

Perceptions, Responses and Challenges of Collecting Micro Data in Labour Conflict Situations

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KEYWORDS Labour Conflicts. Micro Data. Worker. Industrial Relations. Strike

ABSTRACT Settings such as strikes, lockouts and other forms of labour conflicts could lack well-developed systems for routine data collection. To understand labour conflict situations is to give some thought to the ways in which social facts can be and are gathered. The prestige of such a 'scientific study' is great enough that a number of non-researchers may wish to know about the methods adopted. The most valuable outcome is the re-examination of concepts, premises and procedures. Here lies the value of a higher level of methodological sophistication and greater precision in labour conflict research. Real concerns are those relating to ethics, physical security, political implications of activities in rapidly changing environments, logistical difficulties and the technical challenges of working with populations of unusual demographic compositions in the workplace. Therefore, the ethical bottom line must be that if data collection method cannot be used safely and responsibly, they should not be used at all. Micro data collection requires significant commitments of finances, human resources and time, but it can help ensure efficiency and success in the longer term as well as provide data for advocacy purposes. This paper examines the methodological tool of micro data collection, its perceptions, responses and challenges in labour conflict situations.

INTRODUCTION

To understand labour conflict situations is to give some thought to the ways in which social facts can be and are gathered. Settings such as strikes, lockouts and other forms of labour conflicts could lack well-developed systems for routine data collection. Available information may not cover the subject of interest in enough detail, but the systematic observation and classification of any phenomenon allows for detailed learning. The prestige of such a 'scientific study' is great enough that a number of non-researchers may wish to know about the methods adopted. Here lies the value of a higher level of methodological sophistication and greater precision in labour conflict research. The stereotype treatment of labour conflicts, as well as completely obsolete concepts in addition to almost unimaginable factual errors in texts and tables often result in a very sobering conclusion being drawn. Additionally, object and purpose of research determine the methodological approach, which can follow either humanistic or scientific traditions. Since the emergence of scientism, research has been strongly influenced by statistical and experimental research designs leading to clear, positivistic results. However, considering the whole process of planning research it becomes obvious that in selecting and delimiting the research problem, formulating hypotheses or objectives, determin-

ing sampling and measurements, elements of qualitative research dominate (Volkman 1997).

This paper provides an overview of micro data collection techniques. It is designed to examine the methodological tool of micro data collection, its perceptions, responses and challenges in labour conflict situations. It reveals an unprecedented wealth of publicly available data about each of the issue of labour conflicts. The paper argues that in order to make labour conflicts more responsive, it is imperative to strengthen the work of collecting, analyzing and disseminating and using data at the micro level. Using the evidences from Nigeria to explain labour conflicts based on the perceptions and responses of the environment, the paper adopts a set of methodology to include an assessment of published literature and media sources and a behavioural analysis framework.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions are considered to be fundamental to this paper. What is the role of research in identifying and developing new paradigms for labour conflict prevention and management? Is it possible to collect micro data on strikes, lockouts and other expressions of class struggle? How do researchers perceive this enterprise? How can they collect, organize and interpret micro data for meaningful presentation

and dissemination? How do the sides to a labour conflict respond to the techniques adopted by a researcher in micro data collection? What are the challenges inherent in this enterprise? These questions reflect on the availability of micro data through the use of sophisticated research techniques in labour conflict situations.

Labour Conflicts

For the purpose of this paper, the terms, 'labour', 'labour movement' and 'trade union' are used interchangeably. The definition of labour is adopted to be "an organized association of workers in a trade, group of trades or profession formed to protect and further the workers' rights and interests" (DFID 2000). Labour is a platform through which employees, through their representatives, participate in the determination of their terms of employment. It is rooted in the sustained joint suffering of workers in their relationship with the employer, arising from fear of unemployment and starvation. This relationship led to the development of a brotherhood of understanding, joint endeavour and mutual assistance; a situation that compelled workers to organize trade union as the most effective means of both exacting and demanding better conditions of service from the employers (Aidelokhai 1997). Labour movement is usually founded on its relevance and responsibility not only to workers but also to the society. The role of labour movements has always been to checkmate the excesses of government in terms of anti-people policies. Labour "aspires to be in the position to influence and affect government policies" in the areas of development plans, budgets, administrative regulations and programs implementation. Labour tends to have an "unequivocal stance against maladministration, corruption, injustice and oppression," and this has positioned the movement as a veritable opposition to predominantly inept regimes (Oseghale 2005; Onuorah 2007).

