

# Perceptions of the EU's Global Energy Governance and Energy Diplomacy in the light of the Paris agreement

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# Perceptions of the EU's Global Energy Governance and Energy Diplomacy in the light of the Paris agreement

Michèle Knodt, Natalia Chaban

## Abstract

Paris has written history. The initiation of an internationally binding climate agreement serves as a wake-up call for a rapid transformation of the world's energy system (UNFCCC 2015). The implementation exposes Europe and especially Emerging Powers to a challenge, which requires a globally coordinated solution. While climate and energy policy had been treated separately in the past, Paris irretrievably interlinked these topics. New forms of political cooperation at the climate & energy nexus between the EU and Emerging Powers such as Brazil, India, China or South Africa (BICS) are required. Yet, reality tells a different story: the EU's energy and climate policy until now were carried out separately, the EU's geographical focus in energy policy remains on adjacent countries in the European neighbourhood and on issues related to energy security. Despite being Strategic Partners and engaging in climate and energy dialogues, it seems that the EU is lacking strategic vision and is not perceived as a major actor in energy cooperation with the BICS. Thus, political momentum for energy cooperation and joint governance of scarce resources is vanishing. This paper gives evidence on the mutual perceptions of the EU and four Emerging Powers (Brazil, India, China and South Africa (BICS)). We aim to identify, understand and compare mutual perceptions the EU and the Emerging Powers have in energy policy.

## 1. Keywords: European Union, Perceptions, BRICS Introduction

Paris has written history. The initiation of an internationally binding climate agreement serves as a wake-up call for a rapid transformation of the world's energy system (UNFCCC 2015). Reframing the goal of a temperature increase below 2°C as a dynamic investment signal for renewable energy (RE) paves the way towards a joint undertaking that bridges the North-South divide of global climate policy-making and encourages cooperation with Emerging Powers. Embedded into the broader framework of a 'great global transformation' (WBGU 2011), the prospect of a wide-ranging decarbonization fosters energy transition that is not only efficient and comprehensive, but also inclusive and fair as it creates dynamics that ensures a fair participation and distribution of RE around the globe (Jänicke 2013). However, to move this concept beyond buzzwords, political action is urgently needed. New forms of political cooperation at the climate/clean energy nexus within bilateral dialogues between the EU and Emerging Powers provide ample opportunities for implementing the Paris agreement.

However, those bilateral dialogues are carried out separately for climate and energy policies and are embedded differently within the polycentric world order. While the climate regime complex allows embedding bilateral dialogues, the clean energy complex is but in its nascence (Andonova/Chelminski 2016). The latter builds on highly fragmented structures (Baccini et al. 2011) such as regional (e.g. IEA) and resource-based (e.g. OPEC, IEA, IRENA) organizations. Most important, bilateral dialogues are still characterized by mutual mistrust, minor interest of the Emerging Powers in the dialogue and divergent perceptions of the underlying norms and goals. The EU in particular has shown poor performance within these dialogues (Knodt et al. 2015). It seems that the EU is very good in 'talking at' instead of 'talking with' external partners. The EU engages in

top-down one-way communication of projecting interests, norms and values rather than developing a horizontal dialogue-led two-way communication process between equal partners (Chaban/Knodt/Verdun 2016).

This paper gives evidence on the mutual perceptions of the EU and four Emerging Powers (Brazil, India, China and South Africa (BICS)). As relevant scholarship demonstrates, an informed insight into the understanding of the EU governance worldwide demands a systematic comparative consideration of the EU's actions and interests, as well as its values, ideas, norms and identities. Moreover, works in the field of EU foreign policy and international relations increasingly warn against a Euro-centric bias and challenge EU scholars to overcome an exclusive focus on EU projections to the world. They call to include a multifaceted inquiry into the Union's communication with and reception by global partners. In-depth nuanced understanding of a globalizing multipolar reality is needed in a world that is characterized by networks and communications – including the field of global energy governance. As such we argue a research priority for informed reflections on dialogue, cooperation and collaboration, in addition to the scope on the EU's monologues on its positions and actions. This premise grounds our work on the EU as a global energy governance actor within the tenets of the constructivist approach. This approach accentuates the idea of reality being socially constructed and international relations being a product of human interactions in a social world. Importantly, in this approach, social values, norms and language are all seen to possess a crucial role as they shape and help understand changes in world structures (Fierke 2010: 179f).

More specifically, our research is grounded within the framework of *interpretative constructivism* – an approach that empathizes the “centrality of intersubjective cognition and norms in the definition of the social structure” (Schimmelfenning 2001: 58). Carta and Morin (2014: 7) echo this definition stating, “by discursively interacting within a given structure, agents endogenously construct social reality, and, in turn, interactions with the structural context contribute to reconstructing their preferences and interests”. Starting with consideration of how the EU projects its actions and ideas to its external partners (the emerging powers of BICS in our case) through various structures and discourses, we progress to analyze how the EU's actions – together with projected ideas, values and identities – are perceived, imagined and recognised by the Union's key international interlocutors in energy realm. Our emphasis on perception and recognition is not accidental. While powers need to be ‘recognized by others to have certain special rights and duties’ (Bull 1977: 196), perceptions and images – key elements in the reception process – are important explanatory factors in understanding a nuanced interaction between the IR actors. Respectively, our consideration of the EU's identity – and preference-shaping interactions with BICS within the global energy governance structures – is complemented by our innovative analysis of external images and perceptions of the EU and its policies. Research anchors within interpretative constructivism prescribe a complex architecture to our research questions, as well as diverse methods of analysis.

The aim of this paper is to identify, understand and compare mutual perceptions the EU and the EPs have in energy policy. Considering the complexity of the external energy governance of the EU and EPs, what mutual perceptions do both sides hold of each other? What controversies are highlighted by those perceptions? The data for this paper came from two transnational comparative research projects, both completed in 2015. One was a three year project on “Challenges of European Energy Governance with Emerging Powers” (EnergyGov) which analysed the EU-Emerging Powers dialogues with Brazil, India, China and South Africa.<sup>1</sup> The other was a two year project “External images of the EU as a Normative Energy Power: BRICS vis-à-vis the EU”

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<sup>1</sup> The project was funded by the Volkswagen Foundation led by TU Darmstadt involving University of Aarhus, Peking University, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), University of Cambridge, South African Institute of International Affairs, (SAIIA), Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, University of Zurich. Data provided by this project comes from 33 in-depth interviews in Beijing and Brussels from March 2012 – July 2014 and 21 interviews in Brasilia and Brussels from March 2012 – April 2014. Furthermore, a survey on China-EU and Brazil-EU Energy Relations was conducted with data being quoted as EnergyGov, Darmstadt, 2014.

(EXIE)<sup>2</sup> which examined influential media discourses on the EU' place in the global energy landscape. The paper employs a combination of methods to analyse the data -- media content analysis, elite discourse analysis as well as network analysis. This paper will introduce the methodological framework of the paper (chapter 3). Chapter 3 presents empirical findings on the mutual perception of the EU and BICS in energy policy. Topics of EU-BICS energy perceptions in media and elite discourse are analyzed in chapter 3.1. Chapter 3.2 elaborates on the normative orientation of EU-Brazil energy relations in media and elite discourse. In a last sub-chapter (2.3) we look at mutual perceptions as dialogue partners in media and elite discourse (evaluations and roles). The conclusion presents lessons provided by the EU-BICS Energy Cooperation.

## 2. Theoretical Framework and Methods

Theoretical models informing our team's quest to explain complex processes of meaning formation and contestation lay the foundation to a set of operationalisations used to craft the methods of analysis. Our methodology is combining media analysis and elite discourse analysis using content analysis of media images with its categories grounded in the Cascading Activation Framing theory, and survey and interview data to analyse elite opinions. The two methods employed are characteristic of their mixed use of qualitative and quantitative techniques.

This paper is set within the last analytical stream, framing and specifically informed by the 'cascading activation framing theory' (Entman, 2003; 2004). While the relevant scholarship is still debating the definition of 'framing', the field has widely accepted the notion formulated by Entman. This definition was further elaborated within the literature (Herrmann/ Keller, 2004; Alexander et al., 2005a, 2005b; as cited in Mišik, 2013; see also Herrmann et al., 1997). They see that images of international actors are complex phenomena – the so-called 'constellations of meanings'. These 'constellations' are construed by the interactions between perceived relative capability of an actor, the perceived threat/or opportunity represented by that actor and the perceived culture of that actor (Herrmann et al., 1997). And while the tripartite schema of image meaning is often considered in EU external perceptions studies (see Chaban and Holland 2014, 2015; Elgstrom and Chaban 2015 for reviews of the field), relevant literature overlooks the conditions under which these 'constellations of meanings' may 'take off' and leave a more substantial impact on how external actors are imagined in a given society. Herrmann (2013), in his review of the "image theory" tradition, does single out emotive charge as a key scope condition for images of Others to leave a deeper imprint. This paper argues two more conditions – visibility/magnitude and local resonance – to assess a potential effect of an image.

Formulation of these conditions – in application to mutual images of the EU and BICS as global energy actors - is informed by a theoretical model of 'cascading activation framing' (Entman 2003, 2004). This theoretical synergy between image and cascading activation framing theory is an innovative contribution to the EU external perceptions studies. The 'cascading' model was conceived within communication studies to explain how ideas about foreign policy issues and actors are spread within given societies. Central for the model is the notion of framing -- the central process by which government officials and journalists exercise political influence over each other and over the public.' (Entman 2003, p. 417): 'to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation' (Entman, 1993, 2). The theory tells us that powerful ideas spread from one location to others on the domestic network, namely from national administration, down to other elites (including media elites), to news images and finally to the general public. Importantly, ability to promote the spread of ideas on foreign policy is not the same at each level. Ideas that start at the top level, the national administration, are the strongest, followed by national elite networks and journalists. Just as in a

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<sup>2</sup> This project was supported by the Jean Monnet Lifelong Learning Programme. The project 'External Images of the EU (EXIE): Images of the EU as a Normative Energy Player', 2011-2013 was co-led by the universities of Canterbury (New Zealand), Darmstadt (Germany) and Victoria (Canada), it also involved universities of Pretoria (South Africa) and Leicester (UK). Data quoted as EXIE 2015.

real cascade, or waterfall, the flow is easier from the top downwards than in reverse. Entman (2003, 420) argues that 'spreading ideas higher, from lower levels to upper, requires extra energy.' Therefore, the flow of ideas from the public upwards is weak. Yet the public still can provide feedback to influence elites on external policies occasionally and mainly through media.

