Ignite, Share and Reflect: Design Tactics to Foster Social Interactions Between Migrants and Locals in Istanbul

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Design for social integration aims to provide support to foster societies that are inclusive and tolerant with a diverse array of people, regardless of whether they are locals or migrants. So far, in order to support migrants on their integration to a new society, a diverse range of tools have been developed which have been more focused on providing technical knowledge about migration (e.g., learning a language, legal orientation). However, developing positive interactions between locals and migrants is also a potential strategy for facilitating migrants' integration into a new society, as it helps to overcome prejudices and social exclusion which has been in rise recently. Since this strategy is underexplored, we conducted a study with the local and international community at a university in Istanbul to understand interactions between these communities and identify ways of encouraging positive interactions between culturally different groups. In this paper, we present four themes, three design tactics along with three design speculations derived from this study.

Keywords: design for social integration, migration, interactions, urban spaces

1   Introduction

The purpose of design for social integration is developing tools, methods and interventions to foster societies that are stable, safe, tolerant and integrative of diversity (Jeannotte, 2008). In this sense, it focuses on creating solutions to support diverse communities' development and participation in society (Bengs, Hägglund, Wiklund-engblom, Majors, & Ashfaq, 2018; Cipolla & Bartholo, 2014; Coleman, Lebbon, Clarkson, & Keates, 2003; Greater London Authority, 2018; Manzini, 2014), which is the approach used when developing solutions to support immigrants integration to a new society.

By 2015, there were 244 million international migrants (McAuliffe, & Ruhs, 2017), representing one of the biggest migration waves in history. At the same time, there has been a rise in radicalization expressed by discrimination and social exclusion (Bijl, & Verweij, 2012) which are triggered by prejudices (Amaral, Woldetsadik, &

Armenta, 2018; International Crisis Group, 2018; McAuliffe, & Ruhs, 2017). Prejudices can be originated by perceived threats experienced by the local community regarding the possible disintegration of their existing values and beliefs, cultural dissonance, and/or the loss of their resources (Bizman & Yinon, 2001; Matusitz, 2012; Mähönen, Jasinskaja-lahti, & Liebkind, 2011; Paolini, Harwood, Hewstone, & Neumann, 2018; Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Stephan, Ybarra, & Rios Morrison, 2009). Even so, previous work indicates that prejudices and social exclusion can be reduced by increasing positive and meaningful contact between different social groups (Allport, 1954; Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Tausch et al., 2010). These are understood as interactions that promote a positive attitude towards the other (Wessendorf, 2014), promoting a positive learning and shared understanding, (Allport, 1954; Arias, Eden, Fischer, Gorman, Schaarf, 2000; Pettigrew, 1998) and/or interactions on which people exchange more personal and deep information about the self (Great Britain, 2009).

Previous technological solutions addressing this issue have mainly focused on developing tools that provide technical knowledge related to the migration process (e.g., learning the language or making legal orientation accessible). To the best of our knowledge, there has been no study addressing prejudices directly, aiming to enable positive contacts among culturally different groups. In this paper, with the intention of exploring how design can facilitate positive and meaningful interactions between culturally different groups, we conducted two rows of semi-structured interviews with 14 students from the local and international community of a university in Istanbul. We identified four themes pertaining to interactions between local and international students. Additionally, we propose three design tactics that would enable positive interactions between culturally different groups and present three design speculations to illustrate how these tactics could be applied.

2   Design for Social Integration and Migration
Design for Social Integration has its origins on Social Design, which seeks to create solutions to solve complex social problems through design (Bengs et al., 2018; Cipolla & Bartholo, 2014; Coleman, Lebbon, Clarkson, & Keates, 2003; Lee, & Cassim, 2009; Manzini, 2014), becoming an activity related to society's development (Papanek, Fuller, 1972).
Social integration seeks to foster societies that are stable, safe and just, promoting non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons (UN, 1995). Thus, the aim of social integration is for diverse social groups to interact with tolerance, respect and equality.
In the current context of migration, design for social integration has been providing different solutions to support migrants' integration to a new local community. We reviewed previous projects related to migrants' social integration and categorized

them into two groups in regard of whether these projects involved technology or not, as this factor changed the medium of interaction with other people.

