Three Types of Power in the Work of Thai Public University Lecturers: Vertical Power, Horizontal Power, and the Power Embedded in Being Labour

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Abstract

This article aims to understand the changes in the work of lecturers in Thai public universities, which have been structurally impacted by educational quality assurance policies, the transition to autonomous universities, and a new personnel employment system. Although previous academic works have attempted to explain who the external actors are that possess the power to determine the university's direction, those works have neglected to question the underlying power conditions that allow such transcendental power to operate and genuinely control lecturers. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to reveal the underlying power conditions that permit changes to the work lecturers must be responsible for, by applying Labour Process Theory together with ethnographic anthropological research methodology, through in-depth interviews and observations at University A between 2022-2023. The study's results indicate that the labour process of lecturers expands according to the value relations determined by the university. This expansion operates through two types of power in economic and non-economic spaces: vertical and horizontal power, which the university uses to force lecturers to shoulder work according to the university's demands. Both powers are what create changes to the work. However, the operation of these two types of power reveals traces of a third type of power embedded in being labour. This power is the condition that enables the first two powers to operate. The third type of power is the unequal power structure within the employment relationship and the commodity-form of labour. Both components are structures dictating that the university, as the employer, holds more power, and that the work must serve the needs of others.

Keywords: Thai Public University, University Lecturer, Power, Labour

Introduction

The heart of any profession is work, and university lecturers, as a type of profession, also have work that must be done. However, their work is never static; it has changed and is constantly changing, with certain types of work disappearing and new ones emerging to

take their place. University lecturers must confront this change. Lecturers must face administrative paperwork to guarantee that the output of their work has "quality" (Mutita Chuachang, 2010; Pinkaew Laungaramsri, 2015; Pinkaew Laungaramsri & Aranya Siriphon, 2015) or to guarantee that their work processes have "ethics" (Jakkapan Khatchumsang, 2018). In addition to work aimed at proving themselves, lecturers must also work to chase the university's expectations. Lecturers must work as if they are in a "world-class university" despite not being in one (Piraporn Witoorat, 2019), or they must perform work that is so intense in both quantity and quality that the university becomes "toxic" to them Piyanan (Jina, 2023). The feelings lecturers have towards these changing works arise from their inability to determine the quantity and quality of their work. Work designation is managed outside of their decision-making.

Both the changes in works and the subsequent consequences occurred amidst significant transformations in Thai public universities during the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. These transformations are: First, an emphasis on the realization of value produced in the university under the context of the Thai state's educational quality assurance policies (Lao, 2015). Second, the management model of an autonomous university, where the university has more power to decide its own activities without having to account for the bureaucratic system (Office of the Education Council, 2017; Surapon Nitikraipot & Krittin Dingkaew, 2016). Third, the employment of university personnel who are neither civil servants nor considered employees under general labor laws. The result is that their life as a university employee depends entirely on the employer's decision, which is the university. The status of these employees aligns with the proposition of Sarun Jongrak (2020), which is 'the subaltern lecturers'. They are not protected by labor laws and are frequently exploited by their employers. The unequal balance of power between lecturers and the university is not merely a significant phenomenon restricted to Thailand; it also manifests within global transformations, such as precarity (Burton & Bowman, 2022; O'Brady et al., 2025), casualisation (Allmer, 2018, pp. 61-62), and Uberfication (Hall, 2016). We can summarize that the changes in work occur in a context where the power to determine work has slipped from the lecturers' hands. The tripartite power dynamics shaping the nature of work among lecturers, the university, and the Thai state are divided into two factions: the first faction comprises the state and the university, while the second comprises the lecturers. The power of the first faction exceeds that of the second.

A number of academic works have attempted to understand this change. Maitrarat, Openshaw, & Walshaw (2021) propose that Thai public universities have faced external pressures for over a century since the establishment of the first university in Thailand, with pressures stemming from political or economic changes at both global and national levels. Oliver S. Crocco and Somwung Pitiyanuwat (2024) propose that the university is a state

apparatus used for socio-economic development. Confrontations like these make the university a contested space of power where various actors fight to seize control over its direction (Thongchai Winichakul, 2023; Pinyapan Potjanalawan, 2022; Lao, 2015). There are two common points in these propositions: First, work changes according to the definition of what the university's purpose is. Second, such an emphasis leads these academic works to search for "who" dictates the university's value. Understanding the power of value determination in this way equates power with the emergence of a transcendental power (Hardt & Negri, 2009). A god-like power existing outside the university can always force the university to comply with its demands.