Entman argues that 'successful political communication requires the framing of events, issues, and actors in ways that promote perceptions and interpretations that benefit one side while hindering the other' (Entman 2003, p. 417). Each level in the metaphorical 'cascade' makes its own contribution to the mix and flow of ideas. Yet, irrespective of levels, frames and subsequent 'selective framed communicative highlights' possess varying capability to spread and activate ideas. According to Entman, only those frames that possess visibility (i.e. of magnitude and repetition), cognitive and cultural resonance with local audiences, and emotive charge are predicted to be 'capable'. Respectively, this analysis explores which frames were the most *visible*, *locally resonant* and *emotively charged* on two influencing each other levels within the 'cascade' – leading news media and elites.

### *Analysing media*

The 'cascading activation' model emphasises the key role of the media in the spreading and activation of ideas on foreign policy and international relations, both up and down the cascade. For spreading ideas downwards, the interface between journalists and elites is of particular importance. For spreading ideas upwards, the media is a 'pumping mechanism' (Entman, 2003, p. 420) helping the public – the weakest group in initiating and spreading foreign policy ideas – to provide feedback to elites and administration. If the media creates the impression that an idea enjoys prominent public support, it 'can affect leaders' strategic calculations and activities' (Entman, 2003, p. 420). The model treats certain media sources as more capable in creating and spreading frames – i.e. increasing the 'capability' of the frames within the 'cascade'. Those are usually national, prestigious sources in a position to influence news making in other regional and local sources. Moreover, international observers follow them as 'voices of the nation' and 'main opinion formers'. Journalists and editors of those sources usually are among top national elites. Such outlets are in the center of this analysis (Table 1).

**Table 1: All outlets observed, by country**

	Country	Prestigious daily	national Business	Weekly
BRICS	Brazil	<i>Folha de Sao Paulo</i>	<i>Valor Economico</i>	
	Russia	<i>Kommersant</i>	<i>Vedomosti</i>	
	India	<i>The Times of India</i>	<i>The Economic Times</i>	
	China	<i>People's Daily</i>	<i>21st Century Business Herald</i>	
	South Africa	<i>The Star</i>	<i>Business Day</i>	
TheEU	Germany	<i>Suddeutsche Zeitung</i>	<i>Handelsblatt</i>	<i>Der Spiegel</i>
	France	<i>le Figaro</i>	<i>les Echo</i>	<i>le Nouvel Observateur</i>
	the UK	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Financial Times</i>	<i>The Economist</i>
	the EU		<i>European Voice</i>	

\* Case of Russia is not considered in this paper

The period of observation is stretched over five years: 2009-2013. Year 2009 was chosen as a starting point as that year marked crucial changes for the EU in global politics, with the start of the sovereign Euro debt crisis and the failed Copenhagen Conference of the Parties (COP) to discuss the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The conference on UNFCCC were chosen as a global forum that traditionally deals with the issues of sustainability, including energy domain. As global energy governance is highly fragmented, there is no international organisation or forum where all our countries are involved in an equal manner as a necessary prerequisite for the comparison. In the Copenhagen COP to discuss the UNFCCC, for the first time, the EU as a sender of normative messages about climate change and sustainability was challenged by BICS. Challenge thrown by BICS to the EU and the EU's underperformance during the summit captured media attention around the world. The following COPs were often seen as an avenue for the EU to revise and redeem its reputation (year 2013 as an end point was prescribed by a framework of the research project that inspired this paper). A five-year sample (with a focus on one month of coverage surrounding the conferences to ensure comparability across years) is argued here to present a sufficient time frame to trace changes in meanings assigned to the EU and in the framing of the EU as an energy counterpart for BICS.

**Table 2: Period of media observation**

UNFCCC COPs	Location of the UNFCCC COPs	Duration	Period of observation for EXIE
COP15	Copenhagen	7 Dec – 18 Dec 2009	Nov 25 – Dec 24 2009
COP16	Cancun	29 Nov – 10 Dec 2010	Nov 17 – Dec 16 2010
COP17	Durban	28 Nov – 11 Dec 2011	Nov 18 – Dec 17 2011
COP18	Doha	26 Nov – 7 Dec 2012	Nov 14 – Dec 13 2012
COP19	Warsaw	11 Nov – 22 Nov 2013	Oct 29 – Nov 28 2013

In each BICS and EU case, we observed the EU and the energy matters coverage during the two weeks of the UNFCCC summit, as well as one week before and after the climate conference. This

time period was expected to feature plenty of reports in which the EU and the BICS will appear in interaction within these international negotiations. The UNFCCC's discussions offer a common frame where climate as well as energy issues are discussed. This is because of the distinctive feature of energy relations as having a strong 'nexus quality': energy as a policy field is an almost classical cross-cutting issue, standing in very close connection to climate policies. Since our analysis chose to monitor one-month coverage surrounding the conferences we also expected a certain bias in the findings. Namely, we predicted *sustainability* issues to dominate the coverage of the global energy governance and the EU in it. Yet, as this analysis will demonstrate, it was not global but *local* priorities that led the framing of energy issues in general, and of the EU and other global actors in particular. As such, despite our initial expectations, research reported here observed only limited implications of the sampling period on the framing in question – *sustainability* was not the most dominant frame in all BICS and EU cases under analysis.

Two conceptual fields were analysed: *images of the EU* as an actor in various policy areas (including energy) and the representations of *the semantic field 'energy'* with all actors in it (including the EU). This paper elaborates data collected within the latter approach leaving the former approach to future investigations. The chosen approach allowed us to compare images of the EU as a global energy actor (and media frames of its external energy governance) with the images of other main actors (and media frames of their energy governance). Special attention was given to the images of the BICS appearing alongside the EU and their interactions. Since a new multipolar world is a world of networking and communications, the project was specifically interested in the communication patterns between the EU and the BICS as well as within the BICS group in the energy field. It is these *relations* that were studied in terms of framing. Electronic engines storing daily editions of the papers were searched with the key words warranting a high precision in collecting data.

For the dataset on the thematic field 'energy', the key search terms were 'energy', 'oil', 'gas', 'coal', 'fossil', 'nuclear', 'biofuel', 'biomass', 'solar', 'wind', 'hydro', 'tidal', 'renewable', 'thermal', 'EEP'/'European Energy Policy'. The article entered the sample if any one of these terms appeared in a news item that also mentioned the EU (and/or its major institutions of European Commission, European Parliament, European Central Bank, European Court of Justice, EU Council and/or EU Presidency), as well as any of the BICS countries, or the terms 'BICS' or 'BRIC'. Despite its limited time period under observation, the project has collected a large amount of newspaper articles, creating a major dataset – 10,344 news items from all locations in the project. In this paper, we elaborate the four BICS cases and the four European cases using dataset 'energy matters' – 3,192 articles in the former case and 2,604 articles in the latter. Textual and visual data were the focus of analysis in this project, yet this paper will examine only textual framing of the EU and BICS as global energy actors.

**Table 3: Categories of analysis as operationalisations**

Visibility		Local (Cognitive and Normative) Resonance					Emotionally charged	
Volume	Degree of centrality	Sources	Actors	Frames	Focus of domesticity*	Issues	General evaluation	Metaphor*
	Major Minor Secondary	Local International	EU BRICS Other	Sustainability Competitiveness Security of supply Other	Local Regional 3rd country Global	Politics Economy Development Environment Climate change Safety Culture Normative Social affairs	Positive Neutral-to-positive Neutral Neutral-to-Negative Negative Mixed	Positive Neutral Negative

\* this category is not elaborated in this paper



### *Elite opinion analysis*

The methodological framework to study elite opinion on the EU's external energy governance represents a mixed-method approach of qualitative and quantitative methods. A combination of several methods inform this part of our analysis – semi-structured expert interviews, a cross-country survey based on a structured questionnaire, a network analysis and document analysis. These research instruments complement each other, so that a coherent empirically-informed image of external energy governance can be given (Müller et al. 2015: 26).

Qualitative, semi-structured expert interviews with the key actors from Europe (the EU and Member States) and China, India, Brazil and South Africa provided insights into elite perceptions of the content, structures, highlights and challenges of energy cooperation. 150 interviews were conducted from February 2012–December 2013, and involved EU officials in Brussels and the EU Delegations in the BICS; officials from EU Member States (mainly from Denmark, Germany, Spain and the UK); Chinese, Indian, Brazilian and South African government officials; as well as representatives of business associations, NGOs, chambers of commerce, development agencies, other European and emerging powers business actors and representatives of state-owned enterprises. The interviews were carried out in Bangalore, Beijing, Berlin, Brasilia, Brussels, Cape Town, Copenhagen, Eschborn, Johannesburg, Hannover, London, Madrid, Mumbai, New Delhi, Pretoria, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo by 15 researchers of the project team. Here we used a semi-structured set of questions, partly corresponding to those of our survey (discussed below), but adapted according to the respective roles and expertise of our interview partners. Specific focus was put on institutional knowledge of governance structures. Furthermore, we emphasize the importance of constructivist thinking of perceptions, as “decision makers act in accordance with their perception of reality, not in response to reality itself” (Brecher 1968: 298). This method complemented the structured questionnaires as it enabled to gain first hand insights, trace personal experiences of the respondents and elicit recommendations, which then formed the basis of our further analysis. With qualitative interpretative methods used for the interpretation and to improve the reliability of the research, the collected data was analyzed using content analysis methodology (Chaban et al. 2009; Müller et al. 2015: 27).