2.1 Technology-mediated solutions

Regarding information and communication technologies, and other technology-mediated projects (Abujarour, Krasnova, & Hoffmeier, 2018; Bacishoga, Hooper, & Johnston, 2016; Benton & Glennie, 2016; Gifford & Wilding, 2013) the following areas of social integration have been previously addressed:

- Language: these are solutions aimed at facilitating communication between people that do not speak the same language. Examples are translation applications, online language videos and connecting immigrants with translators in real time (Abujarour & Krasnova, 2018; Bacishoga et al., 2016; Brown, 2015; Brown & Grinter, 2016; "Kiron", 2014; Patil, 2019; "Tarjimly", 2017).
- Legal orientation: these projects are aimed at helping migrants to get support and knowledge to conduct permit procedures and learning about their rights (Harney, 2013; "Signpost", 2015)
- Mobility inside a city: these tools are aimed at giving immigrants information about where to go for specific procedures (e.g., hospitals, government offices) and how to reach there (Haus Leo & Welt Haus der Kulturen der, 2017; "Maseltov", 2015; "nett.werkzeug", 2016).
- Social network: these projects are aimed at supporting migrants with means to connect with their relatives and friends in other countries (Gifford & Wilding, 2013; Navarrete & Huerta, 2006), and informing them about recent news from their countries of origin via different social media channels.

These projects showed the importance of mobile phones on migrants' lives (Bacishoga et al., 2016; Benton & Glennie, 2016; Harney, 2013; Patil, 2019), as most of the solutions were related to this artefact. As mobile phones are ubiquitous and affordable, they allow migrants to stay connected with the people that were a part of their lives before migrating, to their culture, and also facilitates their integration to a new country.

2.2 Non-technology-mediated solutions

These projects have focused on language barriers (e.g., language classes, developing understandable graphic signs) (Lanfer & Taylor, 2006; Stern & Seifert, 2010), community empowerment ("CoRE", 2019), and legal orientation. Most of this work is developed under workshops and/or work sessions, which are mostly offered only for migrants unless these are integration-focused workshops on which people from a community develops activities together (e.g., painting, planting trees, crafting together, cleaning a park). These projects are often organized by municipalities, universities, and NGOs. A similar case is the Social Integration Design Lab in London which aims to create a space that congregates different stakeholders to embed social integration and design principles into public service delivery, projects and policies (GLA, 2018). Thus, this is a space to create social integration solutions for the city.

Overall, we observe that the existing solutions perceive language as the principal barrier for social interactions and they have a more technical approach (e.g. learning a language, legal orientation) to integration. Regarding technology-mediated projects, the lack of interaction between host communities and migrants has not yet been addressed. While on non-technology mediated projects, there has been efforts to conduct activities that gather people together. Even so, their scope is small in comparison to what technology can reach, besides mostly working with immigrants-only instead of integrating the local community too. Thus, we believe that, in terms of design for social integration, there is an opportunity to create technological interventions that enables and facilitates positive and meaningful interactions between local community and migrants. In this paper, we examine this opportunity based on a user study conducted with international and local students from Istanbul. In the following section, we explain this study in detail.

3   The Present User Study

3.1   Research Context

We conducted a user study at a university campus in Istanbul to get a broad picture of the student's experiences and opinions towards migration. To elaborate, we wanted to know their point of view regarding interaction with local/international communities from that university, what promotes interactions and what refrains them from interacting.

Turkey is on the list of top 20 destinations for international migrants and, at the same time, in the list of top 20 origins of international migrants (McAuliffe, & Ruhs, 2017). The latter means that Turkey represents both, a country from which its citizens migrate from and to which foreigners migrate to. Also, looking at Turkey's history, the country has experienced many migration waves from Balkans, Soviet Union, Iran and Iraq, as well as other developing nations (Kirisci, 2003). Even though Turkey has an important migrant population there has been a rise in violence and social exclusion towards immigrants in the last years (ICG, 2018). Due to all these reasons, we took Istanbul as a case for exploring interactions between locals and immigrants.

3.2   Participant's procedure

We conducted two sets of interviews with two different groups of participants to better understand their daily interactions with each other. In the first set of interviews, seven international students at Koç University participated. These participants consist of three undergraduate exchange students, three Ph. D., students, and one master's student. Their average age was around 26 years (Table 1), and they had an average of 35 months spent in Turkey. Their birth countries consisted of China, Germany, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, and the United States.

We reached the international community and recruited them through the International Community Office of the university, which helped circulate an open recruitment e-mail. All the participants consisted of individuals volunteering to

participate. Upon signing the consent form, we asked them 17 questions concerning the following topics:

- process of migration,
- the struggles they have experienced before and during this process,
- the frequency and quality of their interaction with the locals,

- their definitions of and opinions about integration in general and integration in Istanbul,
- and how they perceive cultural differences.

