

## PRESS RELEASE

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### The Invention of Difference - Why do women struggle to get the top jobs and be paid fairly?

Why are women paid less than men in every major economy? And why are women leaders still the exception, not the rule?

In their groundbreaking new book, *The Invention of Difference*, psychologists Jo and Binna Kandola examine the issues, tracing the history of women and work – with often surprising results. Binna Kandola says: “We refer to the Yabba Dabba Do! theory – the idea that *The Flintstones* was a documentary, showing Fred as the hunter-gatherer and Wilma as the nurturer. It is ultimately unknowable how cavemen and women divided their roles, but we think they were far more evenly split.”

The authors found that up until the industrial revolution, women performed a wide range of roles inside and outside the home. “For example, in the 13th century, there were female carpenters and masons,” says Binna, “so the division of labour we see today is a relatively new.”

It was only during the industrial revolution that the idea of a sole male ‘breadwinner’ emerged, and a woman’s role became increasingly idealised and focused on home and family.

#### **Danger of stereotyping**

Such stereotyping of the sexes is still going strong and preventing organisations from achieving diversity, the authors argue. Female stereotypes may now be more positive than they once were, but women are generally labeled with traits such as being caring, which are not deemed as valuable in a business context as ‘male’ traits, such as being decisive.

“There is overwhelming evidence that there are no genuine differences between the genders,” says Jo Kandola, “but perpetuating the idea of differences means women are continuing to be held back – particularly when it comes to leadership roles.”

The authors look at how organisations can take action. “Recognising bias in an organisation – and having the will to change it – are both key to eliminating prejudice against women in the workplace,” says Jo. “Challenging bias is everybody’s job, so we need to make it part of everything we do.”

*The Invention of Difference* is being published on 25 November 2013 by Pearn Kandola Publishing and will be available from [www.pearnkandola.com](http://www.pearnkandola.com) and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) . *The Invention of Difference* follows Binna Kandola's critically-acclaimed book, *The Value of Difference*, published in 2009, which examined unconscious bias and how to eliminate it in organisations.

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