The survey<sup>3</sup> contained 25 questions – 22 closed and 3 open questions. It comprises of five sections, which ask respondents for their personal view on 1) participation in EU–Emerging Powers cooperation on energy issues, 2) procedural aspects of EU–emerging powers cooperation on energy issues, 3) importance of events and fora during EU–Emerging Powers cooperation on energy issues, 4) the EU and China/India/Brazil/South Africa as dialogue partners, 5) secure, competitive and sustainable energy policy. A pilot was conducted in India and Brussels. It was sent to participants of the BICS' four Energy Dialogues with the EU. We have identified all relevant participants who were engaged in the Energy Dialogues on a regular basis. In addition to the English version, the questionnaire was also translated into Portuguese and Mandarin. Overall, 143 questionnaires were filled in, with an average response rate of 52 per cent. Individual response rates range between 39 and 73 per cent. While the response rates were rather similar in the cases of China (49 percent), South Africa (45 percent), and India (39 percent), the rate of Brazil was remarkably higher with 73 percent (Müller et al. 2015: 27).

## **3. Mutual Perception of the EU and BICS in energy policy**

Within this section, our paper will compare the findings for the EU-BICS energy relation in several steps. We will start with the analysis of the mutual images as energy actors found in media and elite discourses. We first analyse visibility of issues, types and contexts of the EU's energy-related images in the BICS media and BICS' images in European media. We then proceed with comparison of these to the elite perceptions of motivations to engage in cooperation on energy issues. In the following section we discuss normative media framings of the EU and BICS as energy actors

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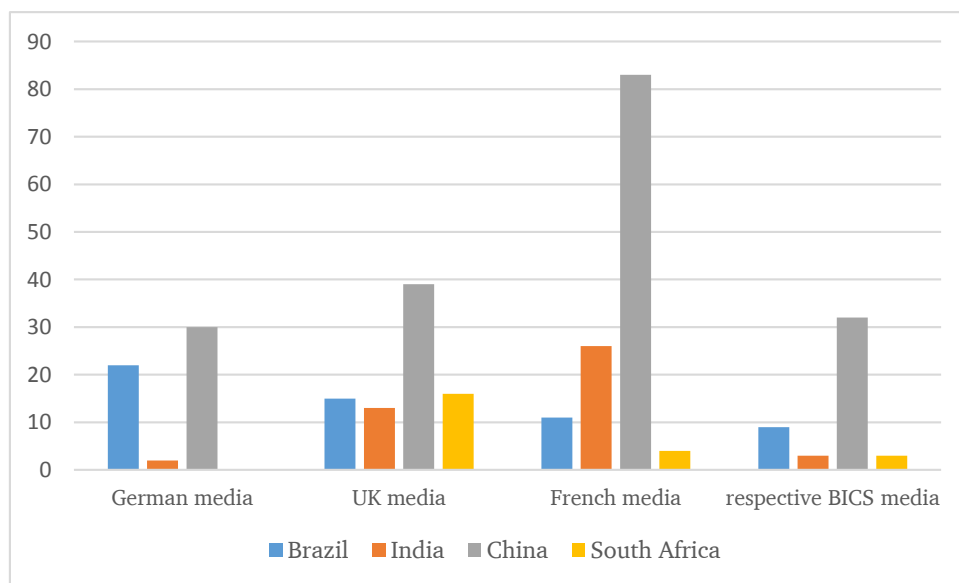
<sup>3</sup> All data is collected and stored with the project leaders at Technische Universität Darmstadt. When referring to the evaluation of our survey data in the following chapters, the source reads: EnergyGov, Darmstadt, 2014.

comparing media findings vis-à-vis elite normative framings of the EU and BICS. We also explore to what extent the two actors within the energy dialogue perceive each other’s willingness and ability to cooperate with each other. Finally, we assess evaluations assigned to the EU as an energy actor in the BICS media and BICS in the European media. We offset these findings against the perceived roles of the EU and BICS in the energy dialogue traced through elite interviews and the survey.

### 3.1 Topics of EU-BICS energy perceptions in media and elite discourse

As detailed above, for the media analysis, BICS and European press were observed over five years (2009-2013), one month each year surrounding the period of annual Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP). Figure 1 shows the visibility of the respective BICS country in the European media as well as the visibility of the EU in the respective BICS media -- as energy actors. The *European Voice* is, however left out of the following analysis, as BICS as energy actors were reported in most cases only in one or two articles. Figure 1 accounts only for articles where the EU and BICS were reported from a major perspective (i.e. a main actor in a news story).

**Figure 1: Major media visibility of the EU and BICS, in the respective media (counted in no. of articles)**



Source: EXIE, 2015

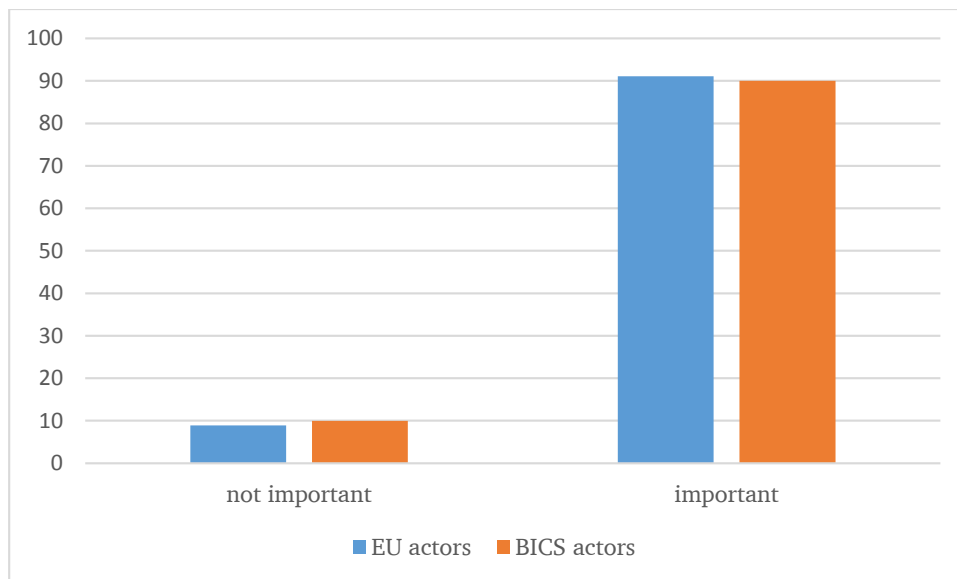
In the European media, the only clearly visible country – framed as a major topic - was China (with the French media being the most interested in framing China this way). Would we have included the articles with the secondary and minor intensity patterns, we would have seen that China with even higher visibility (but this impression would be influenced by a dominant minor perspective on China as an energy actor in the German and UK media). Only French reportage was putting more emphasis on China as a major actor in energy-related reportage. South Africa was the least visible BICS country in terms of intensity (it even did not appear in the major centrality category in the German case). Moreover, in the German media South Africa is predominantly portrayed as a minor actor.

Assessing images of the EU in the BICS images, in China, there was a higher share of news that featured the EU with more intensity. In contrast, the EU was barely visible as a major topic in South African, Indian and Brazilian reportage of energy matters. In general (not only in energy field), the EU had a low media profile in South African and Indian leading press. This low interest seems to be reciprocal -- South Africa and India are the least visible as major energy actors in the European media (with one exception of France where India was indeed more visible in the energy reportage)

It seems that the leading news media of the EU’s ‘Big 3’ and BICS credit low profile to each other as major energy actors. Yet, this low media visibility of the EU and BICS as energy actors (with

the exception of China) does not parallel elite perceptions on EU-BICS relations in energy policy. Our elite survey demonstrated that all BICS and EU actors – those who are involved in the institutionalized bilateral energy dialogues -- regard these dialogues as important to a great extent (Figure 2). There was neither a major difference between the BICS and the EU, nor between public and non-state actors. However, two exceptions were observed: the EU elites were somewhat more reluctant to call the EU-Brazil dialogue important and the Chinese actors were more skeptical to call the EU-China dialogue important.

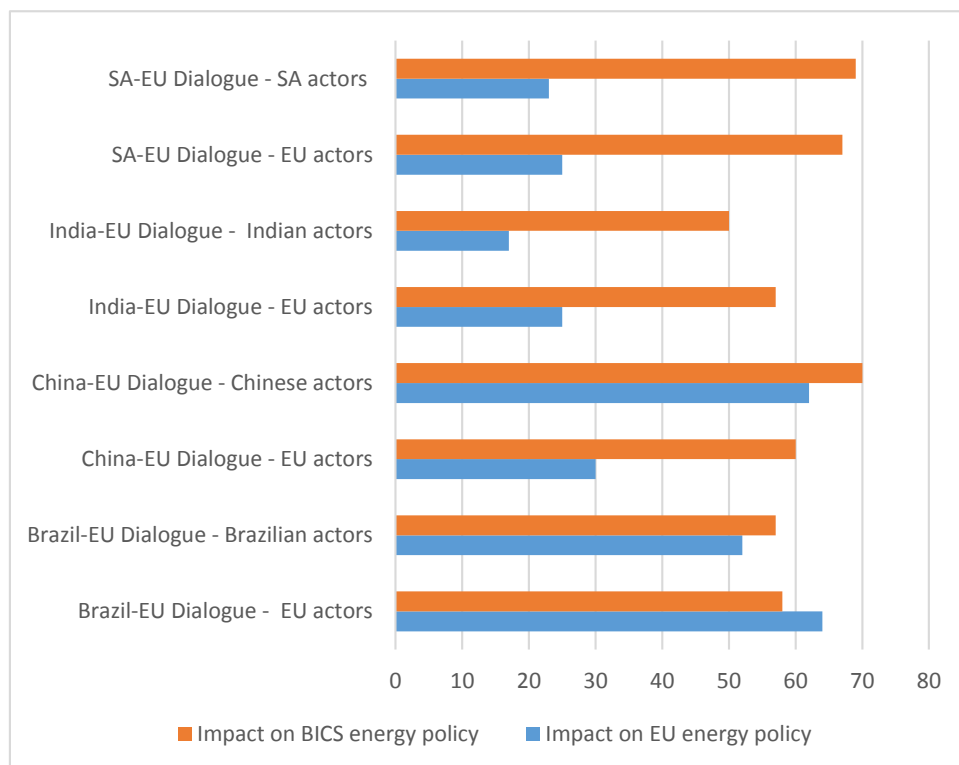
**Figure 2: Importance of EU-BICS cooperation on energy issues since 2007**



