


Chapter 9

Crisis and Transformation in Digital Broadcasting: A Theoretical and Practical Analysis of the Transition From Twitch to Kick in Turkey

Ayten Bengisu Cansever Bayhan

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1165-7273>

*Istanbul University Institute of Social Science, Public Relations, and Publicity,
Turkey*

ABSTRACT

This study explores the structural, economic, and cultural dynamics behind the migration of Turkish digital content creators from Twitch to Kick. Triggered by the 2021 money laundering scandal on Twitch, which significantly damaged the platform's reputation in Turkey, the transition is analyzed through the lens of digital labor, platform capitalism, and representation theory. Using digital ethnography and discourse analysis, the research draws on platform documents, monetization policies, social media commentary, and media reports. Findings suggest that Kick's appeal lies not only in its favorable monetization model but also in its loose content regulation and perceived creative autonomy. In contrast, Twitch's increasing centralization and reputational crisis have eroded trust among creators and audiences. The study concludes that platform migration is a socio-political act shaped by economic precarity, symbolic legitimacy, and regulatory conditions. It calls for future research integrating mixed methods to analyze evolving digital labor and platform governance in Turkey.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, digital broadcasting has transformed into an interactive and participatory domain, departing from the hierarchical and unidirectional frameworks typical of traditional media institutions. Twitch is a prominent platform facilitating this transition, having not only altered content production but also radically modified the interaction between streamers and their audiences. Twitch provides an interactive platform where spectators engage in live broadcasts, exert real-time impact on their development, and contribute to the personas and content strategies of the streamers, in stark contrast to the passive consumption model of traditional television. This interactive structure, along with the potential for commercialization, has established the foundation for a novel type of digital labor that integrates entertainment with entrepreneurial self-presentation.

This paradigm offers accessibility and creative freedom for content creators, yet it also subjects them to the unstable realities of platform capitalism. Digital labor under this framework is influenced by the demands of perpetual visibility, algorithmic performance indicators, and economic objectives. Twitch rapidly became a pivotal platform in Turkey for both amateur and professional streamers to build a following and monetize their content. The 2021 money laundering crisis, facilitated by the platform's donation architecture, exposed substantial shortcomings in Twitch's financial control systems. The participation of several Turkish streamers in this episode significantly compromised the platform's public trust and symbolic validity within the nation's digital culture.

Subsequently, numerous Turkish content creators commenced their migration to Kick, a nascent platform that distinguished itself as creator-friendly by providing up to 95% revenue sharing and supplementary hourly compensation. This study contends that the transition from Twitch to Kick cannot be attributed exclusively to economic motivations. It signifies a profound structural transformation inside Turkey's digital broadcasting environment. This migration signifies a pivotal moment of renegotiation, during which labor practices, platform ethics, and user affinities are being redefined instantaneously. The primary research inquiry of this study is: In what ways does the transition from Twitch to Kick signify deeper transformations in the political economy, symbolic framework, and governance mechanisms of digital broadcasting in Turkey?

This research employs a qualitative methodology that combines digital ethnography with discourse analysis. The study examines the lived experiences and narrative constructions of content providers and their consumers by utilizing publicly available digital materials, such as platform policies, social media discussions, user comments, and news articles. This interpretative paradigm facilitates a detailed

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