Cultivating A 'Green' Image: International Socialisation Theory and Russia's Climate Change Policy

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Introduction

Global problems require global solutions. This seems to hold especially true for the world-wide challenge posed by global warming and climate change. Their effective mitigation warrants a truly global response and international cooperation, supported by a shared understanding of the phenomenon of climate change and ways of fighting it. The Russian Federation, being the world's fifth biggest emitter of greenhouse gases and one of the biggest exporters of hydrocarbons (Makarov *et al.* 2017; Kochtcheeva 2021), but also home to respectively 70% and 25% of the planet's boreal and total forest reserves (UNFCCC 2016), arguably is an indispensable partner in any international constellation aimed at combatting climate change. Indeed, Russia has, in spite of the vested domestic and foreign interests it holds in not fighting climate change – the profitability and the country's dependence on its export of oil and gas, the opening up of a Northern Sea Route, and the possibility of accessing untapped resources in the Arctic shelf to name but a few – adopted several international treaties which are aimed at mitigating climate change (e.g., the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement) and has adopted pieces of domestic legislation in accordance with the stipulations of these agreements. As such, the research question that this paper will set out to answer is the following: "*What explains the Russian Federation's domestic and international efforts and commitments in the field of climate change mitigation?*"

In order to answer the above research question, the current research paper will, in the chapter reviewing Russia's climate policy, provide an overview of Russia's international and domestic commitments and efforts in the field of climate change mitigation, introduce its main research puzzle, and discuss several groups of different, but arguably incomplete, explanations of Russia's current climate policies as found in the relevant academic literature. In the chapter dealing with this paper's theoretical approach and research methods it will discuss the constructivist theory of international socialisation and the model of social influence from which it will subsequently draw its research hypothesis. In order to test said hypothesis, this paper will apply the qualitative research method of discourse analysis to a varied selection of materials pertaining to Russia's domestic and international climate policy. Following said analysis, this paper will summarise and conclude its findings and discuss their merits, limits, and shortcomings. In short, this paper has convincingly established the existence of Russian decision-makers' concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments over Russia's international and domestic climate

policy, indicating that Russia's domestic and international efforts and commitments in the field of climate change mitigation are, at least in part, caused or informed by Russia's socialisation into the international regime governing climate change mitigation and the social influence emanating from its fellow participants in that regime.

The relevance of this paper's findings is twofold: firstly, they add onto the existing (academic) knowledge of the drivers behind Russia's (or other countries') climate policy by approaching the issue from an as of yet unexploited perspective; and, secondly, they could prove useful to (inter-)national policy-makers in devising alternative strategies for enticing states, or specifically Russia, to participate in global climate change mitigation efforts. The second point can be argued to be of particular importance as the war or 'special military operation' that Russia's Armed Forces have been carrying out on Ukrainian soil since February 24th, 2022, has yet again underscored the need to more firmly embed and increase the accountability of neo-revisionist states like Russia in an international community of values and institutions of multilateral governance.

1. Reviewing Russia's Climate Policy

This chapter will, firstly, provide an overview of the international treaties on climate change adopted by Russia and the related international institutions Russia participates in as well as the domestic legislation adopted by the Russian government in accordance with and addition to these treaties. Secondly, it will present this paper's research puzzle by discussing the possible reasons as to why Russia would or should not have been interested in pursuing an active climate policy. Thirdly and lastly, it will discuss how others have accounted for this research puzzle by grouping and providing an overview of the possible answers to this paper's research question which could be discerned from the relevant academic literature. In doing so, it will draw attention to explanatory flaws and the failure of the existent academic literature to theoretically account for Russia's international and domestic commitments to curb climate change. This will lay the groundwork for introducing an approach to the research question from the angle of the constructivist theory of international socialisation and the model of social influence which will be discussed in detail in this paper's subsequent chapter.

1.1. Russia's International and Domestic Climate Policy: An Overview

The Russian Federation made its first step in fighting climate change by becoming party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 (ratified in

1994) and signing the 1997 Kyoto Protocol in 1999 but only ratifying it in 2004 due to domestic political division on the Protocol's positive and negative effects on the Russian economy and indecisiveness over what external benefits to derive from signing the Protocol (Tynkkynen 2014; Gusev 2016). Entering into force for Russia in February 2005, the Protocol, among other things, acknowledged the anthropogenic nature of climate change based on scientific consensus and committed State parties to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions to not exceed 1990 emission levels. It also allowed these same parties to "trade" their carbon emissions as set out in the Protocol's Annex on International Emissions Trading as one of the Protocol's three 'flexibility mechanisms' which also included the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation, whereby Parties are allowed invest in projects aimed at reducing GHG emissions other countries and have these reductions count towards their own commitment goals under the Protocol. The Protocol itself was divided into two commitment periods: 2008-2012 and 2012-2020 (Gusev 2016; Korppoo and Kokorin 2017). Russia only participated in the Protocol's first commitment period during which it adopted no serious domestic mitigation measures and declined to participate in the second commitment period (Gusev 2016; Korppoo and Kokorin 2017; Yagodin 2020).

Dmitriy Medvedev's Presidency (2008-2012) marked a seemingly serious shift in Russia's approach to climate change as a real problem in that it saw Medvedev's participation in the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen held between the 7th and 18th of December, 2009, during which the President announced Russia's firm position that it would strive to reduce GHG emissions regardless of an international agreement being reached at the Conference or not, as well as the Russian government's adoption of the Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation until 2020 on December 17th, 2009 (Poberezhskaya 2015; Gusev 2016).[1] The Doctrine underlined the precedence of the negative consequences of climate change for Russia over the positive ones, acknowledged climate change's anthropogenic origins, and mentioned measures such as energy efficiency and the transition to a low-carbon economy to reduce Russian GHG emissions (President of Russia 2009a). However, the

[1] To make sense of the variety of decrees and other legal instruments the Russian Government adopted to domestically mitigate climate change, Korppoo *et al.* (2015, 16) provide the following very informative passage: "In Russia, policy goals are often announced as presidential degrees [*ukaz*], with no further elaboration of the policy instruments to be used. Such tools commonly follow in the format of federal laws [*federalnyj zakon*], which require approval by the Duma. These tend to be the vehicle for establishing field-specific policy frameworks and the main choice of policy instruments. […] Ministries and/or other federal level authorities then prepare the practical rules for policy instruments and propose arrangements for monitoring as well as enforcement; such detailed elements are typically adopted in the form of government or ministerial level orders and decrees [*prikaz, rasporyazhenie*] etc." For a more detailed overview of Russian legal instruments beyond this brief description, see Nysten-Haarala (2000).

Doctrine also attracted considerable criticism from the expert community as it did not contain specific indicators, such as global parameters characterising climate change (e.g., the rise in atmospheric temperature or CO2 concentration in the global atmosphere), nor did it set any targets or measures to achieve said targets (Gusev 2016). Similarly, the plan on the Doctrine's implementation (only adopted a year and a half later in May 2011) was very general and did also not mention a GHG emission reduction target nor did it include input from Russia's business community (*Ibid*.).

In 2013, the Presidential Decree "On the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions" was adopted whereby a goal was set for 2020 to reduce Russia's GHG emissions to 75% of Russia's 1990 emission level (President of Russia 2013). This goal attracted expert criticism since Russia in 2015, due to considerable industrial contraction during the 1990s which resulted from the general economic disarray and painful market-liberalisation reforms following the dissolution of the Soviet Union (see Makarov *et al*. 2021), was, in 2012, already at 68.2% of its 1990 emission level, thus allowing for growth in emissions (Kheyskanen and Khilden 2013; Gusev 2016; Yagodin 2020). The Decree's Implementation Plan, which was adopted in April 2014, provided for the establishment of a GHG monitoring system, the assessment of reduction potential, and the establishment of measures to regulate emission levels (Government of the Russian Federation 2014). These three measures were further cemented by a Governmental Decree. This Decree, adopted in 2016, provided for the creation of an up-to-date inventory of GHG emissions – prior to this, Russia relied on aggregate data which had a two-year reporting lag (Gusev 2016) – by gradually requiring companies in a number of selected pilot regions which emit the equivalent of more than 150.000 tons of CO2 per year (for the period 2016-2017) and, as of 2017, of more than 50.000 tons to report their emissions (Government of the Russian Federation 2016).

As of then, the development and implementation of these and other international and domestic climate change mitigation policies fell under the responsibility of a number of ministries (i.e., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and the Ministry for Economic Development) as well as the Russian Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring (Roshydromet) (*Ibid*.). The latter organisation was tasked with reporting to the UNFCCC on behalf of Russia and with writing two reports on climate change and its consequences for the Russian Federation in 2005 and 2014 (see Russian Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring

2005 and 2014), which both acted as the informing basis for Russian domestic efforts to reduce GHG emissions and mitigate climate change.

In April 2016, Russia became a Party to the Paris Agreement which it ratified only in September 2019 and under which it, in line with the 2013 Presidential Decree, pledged to keep GHG emissions on the level of 70-75% by 2030 as compared to 1990 levels. This, again, evoked expert criticism as Russia's 2015 GHG emission levels were already 71% of the 1990 levels and Russia had not clearly identified an emissions peak (Gusev 2016). Under the Agreement, Russia also contributed USD 5 million to support mitigation policies in developing countries and established its own fund of USD 10 million together with the United Nations Development Programme with roughly the same objective (*Ibid*.). The Paris Agreement also requires its Parties to formulate and communicate a long-term GHG emission development strategy, but at the time of writing the Russian Federation has not yet communicated a strategy to its fellow UNFCCC-Parties (UNFCCC 2022).

In 2019, things began to pick up pace with the publication of the Resolution "On the Adoption of the Paris Agreement' and Governmental Decree "On Adopting a National Plan of Events of The First Stage of Climate Change Adaptation to 2022" which acknowledged Russia's vulnerability to climate change and the accompanying risks to the country's infrastructure, public health, and biodiversity (Poberezhskaya 2021). In 2020, a new Presidential Decree was adopted which restated the goal to reduce GHG emissions by 30% and called for the creation of a strategy concerning Russia's socio-economic development with a low level of GHG emissions until 2050 (*Ibid*.)

In 2021, a Federal Law was adopted which legally cemented the 2016 Governmental Decree on emissions reporting by GHG-emitting companies for the entirety of the Russian Federation (President of Russia 2021b). In the same year, President Putin called environmental and climate issues a priority for the nation's development for the first time, ordered the government to formulate plans to reduce GHG emissions by 2050 and to decarbonise the Russian economy, signed a law limiting GHG emissions of major polluting companies, set a deadline of 2060 for Russia to achieve carbon-neutrality, and had the Russian government come up with a strategy paper on decarbonisation (Mitrova 2021; The Moscow Times 2021; Soldatkin, Marrow and Golubkova 2021; Smertina 2021; Korsunskaya, Auyezov and Harvey 2021; Trenin 2021). That same year, at COP26, being the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP) to UNFCCC being held from October 31st to November 13th in Glasgow, Scotland, the

Russian delegation, despite not signing two out of three pledges, signed a pledge meant to halt deforestation by 2030.

In sum, it can be argued that, although not explicitly ambitious in its fight against climate change, Russia has adopted a relatively high number of international treaties and agreements within the frame of its being a Party to the UNFCCC (i.e., accession to the UNFCCC, the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement, and COP26's deforestation pledge) and domestic efforts to mitigate climate change (i.e., the 2005 and 2014 Roshydromet reports, the 2009 Climate Doctrine and its 2011 Implementation Plan, the 2013 Presidential Decree and its 2014 Implementation Plan, the 2016 Governmental Decree, the 2019 Resolution and Governmental Decree, the 2020 Presidential Decree, and the 2021 Federal Law). The contents of these treaties and legislative acts, however, do not seem conducive to the security of some of Russia's present and prospective economic interests with regard to climate change and its mitigation. In the following section, these interests will be discussed so as to present this paper's main research puzzle and, hence, the justification of its research question.