Biodun Sowunmi once asserted that, the social exclusion of the worker from the means of production is more often the unexamined prerequisite of the employment relationship (Sowunmi 2004). While modern technology has led to a reduced workforce and in many cases, greater productivity, some of the costs saved have often not reflected in the remuneration of workers, thereby marginalizing labour at the expense of profit. That is, the increased efficiency and higher

productivity has not reflected correspondingly in workers' remuneration, consequently leading to industrial conflicts and demand for better wages. This does not in any way lose sight of the new jobs created by technological advancements. Biodun Sowunmi further argues that:

the structures and very concept of trade unionism vary from one country to another. Workers' economic interests also differ; opposition to lay-offs in an industrialized country can obstruct the transfer of activities to and the resulting job creation in a developing country; pressure for substantial improvements in worker protection in the latter can be interpreted there as an indirect means of avoiding competition from cheaper workforce (Sowunmi 2004).

In Nigeria, the constant rise in the prices of petroleum products, the response of labour to these increases, and the attacks on labour are evidences of the failure of social dialogue on the economic and social needs of the Nigerian people, hence the labour conflicts. The breakdown of social dialogue is attributable to the eroded trust after series of breakdown of agreement. As argued by Sowunmi, the response of the government to the agitation of labour through strikes and protests was to accuse the movement of treason (Sowunmi 2004). Labour conflicts may also be expressed in the form of intra-union crisis. In Nigeria, the multiplicity of trade unions is reinforced by the amendment to the Trade Union Act by the Obasanjo-led government. It has been noted that some of the provisions of this amended Act were actually designed to weaken the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) (Sowunmi 2004). This may be resolved through the successful conduct of a delegates' conference. This adds to the fostering of a harmonious union/ employer relationship.

Labour conflicts have to be managed productively, through mediation and peace talks. Usually, warring parties are urged to come to a roundtable with the aim of resolving the crisis to allow the commencement of activities. Labour conflicts, which sometimes assume unprecedented proportions, arise from inherent opposing interests of employers and employees in work relations. Forms of labour conflicts include strike, work-to-rule, overtime ban, lock-in/out, intimidation, and lock-out. Work-to-rule, popularly known as 'go-slow', designed to restrict output through deliberate reduction in the pace of work

is by far the most common form of industrial action in Nigeria. On its part, overtime ban is a labour strategy “to impose additional cost on the employer if more production is needed.” In the lock-in/out action, “employees physically ‘take over’ the company premises, either by locking-in or locking-out the management staff, thus denying them access to or exit from the premises.” Intimidation is designed by labour to put “the employer in a bad light by doing things which are embarrassing or antithetical to normal behaviour.” The lock-out is the employers’ variant of strike, whereby the organization’s gates are locked to prevent the workers from entering the premises. Oftentimes, when labour has embarked on an action and resolution of the crisis is not in sight, the employer finds it expedient to lock out the workers, either to reduce overhead costs or to safeguard life and property (Fashoyin 1992).

Of all the forms of labour conflicts identified above, strike stands out. As observed by Fashoyin, “the unpalatable side of industrial relations, and one which the public often associate unions, is the strike.” The strike, according to him, is an indication of a breakdown of cordial relationship between labour and management, and it usually invites the most negative commentary (Fashoyin 1992). Strike is “a recognized weapon in law by which workers press home their demands.” On the other hand, striking workers should also realize that the employer has “the right to invoke the labour law that forbids workers to be paid for any period they are on strike.” This issue came to the fore in Nigeria when the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) accused the Federal Government of violating the labour law on the procedures to be followed before applying the ‘no-work-no-pay’ rule, hence the body vowed to resist attempt by the Federal Government to reduce university lecturers to ‘daily paid labourers’ (Oyebode 2008).

Strikes can thus be part of collective efforts and sacrifices to ensure that government acts in accordance with public welfare and the will of the people, and that the citizens must be treated fairly and decently. Strikes and other forms of class struggle paralyze socio-economic and institutional activities. When strikes are on, offices are usually under lock and key, while no one knows when it will end, particularly in the case of an indefinite strike action.

MICRO DATA AND AGGREGATE DATA

There is no gainsaying that data is relevant to organizations. Data can be used in formulating policies, whether by government agencies, labour experts, employers and labour organizations. That is, data helps to inform decision-making at any level, determines how institutions have to function. It changes the thinking of organizational leadership, develops information systems that make the data available accurately and in a timely way, and builds capacity to use the data efficiently.

