



AVMOFA: University Bucket

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Universities have a long history. Buckets even longer. Nevertheless, perhaps not many times in the past have universities and buckets crossed each other's paths. This is a story of one such encounter.

On January 20, 2015 the City of Helsinki changed the name of its Kaisaniemi metro station to the name of the adjacent [University of Helsinki](#). In the official ceremony, the mayor of the city said that the renaming was a gift to the University, for its 375th anniversary. On another occasion, I was told this had been actually done to appease the University of Helsinki's administration, which was disturbed by the fact that one of the new metro stations (operating from autumn 2016) would carry the name of the competing, [Aalto University](#). What is 'the truth' in this matter is not of a concern here. What is of a concern is the sequence of events that this incident has triggered.

On February 26, in the very same metro station, a reopening of a store belonging to a discount retail chain was scheduled. For this occasion, the store was to be renamed - to the University of Helsinki's Tokmanni. However, even before this actually happened, a turbulent reaction came from the University's communication department. It was even announced that the legal unit of the University would look into the matter. The director of the retail chain defended by claiming the store didn't really refer to the name of the University, but to the name of the metro station. The resolution of this dispute was not followed up closely by the Finnish media. Nevertheless, since a number of company registers in Finland have a record of the Tokmanni University of Helsinki's metro station, it seems that there was eventually a compromise.

For the store reopening, Tokmanni decided to give its customers plastic buckets with a big label printed on it: Tokmanni, More for a euro. The bucket - containing a thermos bag, a shower gel, a tooth paste, a wet tissue, a packet of



napkins and a chocolate waffle – was filled with a bunch of useful goods, a monetary value easy to calculate and in this case, very low. Not far from some of contemporary discourses on university, one might say.

An association between these buckets and universities was developed further by a group of researchers affiliated with the University of Helsinki. In their protest carnival, held on the very same date of the University's 375th anniversary celebration, Tokmanni buckets – previously involved in an accidental brand dispute – were deliberately relocated in a wider debate over the purpose of academic knowledge production. Thus, while serving as seats for an improvised outdoor auditorium, which hosted an erudition parade, the buckets were used by the protesters to tell their own story of what universities are and are not for.

Instead of containers of handy, though essentially mundane (and cheap) commodities, Tokmanni buckets came to signify profuse scholarly activity, which yields products that could not and, therefore, should not be measured merely in restrictive economic terms.