On the Development of Methodology of Feministic Economics: Synthesis of Institutional Theory and Hierarchical Analysis

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Abstract: Synthesis of instruments of one of the institutional theory’s directions, namely the economy of power and hierarchical analysis is used for the development of methodology of feministic economics. Such categories as “gender power”, “institutes of gender power”, “institutional role” have been specified and introduced in scientific turnover. The possibility of their utilization has been shown by the example of the institutes of gender power functioning in the modern economic environment of Russia. Using the method of hierarchical analysis the process of their interaction has been studied and the main parameters of inefficiency of the given institutes’ hierarchical system have been defined. These parameters are the following ones: the lack of feedback and laterals between the elements of system, unification of the power’s impact on the subjects being on one and the same level of hierarchy, incoherence. It has been determined that modernization of hierarchical system of gender power institutions should be consisted in sufficient transformation of its content taking into consideration the revealed disparities of interlevel internal and external interactions.

Key words: Feministic economics · Methodology · Institutes of gender power · System · Efficiency of interaction

INTRODUCTION

Feministic economics as the area of economics began to form during two or three last decades. Recently the given aspect of scientific knowledge has strenuously begun to use the instruments of different areas of institutional economics in the frames of which it has been determined that gender patterns of behavior could be considered as the institute [e.g. 1; 2]. It is affirmed that they act indirectly through the other institutes (labour market, property rights, government service, education, family) providing “institutionalized advantages and disadvantages” according to gender [2], reproduce gender inequality in different spheres of social life [2; 3; 4; 5]. However, as a rule scientist pay attention to the investigation of the influence of definite institutes on gender inequality. As reasonably emphasize M.L. Krook and F. Mackay, the instruments of institutional theory are used even so only for the investigation of formal institutions [5]. Today the mostly widespread objects of research are as follows: 1) election policy limiting women’s representation in political life [e.g. 6; 5 and others]; 2) institutes of labour market as the main sphere of gender inequality reproduction [e.g. 7; 2 and others]; 3) different gender regimes of welfare states [8; 9 and others]. These marked institutes are analyzed only as atomic units. Besides, the institutes, providing internal determinacy of economic agents’ behavior which according to the postulates of behavior model in the power theory explains the nature of its appearance, have not been included in the given institutional structure [more detailed in: 10].

Methods (the instruments of research). We think that study of feministic economics as the object of institutional analysis demands specification of two aspects. The first includes accurate definition of categorical instruments of research using the instruments of one of the aspects of institutional theory, namely
The main contents. Using the identified methodological basis of research we’ll characterize the institutes of gender power operating in the modern economic environment of Russia (Table 1).

As the elements of any system the institutes presented in the table do not exist separately and independently from each other, they interact, interpenetrate and “interlace” forming the complex system of hierarchical relations. “Ties between the elements shouldn’t obligatory have binary (bipartite) character and cover only two elements; ternary (tripartite) and, in common case, n-ary (multipartite) ties are quite possible as well. They may be both symmetric and not” [14: 31]. The process of their interaction in the hierarchical system of gender power institutes in the modern economic environment of Russia is given in Fig 1.

This scheme makes possible to conclude the following. Firstly, hierarchical structure of the gender power institutes is being descending, i.e. the state continuous to influence considerably the aims and results of the micro agents activity. It presupposes strict hierarchy of all levels, i.e. every higher level of hierarchy limitsthe possibilities of the lower level, defining by this its institutional status. Reproduction of hierarchical power structure is the result of the dependence from the previous path of development despite the transition to the market economy which presupposes formation and establishment of the characteristic system of institutes including the power decentralization. Concerning formation and reproduction of gender power hierarchy it means that the state reserves the role of the chief

![Hierarchical system of gender power institutes in the environment of modern economy of Russia](image)  

Fig1: Hierarchical system of gender power institutes in the environment of modern economy of Russia
### Table 1: The System of Gender Power Institutes in Modern Russia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutes (subjects)</th>
<th>Object of power</th>
<th>Aims of power</th>
<th>Functions of power</th>
<th>Disposition of gender power contents</th>
<th>Institutional role</th>
<th>Kinds of penalties for violation of power disposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State and regional power of national economy</td>
<td>All econo-mic agents</td>
<td>Establishment of fundamental rules of economic behavior</td>
<td>Limit of access to resources and goods. Fixation of formal gender equality</td>
<td>For men - worker, professional, For women - working mother</td>
<td>State system of compulsion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power of organization</td>
<td>Emplo-yees</td>
<td>Direct influence on behavior of other economic and state agents</td>
<td>Maximization of profits as a result of cheap and more skilled women's labour use</td>
<td>Loss of corporate saving as a result of attachment by the power subject (gender gap in payment)</td>
<td>For men - worker without family obligations, For women - worker burdened with family obligations</td>
<td>System of compulsion existing in organization and running by the organization itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power of social environment</td>
<td>Partici-pant and groups</td>
<td>Control of group parti-ci-pants' behavior</td>
<td>Reproduction of vital behavior standard models for women-working mother or housewife, for men - principal earner</td>
<td>For men - principal earner and a person to rely on For women-housewife</td>
<td>Sanctions carried out by social group (social blame)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family power in its head</td>
<td>Women and men</td>
<td>Using of power object's resources with the aim of appropri-ation of power rent,</td>
<td>Maximization of benefit of power subject in acquisition of power rent,</td>
<td>Family duties should be well-defined according to sex, spheres of professional activity, forms of spare</td>
<td>For men - principal earner and a person to rely on For women-housewife</td>
<td>Sanctions are chosen in dependen-ce with the type of gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal power</td>
<td>Women Men</td>
<td>Control of own behavior</td>
<td>Effect of status stereotypes Family duties should be well-defined according to sex, Behavior of men and women should correspond to gender status</td>
<td>For men - principal earner and a person to rely on For women-housewife</td>
<td>Internal sanctions depending on moral norms (compunction, guilt)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1) For our analysis Russian economy is presented as the closed system, i.e. it has been excluded the analysis of influence of the standards of international law regulating human rights on the national legislation (system of formal institutes).

