



# E-Portfolio

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EN101-ON01

Dr. Kimberly Bunts-Anderson



➤ Primary Research Topic:

- Why do you think it is important to exercise your right to vote in the CNMI?

➤ Secondary Research Topics:

- Why do you think it is important to vote?
- Do citizens feel like their votes are being heard?
- Are citizens aware of the consequences when they do not vote?

➤ Writing Schedule:

- Research Question – October 2016
- Proposal – October 2016
- Process Essay – November 2016
- Literature Review – November 2016

➤ Research Schedule

- Survey – October 2016
  - Pilot – October 2016
  - Final – October 2016
- Interviews – November 2016
- Online Research – Oct – Nov 2016

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<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZC6TTYD>

**KBA-**This is a good survey and relevant to the community. I think and this is my personal opinion that there are some

issues you may consider including Such as asking if the person is aware of the different party platforms and should those be more transparent? To me it is unclear who is promising what. Another issue is Nepotism people tell me they tend to vote their affiliation rather than the issues. But for people not affiliated it makes it difficult to decide on whom to vote for. Also there is a problem with community representation. There are no representatives for the individual segments within the community. Such as the women, men, gays, youth, senior citizens as well as by nationality- Japanese, Korean, Thia, American, Filipino, Chinese, Bangladeshi, Carolinian, Chomorro and outer islands.

**BRS:** I felt that you could change the wording of some of your questions and also change some completely. Your first 3 questions are basically asking the same things so I suggest changing questions 2 and 3. Hope this helps.

**LellieBells:** Interesting survey! Some people who had recently turned 18 aren't interested in voting and believe that their vote doesn't matter, while others have been passed 18 years for a while

and still have never participated in elections. Great questions, too!

**CDJ:** I like your questions because it gets the job done and may give you a lot of data for your research but some questions could use a bit of grammar corrections, your question #1 could be split into two questions,

**YZ:** I think your survey questions are really good, all relevant to your topic which is local elections. I like your question #5, the thumb scale is really cool. It's actually the first time I've ever seen it in that format. It is good that you have some comments box for people. And the example really helps people to understand your question.

**NTT** interesting.

**SMJ**

**BH-** Your questions are great because they are succinct, but I feel it would be great to add a little more detail, or some options along with the comment box on the question of why do they not vote.

**APS:** The survey is very interesting and has questions that are important to ask.

**RJ:** Your survey is simple and straight-to-the-point. My suggestion to have more answers and data for your topic is to ask questions about how they are able to get information about each candidate running in the local elections. It would help see if people do get involved in local elections and

are making the choice to vote. Otherwise, good job (:

**MS:** Hi Erica! Amazing job. It was really thoughtful that you put question #4 because there is a variety of reasons for answering no to question #3. By adding question #4, you show that you are really interested. Question #5 was really impressive, I haven't seen any like it in other surveys. I think this would definitely appeal to survey takers. I think you can get more information by adding a question after #8 that allows them to build on their answer of #8 and explain themselves. In this way, you can learn about why they think elections are important. That could be part of the structure of your research paper: the misconceptions. I believe you did a really great job!

**RI:** I have to say you have a very interesting topic and survey as well. I think this is something that needs to be addressed. JP

**EB:** The questions are relevant and accurate, I wished you had put more multiple choice answers however to widen our varieties. Overall nice work!

**CC:** its interesting.

**Age:**

**Why do you think it is important to vote in the CNMI?**

**Have you voted this election?**

**1.) Theodore Parker – Pharmacist**

Age: 54

Why do you think it is important to vote in the CNMI?

- “The whole purpose of being in a democracy is to participate in it, and the way to participate in a democracy is to vote”.

Have you voted this election? YES

**2.) Kina Sablan**

Age: 23

Why do you think it is important to vote in the CNMI?

- “To have my voice be heard and because it is a responsibility of being a U.S. Citizen”

Have you voted this election? YES

**3.) Trina Ito**

Age: 39

Why do you think it is important to vote in the CNMI?

- “To exercise our right to vote, and to have a say for other people who are not able to as well.”

Have you voted in this election? YES

Voting in the CNMI  
The Importance of Voting in the CNMI  
Erica Leon Guerrero  
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Author's Note:

This paper was prepared for English 101, Online-01, taught by Dr. Kimberly Buntz-Anderson

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## Abstract

For centuries, local elections have shaped the way we live here in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The CNMI being a small island run by a municipal council, these local elections are significant to our islands. Many citizens may feel like their voices have not been heard, or feel no need to vote because they do not know their candidates. In this research paper, the importance of voting in the CNMI will be addressed. The data presented had been collected through numerous surveys, online and academic research, as well as interviews with people of many different age groups ranging from 17-55. I am writing this essay not only to share the importance of voting, but the opinions of others in the topic of voting in the CNMI.

