

LITERATURE ON  
INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS:  
Reply

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Bryce Wood's perceptive comments concerning my article, "Consensus and Divergence: The State of the Literature on Inter-American Relations in the 1970s" (LARR 13, no. 1 [1978]:87–126), are very welcome.

He makes two points in his communication. The second, and shorter, is the insufficient attention paid by political scientists to different personalities and perceptions of political leaders. I agree that this has often been a flaw in the political science literature, but I believe that it is less often the case today in the study of inter-American relations. The material in my article concerning the presence or absence of assumptions about unified, rational actors, the level of analysis and so forth, does get at the point of asking whether the literature pays attention to different personalities and perceptions of political leaders. I indicate that some approaches, but not all, do this, and that the ones that do it best are those I called bureaucratic politics, presidential politics, or political system approaches and, in part, the organizational ideology approach.

Wood's main point, however, bears on the issue of the time factor. My article, and the existing literature, do cope with some elements of the time factor. Thus I looked at the "time horizon" of the existing literature as well as sources of policy change, for example. However, I paid much less attention in my article—indeed, hardly any at all, upon rereading—to variations in time. This is Wood's central point. I want to acknowledge publicly, then, that he is right and that I was wrong.

The scholarly literature does differ in its consideration of variation by time. While it is true that it is primarily a difference between historians and political scientists, there are also differences within each group. A more complete version of my article should include not just the time factor, but the variation-in-time factor, and I am grateful to Bryce Wood for bringing this out.



*Figure of woman holding her hair.  
Chinesco, Nayarit (Mexico).*