

# INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS ON ATMOSPHERE AND CLIMATE PROTECTION IN MEDIA-DISOURSE: PROPAGANDA MODELS OF RUSSIAN AND US MEDIA

Nadezhda RADINA – Sofya BOBKOVA

## ABSTRACT:

The aim of the study is to compare the strategies of the Russian and American media in justifying the need to comply with international obligations on atmosphere and climate protection in the context of solving national propaganda tasks and to describe their dominant propaganda models. The research methods comprise the technique of intent-analysis by Ushakova and Pavlova, as well as the technique of rhetorical deconstruction by Ibarra and Kitsuse. Empirical materials of the research include texts of the of Russian and American media (*Izvestia*, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, *Gazeta.Ru*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*: 104 articles in total; published from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017). It was found that the propaganda models of the Russian and American media correspond to the description of propaganda within the state by Ellul under the two-party system of the state: the ruling party conducts propaganda for itself, the opposition party conducts propaganda against the ruling party. The propaganda model of the American media in this area of information competition between the two states can be characterised as the “propaganda model of the leader”, and the propaganda model of the Russian media may be called the “opposition propaganda model”.

## KEY WORDS:

atmosphere and climate protection, environmental policy, intent analysis, mediatization of politics, propaganda, Russian media

## 1 Introduction

Donald Trump’s statement in early June 2017 that the United States is withdrawing from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change is a vivid example of the return of ‘real politicians’ to the media as directly



Prof. Dr. Nadezhda Radina, PhD.  
Faculty of Humanities  
National Research University “Higher School of Economics”  
Bolshaya Pecherskaya st. 25/12  
603155 Nizhny Novgorod  
Russian Federation  
rasv@yandex.ru

Nadezhda Radina is a Professor at the Department of Social Sciences (Faculty of Humanities) of the National Research University “Higher School of Economics” in Nizhny Novgorod, Russian Federation. Her research interests include media psychology and mass communications. She is the author of over 100 scientific articles and 5 books about the psychology of communications.



Sofya Bobkova, MA  
Translation Company Janus Worldwide  
Gagarin Avenue 164  
603000 Nizhny Novgorod  
Russian Federation  
sophiajeevas@yahoo.com

Sofya Bobkova followed a Master’s programme and graduated with a degree in Linguistics specialising in Political Linguistics in 2016 and is currently a project manager for the translation company Janus Worldwide. Her research interests include media studies and various topics related to media discourse and media agenda.

broadcasting their position.<sup>1</sup> In general, the daily ‘social construction of reality’ and the routine work of the mass media are the responsibility of professional journalists who use their skills to express the position of media editor, which is also only an intermediary between the readers and owners of the mass media.<sup>2</sup>

Politics, inaccessible to the reader, is reconstructed in interpretations, explanations, attitudes of printed and electronic mass media, and is proposed as ready-made value judgments for use. The process of penetration of the political field into the media field, as a result of which there is a shift of political senses from the real field to the virtual, media field, is called the mediatisation of politics in various studies.<sup>3</sup> According to the researchers, media policy appears as a struggle for symbolic power, which unfolds between the elites, as well as communication between the subjects of the public process.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, penetrating into politics, the media construct a new political reality in the information sphere – the virtual reality of mediatised politics.

This study, while focusing on the American and Russian mass media, describes the problem of the mediation of environmental policy and analyses the relationship between the environmental policy constructed in mass media and that constructed with the help of propaganda. The purpose of the study is to compare the strategies of the Russian and American media in justifying the need to comply with international obligations on atmosphere and climate protection in the context of solving national propaganda tasks and describe their dominant propaganda models. The research question is the assumption that the design of the propaganda model of the American mass media in the field of mediated environmental policy offers the United States a leading position in global environmental policy, and the design of the propaganda model of the Russian media in global environmental policy reflects opposition positions.

## 2 Ecological Policy Mediatisation Breakdown

Recent studies focused on mediatisation of politics present a number of models, ideas and concepts regarding the understanding of ‘penetration’ and hybridisation of politics and media: this is the concept of “public opinion” (Lippmann, Lazarsfeld, Noelle-Neumann, etc.), and the “agenda-setting” theory (McCombs and Shaw, Cohen, and others), and the relationship between the code of authority and the code of the media (Luhmann, and others). The agenda-setting theory demonstrates at the media level how readers’ attention and opinions are ‘managed’ due to the emphasis and restructuring of information.<sup>5</sup>

One of the most famous ideas from the theoretical field of agenda-setting is the assumption of Dearing and Rogers about competing agendas: political (it is established by the state), media (it is established by the mass media) and public (formed within public opinion, influenced by the latter and the former based on personal experience).<sup>6</sup>

The nature of competing political and media agendas is actively discussed in different studies. There are two opposing points of view: according to the first, the media have enough resources to influence a policy (for example, the ‘CNN effect’); according to the second, this is impossible because the media are not able to speak from a point of view that differs from the official one (create their own agenda, even completely conformal) or they take the position of the elites (if a certain participant has a politically strong position in society).<sup>7</sup> According to Robinson, the possibility of media influence on politics is more obvious in situations of ‘political uncertainty’, when politics is most influenced by the media and may even be changed by them (the greater the uncertainty, the greater the likelihood that the political process will be influenced by the media).

1 SMETANNIKOVA, M.: *Trump protiv klimata: Chem grozit vykhod SSHA iz Parizhskogo soglasheniya*. Released on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2017. [online]. [2019-09-08]. Available at: <<http://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/4300291>>.

2 See: VOROSHILOV, V. V.: *Theory and Practice of Mass Information*. Moscow: KNORUS, 2014.

3 See also: VOINOVA, E. A.: *Mediatization of Politics as the Phenomenon of the New Information Culture*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Moscow: Moscow State University, 2006.

4 CIAGLIA, A.: Politics in the Media and the Media in Politics: A Comparative Study of the Relationship between the Media and Political Systems in Three European Countries. In *European Journal of Communication*, 2013, Vol. 28, No. 5, p. 541-555.

5 MCCOMBS, M., SHAW, D.: The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass-Media. In *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1972, Vol. 36, No. 3, p. 176-187.

