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**Article**

# Studentification through a Turkish planning lens: Geographical and regulatory insights

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## ABSTRACT

The concept of *studentification*, often discussed as a form of gentrification, has been predominantly studied in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, where globally prominent universities and market-driven higher education systems prevail. While recent studies have begun to introduce geographical diversity, the planning dimensions of studentification remain underexplored. This paper examines the dynamics of studentification in the case of İzmir Katip Çelebi University in İzmir, Türkiye, highlighting differences between the Anglophone literature (UK, US, Canada) and the Turkish contexts. In Türkiye, rapid university expansion, limited state-provided accommodation, and a planning system that has yet to integrate student housing into its strategic framework have shaped distinct conditions for studentification. The findings indicate that local authorities have not developed proactive, plan-led responses, and strategic and spatial plans lack measures to address the social and spatial consequences of the growing student population. Drawing insights from the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, this paper proposes recommendations to enhance regulatory frameworks, strengthen compliance standards, and support municipalities in addressing the challenges of studentification in Türkiye.

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## INTRODUCTION

Türkiye's public university expansion has started since 2006 (Karatas Acer & Güçlü, 2017). As a part of this policy, İzmir Katip Çelebi University was established in 2010 as a public university. The university's main campus was established in Balatçık neighbourhood of Çiğli district 2010. Since then, the neighbourhood's population has more than doubled as of 2023 (TUIK, 2024). The percentage change in population highlights the significant increase in Balatçık's population compared to both Çiğli (29.85%) and the overall population of İzmir (11.29%) (TUIK, 2024). Notably, this peak occurred during the 2011-2012 period, coinciding with the

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establishment of the university. The student population and their evolving needs are becoming increasingly apparent with each passing day. In response to this growing awareness, this research delves into the phenomenon of studentification in Türkiye, aiming to uncover its unique characteristics, disparities, and potential parallels with countries such as the UK, US, and Canada. The research places a particular focus on critical aspects such as urban planning, regulatory frameworks, and the roles played by local and central governments, shedding light on how these elements intersect to shape the experiences of student communities and their broader impact on urban landscapes.

## STUDENTIFICATION IN PLANNING ASPECT

The concept of studentification as a distinct subcategory in the gentrification literature refers to the social, cultural, economic, and physical transformations that occur in a neighbourhood by the demographic shift driven by the influx of students into the area (Smith, 2002; Smith & Holt, 2007; Smith et al., 2014).

The physical changes brought about by studentification are often linked to transformations in the existing housing stock, increasing demand for new buildings and infrastructure, and degradation (Smith & Holt, 2007; Smith et al., 2014; Sage et al., 2012b; Revington et al., 2020). Higher education institutions play a pivotal role in driving local economic growth, though the scale and nature of their impact vary depending on the size of the city while in smaller towns, the local economy often becomes heavily reliant on student populations. Notable economic effects of studentification include increased property values and rental prices, as well as the diversification and expansion of local economic activities (Hubbard, 2008; Fabula et al., 2017; Sage et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2014).

However, this economic uplift often leads to social and economic polarisation. Rising property prices can displace long-term residents, exacerbating inequalities and reinforcing studentification as a subset of gentrification (Rugg et al., 2004; Smith, 2004; Sage et al., 2012b; Revington et al., 2020).

This reorganisation of local economies and the tensions with long-term residents lead to the marginalisation of non-student residents, reducing their sense of belonging and causing social fragmentation, and even the displacement of non-student residents, especially families and the elderly (Chatterton, 2000; Smith & Holt, 2007; Bromley, 2006; Foote, 2017).

One of the most focused aspects of studentification is the changes in the housing stock. In areas with a high concentration of student population, properties are frequently adapted to meet student needs, with single-family houses converted into shared accommodations where individual rooms are rented separately or new developments are designed and built for multiple-occupancy (Allinson, 2006; Garmendia et al., 2012; Hubbard, 2008; Grabkowska & Frankowski, 2016; Situmorang et al., 2019). In the UK, the phenomenon is often discussed alongside concepts such as "Housing in Multiple Occupations" (HMO) and "Purpose-Built Student Accommodation" (PBSA), given their prevalence in student-dense neighbourhoods (Sage et al., 2012a, 2013; Smith & Holt, 2007; Kinton et al., 2016, 2018; Hubbard, 2008).

The phenomenon of studentification necessitates a range of mitigation strategies tailored to the unique contexts of cities experiencing these challenges (Hubbard, 2008). In the UK, where student accommodation patterns have substantially altered urban landscapes, Part 2 of the UK Government Legislation (2004) mandates licensing for HMOs to regulate shared student housing, ensuring safety and quality while controlling its density in specific areas (Sage et al., 2012b; Kinton et al., 2016). PBSAs are increasingly encouraged as a solution to relieve pressure on traditional housing stocks while offering students tailored accommodations (Smith & Holt, 2007; Kinton et al., 2018). In cities like Durham, additional measures restrict the conversion of single-family homes to HMOs, dispersing student housing and promoting PBSAs (Wilkinson & Greenhalgh, 2022). While it is seen as a key player in managing student-related disruptions and improving housing satisfaction for long-term residents (Smith & Holt, 2007; Kinton et al., 2018), such policies have also faced criticism for being reactive and potentially escalating property values in student-heavy areas while devaluing non-student properties (Revington et al., 2020) and creating isolation for some students and causing segregation between students and local communities (Fincher & Shaw, 2009; Smith & Hubbard, 2014).

