Comments on Revised Draft (Kerem)

My comments move below from chapter 2 to chapter 3, and then I comment on chapter 1. Afterwards I make some more general comments.

Chapter 2 – Theory

The focus on elite theory creates the expectation that what is going to be analyze later in the thesis is the relation between the elite and the “subordinates”. But such analysis does not exist in the analysis in any systematic way. To limit this problem, I think you need to do three things.

First, shorten the passages on elite theory and present them as views that offer a basic understanding of the backdrop of the case. Elite theory becomes more the backdrop of analysis and less the topic of analysis.

Second, as much as possible make connections to elite theory in the analysis and, especially, the thesis conclusion.

Third, have a second section in the theory chapter. You can title this section “Key concepts” or something like this. The point you need to explain is that this section presents the concepts on which the analysis pivots. Here you must present and explain as much as you can (and with references to theorists as much as you can) the following concepts:

Fandom, fun loyalty, fun affect, and fun ontological stance.

These four concepts I found in the analysis. There are more, but I thought these are the most outstanding according to what you write.

Fandom is the umbrella concept and the other three are constituent concepts of fandom. If the theories of fandom suggest or imply these other four concepts, explain this. If the theories of fandom do not suggest or only very vaguely impliy these other four concepts, explain that your empirical data calls for these other four concepts. In the latter case, your findings give you reason to revisit and adjust the theories of fandom.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

In general, the chapter in not sufficient. It spends more space on generalities (taken from methods books) and not enough on the specifics of this particular research.

Intro. No need to mention the term variables – you do not have variables in your thesis.

Under “3.2. Sampling” you talk about participant observation. But what participant observation? Here the information needed is about how you selected your interviewees. What are the criteria for your selection? What is the logic behind those criteria? And what knowledge this selection allows you to generate? Also, are there biases in the selected interviewees? (Obviously, if you select donors, you do not learn about the views of those who opted not to donate; at the very least, you must acknowledge this bias and discuss its importance. You vet some limited information on “non-donors” from your research on the websites, so you can mention this.)

With respect to the interviews, you need to say that the questions will be presented in their specificity in the analysis section. But in this methods section you need to explain what themes guided your questions, and what was the logic behind deciding these themes and asking the questions you asked. It is important to explain these matters in some detail, because essentially the questions you asked stand for the way you “operationalized” your research questions. So, you have to show a link between the research question and the logic guiding your interviews.

Section 2 does not say enough at all about online content analysis. What are the texts (websites) you examined? How did you select them? (Why these and not other?). What did you aim to learn? And how would you describe these texts in practical terms (long or short? Who were the authors of these texts? Etc.)

Chapter 4 – Analysis

In general, the chapter lacks cohesion. What you need to develop in this chapter is a story. This is not easy to do (and the story will never look like a story perfectly), but it is very important to do. As it stands, information in this chapter amounts to incoherent pieces, and this is devastating for the thesis.

The following suggestion can help you discover and develop the story.

Section “2. Online Content Analysis”

At the beginning of each sub-section in this section, and as you introduce these sub-sections, present also a summary of the main points made in the section. So, you have summaries of sections 1.1, 1.2., etc. Connections among the sections would therefore be easier to see. If you find connections, emphasize them in the summaries. All together at the end, they may amount to some sort of a story. (If you find that some of these sub-sections are short and don’t tell much, consider combining them with other sub-sections.)

Section “3. Interviews”

In effect you have made an attempt at developing a story at the end, in sub-section “3.4 Concluding Remarks.” But as it stands, this story is not sufficiently concrete and not sufficiently complex. I would suggest that you develop a better version of the summary you have in this sub-section and place it at the introduction of the section “3. Interviews.” The reader needs guidance early one. Following this introductory summary, this section of the chapter then has to unpack and illustrate what the introduction states. Also, as an introduction, this passage must explain how the preceding analysis of the online documents connects to the interview analysis.

After you do that, revisit section “1. Analysis” of chapter 4 and adjust it accordingly. Again, emphasize the story you are telling.

A substantive point on the interview data:

The point that donation is at times the result of peer-pressure is not clearly discussed. Several of your interviewees imply this, but you do not make a point of it clearly. In fact, this point matches well the relational orientation to sociology sketched by Crossley, Kadar, and Tilly (i.e. what explains behavior is not simply ideas and emotions but rather how ideas and emotions are part of relations.)

Chapter 1

Under “2 Conceptual Clarification” it is not at all clear what is the concept that is being clarified. It is not clear either why you should have a distinct section here. If there is information from this section which you like to keep, place it in the theory chapter.

Also, the discussion about fandom, including the relational approach to fandom, is better placed in the theory section as well.

The introduction chapter can be short. In it you need to give quick information in order to orient the reader to the general topic and the thesis research questions. You can write something about globalization, for example, but not much (because you don’t want to go off-topic and give the reader the wrong impression about what the thesis is all about.)

The introduction must say enough (and not more than necessary) in order to orient the reader to the topic, the puzzle connected to topic, and the specific research questions.

The topic essentially is a campaign that “asks the poor to donate to the rich.” This you need to present in clear terms.

The puzzle essentially is, given that many poor eventually gave to the rich, why and how did they do it.

The research questions then are: “Why and how did funs of Fener, who have mid-to-low incomes, donated money to the club?”

After you raise your research question, it is good to give quickly your answer. This answer you will find by knowing the story you are telling and by summarizing this story. (Such a summary can be useful to you for also re-working your thesis abstract.)

After you give the summary of the answer, you can also write 2-3 sentences about why this question and this answer are important – and here you can refer that there is a literature in sociology that deals with this general topic and therefore your answer can make contributions to that literature (and feel free to be specific about the contribution, if you can).

After that, the introduction can present the roadmap of the thesis, presenting the chapters and saying 1-2 sentence for each chapter content.

More General Points

Overall, your exposition is not clear. It is important to be as clear as possible so that you do not frustrate the examiner.

In pages 59-61 there some examples of lack of clarity. At the end of page 59 there starts a long quotation which goes on to the next page. But you do not explain where this is from, and why one needs to read it. Later in pages 60 and 61 you bring in the Swedish government without explaining how this information is relevant or useful. Also, it would be good to say how come interviewee K, mentioned at the top of page 60, brings up Sweden.

While theoretical references in the analysis sections are good, not all of them here are explained sufficiently. Make a better effort to explain how the empirical and theoretical references connect, and why the theoretical references are relevant to mention. (And some theoretical references are very, very unclear. For example, I don’t understand the reference to Tilly at the end of pate 49.)

When citing by using parenthesis in the text, place the period (“.”) after the parenthesis, not before.

When referring to the thesis, as for example at the bottom of page 47 (“This thesis aimed to establish…”), use present tense – i.e. “This thesis aims…”. Do this even in the introduction.

It is less confusing if you write “interviewee A, interviewee B,” etc. rather than “A, B,” etc.

The notation you use of the sub-chapters is confusing. The first digit must refer to the chapter number. So, for example, the section at the end which is now titled “3.4 Concluding Remarks” should be “4.3.4 Concluding Remarks.”

On the cover page: I am the supervisor, not “faculty opponent”