*Source:* EnergyGov, Darmstadt, 2014

The *impact* of the dialogue on BICS and EU energy policy was perceived differently. Predictably, in nearly all cases the impact on the respective BICS national energy policy was perceived to be higher than the impact on the EU's energy policy (Figure 3). The only exception is the perceptions of the Brazil-EU dialogue where the EU actors perceive a slightly higher impact on its own energy policy than on the one of Brazil. Noticeably, extreme difference can be detected. To point, in the South African and Indian cases, the perceptions of the impact on the EU's energy policy are substantially lower than in the case of Brazil and China. We argue that South Africa and India, the two economically 'weaker' Emerging Powers in our sample, seem to be perceived from the EU and by themselves as being less influential than 'stronger' countries of Brazil and China. The perceptions of the impact in the Brazilian case are significantly more balanced. Notably, the perceived impact in the case of the EU actors in the China-EU dialogue is extremely low.

**Figure 3: Impact of the dialogue on EU and BICS energy policy (percentages of the actors)**



Source: EnergyGov, Darmstadt, 2014

Focusing on Brazilian and Chinese cases, we can nevertheless detect difference. In the EU-Brazilian case, the EU actors are much more convinced that the dialogue has an impact on the EU energy policy. This is not so if compared to the Chinese case. Brazilian actors are also much more reluctant to see an impact on energy policies than the Chinese actors. This might be explained by the fact that the Brazil-EU dialogue is in its initial phase while China-EU energy cooperation has a long and profound history. Brazil and the EU have cooperated and held dialogues on specific topics of interest for both sides, but these interactions never dealt with the ‘essentials’ of each others’ energy systems.

Assessment of the general media visibility of the EU and BICS as energy actors in terms of volume and intensity of representation as well as the importance and impact of the EU-BICS energy dialogue is further complemented by our analysis of the visibility of different *issues* and *types* of energy in the respective media discourses.

Here we present the synopsis of the findings selecting *policy-related* issues visible in the media and leaving out the *process-related* issues such as ‘energy governance’ or ‘cooperation’. Table 4 shows the most visible energy policy issues detected in the respective media.

**Table 4: Visible energy issues in media perceptions (only policy related)**

	German media reporting...	UK media reporting...	French media reporting...	Respective BICS media reporting the EU as an energy actor
<b>Brazil</b>	Investment	Emissions/ Investment	Emissions	Emissions / Investment Energy Infrastructure
<b>India</b>	Investment	Emissions	Emissions	Energy access
<b>China</b>	Investment	Prices	Emissions	Energy saving
<b>South Africa</b>	Emissions	Investment	Emissions	Sustainable development

Source: EXIE, 2015

European media demonstrates clear national patterns in reporting BICS as energy actors. German media reports nearly all BICS with a stress on investments in energy field. Only when South Africa is reported German media prefers to report about emissions. However, this policy issue is closely followed by the investment issue. In contrast the French media assigns priority to the BICS in the context of emissions. Some of this orientation is linked to the sustainability frame visible due to the timing of the observation, however it is also an outcome from the French orientation towards nuclear energy. The nuclear energy is introduced as contributing to fight climate change and ensure clean air policy. The UK case is a mixed case. Both investment/prices and emissions are most visible in the UK media. Importantly, none of the European media cases has a highly visible discussion on energy savings, energy access or sustainable development ranking first.

Media portrayals of the EU's energy policy issues by the BICS media show a list of very different features. Once again we observe a divide between how Brazil and China frame the EU vis-à-vis how India and South Africa frame it. Emissions, investment and energy infrastructure are leading issues in EU representations the Brazil case and energy saving in the Chinese case. In contrast, Indian and South African media show an orientation towards development issues when framing the EU -- such as energy access in India and sustainable development in South Africa.

South Africa also portrays the EU in the context of energy access (another visible issue as energy access remains a crucial issue in South Africa, linked not lastly to the deficiencies in energy infrastructure). The *access to energy* is an issue of great importance and public awareness in South African energy politics. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in the South African media case the EU was represented as a promising cooperation partner, able to provide technologies to solve the problems around energy infrastructure. *Sustainable development* and *energy access* are also the issues that dominate the South African stakeholders' perceptions of importance and are often interlinked, as sustainable development is seen as a need to achieve a nationwide access to energy: 'This aspect is directly linked to the development of new infrastructure to meet the energy needs of millions of South Africans' (Fioramonti 2016).

The issue of *energy saving* is visible in the Chinese newspapers. The media representation of the EU suggests that Chinese newsmakers are most interested in the EU for its technologies to save energy and to make energy use more efficient, which requires technologies and investment. The topics of *energy saving* and *infrastructure* found in the BICS media are fitting with the orientation of Germany and the UK when it comes to investment in China and Brazil. To give one example, the issue of investments dominates the German reportage of Brazil as an energy actor, with almost half of the articles mentioning Brazil related to investments. This creates the image of Brazil as a potential market for business interests. This also seems to reflect on the latest developments of the wind sector in Brazil as the fastest growing source of electrical power in Brazil. Most recent Ten-Year Energy Expansion Plan of Brazilians Ministry of Mines and Energy<sup>4</sup> is of special interest of

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.mme.gov.br/documents/10584/3642013/03+-+Energy+Expansion+in+Brazil+Investment+Opportunities+\(PDF\)/97e49acb-ee22-4c98-ad80-](http://www.mme.gov.br/documents/10584/3642013/03+-+Energy+Expansion+in+Brazil+Investment+Opportunities+(PDF)/97e49acb-ee22-4c98-ad80-)

Germany and the UK. In another example, the Federal Ministry of Economy and Energy has launched an information event on ‘onshore Wind energy in Brazil’ in September 2016 within the framework of its ‘Export Initiative Renewable energies’ in order to boost German investments in Brazil’s wind energy infrastructure.<sup>5</sup>

The most visible policy issue of *emissions* in the cases of India and South Africa in the European media also points to the fact that both countries are still highly dependent on coal as an energy source and have to address its emission problems. This leads us to the question of which *types of energy* were the most visible in the respective media when they reported each other as energy actors. The data is analyzed according to the two categories - *non-renewable* and *renewable* types of energy sources (Tables 5 and 6).

**Table 5: Non-renewable energy types in media**

	German media	UK media	French media	Respective BICS media reporting the EU as an energy actor
<b>Brazil</b>	Oil	Oil	Oil	Gas
<b>India</b>	Oil	Oil	Nuclear	Oil
<b>China</b>	Oil	Oil	Oil	Gas/Oil
<b>South Africa</b>	Coal	Coal	Oil	Oil

Source: EXIE, 2015

Looking specifically at *non-renewable energy sources* (Table 5), *gas* and *oil* are the two most visible energy types for all actors when they present each other as energy actors. This media priority is not a surprise, as these two sources remain the most used fossil fuels to produce energy in general.

In the case of Brazil, European media was concentrated exclusively on the oil when reporting Brazil as an energy actor. This media visibility is greatly influenced by the discovery of the pre-salt oil that catapulted Brazil into the group of oil producing countries. *Gas* was more visible than *oil* when the EU is reported by Brazilian media. At first glance it is a surprising finding as natural gas plays modest role in Brazil’s energy mix (accounting for less than 12% of the domestic energy supply and 7.2% of the country’s final energy consumption). This is due to the ‘predominant role of hydroelectricity in Brazil’s power generation, the country’s relatively undeveloped gas infrastructure, government subsidies for LPG and the monopoly of Petrobras, which contributes to balancing the supply of competing fuels – natural gas and low-value fuel oil’ (Gomez 2014: 1f). However, the dry seasons since 2012 let the country run into energy production shortages from their hydro-power generation. Brazil had to import LNG (liquefied natural gas) to meet the needs of its gas-fired power plants. From this perspective, the expansion of the gas share of the Brazilian power mix becomes an important topic for the Brazilian media when they report energy matters in general and the EU within them.

The focus on *nuclear* in the case of Indian and French media is arguably a reflection of their own domestic energy matters and mixes. There is an increasing importance of nuclear power in India’s energy mix, and within this context, nuclear power is an area central to the France-India energy cooperation. Moreover, France was the first country to sign a civil nuclear agreement with

c70056288e89;jsessionid=EA174D8159C21B7C94B25A59F05C52EC.srv155?version=1.1 [accessed 24.8.2016]

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.erneuerbare-energien.de/EEE/Redaktion/DE/Veranstaltungen/2016/Infoveranstaltungen/iv-brasilien-wind.html> [accessed 26.8.2016]

India (2008). In 2009 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two partners in order to pave the way for six nuclear reactor units in Jaitapur (in progress).<sup>6</sup> France's expertise in this field makes it an attractive partner to India. On the other hand, France expects significant economic benefits from this partnership, as well as an appearance of a global ally in nuclear power energy field. France strongly supports India in its aim to become part of the global export control regime. To both actors nuclear energy is of great importance to ensure energy security and to fight climate change.

It is noticeable that *coal* in both German and UK media is the most reported energy source in relation to South Africa. This media priority may also parallel the reality – the UK and Germany are both importing coal from South Africa. In Germany, South Africa is among the five biggest importers of coal, even though the import has been decreasing over the last years. In 2014, South Africa accounted for 9 percent of the coal import in Germany (VDKI 2015). In the UK, imports from South Africa have also decreased over the last years, and in 2013 they accounted for less than 1 percent of the overall coal imports (Bide *et al.*, 2015/Euracoal 2016).