As documented by Revington et al. (2020) Waterloo in Canada took a multi-phased adaptation approach to studentification. Initial measures, such as the 1986 lodging house bylaw, introduced limits on unrelated occupants in single-family homes and minimum distance requirements between lodging houses. Later strategies focused on higher-density developments in designated zones by creating nodes and corridors to accommodate growing student populations while preserving low-density neighbourhoods (Revington et al., 2020). Although these policies effectively increased student housing capacity and diversified options, they struggled to reverse the conversion of owner-occupied homes in adjacent neighbourhoods, indicating the complex interplay of urban planning and market dynamics (Revington et al., 2020; Hubbard, 2008).

In South Africa, rapid university expansions and limited infrastructure created a different set of challenges (Gbadegesin et al., 2021). The 2015 norms and standards policy sought to address overcrowding through budget allocations

for on-campus housing and accreditation of off-campus accommodations. While these initiatives aimed to improve living conditions and mitigate the adverse effects of studentification, they also underscored the difficulty of achieving ambitious targets, such as housing 80% of full-time students on campus (Gbadegesin et al., 2021).

Emerging trends in urban planning reflect a shift toward integrating student accommodations into broader community revitalisation efforts (Livingstone et al., 2023). For instance, local councils in the UK are increasingly zoning areas for PBSAs while encouraging brownfield regeneration to mitigate the oversupply and concentration of student populations (Hubbard, 2009). Similarly, Waterloo's adoption of mixed-use developments, enhanced public spaces, and sustainable transport links exemplifies a holistic response to studentification (Revington et al., 2020). These strategies aim to balance the needs of students, long-term residents, and urban ecosystems, fostering communities that are socially and economically resilient (Hubbard, 2009; Livingstone et al., 2023).

Although the impacts of universities in the regions and cities where they are located have been researched in Türkiye since the mid-1990s (Savaş Yavuzçehre, 2016; Atik, 1999; Görkemli, 2009; Öztürk et al., 2011; Akçakanat et al., 2010; Işık, 2008; Öztürk et al., 2009), the concept of studentification, as a subfield of gentrification literature, has remained quite limited in Türkiye's academic discourse. Tuncer & İslam (2017) examined the evolving relationships between students and residents over time in Konya. Kırmızı et al. (2020) focused on the process of studentification by documenting the changing physical and social structure of the area in Samsun. Aslan & Çakır (2021) examined the spatial and social transformation in the rural neighbourhoods of Hatay. However, none of the existing studies on studentification in Türkiye address how local governments manage this process, the measures they implement, or the role it plays in urban planning. This research seeks to enhance the conceptual understanding of studentification by examining it through the lens of Turkish urban planning. It aims to contribute to the broader academic discourse with an empirical study that highlights geographical and planning distinctions compared to urban planning contexts in the UK, the US, and Canada.

## CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

The contextual framework is structured to provide a comprehensive explanation of the Turkish higher education system alongside the planning system, offering a detailed foundation for understanding the dynamics at play before delving into the case study.

### Higher Education in Türkiye

Law No. 2809, amended in 2006 by Law No. 5467, mandated establishing at least one higher education institution in each province, driving a rapid expansion of universities to enhance accessibility (Karataş Acer & Güçlü, 2017). Following this, student enrollment grew from 471,000 in 1990 to 6.5 million by 2024, fueled by the rise in public universities. The number of universities increased from 53 in the 1990s to 209 by 2024, with 131 being public (CoHE, 2024).

In the 2024-2025 academic year, Türkiye's higher education institutions serve 2.8 million associate and 3.7 million undergraduate students (CoHE, 2024). However, only 14.66% of students have access to state-subsidized accommodation, with dormitories housing 962,000 students across 850 buildings (KYK, 2024). This shortfall is compounded by a post-COVID-19 housing crisis[1], with housing prices in Izmir rising over 600% between 2020 and 2024 (Sahibinden, 2024).

### Turkish Planning System

Every country has its own unique planning system, and its enforcement depends on their legislation. While some have advisory roles, some like the Turkish planning system have legally binding status. Law No. 3194 entered into force in 1985, and currently in force, is the backbone of the Turkish urban planning system. Based on Article 6 of the law, the Turkish planning system comprises upper- and lower-level plans (Law No. 3194, 1985). These plans are accepted as regulative administrative actions. Lower-level plans must align with and reflect the objectives of higher-level plans, with increasing levels of detail and specificity as one moves from the broader national framework to implementation plans. National Development Plans encompass strategic planning in all aspects of the nation, from education to urbanisation. However, the topics addressed in national development plans are not fixed for each planning period; they are adjusted based on both global and national contexts.

### Higher Education in the Turkish Planning System at the National Level

The backbone of national-level planning is five-year development plans. Türkiye has had eleven 5-year development plans since 1963 (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of Strategy and Budget, 2024). These plans, while establishing a long-term vision, also aim to identify challenges and develop strategies to address them. Including the expansion of higher education capacity and student accommodations topics closely linked to urban planning are examined. However, aspects such as curriculum design, education policies, and budgeting are excluded from consideration.

