

Alienating Emotional Labor in Non-Western Societies: Problem or Norm?

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This article presents a paper delivered at the 5th International Sociological Association Forum held in July 2025 in Rabat, Morocco, during the session “The Affective and Emotional Dimensions of Alienation: Modern Societies, Agents, Structures, and Processes” of Research Committee No. 36 “Theory and Research on Alienation”. The article examines emotional labor as a sociological object within the context of alienation. While alienating emotional labor has been extensively studied in Western contexts, this paper explores the applicability of the concept in non-Western societies. The author highlights cultural differences in the management of emotions and the contradictory experiences of emotional labor, which do not always result in alienation. The article emphasizes the need to reconsider the notion of “alienating emotional labor” beyond Western socio-cultural settings.

Keywords: emotional labor, alienating emotional labor, cultural differences in emotion management, burnout

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Introduction and problem statement

The process of rational emotion management is the key value of modern societies. Recently the “emotionalization” of various social spheres has occurred and the so-called “emotional capitalism” has been formed, when the commercialization of emotions has become widespread¹. The emotionalization of labor has occurred both in sociology and in actual social life: requirements for managing and controlling emotions in the workplace are becoming part of everyday labor relations, while various studies of emotional labor (EL) have occupied an important place in the sociology of occupations, as well as in many other fields². Rules of emotion management become part of official labor codes,

¹ Illouz E. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.

² Wharton A.S. The sociology of emotional labor // *Annual Review of Sociology*. 2009. № 35(1).

professional ethics, training guides are created; they can be found in informal requirements of employers, while employees themselves consider emotion management skills as part of their qualification and aim to develop them³. The “culture of emotional labor” becomes one of the main features of late capitalism and reflects the process of cultivation of emotion management for the purpose of profit making, especially in the service industry. Along with the spread of the EL concept, the idea of EL as a cause of professional burnout, exhaustion, external and internal conflicts, dissonances, stresses, alienation and self-estrangement, as well as a mode of sharp social inequality and exploitation of a person’s emotionality in the workplace has emerged⁴.

Based on the classical work by Hochschild, researchers started to comprehend EL in late-modern societies as a necessary part of various occupations and professions and constantly develop Hochschild’s theory, adapt it for different jobs and cultural conditions, including the notion of alienation⁵. Hochschild’s notions of “emotion work” and “emotional labor” distinguish between two different types of emotion management, paid and unpaid, in the private and public spheres. In other words, the notion of EL, in the context of its meaning, immediately refers to alienation. In the last decades the interest in the problem of alienation in relation to EL has not diminished⁶ in sociology, management science, marketing, social psychology, medicine, etc. Scholars all over the world continue to use the concept of EL and the notion of alienation, as well as the notion of alienated/alienating emotional labour⁷, first of all pointing out the negative consequences of EL both

P. 147–165.

³ Simonova O.A. Emotion management and the professional culture of administrative social workers in Russia: Common standards versus the moral mission of social care // *Journal of Social Policy Studies*. 2017. Vol. 15, № 1. P. 129–142.

⁴ Brook P. The alienated heart: Hochschild’s “emotional labor” thesis and the anti-capitalist politics of alienation // *Capital & Class*. 2009. № 33 (2). P. 7–31.; Burkitt I. Alienation and emotion: social relations and estrangement in contemporary capitalism // *Emotions and Society*. 2019. № 1 (1). P. 51–66.; Guy M.E., Newman M.A. Women’s jobs, men’s jobs: Sex segregation and emotional labor // *Public Administration Review*. 2004. № 64 (3). P. 289–298.; Tsang K.K., Wu H. Emotional labour as alienated labour versus self-actualized labour in teaching: Implications of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic for the debate // *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. 2022.