Turning to the *renewable* types of energy prioritized in the respective media, our summary below (Table 6) left out such generic categories as 'renewables in general', 'new energy', 'green energy' and 'clean energy' and focused on particular types of renewable energy sources.

**Table 6: Renewable types of energy in media (without category renewables in general)**

	German media	UK media	French media	Respective BICS media reporting the EU as an energy actor
<b>Brazil</b>	wind	wind	solar	Wind
<b>India</b>	wind	wind	solar	Solar
<b>China</b>	solar	solar	solar	Solar
<b>South Africa</b>	Solar	Solar	solar	Solar

Source: EXIE, 2015

Media in the EU and BICS focuses exclusively on *solar* and *wind* types of renewables. *Solar* dominated the EU's portrayals in Chinese, Indians, and South African cases. *Wind* was most visible in the reporting of BICS in German and UK media.

A more visible media profile of the EU in terms of wind energy in the Brazilian case seems to reflect the latest positive developments of the wind sector in Brazil. These are also in the special interest of Germany and the UK. For example, the Federal Ministry of Economy and Energy has launched an information event on 'onshore Wind energy in Brazil' in September 2016 within the framework of its 'Export Initiative Renewable energies' in order to boost German investments in Brazil's wind energy infrastructure.<sup>7</sup>

In the Indian case, wind and solar are competing renewables in the countries energy mix. Yet, India's solar power potential is seen bigger than the wind potential as 'installed wind capacity grows at less than half the pace of solar' (IEA 2015:131). There is also a question of prices, as both energy installations have to be imported. The costs for solar are lower than the costs for wind. Nevertheless, German and UK firms are highly interested to sell wind turbines especially for offshore installation to India. Arguably, offshore wind parks would be one solution for India to solve its land acquisition issues, but an expensive one.

<sup>6</sup> <http://thediplomat.com/2013/02/france-and-india-deepen-ties/> [Accessed 05.07.2016].

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.erneuerbare-energien.de/EEE/Redaktion/DE/Veranstaltungen/2016/Infoveranstaltungen/iv-brasilien-wind.html> [accessed 26.8.2016]

In the next segment of our analysis we identify the most visible *context* within which the EU-BICS energy relations are framed in the respective media (Table 7). The main contexts are *economics, climate change, development* and *politics*.

**Table 7: Contexts of mutual representations in BICS and EU media**

	German media	UK media	French media	Respective BICS media reporting the EU as an energy actor
<b>Brazil</b>	Economics	Economics	Environment	Politics
<b>India</b>	Economics	Climate Change (followed by Economics)	Politics	Economics
<b>China</b>	Economics	Economics	Politics	Politics/Economics
<b>South Africa</b>	Climate Change (followed by Economics)	Economics	Environment	Development

Source: EXIE, 2015

The *climate change* context visible in the European media points to the links between *energy* and *climate change* issues reported by media – a link expected in our research due to the timing of the analysis around the UNFCCC COPs. However, it was not an exclusively visible context.

BICS energy reportage in the German and UK media is actually dominated by the *economic* context, which corresponds with the most visible policy-related issue of *investment and prices* we discussed above. In contrast, in their reportage of BICS as energy actors French media put much attention environment and politics, which corresponds to the discussed above priority assigned to the issue *emissions*.

Importantly, the context of *development* did not appear within the European media reports of BICS as energy actors, This context was not even observed in the Indian and South African cases, where EU Member States were still carrying out development policy measures (within the observed period). Considering the scale of Germany’s and France’s official development assistance towards India it is surprising not to see these EU states acknowledged. *Development* context appeared in 21 articles in the UK media and was the fourth most visible context, but it did not appear in the German or French media. India was receiving overseas development assistance from the UK until 2013 and this has arguably influenced the contexts (Bain *et al.* 2016).

Turning to BICS media, in Indian media coverage of the EU, *development* as a context appeared as the third most visible. But economics seems to be the most visible one there. Only South Africa shows development as the most visible context when talking about the EU as an energy actor. This might be explained by the fact that of the four BICS, only South Africa will continue receiving development aid assistance from the EU. Most EU energy projects and measures are financed through development programs because DG Energy of the EU Commission has limited budget for cooperation programs with third countries. In this light, it is logical that the local media are framing the EU as an actor of development aid when speaking about the EU as an energy actor.

Following the discussion of the most visible energy issues, types and contexts in media, we assess the most visible motivations to engage in cooperation with each other shared by the elites involved in the EU-BICS energy dialogues. These were identified in the course of interviews and survey. Actors show very different motivations (Table 8). The table lists top motivations, as well as second most visible motivation if they are a close second.



**Table 8: Motivations to engage in cooperation on energy issues\***

	<b>BICS public actors on engagement with the EU</b>	<b>EU public actors on engagement with respective BICS</b>
<b>Brazil</b>	private sector cooperation / technology transfer	climate change / private sector cooperation
<b>India</b>	technology transfer	climate change / private sector cooperation
<b>China</b>	climate change / technology transfer	climate change / private sector cooperation
<b>South Africa</b>	secure energy supply / technology transfer	climate change / private sector cooperation

Source: EnergyGov, 2015

One key findings is that for all EU-BICS dialogues the EU public actors the same motivations: firstly, climate change (an image that is arguably resonating with the EU's self-image of a "green actor"), and secondly, and very closely to the first, private sector cooperation. The latter motivation seems to echo the EU media reportages and the three states' interests as presented in the media.

For the BICS, on the other side, it was technology transfer that was among the top two motivations. In India, public actors prioritized technology transfer to such a great extent, that all other motivations are seen far behind (and thus not listed here). Specifically for the EU-India dialogue, the motivations of the EU and Indian stakeholders are highly divergent. The area of special interest for Indian public actors is energy efficiency and clean energy technologies – prioritized in order to achieve a cleaner production of coal. India had an acute interest in technology transfer, yet this interest is reciprocated from within the EU is only vaguely. Since for the EU the promotion of private sector cooperation was the econd most important point of interest, the dialogue could benefit if a stronger focus on technology transfer made and if European interests in market entry and private technology cooperation are backed in a more articulate way. Certainly issues such as absorptive capacity of the Indian energy sector might be a point of concern. However, we have to keep in mind that the data was collected before the latest shift in the Indian policy towards renewable energies. Future research may reflect if there is a change in elite perceptions after Paris COP 21. We hypothesize that after the 'Joint Declaration between the EU and India on a Clean Energy and Climate Partnership' (European Council, 2016) higher motivations may be observed on the Indian side.

In Brazilian private sector, cooperation received a high priority. It produces an impression that economic and technological benefits are seen as more popular motivations than the issue of combating the climate change. In the EU-Brazil dialogue the motivations are partly convergent as the EU and Brazil share the interests in promoting private sector cooperation.

In the case of EU-China energy dialogue, we find converging interests. The two share political interest in combating climate change. Also, the EU's interest in promoting private sector cooperation may match very well China's interest in technology transfer (not lastly if pending licensing issues can be solved to everyone's favor).

Lastly, the EU-South African dialogue at first sight seems to be driven by quiet divergent motivations. Yet, South Africa's high interest in enhancing security of supply might be matched by the European interest of private sector cooperation, and the growing FDI activities in South Africa's renewable energy sectors might be a first indicator.

### 3.2 Normative orientation of EU-Brazil energy relations in media and elite discourse

Following our earlier argument that norms play an important role in EU energy governance – and exploring the construct of local/normative resonance -- we focus now on how the EU and BICS were framed in the media and elite discourses with respect to the different energy *norms* – *competitiveness, sustainability and security of supply*. We have analyzed the frames within the media analysis as well as within the elite opinion collected with the help of the survey instrument (Table 9)

**Table 9: Energy frames of BICS and the EU in media**

	German media	UK media	French media	Respective BICS media reporting the EU as an energy actor
<b>Brazil</b>	competitiveness	competitiveness	sustainability	sustainability
<b>India</b>	security of supply	sustainability	security of supply/ sustainability	sustainability
<b>China</b>	competitiveness	competitiveness	sustainability	sustainability
<b>South Africa</b>	security of supply/ sustainability	sustainability	sustainability	-

Source: EXIE, 2015

Remarkably, all BICS media<sup>8</sup> are framing the EU as an energy actor within the sustainability frame. While the timing of the media analysis around UNFCCC COP and the EU’s role in the COPs could be one explanation, this framing is also reflective of a broader ‘green image’ of the EU as a normative actor. This finding is standing out, not matching other media findings presented above as well as elite frames presented below.