1 Due to the rising number of universities and the ongoing housing crisis, a significant number of students have increasingly opted to attend universities located in their parents' cities. In the case study case, approximately 30% of the enrolled students' family houses are located in Izmir (Yokatlas, 2024).

The plans reflect an ongoing focus on expanding higher education capacity and ensuring equal access across the country. Early plans emphasised expanding and distributing higher education institutions nationwide and responding to the growing demand for higher education. The Fourth and the Fifth plans highlighted the need for balanced distribution and capacity expansion, which had not been fully achieved in previous periods. The Seventh Development Plan (1996-2000) emphasises expanding the capacity of higher education institutions while also permitting the establishment of private universities. The Ninth Five Development Plan (2007-2012) underlines the same trend regarding higher education; the intense demand for higher education continues to increase. The Tenth Five Development Plan (2014-2018) explains the extension of higher education opportunities. During the Ninth Development Plan period, 36 state and 41 foundation (private) universities were established, bringing the total number of universities to 170 by May 2013.

The case study area for this research, Balatçık, hosts the main campus of İzmir Katip Çelebi University, established in 2011, reflecting the expansion of higher education opportunities. In addition to that, the capacities of the existing programmes are increased as well. The Eleventh Development Plan (2019-2023) highlights the international dimension of higher education. It aims to expand the number of programs offered in foreign languages, enhance accommodation opportunities for international students, and strengthen institutional capacity for internationalisation. As previously noted, the United Kingdom and the United States possess highly commercialisation of higher education systems catering to both national and international students. The Eleventh Development Plan (2019–2023) indicates a focus on internationalisation, which can be interpreted as an effort by Turkish higher education to move towards the commercialisation of the sector. Overall, the objectives of the development plans have primarily centred on two key areas since 1963: the nationwide distribution of universities and the expansion of their capacities, with a more recent emphasis on the internationalisation of higher education.

The policies regarding accommodation for higher education students in Türkiye's development plans reflect evolving priorities over time. The Second Plan (1970-1974) emphasises improving student dormitories to foster social interaction and cultural development. The Third Plan (1975-1979) highlights equitable access to education through loans, scholarships, and dormitory facilities, alongside social and healthcare services. The Fifth (1985-1989) and Sixth (1990-1994) Development Plans adopt a broader youth-centred approach, addressing housing alongside nutrition, health, and employment while promoting cultural values and responsibility. The Eleventh Plan (2019–2023) shifts its focus to internationalisation aiming to expand foreign language programs in parallel with enhancing accommodations for international students.

**Higher Education in the Turkish Planning System at the Lower Level**

Lower-level plans are zoning and implementation plans which are mandatory for district municipalities (Law No. 3194, Article 5). However, it needs to be highlighted that Türkiye does not have a 'single-family zoning' approach. Nevertheless, there are aspects of zoning that impact higher education and urban planning, such as regulations for dormitories and their site selection.

The law dated 14.06.2014 and numbered 29030 Regulation on the Preparation of Spatial Plans (2014) establishes the principles that related authorities must adhere to and also clarifies definitions and principles. The following two articles are related to educational facilities and dormitories as followings;

> *"5) i) Social infrastructure areas: This is a general term for public or private sector facilities aimed at meeting the cultural, social, and recreational needs of individuals and society, as well as enhancing quality of life and creating a healthy environment. It includes educational, health, religious, cultural, and administrative facilities, as well as open and green spaces such as open and closed sports facilities, parks, playgrounds, children's gardens, squares, and recreational areas"*

> *"j) Social facility area: These are areas, either publicly or privately owned, designated to provide services in functions aimed at enhancing the quality and level of social life for community benefits, such as daycare centres, courses, dormitories, nurseries, youth shelters, elderly and disabled care homes, rehabilitation centres, community centres, and shelters for those in need."*

These definitions raise two key issues. First, facilities may be owned by either public or private entities, yet they are collectively considered when determining the necessary space allocation. The inclusion of dormitories in planning documents does not necessarily imply that these facilities will be affordable. Secondly, student dormitories might not be explicitly included in the initial implementation plans under the title of dormitories but instead classified as *social infrastructure* or *social facility areas*. This lack of clarity and uncertainty can be seen in two ways: it may lead to a student housing crisis, or provide opportunities for flexibility in the planning process to adapt to emerging needs such as the growing demand for student housing.

## METHODOLOGY

The existing research gap highlights that studies conducted not only in Türkiye but also in the world have not adequately addressed studentification from an urban planning

perspective but primarily focused on human geography aspects of studentification. This research contributes to the literature as an original study by being one of the few studies focused on studentification in Türkiye (Tuncer & İslam, 2017; Kırmızı et al., 2020; Aslan & Çakır, 2021; Erbas Melis & Okumus Prini, 2023). However, these Turkish case studies have not thoroughly examined the concept of studentification from an urban planning perspective, nor have they provided specific recommendations for planning practice. Accordingly, the primary objective of this research is to analyse the dynamics of studentification from an urban planning perspective, emphasising the differences between the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and the Turkish contexts. Based on this existing set-up raises the following questions: 1) 'How does studentification in Türkiye compare to what has been observed in the UK, the US, and Canada in terms of urban planning and policy?' and to contribute to the Turkish legislative and planning system, the research also focuses on the answer to the second question; 2) 'what specific urban planning strategies can local government authorities adopt to address the unique challenges posed by studentification process?".

