

## To the Editor:

Professor Yoels has seemingly proved his contention that doctoral dissertations are not the "original contributions" that academic folklore would have them (*PS*, Fall, 1972, pp. 432-35). One could argue that there is another possible explanation for the paucity of citations to dissertations in published books and articles. Perhaps the information gathering habits of political scientists provide an answer. If the belief has developed that *Dissertation Abstracts* and other lists need not be consulted too closely in literature searches, it is quite understandable why dissertations are not cited more often. It is not inconceivable that much worth-while data is "lost" in the mass of dissertations, because the latter received a poor reputation for originality in the past.

There may also be factors that militate against the publication of dissertations or parts of them. It is possible that many graduate students are bored with the topics when they finish their dissertations. They may prefer to turn to other projects rather than rehash their dissertations. This theory would have to be proved, of course. We also lack data on the extent to which dissertation advisers encourage students to try to publish all or parts of their dissertations. This could be a significant variable.

From my limited experience I would say a fair percentage of dissertations contain material not readily available from published works. Admittedly, this is merely an impression based on literature searches connected with my own proposed dissertation and other projects and on studying lists of dissertations in law and political science with a view to buying reproductions of some for my library.

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