Table1 International community participant characteristics

	Age (M_{age}= 25,71)	Country of birth	Time spent in turkey	Level of education
P1	20	China	2 months	undergraduate (exchange)
P2	20	China	2 months	undergraduate (exchange)
P3	21	Germany	3 months	Undergraduate (exchange
P4	35	Iran	5 years	PhD student
P5	23	Kazakhstan	5 years	PhD student
P6	24	Kosovo	6 years	Master's student
P 7	37	United States	4 years	PhD student

We conducted a second set of interviews with 7 undergraduate students who were born and who have lived in Turkey for their entire lives (Table 2). The average age of the Turkish participants was 22 years. Upon signing the consent form, we asked them 12 questions about the following topics:

- the frequency and quality of their interaction with the international community,
- their definitions of and opinions about integration in general and integration in Istanbul,
- and how they perceive cultural differences.

Table 2. Local Community Participant Characteristics

	Age (M_{age}= 22)	Country of birth	Level of education
P8	21	Turkey	undergraduate
P9	25	Turkey	undergraduate
P10	21	Turkey	undergraduate
P11	20	Turkey	undergraduate
P12	19	Turkey	undergraduate

| P13 | 24 | Turkey | undergraduate |
| P14 | 24 | Turkey | undergraduate |

We conducted all the interviews in the meeting room of the design research centre, and they lasted approximately an hour. In addition to recording the interviews, we took notes of important comments and points made by the interviewees. We transcribed and coded the 14 interviews and notes separately. We used the thematic analysis method to analyse our data (Braun, & Clarke, 2006), the process of analysis started by identifying the key points (e.g., integration, the process of migration, interaction, prejudices). Then, we integrated relevant quotes of the interviews to these the aforementioned key points. Finally, we created clusters of themes with regards to topic's affinity, which we organized several times. At the end of the analysis, we had identified four different themes that elaborated on the topic of design for social integration.

4 Findings

Several themes reoccurred frequently during our interviews. Firstly, we identified language as a barrier that gets in the way for the initial interaction, which is a point we previously came across on the literature (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). However, we also discovered that overcoming this language barrier does not ensure that meaningful interactions will be established, as there might be a lack of motivation or even a lack of occasions for interaction. Additionally, the interviewees perceive integration as a joint action, not depending solely on immigrants' efforts. Finally, interviewees find intercultural contact as beneficial for bringing new perspectives for both parties and even for inducing self-reflection.

4.1 Language as a barrier

The participants perceived language differences as a barrier which impedes the interaction between the international community and locals. The primary reason was that not many Turkish people knew and spoke English. Although only one of the participants was native english speaker, they all agreed that it would make it easier for them to communicate in public if more Turkish people knew English, particularly because it would facilitate how they navigate in the city and carry out daily tasks. As an example, Participant 3 from the international community mentioned how the difficulty of using public transportation in Istanbul is amplified by language barriers:

> "*I was amazed with and at the same time horrified by how much time it takes and how complicated it might get to go from one place to another in Istanbul. In touristic areas like Sultanahmet or Taksim, you can find your way through since the majority, especially the vendors, speak foreign languages and are willing to help you. However, when you leave these areas, it gets incredibly hard to find someone that can help you even you can't find which bus you will have to take.*"

However, it has been brought to light by 10 of the participants that although speaking the same language would considerably facilitate the interaction between two groups, it does not ensure that an interaction will be established in the first place. Even though in the university setting almost all of the Turkish students and staff speak enough English to be able to engage in a conversation, this alone did not automatically lead to the initiation of interaction.

4.2   Integration as a joint effort

9 interviewees defined the term integration as "*being a part of a group, belonging to a group, not feeling like a stranger*". We observed a commonality in terms of how the participants viewed integration as a bidirectional process. According to the interviewees, the process of integration should not solely concern immigrants or be dependent on the minority's willingness and efforts to be part of the social or economic spheres of the hosting society. Likewise, this process should not be completely dependent on the host society's ability and eagerness to accommodate. The interviewees repeatedly emphasized the necessity for integration to be a process relying on a joint effort. On one hand, immigrants should be willing to adopt some essential practices of the accommodating culture, and on the other hand, the members of the host society should be understanding of the differences and be helpful in guiding their process of adaptation and integration.