6 ROGERS, E. M., DEARING, J. W.: Agenda-Setting Research: Where Has It Been? Where Is It Going? In ANDERSON, J. A. (ed.): *Communication Yearbook. Vol. 11*. Newbury Park: SAGE, 1988, p. 555-594.

7 ROBINSON, P.: Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics. Models of Media Influence on Foreign Policy. In *European Journal of Communication*, 2001, Vol. 16, No. 4, p. 523-544.

The mediatisation of environmental policy is described quite positively, because the media can popularise complex environmental issues,<sup>8</sup> including a discussion of global warming issues.<sup>9</sup> They are able to effectively influence public opinion in the field of ecology and problems in the field of climate change<sup>10</sup> and even on the ‘ecological behaviour’ of the population.<sup>11</sup>

However, in recent studies on the mediatisation of environmental policies, supporting the theory of the agenda, there are doubts that the media can form an independent agenda regarding environmental issues, being dependent on the political agenda and sponsors.<sup>12</sup> The domination of the political agenda on climate change is also noted in the European media: they are recognised as conformist-oriented towards the official policies of their countries.<sup>13</sup>

Analysing the actions of the governments of those countries that are considered responsible for the environmental situation in the world (leading in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to the atmosphere – the United States, China, India, Russia), researchers characterise their environmental policies as due not to a common agenda, but to national political and economic interests.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, the problem of climate change objectively invades the global agenda, as the relationship between natural disasters and climate change, contradictions between environmental and economic issues, etc. are being discussed more often.<sup>15</sup> This entailed competition between countries for the role of a leader in the field of ‘caring for the planet’ since leadership in the global environmental policy ensures the high status of the country and forms its positive image.

## 3 Mediatisation of Environmental Policy and Propaganda Theory

In-depth discussions about media politics, about political and media hybridisation would be incomplete without addressing the issue of propaganda in mass media. There are different approaches to understanding and researching propaganda. The most well-known approach is that by Chomsky and Herman about the five filters that form the news: the information having passed through these filters keeps anything not interfering with the requirements of the filters.<sup>16</sup> Instead of forming state censorship, the filters create a “censorship of elites” since large businesses are the main controlling force in their formation. Mullen and Klachn emphasise that the Propaganda Model, developed by Herman and Chomsky, which sought to explain the behaviour of the mass media in the United States more than 20 years ago, still continues to provide an invaluable tool for

8 POBEREZHSKAYA, M.: Media Coverage of Climate Change in Russia: Governmental Bias and Climate Silence. In *Public Understanding of Science*, 2014, Vol. 24, No. 1, p. 96-111.

9 See: FELDMAN, L. et al.: Climate on Cable: The Nature and Impact of Global Warming Coverage on Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC. In *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 2012, Vol. 17, No. 1, p. 3-31; ZHAO, X., ROLFE-REDDING, J., KOTCHER, J.: Partisan Differences in the Relationship between Newspaper Coverage and Concern over Global Warming. In *Public Understanding of Science*, 2014, Vol. 25, No. 5, p. 543-559.

10 TAKAHASHI, B., MEISNER, M.: Climate Change in Peruvian Newspapers: The Role of Foreign Voices in Context of Vulnerability. In *Public Understanding of Science*, 2012, Vol. 22, No. 4, p. 427-442.

11 XU, J.: Environmental Discourses in China’s Urban Planning System: A Scaled Discourse-Analytical Perspective. In *Urban Studies*, 2016, Vol. 53, No. 5, p. 978-999.

12 DISPENSA, J. M., BRULLE, R. J.: Media’s Social Construction of Environmental Issues: Focus on Global Warming – A Comparative Study. In *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 1981, Vol. 23, No. 10, p. 74-105.

13 OLAUSSON, U.: Global Warming – Global Responsibility? Media Frames of Collective Action and Scientific Certainty. In *Public Understanding of Science*, 2009, Vol. 18, No. 4, p. 421-436.

14 See: RUSAKOVA, E. A.: Climate Policy of the Russian Federation and Addressing the Challenges of Changing the Global Climate. In *Bulletin of MGIMO University*, 2015, Vol. 40, p. 66-72; HOVI, J., SPRINZ, D. F., BANG, G.: Why the United States Did Not Become a Party to the Kyoto Protocol: German, Norwegian, and US. In *European Journal of International Relations*, 2012, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 129-150; PAGE, E.: Equity and the Kyoto Protocol. In *Politics*, 2007, Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 8-15.

15 VLACHOU, A., KONSTANTINIDIS, C.: Climate Change: The Political Economy of Kyoto Flexible Mechanisms. In *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 2010, Vol. 42, No. 1, p. 32-49.

16 For more information, see: HERMAN, E., CHOMSKY, N.: *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2002; HERMAN, E., CHOMSKY, N., MULLEN, A.: The Propaganda Model after 20 Years: Interview with Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky. In *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 2009, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 12-22.

understanding the media within contemporary capitalist societies.<sup>17</sup> Another well-known approach is by Ellul.<sup>18</sup> From Ellul's point of view, "propaganda" is secondary for a totalitarian state, as they have other methods of controlling the population. Democratic countries need more propaganda and they use more complex forms of it. The complex models of propaganda remain invisible; therefore, they do not cause such resistance from the audience. In building the propaganda model, Ellul relies on socio-psychological and sociological concepts and defines "propaganda" as a set of methods used by an organised group that wants to achieve active or passive participation in their actions of a mass of individuals united through psychological manipulation and included in the organisation. Despite the fact that Ellul's propaganda model was suggested in the middle of the last century, some modern researchers consider it to be the most relevant for the post-information society.<sup>19</sup>

Modern researchers tend to define propaganda as a form of communication,<sup>20</sup> which is very productive for studying mediated politics. Regardless of what approach the researcher uses in the analysis of media discourse, the media discourse is no longer defined as neutral and independent, and the term "propaganda" falls under instrumental understanding. In addition, it should be noted that both approaches in the analysis of propaganda successfully complement other theoretical fields in the study of mass media discourse, for example, in agreement with theories of the agenda.

