

Keep your eyes on your city's social indicators: The Nossa São Paulo movement and the empowerment of civil society¹

Miriam Warigoda and Marlei Pozzebon²

Introduction

On January 2008, a mega-event drew more than 500 participants to the SESC auditorium³ and attracted a great deal of media attention in the city of São Paulo. In addition to the mayor, deputies and other municipal authorities, invited guests included representatives of hundreds of social-oriented groups, NGOs and neighbourhood associations. They were there to mark the launching of **Nossa São Paulo**, a local civil society movement whose main goal is the creation of a democratic space for dialogue between citizens and their city's politicians and officials concerning the level of quality of life they are being offered at present, and what the future holds for them. As the guests arrived at the auditorium, they passed by posters that illustrated certain social-economic indicators of the city's quality of life, many of them rather gruesome. Some guests were embarrassed, others outraged, most of them shocked, and all of them immediately plunged into the core idea of the movement: the hard reality of the city's social inequality and unsustainability. These graphic displays called attention not only to the potential of an accessible database of such relevant indicators but, even more importantly, to the substance of those indicators which spoke for themselves, implicitly demanding purposeful action from public administration as well as from all sectors of civil society, including private companies and the third sector. The purpose of the event was to introduce the movement to the general public of São Paulo and invite the broadest possible participation.

“When guests arrived at the auditorium, they were faced with panels showing, for example, an infant mortality index still close to 0.8%, horrible things! Worst neighbourhood: such and such; best: Pinheiros, Cerqueira César. One death here; 10 deaths there. It would go on like this under each heading, creating the intended atmosphere. Of course everyone realized that there was something important there”, recalls Jakow Grajew, one of the founding members of the Nossa São Paulo movement. “The movement is not here to pull anybody down, but to change the standard of quality in public management.”

¹ We would like to thank the members of the executive team of Nossa Sao Paulo movement for accepting to participate in our research project. SSHRC, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Canada's federal funding agency for university-based research and student training in the social the humanities and social sciences, is providing financial support to this research project.

² Marlei Pozzebon is associate professor at HEC Montreal (Canada) and visiting professor at FGV-EAESP (Brazil). She is doing research on technology & social and sustainable development for many years. Miriam Warigoda is finishing her master dissertation on Communications/Media Studies, at the University of Quebec in Montreal. She worked as a television producer/researcher for many years in Sao Paulo. For more information, go to <http://www.hec.ca/profs/marlei.pozzebon.html>.

³ “Serviço Social do Comércio”, or The Social Service of Commerce. It is a nationwide non-profit organisation, founded as a private institution 60 years ago by business and service organizations, to provide employees of the sector with cultural, educational and leisure activities. http://www.sescsp.org.br/sesc/quem_somos/index.cfm?lg=ing&forget=14&inslog=16



One year after this mega-event, and two years after the official launching (May 15 2007), **Nossa São Paulo** could point to significant achievements. These include: establishment of an accessible overall database incorporating indicators from the city's sub-municipalities; two annual opinion polls on the public's perception of life in the city; meetings with candidates in the city's 2008 mayoral election; a campaign to lower sulphur levels in the diesel sold throughout the country; participation of São Paulo in Car-Free Day; a major forum on Amazon-São Paulo connections and another on the Nossa São Paulo movement itself; and an almost daily presence in the São Paulo media.

All these achievements, which have inspired and encouraged similar movements in other Brazilian cities, resulted from many months of discussion and organizing efforts. The goal was to involve the maximum number of citizens and groups in one of the world's largest cities in a public debate about their rights and obligations. The spotlight was put on expectations regarding their quality of life and the sustainability of their environment, and attention was drawn to the power, growing out of access to updated social-economic indicators, to promote increased transparency and political decisions that converge to respond to citizens' needs. **Nossa São Paulo** is not the only movement of this kind in Latin America, and follows the path set by the *Red de ciudades* (the Network of Cities)⁴, which started in Bogota, Colombia, 10 years ago.

The birth of the Nossa São Paulo movement

Mauricio Broinizi, Nossa São Paulo's general coordinator offers this assessment: *"In a huge city like São Paulo, you have some overwhelming numbers: 11 million inhabitants, 1,500 square kilometres and a plethora of different realities. There are sub-municipalities with 400 to 500 thousand inhabitants, which would constitute medium-size cities elsewhere in the world. There are average-size sub-municipalities, with 150 to 200 thousand inhabitants, that have very good indicators. So instead of picking up benchmarks from Switzerland, or Sweden, to say 'we want to get there' we derived benchmarks from São Paulo itself, from regions that have dealt well with a number of items that are the responsibility of the public administration and which impinge on quality of life. Standards of reference for the sub-municipalities are still quite distant. They have some very bad indicators."*

In order to cope with the huge social problems that prevail in Brazilian urban areas, and the fact that the needs and priorities of all levels of government surpass the resources available, São Paulo has built a long tradition of experience in organizing civil society - or the third sector - through associations, cooperatives, non-profit organisations, churches, pastoral groups, foundations, etc. From this panoply have sprung a multiplicity of actions and campaigns aimed at making the city a better place to live and do business (see Appendix 1 for a brief overview of Sao Paulo's history).

⁴ It is called "Rede Social Brasileira por Cidades Justas e Sustentáveis" (Brazilian Social Network of Fair and Sustainable Cities) in Brazil. Red de ciudades is its Latin American counterpart.



In addition to the third sector, São Paulo boasts an increasing number of enterprises - Natura, Amanco, Votorantim and Sadia, to name just a few - displaying high commitment to social responsibility and sustainability issues. One notable example is the *Ethos Institute of Enterprises and Social Responsibility*⁵. This non-profit civil society organization was founded by entrepreneurs and businesspeople who took on the mission of motivating, mobilizing and assisting firms in managing their businesses in a socially responsible manner so as to build a fairer and more sustainable society. It has acquired international recognition in this field.

Another significant example is Natura Cosmetics⁶, today a public company which develops products made only with natural, equitable ingredients from the range of local biodiversity in ways that have the least impact on the environment. The firm rejects unnatural, elitist stereotypes of beauty in favour of promoting the well-being of all their clients, and works in partnership with (among others) the Ethos Institute, Brazilian Greenpeace and the Zero Hunger program of the federal government. The company's foundation mounts sustainable development projects geared mainly to urban green areas and social entrepreneurship.