1.2. Russia's Economic Interests in The Status Quo: A Research Puzzle

As stated above, the Russian Federation appears to have vested interests in relative inaction in the mitigation of global warming, both domestically and internationally. Russia's interests in this lie in its reliance on the export of hydrocarbons as well as the economic benefits which a warmer climate would provide in terms of trade, agriculture, and resource-extraction. It therefore remains a question as to why the country has opted to adopt such a number of international and domestic pieces of legislation aimed at mitigating climate change and has not chosen to enforce a *status quo* which favours inaction regarding climate change.

First of all, Russia's economy and government are highly reliant on the export of fossil fuels by the country's large, state-owned energy companies. In 2019, fossil fuels accounted for around 60% of the country's exports with crude petroleum accounting for 30.3%, refined petroleum for 16.3%, and petroleum gas for 6.46% (OEC 2019). In 2016, this export of fossil fuels made up a fifth of Russia's GDP and around a half of its federal budget revenue (Tynkkynen and Tynkkynen 2018). Given the fossil fuel sector's windfall revenues and Russia's dependence on oil- and gas-rents for the functioning of its economy and Governmental apparatus, the Russian Government as well as the country's politico-economic elites who are alleged to privately benefit from the rents Russia receives for its export of fossil

fuels would or should be expected to be rationally opposed to the decarbonisation of Russia's own economy as well as that of other countries, especially the final consumers of Russia's fossil fuels such as the European Union (EU) which, in 2020, was the final destination of roughly 48% of Russia's crude oil and condensate exports and which is the near sole destination of Gazprom's gas exports (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2021).[2] Kochtcheeva (2021) provides an estimate that a decrease in the EU's demand for fossil fuels by 2030 could lead to a loss of 1% to Russia's GDP (i.e., around USD billion per year). As such, the decarbonisation of its own economy but also that of foreign consumer-states within the frames of international climate agreements or foreign actors' own initiatives (e.g., the introduction of a carbon tax by the EU) would hurt the continued profitability of Russia's economic model as an exporter of hydrocarbons, thereby rationally juxtaposing Russia to such agreements and initiatives. Given this expectation, it thus remains a puzzle why the Russian government is party to the UNFCCC and adopted international and domestic legislation to mitigate climate change and to spur on global decarbonisation.

This question becomes even more pressing when one looks at what Russia stands to gain from global warming. This also is acknowledged by the Russian authorities, as the 2009 Climate Doctrine and the 2019 Governmental Decree both mention the possible benefits of global warming for Russia such as improved trade-access via the Northern Sea Route, the increased productivity of the country's boreal forests, the expansion of agricultural lands and maritime fishing, and the facilitation of the exploration and extraction of resources situated in the Arctic shelf (President of Russia 2009a; Poberezhskaya 2021). While hard to predict in exact figures, the opening up of the Northern Sea Route, which almost solely lies within Russia's Exclusive Economic Zone, would not only provide Russia with increased export opportunities of domestic goods and fossil fuels via an ice-free maritime connection with East Asia, but it would also establish its role as a maritime corridor which would spell more profits flowing in from fees and customs clearances on trans-Arctic commerce between Asia and Europe (Bekkers *et al.* 2018). Increasing Russia's influence on global trade, its role as a transit hub would also boost its geo-political and -economic standing in the international arena (Blunden 2012). Additionally, a more accessible Arctic would also lay bare Russia's vast natural resources which as of yet still lie hidden under the onshore permafrost and offshore polar ice.

[2] The sanctions that the EU has imposed on Russia as a result of the Russo-Ukrainian War, which include prohibitions on the import of Russian coal and oil (products), might alter Russian hydrocarbons' trade-flows. This, however, is not to say that the Russian Federation will not continue to profit from their export nor that it did not during the period where the main research focus of this paper lies.

In terms of energy resources, it is estimated by the Russian Academy of Sciences that the Russian Arctic holds an amount of undiscovered petroleum ranging anywhere from 97 to 212 billion tons of oil equivalent (Kontorovich 2009). The Russian Arctic also offers opportunities in the field of mining, being home to vast deposits of minerals such as nickel, copper, coal, gold, uranium, tungsten, and diamonds (The Arctic n.d.). While the economic prospects of a warmer Arctic for Russia is a topic which exceeds the specific scope this paper, the various indicators mentioned above are deemed sufficient to bring home the point that Russia would stand to benefit from a rising atmospheric temperature in terms of trade, agriculture, and natural resource extraction. As such, Russia would or should be expected to be apprehensive in adopting or promoting climate change mitigation through international and domestic efforts.

The above-discussed economic interests of the Russian Federation in international and domestic inaction in the field of climate change mitigation would seem opposed to the country's current climate policy. This thus presents a research puzzle as it begs the question as to why exactly Russia has adopted such a policy. The existing academic literature on the topic has presented a number of explanations as to why Russia has taken international and domestic steps to curb climate change. These will be examined in the following section.

1.3. Existing Explanations of Russia's Climate Policy

In this section, different explanations as to why the Russian Federation has adopted international treaties and domestic legislation to mitigate climate change as could be discerned in the relevant academic literature will be grouped, discussed, and examined for explanatory flaws and their lack of theoretical analysis of the research puzzle that its current climate policy presents. This latter examination will serve as the justification for paper's choice to approach this research puzzle from the angle of the constructivist theory of international socialisation and social influence. As for the specific groupings of explanations found in the existing academic literature on the topic, this paper could discern the following three main tropes which will hereafter be discussed: 1) the averse effects of climate change on Russia; 2) climate change mitigation's positive effects on Russia's economy; and 3) climate change mitigation's international political benefits for Russia. It has to be noted that it is not uncommon for authors writing on the topic to employ multiple types of explanations in one or multiple pieces of academic literature. Hence, the same authors can be found to be categorised in different groupings of explanations throughout the following discussion.

The first grouping that this paper could discern centres around the averse effect of climate change on the Russian Federation. This explanation argues that, in line with the 2009 Climate Doctine, the negative consequences of climate change outweigh its positive effects. Concerns over the negative consequences of global warming on Russia have been repeatedly voiced in Russian official documents concerning climate change such as the 2009 Doctrine and the 2005 and 2014 Roshydromet reports, the latter of which concluded that, based on contemporary modelling, Russia's atmospheric warming would proceed in a rate which was double that of the global average which, in the mid- to long-term, could lead to a doubling of annual dangerous natural phenomena from 150-200 to 350-400 (Russian Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring 2014). Poberezhskaya (2015) asserts that the 2010 heatwave in central and western Russia, which led to a number of disastrous forest fires and doubled the death rate in Moscow through the build-up of toxic smog, led to an increased public awareness and growing concern over climate change. Economically, climate change has damaging effects, too; seasonally increased energy consumption from cooling elements such as air conditioning could pose a problem to Russia's energy supply-network and exports (Russian Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring 2014). Gusev (2016) points to a potential economic loss from climate change ranging from 1 to 2% of Russia's GDP. However pressing, this explanation is only convincing to a limited extent; if really driven by a genuine concern over the averse effects of climate change on its economy and public health, Russia could be expected to be more actively involved in and agree to all, if not most international climate initiatives and not lack the necessary ambition in its domestic climate policies as it currently does. As such, there must probably be ulterior motives at play guiding Russia's efforts to curb climate change.

Another explanation falling into this group is provided by Andonova and Alexieva (2012) who point to the role of Russia's scientific community in bringing the negative consequences of climate change to public and the Government's attention, taking as an example the role of Aleksandr Bedritskiy, head of Roshydromet and chief scientific advisor to President Medvedev, in making the Russian authorities aware of climate change's anthropogenic nature and negative effects. Yet, posing that scientists influence the Russian government's thinking on climate change might be a case of causal inversion in that it could actually be the government's contemporary position on the need to fight climate change (which could be informed by other factors) that allows these scientists to rise to prominence. Indeed, Wilson Rowe (2009) found that the role of domestic experts in public official discourse became more

prominent when their positions on climate change aligned with official state policy. As such, this kind of explanation, though optimistic, is equally unconvincing.

The second group of explanations discernable from the relevant academic literature focuses on the positive effect of climate change mitigation on Russia's economy which can be further sub-divided into economic modernisation and energy-efficiency, increased competitiveness through 'green' technology and investments, increased revenue from emissions trading and joint implementation investments, and complying with foreign partners' climate-related trade policies. In doing so, these explanations argue that the economic benefits of complying with the international climate regime are greater than reinforcing a *status quo* which is inactive with regards to climate change.

The first explanation falling into this grouping sees the prospected modernisation of Russia's economy, especially in terms of the increase of its energy-efficiency, as a driving force in Russia's climate policy. The argumentation rests on the perceived compatibility between, on the one hand, the need to modernise and become energy-efficient and, on the other, international climate agreements (Andonova and Alexieva 2012; Korppoo *et al*. 2015; Gusev 2016; Kochtcheeva 2021). Andonova and Alexieva (2012) maintain that the need for energy-efficiency is pressing as the Russian economy consumes approximately 2.6 times more energy per unit of GDP than any other of the world's top ten industrialised countries. The benefits of decarbonising the Russian economy by, for example, cutting down on energy-consumption are great as Gusev (2016) argues by pointing to evidence from an IDDRI report which shows that such measures could lead to a GDP per capita growth of USD 13 to 41 thousand by 2050 (IDDRI 2014). According to Andonova and Alexieva (2012), the Medvedev administration linked energy intensity reduction measures it took in 2008 and 2009 (see Douma *et al*. 2010) to international climate mitigation efforts and especially to the 2009 Climate Conference in Copenhagen, underscoring the benefits this agreement could bring Russia in terms of energy-efficiency and economic modernisation. This stream of thought thus sees the coherence of domestic economic goals and international climate initiatives as driving Russia's adoption of the latter.

A related, second explanation in this specific group focuses on the increase of the Russian economy's competitiveness through 'green' or ecological technology transfer and foreign investments. Sources falling into this sub-group argue that, by not engaging with the global climate agenda, Russia risks losing out on vital technology and investments that would maintain or enhance its economy's competitiveness. Pluzhnikov (2016), Porfiriev (2019),

Makarov *et al.* (2021), and Kochtcheeva (2021) all assert that Russia's passivity in developing or adopting low-emission and energy-efficient technologies could, in the mid- to long-term, lead to the loss of its competitiveness on the global market. Similarly, Russia's non-participation in international climate agreements would preclude public and private funds from Joint Implementation or Climate Financing from being invested in energy-efficiency or renewable energy projects, putting a further limit on the country's economic modernisation (Henry and McIntosh Sundstrom 2007; Andonova and Alexieva 2012; Korppoo *et* al. 2015; Gusev 2016; Kochtcheeva 2021). Henry and McIntosh Sundstrom (2007), Davydova (2011), and Andonova and Alexieva (2012) all point to the Russian business community's interests in 'green' foreign investments in its projects and, as a result, its active lobbying for the adoption of international climate agreements. This sub-group of explanations thus posits that the choice to participate in international climate agreements is born out of the wish to stay economically competitive on the global market through the adoption or development of sustainable technology and foreign investments in Russian business's sustainable projects. This, however, presupposes the retention of climate financing in future climate agreements (Andonova and Alexieva 2012).

A third, similarly related explanation falling within this group is the profitability of complying with international climate agreements in that they provide investments and other sources of revenue for the Russian State and business. Sources of revenue other than foreign investments that are derived from international climate agreements are, for example, the profits from the international trade in emissions. Selling carbon units on the international market under the Kyoto Protocol's Annex on International Emissions Trading were seen as highly profitable – especially if Russia's forests were to be characterised as 'carbon sinks' and their absorption capacity were to count in the equation of the country's CO2 emission levels. According to Tynkkynen (2014), the prospects of revenues from the sale of the country's surplus emissions quotas, which was estimated at approximately USD 10 million per annum, heavily influenced Russian decision-makers' position towards the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol. Reversely, Gusev (2016) argues that the abandonment of emissions trading under the Paris Agreement led to negative attitudes towards the treaty among the Russian authorities. Thus, this line of reasoning holds that the (prospected) revenues resulting from international climate agreements are responsible for Russia's participation in the latter.