## 4 Materials and Methods

Analysing the discourses of the justification of international obligations on atmosphere and climate protection in the Russian and American media, this study addresses the theoretical constructs of the model of competing agendas (political, media and public) by Rogers and Dearing and follows the understanding of propaganda by Ellul.

Based on the idea of media discourse as dependent on politics, the study examines the propaganda models of the Russian and American media – the main opponents in information competition based on the presentation of the countries' international obligations to protect the atmosphere and climate.

The methods comprise intent-analysis by Ushakova and Pavlova with the use of an authorial intentions dictionary,<sup>21</sup> as well as rhetorical deconstruction technique by Ibarra and Kitsuse.<sup>22</sup> Both techniques are based on expert assessment, and the principles of "selective coding" of texts as a tool in accordance with the suggestion of Ellul to use sociological and psychological knowledge for the analysis of propaganda strategies.

Texts from the nationwide Russian daily newspaper *Izvestiya* (6 articles, 3,956 words, 29,122 characters with spaces), the official periodical of the Government of Russia *Rossiyskaya gazeta* (20 articles, 18,519 words, 138,709 characters with spaces), the Russian social-political periodical *Gazeta.Ru* (11 articles, 14,315 words, 106,669 characters with spaces) and texts from electronic US periodicals, i.e. texts from the daily newspaper *The New York Times* (23 articles, 31,131 words, 196,739 characters with spaces), the daily newspaper *The Washington Post* (23 articles, 18,621 words, 117,817 characters with spaces), the number 1 nationwide daily newspaper in the US, *USA Today* (21 articles, 12,772 words, 81,256 characters with spaces), from the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 – 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 (i.e. published in the 'before-Trump era') have been chosen as the empirical material.

A comparative analysis of the Russian and American media is explained by the significance of the data of mass media players in general environmental mass media discourse as well as by their complex and ambiguous behaviour. The choice of American mass media (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*) was

17 KLAHN, J., MULLEN, A.: The Propaganda Model and Sociology: Understanding the Media and Society. In *Synaesthesia: Communication Across Cultures*, 2010, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 10-23.

18 See: ELLUL, J.: *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*. New York: Vintage, 1973.

19 ALVES, A. M.: Jacques Ellul's "Anti-Democratic Economy:" Persuading Citizens and Consumers in the Information Society. In *Triplec*, 2014, Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 169-201.

20 See: JOWETT, G. S., O'DONNELL, V.: *Propaganda and Persuasion*. London: SAGE, 2012.

21 For more information, see: USHAKOVA, T. N., PAVLOVA, N. D. (ed.): *A Word in Action. The Content Analysis of Political Discourse*. Sankt-Peterburg: Aleteya, 2000.

22 IBARRA, P. R., KITSYUZ, J.: Discourse of Nomination of Claims - Claims and Vernacular Resources. In *Social Problems: Constructivism's Sigh*. Kazan: Izdatelstvo kazanskogo universiteta, 2007, p. 55-114.

constituted by their popularity and the accessibility of archives. The selection of Russian mass media (*Gazeta.Ru*, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, *Izvestiya*) was undertaken on condition of mass media balance oriented towards official politics and relatively independent (in both American and Russian mass media samples).

The key words for forming the text sample in Russian mass media are *globalnoe potepneniye* (global warming), *klimat* (climate), and *obyazatelstva* (obligations). These key words reflect general ecological topics (climate, global warming) and actualise the political discourse of international obligations (obligations). The key words "global warming", "climate", "obligations" were used to form the sample based on American mass media. Only due to the simultaneous use of all the keywords in one text it became possible to include one or another text in the sample, which significantly narrowed the volume of the material studied and allowed the use of qualitative analysis procedures in the expert evaluation of the material.

Two samples have been formed with the help of the key words (104 articles in total, 670,312 characters with spaces), consisting of articles in Russian (37 articles) and English (67 articles). The five years' period of study has helped to create a sample of articles relevant to quantitative analysis.

The Pearson chi-squared test (2-test) has been used as a statistical method for data comparison being a nonparametric tool allowing to assess the statistical significance of differences between the percentages of the two samples. The key research question concerned the particularities of strategies of transforming a political agenda into a media agenda in American and Russian mass media.

## 5 Results Interpretation and Main Outcomes of the Research

### *Dynamics of Publications Depicting International Obligations on Atmosphere and Climate Protection*

The dynamics of publications depicting international obligations on atmosphere and climate protection in Russian and American mass media between 2012 and 2016 testifies that the activity of Russian mass media is vastly determined not by international, but Russian events (Figure 1).

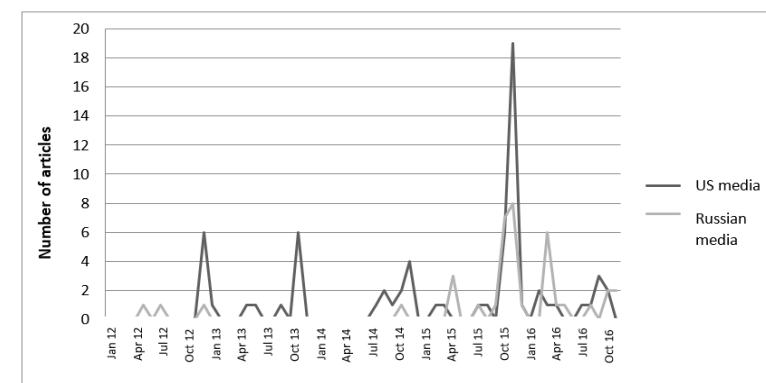


Figure 1: Dynamics of publications depicting international obligations of countries on atmosphere and climate protection in Russian and American mass media (2012 - 2016)

Source: Own processing

The peaks of activity of American mass media in demonstrating international obligations of countries on atmosphere and climate protection fall during the months when large international conferences on climate protection took place. For example, during the period 26<sup>th</sup> November 2012 – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2012, the 2012

United Nations Climate Change Conference, the 18<sup>th</sup> yearly session, took place; on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2013 – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2013, the 2013 United Nations Climate Change Conference, the 19<sup>th</sup> yearly session, took place; the 2014 United Nations Climate Change Conference, the 20<sup>th</sup> yearly session, took place on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014 – 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

There has been no similar tendency stated in the Russian media. The first peak falls in May 2015, which was not marked by international events oriented towards the climate change problem discussion. Nevertheless, on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2015 Russian president Vladimir Putin had a meeting with the members of the government in the Moscow Kremlin; on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015 he appeared at the forum Delovaya Rossiya. The president touched upon climatic changes during both events. The third peak, in April 2016, was caused by Russia signing the Paris Agreement on dealing with the impacts of the climate change.