Data assists agencies to assess and react to labour conflicts as well as assist in consolidating labour relations. Data strengthens the decision making structure within the economy and polity, and provides support for additional conflict prevention activities, supports mediation efforts, and provides the empirical basis for determining the impact of strike action. Data availability is strategic to the facilitation of business activities and economic development. It is the key economic indicator for business transactions. Data can be used to showcase a country’s industrial base to the international community. The availability of data and the myriad possibilities it creates also comes with the need to build an entirely new value system around the data (Adenekan 2008; Hood 2008). At this juncture, it can be said that, conflict is inevitable; the actors, particularly the governments have to evolve ways and means of resolving the grievances. To do this effectively, policy decisions must be based on data (Fashoyin 1992).

An initiative on data collection in labour conflict situations may be successful to varying degrees, perhaps because there are only very few guidelines for conducting the analysis. Secondly, the material used may be highly aggregated and highly simplified. That is, data is generally collected at too high a level of aggregation for it to be of much use. The problem of aggregate data is that of lead times involved in aggregating, analyzing and publishing the data. Much of the data may be lying dormant before analysis, while other priorities absorb the limited number of persons with the requisite analytical skills. There are also serious doubts as to the accuracy of this data, particularly as informants are likely to provide only that information of the true purpose of data collection and either avoid responding or give misleading information (Gray et al. 1996).

Various methods abound for the analysis of the incidences of labour conflicts. Conventional measures often used for this enterprise are frequency, proportion of workers involved and duration of action. Fashoyin posits that in the Nigerian context, "it is of critical importance to consider the number of disputes occur during a particular period and then the proportion of such disputes that ultimately led to strikes," an analysis that he considers useful both for evaluative and policy purposes. McGregor Gall and David Allsop have identified the four standard measures of aggregate strike activity to include by year, the number of strikes, the number of workers involved, the number of days not worked (or days "lost"), and the number of days not worked per thousand workers (Gall, Allsop n.d.). On his part, Fashoyin outlines the shortcomings of data presented in aggregate form, to the extent that, records on labour conflicts in Nigeria are far from satisfactory, mainly because of the method of compilation. The government agency which has the responsibility for gathering data on labour conflicts, "only records stoppages due to strikes where ten or more workers are involved, or when more than three working days are lost." Given the minimum requirements, a fairly large number of labour conflicts, particularly at the enterprise or branch level which are usually of shorter time periods, are not reported in official statistics. In spite of the legal obligations on employers to notify the Ministry in the case of labour conflict, many employers do not often comply. Quite revealing is that, it is only when the parties to a conflict are desirous of government's assistance in settlement that reports reach the Ministry or via the media (Fashoyin 1992).

Having examined some of the pitfalls of aggregate data, it is pertinent to state that, the availability of micro data is 'revolutionary'. Micro data emerges as a particular challenge to the domination of aggregate data. It attempts an in-depth and contemporary analysis of the entire dimensions and dynamism of labour conflicts. Whereas, it is vital to identify and learn from good practice how the use of micro data can contribute to more effective labour conflict response, the lack of micro data (or disaggregate data) is a challenge in addressing labour conflict issues. Micro data may be conceived as a critical component of the overall project of dispute resolution. It reveals the challenge of promoting dialogue, where there is disagreement with a view

to reaching a compromise. Micro data helps to make up for research often produced on the basis of poor designs, conducted over a short time periods and drawn from small, haphazard and unrepresentative samples. It supports the production of data that strives to be more representative, more objectively scientific and collected in ways that can be analyzed more quantitatively (Rodgers 2004).

Micro data makes it possible to track the sectoral performance of any strike action, and that is usually different from comparing one year's action(s) in a particular region or state. With micro data researchers can access the kind of detailed information that may have been commonplace in other sectors. It focuses on marginalized cases that are not known, heard, seen or recorded. Micro data has the capacity to deliver new knowledge and to provide challenging insights into academic or mainstream forms of knowledge. As observed by Sean Field, "significant contributions to development work can be made through recognizing and utilizing the new insights of popular knowledge forms" (Field 2007). Thus, there is a need to gather quantifiable data to complement the work of labour relations experts and political economists in analyzing labour conflicts. Micro data becomes complimentary at the level of consultations and dialogue for mediation in labour conflicts, by stakeholders, complimentary findings with quantifiable data to give added credibility to the process.