The fourth and final explanation falling in this group is one which argues that Russia's engagement in the global climate agenda is driven by the fear of incurring harm to its

international trade and economy if it refuses to do so. Related to Russia's concerns over the competitiveness of its economy in a 'carbon-neutral world', these fears are inspired more by the climate-related policies adopted by foreign States which could inhibit the flow of Russian goods to these foreign markets. An example of such a policy is the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) which aims to impose a 'carbon price' on a selection of carbon-intensive goods (Poberezhskaya 2021). The CBAM thus acts as a sort of tariff barrier to non-sustainable goods coming from without the EU and, if to be averted, presuppose sustainable production mechanisms to be in place in these imports' countries of origin. As such, this may harm the profitability of Russia's exports to the EU if the former chooses to opt out of climate change mitigation through international or domestic efforts (*Ibid*.). Indeed, Makarov *et al*. (2017) pose that the carbon-intensive Russian economy risks losing 0.5% in GDP growth per year from climate-related policies enacted outside the country. Mel'nikov and Daneeva (2021) argue that, if Russia wants to maintain normal trade levels with the EU, it must adopt a strong decarbonisation-strategy. This last economic explanation thus argues that Russia's current climate policy is informed by the wish to avoid the risk of exclusion from international trade, effectively reversing the fossil fuel-export argument as to why Russia would be opposed to international climate change mitigation as presented in this paper's previous section.

While highly informative on the economic variables influencing Russia's climate policy, all explanations belonging to this approach assume that this policy is devised by a purely rational actor; this presupposes that the Russian authorities base their decisions upon a careful weighing of costs and benefits. While rational considerations definitely influence in decision-making in (international) politics, so do considerations of (self-)perception and status. It would seem rather one-sided, or even somewhat reductionist, to say that economic benefits and costs are the sole reason behind joining a given international regime. One, instead, should also be compelled to look at the role played by an actor's (preferred) identity on the world stage and how its participation would reflect this identity. As such, this paper, while acknowledging the above economic explanations' merit, also calls for the inclusion of alternative, less rationality-centred (theoretical) approaches to the above-mentioned research puzzle.

The third and final grouping of explanations for Russia's engagement in the global climate agenda focuses on climate change mitigation's international political benefits for Russia, specifically those of political linkages and global power-projection. Such a focus is based on

the argument that Russia's adoption of international and, to a certain extent, domestic climate regulations are aimed at deriving certain political advantages in the global arena which are seen as being of greater value than the benefits that inactivity in the field of global climate mitigation offer. The first explanation falling into this group is one that stresses the role of securing political benefits by linking Russia's participation in the international climate regime with certain rewards in other areas of global governance. An oft-mentioned example of such political linking is Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol where, due to the Protocol's specific conditions – the Protocol required its ratification by 55 States accounting for 55% of the industrialised Parties' emissions and, with the withdrawal of the US in 2001, Russia, accounting for 17.4% of global emissions, was key in ensuring the fulfillment of the 55% requirement as the 120 Parties that had ratified the Protocol only accounted for 44% of global emissions – and Russia's resulting political leverage, Russia ensured the EU's support for its accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in exchange for its ratification of the Protocol (Henry and McIntosh Sundstrom 2007; Andonova and Alexieva 2012; Tynkkynen 2014; Korppoo *et al.* 2015; Kochtcheeva 2021). In highlighting the role of political linkages in convincing Russia to engage with the global climate agenda, this explanation thus takes political-international benefits in other areas of global governance to be the independent variable influencing Russia's climate policy. As such, it takes the same rational-behaviour approach as the above-discussed economic explanations and, while exceedingly insightful, can also be said to leave out considerations of Russia's standing in the world based on its participation in the global climate regime.

The second explanation within this third grouping does deal with considerations of identity and power projection. This explanation posits that, in line with the country's national interest or foreign policy objective to re-assert its historical status as a Great Power through highlighting the global component in its international strategy as well as its equality with the world's other principal powers such as the US, Russia tries to project its perceived global influence onto the international regime governing climate change mitigation (Andonova and Alexieva 2012; Korppoo *et al.* 2015; Poberezhskaya 2016 and 2021; Kochtcheeva 2021). Indeed, Nevzorova (2020), Makarov *et al.* (2021), and Kochtcheeva (2021) assert that, if Russia does not adopt a wide-ranging climate policy, it risks being excluded from this increasingly important field of global governance and the formulation of international rules. The way in which Russia has tried to project its image as a global player in this field has been through its insistence on the inclusion of other global powers such as the US and China in the

climate agreements it adopts (e.g., the Paris Agreement), the emphasis on its key role in the success of international climate agreements (e.g., the Kyoto Protocol), and a presentation of itself as a global 'environmental donor' or 'Great Ecological Power' based on its relatively great reduction of GHG emissions since 1990 (which, as noted, was due to industrial contraction following the Soviet Union's collapse) and the absorption capacity of its forests (Tynkkynen 2010; Andonova and Alexieva 2012; Korppoo *et al.* 2015; Poberezhskaya 2016 and 2021; Kochtcheeva 2021). By emphasising these three things, it is argued that Russia tries to exert its Great Power image onto the global climate regime the participation in and influence on which in turn reinforces Russia's status as a global power. However, while such an explanation deals with identity and status-concerns, it is mostly viewed from the angle of Russia's historical status as a Great Power and does not so much take into consideration how entering into a specific international regime (in this case, on climate change mitigation) shapes Russia's actions and preferences. In brief, such a reading does not account for the agency of international regimes in acting as a constraining factor for the behaviour of its participants. So, even the explanation that deals with notions of status and identity does not address Russia's status-concerns vis-à-vis a specific in-group represented by the parties to a specific international regime (i.e., the Parties to the UNFCCC).

This last critique, in combination with the other noted points of criticism towards the above-discussed explanations, makes for an interesting gap in existent research on Russia's climate policy – that is, scarce to no attention has been paid to how Russia's international and domestic climate policy has been influenced by concerns over the country's status vis-à-vis the community of states participating in the international regime governing climate change mitigation. It is this gap in the existing literature that this paper intends to fill. It will do this by, in the next chapter, introducing the constructivist theory of international socialisation and the model of social influence from which it will deduct a hypothesis on the influence of international status concerns on Russia's climate policy. This hypothesis will subsequently be tested in order to come to a satisfactory answer to this paper's research question.

2. Approach and Methods

In this chapter, the theory of international socialisation and the model of social influence will be discussed and used to deduct a research hypothesis. In order to test said hypothesis the qualitative research method of discourse analysis will be introduced. This method will guide the collection and analysis of this paper's results in the subsequent chapter.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This section will, in its respective sub-sections, discuss the constructivist theory of international socialisation and the model or micro-process of social influence which will both inform the formation of the research hypothesis in this chapter's subsequent section.

Theory of International Socialisation

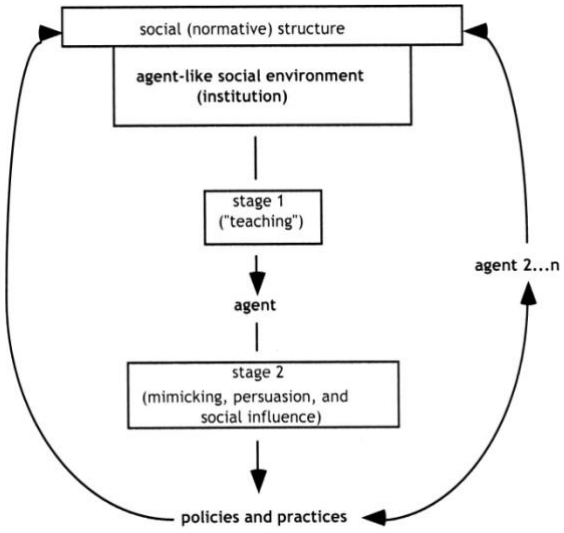
Theories of international socialisation are rooted in social sciences' classical definitions of the concept of socialisation. At a basic level, socialisation is described as a process which encourages novices to adopt certain expected behavioral patterns through their induction into a given social setting. Childhood socialisation, for example, is defined by Ochs (1986, 2) in the following way: "[T]hrough their participation in social interactions children come to internalize and gain performance competence in […] sociocultural defined contexts." Stryker and Statham (1985, 325) interpret socialisation as "the generic term used to refer to the processes by which the newcomer — the infant, rookie, trainee for example — becomes incorporated into organized patterns of interaction." All in all, it provides newcomers with a specific place within a given social group as long as they adopt and abide by a set of shared expectations regarding their behaviour (Johnston 2008). Socialisation, therefore, requires a certain degree of internalisation – that is, it generally promotes the adoption of a given community's shared behavioral ideals (i.e., rules) into the individual moral codes of that community's constituent members as 'taken-for-granted' (*Ibid*.). It thereby facilitates membership of a group by transforming intersubjective understandings held by the group's members into "objective facticities" (Berger and Luckman 1966, 44).

International Relations (IR) theorists have not strayed far from these general definitions. As a simplification, most definitions of socialisation used in IR converge around the term denoting a process "resulting in the internalization of norms so that they assume their 'taken for granted' nature" (Risse 1997, 16). In an attempt to classify the concept of international socialisation, Johnston (2008) draws attention to three common themes that run throughout its varying definitions. Firstly, Johnston (2008) argues, socialisation is most often aimed at or experiences by newcomers in a given social sphere. In the international arena, these might be states which are introduced into a thus far unknown or not yet accessed sector of global governance (e.g., the international regime governing climate change mitigation).

Secondly, socialisation is underpinned by the internalisation "of the values, roles, and understandings held by a group that constitutes the society of which the actor becomes a member" (*Ibid*., 22). These value-laden beliefs often take on a sense of 'taken-for-grantedness' or obvious appropriateness among the actors participating in that particular society (*Ibid*.). As such, they tend to skew the perceived benefits flowing from pro-social behaviour so that the social appropriateness of one's actions as perceived by oneself becomes more important than direct material consequences. In the words of Checkel (2005, 804), this means that international socialisation "implies that an agent switches from following a logic of consequence to a logic of appropriateness; this adoption is sustained over time and is quite independent from a particular structure of material incentives or sanctions." However, both Johnston (2008) and Checkel (2005) acknowledge that the internalisation of group values exists on a spectrum; an actor's exhibition of pro-social behaviour can, on the one extreme, be informed by a sense of "appropriateness" or an internalised intersubjectivity while, on the other, it acts only as a means to an end, namely that of positive material or social consequences (Johnston 2008, 22). Checkel (2005) classifies these differing motivators of internalisation into two contrasting types of socialisation. His Type I socialisation refers to a situation in which an actor recognises what normal behaviour in a given social sphere entails and adjusts his or her behaviour accordingly in an effort to conform (*Ibid*.). This type does not describe a manner of internalisation which is born out of a genuine conviction that the set of values held by the community of which the internalising actor is a part is intrinsically just, but indicates a more instrumental approach to the phenomenon. This means that internalisation is not pursued as a goal in and of itself, but to gain in either material or social terms. Type II socialisation, however, denotes a situation in which "conscious instrumental calculation has now been replaced by taken-for-grantedness" (*Ibid*., 804). This type denotes a situation of 'full' or intrinsic internalisation and the (near to) complete self-identification of an actor with the set of norms and values that are espoused by the society of which he or she is a member. The point to take away is that there exists a vast array of outcomes of socialisation processes, not all of which necessarily contain the intrinsic internalisation of commonly held values. Johnston (2008, 22) neatly summarises this point by arguing that "if internalization of pro-social values is the hallmark of socialization, and if the other end of the spectrum is behavior motivated by the calculation of material costs and benefits, this leaves a vast amount of pro-social behavior produced by neither process."