⁵ See, e.g., Brook P. The alienated heart: Hochschild’s “emotional labor” thesis and the anti-capitalist politics of alienation // *Capital & Class*. 2009. № 33 (2). P. 7–31.; Bolton S.C. *Emotion Management in the Workplace*. London: Palgrave, 2005.; Grandey A.A., Diefendorff J.M., Rupp D.E. (eds.) *Emotional Labor in the 21st Century: Diverse Perspectives on the Psychology of Emotion Regulation at Work*. New York: Routledge, 2013.; Mastracci S., Adams I. “That’s what the money’s for”: Alienation and emotional labor in public service // *Administrative Theory and Praxis*. 2018. № 40 (4). P. 304–319.; Guy M.E., Mastracci Sh.H., Yang S-B. (eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Perspectives on Emotional Labor in Public Service*. Cham: Springer Nature, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

⁶ See, e.g., Grandey A.A., Diefendorff J.M., Rupp D.E. (eds.) *Emotional Labor in the 21st Century: Diverse Perspectives on the Psychology of Emotion Regulation at Work*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

⁷ see, e.g., Szanto Th. Emotional self-alienation // *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*. 2017. №

inside and outside the service industry. The authors, followers of Hochschild, can be roughly divided into two groups: the first group includes those who identify, and study the positive/bright aspects of EL as well as the researchers of the negative/dark aspects (see e.g. Ward, J. and McMurray, 2015), while the second group consists of those who use the concept of alienation, alienating or alienated EL and study the negative consequences of alienation – disorientation, burnout, inequality and exploitation.

The concept of EL reflects universal characteristics of the commercialization of emotions in contemporary societies; however, much of what we understand about emotional labor has been derived from studies conducted in Western societies⁸. Meanwhile, the processes involved in performing EL and its consequences can differ markedly across societies, taking into account varying cultural representations and methods of emotion regulation. Consequently, the experience of executing EL can be contradictory, with its benefits and costs varying significantly. Therefore, the potential exists to interrogate the alienating effects of emotional labor in other, non-Western societies, as well as the very concept of alienation and alienating emotional labor itself.

The central question of this presentation is how cultural perceptions of emotions, and the broader emotional culture of society under study, influence the formation of rules surrounding EL and its execution overall, and how cultural perception of emotions can determine the consequences of EL in particular alienating experience. From this inquiry arises the exploration of what regimes and styles of EL we may observe within the socio-cultural context. A primary concern of this paper is the ambiguity surrounding the methodological significance, explanatory potential, and limitations of the concept of EL and alienating EL when studied across different cultural contexts. Given that performing EL in service-oriented sectors and other areas involving contact work necessitates specific rules for emotional expression alongside organizational demands placed on workers, it becomes possible to trace how these rules are established, their sources, and the cultural understandings that underpin them. This presentation will demonstrate the necessity for incorporating cultural variables into the conceptualization and research protocols regarding analysis of international studies of EL. We will outline types of data that should be included in EL research to account for its particularities while enhancing its heuristic value.

41 (1). P. 260–286.; *Yildirim M., Türker N.* The effect of emotional labor on work alienation: A study at hotel Businesses // *Journal of Business Research – Turk.* 2018. № 10 (3). P. 606–621.; *Tsang K.K., Wu H.* Emotional labour as alienated labour versus self-actualized labour in teaching: Implications of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic for the debate // *Educational Philosophy and Theory.* 2022.

⁸ *Mastracci S., Adams I.* Is emotional labor easier in collectivist or individualist cultures? An East–West comparison // *Public Personnel Management.* 2019. Vol. 48. № 3. P. 325–344.

Emotional labor in different cultural contexts: alienating emotional labor is a problem only for Western societies?

Over the years the EL studies addressed the following issues: is EL always a contributory factor to alienation; what strategies one could use to avoid the consequences of alienation; what is the role of workers themselves in the context of alienating conditions; can alienation expand beyond work; how does inequality facilitate emotional alienation? A few studies connect EL and general alienation from work, by which separation from work, context and own self is understood⁹. However, burnout, absence of dedication, dissatisfaction and deviations in a workplace do not necessarily result from alienation: alienation is represented by a distinct psychological pain:

Alienation is a condition in which the individual becomes isolated and cut off from the product of his or her work, having given up the desire for self-expression and control over his or her own fate at work. The individual enacts a role estranged from the kind of life of which the individual is capable¹⁰.