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both the collection of primary documents and primary data (Figure 1). In the initial phase, primary documents, including upper and lower-level plans and state documents, were sourced from the Presidency of Strategy and Budget (previously the Ministry of Development), the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Municipality of Çiğli. Primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with diverse stakeholders in the neighbourhood. These interviews were conducted across four distinct groups: local residents unaffiliated with the university (n=8), local businesses (n=9), real estate agencies (n=2), and representatives from local government (n=2). This range of stakeholders enabled the researchers to examine the process and impact of studentification from multiple perspectives to have suggestions for regulative purposes.

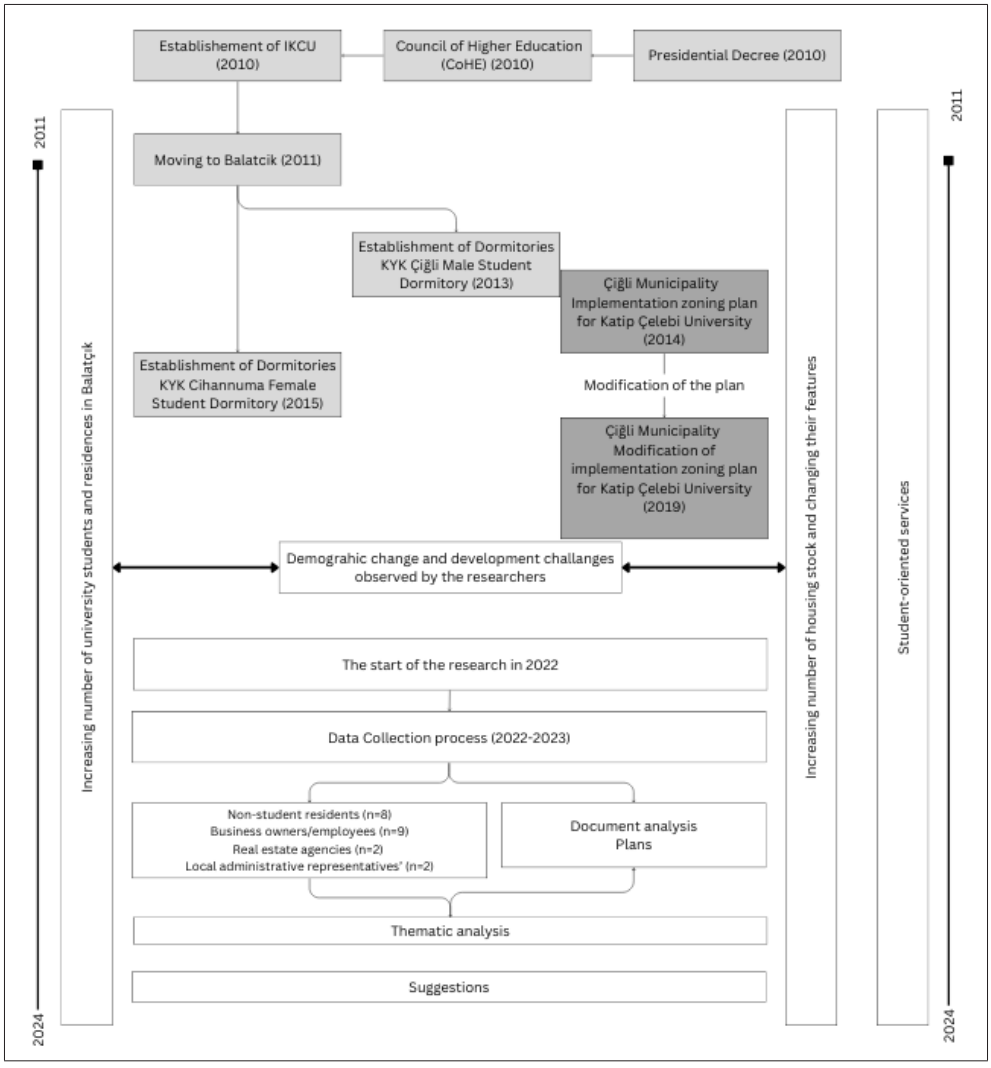


**Figure 1**. Thematic framework and research design.

The research deliberately targeted non-student stakeholders, including local residents, real estate agents, local businesses, and municipal authorities whose views and actions significantly shape urban development and planning responses. While the exclusion of student voices is acknowledged as a limitation, it was a strategic methodological choice aligned with the research aim: to understand how studentification is perceived, managed, and regulated by local actors beyond the student body.

For interviews with non-student local residents, the year of 2011 was identified as a significant benchmark, marking the establishment of İzmir Katip Çelebi University in the area. Consequently, residents were divided into two main groups: those residing in the neighbourhood before 2011 and those who moved in afterwards. Interviews with local businesses were evenly distributed across three categories: food and beverage establishments (restaurants and bars), retail stores, and personal service providers (hairdressers). Additionally, an interview was conducted with the Planning and Project Directorate of the Çiğli Municipality to gain insight into the local government's stance on studentification in the area.