A final example consists of entities working in international partnerships, like the Avina Foundation⁷ (Switzerland and Latin America), which promotes projects concerning social demand, education, arts, culture and the environment in Europe, as well as sustainable development in Latin America, all this in association with enterprises and leaders of civil society.

Behind outstanding socially responsible corporate initiatives in São Paulo, proactive social entrepreneurs are often to be found. Such is the case with the founders of the **Nossa São Paulo** movement. As recalled by Jakow Grajew, a management professor and active movement participant:

*“Nossa São Paulo started with two important leaders, Oded Grajew and Guilherme Leal. Oded Grajew [Jakow’s brother] is a well-known Brazilian activist in the third sector and founder of important entities like the Ethos Institute, Abrinq Foundation⁸ and instrumental in organizing the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre. Guilherme Leal is a leading executive of the Natura Group, one of the founders of the Ethos Institute and the first entrepreneur to provide financial support for the creation of **Nossa São Paulo**. In December 2006, we did not have a movement yet, only the idea that something else needed to be done to improve quality of life, social justice and sustainability in the city of São Paulo. And this idea came from what people were starting to hear about the successful Colombian experience in Bogota. Oded worked to assemble leaders from the most representative social movements to be found in São Paulo, and they said: ‘We’ll go to Bogota and see what they are doing there’. The Avina Foundation*

⁵ <http://www.ethos.org.br>

⁶ <http://www2.natura.net/Web/Br/Home/src/>

⁷ <http://www.avina.net/web/siteavina.nsf/page?openform&Sistema=1&idioma=eng>

⁸ <http://www.fundabrinq.org.br/>



sponsored a trip to Bogota for around 15 São Paulo leaders, where they had their first contact with Bogota Como Vamos⁹ and the indicators movement”.

Bogota was the first city in the world to implement a program based not only on objective social-economic indicators for the city, which had been done in many places for quite some time, but also on subjective indicators - that is, the perception citizens have of their government's performance with regard to such indicators, as measured through evaluation surveys and opinion polls. *Bogota Como Vamos* made the city's political elite aware of the results of such surveys and prodded them to act with a view towards enhancing quality of life for the general public. This example started a trend in Latin America, showing that participatory democracy is key in the process of reinventing the role of politicians and political institutions in contemporary society.

While São Paulo was the first city in Brazil to launch a movement of this nature, many others have followed in its footsteps. Similar movements have been founded in Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Ilhabela (SP), Teresópolis (RJ), and Ilhéus (BA). Also headed along that path are Santos (SP), Belo Horizonte (MG), Bertioga (SP), Guarulhos (SP), Belém (PA), São Luís (MA), Salvador (BA) and Brasília (DF). In Belo Horizonte, capital of the State of Minas Gerais, a bigger project was launched on June 8, 2008: “Rede Social Brasileira por Cidades Justas e Sustentáveis” is the Brazilian counterpart of the Latin American “Red de ciudades” and linked to a network of similarly engaged cities. The purpose of this network is to facilitate the exchange of information and know-how so as to promote mutual growth and collaboration, and thereby strengthen one another's individual experience. It allows its members to not only get to know each other's conditions and public policies, but to compare them with those in the rest of the network. The existence of an overall frame of reference and the possibility of establishing benchmarks and standards can lead to significant effects on social investment and continuous feedback among the various cities that are part of the Network. Their mission is to secure commitment by society as a whole, and by subsequent administrators in particular, to take part in ethical action that fosters fair and sustainable development of their cities. This network is a Brazilian counterpart of the previously mentioned “Red de ciudades” movement, the network of Colombian cities including Bogota, Barranquilla, Cartagena, Medellín and Cali.

In March 2007, back in São Paulo and inspired by what they had seen in Bogota, leaders from around 50 of the city's best organized NGOs and other third sector groups, and joined by Oded and Guilherme, created the movement to be known as **Nossa São Paulo**. Its mission (perusable in the portal www.nossasaopaulo.org.br) is to mobilize the various segments of society and, in partnership with public and private institutions, draw up and commit to an agenda and a set of goals that articulate and promote actions designed to make the city of São Paulo fair and sustainable (see Appendix 2 on use of information and communication technology by the Nossa São Paulo movement).

⁹ <http://bogotacomovamos.org/scripts/home.php>



The pillars of the movement Nossa São Paulo

Nossa São Paulo adopted what constitute the core pillars of the *Network of cities* philosophy that embody its basic premises. The first is to create and update a historical database, accessible by any citizen at any time, that combines objective and subjective indicators of quality of life and socio-economic conditions in the city.

*“There is a whole history in Bogota, but the light bulb lit up for us with a perception of how civil society can monitor government programs with indicators, both **objective** - primary (transportation, health, education) and secondary (primary being more important) - and **subjective**, combined with an annual opinion poll of citizens’ perceptions involving objective indicators. This was the great discovery made in Bogota. Indicators, public opinion polls and the like, were already somewhat known, but the discovery was using quality of life indicators in a systematic, organized way, to show public administrators that the public often fails to perceive improvement in an objective indicator (such as number of accidents). This is extremely important for public officials as their fate is determined through elections, and elections are based more on popular perception of indicators than on indicators themselves”.* (Jakow Grajew)

On the one hand, from the very beginning of the movement, **Nossa São Paulo’s** participants have grappled on an ongoing basis with the laborious process of selecting, formulating and revising objective indicators. Organized into 18 working groups, the conglomeration of social leaders, social entrepreneurs, representatives of social movements and professional associations meet at least once a month to select, define and revise indicators related to the theme each particular group is responsible for: culture, health, housing, transportation, education, etc. These indicators (numbering 140 in 2008) are collected and organized according to a certain granularity (because of its huge size and population, São Paulo is divided into sub-municipalities, and the sub-municipalities into districts) in order to provide people involved with relevant information (see Appendix 3 for a complete list of indicators). As explained by Mauricio Broinizi:

“We work with indicators that can be geo-referenced by 31 sub-municipalities, and soon by 96 districts, bringing the information closer to local realities”.

In order to be included in the movement’s Observatory Website, the indicators are systematically collected from official sources (government and public institutions) and stored in a centralized historical database. Thanks to open access to timely indicators, residents of São Paulo can not only compare the indicators of their district to those of other districts but can also request and monitor actions and decisions taken by public administrators.

“Objective indicators represent the main tool for nourishing a dialog between civil society and public administrations today”, says Jakow Grajew.

