

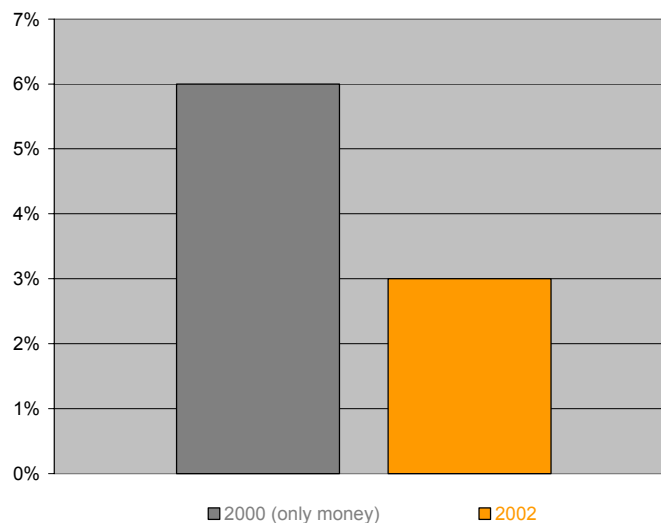
Second Survey on Vote Buying in Brazilian elections

[Conducted by Ibope on behalf of Transparência Brasil and Unacon, over a nationally representative sample of 2000 voters. Margin of error: 2.2 percent points.]

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A national survey on vote-buying conducted by Ibope Institute on behalf of Transparência Brasil and Unacon between November 14-17 2002, showed that in the elections held in October/November,¹ about 3% of Brazilian voters were subjected to offers to sell their votes by candidates or go-betweens. Money, with 56%, was the most common offering, followed by material goods (30%) and favours extended by the public administration (11%). In a similar survey conducted in early 2001 (thus right after the 2000 municipal elections), 6% of the sampling of voters said that they were offered money in exchange of their votes (Graph 1).

Graph 1: Offers to buy votes



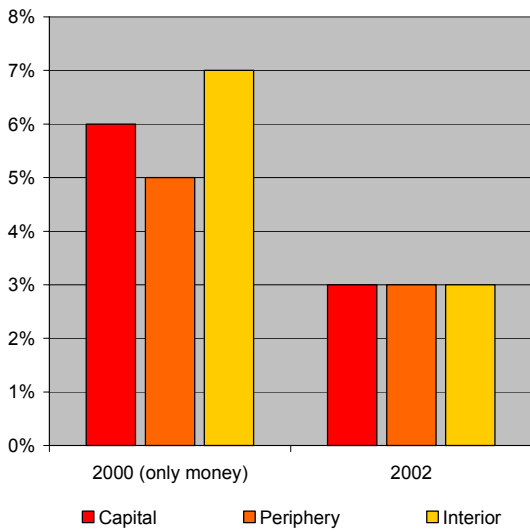
The survey's data confirm what was already apparent in the 2001 survey, namely that a series of preconceptions about vote buying in Brazil need revision. Thus,

- The voter's educational level has only a moderate influence on the supply of offers directed to him (Graph 2).
- Vote buyers don't discriminate among different income levels (Graph 3).
- The type and size of the voter's hometown do not appear to be a significant factor (Graphs 4 and 5).
- There is little difference between genres, men being slightly more targeted than women (Graph 6).

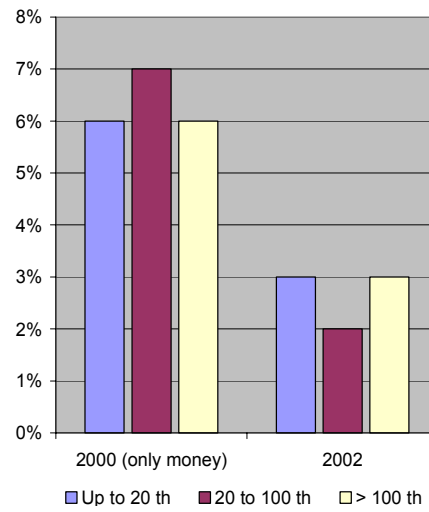
¹ Encompassing Executives and Legislatures in the Federal and state levels. About 115 million voters participated in the elections in 2002.



