and so on)⁸, but the Russian titles are more alarmist and negative. For instance, 'climate change is killing thousands of penguin chicks yearly'⁹ (RIA Novosti 2014c), 'the past year reminded of possible large-scale cataclysms due to climate change'¹⁰ (RIA Novosti 2014d), 'global warming is threatening nuclear waste land fields in Novaya Zemlya'¹¹ (RIA Novosti 2014b), 'climate change led to ticks' invasion in Russia'¹² (Ermachenkov 2013). In one of the analysed *RIA Novosti* articles, the definition of climate security has been provided to include the health of the population, droughts, floods, forest fires, degradation of permafrost, the upset of the environmental balance, spread of infections, and increase in expenses of electricity use for the air-conditioning during the summer time (RIA Novosti 2013b). The alarming coverage of climate change is a good way of producing a dramatic story line and attracting the attention of the broader audience as well as moving the topic up the hierarchy of perceived security risks. But it can also trigger a feeling of disbelief ('it is too bad to be real') (Poberezhskaya 2015) or, as has been discussed earlier, similarly to the negative impact of securitisation, alarming coverage can lead to a passive response from the audience ('it is too bad, so there is nothing we can do'). This observed difference can also be related to the states' visions of the possible solutions of the problems, which is discussed in the next section.

The observed patterns reveal that, on the one hand, the climate change problem is of global character (the negative consequences of which do not acknowledge states' borders), but on the other, journalists desire to connect the problem with the audience's interests, thus putting into conflict local and global memories of climate change events. Even though the consequences of climate change include global economic degradation, current or potential financial losses are mostly looked at (by both media outlets) through the prism of their nation states and their memories.

8. Identifying the 'solution' in the news discourse

Traditionally the responses or the 'solution' to climate change have been divided into two grand categories – mitigation of climate change and adaptation to its consequences. Mitigation aims to deal with the causes of climate change (such as human induced GHG emissions or de-forestation) and adaptation suggests steps towards reducing our vulnerability towards the negative consequences of climate change (UNFCCC 2014). Hence, most of the proposed solutions to the climate change security threat have fallen within the adaptation or mitigation grouping.

Table 3. Percentage of the various types of proposed solutions in *BBC News* and *RIA Novosti*

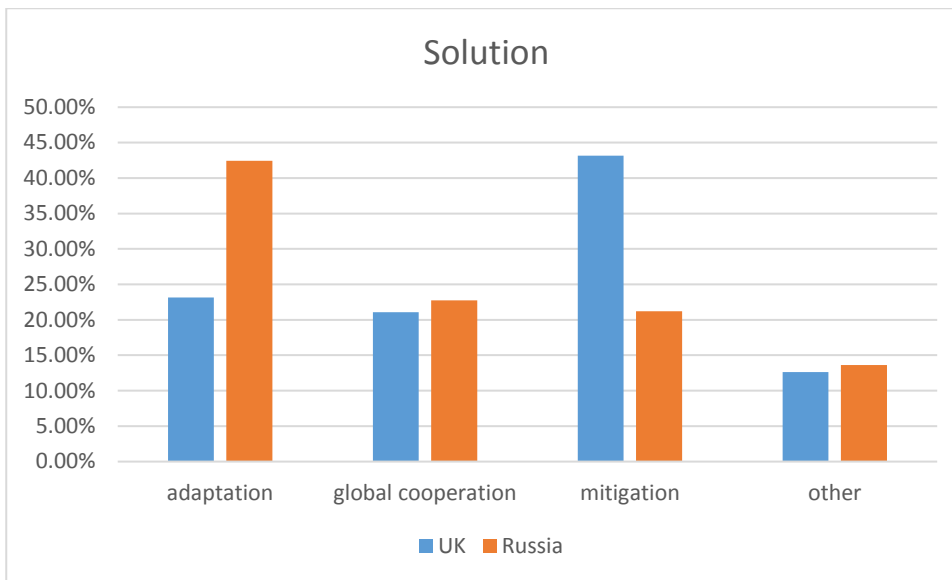
⁸ In Russian, [opasnot' izmeneniia klimata, prinosiashchii ugrozu, risk].