Nevertheless, neither participants from the international community nor the Turkish participants thought of Istanbul (or Turkey in general) as a place where integration easily takes place. This judgment was essentially based on the opinion that Turkish people put a distance between them and the people they perceive to be "*culturally different",* even in a multicultural city like Istanbul. The participants identified religion, ethnicity, rituals, food, dynamics of interpersonal relationships and home life as the areas that would reflect cultural differences the most. In between these, the participants perceived the first three topics as especially sensitive for Turkish people.

This attitude towards differences has been regarded by both, the international and local interviewees, as one of the primary reasons for the exclusion of immigrants. Hereof, the interviewees agreed upon the idea that to make an environment easy to integrate into, its habitants should first acknowledge that there might be cultural differences among themselves, and then try to get to know and become aware about these differences, since most of the conflicts arise from unawareness, or uncertainty about another person's culture.

4.3   Benefits of cultural differences

When asked if they thought interacting with people having different cultural backgrounds had any impact on them, all of the interviewees agreed that this interaction was valuable for them in one way or another. First and foremost, they stated that this interaction exposed them to perspectives that they were not necessarily familiar with, also helping them correct the misjudgments they had

towards certain cultures. Importantly, 11 interviewees out of 14 indicated that having interactions with people from different cultures allowed them to engage in introspection and to get to know themselves better. Participant 9 who belongs to the local community said:

"By interacting with people who are culturally different, I also feel like holding a mirror to myself. I can understand my culture better, even my personality, by comparing the differences and finding out the similarities among those differences. When I reach that level of understanding, it doesn't only affect my interactions with people who are culturally different or people in general. I become even more understanding and tolerant in other aspects of life."

4.4   From superficial to meaningful interactions

Although the interviewees underlined that even an initial exchange of information during this interaction could bring about benefits, both the international and the local interviewees agreed that most of the time, the interaction cannot be easily initiated due to a lack of motivation to interact, linguistic problems, prejudices, or simply because there is no occasion where these groups can interact. Participant 8 from the local community said:

"I don't necessarily avoid interacting with foreigners at the campus, but to be honest, I don't try to interact with them unless there is an occasion where we come together. I feel like at the campus, they mostly choose to hang out with other international students, and we mostly hang out with other Turkish students. I think this is because, at least on our side, that communication is easier and smoother with people you already know or share a similar culture with. This might be why I am not going out of the way to try to communicate with the internationals."

Even if the interaction is initiated successfully, the early and more superficial interaction is not perpetuated for a longer time for it to become more meaningful. To elaborate, the interviewees defined a meaningful interaction as being able to share topics that are more personally relevant, importantly including negative life experiences, in addition to daily experiences.

One reason provided by the interviewees regarding the interaction not being continuous is that locals have an already existing entourage, as well as settled dynamics within that entourage that carry cultural influences to an extent, which makes it harder for foreigners to find their place within those established dynamics. This situation sometimes results in locals refraining from participating in the activities organized by the international community. To exemplify this situation, Participant 7 from the international community said:

"I have been hosting Thanksgiving dinners at home with 15-30 people since the year I came to Turkey. I have always tried to reach out to and invite Turkish people to these dinners, but none of them has come even if they initially accepted the invitation. Sometimes they don't even bother to respond, which makes me question why I am even making the effort."

5 Design tactics to support interactions between culturally different groups

Engaging in a positive and meaningful contact with culturally different groups has the potential of preventing prejudice against each other (Allport, 1954; Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Tausch et al., 2010), facilitating the integration of migrants to the local community. As stated before, the strategy of enabling positive interactions between these groups in order to reduce prejudices has been underexplored. We addressed this gap by exploring ways in which design could support positive and meaningful everyday interaction between locals and migrants. We did this by conducting interviews with the international and local community of a university in Istanbul. We have identified these tactics based on an analysis of interview results. Then, we shared these tactics with a group of designers and psychologists working in our research lab to generate speculations that can illustrate these tactics. We created design speculations for public settings (e.g., bus stops, parks, bus tips, metro lines), since in these places different communities co-exist at the same time and hence, these places can provide an opportunity to create everyday interactions. In the next section, we present the design tactics and related speculations.

5.1 Igniting curiosity

In our interviews, participants emphasized that Turkish society is not highly accommodating to cultural differences currently, but that these cultural differences could actually benefit both parties if the local society was curious for learning them in the first place. In this regard, the first tactic we propose is to ignite an interaction by triggering one's curiosity about the other. Asking questions regarding cultural differences that can potentially be interesting for people or learning about a different group might be viable options. The overall goal in this stage is to move from culturally different groups avoiding each other to foster some kind of curiosity and then, to identify and emphasize similarities between these groups.