While the literature devotes its energy to explaining "whose" power dictates the activities inside the university (politics, economy, the state), they completely fail to help us understand why those "transcendental powers" can determine the characteristics and work of lecturers. Or, to put it another way, why must lecturers do work that aligns with or chase the demands of others outside the university (the actors holding transcendental power)? Simply put, the main question of the article is: what kind of power conditions enable transcendental power (whether it be politics, the economy, the state, or even the university) to operate over the lecturers' decision-making?

Objectives

This research aims to reveal the power structures operating within the work of university lecturers, specifically the power in the creation of work.

Concept theory framework

The author chooses to utilize Labour Process Theory (LPT) to achieve the research objective. The core of LPT is the analysis of the creation process of work (Thompson & Smith, 2017, pp. 11-12). For LPT, work is nothing but the process of transforming the potential of labour (labour power) into value through various mechanisms employed by the employer (Edwards, 2017). Therefore, work is a space of power relations between (1) the labour who must perform the assigned work, and (2) the employer who must chase value (Thompson & Smith, 2017; Thompson & Vincent, 2017; Jaros, 2017). Work is a type of social relation. LPT is suitable for this goal because it helps us explore the formation process of work by connecting the work that labour must do with the value relation (Moore, 2014, p. 248), which dictates what holds value. This formation dictates the boundaries of the lecturers' labour process. Furthermore, it reveals the underlying power structures that allow power to operate over lecturers. In other words, LPT helps us perceive the form of *being a lecturer* and the power structures embedded within it.

Materials and Methods

This research primarily utilizes ethnographic methodology to understand the work that lecturers must do and their relationships with those tasks. This method aligns with the research's objectives and conceptual framework because it best allows us to confront what the lecturers must confront. There are 10 key informants in this study. They work in a faculty of social sciences at University A. In-depth interviews and observations are the main data collection processes of this work. The author utilized both formal and informal interviews, as well as conversations with informants during and outside of working hours. Additionally, the author observed the daily life related to the lecturers' work by requesting permission to sit and work at the department and teaching hours. The data collection period was between 2022-2023. The data obtained from the key informants will be analyzed in conjunction with relevant documentary research, utilizing an interpretive process through the conceptual framework presented in the previous section.

The field site is University A (a fictitious name). University A is a Thai public university. In Thailand, Thai public universities are the main actors in providing higher education, with nearly 80% of students nationwide enrolled in public educational institutions. University A is a medium-sized university with a prominent reputation in a region of Thailand. It consists of over 20 faculties, possessing an equal number of faculties in the sciences and social sciences. This composition aligns with the university's positioning as an institution aimed at driving economic development and addressing social problems at the regional level. University A possesses appropriate characteristics to answer this research's questions. University A is a Thai public university situated within the context of the three transformations mentioned in the introduction. Over the past three decades, a significant managerial model of University A has been chasing value metrics. Instead of metrics being merely tools for evaluating value, they have become tools with value because they serve as references demonstrating that the university is desired by others (the realization of value). Furthermore, University A has become an autonomous university, and the majority of its employees are no longer civil servants. They are also not protected by labor laws. All lecturers who are the key informants of this study operate under the aforementioned employee conditions (neither civil servants nor labour as defined by general law). For these reasons, the author purposefully selected informants who are lecturers. They are all lecturers who entered employment at the university under the conditions of the three aforementioned transformations.

Results

Ampika (a pseudonym) is one of the key informants. Her experiences during her early working years were filled with dissatisfaction. She recounted that in her first year, she dedicated herself to academic teaching and organizing activities she believed were beneficial to students' work she thought a lecturer should do. The result of her dedication was disappointment. She discovered that pouring her time and effort into these tasks did not contribute to her career growth at all. She spent time reflecting on this failure and uncovered the reality of the lecturer's work: it does not matter whether a lecturer's work creates academic knowledge or supports students; valuable work is only the work that the university designates as work.