On the other hand, subjective indicators are gathered by means of an annual opinion pool called “Live in São Paulo”. To carry out this probe, **Nossa São Paulo** selected the



well-known *Ibope Institute*¹⁰, one of the most reputable and trusted polling organizations in the country, whose surveys have long served as standard reference for politicians, media and the general public. Conducted for the first time in January 2008, and once again in January 2009, the poll scrutinised a sample of 1.512 city inhabitants aged 16 years and over. With a maximum margin of error of 3 percentage points, the results distill a diagnosis from the perception of city-dwellers on various aspects of municipal administration and the public services it offers. These results are particularly relevant to public administrators: they are not always aware of public perception of their performance, but it is that public on whom their (re)election depends. Finally, in a more mature phase of the “indicators move”, objective and subjective indicators can be compared, and any demonstrated gap analyzed. The understanding of possible gaps can represent an important step in improving the quality of life for the population of a given city. The entire process of indicator storage, access, comparison and analysis depends on construction of a robust technological infrastructure. Here we talk about ICT being used to improve participatory democracy (more in Appendix 2).

Through use of indicators, annual opinion polls, and a democratically accessible information system, movement participants are trying to spotlight social-economic inequality in the city, follow up on executive and legislative actions, and provide feedback to leaders on what remains to be done to achieve overarching common goals. Through popular participation, they seek to provide government with a better sense of what priorities need to be targeted and how they can be achieved in reasonable and rationally fashion. The city administration has a reputation for misunderstanding results, and misusing resources. For example, a result should not consist of building schools but of providing children with education. The number of schools to be built in pursuing the end result is simply part of the means for achieving that result. The use of resources should be focused on results, not on the means.

The second pillar of the movement is its independence with regard to any political party, religion, government or public institution. The movement must represent the third sector’s true interests, without any partisan political alliance or government support. Such independence is crucial in endowing legitimacy to dialogue with elected public administrators and civil servants, based on well-defined goals, indicators and targets that represent the wishes of the population of the city.

The movement’s third pillar is a corollary of the second: to promote changes in the municipal constitution making it mandatory for mayors to present, every year, a plan with well-defined goals, indicators and targets. The greatest achievement of the Nossa São Paulo movement in recent times was the approval by the Municipal Chamber in February 2008 of an amendment to the “Lei Orgânica do Município” (Municipal Organic Law, the municipal constitution), called “Programa de Metas” (Program of Goals)¹¹. It constitutes the fundamental way in which the more than 500 organizations representing civil society, including those participating in the **Nossa São Paulo** movement, can

¹⁰ <http://www.ibope.com.br>

¹¹ <http://nossasaopaulo.org.br/portal/emenda>.



promote participatory democracy by monitoring social indicators, fighting for social advances, negotiating and exerting pressure on how public resources are spent and why. The Program of Goals states that as of January 1, 2009, date of the beginning of a new mandate, the new mayor, as well as all successors, have 90 days in which to present a detailed political program for their administration based on social indicators by sub-region (sub-municipality or district), with clear strategic actions to improve the general public's quality of life pegged to each indicator, and the setting of quantitative objectives for each of the 96 districts within the 31 sub-municipalities that constitute the city of São Paulo. This program must be publicly discussed during the 30 days following its issuance. Every six months the administration must demonstrate accountability for actions and undertakings concerning each indicator, so that performance can be measured and evaluated by the public.

Walking the path

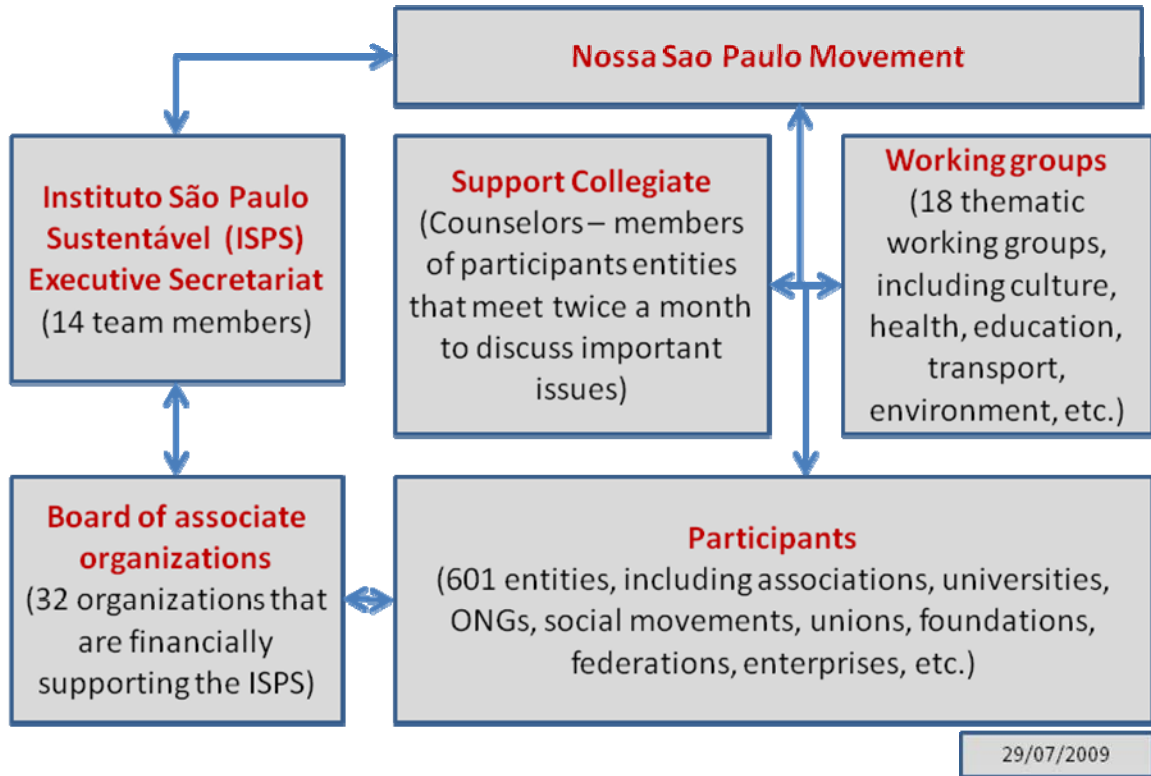
The history of the Nossa Sao Paulo movement is a story of groups. In essence, it is the outcome of collective discussions and decisions. At present the movement has evolved a structure comprised of an Executive Secretariat, the "Colegiado de Apoio" (board of a variable number of members associate organizations (more than 30 in 2008) who provide the movement with guidance) and many Working Groups (thematic and non-thematic) whose hierarchical structure resembles a web more than a pyramid, reflecting their mission and their vision of how issues have to be dealt with. Historically speaking, this structure is the outcome of an empirically spontaneous, rather than planned process of structuration.