The scientists that study EL of state employees¹¹ considered to be the source of alienation the feeling display rules, which “dictate the form, content, and appropriateness of emotional displays, thereby separating workers from the design and control of the labor process. Workers, therefore, are estranged from their emotional product and the process of emotion production”¹². The costs of alienation from work through EL are especially disturbing for state workers:

After many months of deep acting, it becomes difficult to ascertain where “real” selves end, and company selves begin. Over time, employees cannot distance themselves from what they perceive to be ‘inauthentic’ attributes even off the job¹³.

Alienation from work could be not only the result of feigning emotions, but also the result of diligent and sincere following of the feeling display rules¹⁴.

⁹ *Mastracci S., Adams I.* “That’s what the money’s for”: Alienation and emotional labor in public service // *Administrative Theory and Praxis*. 2018. № 40 (4). P. 1–16.

¹⁰ *O’Donohue W., Nelson W.* Alienation: An old concept with contemporary relevance for human resource management // *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*. 2014. № 22 (3). P. 302.

¹¹ *Mastracci S., Adams I.* “That’s what the money’s for”: Alienation and emotional labor in public service // *Administrative Theory and Praxis*. 2018. № 40 (4). P. 304–319.

¹² *Brook P.* The alienated heart: Hochschild’s “emotional labor” thesis and the anti-capitalist politics of alienation // *Capital & Class*. 2009. № 33 (2). P. 12.

¹³ *Erickson R.J., Ritter C.* Emotional labor, burnout, and inauthenticity: Does gender matter? // *Social Psychology Quarterly*. 2001. № 64 (2). P. 359.

¹⁴ *Mastracci S., Adams I.* “That’s what the money’s for”: Alienation and emotional labor in public service // *Administrative Theory and Praxis*. 2018. № 40 (4). P. 6.

Hochschild also assumed that estrangement from one's own self and burnout is possible in case of both deep and surface acting¹⁵.

Moreover, identification and satisfaction with job are no guarantee against feeling alienation¹⁶ and although other researchers¹⁷ note positive objective and subjective sides of EL, this does not imply that there is no connection between EL and alienation¹⁸. An ability to confront formal display rules does not mean permission to ignore them completely; it is important that EL is a definitive and everyday working process: "Deep acting tends to become more difficult with each iteration of the role. Frequent repetition tends to blunt felt emotion"¹⁹. In the study by Mastracci and Adams²⁰ the alienating consequences of EL in the state sector as opposed to the private sector are highlighted, and the most interesting point is that they distinguish a unique aspect of EL in the civil service: "the alienated public servant can, in turn, alienate citizens from government"²¹. This means that EL contributes to the alienation not just from work, client, superior and workers themselves, but to the alienation of society from state authorities as well.

We aim to analyze both universal and culturally specific characteristics of EL as a phenomenon and explore the potential of this concept in examining cultural particularities related to EL. The term EL was introduced by Arlie Hochschild (2019/1983) and is defined as a process whereby workers are expected to manage their feelings according to established organizational rules while receiving formal monetary compensation. In this regard, the following questions may be posed. Since «much of what we know about emotional labor comes from a specific cultural context»²², is the phenomenon of emotional labor universal? Are the causes and consequences of emotional labor universal or culturally determined? Are there emerging findings that challenge established Western perspectives? How does cultural context shape the consequences of emotional labor? Are the consequences of emotional labor—such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and loss of job meaning—universal? What should be included in research protocols on emotional labor to account for cultural variables?

¹⁵ Hochschild A. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

¹⁶ Mastracci S., Adams I. "That's what the money's for": Alienation and emotional labor in public service // *Administrative Theory and Praxis*. 2018. № 40 (4). P. 7.

¹⁷ Bolton S.C. *Emotion Management in the Workplace*. London: Palgrave, 2005.

¹⁸ Mastracci S., Adams I. "That's what the money's for": Alienation and emotional labor in public service // *Administrative Theory and Praxis*. 2018. № 40 (4). P. 8.

¹⁹ Ashforth B.E., Humphrey R.H. Emotional labor in service roles: The influence of identity // *Academy of Management Review*. 1993. № 18 (1). P. 97.

²⁰ Mastracci S., Adams I. "That's what the money's for": Alienation and emotional labor in public service // *Administrative Theory and Praxis*. 2018. № 40 (4).

²¹ Ibid. P. 8.