From field experiences, the author found that the most important thing in a lecturer's working life is nothing but a stack of documents. Those documents are not just papers; rather, they are the concrete manifestation of the university's power to dictate work. These documents serve to declare what kind of work has or does not have value, and if it does, how much value it holds. One lecturer told the author, "Working is no different from a game; learn its rules and play along well". These various forms of documents reflect the process of creating the work that lecturers must do.

The Boundary of Value: Method of Calculating Workload

The work lecturers must do is determined by the power on a document called the "Workload Designation". The main function of this document is to point out what work a lecturer must perform. In 2022, University A designated that lecturers have five categories of workload: (1) Teaching, (2) Research and other academic works, (3) Academic services, (4) Preservation of arts and culture, and (5) Other works.

However, the core of work designation lies not in the type of work to be done as much as in the emergence of the workload itself. Workload is the stipulation that X units of a lecturer's work activity count as Y units of the employer's work. In other words, working in and of itself is never the exact same thing as what the employer wants; the work must be converted into units that fit the rules set by the employer. Work categories one, two, and three are tasks for which the documents specifically specify the workload calculation.

For teaching, the unit for measuring workload in "Workload Designation" is hours. University A mandates that lecturers must work no less than 35 hours per week. This period represents the teaching workload. Examples of the teaching workload calculation are as follows: Undergraduate Level: 1 credit of a lecture-based course counts as 3 hours of work per week (covering 1 hour of preparation, 1 hour of teaching, and 1 hour of grading). Graduate Level: 1 credit of a lecture-based course counts as 4 hours of work per week (covering 2 hours of preparation, 1 hour of teaching, and 1 hour of grading).

The main point of the above calculation method is not the university's attempt to determine how much time a lecturer should spend to teach 1 hour, but rather to reveal the traces of work that is not counted as part of the work under workload calculation—the reproductive work necessary to sustain teaching hours.

Teaching hours cannot proceed without the raw materials for teaching. Lecturers can only teach if they possess the knowledge to impart. They must seek new knowledge or update existing knowledge to teach effectively. Besides updating knowledge, they must adapt it to align with the assigned courses. Moreover, they must acquire entirely new knowledge for subjects they are teaching for the first time.

The raw materials for teaching are not limited to the knowledge imparted to students. Lecturers must also prepare teaching methods. They must practice and strategize their delivery for each lecture hour. Jokes and contemporary anecdotes are necessary to keep students engaged with the lecture content. Some lecturers even intentionally incorporate jokes, seemingly bizarre topics, or strong critiques of societal norms into their early lectures. They put significant effort into drawing connections between the students' daily lives and the teaching material.

Beyond knowledge and methodological preparation, post-teaching work is also necessary to perfect the act of teaching. Lecturers must observe the outcomes of their teaching to improve subsequent lectures. If the knowledge becomes outdated, they must prepare it anew; if the teaching method fails to engage, they must search for a better one. Teaching beyond the allocated time occurs frequently. Often, this is not due to the lecturer's poor preparation but rather stems from the demands of the subject or the students. Some courses demand intense time commitments from the lecturer to achieve the course objectives, such as research methodology courses where lecturers unavoidably face the burden of repeatedly reading student drafts each week to provide feedback. Sometimes students have inquiries related to the taught knowledge, and lecturers must answer these questions, frequently outside of designated teaching hours.

Besides activities directly related to teaching hours, managing student relations is also a crucial part of teaching work. Lecturers must manage problems related to student learning. They act as managers dealing with student issues, whether regarding course content or administrative matters like exams, attendance, submitting assignments, and grading.

Seeking knowledge, preparing teaching methods, post-teaching work, and managing student problems are all reproductive work for teaching hours. This time constitutes a necessity that exists outside the workload. Reproductive work is work that is not recognized as having value, yet it is necessary for the production of valuable work. This

type of reproductive work is part of what is called social reproduction (Fraser, 2023, p. 9) and domestic labour. (Vogel, 2000, p. 161; Hensman, 2011)

Regarding Category 2 (Research and academic work) and Category 3 (Academic services): While the teaching workload appears in the form of hours (minimum hours required per week), the workload for these two categories adds complexity to the designation. The intensity of the workload is directly proportional to the academic rank; the higher the rank, the greater the workload.

