

3-5 April 2019

Beijing

Bangalore

Cape Town

Curitiba

Mexico City

Milan



The LeNS World

Distributed Conference

Designing Sustainability for All

YUE ZOU, AHO / ZHIYUAN OU, MIMIR LAB

Transdisciplinary and Intercultural Field Study as A New Approach to Address Climate Change Designerly

ABSTRACT

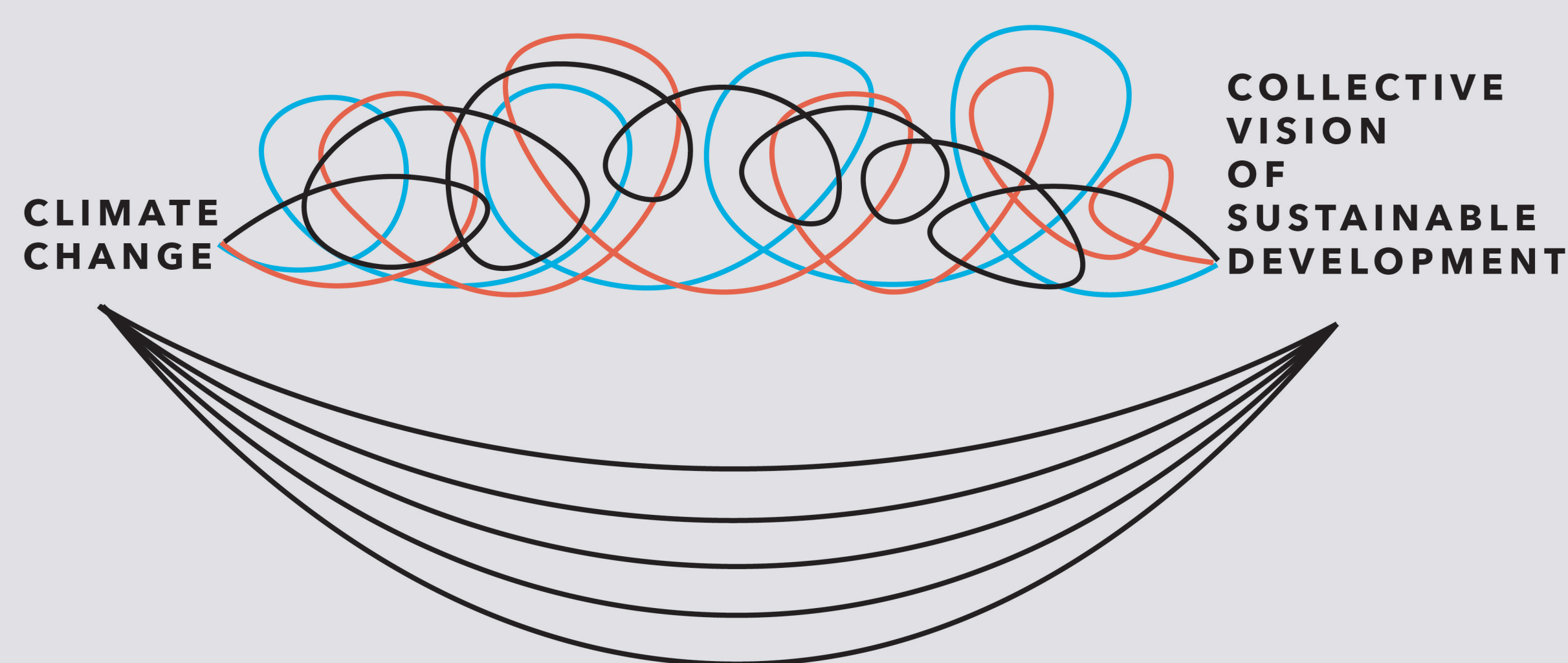
Climate change is not only an issue relating to the environment but also the structure of our society. This paper is to discuss a new model of field study to support design to address climate change. The article uses a field study performed in China by an European design school as an example to explain the new model in more detail. This model has three main characteristics: this field study is an explorative process for design with a flexible frame; this field study is a transdisciplinary approach, and the process is an intercultural process. The transdisciplinary approach could provide a holistic solution to form the 'new' living. The team members from different cultures could make the process easier to sense the alternative living model and nurture a collective global vision of sustainable development. To conclude, the paper explore how an explorative, transdisciplinary and intercultural field study could be a robust approach to address climate change.