²² Mesquita B., Delvaux E. A cultural perspective on emotion labor / Grandey A., Diefendorff J., Rupp D. (Eds.). *Emotional labor in the 21st century*. New York: Routledge, 2013. P. 251.

Universal characteristics of EL include its orientation towards service provision and consumerism, profit generation, client retention through contact work and mutual recognition; standardization of organizational or corporate emotion management rules for monitoring and control; development of emotional labor skills through specialized training; a trend towards servilization of professions or emphasizing service components in labor; emergence of EL in various occupations previously considered devoid of such significance; and an intensification of EL linked to employee burnout, stress and ill-being. Culturally specific characteristics defining EL encompass understandings of emotions and their significance in people's lives and society (emotional culture—desired vs. undesired emotions, intensity of emotional life, etc.); the relationship between collectivist and individualistic values in understanding emotions; the importance placed on emotional restraint/suppression versus expression; methods for managing emotions within institutional and private/impulsive contexts. The concept of alienating emotional labor²³ exemplifies how cultural differences manifest distinctly: in non-Western societies, EL might not lead to stress or burnout nor be perceived as a burden, as supported by various empirical data²⁴. Additionally, styles or methods of executing EL may reflect local cultural and socio-economic contexts — a finding corroborated by Russian studies²⁵.

The uncertainty of consequences of EL for workers became the reason for conducting meta-analysis of 175 of primary studies that concerned a variety of different connections between EL and its consequences (emotional burnout, depersonalization, personal achievements, and job satisfaction). The results of this meta-analysis suggest that EL might be both harmful and useful for employees and have positive as well as negative impact on burnout and job satisfaction owing to the utilized strategy of EL, where surface acting leads to negative consequence. A significant result could be considered the point that the strategy of deep acting facilitates depersonalization, in a greater degree contributes to personal self-realization and job satisfaction, which provides additional support to the line of research focused on the positive consequences of EL. Furthermore, the following ambiguity of consequences of EL in collectivist and individualist cultures became apparent: the difference between individualist and collectivist cultures plays an important role in the way of perception of EL by workers; moreover, individualist cultures are more sensitive to negative consequences of²⁶. However, it should

²³ *Simonova O.* The “bright” and “dark” sides of emotional labor: The concept of alienation in the theory of A.R. Hochschild and modern research // *The Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*. 2023. Vol. 26. № 1. P. 88–117.

²⁴ *Mastracci S., Adams I.* Is emotional labor easier in collectivist or individualist cultures? An East–West comparison // *Public Personnel Management*. 2019. Vol. 48. № 3. P. 325–344.

²⁵ *Temkina A., Litvina D., Novkunskaya A.* Emotional styles in Russian maternity hospitals: Juggling between khamstvo and smiling // *Emotions and Society*. 2021. № 3 (1). P. 95–113.

²⁶ See *Mastracci S., Adams I.* Is emotional labor easier in collectivist or individualist cultures? An East–West comparison // *Public Personnel Management*. 2019. № 48 (3). P. 325–344.

be noted that in this meta-analysis the notion of alienation was not applied to interpret results, although it appeared in the studies included in the sampling.

Emotional labor performance and its social and psychological consequences: emotional culture matters

Given the contradictory results of various studies on emotional labor (EL) conducted in different professional fields, it can be assumed that EL may depend on cultural context and the cultural model of understanding emotions, relationships, and employee identity. In this regard, research in cultural psychology is based on the dichotomy of individualistic and collectivistic cultures (although it is clear that this dichotomy is conditional, it nevertheless serves as a starting point for exploring this area). Therefore, it is possible to consider the following questions: how important is employee autonomy in the workplace, how does personal satisfaction with work align with the establishment of harmonious relationships at work, and how do these factors interact? Cultural differences in the perception of desirable and undesirable emotions in the workplace, as well as their intensity, duration, and frequency, are also significant. In individualistic cultures, altering the emotion itself is often preferred, whereas in collectivistic cultures, suppressing and modifying behavioral reactions is more common. Emotion management may also be viewed differently across cultural contexts; for example, the costs of EL may be perceived as higher in Western societies and lower in non-Western ones. Another important factor is the value placed on the authenticity of emotions and their expression: while authenticity is regarded as a virtue in Western cultures, it is often seen as a sign of personal immaturity in many non-Western cultures, such as Japan. To further elaborate on this, we will refer to the broader perspective on emotional culture from the viewpoints of sociology and social psychology.