The samples have been united by a high activity of media in both countries during the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, the 21<sup>st</sup> yearly session (30<sup>th</sup> November 2015 – 12<sup>th</sup> December 2015).

## The Rhetoric of Environmental Media Agenda-Setting

The rhetoric deconstruction technique of social problems by Ibarra and Kitsuse embodies the key postulates of social constructionism, i.e., it unveils the way the social problem is formulated and constructed in mass media texts on the grounds of rhetoric analysis as a means of claims-making. The authors of the technique distinguish four measures of claim-making rhetoric: rhetorical idioms, counter-rhetorical strategies, motifs (figures of speech briefly expressing the essence of a social problem) and claim-making styles.

**Rhetorical idioms** (the authors determine 5 types of rhetorical idioms) mark idiomatic complexes determining the problem status:

- The rhetoric of loss (1) is based around the protection of a sacral object, whereas the author takes place of a rescuer.
- The rhetoric of entitlement (2) implies a focus on the equality of rights of everyone in the choice of self-expression and the unlimited freedom of realisation of that choice.
- The rhetoric of endangerment (3) describes the conditions of a threat.
- The rhetoric of unreason (4) moulds the problem as an abuse of those who do not possess sufficient knowledge and competence.
- The rhetoric of calamity (5) forms an image of a complete catastrophe and requires actions here and now.<sup>23</sup>

**Counter-rhetoric**, on the contrary, is used to remove the problematic status of a situation (problem deconstruction). Ibarra and Kitsuse divide all counter-rhetoric strategies into sympathetic and unsympathetic rhetoric.

**Sympathetic rhetoric** involves such strategies as:

- naturalising (the situation is presented as natural and inevitable);
- counter-rhetoric of the costs involved rectification linked to the situation (invokes reconciliation with the problematic situation as amendments would lead to negative consequences);
- declaring impotence (demonstration of sympathy alongside with the impossibility of solving the problem due to the lack of certain resources);
- ‘perspectivising’ (problem deconstruction as a result of a biased assessment not corresponding to the reality);
- tactical criticism (the status of the problem is accepted, but the ways of solution are criticised).<sup>24</sup>

23 IBARRA, P. R.: Problematic Sociality: Uncertainty and the Study of Social Problems. In *American Sociologist*, 2009, Vol. 40, p. 79-88.

24 IBARRA, P. R.: Problematic Sociality: Uncertainty and the Study of Social Problems. In *American Sociologist*, 2009, Vol. 40, p. 79-88.

**Unsympathetic rhetoric** includes such strategies as:

- anti-patterning (indication of uniqueness and a ‘small scale’);
- telling anecdote;
- counter-rhetoric of insincerity (the assumption that the problematisation is closely connected to personal benefits);
- counter-rhetoric of hysteria (the assumption that the problematisation is caused by irrational or emotional reasons).

Next, the construction and deconstruction of international obligations on the atmosphere and climate protection problem have been analysed in the studied American and Russian media based on axes imposed by the Ibarra and Kitsuse technique. The articles under consideration have revealed 44 cases of use of rhetorical idioms in grounding international obligations on atmosphere and climate protection in Russian mass media and 62 cases in American mass media (see Table 1).

Table 1: International obligations on atmosphere and climate protection: Rhetorical idioms in Russian and American mass media (%)

Rhetorical Idioms	Russian Media	American Media
The Rhetoric of Loss	11 *	23 *
The Rhetoric of Entitlement	0	2
The Rhetoric of Endangerment	68	67
The Rhetoric of Unreason	0	0
The Rhetoric of Calamity	21 **	8 **
$\chi^2$ : * $p < 0.05$ ; ** $p < 0.01$		

Source: Own processing

According to Table 1, both Russian and American mass media use three key rhetorical strategies while problematising international obligations on atmosphere and climate protection. The leading one is the **rhetoric of endangerment**.

“Since global warming threatens virtually the whole humankind, there are being made several attempts to take control over this process.” (*Gazeta.Ru*; “CO2 uzhe nikogda ne upadyot nizhe 400 ppm” (“CO2 Will Never Fall Lower than 400 ppm”); Vyacheslav Avdeev; 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016).

“Malia Talakai, a negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States, a group that includes her tiny South Pacific homeland, Nauru, said that without urgent action to stem rising sea levels, ‘some of our members won’t be around’.” (*The New York Times*; “Growing Clamour About Inequities of Climate Crisis”; Steven Lee Myers, Nicholas Kulish; 16<sup>th</sup> November 2013).

The **rhetoric of loss** is also among the most frequent strategies.

“The biggest natural reservoir of fresh water Lake Baikal might become under the threat of dessication (*Gazeta.Ru*; “Rossiya mozhnet zasokhnut” (“Russia Might Dry Out”); Rustem Falyakhov; 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016).

“Three weeks from now, I look forward to joining my fellow world leaders in Paris, where we’ve got to come together around an ambitious framework to protect the one planet that we’ve got while we still can’, Obama said.” (*USA Today*; “Obama to Attend Climate Change Conference”; David Jackson; 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015).

Furthermore, the **rhetoric of calamity** is used.

*“If greenhouse gas emission is not reduced, the climate change may lead to serious threats to food and environmental safety let alone political safety of certain regions. The climate change may lead to tangible social transformations including uncontrollable migration, impetuous spreading of mortal diseases.”* (*Rossiyskaya gazeta*; “Teplo, esche teplee” (“Warmer, Much Warmer”); Elena Shmeleva; 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015).