⁹ [Izmenenie klimata ubivaet tysiachi ptentsov pingvinov ezhegodno – uchenye]

¹⁰ [Minuvshii God Napomnil o Vozmozhnykh Masshtabnykh Kataklyzmakh iz-za Izmeneniia Klimata – VMO]

¹¹ [Global'noe Poteplenie Ugrozhaet Radioaktivnym Svalkam na Novoi Zemle –MCHS RF]

¹² [Izmenenie Klimata Privelo k Nashestviu Kleshchei v Rossii]



As table 3 demonstrates, both media outlets have devoted a fair amount of attention to processes related to adaptation and mitigation, but clear preferences between the two can be observed. *BBC News* has mentioned or discussed the mitigation steps twice as often as *RIA Novosti*. Among the proposed solutions is the development of the renewable energy sector (in the UK and worldwide), switching to the more extensive use of gas instead of coal or oil (e.g. there has been a heated debate on shale gas exploration) and further referencing to the global reduction in GHG emissions. It also included the debate on the UK mitigation commitments and the economic crisis which I discussed above. For instance, one of the studied articles titled 'Wavering on UK climate policy 'not justified' (Harrabin 2013b), covering the issue from different angles presents two types of security concerns – economic and environmental, which eventually lead to the different views on the solution of the problem where, on the one hand, the UK Climate Change Committee states that 'no change in global science or policy justifies a slackening of effort', whilst, on the other, the national Treasury representatives claim that they 'want to tackle climate change, but it should be done in a way that doesn't put huge costs on people's energy bills or destroys manufacturing jobs'.

RIA Novosti, on the other hand, focuses more on the adaptive measures which includes the timely anticipation and preparation for natural disasters to reduce the destructive outcomes of climate change. A number of articles were devoted to the protection of endangered species (not fighting the actual cause but taking care of the surviving populations) and adaptation of the agricultural industry. Nicole Detraz and Michele Betsill suggest that discourse of 'environmental conflict' defines the choice of policies which are 'aimed at short-term adaptation strategies as a mean of avoiding violent conflict' (2009: 306). Indeed, as has been mentioned above, Russian media coverage assumed the more extreme sense of security concern with providing more links (than its British counterpart) between climate change and open conflict or more urgent security threats. This difference in addressing climate change risks enables us to raise concerns of different potential policy approaches within these two countries. For instance, the RF, reluctant to commit to the proactive GHG emission reduction strategy, will concentrate on policies which deal with the outcomes of climate change and try to reduce the potential losses. Whilst the UK, with its relative lack of fossil fuel resources and greater GHG reduction commitments, persists in promoting the agenda of climate change mitigation.

The prioritisation of the adaptation measures over the mitigation ones can be linked with the nature of the climate change securitisation process within the studied media discourse. As it has been mentioned above, one of the most 'popular' securitising actors within the selected body of articles published by the Russian news agency was the Ministry for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters which mostly deals with the consequences of the security threats, when disasters have already taken place or are very likely to happen in the near future. Subsequently this type of 'securitising actor' would have a different perspective on the required solution to the problem. Yet further research is

needed in order to determine the exact correlation (or even causation) between the type of securitising actor and the proposed response, especially as regards national memories.

The analysis does demonstrate some similarities between the studied media sources. Both outlets pay approximately an equal amount of attention to 'global cooperation' as the solution to climate change threats. It should be noted that this category was ascribed to the news article which did not specify what exactly should be done in terms of battling the dangers of climate change, but instead the text would refer to the urgent needs of the global agreement. *RIA Novosti* and *BBC News* have also mentioned a number of solutions/responses to climate change which were grouped within the category 'other', where once more, the media outlets have demonstrated parallels in their coverage by referring to the need of informing citizens about climate change threats, facilitating and promoting climate change research and improving national climate policies.

10 Conclusion

Securitising climate change presents a problematic area in the academic debate as well as for policy makers. Political actors rely on the security discourse to achieve certain political goals, e.g to 'delegitimise opposition', 'to access the power-centralising aspect of securitisation' (Hayes and Knox-Hayes 2014: 85) or to resort to unpopular political decisions. At the same time it has been argued that bringing climate change into the security realm sometimes can be damaging to the whole process of resolving the problem of anthropogenic climate change. Creating the alarmist perception of the problem can lead to the stagnation of the public response and the re-direction of attention towards managing the negative consequences of environmental degradation rather than trying to eliminate the causes.