Psychologists have identified two models of understanding emotions in individualistic and collectivistic cultures²⁷. In the first model, emotions are viewed as personal mental states, and authenticity of emotions is highly valued. In the second model, emotions are more closely associated with relationships and the values of the group experiencing them; accordingly, individuals are oriented toward shared emotions, sometimes at the expense of their own experiences. In the first case, emotions are understood as universal mental states within the individual, whereas in the second, emotions are seen as relational phenomena realized through social interaction. This distinction also implies differences in emotion regulation strategies: in individualistic cultures, emotions are typically linked to a specific person, and the adaptation of these emotions to social expectations is not always required (or is less emphasized). In contrast, in collectivistic cultures, emotions are often shaped by social interactions: social demands regarding the

²⁷ *Mesquita B., Delvaux E. A cultural perspective on emotion labor / Grandey A., Diefendorff J., Rupp D. (Eds.). Emotional labor in the 21st century. New York: Routledge, 2013. P. 271–292.*

expression and regulation of emotions are internalized as part of an individual's identity²⁸. Therefore, the similarity or difference in emotional norms at work and in private contexts may have significant implications for the performance of EL: if Western societies maintain a clear distinction between public and private emotional expression, and (service) employees suppress or regulate their emotions according to organizational or group norms, then in collectivistic cultures, the differences between workplace and private emotional expression may be less pronounced or even nonexistent.

The problem of burnout in the workplace, and among service workers in general, has been widely discussed in Western research across various professions and occupational groups. Typically, it is associated with the intensity of emotional labor, as employees are often required to manage their emotions not according to their own rules and are not free to express their feelings as they would in private contexts. The phenomenon of burnout is theoretically linked to subjective aspects such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization²⁹, and the lack of opportunities for self-actualization and self-regulation that arise when employees must constantly regulate their emotions at work³⁰. Some studies suggest that the EL of employees may be more costly³¹, with the restriction of emotional expression being particularly pronounced among certain occupational groups. Comparative studies of public sector employees in different cultures (countries of Southeast Asia and countries of Western Europe and North America) have revealed different relationships between the intensity of EL and burnout. For example, employees from Asian countries are more likely to report that the need to display required emotions at work, even if they do not correspond to their true feelings, is just as stressful as the need to suppress undesirable emotions³². In previous cross-cultural studies, researchers have also found that Chinese employees experience less burnout when managing emotions at work than their American counterparts³³.

²⁸ Townsend S.S.M., Markus H.R., Bergsieker H.B. My choice, your categories: The denial of multiracial identities // *Journal of Social Issues*. 2009. № 65 (1). P. 185–204.; Uchida Y., Kitayama S. Happiness and unhappiness in east and west: Themes and variations // *Emotion*. 2009. № 9 (4). P. 441–456.; Masuda T., Ellsworth P.C., Mesquita B., Leu J., Tanida S., Van de Veerdonk E. Placing the face in context: Cultural differences in the perception of facial emotion // *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 2008. № 94 (3). P. 365–381.

²⁹ Maslach C., Leiter M.P. *The Burnout Challenge: Managing People's Relationships with Their Jobs*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022.

³⁰ Hochschild A.R. *Upravlyaemoe serdtse: kommertsializatsiya chuvstv [The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling]*. Moscow: Delo RANHiGS, 2019.

³¹ Hülsheger U.R., Schewe A.F. On the costs and benefits of emotional labor: a meta-analysis of three decades of research // *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*. 2011. № 16 (3). P. 361–389.; Grandey A.A., Diefendorff J.M., Rupp D.E. (eds.) *Emotional Labor in the 21st Century: Diverse Perspectives on the Psychology of Emotion Regulation at Work*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

³² Mastracci S., Adams I. Is emotional labor easier in collectivist or individualist cultures? An East–West comparison // *Public Personnel Management*. 2019. № 48 (3). P. 325–344.