Similar to teaching, these three types of work occur only because of work existing outside the value relationship that reproduces the activities recognized as work. There are at least two types of this reproductive work: One: Work to access data. Both research and academic services cannot occur merely through the lecturer's cognitive potential or skills. They must build social relations with data sources in various ways to maintain the opportunity to conduct research and services. One lecturer stated, "I spend quite a lot of money on this part". Two: Work to maintain networks among lecturers. Beyond data, they also require a large number of "colleagues". Lecturers must constantly maintain networks of capable collaborators.

If the two forms of reproductive work above are the reproduction of raw materials and labour power, lecturers must also perform another type of work: (Three) work for the possibility of accessing work. Creating proposals for funding agencies is the most prominent form of this work because work that holds value for the university is often funded work. For instance, in 2022, University A mandated that academic services must be service or research projects receiving a total budget from external sources of no less than 1,000,000 Baht.

Typically, lecturers begin writing proposals when funding agencies announce calls for projects. They must write proposals based on the possibility of receiving the funds. In this sense, the time spent working on unfunded proposals is time lost to opportunity. If they win, that time becomes time capable of creating work, but if they lose, the time is gone. This risk pushes many lecturers to plan and write these proposals in advance based on "guessing" before the funding call is even announced.

We might call all these tasks pre-production work. However, lecturers must also perform post-production work. A lecturer's work only becomes part of their workload when it is properly disseminated. For example, work must be published in recognized journals listed in national or international databases, presented at continuously held national or international conferences, or books must have evidence of wide dissemination.

To disseminate work in various formats, lecturers must prepare manuscripts suitable for the specific type of publication. Publishing in academic journals requires conforming to the journal's guidelines (word count, citation style, content format,

proofreading, etc.). Besides the manuscript, lecturers spend time submitting it to the journal. When it reaches the peer-review stage, they must revise the manuscript according to the reviewers' comments. All these steps consume both time and money (publication fees, proofreading, language editing, etc.). Although the university offers rewards for journal publications, if a manuscript is not accepted, it has no chance of receiving compensation from the university.

Publishing at academic conferences is similar. They must prepare presentations and manuscripts from their research. The expenses in these processes involve both their time and money (time spent finding conferences, verifying if the conference meets specific criteria, registration fees, travel expenses, accommodation, etc.).

Preparation work for publishing books and textbooks shares similar characteristics. Research must be transformed into a book, and lecturers must rely on publishing professionals, such as professional publishing houses and printing presses. Furthermore, in the case of disseminating research as a book, they must ensure these books are distributed within academic circles or university libraries. This distribution also requires money.

All this post-production work cannot become part of the workload if the work is rejected by journals, publishers, reviewers, and numerous other variables. But if lecturers do not perform these tasks, they will not even have the opportunity to acquire workload.

Hierarchy of Value: Performance Evaluation Agreement

Bodin (a pseudonym), Ampika's colleague, expressed frustration with his working conditions. He found that the academic work lecturers 'must' perform is filled with limitations. Doing academic work is not about the pursuit of knowledge, but rather chasing the rules set by the university regarding what kind of academic work is important. The content of the academic work is not as important as the hierarchy of value dictated by the university. Under these constraints, he was forced to adapt. He could not produce academic work merely to pursue or cultivate academic growth. Instead, he had to carefully evaluate how much value the academic work he intended to do held in the eyes of the university, his employer

Value relations not only determine the boundaries of work but also create a hierarchy of work. The document known as "Performance Evaluation Agreement" sets goals and work outcomes between supervisors and university employees. Work goals are tiered to show the importance of tasks, divided into (1) basic work and (2) work that demonstrates performance. The first type is work that equals the employer's minimum expectations, or in the employer's economic terms, basic work equals the cost the employer expends to produce work. This is the work employees must achieve to maintain their employment status. The second type of work demonstrates exceeding the employer's costs; it is work that lecturers should produce as much as their potential allows.