This brings one to the third and final common theme as identified by Johnston (2008), namely that of the focus on persuasion as a driver of the adoption of pro-social behaviour. Most IR theorists point to the persuasion of newcomers by a given group's established members as being the sole mechanism by which commonly held values are instilled into the novice member (*Ibid*.). Here, persuasion refers to the changing of the newcomer's mind, opinion, or viewpoint on a given epistemic field so as to create a common understanding of that field between all members of a group (*Ibid*.). Persuasion, however, albeit a very straightforward causal process, is but one of the different 'micro-processes' which support value internalisation and, resultingly, international socialisation. Nevertheless, constructivist IR theory, according to Johnston (2008), has tended to ignore most micro-processes other than persuasion. Alexander Wendt (1999, 134), who is commonly thought of as the founder of social-constructivist IR theory, comments on this perceived hiatus by positing that "[i]n social (and IR) theory […] it is thought to be enough to point to the existence of cultural norms and corresponding behavior without showing how norms get inside actors' heads to motivate actions." However, it is these micro-processes, Johnston (2008) argues, that govern an actor's successful socialisation into a given group. Johnston (2008) therefore proposes a two-stage model (see fig. 1) in which, in the first stage, the social environment or institution attempts to transmit its commonly espoused values and norms to the new actor and, in the second stage, the actor processes this set of values and norms which then go on to "mediate the development of foreign policies and practices that govern the interaction with the institution" (*Ibid*., 17).

Figure 1. Johnston's (2008) Two-stage Model of International Socialisation



Source: Alastair I. Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), 18.

According to Johnston (2008), it is exactly when examining the dynamics taking place in the second stage that one finds the reason for the existing variation in behaviour (or internalisation) "across actors who are nonetheless exposed to the same institutional social environment" (*Ibid*., 18). In Johnston's (2008) model, an actor's policies and practices are mediated by three different micro-processes of socialisation. These include persuasion, mimicking, and social influence. These micro-processes in themselves represent different modes of social interaction which produce different degrees of pro-social or pro-normative behaviour. Each of them is driven by different motivators and is conducive to different behavioral outcomes. Thus, examining them separately holds heuristic value in accounting for the different reasons for norm-diffusion across international institutions and forms of conformity to these institutions' sets of commonly held values and norms (*Ibid*.). Institutions, here, are seen as social environments which foster norm-diffusion through socialisation. As it is thought to be of special interest in accounting for Russia's efforts in climate change mitigation, Johnston's (2008) third micro-process, namely that of social influence, will be discussed in greater detail in this chapter's subsequent section.

Micro-process of Social Influence

In essence, social influence is a micro-process of international socialisation whereby "a novice's behavior is judged by the in-group and rewarded with backpatting or status markers or punished by opprobrium and status devaluation" (*Ibid*., 24). Its effect, as with all micro-processes of socialisation, is an actor's conformity with a group's behavioral ideals in the absence of explicit material gains or punishments (*Ibid*.). With social influence, pro-normative behaviour is elicited through social rewards and/or punishments which exert "real or imagined group pressure" (Nemeth 1987, 237) on the newcoming actor. Johnston (2008, 25) calls social influence "a second-order socialisation process," referring to the fact that "while actors' preferences and interests may not change, these interests are linked together in ways in which they were not in the past." This refers to the situation in which, in the case of social influence, extant interests in one field get linked with others in the field of (international) cooperation, status, and self-esteem, whereas these two sets of interests were not priorly connected (*Ibid*.).

In the case of social influence, social rewards and punishments mainly take the form of back-patting and opprobrium. As the term suggests, back-patting is the reward or benefit that one derives from exhibiting pro-normative behaviour within a given in-group (*Ibid*.). For this, an

actor receives praise, recognition, and/or support from other group members (*Ibid*.). It can re-affirm an actor's valuation of him- or herself and his or her self-categorisation as a high-status actor within a given community as well as provide the actor with a sense of self- and public legitimacy (*Ibid*.). Hence, conformity promotes a sense of psychological well-being and belonging as well as an actor's image, being the outward projection of in-group status (*Ibid*.). Opprobrium, however, takes the form of social punishments for the exhibition of anti-normative behaviour. It carries social costs in that it may include public shaming, shunning, denial of status, or even exclusion, but also psychological ones in the sense that it devalues an actor's own perceived standing in a given group (*Ibid*.). Hence, the rewards or costs flowing from the (in-)consistency with a group's expectations regarding an actor's actions are a powerful tool in enforcing pro-normative behaviour.

Underlining social influence's social essence is the fact that only groups can dish out rewards or punishments (*Ibid*.). However, for these to be effective, the influenced actor must value this group's judgement. In a sense, the actor must already have some prior identification or affiliation with the in-group in order for it to care about its back-patting or opprobrium. An actor's (prior) self-identification with a given group is therefore essential in determining the effectiveness of that group's social influence (*Ibid*.). In this sense, a group's worth or legitimacy in the eyes of a given actor is a mere function of that actor's self-identification with that same group (*Ibid*.).

As noted by Johnston (2008), some social environments, or international institutional designs, are specifically conducive to international socialisation and social influence. Johnston (2008) names several criteria related to institutional design which increase the effects of the micro-process of social influence. The first of these is a large membership of the given institution, as this in turn maximises the accumulative effect of back-patting and/or opprobrium (*Ibid*.) – that is, the more members an international institution has, the more (imagined) group pressure it can exert. When taking this criterion into consideration, the UNFCCC (i.e., the 'social environment' which the current research paper deals with), with its 197 state-Parties, fits the bill.

The second criterion is represented by majoritarian decision making (i.e., a numerical majority of actors should have the final say in the outcome of a decision) or "where reasons for supporting or opposing consensus are on record" (*Ibid*., 94). As, here, anti-normative behaviour could directly influence outcomes in a negative way and one is forced to explain

the reasons as to why he or she is not abiding by the institution's established moral code, fulfilling this criterion maximises the effects of the perceived need to remain consistent in exhibiting conformity with the values held by the majority of the institution's members out of fear of invoking social costs (*Ibid*.). The UNFCCC, while not exactly majoritarian in its decision-making model, does base its decisions on the consensus of its Parties. The consensus-based decision-making model has considerable overlap with the majoritarian one, however, in that a single individual's disregard of a social environment's behavioral expectations can influence the outcome or the net effect of an institution's decision(s). If, for instance, the Russian Federation would have decided not to sign the UNFCCC's Paris Agreement and, concomitantly, not to adopt national legislation, then the Paris Agreement's global net effect would have been less. Individual acts of anti-normative behaviour in consensus-based decision-making, such as the UNFCCC's, therefore negatively affect the outcomes of an institution's (or its members') decisions. Additionally, in the UNFCCC, state-Parties, out of convention, are also expected to publically provide one or multiple reasons as to why it is not committing to a specific initiative to mitigate climate change. Having to publically explain one's non-commitment to climate change mitigation, and hence risk incurring social costs, can be a powerful factor in enforcing pro-normative behaviour.

The third criterion is when the mandate of a given international institution mainly consists of negotiation (*Ibid*.). When, in negotation, one's communicated interests or standpoints fall well beyond what is accepted in a given social environment (and especially when adhered to throughout negotiations), the ability of the institution to reach a working decision through negotiation may be incapacitated. In order to avoid being subjected to public shaming or shunning, an actor is thus pressured into presenting initial demands which are more or less in line with a given institution's commonly held set of values and norms or to at least be considering of them when pursuing negotiations. In other words, if an institution's main task is negotiation, pro-normative behaviour is oftentimes expected to facilitate the reaching of an effective decision. The UNFCCC, the *modus operandi* of which is negotiation to reach a consensus between its Parties (as is the main task of its Climate Summits), therefore falls squarely within this criterion. Its Parties are often criticised if they voice initial demands which are opposed to increased national and global effort to fight climate change.

The fourth and final institutional criterion as set out by Johnston (2008) is low autonomy of agents (i.e., international institutions) as opposed to that of the principals (i.e., the state-Parties). When the main task of the agent is to represent the principal, as is the case with the

UNFCCC, whose decisions are only reached and made binding by virtue of consensus of its state-Parties, then persuasion effects are less likely to work (*Ibid*.). Instead, as the institution's centralised bodies are subservient to the member-states' interests, socialisation is more likely to come from peers (i.e., fellow member-states) in the form of social influence (*Ibid*.).

In order to establish whether the micro-process of social influence causes the exhibition of pro-normative behaviour by a novel actor within a given international institution, Johnston (2008) proposes looking into three indicators of social influence. Based on his extensive review of the concepts of international socialisation and social influence, Johnston (2008) poses that if one wanted to establish that the micro-process of social influence has indeed informed an actor's (or state's) exhibition of pro-social behaviour, he or she would have to confirm the presence of the following three hypothesised indicators within that actor's introduction to a given international institution:

> • "commitments to participate and join power-constraining institutions should take place in the absence of material side payments or threats of sanctions;
>
> • arguments for joining or participating should stress backpatting and image benefits, and opprobrium costs;
>
> • initial bargaining positions, if stuck to, will put the state in a distinct minority, isolating it from the cooperating audience or reference group. Thus, commitments to pro-social behavior will be made only when it is clear that noncommitments will be highly isolating." (*Ibid*., 94-95).

What, in the study of international socialisation, is actually meant by 'actors' is, as stated earlier, states; they accede or are introduced to international institutions that govern a certain international regime. States as actors, therefore, make up the unit of analysis when gauging the effects of social influence in international institutions as social environments. The problem here, however, is that, as Johnston (2008) notes, states are not sentient beings – that is, states themselves are not capable of feeling the psychological effects of real or imagined group pressure (*Ibid*.). This begs the question as to whether it is even appropriate to study the effects of social influence on states as they are, by their very essence, not susceptible to it. Johnston (2008) provides an answer to this question by drawing attention to the fact that states are often subject to anthropomorphisation and isomorphisation.

Anthropomorphisation of states means that states (or any form of polity for that matter) are, in their popular or international depiction and imagination, oftentimes endowed with human-like characteristics (e.g., mother- or father-land) which allows for the attribution of agency and responsibility to a single unit which in reality is nothing but a collection of individuals (*Ibid*.). O'Neill (1999) argues that this allows for the simplification of complex relations between units that are actually informed by an arguably more complex set of intra-group relations. The reason as to why we can and do denote states as 'actors' on the international stage is because we, consciously or not, anthropomorphise them.

Johnston (2008) then asserts that a country's inhabitants, but especially its leaders, come to identify themselves with the anthromorphised state through a process he calls isomorphisation. A country's leaders see any praise or critique aimed at their state as aimed at themselves (*Ibid*.). This means that if a country is subjected to back-patting or opprobrium within an international institution, decision-makers from that country (through isomorphisation) feel as though they are the direct recipients of these social rewards or punishments (*Ibid*.). As such, a country's leaders can be said to be sensitive to that country's international status and are, therefore, incentivised to accrue social or status gains and avoid social costs (*Ibid*.). The micro-process of social influence thus works via a state's decision-makers (*Ibid*.). Therefore, according to Johnston (2008), looking into a state's behaviour and susceptibility to social influence requires looking at the statements and actions of that state's constituent (key) decision-makers. Decision-makers thus come to represent the state as a single actor and unit of analysis in researching the effects of the micro-process of social influence (*Ibid*).

2.2. Research Hypothesis

The current paper intends to answer its research question (i.e., "*What explains the Russian Federation's domestic and international efforts and commitments in the field of climate change mitigation?*") using the constructivist theory of international socialisation and, more specifically, the model of social influence as discussed in the previous sections. The appliance of international socialisation theory and the model of social influence is thought to be of heuristic value in theoretically accounting for Russia's domestic and international climate policy since, as was argued in this paper's previous chapter, the institutional design of the UNFCCC (i.e., the social environment of interest to this research) is highly conducive to the exertion of social influence on its members.

Viewed from the angle of international socialisation theory, the current paper's research question could be re-stated as the question as to why the Russian Federation has chosen to exhibit pro-normative behaviour within the international regime governing climate change. Here, the community of states committing to the international regime governing climate change, and especially their institutionalised formation (i.e., the UNFCCC), make up the social environment in which Russia acts as the 'novice'. Pro-normative or pro-social behaviour is, in this case, understood as referring to Russia's international and domestic commitments and efforts in the field of climate change mitigation as discussed in detail in this paper's first chapter.