After conducting the interviews, the qualitative data was analysed using a thematic analysis framework. The interview transcripts were first transcribed verbatim and then systematically coded. Including market-led development, planning, housing supply, housing demand, affordability, and student-focused policies. During axial coding, these were grouped into three major themes: Urban Governance, Housing Supply and Demand, and Planning Practices. Notably, several codes were identified as cross-cutting, informing more than one theme. Thematic patterns were compared across stakeholders: non-student residents, business owners/employees, real estate agents, and local government representatives. These comparisons helped to identify convergences and divergences in their perspectives on the outcome of the studentification process in the neighbourhood. This interconnected coding approach allowed for a more holistic interpretation of the studentification dynamics in the study area. Emerging themes were compared with the existing urban planning theories and the existing literature to contextualise the findings within a broader academic framework.

## DISCUSSION: WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EXISTING LITERATURE AND TURKISH CONTEXT?

As mentioned in the earlier section of this research, the existing literature on studentification has predominantly concentrated on the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canadian contexts. However, this research is conducted in a context where the same dynamics had not been prevalent until recent years. Consequently, the discussion section examines the differences between these countries and the Turkish context, with particular focus on urban development policies and planning systems. These key differences are categorised to highlight the distinct approaches and challenges faced in each context.

State-led Development vs. Market-led Development

In a state-led development, the state regulates urban development features, including site selection of the universities, dormitories, housing markets, and licensing. These are regulated with government controls; regulations and planning. However, in a market-led development, individual consumers and businesses lead the investments which impact urban development. This is possible with supply and demand and limited regulation. From this point of view, regulation and planning should be investigated in detail.

As mentioned earlier, the central and local governments play pivotal roles in shaping state-led development. Therefore, to get an insight view, an interview was conducted with a local government official who has been an urban planner in the responsible municipality for over 10 years.

> *"The 1/1000 implementation zoning plans for the north of Anadolu Avenue and Balatçık neighbourhood were approved in 1989, and the revision was approved in 1996. The plan approved in 2008 is currently in effect. The implementation zoning plan for İzmir Katip Çelebi [University] was approved in 2014, and the revision was approved in 2019."* (Local Government- Planner)

Based on the interview and documents obtained from the municipality, the local government implemented various plans to modify zoning regulations in response to evolving urban needs over time. However, these regulations have struggled to adapt to the rapidly emerging demands of the university and its students. Consequently, market forces have played a significant role in addressing the needs of university students.

Additionally, as explained earlier, student accommodation in Türkiye faces significant challenges, primarily due to the rapid increase in student enrolment at universities, with 1.1 million in 2000 and 6.5 million by 2024 (CoHE, 2024). As the demand for higher education has expanded, the need for affordable and adequate student housing has also risen sharply. However, the supply of public dormitories and other state-sponsored accommodations has not kept pace with the increase in demand. The case study university has no university-provided accommodation; however, two state-owned dormitories exist in the vicinity of the campus. These state-owned dormitories have a 2160-bed capacity, which not only serves İzmir Katip Çelebi University but also other universities in Izmir. Even though these are reserved for İzmir Katip Çelebi University, they only serve 12.29% of the undergraduates, as the total student population at the undergraduate level at İzmir Katip Çelebi University is 17,140

(IKCU, 2024a). Consequently, alternative housing options are required. As mentioned earlier, approximately 30% of the enrolled students' family houses are located in Izmir (Yokatlas, 2024). Based on this information, even with the new state-run dormitory, only 25% of the student population can be accommodated in these state-owned dormitories, underscoring the inadequacy of the public student housing supply. This means that 9000 students are in need of accommodation.

> *"The municipality has contributed little to the neighbourhood's development, which has so far relied on the efforts of local contractors. Despite owning numerous plots of land, the municipality has failed to utilise them effectively."* (B11-Realtor)

> *"There is nothing in the neighbourhood in terms of socio-cultural activities. There are only small playgrounds for children, and those do not serve adults."* (Non-student local resident-1)

> *"I don't spend much time in the neighbourhood because there aren't many recreational spaces."* (Non-student local resident-5)

> *"There is an inevitable need for [socio-cultural spaces]. People naturally want to see a recreational area in the place where they live. They want somewhere to socialise, a path where they can take a walk, but there isn't one. We are, so to speak, living among piles of concrete."* (Non-student local resident-6)

Based on these interviews, the municipality's limited involvement in the development process, particularly in urban planning and land use takes attention. It is claimed that the neighbourhood's change has been driven by market-led development rather than state-led initiatives. Additionally, despite owning numerous plots of land, the municipality has been criticised for not utilising these resources effectively to provide social-cultural and green infrastructure in favour of local residents.

During the interviews, local residents and business owners also identified infrastructure-related problems such as unpaved roads, insufficient street lighting and surface water drainage system. These problems typically occur when there is an imbalance between the rapid expansion of residential development and slower delivery of infrastructure by the local government. In parallel with this imbalance, residents and business owners express their dissatisfaction with municipal services in the neighbourhood.