The Executive Secretariat is an NGO created specifically to coordinate the movement's activities, formalized as the **Instituto São Paulo Sustentável** (Sustainable São Paulo Institute), whose purpose is to provide legal support to the movement as a whole. In Brazil, the Ministry of Justice grants NGOs a special title called OSCIP ("Organização da Sociedade Civil de Interesse Público", or Organization of Civil Society in the Public Interest). This designation facilitates partnerships between these organizations and all governmental authorities and public institutions, and allows any donations received from the private sector to be deducted from income tax. The Executive Secretary of the movement Nossa São Paulo is an OSCIP.

In the initial stages of the movement, groups that were already active and organized in their fields or around their issues came prepared to discuss and to act. The first opinion poll was fundamental at that point because it served as a base on which to begin drawing up the list of indicators. Security, Education, Health, Transportation and Mobility were some of the themes proposed. These thematic groups were very much focused on action that had to be taken, but also very aware that equally fundamental was the creation of a database in which the users themselves could create their own models and project their own vision. Each group undertook internal consultation directed to identifying their sources, though always under the guidance of the Indicators Group, which rendered possible all that might be articulated.



Table 1. The structure of Nossa Sao Paulo



The Indicators Working Group counts on the participation of technicians, specialists and academics with considerable experience in working on indicators. Some belong to the public administration but function in the movement on their own personal initiative, not as official members of the government. This is a consequence of the fact that initially, when each participant’s role had not yet been clearly defined, certain government officials drawing on their own good will and availability took part in one thematic group whose theme was still to be determined. Nevertheless, once it became evident that, as members of the government, they would have their work and performance monitored and evaluated, and that questions would be asked that needed objective, unprejudiced answers, they began to put some distance between themselves and the movement. Meanwhile, the movement core made the decision to disallow their formal participation as civil servants from then on, to avoid potential embarrassment to both sides and compromising of the movement’s credibility due to those individuals being signatories. Thus, since that time some of them have continued to participate, but as ordinary citizens, like any other – concerned about the well-being of their city and willing to actively help in improving it.

During the course of its history, especially at these first stages of discussions, one of the greatest though unintended achievements of the movement was to bring together groups that had been working in the same field long enough to gather considerable expertise and knowledge, but that had never sat around the same table to try and fight for their common cause as a larger team. Some were even competitors, and harboured

resentments towards one other. But after being invited by the Nossa São Paulo movement, for the first time they seemed to have felt a certain synergy, a unifying political force that would push them all together in the same direction. As predictable in such discussions, there were disagreements, but the participants managed to find a consensus.

“People do not talk, there is no such interaction. I think the movement is allowing this debate. (...) It was beautiful to see”, says Mauricio Broinizi.

Parallel to the path of issue-oriented groups was that of the Indicators Group. As its name implies, it was responsible for creation of the list of indicators. Their starting point was the question and resultant answers of the first opinion poll: “What are the biggest problems in the city?”. Determining the focus and includability of each indicator was an extremely demanding task. Some participating groups presented up to 50 suggestions in their discussion meetings – clearly too many for any single theme. There was discontentment, and even anger, when certain suggestions were not accepted.

Although they eventually attained their objective, the Indicators Group members have continued to fine-tune the list on an ongoing basis. No effort is spared to make it easier for the average citizen to understand the whole concept and feel encouraged to participate further.

“We have 140 indicators today, which is a lot. We are studying a simplified version, to be more popular”, comments Mauricio Broinizi.

In preparation for the official launching, many steps had to be taken. There was another non-thematic group in direct contact with all the others: the Communication Group. It was very successful in mobilizing the media and did not take long to capture the attention of all major newspapers. With media coverage came wider public attention and, even before the stunning launching ceremony, other positive consequences.

One of them was the fact that the Technology Group was able to achieve its goal of providing the movement with tools (at that stage, more essential than any content material they might wish to convey) that would allow it to function properly. Private firms and corporations, public entities and NGOs, all experienced in working with indicators, became interested in the movement and offered to help. After meeting its needs in this first phase, the Technology Group became inactive. Though it has met recently, today this working group does not function with much regularity, working only when necessity calls.

At present the movement is made up of seventeen working groups. Besides the Indicators Group and the 13 thematic groups (Children and Adolescents, Citizen Security, Culture, Education, Enterprises, Environment and Urban Mobility, Health, Housing, Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology, Sports and Leisure, Work and Income, and Youth), two others have recently been created that exercise a distinctive role in the movement: Follow-up on the Municipal Chamber and Follow-up on the Municipal Budget.



Each group has its coordinator, and the 16 coordinators gather in meetings (called “inter-GTs”), every two weeks or once a month, to discuss points of common interest. Although a lot has changed since Nossa São Paulo started, the movement’s core quality has remained intact, as embodied in the exercise of gathering to discuss, seek consensus and reach common decisions. Losing that would mean losing part of their essence, and they are deeply aware of this.

Nossa São Paulo in action

As mentioned previously, one of the most important achievements of Nossa São Paulo was its organization of two forums. To celebrate the first anniversary of the movement, the *First Forum Nossa São Paulo – Propositions for a Just and Sustainable City* was held May 15-18 in 2008. Gearing up for the exercise extended over the four preceding months and through special consultation tools that had been opened in the movement’s portal. Thus, a series of 60 debates and open meetings was launched. The purpose of these gatherings was to encourage the public to reflect on their quality of life and the transparency of their public officials, and to seek solutions for the main social, economic, political, environmental and urban challenges faced by public administrators in São Paulo. There were 750 subscriptions, and 1500 proposals were put forward by inhabitants, growing out of preparatory debates or received through the special tools in the portal. From discussion of those proposals, a document was drawn up which was presented at the final debates of the forum, and was sent to the mayoral candidates in the upcoming October elections, so as to be taken into consideration in their political programs. The movement facilitated the election by organizing a series of candidate debates in August and September 2008.