*“Mitigating climate change and adapting to its effects are necessary to eradicate extreme poverty, reduce inequality and secure equitable, sustainable economic development,” said Ban Ki Moon, U.N. secretary-general, in the keynote speech.* (*The Washington Post*; “Vatican Kicks Off Environmental Push with Climate Change Summit”; Doyle Rice; 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015).

Nevertheless, the American mass media appeal to the rhetoric of loss authentically more frequently, the Russian mass media address the rhetoric of calamity. It is notable that the rhetoric of loss is coupling the role of rescuer which is employed by the studied American mass media; at the same time, the rhetoric of calamity, despite the need of a ‘here-and-now’ solution is subjectless.

As far as the analysis of appealing to counter-rhetorical strategies is concerned, it has to be stated that there are significantly more differences in counter-rhetoric in the media in question, including statistically significant differences.

Moreover, there have been identified 75 cases of addressing to counter-rhetoric in 37 articles in the Russian media, whereas there are only 22 cases in 67 articles in the American media (see Table 2).

Table 2: International obligations on atmosphere and climate protection: Counter-rhetorical strategies in Russian and American mass media (%)

Counter-Rhetorical Strategies	Russian Media	American Media
Naturalising	0	0
Counter-Rhetoric of the Costs Involved	21	27
Declaring Impotence	0**	18**
Perspectivising	16*	5*
Tactical Criticism	23**	41**
Anti-patterning	1	0
Telling Anecdote	13**	0**
Counter-Rhetoric of Insincerity	20*	9*
Counter-Rhetoric of Hysteria	6*	0*

$\chi^2$ : \* p < 0.05; \*\* p < 0.01

Source: Own processing

The American mass media under consideration mainly use three counter-rhetorical strategies:

· **Tactical criticism:**

*“It’s also true that the deal doesn’t do nearly enough to meet the carbon reduction goals that scientists have said are essential, so a lot depends on whether countries will make good on the deal’s provisions for returning to the table and ratcheting up their commitments.”* (*The Washington Post*; “The GOP Candidates Are Ignoring the Paris Climate Deal. That’s a Good Thing”; Greg Sargent; 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015).

· **Counter-rhetoric of the costs involved:**

*“Some say it will set unrealistic goals for carbon emissions and wind up undercutting American industry.”* (*USA Today*; “Obama to Attend Climate Change Conference”; David Jackson; 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015).

· **Declaring impotence:**

*“With the science becoming more conclusive, the opponents turned to the argument that U.S. action on emissions was pointless in the absence of similar commitments by other nations.”* (*USA Today*; “Why Paris Climate Talks Matter: Our View”; The Editorial Board; 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015).

The range of counter-rhetorical strategies is wider in the studied Russian mass media; they include **tactical criticism, counter-rhetoric of insincerity, counter-rhetoric of the costs involved** as well as **telling anecdote** and **perspectivising**.

· **Tactical criticism:**

*“Let’s point out that the carbon tax was repealed in Australia in 2014 only four years after its introduction by the former government because it hadn’t led to anything but harm to the economy.”* (*Rossiyskaya gazeta*; “Dengi v bezdonnoye nebo” (“Money Down the Depthless Sky”); Alexey Ivanov; 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016).

· **Counter-rhetoric of insincerity:**

*“No one denies the significance of the ecological problems. It is clear that the planet is undergoing dismal transformations. It is sad when we see lobbying projects under honourable slogans having nothing in common with saving the Earth.”* (*Rossiyskaya gazeta*; “Mutniye obyazatelstva” (“Vague Obligations”); Konstantin Simonov; 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016).

· **Counter-rhetoric of the costs involved:**

*“It means direct financial loss for Russia measuring from \$500 billion to \$2 trillion for the period until 2030, which is unbearable for our economy, which would be burdensome on our real economy and firstly on the energy industry.”* (*Izvestiya*; “Parizhskoye soglashiye – shans dlya Rossii i SSHA po sblizheniyu” (“The Paris Agreement – A Chance for Russia and the US to Drift Together”); Tatyana Boykova; 27<sup>th</sup> December 2016).

· **Telling anecdotes:**

*“Natural disasters fit in well with the dynamics of the average temperature. In the 90s it rose fast; in the noughties it showed the tendency to fall (the yearly amount).”* (*Gazeta.Ru*; “Grimasy ustoychivogo razvitiya” (“Grimaces of Steady Development”); Alexey Mikhailov; 21<sup>st</sup> May 2012).

As far as the other measures of the **claim-making rhetoric** are concerned, the mass media of both countries appeal to the same claim-making styles (scientific-oriented publicist style, legal-oriented publicist style and civil-oriented style). The key motifs used by the Russian and American mass media are also similar: “voyna” (war), “vzov” (challenge), “bolezn” (disease), although the Russian media also employ the motif of “katastropha” (catastrophe).

Thus, the problem of international obligations on atmosphere and climate protection is disclosed in the context of danger and ecological threats in American media, although the media position themselves as subjects, participants in the field of ecological problems. They narrate disquieting stories where the American role appears to be as planet rescuers, even in the counter-rhetoric and the strategies of problem deconstruction the American media do not reject the search for a solution.

Meanwhile, the Russian media accentuate the spontaneity of the problem losing the subjectivity, whereas the variety and frequency of the use of counter-rhetoric testifies to the problem deconstruction of international obligations on atmosphere and climate protection by the Russian mass media. By presenting disquieting stories about legal-political opposition to global warming, the Russian media underline the non-governability of the processes and more often doubt the need of opposition to this ecological threat.

Comparing the rhetorical strategies of construction and deconstruction of the problem, it is obvious that the American mass media in this case are oriented to a leading position whereas the Russian media seem to embody the initiatives of other actors forming the discourse of international obligations on atmosphere and climate protection.

### *Ecological Media Agenda-Setting: The Intentional Constituent*

Explaining the specifics of constructing a mass media ecological agenda, namely ways of justifying international obligations for the protection of the atmosphere and climate in the media, the quantitative intent analysis developed by psycholinguistics of the Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences<sup>25</sup> was chosen as the second research tool. Currently, it is one of the popular methods for studying conflicting political discourse.<sup>26</sup>

“Intent-analysis” is defined as a theoretical-experimental approach to the study of intentions, which makes it possible to determine the communicants’ intentions behind the speech and their influence on the organisation of discourse. As for the procedure, according to the organisation of the study, the intent-analysis is a closed coding, which presupposes semantic mark-up of the text with subsequent marking of the selected parts on the basis of an existing dictionary. This study used the dictionary of intentions, consisting of 27 categories of intentions, proposed by the authors of the technique.