5.1.1 Design speculation 1: Station Connections

Exploring how interactions between strangers can be initiated by making use of the feeling of curiosity towards the "unknown", we have speculated about placing interactive screens in different buses or subway stations. Two individuals can be situated in different stations and engage in a game in real time, even a game as simple as Tic-Tac-Toe. The players can join an activity together without having prior information about each other's identity, which might actually make them curious about who they are playing with. At the end of their game, the screen will ask the players if they want to know the identity of the other as well as if they want to share their own identity, possibly initiating an interaction that is no longer anonymous.

Besides games, we could also pose trivia-like questions so that people in the bus stop can learn something (e.g., food, music, history) regarding the culture of a different country and then think about whether there are any similarities with their own culture, trying to create connections.

A different alternative is asking people about their interests and suggesting a route of the city they can follow using public transportation, igniting curiosity in regard to the person's interest. When two people having a shared interest join from different parts of the city, they will be matched on their routes so they can share this experience together. The different activities will be in the form of "missions" that one has complete to master that route. For example, if the individual is interested in traditional foods, s/he will receive a route of the city in which s/he can try different dishes and learn something new, accompanied by other people.

These interventions could initiate two different kinds of interactions: first, virtual interactions with the unknown player in the other station and also, with other people on the bus stop at that moment, which might encourage them to continue interacting during the bus trip. We think that anonymity is needed in the first instance so that people do not start with a prejudice regarding who is on the other side, and also so that they feel less shy about starting an interaction.

Figure 1. Representation of design speculation in a bus station.

5.2   Supporting shared experiences

We discovered in our interviews that it is difficult for the participants to start interactions with a member from the other community, and it is definitely more difficult to make these interactions long-lasting and meaningful. However, these meaningful contacts could make the integration process easier for immigrants. We think that after helping individuals acquire some knowledge regarding a culturally different group, design solutions should lead people to engage in a deeper

understanding of the other's experiences. In this sense, we can focus on similarities and shared human experiences between people (Adida, Lo, & Platas, 2018). Losing people, loving people, frustrations, happiness, successes, and failures can be experiences that connect people, and sharing these experiences can turn a superficial interaction into a more meaningful one, even through virtual interactions.

5.2.1 Design speculation 2: Share the Park

We thought about giving individuals the opportunity to share their stories in a public space while learning about the stories of others. In a predefined public space like a park, an interactive bench can be set. It will sense when an individual sits on the bench and will send a notification through its surface, asking the individual to share his or her own story, or anything that s/he might want to share about himself or herself. The individual will also have the chance to look at or hear other people's stories shared at that spot. These "stories" might be in the form of writings, drawings, or even sounds. This way, although not in real time, an interaction will be developed among people who are complete strangers, in the form of a shared experience.

Another option is to benefit from augmented reality and mobile phones, in the sense that people will have the chance to "attach" their stories or experiences virtually to certain items within a public place (e.g., a tree in a park). The recipient of the stories will be able to perceive these stories by holding his or her phone to the item in which the stories are attached and kept and leave his/her own. This way, people can digitally tag experiences, reflections or thoughts to a place or an item in the city, which will be shared with other people that normally inhabit that place too. For example, if someone is in a park and he or she feels like sharing an experience, they can upload that story which the next person that sits on the same bench will receive, and so on. With this proposal, we think that people who do not normally interact with each other but go to the same places in a city can start a virtual interaction and even develop some level of understanding of the other by collecting their experiences on those places. Later on, people can get in touch and further proceed to an interaction in person.
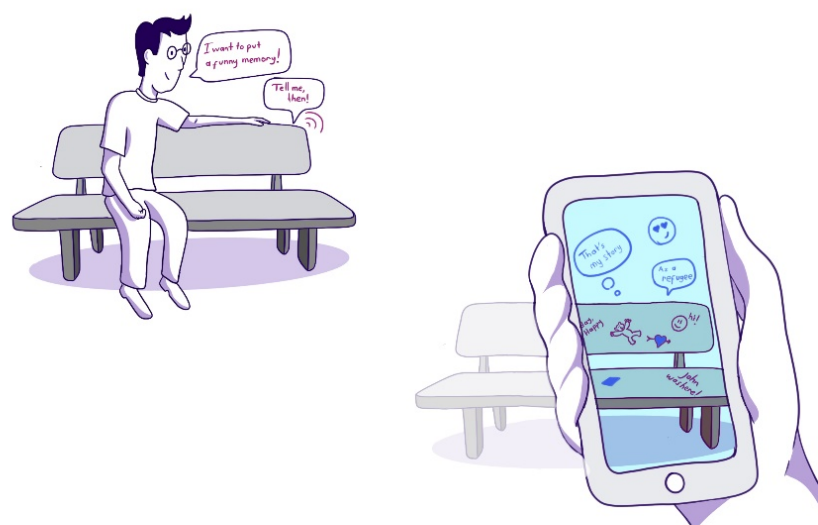
5.3   Triggering self-reflection

