

THE 1989 ELECTIONS IN BRAZIL

By Silvia Cervellini

"Today we are the third-largest democracy in the world", said President Sarney on November 16, 1989, when more than 82 million voters could finally, after 29 years, begin the process of choosing a president in free, open elections.

The first round victories of Fernando Collor de Mello and Luis Inacio "Lula" da Silva demonstrated popular opposition to a government unable to relieve 40% monthly inflation rates, in a country which also has one of the largest gaps in the world between rich and poor. The low percentages received by candidates identified with the Government, Ulysses Guimaraes (former president of the Chamber of Deputies) and Aureliano Chaves (ex-minister of energy), confirm the opposition trend.

Collor, former governor of the small northeastern state of Alagoas, began the campaign behind the left-wing candidates, Leonel Brizola, ex-governor of Rio de Janeiro, of the Democratic Labor party (PDT) and Lula, a labor leader and former deputy of the Workers' party (PT). The PDT and PT had won mayoral races in 1988 in a number of key cities, including Sao Paulo (PT), Rio de Janeiro (PDT), and Porto Alegre (PT). By June, though, Collor's strategy of projecting himself as an anti-corruption, anti-system candidate had proved to be a success, and polls by the Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics (IBOPE) showed him receiving 43% of the voter preference.

The polls again indicated a change of candidate standing with the onset of the media advertising in September. Collor's lead declined, Brizola regained strength, and Lula started a steady climb which brought him into a virtual tie for second place with Brizola by early November. At the same time, Silvio Santos, Brazil's most popular TV entertainer, announced his intention to run for president. Politicians and pollsters waited anxiously—until on November 9 Santos was declared ineligible. IBOPE's polls showed him with a maximum of 7% of the vote.

The outcome of the first round gave the expected advantage to Collor (28%). Brizola and Lula ran a virtual dead heat (16 points each with the latter gaining a place in the run-off by 455,000 votes). Mario Covas, founder of the Brazilian Social Democratic party (PSDB) and currently a senator

from Sao Paulo, came in fourth with 11%, while Paulo Maluf, ex-governor of Sao Paulo under the military regime, tallied 8%. Lula ran as the candidate with the clearest ideological message, but the results of the first round balloting raised doubts that he would succeed in turning the run-off against Collor into a contest of "the poor man against the rich man," as he had declared. Collor had a populist appeal despite his privileged social background, as his strong support in the lowest income and educational groups demonstrates (see table).

Brizola's strength came largely from the three states in the South and from Rio de Janeiro. Most of Covas' voters came from the best-educated classes, who favored his social democratic program, and who feared Lula's radicalism on one side and Collor's populism on the other. Maluf's supporters, traditionally conservative, were expected to turn to Collor.

Just after the first round voting, Collor led Lula comfortably, according to the polls. IBOPE had him up by 14 points, for example, in the survey done November 22-24. The race steadily tightened in the first two weeks of December, however, until in the IBOPE poll of December 14-15, it was a virtual deadheat. But Collor was seen winning the final televised debate, and he won "the only poll that really counts"—the run-off balloting December 17—by 6 percentage points. The IBOPE exit poll got the margin almost exactly.

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**VOTE PREFERENCE IN THE FIRST ROUND OF THE
1989 BRAZILIAN ELECTION, BY SOCIAL GROUP**

	Collor (PRN)	Lula (PT)	Brizola (PDT)	Covas (PSDB)	Maluf (PDS)
SEX					
Men	27%	17%	16%	8%	8%
Women	27	12	15	8	7
EDUCATION					
Elementary	34	11	15	5	6
Junior High	27	17	16	8	7
High School	18	20	13	13	10
College	10	15	15	20	10
AGE					
16 - 17	28	24	18	8	7
18 - 24	28	19	15	9	5
25 - 39	26	15	15	8	8
40+	29	10	15	7	8
INCOME "min. salaries"					
up to 2	34	12	16	5	4
2.5 - 5	27	16	16	8	8
5 - 10	19	18	13	13	12
10+	17	15	11	17	14
REGION					
South	18	8	37	6	5
Southeast	21	16	13	11	12
Center/North	41	15	8	5	4
Northeast	40	15	7	5	2

SOURCE: IBOPE (Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics), November 2-5, 1989.

NOTE: The "minimum salary" is the lowest amount that can legally be paid to a worker. An annual income of 2 "minimum salaries" or less is, in Brazil, very low. An annual income of 10 "minimum salaries" puts the family in an upper-middle class position.

Note that the percentages do not add to 100. Candidates getting less than 5% of the vote are not shown; together they received 14%. Respondents who didn't indicate support for any candidate also are not shown in this table.

Readers of *The Public Perspective* will be interested in the methodology that IBOPE used in its December 17 exit poll. To avoid possible bias brought by the atmosphere surrounding polling stations, the interviews were conducted in voters' homes, using a secret ballot. Those who had already voted were identified by a "screen" question at the beginning of the interview. For the exit poll a sample of 1,218 respondents was drawn. IBOPE's samples are stratified and proportional to the number of voters per state. A PPS, multi-stage selection was used to reach the towns and census tracts, but all capitals and metropolitan areas were included. Quotas of sex, age, educational level, and occupation were built into the final stage.