A distinctive feature of the intent-analysis algorithm by Ushakova and Pavlova is in determining not only the intentions, but also the reference objects allowing to highlight in the process of analysis towards whom the intention is oriented: towards themselves (reference object “Us”, “Me”), towards the opponent (reference object “Them”), towards a subject beyond the discussion (reference object “Third Person”) and towards the situation (reference object “Situation”).

Following the algorithm, the researchers identify the frequent intentions in the text alongside the reference object, which allows them to determine the quality and the structure of the directivity of the interaction subjects in the conflict political discourse.

The study in question employs the following reference objects for the sample of the Russian media:

- “Us” – Russia (president, government, governmental authorities) as part of international community;
- “Them” – other countries (their government, their governmental authorities), intergovernmental international organisations;
- “Third Person” – the civil society of any country, international nongovernmental organisations, etc. In this study the “Third Person” referent was united with the “Situation” reference object.

The reference objects for the American media sample:

- “Us” – the US (the president, government, governmental authorities) as part of the international community;
- “Them” – other countries (their government, their governmental authorities), intergovernmental international organisations;
- “Third Person” – the civil society of any country, international non-governmental organisations, etc., and the situation in general.

The reference object analysis in the general context of intent analysis from the point of view of understanding the specifics of communicative impact has its own value (see Table 3).

<sup>25</sup> For more information, see: USHAKOVA, T. N., PAVLOVA, N. D. (ed.): *A Word in Action. The Content Analysis of Political Discourse*. Sankt-Peterburg: Aleteya, 2000.

<sup>26</sup> TSYKUNOV, I., DANILOVA, E.: Intent-Analysis of Tolerance in Federal and Regional Print Media. In *Right to Know: History; Theory; Practice*, 2003, Vol. 73-74, No. 1-2, p. 73-74. [online]. [2019-09-08]. Available at: <[http://www.dzyalosh.ru/02-dostup/pravo/2003\\_73\\_74\(1\\_2\)/cikunov\\_1\\_2.html](http://www.dzyalosh.ru/02-dostup/pravo/2003_73_74(1_2)/cikunov_1_2.html)>.

Table 3: Reference objects in the studied mass media texts (%)

Reference Objects	Russian Media	American Media
“Us”	44*	58*
“Them”	41**	27**
“Third Person”	15	15
$\chi^2$ : * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01		

Source: Own processing

Table 3 discloses the intentional directivity of the texts under consideration, and it is obvious that the “Third Person” in both Russian and English texts causes less interest while discussing international obligations problems in the context of climate.

At the same time the American media prefer to write about national players on the ecological discourse field (‘about themselves’) more often whereas the Russian media pay more attention to their opponents (more attention compared to the studied American media).

From the point of view of communication rules, this scenario bears testimony in favour of the leading position in exposing the question by the American mass media (pretending to be the leader at discussion venues and showing assertive behaviour: talks about themselves, their actions and victories, their role and plans whereas the unsure of themselves ‘non-leader’ – about the ungovernable world, threats and enemies). It is highly probable that the stance of the Russian media does not seem to be the ‘position of a loser’ (the interest in the reference object “Us” and “Them” is nearly equal), but compared to the studied American mass media, the Russian media in question cede in the behavioural features of a leader. A more detailed analysis of the intentionality of the texts in question is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Intentions and reference objects of the studied media (%)<sup>27</sup>

Intentions	“Us”		“Them”		“Third Person”	
	Russian Media	American Media	Russian Media	American Media	Russian Media	American Media
Analysis (neutral)	8**	24**	11**	27**	11**	27**
Analysis +	4	5	3	2	4	4
Analysis –	3	3	5	3	8	3
Discredit	1	1	4	3	1	1
Informing	19*	8*	18	9	25	19
Cooperation	8	6	14	8	7	4
Criticism	6	8	9	12	6	6
Accusation	1	2	6	5	6	2
Assessment +	4	4	3	2	3	1
Incentive	7	10	6	7	2**	13**
Warning	12	7	4	2	5	1
Presentation	24	16	6	10	12	15
Opposition	0	4	2	1	1	2
Delimitation	2	2	7	8	8	2
Exposure	1	0	2	1	1	0
$\chi^2$ : * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01						

Source: Own processing

<sup>27</sup> Remark by authors: The table shows only the intentions (out of 27 intentions in the dictionary) identified in the studied texts.

Intent analysis makes it possible to identify the strategies of the Russian and American media in constructing the problem of the international obligations of countries in the context of global climate change: the Russian media will propose objectivity based on a statement of facts, the American media are guided by a neutral analysis that allows them to indirectly influence readers.

The orientation towards factuality (“Informing”) in the Russian media shows itself especially brightly as far as the reference object “Us” is concerned. For example:

*“The signing of the Paris Agreement is not the final decision on joining according to the Russian legislation.” (Izvestiya; “Soglasheniye bez obyazatelstv” (“An Agreement without Obligations”); Dinara Gershinkova; 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2016).*

Another popular intention geared towards “Us” in the Russian media is “Presentation”:

*“Our country has been one of the first to declare that it is ready to reduce emissions by 25 – 30 per cent compared to the level of 1990.” (Rossiyskaya gazeta; “Gradus podderzhki” (“The Degree of Endorsement”); Kira Latukhina; 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015).*

The studied American and Russian media while referring to the object “Us” use the “Presentation” intention in spite of preferring neutral analysis authentically more frequently which has more extensive resources for indirect impact since it implies certain assumptions and interpretations in an unobtrusive form:

*“The debate over how much public money will be available and how it will flow is critical. Unlike a renewable energy project, which can attract private capital, almost all the funding that poor countries need for building more climate-resilient societies must come from governments – either their own or foreign ones.” (The Washington Post; “U.S. Climate Aid Reaches across Globe”; Juliet Eilperin; 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012).*

The reference object “Them” in the Russian media is constructed in the context of neutral analysis, factuality (“Informing”) and cooperation.