Taking the categorization of research and academic work as an example, the basic work for this category is the minimum workload, which is determined by two criteria: working hours per week and specific workload based on academic rank. We can categorize the indicating performance-demonstrating work into four types as follows:

One: Financial Amount. The more money a project utilizes, the greater its value. Research securing hundreds of thousands of Baht demonstrates higher lecturer performance than research securing tens of thousands of thousands of thousands of thousands of thousands of thousands of thousands of thousands. Two: Recognition. Lecturers must produce work supported by actors outside the university, such as external agencies (both public and private), globally ranked educational institutions, citations in global journal databases, or work that passes academic standards evaluated by outsiders (both national and international). Examples include publishing in conferences or journals listed in the Thai-Journal Citation Index Centre (TCI) or SCOPUS databases, undergoing peer review, receiving awards from national/international bodies, or managing a curriculum that passes high-level quality assessments. Three: Targeted Work. Work aligning with the university's goals is deemed valuable, such as work responding to the university's target industries, creating start-up businesses, or academic services aimed at developing economic competitiveness for the university's surrounding communities. Four: Academic Rank. Earning an academic rank serves as an indicator that the lecturer's overall work is effective. The higher the rank obtained, the higher the value of their work.

Valueless Work: Minimum Conditions

Under the quality assurance policies set by the Thai state, the standard of a university lecturer's educational qualifications has become a metric indicating the university's quality. In this sense, universities attempt to mandate a doctoral degree as the minimum condition for university lecturers, making the PhD a "norm". Under this atmosphere, those aspiring to be lecturers must struggle to attain that degree. Many choose the path of scholarships from universities or the Thai state—scholarships that come with conditions requiring them to work to repay the granted funds. Some rely on personal funds supported by their families or their own earnings. Many lecturers work as part-time instructors to use the income to achieve their PhD, which serves as the first gateway to permanent employment. Many others struggle but remain stuck halfway or fail to complete it.

The life of Warit (a pseudonym) serves as a prime example of the offloading of such costs. He was previously a part-time instructor at University A and desired to advance to the next step of his career path: permanent employment. However, he could not become a permanent lecturer because he had not yet completed his doctoral degree. Failing to meet this qualification forced him to struggle to pursue further education in

order to fulfill the minimum condition of becoming a lecturer. At the time of completing this article, he still had not been able to fulfill that condition. "I don't want to start all over again," he said.

The crucial point is not the diverse paths to fulfilling the PhD condition, but the fact that the employer has turned the pursuit of a PhD into someone else's burden. Instead of the employer bearing the costs for what they desire, they offload those costs onto current and future employees. These latter two groups become the bearers of the employer's demands.

The Value of Others: Anti-Knowledge Work

Besides the reproductive work we have already explained, another type of work has emerged work that, from the lecturers' perspective, is anti-knowledge work. It is "anti" in the sense that these tasks consume all the time lecturers should be using to produce and circulate knowledge. Work that must be done to chase the university's demands is one form of anti-knowledge work. Lecturers at University A must work according to the indicators desired by their dean, such as being rushed to create MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). Instead of using their time to produce knowledge, they are forced to learn the "format" of knowledge production merely to satisfy the university's mandates. Another type of work that perfectly reflects this anti-knowledge characteristic is paperwork. Paperwork related to the university's quality assurance is a massive workload for lecturers. They must complete these documents solely to allow the evaluation process to occur. Furthermore, paperwork does not merely consume time for filling out forms; lecturers must also attempt to interpret (Graeber, 2015, p. 66) what those documents require of them. What kind of data does the document want? What format do the evaluators prefer? What language or numbers are appropriate for the evaluation forms? All of this involves utilizing labour to interpret the demands of a power they cannot control.

The core issue of these anti-knowledge tasks lies in their emergence. Despite being tasks mandated by the university, they are not linked to the university's own genuine intentions. These tasks emerge as unavoidable necessities for the university. For these tasks, the university is nothing but a middleman adjusting the demands of others outside the university to be suitable for dictating the work of lecturers inside. This is the managerialization of the university, shifting their responsibility to others. We can observe this managerialization through the content of "University A's Strategic Plan". The plan begins with a SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The main factors determining change are not the university's decisions as much as external changes: social changes (an aging demographic driving the university to become a lifelong learning provider); economic changes (aligning education with market demands through flexible and all-age learning); technological changes (advanced technology causing severe

disruptions in the labor market); environmental factors (temperature changes, global warming, and the UN's sustainable development agenda leading to university rankings focused on sustainability); global development trends (developing the university to gain international recognition through assessments like university rankings); and politics (global and national political changes, particularly national politics dictating the university's direction because University A is a public university tasked with responding to state development policies).