Techniques of Micro Data Collection

Any one who has a serious interest in understanding labour conflict situations must give some thought to the ways in which social facts can be and are gathered. The most valuable outcome of labour conflict period is not in the victory of either side, but in the fact that all the researchers are compelled to re-examine their concepts, premises, and procedures. The benefit here is in the production of a higher level of methodological sophistication, and consequently greater precision in labour conflict research truth that were never known before. That is, the application of more sophisticated statistical techniques is possible when micro data are available, and new questions can be asked.

Survey becomes relevant as part of micro studies, particularly when there is insufficient

basic information about target communities. This type of survey may be needed in settings which lack well-developed systems for routine data collection such as strikes, lockouts and other expressions of class struggle, or when the available information does not cover the subject of interest in enough detail. Micro data survey should collect clear information on a small range of items, which it is expected will be recorded, reconciled again when the project has made an input. Surveys for micro data should have a target length, a crispy-defined purpose and a pre-determined analysis plan. The quality of micro data collected is essential for ensuring representativeness of information, its reliability and accuracy. Micro data quality involves many aspects ranging from sample approach, instrument development to data processing and creation of the dataset. This is imperative for social and management science researchers and users of datasets who are interested in understanding the key aspects of assessing micro data quality and enhancing their research/survey quality through applying appropriate techniques. Hence, researchers need to be mindful of the overall direction and approach to the statistical analysis for several projects. Having been conceived as a scientific exercise, there is the need to make the exercise as scientific as possible. It demands going beyond the traditional statistical analysis and collating and cross-referencing large amounts of data mainly manually. Its also means that the researcher should identify other sources of data apart from Government departments and its agencies, employers and employers' associations, labour organizations and associations, and training and educational institutions. However, in determining a realistic sample size that will at the end of the day capture the feelings and concerns of a broad context exists at an aggregate level (Reading 1998).

It is necessary to note the levity in assuming that survey is the only available instrument option for micro data collection. To apply more sophisticated techniques for the available micro data, consideration must be given to other techniques of data collection, namely: structured interview, questionnaire, focus groups, key informant interview, in-depth interview, participant observation, content analysis, newspaper scanning, and triangulation. In specific terms, telephone interview with employees, labour leaders, employers and government officials can be em-

ployed in regions with good telephone services. In Nigeria, the revolution in telecommunication brought about by the global system for mobile telecommunications (GSM) makes it possible for journalists to get the latest piece of information in detail before going to press. When this is tied to newspaper scanning in regions where the print media flourishes, micro data collection can become very enterprising.

Perceptions and Responses of Micro Data Collection

Abundance of documentary evidence necessarily affords a level of analysis devoid of undue speculations. Contrary to common assumptions, labour activism, often times, transcends its primary domain to affect developments in larger society. Labour conflicts alter social, economic, political and legal relations. Hence perceptions and responses are best analyzed from the perspective of the larger society. There is an absence of absolute parameter for conceptualizing the phenomenon of labour conflicts. This has implications for existing perceptions. Additionally, there persists considerable distrust and antagonism among the participants, a situation which puts to question the extent to which labour conflicts have been understood and internalized by industrial relations actors and other participants (Fashoyin 1992; Oseghale 2007).

The actors' perception of leadership, seniority and authority differ markedly from society to society. For example, as observed by Tayo Fashoyin, "African system of social relations is strongly rooted in paternalism, and this is taken to the workplace where organization of work, largely based on western values, is difficult." According to him, there is a paradox in the reaction of the manager which very often does not fit this pattern of social expectation in work places. In this case, the manager may conclude, obviously erroneously, that workers' protests have been master-minded with the aim of sabotaging the organization or undermining his or her leadership position" (Fashoyin 1992). Whereas, the perception may be to the effect that, the workers' expectation is based on material reward, the actual occurrence may have been influenced by the expectation that the labourer be treated with human considerations. Where the source of data is influenced by the management, the researcher gets the wrong perception, and one can better imagine the response of labour to such data.

Considerations should be given to intense feelings of the conflict actors, the mood of the labour conflicts, and intricate details on many social and political relationships that shape the union's life and growth over time. An adoption of fundamental skills of listening or empathy helps to shape perceptions and responses. "These skills have a value that stretches far beyond the research terrain, and can be used in a variety of professions." "Such skills are certainly involved in studying political and social change at a micro-level." Perceptions and responses thus involve a reflection on experiences during the data collection process (Field 2007). The labour conflict researcher is more likely to confront interviewees or respondents dealing with painful emotions and memories of traumatic events arising from strikes, lockouts and other forms of class struggle. Perceptions and responses help to explain communities' in-depth knowledge of themselves and their relative knowledge about others. Perceptions and responses also help to explain the cooperative relationship between communities and researchers. It is synonymous with moving from 'them' and 'us' situation to achieve 'a shared authority'. Perceptions and responses further help to explain the dynamic process of engagement and dialogue on issues of local concern, including highly sensitive topic (Molony et al. 2007).