> *"I'm not satisfied at all with the municipality's services. especially in our area, the part between the İZBAN station and Anadolu Street, we haven't seen any municipal services. In fact, since I moved here, the side road between my house and the İZBAN line was just a dirt road. Only a few months ago did they finally pave it with cobblestones, so at least now we're rid of the dust."* (Non-student local resident-4)

> *"This neighbourhood was a village before 2011. But even after the establishment of the university, the roads are still in terrible condition, the side streets are in bad shape, and there's still no proper infrastructure."* (Non-student local resident-8)

> *"The municipality isn't working hard enough. There's an infrastructure problem. When it rains, the roads become so bad that they're unusable."* (Local business-3)

> *"The [street] lighting in the neighbourhood is insufficient. The roads are constantly being built and then torn up again. The municipality is not working adequately."* (Local business-7)

The interview with the local government urban planner provides insight into the planning and zoning regulations related to student accommodation in the area. This interview helps to understand the existing and long-term development dynamics in the neighbourhood.

> "*Student dormitories appear as municipality facility areas or social facility areas in the plans, you need to look at the plan notes [to understand the intended use]. Also, according to Article 19, an entire independent section can be designated as a dormitory*[2] *if there is a commercial unit among residential units. This is also referred to as roadside commerce, and such decisions, even if not included in the plan, are made through a council resolution."* (Local Government - Planner)

According to the planner, student dormitories might not be explicitly included in the initial implementation plans, with such decisions being made by the local government. However, they might be constructed in areas that are designated as municipality facility areas or social facilities. In the same way, if a residential building on a commercial road is on the plan, it can be converted to a private dormitory without the need for a planning revision. This situation may be seen as uncertainty, leading to undesirable planning outcomes, such as a student housing crisis. Alternatively, it can introduce flexibility into the planning process, allowing regulations to be adapted to meet emerging needs, such as increased demand for student housing.

As observed in Waterloo in the early 2000s (Revington et al., 2020), leaving loopholes in the planning regulations to encourage the construction of more dormitories in certain areas could result in an oversupply of a specific type of housing stock, potentially leading to either an over-concentration of students or underutilised resources. At the moment, Balatçık is on the verge of an oversupply of one-bedroom apartment units. Based on construction permit data from 2011 to 2023, 66% of the housing units in the neighbourhood are one-bedroom, 29% are two-bedroom,

2 These dormitories are private dormitories which would be equivalent of PBSAs in Turkish context.

and 5% are three-bedroom flats (Erbas Melis et al., 2025), as will be discussed later in this paper.

The existing state-owned dormitories and their capacities are listed (Table 1). Based on that, it is not possible to access demand data regarding the percentage of the student population that applied for the 3,000-bed capacity state-run dormitory. CoHE reports indicate that 60% of the 17,000-student population comes from outside İzmir for university studies (CoHE, 2024; Yökatlas, 2024) which means that they need a type of accommodation. However, despite the construction of new dormitories to accommodate 1,000 more students, the supply will still fall short of meeting the increasing need. In this context, the term "demand" has been redefined as "need." Consequently, the gap between the supply and the need for accommodation persists as a significant challenge in providing adequate housing for students, with market-driven developments continuing to play a role in expanding accommodation options.

Plan-led Developments vs. Development-led Planning Practices

Plan-led development integrates the coordination of state-led and market-led initiatives, aiming to promote economic stability and foster social equity. In contrast, development-led planning arises as a response to significant changes driven by market pressures. A key distinction between the two approaches lies in their timeframes: plan-led development involves proactive planning before action, whereas development-led planning follows action (Figure 2). In this research, the rapid increase in one-bedroom accommodation units within the neighbourhood, aimed at addressing the demand for state-run dormitories with sufficient capacity, serves as an example of market-led development.

Due to the ongoing housing crisis in Izmir after the recent earthquakes and the growing need for student accommodation, developers have increasingly shifted their focus toward smaller, fewer-bedroom units, particularly one-bedroom flats. The development-led planning process has primarily responded to market pressures and immediate needs, rather than long-term strategies, by expanding the supply of such units.

**Table 1.** State-subsidised student accommodation

| | Name of Accommodations | Opening Date | Capacity in 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|
| State-Owned Dormitories | KYK Cihannuma Female Student Dormitory | 2015 | 960 |
| | KYK Çiğli Male Student Dormitory | 2013 | 1200 |
| | KYK Çiğli Dormitory | Under Construction | 1000 |

Source: IKCU, 2024b

However, local planning authorities have not been proactive in pursuing plan-led development. They have neither coordinated with the university's site selection in the district nor developed strategies to mitigate the social and spatial consequences of student housing demand. The strategic and spatial plans of Çiğli Municipality and İzmir Metropolitan Municipality also lack specific measures to address the studentification process.

Insights from interviews further reveal an absence of comprehensive policy decisions and the lack of a roadmap to acknowledge and address the implications of the growing student population in the region.