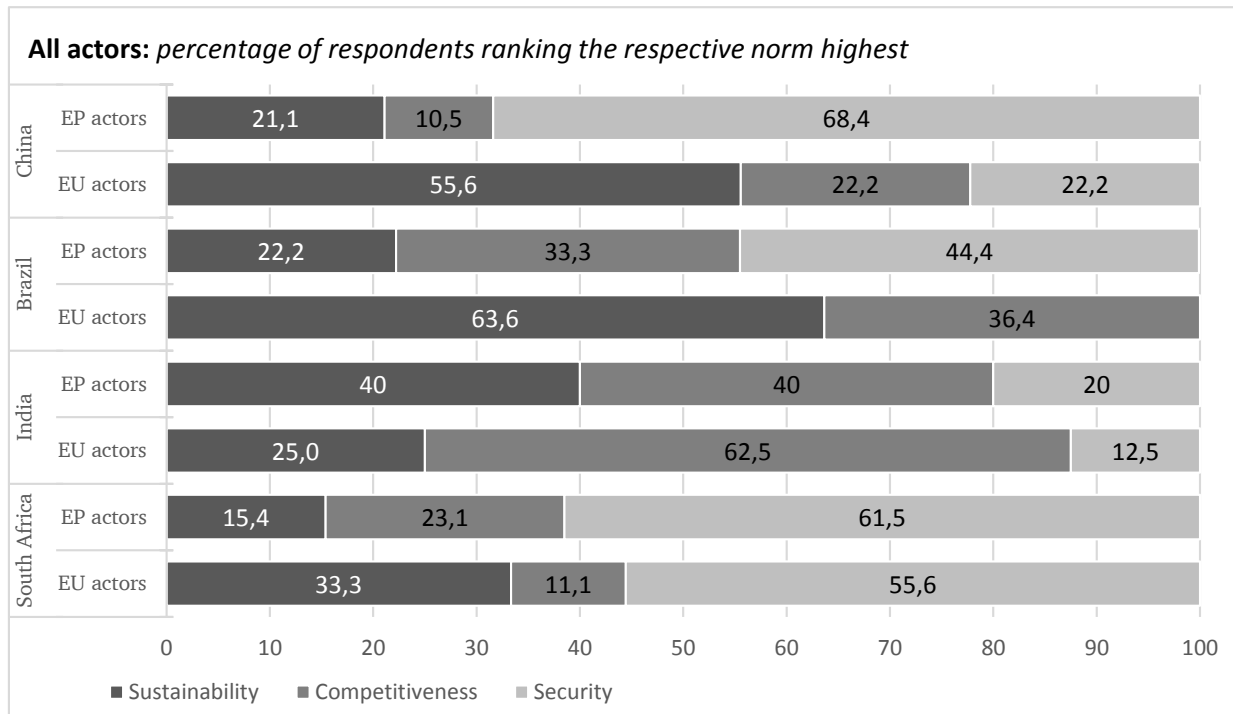
The German and UK media again demonstrated a divide between how they framed Brazil and China on the one hand India and South Africa on the other. Whereas the former group are framed through the competitiveness frame -- which corresponds to the economical orientation towards those countries -- India and South Africa where framed through the prism of their national problems -- the security of supply by the German media and with sustainability in case of the UK media. French media again is consistent with the sustainability frame when reporting BICS as energy actors, adding security of supply in the Indian case.

We then compared media data with the opinion of the elites. Our survey provides detailed information concerning normative orientations and mutual perceptions of the participants in the energy dialogues that allows us to assess the political interactions of the dialogue partners. Regarding normative orientations, we asked our interviewees to rank the aspects of sustainability, security and competitiveness and choose between different possible understandings of each norm. This let us to find out more about the shape and structure of each normative triangle, and thus the normative background that predetermines political interaction within energy governance. Our findings point that liberal and green motivations become closely interwoven in the European stakeholders’ normative orientations. However, comparing the normative orientations of the EU actors with the orientations of the Emerging Powers actors shows a different pattern with high variance of normative orientations displayed (Figure 4). This major difference in normative orientations in the four surveys may be explained by the differing political agendas of European

<sup>8</sup> South African sample had some missing data at the moment of this paper submission

official institutions and actors. Obviously, the EU does not perform as a coherent normative actor who is promoting the same energy norm in each of the four dialogues. That means that the norm hierarchy of the EU changes according to the context of the respective dialogue. In addition, the normative orientations between EU and Emerging Powers within the dialogue do not always show the same orientation. For China and Brazil, the normative orientations of the EU-EP dialogues were found to not match. In contrast, in the case of India and South Africa energy dialogues with the EU, all the European and EP normative orientations matched quite well.

**Figure 4: Energy frames of BICS-EU cooperation by BICS and EU actors (in percentage)**



*Source:* EnergyGov, Darmstadt, 2014

In the case of China, we find security as the widely preferred norm by Chinese actors whereas the EU prefers the sustainability norm in this dialogue. Here it might be helpful for the EU to reframe the formulation of political goals in light of China's security ambitions, in order to build more common grounds on which political dialogue can be based. This might for instance imply a focus on the potentials of renewable energy for guaranteeing security of supply. The EU-China negotiations give evidence of a long-standing cooperation that strongly focuses on sustainability issues, a fact which is comprehensible when looking at the creation of the Europe-China Clean Energy Center (EC2), at energy law cooperation or the energy subgroup on energy efficient buildings, which is part of the energy dialogue.

As mentioned above, normative orientations if the EU and Brazil within the EU-Brazil dialogue are seen as very different. Whilst the security norm seems to be most important for the Brazilian actors in the dialogue, for the EU actors the sustainability norm has the strongest weight and security. It is likely that the strong focus of the Brazil-EU energy dialogue on renewable energies is regarded as one aspect of energy security by Brazilian actors and framed within sustainability ambitions by the EU side. Due to Brazil's green energy mix with over 45% renewable energies, further investments in wind and solar energy are regarded as a measure to enhance energy security due to the excellent climatic conditions for wind and solar energy, and not as measure to enhance sustainability. Yet, a normative discontent between the EU and Brazil exists in interpreting the sustainability norm with reference to licensing of Brazilian second generation biofuels. Whilst Brazil aims for EU certification of its second generation biofuels, the EU does not regard its sustainability standards to be fulfilled.

The Indian case is one of the two cases, where the normative orientations overlap. The Indian and European normative configurations match relatively well, with competitiveness and sustainability seen as most important norms, followed by security. Here EU and Indian actors show similar orientations; a fact which might facilitate cooperation if taken into account as a point of reference within political communication. Competitiveness plays a very important role, which can be explained by the growing European interests in market entry and enhanced energy cooperation with India. Possibly the ongoing EU-India FTA negotiations also influence this orientation. For EU officials this is obviously a situation, where the impetus to enhance the competitiveness is more important than sustainability or security concerns.

Within the EU-South Africa energy dialogue, the orientations match, as here both actors share a preference for security of supply as a guiding norm for energy policy-making, and might take this as an important normative basis for intensifying the dialogue, in light of developing common solutions for security of supply and for battling energy poverty. Energy security as the most important issue in the EU-South African dialogue does certainly not point to a highly competitive struggle over resources taking place. This underlines the high importance the EU devotes to security of supply issues in the South-African case. At the same time, in a country driven by energy path dependencies with the energy state owned enterprise Eskom as a single monopolist and only few private energy providers, competitiveness is of minor importance for the EU as long as this solid structure is changing slowly. Yet, a growing interest in getting access to the South-African energy market for renewables technologies can be observed and it is likely that competitiveness will gain on importance in the next years.

### **3.3 Mutual perceptions as dialogue partners in media and elite discourse (evaluations and roles)**

The next dimension of our analysis explores to what extent the two actors perceive each other's willingness and ability to cooperate with each other. One important indicator of these visions comes from the media data – it is the evaluations assigned to the EU as an energy actor in the BICS media and to BICS in the European media. Within the elite interviews and the survey, our respondents were asked to assess different roles of the EU and BICS, for instance "being an agenda-setter", or "playing with a hidden agenda", etc. The two indicators of evaluations and roles are argued to identify emotive charge of mutual perceptions and visions of agenda-setting qualities, compromise-building skills and mutual learning (Knodt *et al.* 2015b: 335).

We start with the media analysis, analysing the evaluations BICS and the EU assign each other in perceptions of each other – from negative-to-neutral and neutral-to-positive (Table 10).

**Table 10: Evaluation of BICS and the EU in the respective media**

	German media	UK media	French media	Respective BICS media reporting the EU as an energy actor
<b>Brazil</b>	neutral	neutral (with slight tendency to negative)	neutral (with slight tendency to positive)	positive
<b>India</b>	neutral	neutral (with tendency to negative)	neutral	neutral
<b>China</b>	neutral	neutral (with tendency to negative)	Neutral (with slight tendency to negative)	neutral
<b>South Africa</b>	neutral	neutral (with tendency in both directions)	Neutral (with slight tendency to negative)	-

Source: EXIE, 2015

In German and French media, BICS tend to be evaluated in a predominantly neutral manner, while clearly positive or negative evaluations are hardly being visible. Such neutral style of reporting could be a hallmark of the European quality press who claims objective information-oriented reportage. Respectively, our analysis considers less clear-cut categories *positive-to-neutral* and *neutral-to-negative* to analyse closer the evaluation of the actors (following Bain *et al.* 2016). In France we see slight tendencies to negative assessment for South Africa and Brazil and a slightly more positive tone in the case of China. UK media portrayals of BICS as energy actors are the least neutral in the sample. Here we find clear tendencies to negative or positive (or even both direction as in the South African case).

In the Brazilian case, the majority of the European articles evaluated Brazil in a neutral manner, with a clear negative or positive evaluations being hardly visible. In the UK media, the dominant frame of a *competitiveness* attracted more negative evaluations than positive. These negative stories portrayed Brazil and its energy markets in a non-competitive matter in comparison to other energy markets, e.g. China. Interestingly, this is vice versa in the French media. French press framed Brazil as a competitive actor especially in offshore drilling and developing green energies.

In the Brazilian press, there were more articles containing some evaluation of the EU as an energy actor than articles where the EU was reported from a neutral perspective. Overall, the EU is portrayed in a rather positive tone. This is specially the case when the EU is evaluated as a sustainable energy actor. The EU is not a very visible actor in Brazilian media, but when it appears, it is presented in a positive light. This does however change, when EU-Brazilian energy interaction is evaluated. In those articles, the negative tone is overweighing the positive. Furthermore, there is a visible change over the years. While the EU was evaluated in a more positive way in 2009 (during the Copenhagen Climate Summit), the tone becomes more negative in the following years. Some of this evaluation is connected to the EU's challenged performance at the climate summits (Guimaraes/Piefer 2016).

In the Indian case, the European press is reporting India as an energy actor in a more negative tone. This is mostly linked to the reportage on India's role and problematic involvement in the annual climate summits. German and UK press also speak about concerns with regard to India's nuclear policy and related safety issues.

Indian media presented the EU as an energy actor from an exclusively neutral perspective. Previous media analyses of EU in the Indian media also reported that Indian media portrayed the Union almost exclusively in neutral terms (Chaban/Elgström 2014: 179).