³³ Allen J.A., Diefendorff J.M., Ma Y. Differences in emotional labor across cultures: A comparison

This and similar findings suggest that the negative consequences of EL may be less pronounced from the perspective of subjective well-being among Chinese employees than among American employees, possibly due to the higher value placed on group harmony in Chinese culture, which is equally important for both successful resolution of cultural tasks and for social adaptation and harmonious relationships.

Are the causes of burnout truly identical in Western and non-Western societies, in individualistic and collectivistic cultural contexts? How is burnout related to the cultural meanings of work and daily emotional regulation? Apparently, EL and its accompanying burnout threaten individual well-being and job satisfaction where the rules and practices of the workplace significantly deviate from everyday emotional regulation in a specific cultural context and limit individuality. Based on various comparative studies, we can tentatively conclude that in individualistic cultures, managing emotions at work is often perceived as a burden, constraining self-expression and independence (dissonance is felt). In collectivistic cultures, managing emotions at work resembles habitual behavior aligned with an orientation towards others' emotions and maintaining relationships (dissonance is not felt). Emotional labor can be stressful to the extent that the emotions expressed at work diverge from personally experienced emotions³⁴ – an idea rooted in the cultural model in which feelings, emotions, and preferences are viewed as defining individual identity. Therefore, we may assume that the concept of alienation is more relevant for Western societies and their individualistic cultures, which understand relationships in work and private contexts, as well as the perception and expression of emotions, in accordance with the rules of these cultures.

Undoubtedly, the issue of alienation in the workplace and alienating emotional labor (EL) requires further investigation. However, it is now possible to incorporate cultural variables into the study of EL and its consequences, and to reconsider the concept of alienating EL in this light. It should also be noted that a comprehensive understanding of emotions in culture necessitates a kind of “bridge” – a description of the local cultural context and the reception of global trends in professions and occupational fields related to EL, as well as an assessment of the universalization of its characteristics and other global trends, such as commercialization, medicalization, the spread of the ideology of neoliberalism, and the dissemination of therapeutic discourses among others. Thus, it is important to identify the types of data that should be included in EL research³⁵. It is essential to incorporate the specific features of the cultural context

of Chinese and US service workers // *Journal of Business and Psychology*. 2014. № 29 (1). P. 21–35.

³⁴ *Hochschild A.R.* Upravlyaemoe serdtse: kommertsializatsiya chuvstv [The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling]. Moscow: Delo RANHiGS, 2019.

³⁵ For example – *Temkina A., Litvina D., Novkunskeya A.* Emotional styles in Russian maternity hospitals: Juggling between khamstvo and smiling // *Emotions and Society*. 2021. № 3 (1). P. 95–113.

at the intersection of historical conditions, characteristics of the professional sphere, and social environment (1). Second, particular attention should be paid to the features of emotional culture: it is necessary to investigate how emotions and feelings are valued within the society – whether individual emotional states or group relationships are prioritized (2). It is also important to examine the extent to which both the work itself and emotional labor are culturally appreciated (3). In this regard, the question of employee autonomy in the workplace becomes significant: it is necessary to assess the degree of autonomy granted to employees within both organizational settings and the broader cultural context (4). Additionally, it is important to determine whether organizational rules for managing emotions exist, and how these rules differ from everyday norms of emotional regulation (5). From this, it is necessary to identify preferred strategies for emotion management: one should identify valued or commonly chosen strategies for managing emotions and explore whether alternatives to deep acting and surface acting exist within the given context (6). The issue of burnout is also relevant in light of the aforementioned factors: it is important to investigate whether burnout is a significant concern in the field under study, to identify its causes, and to examine specific stressors such as work quality, service quality, labor intensity, cultural norms regarding breaks, and other relevant factors (7).

For example, let's turn to the Russian context. The phenomenon of EL and its specific features are closely linked to the Russian economic, social, and cultural context³⁶. According to research³⁷, there exists a well-developed understanding of EL within Russian labor sectors, and its analysis shows transformations within service industries and the broader professional landscape. Nevertheless, previous understanding of services, interpersonal dynamics, and service delivery models remain influential and continue to compete with newer frameworks. Consequently, practices considered normalized and unproblematic in Western societies – such as the expectation to “serve” clients and display positive emotions—often appear non-standardized and problematic in the Russian context. Conversely, issues commonly discussed in Western literature—such as the lack of autonomy in EL and the formalization of emotion expression rules – are perceived as normative or even desirable in Russia. Researchers also examine the clash of historically established cultural styles of performing EL in Russia, such as the Soviet-era service style characterized by “rudeness” or “boorishness” and the neoliberal “smiling” style. Employees are more likely to experience burnout as a result of this cultural confrontation rather than from suppressing their own emotions in accordance with organizational rules, as is the case in the medical sector.

