In research, much attention has been given to the conflicts related to workforce diversity in organizations. Some has focused on direct conflict, while other research has focused on frustrations from lack of career progress and the structural barriers that create those frustrations. In these cases, the conflict that is described or analyzed is one that is experienced most strongly by women or people of color, and less so by majority white males.

In "**Managing Diversity and Second-Order Conflict**," Raymond A. Friedman and Martin N. Davidson propose that those who study diversity conflict need to recognize the distinction between first-order diversity conflict and second-order diversity conflict. The former refers to forms of discrimination; first-order disputes affect subordinant group members most strongly in the organization, are morally unambiguous for most, and are organized around set organizational and societal procedures.

Second-order diversity conflict refers to disputes over remedies designed to eliminate discrimination. It involves dominant as well as subordinant group members (so that more people are affected), is more morally ambiguous, and lacks set procedures for resolution. As a result, second-order disputes tend to remain hidden, despite being widespread, resulting in hostility. The presence of second-order conflict may undermine efforts to resolve first-order disputes, and lead to escalation of conflict between people from different identity groups.

While the conflict resulting from first-order conditions of discrimination and prejudice is important and continues to be deeply analyzed, the impact of organizational

responses to discrimination reveals an equally important layer of conflict that is not as well explored. Remedies such as affirmative action, diversity training, minority mentoring programs, and identity network groups are designed to resolve first-order diversity conflicts, but they in turn create backlash and resentment, the seeds of second-order diversity conflicts. Recognizing this distinction is critical for understanding the dynamics of diversity conflicts.

To request a copy of the full research paper, please contact Martin at http://www.leveragingdifference.com/contact/.