> "*Rents are too high for public university students to afford, the recently built houses* [mainly one-bedroom flats] *are too small for students to share, and there are not enough dormitories where students can stay.*" (B10-Realtor)

> *"There's a high demand for rental housing, but it's difficult for students to find a place to stay. Student dormitories are needed in the neighbourhood.*" (Non-student local resident-7)

> *"Very small flats [one-bedroom] are rented or sold for very high prices.*" (Non-student local resident-1)

> *"The rent for a one-bedroom flat starts from 7,000 Turkish Liras (approx. 380 US Dollars as of March 2022) so, some students cannot afford to live in Balatçık. Also, there is a notable shortage of private dormitories in the neighbourhood. Therefore, some of these students prefer to live in Karşıyaka or Bornova in shared flats.*" (Neighbourhood official)

The interviewees highlight the challenges related to student housing affordability and availability in the neighbourhood. A local realtor emphasised that rents are prohibitively high for public university students, and the newly built one-bedroom flats are too small to accommodate multiple students who would like to share an accommodation due to costs. As mentioned earlier, the number of state dormitories is not enough to accommodate students' housing need either. This highlights a critical issue: the need for comprehensive planning and investment in student accommodation at both national and local levels.

## CONTEXT OF HMO LICENSING

As can be seen in the discussion, different regions of the world exhibit distinct dynamics in the studentification phenomenon. Therefore, from a holistic perspective, some suggestions are listed for mitigating the impacts of studentification in neighbourhoods while balancing the needs of the community within the Turkish planning system. National-level policies and development plans indicate a strategic move towards the internationalisation of higher education, which is expected to result in a significant increase in student numbers and the need for student accommodation. As previously noted in the contextual framework, accommo-

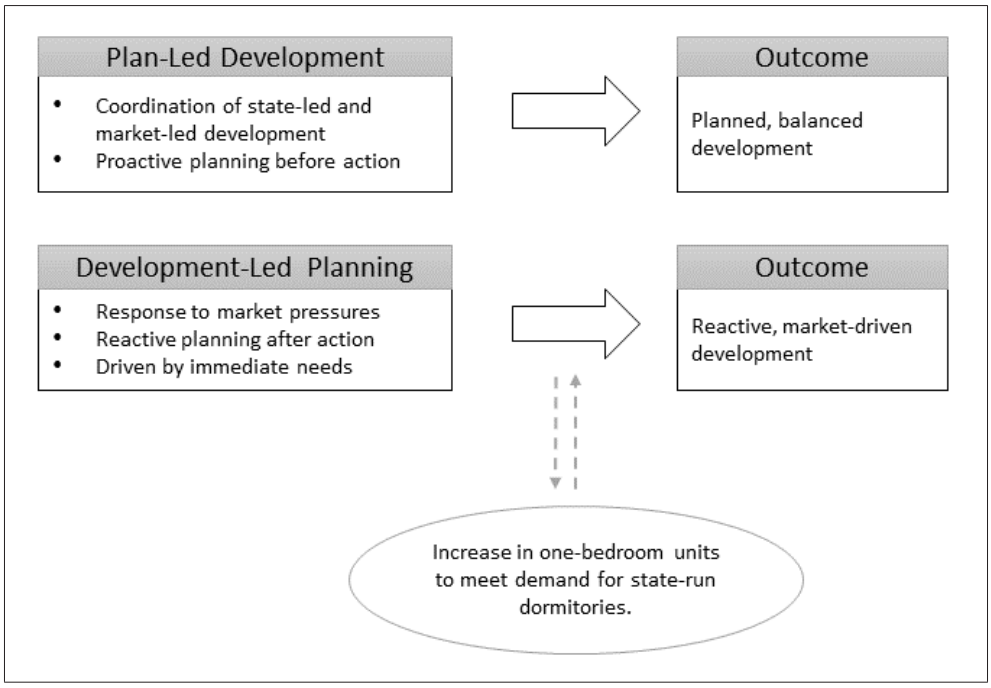


**Figure 2**. Plan-led development vs development-led planning.

dation options for higher education students (dormitories) within the Turkish planning system are addressed at the lower level through implementation plans. Consequently, local governments must be adequately prepared to address these changes. Therefore, the HMO recommendations presented in this section should be carried out within the scope of planning notes in these implementation plans, under the jurisdiction of district municipalities.

**Need for HMO Licensing**

Due to the increasing number of students in some neighbourhoods, local governments prefer to implement measures for neighbourhood stability to avoid social segregation among the non-student and student residences, relieve pressure on traditional housing stocks, and offer students tailored accommodations (Hubbard, 2008; Sage et al., 2012b; Kinton et al., 2016). Therefore, some countries, such as the UK, introduced licencing for HMOs.

As mentioned earlier, studentification has been a topic of planning in the UK. One of the most discussed topics is the licensing of houses in multiple occupations. The term, a house in multiple occupation (HMO), is described by the UK government as 'a property rented out by at least 3 people who do not form a 'household' (for example, a family) but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen' (Gov.uk, 2022). In Türkiye, currently, students come together with prospective flatmates to rent a flat instead of individually renting a room from an HMO. When this research was conducted in 2022 and 2023, neither the central nor the local government had long-term strategies to control the student housing market in regards to licensing the housing for multiple occupants and regulating the housing supply in a given location. However, Türkiye does not have any legislation regarding HMOs. The lack of such legislation could lead to significant challenges for students, homeowners, non-student local residents and local government (Sage et al., 2012b; Kington et al., 2016).