On October 14 and 15, 2008, the movement registered another success when, in partnership with Fórum Amazônia Sustentável, Nossa São Paulo hosted a seminar entitled “Sustainable Connections: São Paulo – The Amazon”. The seminar was aimed at galvanizing the attention of government, business and the general public around the responsibility of every individual for preserving and promoting sustainable development in the Amazon, which is a natural heritage for all humanity. Participants discussed predatory and sustainable practices in the region. Being the largest consumer market for products coming from the Amazon, São Paulo bears significant responsibility – direct and indirect – for what happens there.

Another achievement of Nossa São Paulo has been to become a regular presence in the media. Enhancing the visibility gained in Brazil’s printed press, since November 25, 2008, a five-minute noontime radio program has been broadcast Monday through Friday on AM station, Rádio Globo. Each program involves an interview with a participant of the movement speaking about a particular aspect of city life needing improvement. The first program lasted a little longer as Oded Grajew, one of the founders, explained the overall significance of the movement.



Certainly not the least of the movement's accomplishments has been its publications. On January 22, 2009 Nossa São Paulo launched one on the city's main indicators in the areas of Social Assistance, Culture, Education, Sports, Housing, Environment, Municipal Budget, Health, Work and Income, Transportation, and Violence. The numbers were broken down by sub-municipality, ranking the best and the worst and indicating the optimal score to be reached by each sub-municipality.

Future steps and challenges

One of the main challenges the movement has chosen to confront is pursuing a level of capillarity and involvement sufficient to take discussions to a micro sphere in a more generalized way.

"One cannot say all these indicators we gathered represent all the interests, all the expectations of the grassroots population; it is a process of synthesis by those sectors of society that are more organized", says Mauricio Broinizi.

To date, the movement has not often been able to afford such effort, but this is the great challenge and the ultimate goal for the future. On a few occasions, larger meetings allowing ordinary citizens to participate side by side with organized society were attempted by the movement. Average citizens, not accustomed to political speeches and procedures, do not necessarily understand the overall process so that the proceedings have a tendency to meander. Invited to participate by their neighbourhood associations, about 200 people came in those few occasions. Some positive repercussions came out of these meetings, although perhaps not as extensive and deep as everyone would have liked. If the movement succeeds in raising the level of electoral debate in future meetings, political programs may become more precisely defined and problem-targeted, instead of amounting to superficial or even pure marketing strategies. Therefore, the emergence of true diagnoses and quests for solutions may encourage the public to move beyond the basically passive attitude of making accusations, towards a stance of active help in building a better city.

In the pursuit of this capillarity, the movement has to take one step at a time. Its first goal is to implement one nucleus in each of the city's 31 sub-municipalities. This involves closer and deeper follow-up on the Program of Goals, accountability therewith, and how it is being implemented in each sub-municipality. Later this is articulated internally and respective districts are allowed to do likewise. In the meantime, the movement is making progress in capturing data on all 96 districts to make the Observatory as complete and accurate as possible.

The second challenge is to promote a constant revision of the indicators in order to: (a) clarify priorities for the Program of Goals ("which ones are important", as Mauricio Broinizi puts it), and (b) make the Observatory a dynamic, living tool that allows and encourages the public to participate more and more.



“The Observatory is a permanent process of construction, it never ends.(...) And those indicators that are perhaps a little more sophisticated, they are pointing to medium- or long-term, not to short-term public policies. These indicators need improving, and we will keep them in mind in a larger perspective or horizon.”
(Mauricio Broinizi)

Among data sources, some are under the authority of the federal government. Some data is still based on the 2000 census, and therefore not very up to date. Some are management indicators, not quality of life indicators, although equally important.

The movement’s third challenge is to promote the idea of co-responsibility. Some of the members of Nossa São Paulo give lectures and interviews and take part in debates wherein they insist on the idea that each and everyone is responsible for the city and the public domain, not just the authorities in power. Up until the 1980’s, social movements were much more given to blaming the government and pointing a finger at its representatives.

There is a certain pressure from the more organized sectors of the population to start looking at the problems of public administration not only through that idea of “I want”, but rather “Let’s do it together, let’s improve it together”. (Mauricio Broinizi)

If a way were found, for instance, to implement a more regionalized hiring process in the public sector, it is very likely that the quality of services offered would increase noticeably because the administration would bear greater responsibility for hiring. When civil servants do not come from the neighbourhood where they are deployed, they do not have a sense of belonging to it, which completely colors the relationships they establish with their clients, patients, students, etc. The relationship remains strictly professional, without a sense of personal involvement. If, on the other hand, they do know their environment and its byways, they can identify with its problems. The population also views with different eyes a professional with whom they are familiar and even meet regularly outside his/her office. In a more regionalized public administration, decision making can become less technocratic and top-down, and more democratic and participatory. This would not constitute a typical indicator like Security, Health, Education, or whatever field the professional might belong to, but represent a more generic aspect of management. The movement does not have the power to implement such dramatic change in public administration, but ideas like this have popped up in debates, showing the extent of civil society’s awareness concerning the management of their city. Were it not for the initiative propelled by Nossa Sao Paulo, citizens would not have a genuine way to express their opinion, and, consequently, would not be heard.

Last, but certainly not least, is the movement’s fourth challenge: to serve as an example that generates social support for its agenda and that encourages other cities in the country to take the same path in fighting for a higher quality of life.



For a movement that was launched two years ago aimed at making a difference in a city as large and complex as São Paulo, Nossa São Paulo has achieved surprisingly substantial results so far. Evidently, much more remains to be addressed, and time must be allowed for measures to work and changes to be developed. In certain aspects, a megalopolis will always be more sensitive than a medium-sized city, but in others it will enjoy enormous advantages, representing larger markets that can offer and absorb more. The movement seems to be quite aware of its particularities and has chosen good models to follow, i.e., Bogota and the *Red de ciudades*. It has influenced many other cities in Brazil, which have both similar and quite different issues to tackle, and is proving to be a positive model in its own right. The previously existing organization of civil society in the city constituted a fertile terrain for the movement to flourish. Through its help, citizens have finally reached a point where they can express themselves reasonably and rationally, and be heard and taken seriously by the authorities.