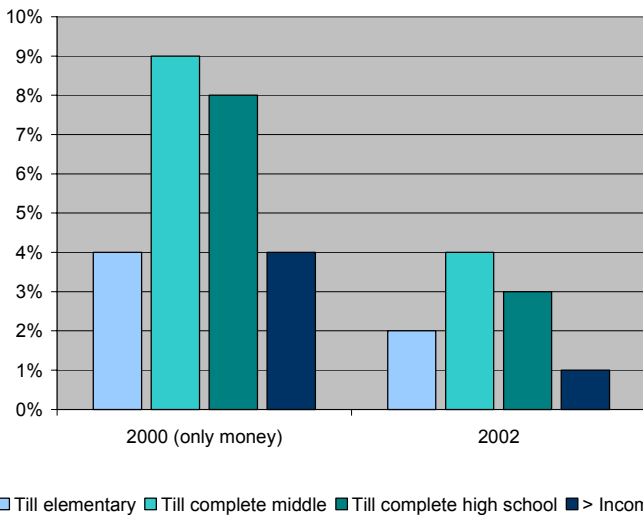
Graph 4: Type of municipality



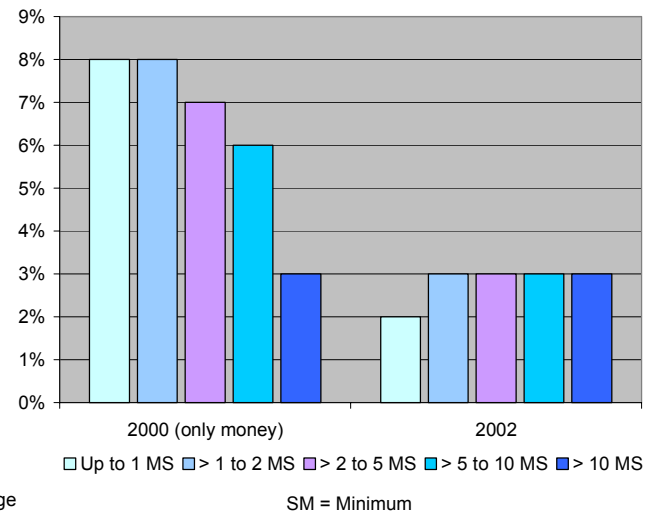
Graph 5: Size of municipality



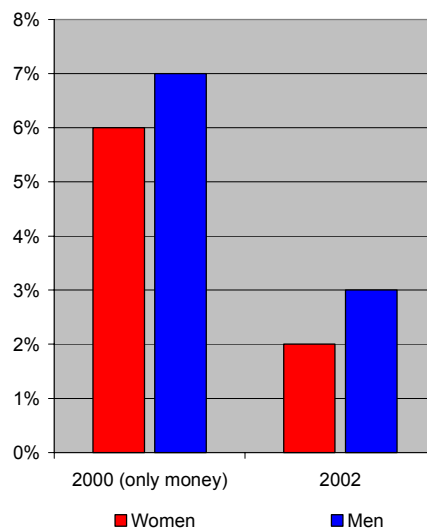
Graph 2: Education



Graph 3: Family income



Graph 6: Gender

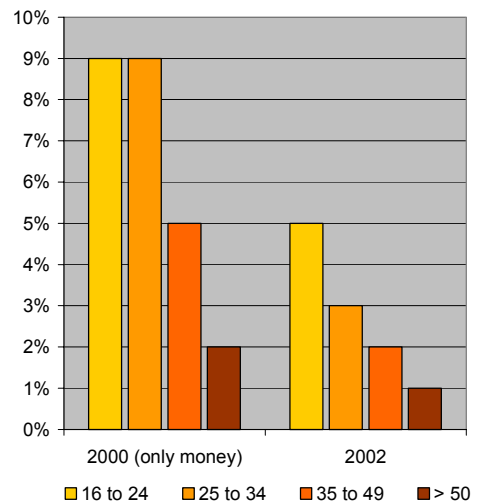




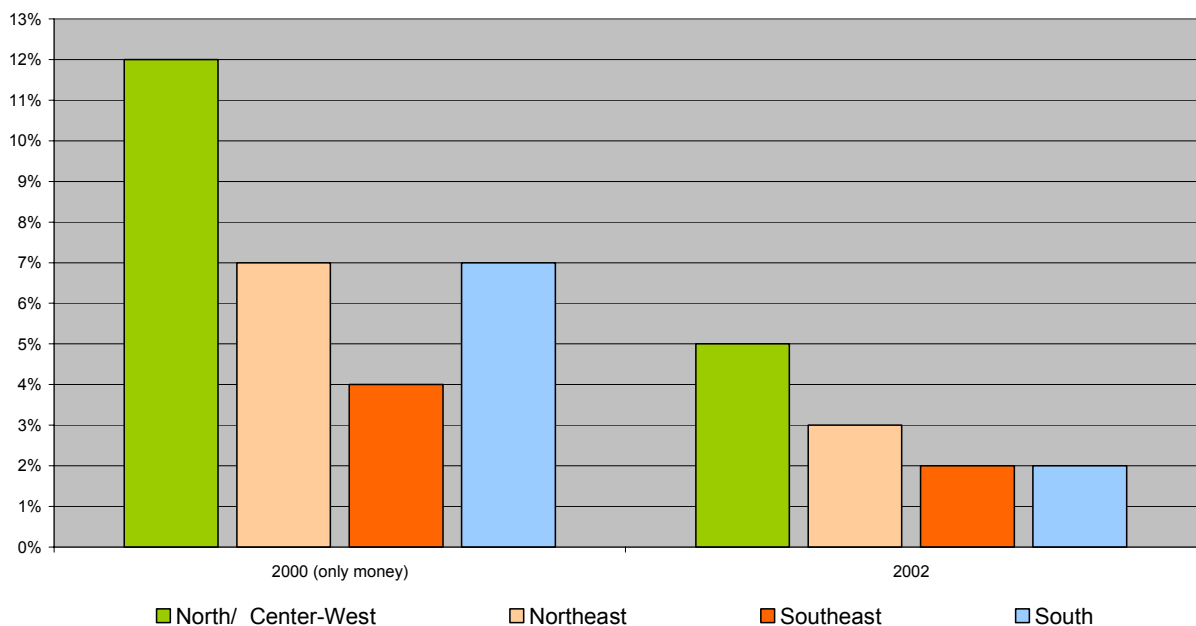
Graph 7: Age

On the other hand, there are significant differences in what regards the voter's age. Older voters are less vulnerable to offers of vote buying than younger ones (Graph 7).

The most marked differences are those between the country's regions (Graph 8). As happened with the survey about the 2000 municipal elections, in 2002 the North/Center West regions were the most vulnerable, followed by the Northeast. The North and the Northeast are the poorest regions, closely followed by the Center West. The Southeast (the most heavily industrialised region) and the South (also industrialised) appear less unfavourable, although the phenomenon is not entirely absent. It is to be noted that, while in 2000 the South was at the same level as the Northeast, in 2002 the region appeared levelled with the Southeast.



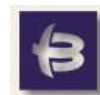
Graph 8: Regions



Besides evaluating the volume of the Brazilian voting “market”, Transparência Brasil’s surveys aim at establishing an indicator to monitor the phenomenon along the time. However, some caution must be exercised when comparing the two surveys reported here.

- Firstly, while the 2000 elections were only municipal, the 2002 were state and Federal. Thus, the studied phenomena were not exactly the same.
- In the first survey, the question asked was limited to offers of money, while in the 2002 survey all types of exchanges were included (money, goods, services).

Even with these limitations, the 2002 survey reveals that about 3 million voters were offered to sell their votes. It is worth recalling that the electoral code defines such a transaction as a crime,



punishable with up to 4 years of imprisonment – even if the voter does not accept the offer. Thus, during the last electoral period about 3 million criminal acts were perpetrated.

A remark on methodology