The third tactic is a key element for overcoming prejudices, as it is necessary for people to reflect on their own prejudices first in order to reappraise them (Pettigrew, 1998). The participants underlined the fact that interacting with individuals from different cultures encourage them to reflect on their own culture as well as their opinions on other cultures, which is crucial for the realization of their misunderstandings or prejudices. Self-reflection can simply be triggered by providing powerful questions as part of the design that will encourage the individual to interrogate his or her experience with the other, and to see himself or herself in the shoes of the other.

5.3.1   Design speculation 3: Mirror, Mirror

An effective way of encouraging self-reflection in individuals would be asking questions that can trigger introspection. A machine, similar to a tickets kiosk in subway stations, will be used to display tweets or newspaper headlines which contain an element of discrimination towards the migrants and ask individuals what they think about that tweet or headline. Through artificial intelligence, the machine will analyse the keywords provided by the entry of the individual, to evaluate whether there is some kind of bias towards these groups. Then, the machine will transform this prejudice into something positive, in the form of immersive videos, images or sounds, to finalize by asking a question to the individual that would induce self-reflection so they can examine their internal thoughts and feelings. For example, if someone's comment has a prejudice component about a migrant community, then the machine can display a short 360 VR video showing the experiences of this community, from their point of view, to correct the initial prejudice and end by posing a self-reflective question, for example "*What are you scared of?*" or "*What if this was your reality?*" . With this idea, we think that we could add some perspective about the life of different communities and even induce curiosity for these people to interact.
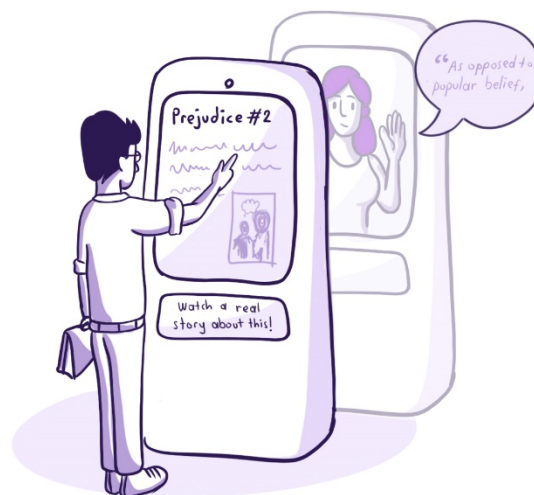

Figure 3. Representation of design speculation for a subway station

6 Conclusion and future work

In this study, we identified a gap within the domain of Design for Social Integration, since current work has not explored enabling positive interactions between culturally different groups as a strategy to overcome prejudices and foster social integration. We conducted interviews to understand how we can, from a design perspective, foster these interactions between the international and the local community on a university setting in Istanbul. We identified four themes related to how these communities interacted. Based on the findings, we proposed three design tactics that could start interactions along with design speculations that exhibit how these tactics could be applied in real contexts.

With these design proposals, we expect to provide a space for design and technology to be applied within the context of the integration of migrants, giving people more opportunities to interact as well as tools that support this interaction. Additionally, we think that our design tactics can be applied to other instances of exclusion concerning undermined groups, as they can be adapted to target prejudices towards any these groups. For example, we could use the bus station games to have elderly people and young people come together to share their experiences on a route.

Regarding social integration, there is never a single solution. We do not posit these tactics as the only way to proceed, but instead, as possibilities for designers working on the same subject. Also, we understand these tactics as complementary with each other instead of different paths.

As for the limitations of this study, the first limitation is its scope. Our participants represent a small population of the aforementioned communities since they included a group of international students and the local community of a university in Istanbul. Thus, findings might not be generalized to all migrants in different countries and different conditions, nor to other kinds of undermined communities. Second, the speculations were not developed with the communities that are involved in the problem, which we will do in our future work. Our future work will focus on co-creating solutions with the communities of interest and further developing our proposed design tactics to enable positive and meaningful interactions for culturally different communities exploring how can we, by design, overcome prejudices between these communities and foster social integration.

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