In order to test whether Russia's international and domestic commitments and efforts in the field of climate change mitigation were, indeed, influenced by the country's international socialisation in the international regime governing climate change mitigation through the micro-process of social influence, one would infer from Johnston's (2008) hypothesis as discussed in this chapter's previous section that the following three indicators in the case of Russia's climate policy are to be observed:

1. Russia's commitments to join power-constraining institutions (the UNFCCC) and adopt international and domestic legislation for the mitigation of climate change have taken place in the absence of material side payments or threats of sanctions;
2. Russia's arguments for joining the UNFCCC and adopting said legislation should stress back-patting, image benefits, and opprobrium costs;
3. Russia's initial bargaining positions with regard to climate change mitigation, if stuck to, would have put the state in a distinct minority, isolating it from the rest of the states complying with the international regime on climate change mitigation.

In the opinion of this paper, indicators 1 and 3 are inferred points of observation that, be it from a slightly different angle, have either already been discussed in previous sections of this paper or that need evidence which is easily retrievable and, hence, do not require extensive research. Therefore, the current research paper will review these two indicators in this section and will then go on to focus its further research efforts on indicator 2. Additionally, as will be discussed below, indicator 2 is also taken by this paper to be the most useful inferred point of observation to establish whether and, if so, how international status concerns vis-à-vis the community of states participating in the international climate regime have influenced Russia's international and domestic climate policy.

With regards to the discussion of indicator 1, a similar review has already been performed in this paper's first chapter – that is, an inquiry into the question of material side payments and the threat of sanctions is largely in line with the discussion of the second and third groupings of extant explanations of Russia's efforts and commitment in the field of climate change mitigation. These are the explanations focusing on climate change mitigation's positive effects on the Russian economy and the international-political benefits it holds for Russia. From this discussion, it flowed that definitely not all of Russia's efforts to fight climate change were informed by (the prospects of) material benefits or the avoidance of material costs; the only cases identified by the extant academic literature in which material considerations could be argued to have swayed Russia to adopt an active climate policy are the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. The economic benefits for Russia flowing from these two treaties can be said to be the following; the prospects of international investments though the Kyoto Protocol's Joint Implementation and the Paris Agreement's Climate Financing; the revenues from the sale of the country's surplus emissions quotas; and the country's avoidance of 'sanctions' in the form of its exclusion from international trade networks through measures of trade partners such as the EU's CBAM.

One issue, however, complicates the characterisation of these instances as direct material side payments or the avoidance of sanctions. That is the fact that these positive economic effects only refer to future prospects of material benefits – that is, ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement would not have directly led to Russia receiving these economic benefits. There, in short, is the issue of the indirectness and uncertainty of these prospected material gains. So, even though they were undoubtedly of importance in Russia's calculations with regards to ratifying the two climate treaties, it would be problematic to cast them as material side payments directly paid to Russia for adopting these agreements. A similar line of reasoning applies to Russia's avoidance of economic costs arising from, for example, the installing of the EU's CBAM; the decarbonisation of the Russian economy in response to climate-related policies enacted by trade partners is purely based on the prospects of the economic costs generated by said external policies. The absence of a direct 'tit-for-tat dynamic' in the economic gains or costs of Russia's climate policy inhibits the labeling of said costs and gains as direct material side payments or sanctions. This paper therefore deems material side payments and the avoidance of the threat of sanctions to be of insufficient explanative value in accounting for Russia's efforts and commitment in the field of climate change mitigation.

The only instance in which a *quid pro quo* bargain was struck was the case of Russia, by ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, securing the EU's support for its accession to the WTO. This specific political linkage is a clear case of Russia receiving not a material, but a political side payment for exhibiting pro-normative behaviour. Although of indicative importance, this case nevertheless represents only one of the instances in which Russia chose to adopt an active climate policy. Hence, this case of political linkage is not seen as particularly representative of the rest of the instances in which Russia has chosen to exhibit pro-normative behaviour in climate change mitigation. So, in light of the incompatibility between, on the one hand, material side payments and the avoidance of sanctions and, on the other, prospects of material gains or costs as well as the general lack of representativeness of the cases where 'side-payments' did arguably have an effect, it can be argued that Russia's commitments to join the UNFCCC and adopt international and domestic legislation for the mitigation of climate change have, chiefly, taken place in the absence of material side payments or threats of sanctions, confirming Johnston's (2008) first indicator.

As for the confirmation of indicator 3, one needs to simply look at *post-hoc* evidence of the majority of the world's states having joined the UNFCCC and adopted international agreements and domestic legislation meant to curb climate change. Indeed, the majority of states have joined the UNFCCC and signed up to the same climate agreements as Russia has; the UNFCCC counts 197 state-Parties amongst its ranks (UNFCCC n.d.). In terms of state-Parties, the Kyoto Protocol enjoys a 192 (UNFCCC n.d.) and the Paris Agreement a 196 (UNFCCC n.d.). As for the national laws and/or policies that the world's countries have either adopted or enacted, a 2019 report by the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change cites that "[m]ore than 120 countries have at least one framework document that addresses climate change adaptation (laws or policies that lay down the overarching and cross-sectoral obligations and principles, but often have more detailed subsidiary laws or policies that set out how these goals are achieved)" (Nachmany, Byrnes, and Surminski 2019, 2). Based on these numbers, it is safe to say that the Russian Federation would, in the hypothetical case that it would have stuck to a position of climate change denial and/or inaction, belong to a very small, distinct minority of like-minded states. It would, in effect, be isolated from a large portion of the world's states which, internationally and domestically, have chosen to address climate change. Aggravating this seclusion would be the issue that, as discussed in this paper's first chapter, Russia's hypothetical passivity in terms of its climate policy would spell its possible exclusion from international trade networks. Such inaction would also prevent

Russia from pursuing its international strategy of solidifying its place as a Great Power in that the country would effectively forego its influence in shaping the field of global governance dealing with climate change mitigation. It could therefore be argued that, were Russia not to have committed to the mitigation of climate change, it would suffer from an extensive degree of international economic and political isolation. Thus, using the above-discussed *post-hoc* evidence supporting said claim, Johnston's (2008) third indicator can be confirmed.

Lastly, it is the opinion of this paper that Johnston's (2008) second indicator of social influence is the most useful inferred point of observation to establish whether and, if so, how international socialisation and social influence have shaped Russia's international and domestic climate policy. The rationale behind this conviction is the fact that this inferred observation directly deals with Russia's hypothesised concerns with back-patting and opprobrium by and status and image vis-à-vis the UNFCCC's constituent state-Parties – that is, the direct mechanisms through which social influence is exerted. For a paper of which the main research focus is the influence of a given social environment on a specific international actor's behaviour and preferences, this second inferred point of observation seems the most appropriate focus of further inquiry. Additionally, point 2 (or the second indicator), in contrast to points 1 and 3, seems to focus on observable phenomena (i.e., concerns with back-patting, image benefits, and opprobrium costs) which have been largely ignored by the existing relevant literature. For the purpose of filling this perceived gap in existing research, the second indicator is argued to be a highly promising avenue for independent research.

Based on the above discussion, this paper's research hypothesis is taken to be the second indicator of the impact of international socialisation and social influence on Russia's international and domestic climate policy, namely:

- *Russia's arguments for joining the UNFCCC and adopting international and domestic legislation for the mitigation of climate change should stress back-patting, image benefits, and opprobrium costs.*

Confirmation of the above hypothesised observation is taken as proof that Russia's accession to the UNFCCC as well as its adoption of the aforementioned international treaties and domestic legislation are indeed, if only partially, informed by social influence emanating from other states that are active in the international climate regime. In other words, affirmation of this paper's research hypothesis confirms the explanative power of the theory of international socialisation and the social influence model in (theoretically) accounting for Russia's

international and domestic commitment and efforts in the field of climate change mitigation, thereby providing a sufficient answer to this paper's research question. This chapter's subsequent section will deal with the operationalisation of the terms used in this paper's hypothesis as well as with the methodology which this research will make use of in its inquiring into the observable veracity of the claims set out in the above hypothesis.

2.3. Research Methods

This section will define the concepts used in this paper's research hypothesis so as to make them subjectable to empirical observation. This section will also describe the qualitative research method of discourse analysis with which this paper intends to analyse the data flowing from said observation.

Central in this paper's research (and hypothesis) is the concept of the Russian Federation as a polity and, more specifically, the arguments which it presents in favour of its commitment and efforts in the field of climate change mitigation. Put differently, the Russian state forms the unit of analysis of this research paper. However, as discussed, states themselves are not sentient beings and are, therefore, unable to produce any line of argumentation, let alone one that stresses its own status concerns in a given international context. Following Johnston's (2008) remarks on the anthropomorphisation and isomorphisation of the state, Russia is taken by the current research paper to be a distinct unit or 'actor' in the international arena which is endowed with human-like characteristics such as agency and responsibility and which is represented by (key) national decision-makers who, to some extent, identify with the state and see themselves as the (in)direct recipients of back-patting or opprobrium within international institutions. This research paper will, therefore, take the Russian state to be represented by (key) Russian decision-makers active in the field of Russia's international and domestic climate change mitigation efforts.

The indicators which this research will actively look for in Russia's arguments to pursue an active climate policy are, as stated in its hypothesis, reasons that stress back-patting, image benefits, and opprobrium costs. It is namely the presence of voiced concerns over these concepts that would point to a causal relationship between social influence and Russia's pro-normative behaviour with regard to climate change mitigation, in which the former acts as an independent variable and the latter as a dependent one. The task at hand is thus to verify the existence of Russia's concerns with opprobrium and back-patting from as well as its status and image within the community of states that make up the UNFCCC. Here, status, meaning

one's (perceived) standing within a given social environment's hierarchy, and image, which refers to the "package of favorable perceptions and impressions that one believes one creates through status-consistent behavior" (Johnston 2008, 82), are inextricable bound up with the concepts of back-patting and opprobrium. In line with the above discussion of these terms, the former of these concepts denotes social rewards such as praise, recognition, and support which a given actor receives for exhibiting pro-normative behaviour and which confirm its high status and good image in a group. In the context of Russia's climate policy, back-patting could take the form of the UNFCCC's other constituent state-Parties praising Russia for its activism in the field of climate change mitigation as well as the high international status, legitimacy, and image as a 'green' or responsible state that Russia derives from its efforts in and commitment to fighting climate change. Opprobrium, however, refers to social punishments (e.g., public shaming, shunning, denial of status, and exclusion) which are brought on by the exhibition of anti-normative behaviour that effectively lowers an actor's status and image within the community of states it is a member of. Turning to the case of interest to this particular research, opprobrium could manifest itself as critique by the other UNFCCC-Parties of Russia's inaction in curbing climate change and the concomitant degradation of Russia's status and image as a global power and responsible state in the eyes of the international community. It is signs of Russia's concerns with these issues that this research is particularly interested in, as their observation would confirm this paper's research hypothesis and serve as the foundation for answering its central research question on the basis of international socialisation theory and the model of social influence.

In order to establish whether Russian decision-makers indeed exhibited evidence of concerns over the country's domestic and international climate policy eliciting back-patting and opprobrium and resulting in the adjustment of Russia's international status and image, this paper will look at the official communication by the Russian state, be it written or oral, on the country's climate policy. Specifically, it uses a selection of official government documents, governmental resolutions and doctrines, published rhetoric of Russian officials, and assessments of various stakeholders (e.g., academic bodies) pertaining to Russia's domestic and international climate policy as its primary data-set. Said selection of materials is listed in this paper's appendix. As for the processing of this qualitative data, this research paper will apply discourse analysis to the aforementioned material. Discourse analysis is a qualitative research method by which various elements (e.g., words, sentences, paragraphs and overall structure) of the materials selected are closely examined for, in this case, their reflection of

concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments over Russia's domestic and international climate policy. If, using discourse analysis, the selected material is found to reflect said concerns, this paper will deem its research hypothesis confirmed and, resultantly, its research question answered. In this paper's subsequent chapter, the results of the inquiry as set out above will be analysed and discussed.