“We are together, this is our mission, we are going to use indicators, we are going to make yearly opinion polls, we are going to follow up on what the legislative and the executive are doing. This is the fundamental motto of the movement.” (Jakow Grajew)

This document was written based on interviews carried out by October-November 2008. From then, the Nossa Sao Paulo movement has evolved and achieved many additional positive results and social advances after that time. For more information, visit the web site: www.nossasaopaulo.org.br



APENDIX 1

A brief overview of São Paulo's history

In order to better understand why the city so desperately needed a movement like this, we need a better grasp of São Paulo itself, and how it became what it is today. This requires looking back a few centuries.

The city of São Paulo, today capital of the State of São Paulo in south-eastern of Brazil, was founded on January 25, 1554 by Jesuit missionaries, around a school designed to convert indigenous people to the Catholic faith. Thanks to its location – right above the cliffs of a plateau, the first settlement inland from the Atlantic port of Santos – São Paulo has seemed to demonstrate a vocation for power from early on in its history. That power has not been strictly political – it has never been the Federal Capital of Brazil – but rather economic and financial. From the little village it was back then, groups of explorers, known as Bandeirantes, departed towards the heart of the continent, to enlarge the domain of Portugal in the region¹², to search for native Indians to enslave and sell to Portuguese landowners, and to mine for gold and precious stones, which were eventually found in what today is the state of Minas Gerais. This turned the city of São Paulo into a strategic point on commercial routes in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

It was economically and politically overshadowed by the Northeast during the colonial period of the Brazilian history (from the sixteenth to the second half of the nineteenth century, when sugar cane cultivated in the Northeast was the country's main product). The then Capitaincy of São Vicente, more or less the equivalent of the modern State of São Paulo, gained considerable importance after the declaration of independence from Portugal, signed in the city of São Paulo in 1822, by D. Pedro I, then Portuguese crown prince. From a colony, Brazil became first a monarchy, with the Portuguese prince as ruler, then decades later, in 1889, a republic immediately following the abolition of slavery, the strongest bond still linking Brazil to its former metropolis (Portugal). In the second half of the nineteenth century, coffee surpassed sugar as the main product in the country's economy, which was favoured by milder weather and rich soil in the southeast. But new plantations required labourers of a different sort than those of the slavery period. Immigrants from countries ranging from Italy to Japan to Lebanon (to name just a few) began flocking into the region, later migrating to the city. The multitude of ethnic groups ended by building a mosaic of cultures, religions, and ethno-linguistic groups that characterizes São Paulo even today.

With the decline of coffee on international markets and commercial restrictions in force at the time of World War II, São Paulo turned its view to industrial development. Later, in the last quarter of the twentieth century, as fiscal laws encouraged industries to locate in other states and regions of the country, the city became increasingly oriented to the tertiary sector, concentrating head offices of large banks, multinational

¹² Under the Treaty of Tordesilhas, Portugal was entitled to all the newly discovered land east of a meridian 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, the west belonging to Spain.



corporations and businesses in general. Throughout the century, immigrants from poorer regions of the country, seeking opportunities and wealth, contributed to the growth of what had already become one of the most important urban centers in Brazil. Needless to say, not all newcomers found what they had come for, adding to the already existing poverty, and forming an ever greater contrast to the wealth of the elite that had dominated the upper strata of power since colonization began.

Multiple factors contributed to making São Paulo a megalopolis, one of the 5 largest and most densely populated cities in the world today. Over 22 million people inhabit its metropolitan region (10,886,518 of them in the municipality of São Paulo alone, according to the 2007 census of the IBGE¹³, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), which covers almost eight thousand square kilometers (three thousand square miles), of which 1,523 square kilometers lie in the city, giving a density of about 2.5 thousand per square kilometer in the metropolitan area, but over 7 thousand per square kilometer (18,689.4 per square mile) for the city. The economy of the city of São Paulo is the third largest in Brazil, surpassed only by the country itself and the State of São Paulo. According to the IBGE, in 2006 its GDP amounted to 12.26% of the total national GDP, and that of its metropolitan area 57.3% of the State's GDP (which, in turn, represents 33.9% of that of the entire country).

Unfortunately, not all this works to its advantage. The very size of the city reproduces and exacerbates the deep economic and social disparities that mark Brazilian society. Lack of administrative continuity is another of the chronic problems that prevent São Paulo from offering the desired level of quality of life in all of its subdivisions and, consequently, to all its inhabitants.

¹³ <http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/>, in English and Spanish



APPENDIX 2

People using ICT to promote democracy

At the time it was launched, the movement had only a temporary mini website available for consultation. There was no information about the movement's definition, mission, values, manifesto or any institutional aspect directly linked to its history. The site had been conceived in the framework of proprietary technology, which did not allow users to interact with its content. However, it was soon totally overhauled and rebuilt with free software that actually allowed citizens to participate directly in putting together its content, democratic participation having always been at the core of the movement's values. This is what it became, and what it has remained since then. It took about two months for the new website to be completed, at an initial cost of R\$ 15.000 for a web portal. Currently, an employee of the Executive Secretary, Clara Mayer, is able to handle its maintenance by herself, so that her salary is the movement's only remaining cost for the portal. The quantity of information to be dealt with is enormous and entails: (a) a lot of organisation and planning by the movement; (b) user-friendly visibility in the layout of the portal (which has been successfully maintained despite all the changes), and (c) determination on the part of their users (who don't always have patience to spare) to persist in their particular search in the midst of such a distracting abundance of information. The portal has encountered considerable technical challenges, but problems have been diagnosed and solutions found in timely fashion.

The portal aims at giving Nossa São Paulo public visibility and providing transparency and accountability for movement action, with the ultimate goal being the highest possible rate of citizen participation and having a concrete impact. Thus, the Executive Secretary constantly flags the portal, encouraging people to visit it, with undeniable success. Today the site receives 50,000–60,000 visits per month (with a daily average of 2500–3000), peaking at 70,000 during the month of the Forum Nossa São Paulo and 4100 on Election Day). Websites with greater penetration than this, like those of Brazilian Greenpeace and other NGOs, do not get such a high number of hits. This proves that it is feasible for a small, low-budget organization to put an ambitiously idealistic idea into practice – and to make it work.

On accessing the portal, users find tools and options to get to know the movement right away. Starting with the initial menu, the main features of Nossa São Paulo are presented: *Axes of the Movement*, *Working Groups*, and *Nossa São Paulo's Actions*. There are four axes: *Indicators and Goals*, *Citizen Follow up*, *Citizen Education*, and *Citizen Mobilization*, all of which speak for themselves as facets of movement's path and values. More information on the movement is provided in the section *Who we are*, which introduces the members of the Executive Secretariat, the Sustainable São Paulo Institute, and *Nossa Sao Paulo's Mission, Vision, Letter of Principles, Manifesto and Directives*.