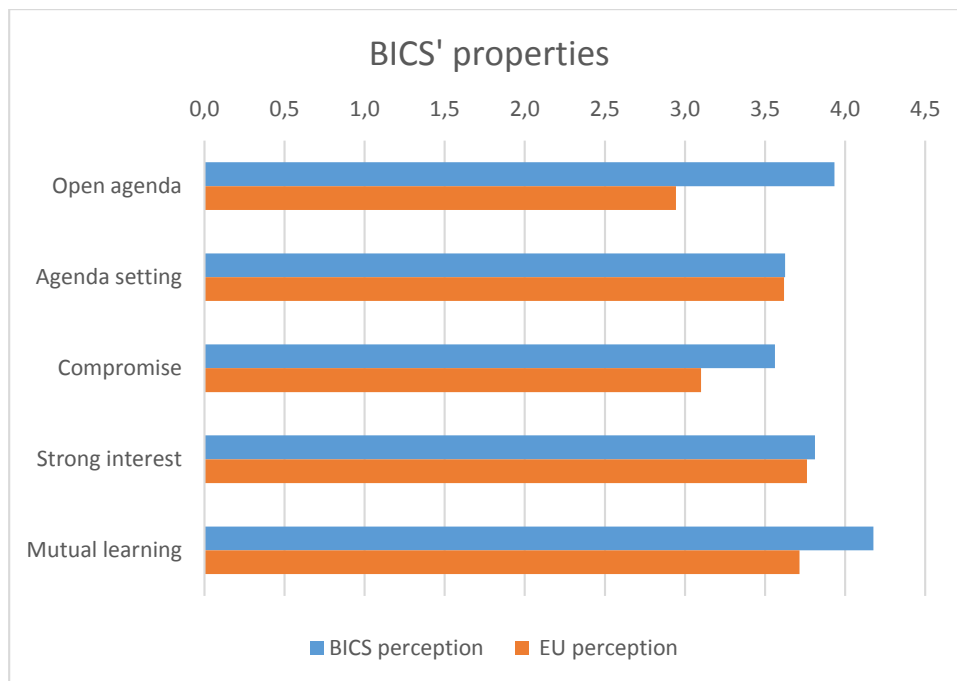
China is evaluated in a more negative than positive tone in the UK and French press. In the UK media negativity often appeared in the *sustainability* frame with China described as lacking in actions as a sustainable actor, and also being destructive in the course of the COPs negotiations. The same counts for the French media – a significant number of articles with a clear negative evaluation of China were linked to it hindering the conclusion of an agreement at the COPs. Another negatively-coloured theme was China's dumping of solar panels into the EU markets.

Neutral tone dominated the portrayals of the EU as an energy actor in both Chinese newspapers. When evaluations took place, they demonstrated a noticeable difference between the party-owned newspaper vis-à-vis the business daily. While *People's Daily* evaluates the EU from a rather positive stand-point, *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century* does not have a single article which presents the EU in a positive light. It seems that the official opinion of the EU in China rendered by the party newspaper is more positive than an opinion of the business daily. The articles with a negative connotation address the international climate negotiations, emissions and the solar dispute between the EU and China. It is interesting to note that China in the same articles was evaluated in a neutral tone (with the exception of one article). Positive evaluations assigned to the EU by the *People's Daily* were mainly in the context of the China-EU summits and the progress made in cooperation on clean energy and energy saving (Lai/Shi, 2016).

For South Africa, the UK and French reports featured more articles with pronounced evaluations (this resonates with the overall volume and intensity of South Africa's representations in these media). In the UK media, news stories portraying South Africa were rather polarized, while the *positive* tone is led in the French media. The *negative-to-neutral* stories in the UK media dealt with South Africa's energy challenges regarding its energy mix, energy supply and energy efficiency, while the *positive-to-neutral* stories among others addressed South Africa's role in the fight against climate change, its aim at reducing the amount of coal in its energy mix and use of biofuels. *Positive* stories in the French media dealt with diverse issues, among others, the involvement of South Africa at the UN climate summits, the construction of solar plants and the production of energy from methane in South Africa.

Another important moment to analyze the dialogues is the mutual perceptions of the dialogue partners. As mutual perceptions of the actors are an important explanatory factor – they provide evidence of how the dialogic partners view each other's political interactions, agenda-setting qualities, and consensus-building activities (Chaban/ Holland/ Ryan, 2009; Lucarelli and Fioramonti 2010), we had a look at the mutual perceptions of the political and administrative elites. The mutual perceptions can display to what extent the actors are willing and able to cooperate, as well as which neuralgic points need to be clarified in order to come to terms for cooperative policymaking. In order to explore how the actors perceive each other's behavior as dialogue partners, we asked our interview partners to assess different properties, for instance "being an agenda-setter" or "playing with a hidden agenda". This allows further conclusions on the quality of bilateral energy cooperation and on strategies for optimizing energy cooperation (Figure 5).

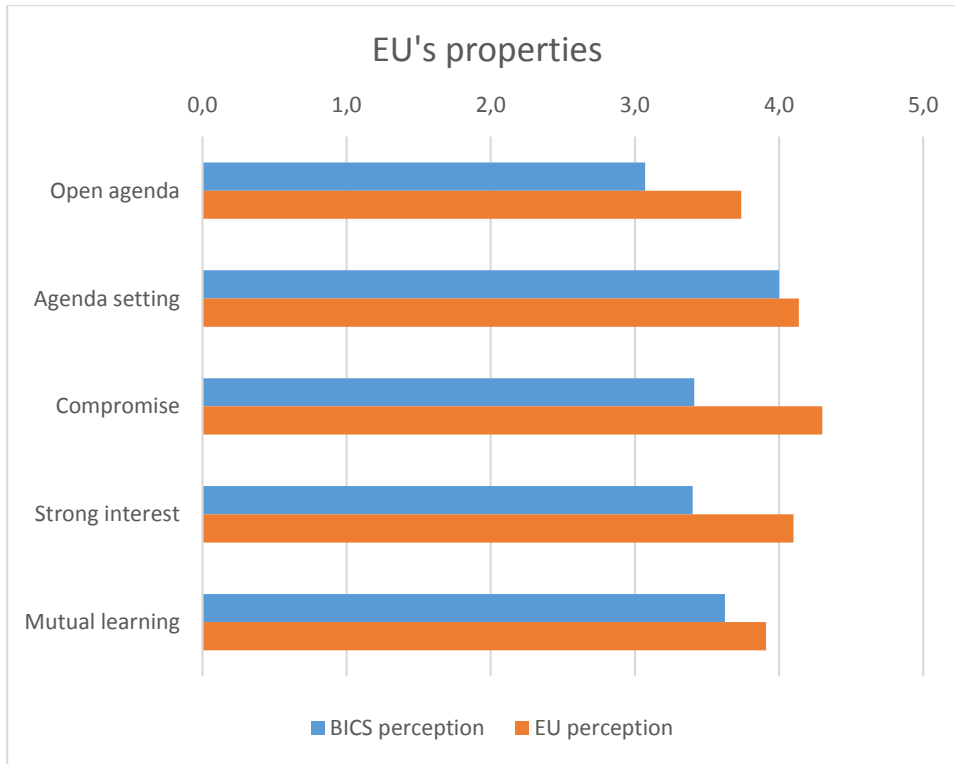
**Figure 5: Perception of BICS' characteristics as a dialogue partner**  
(Means of all answers; 1 = "Strongly disagree"; 5 = "Strongly agree")



Source: EnergyGov, Darmstadt, 2014

In their self-perception, the EU public actors tend to view the EU as an active agenda setter and emphasize high compromise-building qualities, as well as an interest in the other negotiation partner, which is also visible in the openness for mutual learning. This very positive self-image of course needs to be contrasted with the perceptions the emerging powers have of the European actors. The emerging powers actors agree that the EU acts as an agenda setter but is also willing and able to learn from the BICS side. While they do not regard the EU as a dominant promoter of interests, they also point out, that the EU is not that eager to compromise or change standpoint. Also they would not subscribe to the claim that the EU is acting with an open agenda. Instead, some of respondents from India and China stated that the EU was sometimes acting with a hidden agenda. Interestingly the same holds true for the opposite view. If we have a look at the BICS's properties as a dialogue partner from EU and BICS side, the self-perception of the BICS's is to have an open agenda whereas the EU sees this rather critical. The same holds true for compromise (see also Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Perception of EU's properties as a dialogue partner**  
*(Means of all answers; 1 = "Strongly disagree"; 5 = "Strongly agree")*



Source: EnergyGov, Darmstadt, 2014

The perceptions of the partners match when referring to the way they see the EP's as agenda setters, possessing a strong interest and ability to change the standpoint. The EPs see each other in a slightly more positive light being able to undertake mutual learning. The European public actors stress that the BICS had increased political pressure and had made use of policy trade-offs along the dialogue. As this perception might weaken private actors' confidence in the negotiations, it might be an important task for EU and BICS public actors to prevent further irritations along the process.

Brazilian public actors have a very positive self-image of Brazil's role as a dialogue partner in energy cooperation, highlighting Brazil's openness for mutual learning within bilateral cooperation and its strong interest in the EU perspective, while also noting the country's compromise-building qualities and open agenda. Interestingly, the EU actors share the perception of Brazil's contributions to the dialogue. They even assert a more active role than Brazil in initiating topics and putting them on the agenda (Ribas/Schaeffer 2015). Within the perception of the EU's properties as a dialogue partner, the Brazilian and European actors do not converge in the same way. Especially the Brazilian actors perceive the EU not playing with an open agenda. Thus, there seems to be a potential for mistrust from the Brazilian side.

When it comes to the perceptions of the EU by both European and Indian actors, European actors see the EU as challenging India's position and increasing pressure on Indian partners in the dialogue and negotiations. They also see themselves as having more influence on the agenda setting in contrast how the Indian stakeholders would perceive it. At the same time, the EU actors perceive themselves more willing to compromise than the Indian actors would admit. Surprisingly, the Indian actors attribute the EU more willingness and openness for mutual learning than the EU actors perceive it about themselves. All in all, the perception between European and Indian actors do not differ as much judging about the EU's properties as a dialogue partner as they do in the case of India as a dialogue partner.