3. Results and Analysis

This chapter will present the results of the current paper's research and their analysis. It is subdivided into two parts with the first part discussing materials that directly seem to confirm this paper's research hypothesis. The second part deals with indirect textual evidence supporting said hypothesis based on Russia's 'showcasing' of its pro-normativity in the international climate regime. All excerpts taken by the current research paper from Russian-language materials are the result of the author's own translation efforts.

3.1. Voiced Concerns: Direct Confirmations of Social Influence

This section deals with the category of reviewed materials that directly seem to affirm the current paper's research hypothesis – that is, it focuses on materials which directly reflect Russian decision-makers' concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments over Russia's domestic and international climate policy. This category is itself further subdivided into three parts which, respectively, will discuss the following types of materials: statements made by Russian decision-makers, Russian governmental or official assessments and analyses, and academic analyses.

The first type of materials falling within the category discussed in this given section are statements made by Russian decision-makers in which they directly voice their concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments over Russia's domestic and international climate policy. It has to be acknowledged that these instances are scarce and, therefore, of limited support for the affirmation of this paper's research hypothesis. Indirect evidence of status concerns in statements made by Russian officials can, however, be readily found in said statements' focus on Russia's minute exercise of pro-normative behaviour in the international regime governing climate change mitigation as well as on the country's active, responsible, and sometimes even leading role in fighting global warming. These forms of indirect evidence will, therefore, be discussed in this chapter's subsequent section.

Turning again to direct evidence of international status concerns guiding the formation of Russia's climate policy in Russian decision-makers' statements, three instances have been observed in which Russian officials voiced the need to take Russia's international image into account when making decisions related to the country's international and domestic climate policy. The first one was a statement made by German Gref, Russian Minister of Economic Development and Trade from to 2000 to 2007, who, on October 5th, 2004, just before Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, stated that "the Kremlin viewed the step mainly as a symbolic gesture to improve Russia's international image" (Henry and McIntosh Sundstrom 2007, 58).

Other Russian officials, too, have highlighted Russia's international image in relation to its ratification of the Kyoto Protocol; during a press conference held on April 10th, 2003, Oleg Pluzhnikov, the deputy head of the Department of Ecology at the Russian Energy Ministry, voiced his concerns that, if Russia was not to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, the country would risk considerable international backlash: "[t]he loss of confidence on the part of foreign countries may be the most significant consequence of Russia's refusal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol" (Neft' Kapital 2003). By emphasising the improvement of Russia's international image and the avoidance of the loss of confidence by other states, it can be argued that Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in 2004 seems to have, indeed, been guided by the prospects of status rewards and the avoidance of international opprobrium, if only partially. Flowing from such a reading of the analysed materials, Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol can be said to be an instance of pro-normative behaviour brought on by international status or image concerns on the part of Russian decision-makers.

The third and last instance of a Russian government official voicing concerns with Russia's inactivity in the field of climate change mitigation possibly harming the country's international image is that of Dmitriy Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation from 2008 to 2012, stating the following on February 18th, 2010, during a meeting on climate change, the attendees of which included the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Economic Development as well as several members of the Presidential Administration:

> "[W]e should not forget our global responsibilities. [..] Climate policy should be a task for the government, a task for local authorities, a goal for business, and not just a lot of armchair scientists and publicists who write notes on this topic. Therefore, I hope that we will make

> appropriate efforts here. By the way, this will also contribute to the creation of a correct, positive climate image of our country. We also need this." (President of Russia 2010).

This statement very clearly indicates Medvedev's focus on a positive image of Russia in the field of climate change mitigation and said image's importance in driving Russia's domestic and international climate policy. This statement was made following the publication of Russia's 2009 Climate Doctrine but prior to the publication of the Doctrine's Implementation Plan in 2011. While there is no direct evidence that the publication of the 2011 Climate Doctrine Implementation Plan was driven by international image concerns, the above statement does seem to indicate a certain importance being attributed to Russia's international image in the efforts made by the Russian authorities in their fight against climate change. Indeed, in it, Medvedev does spur on different branches of the Russian government to actively engage in the formation of Russia's climate policy with the goal of furthering the country's 'correct, positive climate image'. Hence, it can be argued that, in this particular statement, image concerns do seem to be a driver behind the formation of Russia's climate policy.
So, while sparse in number, the above-discussed statements by Russian decision-makers do reflect concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments over Russia's domestic and international climate policy, thereby affirming this paper's research hypothesis.

The second type of materials to be discussed within the confines of the current section are assessments and analyses of Russia's domestic and international climate policy performed by Russian governmental or otherwise official institutions which emphasise concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments. Two documents, in this regard, stand out. It has to be noted that these two documents were drafted not directly by the Russian government, but were both created in cooperation with or under the guidance of ministries whose respective portfolios include the formation and execution of the Russian Federation's climate policy. The first document is a 2020 report titled *The Turn to Nature: Russia's New Ecological Policy in the Conditions of the "Green" Transformation of the Global Economy and Politics* which was written by a collective of authors hailing from Faculty of Global Economy and Politics of the Moscow-based Higher School of Economics (HSE). The writing of said report was supported by and took place under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, which ensures the document's conformity with the Russian government's official position on climate policy. The report's contents consist of a number of recommendations resulting from a series of situational

analyses performed by the HSE and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Russia's international and domestic climate policy. The following recommendation, which can be found under the header 'Risks of Maintaining the Status Quo' in the chapter 'Russia's Current Climate Policy', deals with the foreign policy or international image risks Russia could incur by keeping to a rather inactive and unambitious climate policy:

> "Foreign policy risks are associated with yet another possible blow to the image of Russia, which will be actively represented as an ecological 'loser' or even a pest, and a loss of advantage due to Russia's inability to instrumentalise the objective advantages in the environmental sphere (for example, the position of the country as an environmental donor) that it has. Instead of being one of the leaders in an area that plays an increasingly important role in international relations and in the distribution of influence in the world, Russia risks being a 'whipping boy', losing the ability to determine the agenda in this area in a favorable manner. There is a real danger that Russia, with its current plans for emission reduction, will be portrayed as not only the opposite of relatively developed countries, but also of the advanced developing countries. As a result, geopolitical rivals, and eventual partners who announced their plans for 'green' development and their readiness to spend significant financial resources for their implementation, will accuse Moscow of opportunism, environmental dumping, and unfair competition. […] China was extremely successful in getting out of this situation, turning its weaknesses, in the form of a low basic level of environmental development, into its strength and in a matter of years becoming one of the leaders of the environmental agenda. Russia has the opportunity to make a similar maneuver, but there is less and less time for this, and the importance of environmental issues more and more on the international political agenda." (Makarov *et al.* 2020, 48-49).

The above passage can be argued to heavily reflect concerns over international opprobrium as well as image and status adjustment. Concerns over Russia becoming subject to international opprobrium as a result of its inactivity in the field of climate change mitigation can be clearly made out in the parts referring to Russia being represented an 'ecological pest' or 'whipping boy' by the international community. Said community, and most importantly Russia's 'rivals', are also said to be able to show their discontent with Russia by accusing the country of 'opportunism, environmental dumping, and unfair competition.' These are all clear concerns over Russia being subjected to social costs in that it may include public shaming, shunning, and denial of status (i.e., opprobrium) emanating from the part of the international community which has committed itself to the fight against climate change.

The above text also warns of the resulting lowering or negative adjustment of Russia's international image and status. Indeed, it talks of the country's current climate policy incurring 'yet another possible blow to the image of Russia, which will be actively represented as an ecological "loser".' Russia would also be portrayed as 'the opposite' of developed and developing states that have voluntarily committed themselves and their resources to the cause of climate change mitigation. In terms of status adjustment, it acknowledges that Russia's slacking in the fight against global warming, which is becoming an area of increased international importance and cooperation, could lead to the loss of influence or its 'the ability to determine the agenda in this area in a favorable manner.' While this last point (as well as the referring to Russia's position as that of an 'environmental donor') seems to be in line with the explanation of Russia's climate policy focusing on considerations of identity and power projection as discussed in this paper's first chapter, it can be argued that, here, status and image considerations are not presented as an intrinsic motivator but, rather, as the object of the social influence radiating from the other participants of a specific international regime.

In light of the above discussion, this paper posits that the above passage does indeed provide proof of Russian official bodies (in this case, Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with researchers from HSE) voicing concerns over opprobrium and the negative adjustment of Russia's image and status within the international regime governing climate change mitigation. It also has to be noted that this publication's recommendations, including the above, were extensively covered by Russian news media, both state-controlled and independent. Widely-read newspapers such as the state-owned *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* and the Kremlin-affiliated *Vzglyad*, but also the business daily *RBC* and the relatively independent *Kommersant* have all published articles which include the above recommendation (Khimshiashvili, Pudovkin, and Kalinina 2021; Makarova and Moshkin 2021; Karaganov 2021; Makarov 2021).

Analysing the risks of maintaining the current *status quo* of Russia's domestic and international climate policy, which is characterised by a distinct lack of ambition, the above excerpt's main focus, of course, lies with the negative ramifications of keeping to such a course. It therefore, apart from asserting that Russia, like China, still has the opportunity to boost its international status and image by further developing its environmental agenda, does not touch much upon the positive consequences for Russia of adopting a more active policy to fight climate change. Thus, the above excerpt can be said to largely disregard possible

international social rewards, or back-patting, and positive image or status adjustments flowing from the adoption of a more ambitious climate policy by Russia. It does, however, show that a Russian ministry is concerned with opprobrium and negative status and image adjustments over Russia's current climate policy.

A similar assessment is made by the second document under consideration, namely the 2021 report by The Centre of Strategic Developments and the Analytical Centre of the Russian Energy Agency falling under the Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation titled *Russia's Climate Agenda: Reacting to International Challenges*. In the report, the following risk-analysis is presented pertaining to Russia's current climate mitigation efforts and goals:

> "Russia is one of the largest international GHG emitters (about 5% of the total GHG emissions), which leads to increased attention in the international arena to its climate impact and control. According to data from the state cadaster, Russia has significantly reduced GHG emissions in the long term: in 2018, GHG emissions in Russia totaled around 2.2 billion tons CO2-equivalents […] which is 30.3% less than their number in 1990 (3.2 billion tons CO2-equivalents). […] In recent years, however, GHG emissions in the country have been growing, and Russia's target, for example in the 'Climate Action Tracker', has been described as 'critically insufficient'- corresponding with a warming of more than 4 ° C (assuming all countries make similar efforts). This creates a challenge for the image of Russia as a climate responsible country." (Tsentr Strategicheskikh Razrabotok 2021, 6).

The above excerpt draws attention to Russia's precarious standing within the international climate regime on account of the country's large contributing to global GHG emissions; while mentioning Russia's achievements in the field of GHG emission reduction, it also acknowledges that its high emission levels elicit increased international attention, implicit in which is the warning that Russia should tread carefully in the formation of its efforts to fight climate change – that is, increased international attention, in the context of Russia's current unambitious climate policy, is implied to have the potential to turn into increased international critique of said policy and of Russia as an international actor. Indeed, the passage makes mention of such critique when it points to Russia's target for limiting GHG emissions being assessed as 'critically insufficient'. Although it does not specify by whom, it can be inferred that the document does mean external assessors, be they academic, international, or otherwise. Referring to this and possibly other forms of critique, it can be argued that the above excerpt draws attention to the risk of social costs or opprobrium coming from the international community over Russia's current climate policy. It also points to this policy's possibly

negative consequences or 'challenges' for Russia's international image as a 'climate responsible country'. This is to say that, if continuing to go down the road of 'insufficient' climate mitigation measures, Russia's responsibility as an international actor might be called into question, harming its image and standing within the international climate regime and the international community at large. As such, the above passage can be said to reflect the Russian Ministry of Energy's concerns over Russia's current climate policy eliciting international opprobrium and image lowering.