#### · **Informing:**

*“According to the Paris Agreement, each country determines its obligations (input) for the period 2020 – 2030, which would be updated every five years.” (Izvestiya; “Soglasheniye bez obyazatelstv” (“An Agreement without Obligations”); Dinara Gershinkova; 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2016).*

#### · **Analysis:**

*“This has an extremely important meaning for African countries, small developing insular countries and the least developed countries.” (Rossiyskaya gazeta; “Pan Gi Mun: V Parizhe podpisali ‘meditsinskuyu strakhovku dlya vsey planety” (“Ban Ki-Moon: A Medical Insurance for the Whole Planet Was Signed in Paris”); Ban Ki-Moon; 21<sup>st</sup> December 2015).*

At the same time the American media reveal neutral analysis more often and also criticise their opponents.

#### · **Analysis:**

*“The climate plan has been a signature of Ms. Rousseff’s administration, but she now faces possible impeachment, which could throw the Brazilian plan into question.” (The New York Times; “Obama and President Xi of China Vow to Sign Paris Climate Accord Promptly”; Coral Davenport; 31<sup>st</sup> April 2016).*

#### · **Criticism:**

*“While Russia has not made a similar pledge, the official said ‘that absolutely will be the next part of the conversation’ about how to conduct Arctic policy.” (The Washington Post; “Obama and Nordic Leaders: Economic Activity in the Arctic Must Pass Climate Test”; Juliet Eilperin; 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016).*

The reference object “Third Person” is employed in a distant manner in the Russian media (the “Informing” intention predominates).

#### · **Informing:**

*“While anticipating the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21), which is taking place on Monday in Paris the biggest Russian companies have come forward with an initiative of a more active involvement of business in environmental measures.” (Gazeta.Ru; “Zeleniy front” (“The Green Front”); Nataliya Eremina; 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015).*

In the studied American media, the reference object “Third Person” is more complex given the particularities of construction in the texts under consideration. It is put in the context of a more or less obvious impact (“Analysis” and “Informing” intentions) and a direct incentive.

#### · **Analysis:**

*“Experts said they hope that market forces will help speed up the limits agreed to in the deal.” (USA Today; “EU Lawmakers Endorse Paris Climate Pact”; Kim Hjelmgaard; 4<sup>th</sup> October 2016).*

As a whole, the intentional fields of the Russian and American mass-media are relatable. However, they are differentiated by the orientation of the Russian media to “Informing” and the American bias towards neutral analysis. It is obvious that the analysis is neutral only at first sight. The analysis suggests to the readers interpretation schemes and helps form assumptions about a certain event being a tool for effective indirect impact.

## *Propaganda Models in the Information rivalry of the Russian and American Media for the Justification of International Obligations on Atmosphere and Climate*

Ellul believed that the goal of propaganda is to induce a specific action or inaction (rather than a persuasion) using the background mood of the influenced audience.<sup>28</sup> In addition, he considered ‘sociological’ (indirect) and ingressive (ingression creating a general attitude, human involvement in the system) propaganda more effective in ordinary (non-crisis) conditions. Being one of the classics of propaganda, he considered propaganda at the state level as a protective mechanism to level the propaganda pressure of other countries and offer its own version of interpreting reality.<sup>29</sup>

On the basis of generalisation of the obtained empirical material, the propaganda models of the Russian and American media based on materials on international obligations for the protection of the atmosphere and climate have been reconstructed.

Thus, the American media referred to the obligations on atmosphere and climate protection more often than the Russian (more than one and a half times), and their materials were in the international context.

28 See: ELLUL, J.: *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes*. New York: Vintage, 1973.

29 See: ELLUL, J.: *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes*. New York: Vintage, 1973.

The Russian media presented the problems under study both in the international context and in the context of the position and statements of the president of the Russian Federation.

To construct the international obligations on the atmosphere and climate protection problem both American and Russian media use the same range of key rhetorical idioms to endow the situation with a problem status – “opasnost” (danger), “bedstviye” (disaster, calamity), “utrata” (loss). Although the rhetoric of “bedstviye” (calamity) is more typical of the Russian media (the pressurisation of the inevitability of a catastrophe), the rhetoric of “utrata” (loss) is more typical of the American (which allows the positioning of the US as the world rescuer).

To deconstruct, while making it lose value, the American media employ sympathetic counter-rhetorical strategies authentically more often (“tactical criticism” and “declaring impotence”), which do not deny the existence of a problem. The Russian media appeal to unsympathetic counter-rhetoric authentically more frequently (“counter-rhetoric of insincerity”, “telling anecdote”, “counter-rhetoric of hysteria”), which make the existence of the problem questionable.

It is obvious that concerning the leadership position in the sphere of global ecology and atmosphere and climate protection obligations, the American media strategy is more profitable. Their stance is not only ‘sympathetic’ to the global ecology problems, but it also implies the initiative of the US in protecting and rescuing the environment. From the point of view of intentionality, the American mass media reliably more often wrote about themselves and about the United States (about the president, government, state power). At the same time, the Russian media reliably more often described their opponents. In addition, the Russian media reliably more often used the “Information” intention, and the US “Analysis”, which allowed the American mass media to blur the line between facts and opinions, indirectly affecting readers (the active use of the ingressive component of propaganda).

The propaganda models of the Russian and American media correspond to the description by Ellul of propaganda within the state under the two-party system of the state: the ruling party leads the propaganda for itself, the opposition party leads the propaganda against the ruling party.

If this dichotomous construct is used to analyse the obtained results, the propaganda model of the American media with regard to the international obligations to protect the atmosphere and climate is relevant to the propaganda of the ‘ruling party’ (to dominate, claim to have a subjective and leadership position), and the propaganda model of the Russian media is relevant to the propaganda of the ‘opposition party’ (to defend and write more about opponents). Consequently, the propaganda model of the American media in this time period of informational competition between the two states can be characterised as the “propaganda model of the leader”, and the propaganda model of the Russian media as the “opposition propaganda model”.