Researchers do not collect data on people but events and occurrences, using documents. Again, humans tend to stereotypical judgments of their respective neighbours. The psychology of people is characterized by specific and almost standardized patterns (Hecht and Pletsch 1997). Issues worth considering are responses to verbal and non-verbal cues, location of memories in the context of their life stories, sensitivity in asking questions and eliciting information, and processing peoples' feelings. Little wonder that, researchers are ignorant people. It is precisely because of ignorance of the answers to particular questions that research is being conducted. This does not deny, in anyway, the knowledge and training that professionals bring into research relationships. State actors may perceive the strike action as pursuing a partisan political agenda that the labour movement is seeking credibility by its decision to embark on strike. Thus, perceptions and responses may manifest in terms of assurances by government, that citizens should go about their normal businesses. This encourages researchers to collect data. Picketing by way of

response by the striking union, going about to shut down workplaces and businesses that refuse to comply hinders data collection. Workers usually sing solidarity songs and display placards where their demands are inscribed. How these inscriptions are perceived by the researcher also call for consideration.

Challenges of Micro Data Collection

Very real concerns exist – such as those relating to ethics, physical security, political implications of activities in rapidly changing environments, logistical difficulties and the technical challenges of working with labour unions (Schlecht and Casey 2007). Researching labour conflicts can be challenging for a variety of reasons, including security risks to researchers and informants, restricted or lack of access to informants and field sites, deterioration of the reliability of official data, and unpredictability of the level of security in the research environment. Micro data research carries ethical challenges about how informants and information should be represented so as to protect the confidentiality of sources and to minimize the risks that the research may be used for ends which could ultimately bring harm to subjects. In specific terms, labour leaders might be hesitant to respond to questions on the causes, nature and dimension of conflicts, because of security risk. Here lies the challenge of designing or utilizing information system of this nature. It is to guarantee the physical safety and protection of participants and their trusted confidants. That is, real concerns are those relating to ethics, physical security, political implications of activities in rapidly changing environments, logistical difficulties and the technical challenges of working with populations of unusual demographic compositions in the workplace. The ethical bottom line must be that if data collection method cannot be used safely and responsibly, they should not be used at all.

More fundamentally, traditional methodological approaches, say participant observation, surveys, random sampling, etc, may not be usable without significant adoption, and new methods may be called for. Other challenges include fear of sabotage by striking workers, emergence of parallel workers bodies, often regarded as illegal by the striking union, fear of unhealthy competition by the employers, documentary review,

data collection technique, site selection and sampling, mutual distrust, credibility and predictability.

There are still challenging debates over what kinds of evidence carry weight in the analysis of labour conflicts, representing particularly intense variants of wider debates over alternative, or mixed methods in social sciences. Micro data collection requires significant commitments of finances, human resources and time, but it can help ensure efficiency and success in the longer term as well as provide data for advocacy purposes. This provides evidence for the psychology of people, characterised by specific and almost standardised patterns. Here the choice of themes in documents, say the media often nourishes the image of stereotypical judgments on labour. Low workforce, instability of the labour force, and hiring of workers without a written contract by public services and the firm often justifies this image.

There is also a bit of academic challenge examining the methodological presentation of newspapers and checking their accuracy. Too often such analyses end up as stereotype containing or comprising texts, figures, illustrations or maps. Perhaps, this is precisely why academics may be reluctant to undertake the task of analyzing issues based on newspaper reports. On timing of data collection, seasonal changes have a clear impact on data collection, and data has to be collected over a range of seasons. A researcher may collect data on warning strike, but when the full-blown strike occurs, there is the challenge of follow-up, even till the time the strike action ends. Whereas, confidentiality and secrecy are hallmarks of data from the state, government officials may employ all forms of intrigues, deceit and division to avoid taking a positive action on agreement reached between the parties. A case in point here is the strike action embarked upon by the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT). NUT had earlier deferred the resumption of strike after a three-day warning strike, following positive signals from the federal government and intervention by other well-meaning persons and institutions, including the National Assembly (Madu 2008).