A few Chinese interviewees elaborated and said that in energy aspect China had more to learn from the EU than vice versa, especially in technology, energy management and regulations. Numerous respondents mentioned the misunderstandings and misperceptions between China and the EU. These misunderstandings could indeed link back to the lack of trust problem. The EU side suspects China's long-term strategic intentions and sees Chinese enterprises as competitors. The



solar panel trade dispute served as an example. Owing to different stage of development in economy and energy aspects, the interests of the EU and China differ. The various communication mechanisms established were viewed as positive attempts to help the situation. However, the interviewees demanded for more and better communication. Another frequently named problem was the lack of openness of the Chinese and EU energy markets to foreigners, particularly the former one. Trade frictions, hence, increase. Restrictions on market access also hinder the flow of technology and know-how. Blocking European companies from entering the energy market means that European advance technology and skills are also blocked from reaching China, while many European enterprises are already reluctant to sell their technology to China. Interviewees remarked that such market access problem could only be settled at EU level, between the EU and Chinese government.

In the case of South Africa, both actors perceive the EU to be a strong agenda-setter in the dialogue. Yet, while *EU actors* perceive the EU to have an open agenda, South African actors stated that the EU was playing with a hidden agenda (Knodt *et al.* 2015a: 68). While the EU actors perceive the EU to be a willing one to change standouts during negotiations, South African actors agree less on this aspect. Such differences in the perceptions of each other as dialogue partner can hinder a fruitful dialogue. Of major concern are the differing visions of agenda-setting – especially regarding open vs. hidden agenda. Such perceptions can lead to mistrust among the dialogue partners.

#### **4. Conclusions: Lessons Provided by the EU-BICS Energy Cooperation**

Our findings allow us to conclude with the comments about the quality of bilateral energy cooperation and for developing strategies to optimize energy cooperation. In terms of the construct of *visibility*, we observed that leading media of the EU's 'Big 3' and BICS media credit only little recognition to each other as energy actors. The only exception is China. Yet, this lack of media visibility is not reflected in the elite's mutual perceptions as energy partners. Here BICS and the EU seen as important communication partners and the bilateral energy dialogues are perceived as important for 90 percent of all the elite respondents. When it comes to the question of the impact on national energy policy all actors perceive the impact on BICS partner higher than on the EU with the exception of the Brazil dialogue.

Analysis of the *visibility* (in terms energy issues, types of energy and contexts of mutual representation) as well as of the *emotive charge*, in the European sample we observe interesting patterns. German and UK media matters were framed energy matters and BICS within them in a similar way, whereas French media diverged to a great extent. German media reporting the BICS cases showed a clear economic orientation and framed energy issues within competitiveness. Contrary to the common popular impression of Germany being the 'green' country of the Energiewende, media did not reflect that profile when BICS were concerned. In contrary, French media showed a lot more orientation towards the sustainability frame yet with a nuclear 'twist' to it. Whereas German media prioritized investment as an issue in all cases, French media preferred to speak about emissions. We have warned our readers to be cautious with the interpretation of emissions as being solely linked to the sustainability frame. French media's talk about emissions should be considered within the context of France's advocacy of nuclear energy towards BICS countries (as discussed in the case of India above). Also, German and UK media prioritized economics whereas French media was much more oriented towards environment.

The key finding of our analysis is the role of local factors and 'hooks' in shaping image of each other as energy actors. The national variations were in place in our media analysis – despite a big event of the climate summits it were the local domestic concerns that led in the coverage of energy matters, not global ones. The locally 'hooked' images were the most visible. For example, in the question of visibility of energy types within the respective media, differences could be explained by the national industry orientation. For example, German media prioritized solar in the reports on China and South Africa, where solar industry in the case of China is a big issue for Germany and South Africa does not invest so much in wind than in solar.

Another major finding, appearing through media and elite opinion analyses, is a divide within perceptions of the economically strong and powerful Emerging Powers (such as China and Brazil) on the one side and the weaker ones (such as India and South Africa) on the other side. This divide showed up in the perception of the impact of the EU-BICS dialogue and the EU's perception of the BICS. In the case of 'weaker' countries, elite actors perceived a weaker impact on the EU's energy policy by the respective EU-BICS energy dialogues than in the case of the stronger emerging powers. Remarkably, both sides, the EU and the Emerging Powers, perceived the same effect. Framing of energy in the media also testified to this divide. In the German and UK media, we discovered the divide between the frames of Brazil and China on the one hand and India and South Africa on the other. The former pair is framed with the competitiveness (which corresponds to the economical orientation towards those countries). The latter pair is framed through their national problems -- the security of supply in the German media and sustainability in case of UK media.

The divide could also be detected in the way the BICS frame and perceive energy issues and within them the EU as an energy actor. The stronger EPs reported more on investment, energy infrastructure and energy savings. In contrary, India and South Africa perceived the EU in relation to the question of energy access and sustainable development.

When asked about the motivations why they cooperate within the energy dialogue, EU and BICS actor's perception diverges to a great extent. Whereas the EU in all BICS cases was motivated most by fighting climate change as well as trying to force private sector cooperation, the main issue for all BICS was technology transfer. If the EU wants to play a more important role within the EU-BICS energy dialogues, it has to offer them interesting cooperation projects and serve as a manager of the EU Member State as well as European Union energy governance towards BICS.

Our research also showed that cooperation requires areas of common interests. To give an example: China desires tangible cooperation in order to secure its energy supplies in a sustainable way. Chinese stakeholders urged for more tangible cooperation instead of 'talk shop'. Noteworthy, China prefers state-to-state cooperation with individual Member States because it is easier and quicker to reach bilateral agreements with an individual EU country and to move to concrete actions. Moreover, several stakeholders pointed out that China enjoyed a better leverage when the EU is divided in a negotiation (Piefer et al. 2015: 350f). A

Another finding is the detected problem of latent mistrust and diverging mutual perceptions as cooperation partners. In their self-perception, the EU public actors tend to view the EU as an active agenda setter. Particularly, they emphasize the EU's high compromise-building qualities, and recognize the EU's interest in the other negotiation partner, a habit, which is also visible in the openness for mutual learning. Certainly, this is a very noble and elevated self-image, but for reality check it needs to be juxtaposed with the perceptions BICS have about the European actors. BICS actors mostly agree that the EU acts as an agenda-setter, but also hope that the EU is also willing and able to learn from the BICS side. While they mostly do not regard the EU as a dominant promoter of interests, they also point out that the EU is not that flexible in terms of compromise-seeking or changing a standpoint. The EU was seen acting with a hidden agenda. Reciprocating this vision from BICS, European actors showed a lack of trust towards the BICS partners (Knodt et al. 2015b: 336f).

In many instances in our analysis media findings corresponded to the elite perceptions, the normative framing of energy matters differs between media and elites. Interestingly, all BICS media (South Africa has unfortunately missing some data at the moment of the paper submission) are framing the EU as an energy actor through the sustainability frame. Maybe this is due to the timing of the media observation (around UNFCCC COP and the EU's role in the COPs). However, it also could be the green image of the EU as a normative actor, which de facto does not correspond to the other findings presented already and to the elite frames below. However, as Kavalski has put it: 'to be a normative power is oftentimes less important than to appear to be a normative power' (Kavalski 2013: 250). Normative framing in European media analysis varied according to national media as well as according to BICS reported on in the European media. When it comes to elite perception normative framing of EU and respective BICS varies in the Chinese and Brazil case and converged in the case of India and South-Africa. Awareness of diverging and converging normative interpretations becomes a key for a successful dialogue on norms and values between the EU and its partners around the globe. A more subtle and horizontal approach (vis-à-vis a top-down

Eurocentric communication) might represent more of viable collaborative solutions for both sides. It is important to highlight that at least some of our BICS have also become 'normative powers' in their region of influence and will actively shape international discourses and advocate for a paradigm shift towards a multipolar world order and away from a Eurocentric vision. As one example we can besides China we can think here of Brazil. Brazil, on the other hand, has re-oriented its foreign policy—traditionally focused on the US and the EU—to increasing “Bricsalization” and South-South cooperation (Gratius 2012).

To advance future EU-BICS energy dialogue the following points seem to be important: First, the dialogue is important. Both BICS and the EU have invested time and efforts to chisel better ways for this dialogue. They have tried mechanisms with different representatives, different government levels and different time intervals. It is important for the two sides to build on existing platforms and initiatives and take stock of past successes also learning from each dialogue. An assessment of the successes and the failures of existing dialogue mechanisms should be conducted prior to any new dialogue propositions. Besides, duplication should be avoided, which demands better coordination between different government institutions as well as between the EU and its Member States. Most BICS actors within our survey suggested more concrete actions at the BICS-EU level with reference to the more tangible outcomes at state-to-state level between EU Member States and BICS. Specifically for the EU, the respondents urged it to avoid duplicating the work of the individual Member States in China, as well as to clarify and demarcate the roles between the EU and the Member States (EnergyGov, Darmstadt, 2014).

Dialogue is a two-way process, as such it is important not to have the EU as the only norm exporter. China has its own domestic agenda, demands and pride. It requests not to be treated as a passive norm-receiver but as an equal partner. Only through a real dialogue the EU can identify common interests with its partners. The EU has to learn to speak 'with' its partners instead of 'at' them (Chaban et al. 2016).

The insights into the BICS self-perceptions could be instrumental when (and if) the EU revises its Strategic Partnership with the respective countries for true strategic values. Our research suggests that the energy sector is an area where the EU may carve out its value added especially for Brazil and China. Media analysis presented here could be helpful in identifying which demands BICS have, what the EU can offer, what European demands are in the eyes of BICS, and what BICS can offer to the EU. If the EU is serious about horizontal, equal and strategic partnerships, which open up creative space for innovative cooperation modalities, then openness for mutual learning and building up of trust is the must.

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