A INTERDISCIPLINARY, INTER-CULTURAL AND DESIGNERLY EXPLORATIVE FIELD STUDY

In accordance with the goal of climate change and transformative design, we also develop the idea from matters of fact to fact of concerns according to Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory (Latour, 2005), which helps to understand that the sperate domain or material no longer contributes to the progress of social science and that it is necessary to reassemble the knowledge beyond its border. When it comes back to climate change, what needs to draw attention is not only the facts, but also the concern widely-spread through human society. At the meantime, the concern might present in various patterns but each would converge into the same topic behind.

To support transformative design, we adopt the smile model (see figure 1) to extend a field study that aims to inspire different designs. All designs from the filed study doesn't start with facts but share positive attitude towards future. All designs go through sophisticated creative process with the start of different specific concerns, to compose a big vision how we address climate change. We will describe how the filed study is organised and what conclusions we get.

INTERDISCIPLINARY
INTERCULTURAL
DESIGNERLY EXPLORATIVE
FIELD STUDY



DIFFERENT DESIGN CONCERNS
[FIGURE 1] SMILE MODEL

TRANSDISCIPLINARY

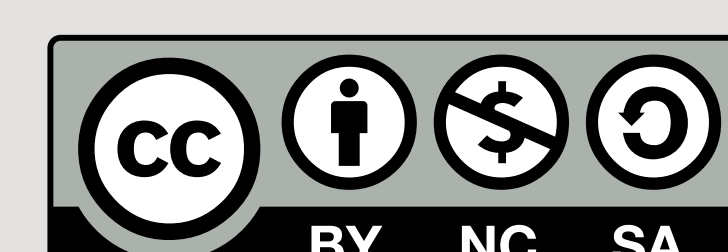
The easy possibilities to communicate with people from different disciplines but sharing the same goal is the first step to carry on transdisciplinary design, but the language is very important to guarantee the communication efficient and effective. The language is more about the tech language, via which designers without tech training could grasp the points. So the preparation is essential. Designers don't really need to know all the technology details and what they really need to know is the basic function and how it is different from other technologies. This requires that designers review related technologies before the transdisciplinary practice happens and make the demand specific and clear.

INTERCULTURAL

IFS (Intercultural field study) is designed to understand the plural everyday livings with a global perspective. Culture study has become a process of studying cultural heritage, customs and traditions around the world in many cases. For instance, many design field studies are usually looking for some traditional crafts or some form of the past. The new concept of culture study from cultural neuroscience and cultural psychology that culture is not only these symbols but more as a force to influence people's thoughts and actions (Shaules, 2015). IFS can give designers chances to understand how different people in different places to choose the way they live as future design contexts. During desgnBRICS's field study, we went to Azheke village in a very poor area in Yunnan Province, China. As an intercultural team, we have different understandings of the local people's way of living, from the respect the relationship between the people's life and nature to the anxiety of the primitive living in poverty. These intercultural interpretations are in-depth cultural learnings through cultural misunderstanding which provoke changes in our perception and worldview. Also, these intercultural interpretations are the resources for imagining the alternative livings, instead of some design elements from special architectures and craft products.

DESIGN EXPLORATION

The designerly explorative field study is a narrative co-prototyping process. Prototyping in speculative design could be a way of knowing, exploring, projecting, and activating the relationship between users, objects, and the systems that they exist in. Co-prototyping becomes a commonplace form of communication and interaction for co-prototyping and becomes prevalent as a new medium in many areas of daily life (Kimpel, 2016). The result in the co-prototyping provide descriptive and visual information for a technical realization. The designer takes on the role of a storyteller and author where fictional scenarios are developed to position the object, but also where the imagined or rhetorical interaction with the object itself works to make the fictional scenarios believable. Narrative traditions are not only for remembering but also are a form of knowledge management. They can express elementary and tacit knowledge in tangible and emotional images in order to pass down this knowledge in a sustainable way (Zerwas 2013). During the field study, some co-prototyping workshop could facilitate a process to turn the insights from filed study into multiple-levels solutions. The solutions are tangible results of the field study which are possibilities for future design practices.



With the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union