³⁶ *Simonova O.* The “bright” and “dark” sides of emotional labor: The concept of alienation in the theory of A.R. Hochschild and modern research // *The Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*. 2023. Vol. 26. № 1. P. 88–117.

³⁷ *Simonova O.A.* Emotion management and the professional culture of administrative social workers in Russia: Common standards versus the moral mission of social care // *Journal of Social Policy Studies*. 2017. Vol. 15. № 1. P. 129–142.

Conclusion

To conclude it is safe to assume in reliance upon the given examples that the ambiguity of the original Hochschild's concept gave rise to a renewed surge of interest to alienation from work and alienating EL, the negative consequences of which started being perceived more reflexively. The concept of alienation serves Hochschild for reflection of subjective experience of inequality, deprivation, burnout after emotion management, as well as certain hopelessness, resignation to the situation, when service industry workers accept this burden as common for their low status position. In further works the researchers highlighted the danger of emotional hyperregulation (or alienating EL), which tends to become customary, and, in some cases, institutionalized³⁸. It is emotional hyperregulation that can lead to loss of orientation, exhaustion, absence of contact with one's own feelings, loss of one's "genuine" identity, deterioration in relations with others and that is what Hochschild warns about. However, the spread of EL research in non-Western societies has led researchers to recognize the importance of the cultural context in which it takes place: the universal characteristics of EL are combined with culturally specific, uneven development of capitalist relations. Therefore, the notion of 'alienating EL' requires a reflexive and careful application; EL, even when quite intense, cannot always be perceived as a burden, as an alienating force from work, co-workers, the organization and one's own experiences. Numerous studies have explored the inequality associated with the burden of emotional labor, but cultural variables remain unexamined. It is essential to consider emotional labor within a culturally and historically contextualized framework, distinguishing between culturally specific and universal aspects. Universal characteristics of emotional labor can lead to different outcomes in different cultural contexts. The adoption of neoliberal ideology, social order, and psychotherapeutic culture in non-Western societies results in unique rules and practices of emotional labor. Professional burnout, a frequent companion of emotional labor, may not be manifested or articulated in non-Western societies, highlighting differences in the valuation of psychological states. The extent to which alienation and alienating EL theory can be heuristic in non-Western cultural contexts needs to be explored.

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³⁸ see, e.g., Szanto Th. Emotional self-alienation // *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*. 2017. № 41 (1). P. 260–286.; Mastracci S., Adams I. "That's what the money's for": Alienation and emotional labor in public service // *Administrative Theory and Praxis*. 2018. № 40 (4); Grandey A.A., Gabriel A.S. Emotional labor at a crossroads: Where do we go from here? // *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*. 2015. № 2. P. 323–349.

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Отчуждающий эмоциональный труд в не западных обществах: проблема или норма?

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Настоящая статья представляет доклад, сделанный на 5-м Форуме Международной социологической ассоциации в июле этого года в Рабате, Марокко (на сессии «Аффективные и эмоциональные измерения отчуждения: общества модерна, агенты, структуры и процессы» исследовательского комитета № 36 «Теория и исследования отчуждения»). В статье рассматривается эмоциональный труд как объект социологии в контексте проблемы отчуждения. Хотя отчуждающий эмоциональный труд широко изучался в западных контекстах, в данном докладе анализируется применимость данной концепции в незападных обществах. Автор выделяет культурные различия в осуществлении управления эмоциями и противоречивый опыт эмоционального труда, который не всегда становится отчуждающим. В статье подчеркивается необходимость переосмысления понятия «отчуждающий эмоциональный труд» вне западных социокультурных условий.

Ключевые слова: эмоциональный труд, отчуждающий эмоциональный труд, культурные различия в управлении эмоциями, выгорание

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