## Introduction

Municipal elections are nothing new to the citizens of the CNMI. Local elections bring out meetings, family gatherings, and invigorating rallies. Although our elections may not seem as thrilling as the United States, we are indeed seeking for the same outcome. We are looking for strong leaders to administer and guide us. We rely on these officials to manage our hospitals, our school system, and our villages. Citizens often forget the importance of voting and all the unauthorized authority we give out to candidates when we do not.

## Literature Review

One very important academic source to the student researcher's topic that supports her research project is a handout, "We Are All West Virginia" by the Secretary of State in West Virginia, Natalie Tennant. This source supports the student researcher's topic in many ways, but mostly in the sense that if a person does not vote, they allow others to make decisions for them. "It's your money. The county commissioners, governor, state treasurer, legislators, President and members of Congress you vote for will decide how to spend your money, vote for those that agree with your point of view" (Tennant, N/A). The citizens of the CNMI rely on a council to provide good education, healthcare, and safety to their villages. When a citizen of the CNMI does not vote, he/she is often left with a municipal council who has a different point of view from its citizens.

Another very important academic source to the student researcher's topic that refutes her research project is a website article, "Voter Turnout at 20-Year Low in 2016", provided by CNN

Politics. In this academic source, it refutes the student researcher's topic with the importance of voting because although citizens of the United States have continuously showed their disagreements towards the idea of Donald Trump being their president, he had won anyways. "That measure of turnout is the lowest in a presidential election since 1996, when 53.5% of voting-age citizens turned out" (Wallace & Yoon, 2016). The following source connects to a non-academic source, "Turn out Kind of Low", provided by a local newspaper company in the CNMI, The Saipan Tribune. The source explains the low turnout of voters in the CNMI for the year of 2016 as well. Citizens of the CNMI have constantly voiced their concerns towards the works of their municipal council, but still many citizens have not progressed to changing their government officials. "Out of 17,930 registered voters, only 10,993 voted, which comes out at 61.31 percent participation" (Encinarez, 2016).

Another source that supports the student researcher's topic is a blog, "Voting: What is the Point?" by Lorraine Wilke. This source explains the facts of what major decisions a president can make that shapes our everyday lives but most especially the laws we are to abide. "Because to not vote is to have no hand in who gets those aforementioned powers, no influence in choosing who might be the better choice, even if, in your mind, they'd be "the lesser of two evils" (Wilke, 2012). Just like in the CNMI, the buildup of the Best Sunshine casinos has been a back and forth issues with the citizens of the CNMI and the elected municipal council. Although people have voted "No" to the casino, candidates who are for the casino are being elected. This source supports the importance of voting in the CNMI because the citizens of the CNMI have a say of who they give power to.

## Methodology

First, with a well thought outline and a clear overview of her topic, the student researcher proceeded on to creating a survey as one method of collecting data. Using the online survey generator, [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com), she was able to incorporate the questions she created in her outline. For example, "How do you think your vote will help towards the betterment of the CNMI?" The student researcher then shared her survey with her classmates and instructor on their designated google forum for peer feedback. This is her test-run survey, or her 'pilot survey'. After reviewing the helpful comments/suggestions left by her peers, she had taken the initiative of following their advice and applying it on to her final survey. One of the many comments that stood out to her was by one of her peers, Yijia Zhao, who commented, "I think your survey questions are really good, all relevant to your topic which is local elections. I like your question #5, the thumb scale is really cool. It's actually the first time I've ever seen it in that format. It is good that you have some comments box for people. And the example really helps people to understand your question." In addition, the student researcher was able to edit her survey removing all grammar issues and leading questions as well as questions that may stand as leading or offensive.

Second, the student researcher then created a list of 'experts' to share her survey with as this is her second method of collecting data. Local voting being her research topic, she had chosen to interview both Congressmen Edwin K. Propst and Angel Damapan. After selecting these two out of a list of many government officials shared by the CNMI Legislature website, [www.cnmileg.gov.mp](http://www.cnmileg.gov.mp), she was also able to get hold of their contact information and addresses. Another expert she had chosen was the Director of the CNMI Election Commission, Ms. Julita

Villagomez. The student researcher was able to retrieve information about Ms. Villagomez by paying an office visit to the Election Commission office. After creating a list of experts and retrieving as much information on them, the student then started working on her "Letter to Experts". This "Letter to Experts" is a short letter written formally to the specific expert requesting their permission to be interviewed by the student researcher. The student researcher then distributed her survey via office visits and email. (Unfortunately, due to the hectic schedule of the government officials because of the upcoming election, she has yet to hear back.)

