Notice of the Final Oral Examination  
for the Degree of Master of Arts  
of  
INJAMAM ALAM  
B.B.A. (University of Dhaka, 2014)  
M.S.S. (East West University, 2016)  
“Votes in the Wind: The Dust Bowl and American Elections”  
Department of Economics  

Wednesday, August 15, 2018  
1:00pm  
Clearihue Building  
Room C214  

Supervisory Committee:  
Dr. Robert Gillezeau, Department of Economics University of Victoria (Supervisor)  
Dr. Donna Feir, Department of Economics, UVic (Member)  

External Examiner:  
Dr. Lynda Gagne, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria  

Chair of Oral Examination:  
Dr. Stephen Tax, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, University of Victoria  

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

In this study, we go back in time to the American Dust Bowl, to understand the political impacts of this catastrophe which devastated the American Plains during the 1930s. We employ county-level panel analysis, to analyze whether the Dust Bowl caused voters in effected areas to shift away from the Democratic Party who were the incumbents throughout the decade-long occurrence of the Dust Bowl. We look at Presidential, Congressional, Senatorial and Gubernatorial elections from 1940 to 1968. Our results show that the Dust Bowl caused voters to significantly backlash against the Democratic party. We find that this political impact lasts through the 1940s. However, the effect seems to eventually subside and we have found little evidence of it continuing into the 1950s and 1960s. We also find no evidence to suggest that this shift in voting behavior was due to migration. Lastly, we find the New Deal to be ineffective in reducing this backlash, despite its overall wide popularity.