When this research was conducted between 2022-2024, neither the Development Law nor relevant zoning regulations in Türkiye defined or governed shared rental arrangements. However, with the increasing number of students and in parallel to this, the rising demand for student housing has unearthed a housing supply and demand gap. Consequently, the subsequent section provides recommendations on the HMO licensing process from a planning perspective.

**Planning Implications and Recommendations**

The Turkish planning system and local governments should carefully consider studentification, evaluating both its potential advantages and disadvantages. Accordingly, this section outlines recommendations for structuring the HMO licensing implementation process to minimise adverse impacts while enhancing the potential benefits associated with studentification.

**Local population should be adjusted to include HMO residents:** It is important to note, however, that in some cases, students may not update their residential addresses when they move out of their family residences. This is also observed in the case study area, Balatçık. The students stated that they did not feel obligated to change their addresses and keep their family-based addresses. As a result, the Ad-

dress-Based Population Registration System does not reflect temporary student residences; therefore, it complicates demographic analysis and public service provision.

The mandatory declaration of HMO-converted houses, along with their potential and actual occupancy data, ensures greater transparency in the HMO system and provides a valuable data source for population calculations. Similarly, in PBSA (Purpose-Built Student Accommodation) projects, the bed capacity is predetermined, offering a reliable basis for demographic estimations. Therefore, incorporating HMO and PBSA capacity data is essential to achieve more accurate and realistic population estimates in these neighbourhoods.

**Integrating HMO Licenses into Implementation Plans:** Even though, in general, it is thought that local authorities need to establish clear zoning and density regulations for HMOs, according to previous research, including the work by Revington et. al (2020), implementing uniform regulations in areas adjacent to higher education institutions may introduce additional challenges. For example, if regulatory measures are limited to a certain area with clear boundaries, HMOs may become concentrated just beyond the specified boundary, leading to unintended clustering effects. Therefore, HMO regulations should not be predominantly limited to an area with certain boundaries. Instead, it is important to consider these areas at the city level—particularly in metropolitan areas—due to the overlapping impact zones of multiple higher education centres.

**Diversifying the Housing Mix:** HMO licensing should be considered at two levels: The building block (yapı adası) and the individual structure. Following the calculation of projected population density over a 30-year period, adjustments could be introduced for neighbourhoods anticipated to experience heightened student populations as a result of studentification. Based on these adjusted population figures, corresponding HMO licensing requirements may be formulated. To promote balanced population diversity in both vertical and horizontal growth, it may be advisable to explore setting an indicative threshold—such as limiting licenses to approximately half of the properties within each city block and individual structure. This threshold, however, should be regarded as a preliminary suggestion and refined through further empirical research and policy evaluation.

In studentified or studentified-to-be neighbourhoods, municipalities should consider not only regulating HMOs but also the number of one-bedroom or studio flats. New housing policies should introduce a diverse housing mix, including larger, multi-bedroom units to prevent the over-saturation of single-occupancy residences and promote a balanced housing mix within the community. Such measures would ensure hosting a broader range of residents. Therefore, the total number of one-bedroom and studio flats should be limited to half of the properties within a building complex.

## CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has examined the dynamics of studentification in the case of İzmir Katip Çelebi University in İzmir, mainly focusing on understanding the differences between the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canadian context and the Turkish context. While studentification has been widely studied in these countries, its emergence in Türkiye reflects distinct conditions shaped by rapid university expansion, limited state-provided accommodation, and a planning system that has yet to fully integrate student housing and the increasing student population in areas surrounding campuses into its strategic framework. The findings indicate that local authorities have not developed proactive, plan-led responses regarding the studentification.

As elaborated in the discussion section, two main controversies emerge from this empirical research. Firstly, urban development regulated by government controls and planning has struggled to adapt to the rapidly growing demands of universities and their students. While adequate accommodation remains the most immediate and visible need, provisions for physical and socio-cultural infrastructure for the broader local population, including students, have also lagged behind market-driven developments. Secondly, plans intended to coordinate state-led and market-led initiatives, promote economic stability, and foster social equity in this rapidly evolving urban environment have largely yielded to market pressures that have resulted in an unbalanced housing supply. These findings suggest that without more proactive and coordinated planning, the pressures of studentification are likely to exacerbate social and spatial inequalities in the affected areas.

The comparison between the existing literature and Turkish contexts shows that, whereas these countries has implemented regulatory mechanisms such as HMO licensing to mitigate negative impacts, Türkiye still lacks a coherent policy framework. Introducing HMO licensing could help create more balanced and sustainable outcomes for both students and local residents. Accordingly, this research proposes several recommendations: adjusting local population data to account for HMO residents, integrating HMO licensing into implementation plans, and diversifying the housing mix to prevent over-reliance on single-occupancy units.

While this study has focused on the urban planning implications of studentification, future research could examine the wider socio-economic impacts of licensing practices. In particular, further work could assess how licensing influences population dynamics, housing markets, local economies, and social relations between student and non-student residents. Combining demographic and economic analysis with qualitative insights from local stakeholders would provide a fuller understanding of how licensing shapes neighbourhood change and its links to processes such as gentrification.

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