This analysis has demonstrated that at the level of the government discourse the RF and the UK differ in their approach to the climate change policy. However, the analysis of the two media outlets has showed more similarities than differences. In both *BBC News* and *RIA Novosti* climate change has been raised in the context of human, economic, national, water, environment, food and energy security. In both cases the threats of climate change have been proclaimed by various actors - the international scientific community, NGOs or state officials. The referent object of the securitisation process included the global ecosystem, the global community and states' security. It was particularly interesting that in both *BBC News* and *RIA Novosti*, the UK and the RF (respectively) have been addressed as a security object in almost equal proportion. The trend of similarities was also witnessed within the proposed solutions to the climate change dangers. However, in the Russian case more attention was paid to adaptation whilst in the analysed British media discourse the mitigation tools became the priority.

Malksoo argues that memory 'emerges as a vital self-identity need as it is invoked to constitute the central narrative of a state about its past in order to form a core part of its consistent sense of the self in the present' (2015: 224). If we look at the variances in media coverage from the point of view of the states' historical record (which to some extent correlates with national memory) then we can speculate how the past has pre-determined certain frames existing within the climate or environmental discourse. For instance, both countries went through the stage of rapid industrial development—the UK in the nineteenth century and the RF (as part of the USSR) in the twentieth—which induced carbon-dependent economies. In the UK this past has been accepted and even the most economic-oriented major party—the Conservatives—has tried to come to terms with it and to present a new vision of their environmental policies albeit often reversing their environmental policies in favour of the economic ones. In the Russian case, the Soviet legacy played a significant role in forming the perception of nature as something which can be sacrificed towards economic prosperity (Henry 2010). It is only with the Chernobyl nuclear disaster that the environment fully entered the official discourse (the disaster became part of the national trauma¹³, that is 'remain[ing] in the memory of all Russians as the "people's disaster' (Zykova 2007: 213) and becoming part of a narrative of

¹³ It could be argued that, at first, the Chernobyl disaster was intensified by the absence of any national memory of the catastrophic influence of a man-made environmental disaster. As Zykova (2007: 2006) points out, being convinced by Soviet propaganda of the idea of the 'safe peaceful atom', people were unprepared for such devastating consequences which slowed down some protective responses. However, later the disaster led to another extreme reaction - 'radioanxiety', a psychological stress which has shaped people's perception of nuclear technology and the environment.

ecological and man-made catastrophes; in its duration it has been as long as the discourse in the west—from the 1980s). Unlike in the British case, instead of ‘acceptance’, post-Soviet Russia has tried to distance itself from what happened in the past and divert the discussion towards the current state of the problem. Therefore, it is only logical to see the prioritisation of adaptation policies (how can we adjust our lives to survive) over mitigation policies (how should we accept the historic responsibility and try to eliminate the cause of the problem).

The question of the historic responsibility—as a form of national memory—is extremely tricky in the climate change debate, even not going deep into the ethical discussion, it leaves many controversial questions for the states to consider. In this light, even the Russian official line of ‘common and differentiated responsibilities’ becomes very obscure. Can any highly advanced European country such as the UK, ever be seen as a leader in environmental politics (considering its industrial past)? Can the ‘new state’ of the Russian Federation escape the Soviet Union’s environmental policies? If not, how should this influence Russia’s share of ‘responsibilities’? Can the current economic and social conditions be a priority in defining the state’s commitments? The temporal and mnemonic characteristics of climate change (caused in the past, worsened, and experienced in the present, but with the worst still to be seen in the future), makes finding the answers to these questions a very difficult task indeed.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the studied media coverage cannot be equated with national climate change policy. Mass media in this case are understood as the tools of communicating climate change risk and demonstrating general areas of climate related security concerns. Jorn Rusen notes that ‘the interpretation of the past serves as a means for understanding the present and expecting the future’ (2008: 3). Media can be seen as a reservoir of the collective memory of climate change risk, how the environmental problem is remembered and perceived by the general public and the political elite. Therefore, by analysing mass media, it allows us to gain an understanding of the dominant frames in climate discourse, how it is addressed from the point of view of risk and security, it also allows us to see how and why climate change security risks have been communicated at the national level and how the current representation of the problem will influence future discourse. At the same time it can be argued that the popularisation of these themes can lead to the legitimisation of certain policies and approaches (McDonald 2013). In this case, further analysis of the climate change discourse in the selected case studies will allow us to predict what actions the states are willing to take in order to deal with this environmental issue.

It is apparent, that tackling climate change requires a joint effort from all European states, therefore countries need to identify common ground where they can reach an agreement. For example, they can do it by paying greater attention to the way climate change is framed at the national level and try to approach the problem from a similar angle. Then a stronger and unified Europe has a potential to champion global environmental prosperity.

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