So, while not paying great attention to back-patting and positive image or status adjustments, the reports discussed above can be argued to confirm the presence of concerns with opprobrium and international status and image adjustments over Russia's domestic and international climate policy on the part of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Energy, thereby largely affirming this paper's research hypothesis.

The third and final type of materials to be discussed within this section are academic analyses that make note of Russian decision-makers' concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments over Russia's international and domestic climate policy. While these academic sources, written in both English and Russian, refer to international image consideration as guiding the formation of Russia's climate policy, they mostly do so incidentally – that is, they, in contrast to the current research paper, do not take these considerations to be part of an overarching theoretical account of Russia's domestic and international efforts and commitments in the field of climate change mitigation. Nevertheless, these 'incidental' notes are of importance to this paper, as they serve to affirm its research hypothesis. The main instances in which, according to the academic sources reviewed, concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and status and/or image adjustment played a role in the formation of Russia's climate policy were the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in 2004, the domestic measures which Russia took following its refusal to join the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol in 2011, and its signing of the Paris Agreement in 2016.

Starting with Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, Korppoo, Tynkkynen, and Hønneland (2015, 28) assert that there were those in Russian government circles who supported this step because it "could boost Russia's image in the international arena as a 'civilized' country, and even an 'environmental leader', while rejecting the pact could lead to loss of trust by the international community." Indeed, the same authors also argue that voiced environmental worries on the part of Russian officials were mostly "lip service" (*Ibid*., 28)

paid to the countries who had already adopted and ratified the Protocol out of genuine concerns about the negative consequences of climate change. In light of this, they posit that "the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol was seen by the Russian side as an image-building exercise" (*Ibid*., 2). The situation the authors describe is, in essence, one of non-intrinsic internalisation (see Johnston 2008) or Checkel's (2005) 'Type I socialisation' of Russia into the international regime governing climate change mitigation – that is, according to Korppoo, Tynkkynen, and Hønneland (2015), Russia's exhibition of pro-normative behaviour (i.e., the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol) was driven not so much by genuine concerns with the averse ramifications of climate change as it was by calculations of social costs and benefits to achieve the improvement of Russia's international image and the increased trust of the international community. Social influence originating from said community can, therefore, be said to have pushed Russia towards its ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. This is a conclusion that is reached by a multitude of other scholars writing on the subject; Tynkkynen (2010) notes that, because Russia was under no obligation to cut its GHG emissions (mainly because of the aforementioned post-Soviet industrial contraction), the country's ratification of Kyoto Protocol was not born out of intrinsic concerns with the state of the global climate. Instead, Tynkkynen (2010, 192) argues that "Russia joined the Kyoto Protocol mainly in order to improve its own international image and gain political or economic leverage." In an interview with Henry and McIntosh Sundstrom (2007, 58), Yuri Safonov, an economist at the HSE, too, agrees that an important factor in Russia's ratification of the Protocol was "the international image of Russia and Putin himself."

Russia's less than impressive domestic efforts following its ratification of the Kyoto Protocol can, according to some authors, also be explained through the lens of image concerns. Such authors argue that while grand international gestures such as Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol attract a large amount of (international) attention and praise, smaller or more technical domestic measures meant to implement said international climate agreements are often ignored. Hence, the latter category of measures is not seen as particularly conducive to the accruing of status or image benefits and, therefore, only enforced haphazardly. In the words of Henry and McIntosh Sundstrom (2007, 64), this produced a dynamic in which "Russia's shallow ideational commitment to the environment generally and climate change prevention specifically […] affect[ed] the implementation of the protocol." More specifically, they assert that "[w]hile ratification appeared to be driven primarily by international pressure and side payments, implementation is a process that occurs largely outside the public spotlight

and, at least in the short term, does little to affect Russia's international image" (*Ibid*., 65). The perceived lack of international social benefits and low risk of social costs resulting from domestic implementation of the Kyoto Protocol's stipulations thus inhibits the expediency of this same implementation. This, according to Tynkkynen (2010, 192), explains why "the positive environmental image projected onto the international stage contrasts with the corresponding effectiveness of prevailing domestic policies." As such, Russia, through what Kokorin and Korppoo (2013) call 'window-dressing', "treats the […] global agreement [i.e., the Kyoto Protocol] as another site for building a green but empty image in foreign environmental policy" (*Ibid*., 8). This way, Kokorin and Korppoo (2013, 4) argue, "it seems that as soon as the image-building benefits had been pocketed, further action was held back."

In conclusion, the above discussion of academic accounts of Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol confirms that said ratification was, at least in part, motivated by concerns over Russia's international image, the accruing of international social rewards, and the avoidance of international opprobrium. These same motivators can also be argued to account for the low rate of domestic implementation of the Protocol's stipulations by the Russian authorities.

Conversely, image considerations do seem to have had a positive effect on the adoption of domestic mitigation measures following Russia's 2011 announcement that it would not participate in the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (2012-2020). According to the official Russian narrative, said refusal was in large part due to the fact that the US, India, and China, the world's largest GHG emitters, did not sign up to the Kyoto Protocol to begin with, providing them, in the eyes of Moscow, with an unfair advantage in terms of economic development. Some, however, argue that this decision was also based on image considerations; Korppoo, Tynkkynen, and Hønneland (2015) posit that the move also provided an opportunity for Russia not to be subjected to the same critique (or opprobrium) over its unambitious mitigations goals and efforts as it was during the Protocol's first commitment period. Whatever the reason behind Russia's refusal, Russia's non-commitment to the second phase of the Kyoto Protocol was accompanied by a flurry of domestic measures to fight climate change (i.e., the 2011 Climate Doctrine Implementation Plan, the 2013 Presidential Decree and its 2014 Implementation Plan, and the 2014 Roshydromet report). Korppoo, Tynkkynen, and Hønneland (2015, 32) maintain that these "domestic commitments were introduced as an alternative to the second period commitments, most probably for image reasons." Putting it differently, they argue that "[e]ven though it was argued that Russia can withdraw from Kyoto with a 'clear conscience' […] adopting a domestic emissions limitation

target (September 2013) indicates that Moscow has remained aware of its image in terms of global fairness of participation in efforts aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change. The domestic target is probably seen as replacing an international commitment to some extent." (*Ibid*., 48). Based on these assertions, it can be argued that the series of domestic measures Russia adopted during its non-participation in the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol were, at least in part, motivated by concerns with its international image and the avoidance of social costs.

Lastly, Russia's signing of the Paris Agreement in 2016, too, is said by some to have been motivated by international image and status concerns; a 2021 analysis by the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) argued that, in the context of Russia's accession to the Paris Agreement

> "Russian policy has been dictated not so much by concerns about global warming as by a cold-blooded calculation of costs and benefits. At a time when US moral and political credibility is at an historically low level, the case for Russia's joining the international consensus has grown stronger. Ratification contributed to the promotion of its image as a responsible participant in the world community, while not imposing serious obligations. For Moscow, the situation looked like a win-win" (IFRI 2021, 11).

The US's hesitant accession to and subsequent withdrawal from the Agreement in 2017 provided Russia with a chance to contrast its pro-normative behaviour (i.e., signing the Agreement) with the global hegemon's disregard of the international community's expectations. Helping, of course, was the relative freedom granted to state-Parties in devising and adopting their own measures. This allowed for 'window-dressing' by the Russian authorities who raked in the image benefits gained from signing but abstained from adopting any serious measures to curb climate change, again putting Russia's socialisation squarely in Checkel's (2005) 'Type I'. So, Russia's signing of the Paris Agreement can also be argued to, if only partially, be motivated by international status concerns.

The above-discussed academic analyses have, in short, proven the presence of concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments over Russia's international and domestic climate policy in the minds of Russian decision-makers. In doing so, they have confirmed this paper's research hypothesis.

In conclusion, the above discussion of Russian decision-makers' statements, Russian governmental/official assessments and analyses, and academic analyses seems to directly confirm the existence of Russian decision-makers' concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments over Russia's international and domestic climate policy. As such, these selected materials have affirmed the current paper's research hypothesis, thereby asserting the usefulness of the theory of international socialisation and the model of social influence in (at least partially) accounting for Russia's domestic and international efforts and commitments in the field of climate change mitigation.

3.2. 'Showcasing': An Indirect Account of Social Influence

The current section will deal with indirect textual evidence of Russian decision-makers' concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments over Russia's domestic and international climate policy. This strain of evidence mainly consists of Russian decision-makers' 'showcasing' of Russia's pro-normative behaviour and identity in the international climate regime. More specifically, this section will inquire into Russian officials' drawing attention to Russia's active fulfilment and voluntary exceeding of its international obligations, the country's role as a global environmental leader and a responsible state, and its ideational congruence with the current international climate regime. In doing so, this paper makes the case that by showcasing Russia's pro-normative behaviour and role, the country's officials would like to elicit international social rewards and positive status and/or image adjustment or maintenance. This paper does, however, acknowledge the existence of alternative explanative accounts of said 'showcasing' which mainly lie in Russia's broader international goal to preserve its Great Power status or to cultivate multipolarity in the face of US global hegemony.

Showcasing Russia's pro-normative behaviour most often takes the form of Russian officials' repetitive emphasis on the country's active fulfilment or even voluntary excess of its obligations under the international climate agreements it is or was a party to. Indeed, stressing that Russia actively fulfills its international obligations in the field of climate change mitigation seems to be commonplace in a plethora of statements made by Russian decision-makers (see Bedritskiy 2010, 2011, 2012a, 2013; Edel'geriyev 2018, 2019; Federation Council of the Russian Federation 2009; Government of the Russian Federation 2019b, 2019c; Khloponin 2016; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2016, 2021b; President of Russia 2009b, 2021a, 2021c, 2021d).

Generically, such statements follow along the lines of the following statement made during a speech delivered during the 24th UN Climate Change Conference in Katowice, Poland, by Special Presidential Representative on Climate Issues from 2018 to present, Ruslan Edel'geriyev (2018): "Russia, in terms of its contribution to joint efforts to prevent global warming, is methodically and coherently fulfilling its obligations in full." Similarly, Edel'geriyev's predecessor from 2009 to 2018, Aleksandr Bedritskiy (2010), stated during his speech at the 16th UN Climate Change Conference in Cancún, Mexico that "Russia, in accordance with its obligations, is actively counteracting climate change […] Russia will continue to actively participate in all processes that really lead to the solution of the problem of reducing the anthropogenic pressure on the climate from all, without exception, countries of the world."

In addition to pointing to Russia's fulfillment of its international obligations, many Russian officials also make mention of the fact that the country voluntarily exceeds them. These perceived excesses are mostly presented as Russia's moving beyond quantitative emission reduction requirements as stipulated by international climate agreements (see Government of the Russian Federation 2019c; President of Russia 2015) or as the voluntary financial assistance it provides to developing states to fight climate change (see Bedritskiy 2014, 2016; Edel'geriyev 2018; Federation Council of the Russian Federation 2016; Khloponin 2016). Exemplifying the first category is the following statement made by Russian President Vladimir Putin during the 21st UN Climate Change Conference in Paris, France:

> "We have exceeded our obligations under the Kyoto Protocol: from 1991 to 2012, Russia not only prevented the growth of greenhouse gas emissions, but significantly reduced them. Thanks to this, about 40 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent did not enter the atmosphere. For comparison, I will say, dear colleagues, that greenhouse gas emissions from all countries of the world in 2012 amounted to 46 billion tons, that is, we can say that Russia's efforts made it possible to slow down global warming for almost a year" (President of Russia 2015).

Russia, which under the Kyoto Protocol was only required to at least not exceed 1990 GHG emission levels, indeed did much more; it reduced them with roughly 30%. This, however, was mostly due to the aforementioned post-Soviet industrial contraction, making Russia's excess of the Kyoto Protocol's requirements an easy achievement which is largely unrelated to its efforts under the Protocol. Nevertheless, it is used here by Putin to draw attention to Russia's exceeding of international emission reduction obligations.

