

Poll Shows No Loss of Support for Lula Despite Scandals

A nationwide public opinion poll released July 12 showed a surprising improvement in President Lula's approval rating.

In the July 5-7 poll taken by the Sensus polling firm, Lula's approval rose from 57.4% in May to 59.9% while his disapproval rating fell from 32.7% to 30.2%. The improvement came despite Brazil's largest corruption scandals in more than a decade and the government's most serious political crisis since taking office.

The government's image has also not been tarnished by the scandals. In the poll, the government's approval rating increased from 39.8% in May to 40.3%. The poll's results indicated that the public has not associated the corruption scandals with either Lula or the government. In the survey, 35.4% of the respondents said the accusations are directed at Congress, 31.2% at the PT Party and only 12% said the scandals involve Lula.

When asked to evaluate Lula's actions to deal with the scandals, 47.8% of the respondents said Lula had acted effectively versus 31.9% who said he had not done enough. Also 45.7% of the persons interviewed said they do not believe Lula was aware of the scandals while 33.6% said they thought he was. But when asked whether corruption had increased in the Lula government, 40.3% said it had, up from 31.2% in the May survey.

The poll's results were generally favorable to the government but they also conflicted directly with a poll cited by *Veja* magazine in its weekend edition. In that poll, taken June 21-29 by the Ipsos-Opinion polling firm, 55% of the respondents said they believe Lula was aware of the alleged PT payoff scheme in Congress. Out of these persons, 16% said they believe Lula was involved in the scheme.