Several other sections of the portal are devoted to actualizing transparency: keeping the population informed not only regarding the movement but regarding the city as a



whole. Through the movement's websites, *Nossa São Paulo in the Chamber* and *News Central* offer the public on-the-scene information about goings-on within the city administration. Since 2008, reporter, Ayrton Goes, has been assigned exclusively to cover the Municipal Chamber of São Paulo, tracking legislators' activities and monitoring the municipal budget. This material is constantly being updated. *Press* opens links to other web pages with further information on the movement. *Audio, Video and Image* is a multimedia archive of movement-related news, much of it available on You-Tube. *Citizenship Agenda* lists free or low-cost events that promote citizenship and democratic participation; there is a direct link to another page, "Catraca Livre"¹⁴, offering similar content. Another link opens to the *Network of Cities* project, providing access to all similar movements in the country. *Nossa São Paulo* graphic material and publications are also available online. And last but not least, a *Virtual Library* and *Links* to other relevant sites are available through the *Nossa São Paulo* portal.

The movement's biggest achievements are highlighted in a section of the Portal called *Actions*, which describes the most important undertakings and a downloadable report detailing movement activities in the past year. This embodies the movement's accountability to all the organizations and individuals who, directly or indirectly, contribute to the work of *Nossa São Paulo*.

Finally, as previously mentioned, the portal's ultimate goal is to promote the broadest possible participation of civil society through mechanisms developed for this purpose. Those wishing to contact the movement can do so through the section *Working Groups*, which provides contact e-mail addresses through which a message can be sent to any of the movement's working groups: *Children and Adolescents, Citizens' Security, Culture, Education, Enterprises, Environment and Urban Mobility, Health, Housing, Participatory Democracy, Science and Technology, Sports and Leisure, Work and Income, Youth, Follow-up on the Municipal Chamber, Follow-up on the Municipal Budget* and *Indicators*.

Participation is further promoted through mechanisms like *Talk to us* and *Participate* (this latter subdivided into *Ideas and Proposals* and *Exemplary Practices*) and *Citizen Agenda*. These instruments, whose names are self-explanatory, are open to individuals as well as organizations. A wide variety of content is received through these mechanisms: suggestions, questions, complaints, and even CV's. Certain requests do not fall under the movement's mandate (e.g., "How do I get the hole on my street fixed?") and therefore cannot be responded to. But the range of contributions testifies to users' trust in the *Nossa São Paulo* movement, and to their feeling free and comfortable enough to register their views. There is no censorship of comments before they are posted on the portal, not even grammar corrections. (This is not meant to embarrass users or denigrate their level of education, but to demonstrate fidelity to citizens' right to free expression.) Nor does the movement take a position vis-à-vis contradictory ideas. Texts are only filtered out of concern for serious repercussions, as with an

¹⁴ <http://catracalivre.uol.com.br/proposta-catraca/>. This is a project of community journalism aiming to make the city a constant learning experience for all, not only for the elite, through free or affordable quality leisure and learning activities.



insulting or prejudicial remark, or if the text in question is later printed and published elsewhere.

The homepage of the portal has a map through which the users can locate themselves in terms of the city's sub-municipalities and their respective districts. Though useful, this map is rudimentary and does not allow users to access indicators or any further information about their sub-municipality, their district or even about the city as a whole. Such information can only be accessed via the Observatory, to which users can open a direct link through the portal¹⁵. Not surprisingly, the Observatory is the movement's most visited page.

The Observatory is a website that shows and compares social indicators for the city of São Paulo, as well as for each of its 31 sub-municipalities and their 96 districts, wherever possible. Factors of gender, ethnicity and age are taken into account where feasible. Given the huge extent and complexity of the megalopolis, indicators are not applied to the city as a whole since averages would obscure inequality.

Launched in January 2008, the Observatory is a constantly updated virtual database displaying a range of social, environmental, economic, political and cultural indicators for the city of São Paulo and its subdivisions. The display of objective indicators evokes subjective ones which crop up in public opinion polls on life in the city. Through these indicators, society can monitor quality of life year by year, and evaluate the performance of public administrators in the discharge of their responsibilities. They can be a priceless means for citizens to exert influence in developing public policies aimed towards a more sustainable, just society.

Sources of these indicators are mostly municipal secretariats, and the databases of certain federal and state organizations. Since all of these are official and public, their data has already been validated and does not require further research except if some discrepancy is observed. Gathering and updating data is a very complex process, and unsatisfactory performance of this phase can compromise the movement's credibility. Thus, it had to be handled by the movement's Executive Secretariat, not left in the hands of a private firm as it had been at the outset because: not all indicators are regularly updated by their sources regularly; publication of certain data can be manipulated by the source; scheduling discrepancies exist in issuance of data by different sources (some are annual, others biannual, etc.); some sources are extremely slow in updating their data. Furthermore, although official requests are always sent to them in the name of the movement, not all sources are very cooperative, and a great deal of patience and determination is required. Also, new tools and analyses have to be created when available data is not satisfactory for purposes of the Observatory. Nonetheless, the movement's accomplishments have been impressive. The Observatory consists almost completely of updated information, the rare exceptions being due to circumstances beyond the movement's control: the source of data for some indicators may not yet have been established; other data may not have been provided by official

¹⁵ <http://www.nossasaopaulo.org.br/observatorio/>



sources. This usually involves sub-municipalities that appear unready to deploy this information. Most of the Observatory's indicators grew out of collective work involving civil society organizations and individuals in Nossa São Paulo Working Groups, but a few highly important indicators originated elsewhere. Some of them are among those previously noted as still missing. Therefore, Nossa São Paulo is mandated to demand that public administrations improve their data-gathering processes to provide the movement with the maximum possible amount of trustworthy data to keep the Observatory fully updated and the population thoroughly informed. This represents a major challenge for them.

The Observatory is an ongoing process-in-the-making. At the moment, two sections are foreseen, one which will follow the Municipal Chamber's work more closely. The other will promote transparency and participatory democracy by spotlighting the way municipal councils actually work, public audiences, budget transparency and e-government procedures. It will monitor whether exercises in public consultation and participation are being properly carried out, and whether the new laws regarding mayoral plans and programs, the "Plano de Metas" and "Plano de Governo", are being respected.