Both lay and specialist evaluations about the relevance of the commerce of votes vary between an optimistic perspective (as if the phenomenon was mainly folkloric) all the way to an assessment that vote buying would be so prevalent as to challenge any election's overall integrity. Transparencia Brasil's surveys on the subject were designed to throw a systematic light onto a theme that, although highly relevant, has been treated with too much subjectivity.

Empirical research on vote buying is affected by two practical difficulties. Firstly, the phenomenon's delimitation is not an easy task. In the strict sense, vote buying entails exchanging one's vote for money, goods or other favours. However, beside individual exchanges, there is also the collective bargaining of votes, conducted by influential leaders. For some observers, unreal promises made during electoral campaigns to specific groups of voters constitute a vote buying operation. Between choosing a broader definition of the phenomenon, one which necessarily would also broaden the margin for imprecision, and choosing a stricter characterisation, TBrasil opted for the latter. In the present context, vote buying is limited to the individual negotiation of votes in return for money, goods, administrative favours and other advantages offered to individual voters.

Secondly, it is not easy to empirically pinpoint the actual transaction. Any survey runs into the interviewed person's embarrassment when asked about his participation in the transaction, which is illegal and criminally punishable. In order to avoid the difficulty, TBrasil surveys are limited to the offer of candidates/go-betweens to buy votes. This places the responsibility on candidates.² The price this procedure pays is not fully getting to the completed transaction.³

² It is known that some voters initiate the transaction, asking candidates for something in return for their votes.

³ The transaction can be divided in three stages: first comes the offer or soliciting of payment; then it comes the negotiation and the agreement about the exchange; finally comes the contract's fulfilment – which can be broken both by the voter and the candidate.