## 6 Discussion and Conclusion

The peculiarities of climate change design in mass media are studied by many authors. A number of studies are consistent with the theoretical framework of the “agenda”, especially with the ideas of the model by Daring and Rogers on competing agendas (political, media and public). Thus, in the work of Schmidt, Ivanova, or Schafer the positive dynamics in publications on climate in 27 countries are discussed, revealing the relationship between the political and media agenda.<sup>30</sup> The study by Sampei and Aoyagi-Usui traced the relationship between the media and public agenda: the attention of public interest to climate issues is closely related to media activity.<sup>31</sup>

At the same time, researchers turn to propaganda models by Herman and Chomsky or Ellul in a few cases. For example, Good used the propaganda model by Herman and Chomsky, comparing Canadian, American,

and International media discourse on climate change.<sup>32</sup> However, researchers more often avoid turning to the theories of propaganda using other theoretical interpretations of the intentionality of mass media. For example, Liu, Lindquist and Vedlitz discuss the agenda theories and the problem indicator, focusing on event and information feedback. In the process, they discuss technology that is relevant to propaganda models, but remain in the conceptual field of the agenda theories.<sup>33</sup> Boykov and Boykov explain the specifics of the climate mass media discourse by the presence of journalistic norms,<sup>34</sup> while the ‘journalistic norms’ themselves can be successfully interpreted using the Herman and Chomsky propaganda model and the Ellul propaganda model.

A number of significant and interesting works in the field of analysis of mass media discourse on climate change contain ideas that are consistent with the provisions of any of the propaganda models, but in research they use the concept of “propaganda”.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, defining “propaganda” as a form of communication and using the ideas of propaganda models (for example, Herman and Chomsky’s or Ellul’s) to analyse the mass media, it is possible to get a higher order perspective when studying informational competition between media from different countries.

In this study, the propaganda model of the Russian media in relation to the presentation/description of international obligations for the protection of the atmosphere and climate received the characteristic “Opposition”, and the propaganda model of the American media received the characteristic “Leadership”.

The results of the presented research, as well as other evidence<sup>36</sup> show that the propaganda of the Russian media (‘Russian propaganda’) is not the ‘perfect machine’ that its opponents usually imagine themselves,<sup>37</sup> at least in relation to the Russian-language discourse of global ecology problems.

According to Strömbäck,<sup>38</sup> it is characteristic of the fourth phase of mediatisation, wherein media colonise politics, whereas other social subjects are unsensible of telling the difference between the political and media logic. Nevertheless, the media-created “ecopolitics reality” in the case of the Russian media has turned out to be reasonably destructive and reactive. The reactive stance of the Russian mass media, which reveals itself in the orientation towards the discussion of opponents, the preference of ‘inner’ incentives to the publication, the construction of a problem by means of non-subjectivity and catastrophe, and the rejection of a position of leader, seems rather unfit to lead in the questions of global ecology. It is probable that the Russian mass media might not have such an aim, might not strive to ‘lead’ in the field of global ecology. Nevertheless, the ‘ineffective communication’ strategy chosen by the Russian mass media in question might negatively affect Russian readers, among which the more constructive and demanding are highly likely to incline towards the versions of publications on global ecology written in the English language. Consequently, a similar media agenda-setting of the Russian mass media shall lead to the partial loss of target readers, whether it be constructed consciously or spontaneously and unknowingly.

32 GOOD, J. E.: The Framing of Climate Change in Canadian, American, and International Newspapers: A Media Propaganda Model Analysis. In *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 2008, Vol. 33, p. 233-255.

33 LIU, X., LINDQUIST, E., VEDLITZ, A.: Explaining Media and Congressional Attention to Global Climate Change, 1969 – 2005: An Empirical Test of Agenda-Setting Theory. In *Political Research Quarterly*, 2011, Vol. 64, No. 2, p. 405-419.

34 BOYKOFF, M. T., BOYKOFF, J. M.: Climate Change and Journalistic Norms: A Case-Study of US Mass-Media Coverage. In *CeoForum*, 2007, Vol. 38, p. 1190-1204.

35 See: BOUSSALIS, C., COAN, T. G., POBEREZHSKAYA, M.: Measuring and Modeling Russian Newspaper Coverage of Climate Change. In *Global Environmental Change*, 2016, Vol. 41, p. 99-110; BRUGGEMANN, M., ENGESSER, S.: Beyond False Balance: How Interpretive Journalism Shapes Media Coverage of Climate Change. In *Global Environmental Change*, 2017, Vol. 42, p. 58-67; IRWANSYAH, I.: What Do Scientists Say on Climate Change? A Study of Indonesian Newspapers. In *Pacific Science Review B: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2016, No. 2, p. 58-65; SHAPIRO, J. M.: Special Interests and the Media: Theory and an Application to Climate Change. In *Journal of Public Economics*, 2016, Vol. 144, p. 91-108.

36 MCMILLAN, R., HARRIS, S.: *Facebook Cut Russia Out of April Report on Election Influence*. Released on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017. [online]. [2019-09-08]. Available at: <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-cut-russia-out-of-april-report-on-election-influence-1507253503>>.

37 CASEY, M.: *Putin’s Magnificent Messaging Machine*. Released on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2015. [online]. [2019-09-08]. Available at: <<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/08/25/putin-rt-soviet-propaganda-121734>>.

38 STROMBACK, J.: Mediatisation and Perceptions of the Media’s Political Influence. In *Journalism Studies*, 2011, Vol. 12, No. 4, p. 423-439.

30 SCHMIDT, A., IVANOVA, A., SCHAFFER, M. S.: Media Attention for Climate Change around the World: A Comparative Analysis of Newspaper Coverage in 27 Countries. In *Global Environmental Change*, 2013, Vol. 23, p. 1233-1248.

31 SAMPEI, Y., AOYAGI-USUI, M.: Mass-Media Coverage, Its Influence on Public Awareness of Climate-Change Issues, and Implications for Japan’s National Campaign to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions. In *Global Environmental Change*, 2009, Vol. 19, p. 203-212.



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