The second category (i.e., voluntary financial assistance) is best caught by the words of Edel'geriyev during the aforementioned 24th UN Climate Change Conference: "The Russian Federation, despite the absence of legal obligations to provide financial assistance to developing countries under the Convention and the Paris Agreement, provides climate finance on a voluntary basis" (Edel'geriyev 2018). Here, Edel'geriyev probably refers to Russia's USD 5 million contribution to support mitigation policies in developing countries and establishment of its own fund of USD 10 million together with the United Nations Development Programme.

The emphasis on Russia's active fulfilment and voluntary excess of its international obligations clearly represents the showcasing of Russia's pro-normative behaviour in the international regime governing climate change mitigation. Alternative explanations notwithstanding, this paper posits said showcasing to be indicative of Russian decision-makers' wish for the international community's acknowledgement of Russia's international and domestic efforts to curb climate change and possible social rewards and positive status and/or image adjustment or maintenance (i.e., back-patting) or the avoidance of international opprobrium. As such, the stressing of Russia's fulfilment and excess of its international obligations could be taken as indirect evidence of the existence of Russian officials' concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments over Russia's international and domestic climate policy.

Similarly, Russian officials also try to showcase or project Russia's pro-normative identity onto the world stage by referring to the country's role as a global environmental leader and a responsible state. As for Russia's identity as an environmental leader, Russian officials tend to stress Russia's role as an ecological donor (see Bedritskiy 2010, 2015; Government of the Russian Federation 2019a, 2021; Khloponin 2016; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2016; President of Russia 2003, 2009, 2021a, 2021c, 2021d) and initiator or enabler within the field of global governance dealing with climate change mitigation (see Bedritskiy 2012a, 2012b; Federation Council of the Russian Federation 2009). The perception of Russia as an ecological donor often emphasises the absorption of CO2 by Russia's boreal forests and the relatively 'clean' composition of Russia's energy mix. This propagated view is best exemplified by the following excerpt from President Putin's speech delivered during the 2021 meeting of the Board of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

> "Clean nuclear and hydropower, gas-fired power generation, as well as the enormous absorptive capacity of our forests and ecosystems, have made our country one of the leaders in the global decarbonisation process. […] [W]e must proceed from the fact that Russia has now reached the forefront in the matter of 'green' transformation, digitalization of all sectors of the economy and spheres of human life" (President of Russia 2021d).

The above statement could reflect Russia's wish to present itself as a 'Great Ecological Power' in order to regain its Great Power status or, by drawing attention to the CO2-absorption by its forests and its 'clean' energy mix, prevent Russia being subjected to additional quantitative emission reduction requirements. It could, however, also be an example of showcasing Russia's pro-normative identity within the international regime governing climate change, positively confirming or improving its international image and status.

A similar line of reason would hold for statements which posit Russia as a fundamental enabler of the current international climate regime. Such statements mostly tend to focus on the key role played by Russia in having the Kyoto Protocol go into force as described in this paper's first chapter. An example is provided by Bedritskiy who, in a speech delivered at the 18th UN Climate Change Conference in Doha, Qatar, stated that

> "By ratifying the Kyoto Protocol in 2004, the Russian Federation made a decisive contribution to the launch of this important instrument of international cooperation on global climate protection, which, due to procedural specifics, would simply not have come into force without Russia's participation. The Kyoto Protocol was an important first step in translating, in the formation of specific legal obligations of the overall goal of the UNFCCC to prevent dangerous anthropogenic impacts on the climate system" (Bedritskiy 2012a).

By emphasising the importance of Russia in bringing about the contemporary international climate regime, Bedritskiy links Russia to the normative framework of that same regime. Russia thus becomes synonymous with (pro-)normativity. Such a reading could indicate the need on Bedritskiy's side to construe an image of Russia as a pro-normative environmental leader, possibly meaning that he is concerned with Russia's international image.

The same can be argued for statements that emphasise Russia's (sense of) responsibility in mitigating climate change. References to Russia's identity as a responsible state feature in many statements by Russian officials about the country's climate policy (see Edel'geriyev 2019; TASS 2017; Khloponin 2016; President of Russia 2009b, 2021a; Zakharova 2021). A

generic example is provided by the following excerpt from special representative Edel'geriyev's speech at the 25th UN Climate Change Conference in Madrid, Spain: "I consider it important to take this opportunity to once again state: the Russian Federation shares with the entire world community the goals and responsibility for climate conservation" (Edel'geriyev 2019). By pointing to Russia's sense of responsibility, such statements also stress Russia's understanding of and willingness to comply with international climate mitigation measures (i.e., to exhibit pro-normative behaviour). As such, references to Russia's felt responsibility could indicate concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments.

In short, showcasing Russia's pro-normative identity through references to its role as an environmental leader and responsible state could well indicate the existence of concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments in the minds of Russian decision-makers.

Lastly, a limited number of statements made by Russian officials on Russia's climate policy stresses the country's ideational congruence with the current international climate regime (see Edel'geriyev 2019; Government of the Russian Federation 2019a; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2016, 2021c). One form these statements take is the voicing of Russia's agreements with the overall aim(s) of said regime. An example in this regard is the following, already touched-upon excerpt from the speech delivered by Edel'geriyev during the aforementioned Madrid UN Climate Change Conference: "I consider it important to take this opportunity to once again state: the Russian Federation shares with the entire world community the goals and responsibility for climate conservation" (Edel'geriyev 2019). Another possible form are confirmations of Russia's agreement with specific international climate agreements. This form is exemplified by the statement made by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexey Gordeev during his 2019 meeting with the German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Gerd Müller: "Russia welcomes the conclusion of the Paris Agreement and considers it a reliable international legal basis for a long-term climate settlement" (Government of the Russian Federation 2019a). While admittedly precarious, statements in favour of the current international regime governing climate change mitigation could point to a felt necessity to confirm Russia's ideational congruence with and, hence, pro-normative stance towards said regime. This, in turn, could indicate the presence of international image or status concerns and worries about international rewards and/or opprobrium.

In conclusion, the current paper maintains that the showcasing of Russia's pro-normative behaviour and identity within as well as the country's ideational congruence with the current international climate regime by Russian officials can be argued to be indicators of Russian decision-makers' concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments over Russia's domestic and international climate policy. This would assert the explanative power of the theory of international socialisation and the model of social influence in (at least partially) accounting for the Russia's domestic and international efforts and commitments in the field of climate change mitigation.

This paper does, however, acknowledge the possibility that alternative causes could be at play. Instead of it being due to the wish to project an image of pro-normativity, Russian officials' 'showcasing' could also be part of a broader international objective on the part of the Russian Federation to preserve its former Great Power status or to cultivate multipolarity within a world order that it perceives to be increasingly characterised by unipolarity or US hegemony. Such an alternative explanation would venture from the perceived tension between Russia and the collective West which resulted from the transition from a bipolar international system, which characterised the Cold War, to one that is dominated by a US-led liberal international order. With the former order still informing the current (i.e., UN-centred) international institutional architecture in which Russia, as the 'successor state' of the USSR, still sways considerable formal influence and power, it can be argued to be in Russia's interest to uphold and strengthen the UN's (and its agencies') agency as well as its own role and position within the UN vis-à-vis that of independently acting states (e.g., the US). Such an understanding is best captured by Sakwa (2020, 22) when he posits that "at the vertical level [i.e., at the level of international organisations] neorevisionist states such as Russia and China are committed to the institutions of multilateral governance." As such, Russia is often seen to criticise international regime formation or independent action away from under the auspices of the UN (e.g., the NATO or US-led interventions in Kosovo, Iraq, Lybia, and Syria) which it dubs as rogue, irresponsible, and hypocritical behaviour that, in Moscow's rhetoric, defines US global hegemony (Monaghan 2006; Bond 2015; Sakwa 2017). In doing so, Russia often tends to emphasise its own keeping with UN rules and regulations (i.e., pro-normative behaviour), contrasting it with the anti-normative actions of, for example, the US. The objective here is to retain Russia's former Great Power status within the international order or to present it as an alternative 'pole' (that is, one of multiple within a multipolar world order) to the US (Monaghan 2006; Bond 2015; Sakwa 2017, 2020). Russia's general emphasis on its

own pro-normativity within a UN-centred institutional system could well inform the country's showcasing of its pro-normative behaviour and identity within the international climate regime which, through the UNFCCC, falls under the auspices of the UN. As such, said showcasing could be considered an instrument for Russia to retain its international institutional power and avert the formation of an alternative international regime which would be commandeered by its geopolitical rivals. Such a reading provides an explanation alternative to the one presented by the theory of international socialisation and the model of social influence.

In this paper's subsequent chapter, the above results and analysis will be summarised which will be followed by an overall conclusion. Additionally, the merits, limits, and shortcomings of the research done will be discussed.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

To summarise, the current research paper has attempted to answer its research question by, in in the chapter reviewing Russia's climate policy, providing an overview of Russia's international and domestic commitments and efforts in the field of climate change mitigation, introducing its main research puzzle, and discussing several groups of different, but arguably incomplete, explanations of Russia's climate policy proposed by the relevant academic literature. In the chapter on its theoretical approach and research methods, this paper discussed the theory of international socialisation and the model or micro-process of social influence from which it subsequently drew its research hypothesis. By applying the qualitative research method of discourse analysis to a varied selection of materials pertaining to Russia's domestic and international climate policy, it found that 1) a selection of Russian decision-makers' statements, Russian governmental or official assessments and analyses, and academic analyses seems to directly affirm the existence of Russian decision-makers' concerns with back-patting, opprobrium, and international status and image adjustments over Russia's international and domestic climate policy and 2) a selection of statements in which Russian officials 'showcase' Russia's pro-normative behaviour and identity within as well as the country's ideational congruence with the current international climate regime could possibly indicate the existence of these same concerns. In doing so, the first group of findings directly confirms and the second group, taking into account alternative explanations, possibly supports the predictions made by this paper's research hypothesis. As such, this paper's findings support the explanative power of international socialisation theory and the model of social

influence in accounting for the Russian Federation's domestic and international efforts and commitments in the field of climate change mitigation, thereby providing a sufficient answer to this paper's research question – that is, this paper's findings indicate that Russia's domestic and international efforts and commitments in the field of climate change mitigation are, at least in part, caused or informed by Russia's socialisation into the international regime governing climate change mitigation and the social influence emanating from its fellow participants in that regime.

It is hoped that this paper, through its findings, has meaningfully contributed to both an academic and practical understanding of Russia's climate policy. An analysis of this kind might also facilitate interpretation or limited prediction of the behaviour of Russian delegations to very recent or future climate summits.

This paper's research and findings do, however, have their respective limits and shortcomings, too. First of all, it has to be noted that the theoretical angle the current paper takes is not to be seen as an attempt to completely account for Russia's climate policy – that is, this paper's theoretical focus needs to be viewed as an inquiry into a previously unexplored research avenue meant to add onto already existing (and equally valid) academic accounts of the drivers behind said policy. This limit is enhanced by this paper's aggregate approach, meaning that when looking at a specific commitment or effort of Russia to fight climate change, the application of an alternative explanative account might be more suited. As such, it can be best concluded that this paper's findings add a partial nuance to the understanding of the topic at hand.

Secondly and relatedly, as discussed in the case of Russian officials' 'showcasing' of their country's pro-normative identity and behaviour, one has to take into account that the passages of the selected materials that this paper uses to establish the presence of social influence could be subject to alternative explanative accounts that undermine this paper's research hypothesis. Exploration of more of these alternative accounts should, therefore, be encouraged.

Third and last is the point of improvement of this paper's research methodology. Possibly improving or strengthening this paper's choice of theoretical framework could be the application of international socialisation theory and the model of social influence to other cases in order to test their currency as an interpretive device for (other) states' climate policies. Another possible improvement upon this research could consist of including

quantitative research methods in inquiring into official or public statements on Russia's climate policy. Taking an approach to public communication which prioritises quantifiable data may yield alternative insights to those identified by using, for example, content analysis. All in all, this paper leaves ample opportunity for the exploration of alternative avenues by future research.

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Appendix

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