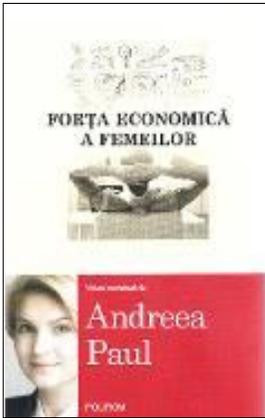


Andreea Paul, *The economic strength of women* (Andreea Paul, *Forța economică a femeilor*)



Andreea Paul, *Forța economică a femeilor*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2016, 376 p.

This year, the well-known publisher house Polirom, from Iasi, has brought to the public a remarkable work, coordinated by Mrs. Andreea Paul. The title itself, *The economic strength of women* can be regarded as intriguing and suggests a subject which has been only occasionally addressed – that of Romanian feminism within the economic environment. This volume is a follow up of another project, initiated by Andreea Paul 5 years ago, regarding *The political strength of women*. This

became a real success and was able to gather quite a few important names from different political parties under a common voice, proving thus there is a solidarity of women in politics regardless party politics and ideology.

The new volume, *The economic strength of women*, has benefited from 57 major contributions and is organized into three major parts, preceded by an introduction and followed by conclusions. The author starts by presenting the kind of subjects and questions the volume is covering and addressing, such as how much women and men work, where they work and how much they are paid, how the economists define gender inequality and what its impact on the whole society is. The book also looks at entrepreneurship and its motivations, who the successful women are and how they succeed in a fierce business competition, and why there are more and more public initiatives that support women entrepreneurship. On this background, the author reminds us about the initiative of the former European Commissioner on Justice, Viviane Reding,

regarding a 40% gender quota on company boards. (p.7)

In the first part, Andreea Paul enquires into a history of the women in business in Romania, as well as of women as employees and of the independent activities women were involved into. (p.13). The chapter regarding the history of women in business also describes the way in which the juridical and social statute of women has been changed from the first decades of the XIXth century, starting with "Caragea law", continuing with the Organic Regulations, the documents adopted during the 1848 Revolution, the Civil Code introduced by Alexandru Ioan Cuza. Such documents illustrate the inferior statute of women in relationship to men, a status quo preserved for a while. It wasn't until the beginning of the XXth Century that this situation slightly started to be altered. The second part of the chapter is focused on representative women figures in the modern and contemporary Romanian history and their role within the management of different association, schools, hospitals or charities.

The second chapter presents the emerging entrepreneurial female class within the Romanian capitalism framework. The author leaves the field of descriptive method in order to apply the research method of quantitative statistic data, using information presented by the National Institute of Statistics. The study shows that for the year 2015 only one in two women are "employed in the

workforce..."(p. 27), whereas we see more women "...among low income employees, more active in worst paid work areas" (p. 27).

At the same time, the author has identified and presented five key aspects of gender economy

a) Romania has the lowest employment rate among women in the European Union (EU);

b) the wage gap between men and women in Romania is among the lowest in the EU;

c) the share of employment of women in the workforce is influenced by the number of children;

d) the employment rate of women in the workforce is correlated with the number of children in preschool education forms;

e) 4 in 10 Romanian women have to manage the risk of poverty and social exclusion (pp.28-32)

The chapter concludes with a generous presentation of statistic data with respect to the female entrepreneurial class and types of activities.

The second part entitled "International public policy support for female entrepreneurship" hosts two contributions.

The first one signed by Ana Maria Ungheanu presents a series of methods by which several countries supported the promotion of women entrepreneurship. Here we find the tools supported by countries such as: Finland, Germany, Denmark, Letonia, Ireland, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa and France.

The incentives used by these countries can be summarized as

follows: grants for start-ups, financial assistance for the first employee, information platforms, services related to entrepreneurship, gender quota for the first 100 companies listed on the stock exchange, counseling for business development, micro-business formation stimulation, etc. (pp.83-100).

The second contribution, signed by His Excellency Vladimir Valky, ambassador of the Czech Republic in Bucharest, is questioning whether “women will dominate the twentieth century business”. He presents the project „Women Entrepreneurs”, a collaboration between the embassy and the „Association of Small and Medium Enterprises”, which has as a main purpose to motivate women to get involved in business, by reducing

their fear towards entrepreneurship. (p. 104)

The third part entitled “Experiences of entrepreneurial women in Romania” comprises 57 contributions signed by representatives of women entrepreneurship in Romania. Interestingly, the number of invitations sent by the coordinator was ten times higher. The women who agreed to contribute to this volume come from distinct management areas, have different ages and represent many fields of activity across the country. While reading this pages, we are left with the strong experience that competence, ambition, ability to innovate and willingness to perform were the necessary ingredients for success.

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