2) Detailed description of the given institute operation is given e.g. in [13]

patriarch, only in the modern sense, i.e. exactly the state initially defines the main set of institutional alternatives for the lower levels of hierarchy. Thus, the introduction of expansionary actions by RF government aimed at the growth of birth rate in the environment of market economy indicates the rollback to the elements of neo patriarchy when women are forced to return to their families and to remember about their natural destination. It is necessary to mention that State Duma deputies more than once preposed to introduce state compensations in the form of monthly pay for mothers-housewives having tree and more children in order to fix the function of mother in the environment of market economy. It is not coincidence that criticizing the leadership of our country on non-fulfillment of norms of Convention and its optional proceedings, ratified by RF, concerning the elimination of all forms of women's discrimination experts of U.N.O. expressed their anxiety "on the fact, indicating that state-participant underlined repeatedly the role of women as mothers and housewives" [15].

Secondly, institutes of gender power except the first level, assuming the spontaneous gender interaction of man and woman in the institute of family, are connected with each other only by direct ties. In such conditions the influence of lower levels on the higher levels of hierarchy is practically eliminated. On the one hand, it raises the possibility of manifestation of "arbitrary rule" by the higher levels of power. On the other hand, the lack of feedback relations of the gender power institutes means that the higher levels of hierarchy can’t correct the conditions of power’s disposition fulfillment promptly. Thus, the risk of nonoptimal interaction increases [In detail: 16]. Such conditions promote the low quality of functioning of each institute separately and
hierarchical system in whole. In this connection, it should necessary to pay attention at the slowness of hierarchical system of gender power. It is known that “the results of upper layer influence on the functioning of the bottom one show themselves as cumulative lag process with the lag extension by transfer from top to bottom layers” [14: 135]. It means that the rate of change becomes to be slower while moving from upper to lower levels of hierarchy. As a result of this contradiction the situation of sufficient institutional conflict between them appears [See in detail: 17]. Therefore, the scale of hierarchical system influences the quality of its functioning as well.

Thirdly, the character of relations among institutes of gender power is formed as “one for many”, i.e., it is per se the mass one. It means that the given hierarchical system does not take into consideration the diversification of power’s disposition influence on subjects, presenting on one and the same level of hierarchy. The results of such influence could be not well-defined. Thus, for example, the level of the achieved gender equality is quite different in the regions of Russia despite the fact that institutional environment there is formed in the frames of single national statutory requirement [See in detail: 18]. Types of gender interaction between spouses in Russian families are not homogeneous as well: in 15% of families egalitarian relations have been already established, in 20-25% of families patriarchal type of gender interaction of spouses has been realized so far, in all the rest families there is the transitional unbalanced type of relations [See in detail: 12]. It is no coincidence that Russia is in the first place over the divorce coefficient in the world. It is necessary to mention that in future functioning of the presented hierarchical system of the gender power institutes without revision on the higher level the rate of correspondence of decision making complexity to the invariants of behavior of the lower levels’ subsystems will both decrease the efficiency of the given system and impede its susceptibility to innovations [See in detail: 19].

The last factor is: one and the same economic agent acts in one power relations as the object of power and in the others as its subject. The position of economic agent in the system of gender power as its subject allows him subordinating the behavior of other economic agents. It gives him the possibility to lower costs which he has to incur as the object of power and “transmission” of these incurs to those economic agents who are the objects of power for him is include [20: 180-181]. It means that every level of hierarchy forming its own disposition of gender power obtains its own level of production which is defined by the correlation of its functioning costs and the revenue position. In terms of the fact that hierarchical system of gender power institutes is the descending one the norm of efficiency from the created abandonment costs and subordination costs should increase on every further level of hierarchy achieving its maximum on the higher level of hierarchy. I.e., profit gained on every level of hierarchy should exceed the profit of the previous level. It is necessary to mention that in the environment of the modern economy of Russia working potential of the descending hierarchical system achieves its maximum when the functions of human capital reproduction is completely “come down” to the level of housekeeping. As the results of numerous researches show, it is first of all increased women’s operating load due to traditional distribution of family duties [21].

CONCLUSION

It should be stated in whole that the current hierarchical system of gender power institutes in Russia has the low rate of efficiency. The state continuous to realize the function of “the principle patriarch” and the formal greater privileges and freedom of citizens are followed by the less possibilities of their realization, first of all. The representatives of scientific community insist on modernization of the given hierarchical system of institutes which should be realized not by the simple adoption of highly efficient institutes of gender equality, functioning in different countries, but are to be concluded in sufficient transformation of its contents taking into consideration revealed disproportions of inter level internal and external interactions. Otherwise, the risk to be “institutionally entrapped” the next time is greatly increased for our country.

Resume: The development of methodology of feministic economics as the object of institutional analysis has been made in two directions in this article. Firstly, the path of development of feministic economics’ categories on the basis of economic power relations research instruments accumulated by institutional theory has been defined. By the example of gender power institutes operating in the environment of modern Russian economy it has been shown the possibility of these categories utilization. Secondly, the use of hierarchical analysis has made possible to analyze the process of interaction between the institutes of gender power, functioning in Russia and
to determine the main parameters of inefficiency of the
given institutional system as the hierarchical system of
institutes.

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