The needs of others that the university must chase manifest through two types of necessities. One: Political necessity. Since 2020, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation initiated a categorization of public universities. Each group has directions and indicators dictating its developmental path. University A chose to be in the technology development and innovation promotion group (this group's indicators focus on creating entrepreneurs, winning entrepreneurial awards, securing external funding supporting entrepreneurship, and having university personnel engage with the industrial sector). University A's choice attempts to transform the university into a space of helices intertwining education, industry, and technology. The university, as the central axis connecting these three, has the duty to create human capital and technological capital to respond to the country's industrial development (developing industry using technology and innovation capable of creating economic value from knowledge). Simply put, state mandates force the university to adapt accordingly.

Two: The Market. The market here refers to the realization of value through specific forms that strip the burden of responsibility as decision-makers away from all humans. Even though humans make decisions, they decide by considering the needs of others that are beyond any single human's control (Fraser, 2023, pp. 5-6). The clearest example of the market as a reference to others' needs is money. Money signifies the volume of utility the university holds for others; more money means more utility. Therefore, the university pours its potential into increasing the money flowing into it. For instance, the focus on MOOCs arose from anxiety over the "money" the university might lose due to Thailand's shrinking population. Even defining the value of work by tying it to the amount of money the work can attract into the university demonstrates seeking acceptance from others via money.

Besides money, prestige is another form of the market. Universities seek prestigious recognition through rankings. Internationally, they target rankings focused on sustainable development (SDGs) and the World University Rankings by Times Higher Education (THE), environmental rankings like UI Green Metric, and the UN's SDGs. Nationally, they target scores from the Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEX) to achieve the Thailand Quality Award (TQA). Universities chase these criteria by adjusting their

management to align with prescribed standards. Valuable work and the hierarchy of value all refer to these prestige evaluation criteria.

Because of this, the emergence of anti-knowledge work points us to another form of work dictation. Instead of work originating from the university's needs, work emerges because the university must chase the demands of others to demonstrate that the university is useful.

Table 1: Work from Documents and Value Relations

Work	Value relations
Workload	Valuable work and valueless work
Performance Evaluation	High value - low value work
Basic condition	Valueless
Anti-knowledge work	Managerialization of the university, needs of others"

Discussion

Power (I): Two Types of Power

From fieldwork regarding work, the author discovered that work occurs according to the university's dictation, operating through various documents. Those documents reveal the value relations set by the university. Regardless of the necessity claimed, the quantity and quality of value within each work category represent the power the university exercises over the lecturers' bodies, brains, and social relations to transform them into work that serves the university's goals. Work is a mechanism of social domination (Cleaver, 2002, p. 147) rather than merely an interaction between lecturers and their external world. For this reason, we can say that the scope of work lecturers must perform expands according to value relations, meaning the power to dictate the form in which value will manifest.

This expansion of work reveals the university's power. This is the first type of power: vertical power. University clearly emerges as the actor of power through two crucial mechanisms. One: Exploitation through economic spaces. Exploitation is the transfer of value through a free contractual exchange. (Fraser, 2023, p. 15; Heinrich, 2012, p. 96) In the case of this article, it is the university's dictation requiring lecturers to produce valuable work through the employment relationship. Value relations create boundaries of value and arrange the hierarchy of valuable work by relying on the economic relationship between the lecturer and the university (work exchanged for compensation). Under this dictation, a lecturer's compensation varies both quantitatively and qualitatively according to their value. The more lecturers perform valuable work, the more compensation they receive.

Two: Expropriation through extra-economic spaces. Expropriation differs from the previously discussed exploitation. It abandons exchange and economic relations, resorting instead to 'brute confiscation' to transfer value from the work lecturers due to the university. (Fraser, 2023, p. 15; Himmel In the case of this article, it is forcing them to perform valueless or low-value work. The university directly forces lecturers to work more to increase value metrics. The university unilaterally alters value relations. New tasks are constantly generated, reproductive work piles up on the shoulders of the labour, and a few tasks become cheap work that, despite offering little compensation, must be done.

However, vertical power is not the only power operating within the expansion of work. The managerialization of the university reveals that vertical power relies on shifting the responsibility of decision-making to others. It is not the university's abuse of power that causes exploitation and expropriation, but rather the necessity originating from external factors “the needs of others". This is horizontal power. Horizontal in the sense that power spreads out so amorphously that one cannot observe where its center lies or who dictates it. This type of power operates vigorously within value relations.