To furnish users with varied perspectives as a basis for more accurate perception of objective indicators, for each sub-municipality the Observatory presents three different types of graphics: historical series (tracing indicators' evolution over time, for the years the movement had access to data only); comparison of historical series; and general indicator-referenced classification of sub-municipalities. Also featured is comparative analysis of issues and their respective indicators, in terms of absolute values and the inequality factor. Maps are also provided for easier user location of indicators in their sub-municipalities. Observatory maps access wider and deeper data than those in the portal.

Besides Working Group issues and their indicators, the Observatory offers an explanation of the methodology it is built around and explains how to read the data presented. It opens links to related websites, other observatories, and on-line publications. Finally, it displays the results of the movement's opinion polls on quality of life in the city, leadership in social movements, and the Car-Free Days in 2007 and 2008.



APPENDIX 3

The 140 Indicators of the Nossa Sao Paulo Observatory (as per May 2009)

- Social Assistance
 - Homeless population
 - Reintegration of under-aged after staying in shelters
 - Government budget destined for social assistance NGOs
 - Available places in social assistance services
 - Percentage of under-aged that return to shelters (unavailable)
 - Families receiving income transfers from government programs (unavailable)
- Culture
 - Children's library collections per capita
 - Adult library collections per capita
 - Percentage of Cultural centers per sub-municipality out of the citywide total
 - Percentage of movie theatres per sub-municipality out of citywide total
 - Cultural public equipment per sub-municipality out of citywide total
 - Percentage of music halls per sub-municipality out of citywide total
 - Percentage of theatres per sub-municipality out of the citywide total
 - Cultural activities promoted by government (unavailable)
 - Public attendance at cultural activities (unavailable)
- High School Education
 - High school dropout rate (in private and public schools)
 - Discrepancies between age and school year (in private and public schools)
 - School failure (in private and public schools)
 - Teacher absenteeism in public schools (unavailable)
 - Number of teachers transferred between public schools (unavailable)
- Primary School Education
 - Primary school dropout rate (in private and public schools)
 - Discrepancies between age and school year (in private and public schools)
 - School failure (in private and public schools)
 - Percentage of students in the intermediate shift (between morning and afternoon) in public schools
 - Percentage of schools that offer the intermediate shift (the so-called "hunger shift")
 - Illiteracy
 - Primary Education Development Index ("Ideb") from 1st to 4th grade, and from 5th to 8th grade in municipal schools
 - Teacher absenteeism in public schools (unavailable)
 - Number of teachers transferred between public schools (unavailable)



- Crowding in public schools (unavailable)
- Childhood Education
 - Available places in day-care/nursery schools
 - Available places in kindergartens
 - Teacher absenteeism in public schools (unavailable)
 - Number of teachers transferred between public schools (unavailable)
- Sports
 - Athletic equipment
 - Sports centers
 - Access to oriented sports practice
 - Sports educators (unavailable)
 - Available places to oriented sports practice (unavailable)
- Housing
 - Tenement housing
 - Slum areas
 - Percentage of residential building potential already acquired in relation to that authorized by Law 13.885/04, in square kilometres
 - Progressive Property Tax collection on properties not in use (unavailable)
 - Housing shortage (unavailable)
 - Number of families served by housing programs (unavailable)
 - Housing units built (unavailable)
 - Percentage of ZEIS (Special Zones of Social Interest) being used as prescribed by law (unavailable)
- Environment
 - Green area per inhabitant
 - Proportion of green area in relation to overall area of the sub-municipalities
 - Water consumption
 - Air quality
 - Sewage collection network
 - Sewage treatment
 - Proportion of territory covered by vegetation of any size (unavailable)
 - Waste sorting (unavailable)
 - Water waste (unavailable)
- Budget
 - Municipal Budget updating
 - Municipal Secretariat Budget updating
 - Municipal Sub-municipalities' Budget updating
 - Municipal Debt per capita
 - Municipal Investment per capita
 - Percentage of budget earmarked for municipal secretariat actually spent
 - Ratio of foreseen and actually spent budget, incorporating updates
 - Percentage of the budget for sub-municipality actually spent, incorporating updates



- Municipal budget per capita
 - Sub-municipality budget per capita
- Health
 - Underweight at birth
 - Number of post-abortion curettage in women 15 - 34 per thousand in this age group
 - Teenage pregnancy
 - Hospital admittance of patients with respiratory disease between 0 and 4 years old
 - Number of hospital beds available per thousand inhabitants
 - Infant mortality
 - Maternal mortality
 - Mortality from external causes (violence and accidents)
 - Mortality from poorly-identified causes
 - Mortality from circulatory disease
 - Mortality from respiratory disease
 - Mortality from neoplasia (cancer)
 - Insufficient pre-natal care
 - Main *causa mortis* in the city
 - Health professional availability per inhabitant
 - Proportion of municipal budget spent on health care
 - Comparison of insufficient pre-natal care in afro and non-afro descendents
 - Number of basic care units
- Work and income
 - Unemployment
 - Unemployment between 16 and 29
 - Unemployment among women/men
 - Unemployment among afro and non-afro descendents
 - Job offers
 - Average income
 - Average income among women/men
 - Average income among afro descendents and non-afro descendents
- Transportation / traffic accidents
 - Comparison of deaths in the traffic
 - Deaths in automobiles
 - Deaths in bicycles
 - Deaths in motorcycles
 - Deaths by collisions with pedestrians
 - Deaths in the traffic
 - Car accidents (unavailable)
 - Bicycle accidents (unavailable)
 - Motorcycle accidents (unavailable)
 - Traffic accidents (unavailable)



- Collisions with pedestrians (unavailable)
- Transportation / urban mobility
 - Access of physical handicapped passengers to busses
 - Traffic congestion
 - Yearly average traffic congestion
 - Percentage average of daily displacements (on foot, by public and individual transportation)
 - Car fleet of the capital of São Paulo
 - Types of motor displacements
 - Transportation system
 - Vehicles and passengers – comparison of growth
 - Average speed in traffic
- Violence
 - Adolescents involved in infractions
 - Children’s abuse
 - Women’s abuse
 - Violent fatal crimes
 - Violent non-fatal crimes
 - Juvenile homicides
 - Robbery