One can thus draw insights into the challenge of tracking and monitoring of labour conflicts from the foregoing. To address this, systematically drawing an existing data and triangulating information with follow-up participatory method

is essential. It is rare that projects on micro data have sufficient time to conduct the research activities. Findings of this approach might give parochial answers to the many questions of how and why people think, believe and act in the way they do, embarking on strike action. Doing micro data collection on labour conflict settings also requires fieldworkers to be more skilled at interpersonal relations. Micro data require painstaking efforts at selection of research teams to conduct the study. Further still, it is capital intensive to invest in micro data collection. Even then most donors are willing to fund seminars, workshops, colloquia, civic education, conferences and production of information, education and communication materials. Very few are predisposed to sponsoring research work, particularly collection of micro data. For many, aggregate data are just enough. This is reinforced by lack of sufficient incentive for donors to invest in building local research capacity, arising from suspicion by the State when studies are externally funded (Bastian and Hedrickson 2008).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Arguably, lack of good knowledge of the context where labour conflict occurs poses a challenge. Coupled with its sensitive nature the lack of good knowledge makes it difficult to conduct longer term empirical research on labour conflict issues and build capacity among local researchers. However, with improved commitment to data collection, evidence-based programming in labour conflict settings is possible. Although the collection of micro data requires time and resources, it can help ensure efficiency and success in the long run as well as provide data for advocacy purposes. Efforts should be made to ensure that all relevant data on labour conflicts is disaggregated by form, number of workers involved, duration of actions in days, amount of time not worked, number and names of companies involved, demands that led to the action, outcome of the actions, methods of dispute resolution, date of actions, geographical location of action, etc.

In addition, appropriate preparation for micro data collection is critical, especially in conflict settings. Before mounting the arrangement for commencement of the project, it is imperative to consider the potential direct and indirect

effects the process could have on the parties to a conflict, and the ability to continue to work in a given setting. Researchers should ensure that micro data collection follows standardized methodology while building the monitoring and evaluation capacity of project field staff. Again, data should be collected and analyzed by experts in the field. Thus, each micro case study should be determined by theme, expert, entry point, key questions, and methodology to be adopted. Although no formal training is needed by the researcher, analysts and actors of micro data, standard survey techniques require reasonable familiar statistical, sampling and data analysis. This underscores the need to train researchers in the techniques of micro data generation, analysis and dissemination. To speed up the process, there is need to adopt the use of computer hardware and software.

Indicators that are sensitive to classifications accountability systems, including terms of reference, should also be developed. This will ensure timely availability of data by differences. Micro data should strive for a balance between the aims/needs of the researcher and the aims/needs of the labour conflict actors. Also, in the face of generally deepening results of preliminary study of strike actions, subsequent researchers should try to undertake a systematic analysis, say micro data. The dimension of self-imposed task makes an institutional framework necessary in order to provide the non inconsiderable material requirements.

Political economists working with micro data that may be of questionable reliability or may be only partially representative of conditions in labour conflict settings need to identify innovative research tools to achieve and maintain objectivity. This will add to the reliability of information in situation where rumour is rife and confirmation of data may be difficult or impossible. Researchers should build people's ownership of the data through a process-led, bottom up approach using the principles of inclusivity, transparency and openness. Researchers also need to have the expertise to tailor research needs with the foresight of opportunities. As Vartan Gregorian would say, "needs don't attract philanthropic support – ideas do" (King 2008). Where financial incentives are limited, academic incentives, such as the possibility of publishing research findings and opportunities for pursuing the subject on a long-term basis, can

be important motivating factors for micro data collectors (Bastian and Hedrickson 2008).

To balance perceptions and responses in labour conflicts is to achieve a 'shared authority'. This can be done through the encouragement and support in coordinating efforts, to avoid duplication and sharing outcomes. In this context, the development of labour conflict research unit, independent of specific government departments should be promoted as the most effective means of coordinating existing initiatives. Where such "centres of excellence" can be established, support should be provided in the forms of training and appropriate technologies in order to improve the quality of data collection and analysis" (Gray et al. 1996).

Micro data should be disseminated through various media such as radio, television, books, etc. By disseminating micro data, the labour communities who are usually marginalized from the analysis of strikes, lockouts and other forms of class struggle will potentially be affirmed and publicly recognized as having value to the organization. Labour conflict research should give clear information on a small range of items, which is expected to have a target length, a crispy-defined purpose and a pre-determined analysis plan. A thorough analysis can be made of labour conflicts given the use of appropriate methodology and approach.

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