Power (II): Two Sides of the Third Type of Power

The core of vertical and horizontal power is the university's ability to dictate work. This ability could not operate without a power structure that positions the university as the power holder and lecturers as those with less (or practically zero) power. The author proposes that this power structure resides within *the employment relationship*. The lecturer is labour who hawks their labour power in exchange for access to the reproduction of their lives. The university is the holder of that access. Without the institutional structure connecting the university to the state, the academic capabilities lecturers accumulate cannot enable them to reproduce their own lives. Thus, this exchange between work and compensation is nothing but an unequal power structure. The university holds more power than the lecturer, who is labour. This power structure is part of <u>being labour</u>, in the sense of transforming labour's potential into work according to the employer's needs. The power from this structure allows the university to determine the goals and frequency of the lecturers' work. The dictation and modification of value relations rely on this structure embedded within being labour. In summary, the third type of power is the power located within being labour. It is the level zero background that enables vertical and horizontal powers to operate.

However, the power structure of the employment relationship is not the only power structure embedded within being labour. The attempt to chase the realization of value and the needs of others reveals the social form of being labour. Being labour is not just about the employer's power over the labour, but it also exists under a social form called the commodity-form (Neary & Winn, 2016; Winn, 2015; Winn, 2020). Regardless of

the commodity's content, the commodity will manifest as the simultaneous existence of both use-value (the ability to fulfill a need) and exchange-value (someone else wants that ability). Both vertical and horizontal powers show us traces of the commodity form. The abundance of attempts by the university to create work rests on the other side of the level zero background: the commodity-form. And it is this form, acting as a type of power, that dictates that work must constantly align with the needs of others. Or put another way, the commodity-form is the other side of power in labour that pushes the university to utilize vertical and horizontal powers. This type of power arrives with the establishment of the employment relationship. It is part of that relationship rather than the intention of any actor or user of transcendental power.

Conclusion

The research results have shown us the operation of power causing changes to the work lecturers must do. Vertical power reveals that the university uses its power as an employer to determine the face and frequency of work—a determination made to transform the lecturers' labour power into work serving the employer's needs. Such determination also relies on horizontal power through the emergence of the needs of others to reference the value of the work. Both university's powers represent a type of transcendental power. However, the lecturers' expanding work also points us to the operation of another type of power: the power embedded within the lecturers' state of being labour.

This power has two sides: (1) determining the power structure, and (2) determining the social form. Therefore, a lecturer's existence as labour does not merely mean producing and circulating knowledge, but rather they must produce certain use-values to answer the needs of others under the control and dictation of their employer. It is this third type of power that helps plug the gaps in existing studies and answers the question of what kind of power conditions allow work to expand according to the university's needs. That condition is the power embedded in the lecturers' existence as labour.

The discovery of the third type of power discussed above reveals the possibility of resolving the dissatisfaction lecturers have towards their changing work that is formed upon the unequal balance of power between the university and lecturers as labour. The author proposes that the path to alleviating or eliminating both the lecturers' negative feelings and the unequal power structure is to reform the power structure embedded within being labour. In other words, the university must open spaces for labour to negotiate with or challenge the power of the university as their employer. Furthermore, the university must provide opportunities for lecturers to participate in the designation of the work they must perform. Although providing such opportunities may not completely eliminate the

unequal power structure, it will help alleviate the negative feelings lecturers hold towards their work and the university."

Limitations and Recommendations

The arguments and findings of this article have limitations due to the data utilized for analysis. These arguments and findings are grounded in the analysis of experiences and the structural conditions of the transformations occurring within Thai public universities, as well as the changes occurring within faculties of social sciences. Therefore, they may face limitations when applied to explain phenomena occurring outside of public universities or within science faculties. Although this research reveals the conditions of power, it still contains a gap suitable for further research development: the formation of the power embedded within being labour. The unequal power structure within being labour is not something that occurred spontaneously, but rather emerged from the relationship between the state, the university, and labour. Exploring the tripartite power changes is something missing from this work. An understanding of those changes will help us better comprehend the currently unequal balance of power between universities and labour balance of power that is both the starting point and the turning point of power within the lecturers' existence as labour.

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