Lastly, the student researcher moved on to her third method of collecting data, by interviewing voters and concerned citizens of the CNMI. She interviewed these voters not only by the survey she had created, but by questions she observed concerned voters asked repeatedly. One question she used to interview Brabu Pharmacy and Wellness Center's Pharmacist, Theodore Parker, was, "Why do you think it is important to vote in the 2016 CNMI election?" Mr. Parker's answer was, "The whole purpose of being in a democracy is to participate in it, and the way to participate in a democracy is to vote". Note that the people she had chosen were very active, and unconcerned voters at random. Another question asked and answered by CNMI citizen, Ms. Kina Sablan was, "What characteristics do you look for in a candidate?" Ms. Sablan replied, "I look for candidates who can serve the community well without being selfish and biased". Lastly, she interviewed a DPS employee, who wanted to remain anonymous, the question, "From one to ten, rate the level of nepotism and scandal in the CNMI". The DPS employee answered, "Nine, because people only vote for the people they know personally but when it comes to getting the job done, you are related to no one". With the data she was able to collect and will be collecting, the student researcher continuously updates her excel spreadsheet for further analysis.

## Analysis

As time has gone on and numerous surveys and interviews had passed, data had been collected and analyzed thoroughly. The student researcher had come upon many people who had answered no to her question, "Are you at the legal age of 18, a U.S. citizen, and had registered to vote?" in the survey that she distributed. She then asked in the next question to further explain why, and had come upon answers that explained that they were either not old enough, or not eligible to vote in the CNMI (Appendix A). Although there are many people here on island, some people are not able to cast a vote because of citizenship. It makes voting even more important here on CNMI because we are voting for others as well.

In her survey, the student then asked, "What is one word that you could use to describe the changes that the village congressmen have made to your village?", it was surprising to find out that many people have answered "little to none" (Appendix B). This makes voting important because we want to vote for people who will get the job done!

Although all her survey takers had voted yes to her question "Do you think citizens should be more involved in elections?" (Appendix C), the average vote on a 1-5 scale of the question "How important is voting to you?" was 3 (Appendix D). This has resulted in the analysis that although many people feel that citizens should participate more in local elections it is of little importance to them which is indeed a contradiction.

In a personal interview with citizens from the CNMI, many great answers had come up when asked "Why do you think voting is important?" (Appendix E). A great amount of participation



in the student researchers survey that had been noted was from college students whose ages ranged from 17-24 (Appendix F).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, although many people feel that voting here in the CNMI is important, many still do not know the significance of it. Voting is one great way to express your thoughts on issues that you feel need to be fixed, or simply to have your voice be heard. Coming from a small community run by a municipal council, it is just as important to vote because people are more affected by what is going on as a whole. The CNMI is a melting pot of cultures and different citizenships, and as a U.S. citizen with the rights to vote, many are counted on to make the right decisions for others as well. Personally, voting is important to me because it is what controls our islands and what our daily activities are based on. When we don't vote, we allow people to make decisions that we don't agree with. Your single vote will not only save yourself and the people around you, but preserve the indigenous culture of the CNMI.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A:

I missed the deadline to vote in the 2016 election 11/29/2016 3:18 PM <a href="#">View respondent's answers</a>
I am only a greencard holder and not a U.S citizen. 10/26/2016 6:25 PM <a href="#">View respondent's answers</a>
I am not eligible 10/12/2016 8:32 PM <a href="#">View respondent's answers</a>
I've checke online and there is no street location or phone number to contact or locate the voters registration office. 10/9/2016 2:51 PM <a href="#">View respondent's answers</a>
I am still under age. 10/9/2016 4:00 PM <a href="#">View respondent's answers</a>
Because I am not US citizen. 10/5/2016 8:15 PM <a href="#">View respondent's answers</a>
I just turned 18 so this is my first election. Whoo-hoo!

### Appendix B:

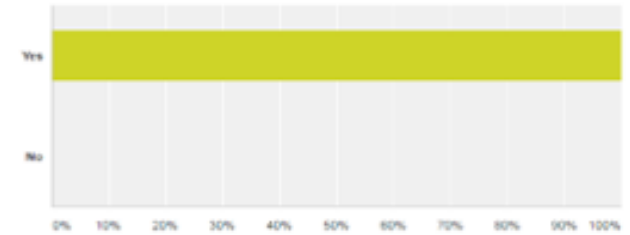
Showing 91 responses

Unsatisfactory (No changes have been made) 11/29/2016 3:23 PM <a href="#">View respondent's answers</a>
Exceptional 11/29/2016 3:18 PM <a href="#">View respondent's answers</a>
Not much. 10/26/2016 6:25 PM <a href="#">View respondent's answers</a>
good 10/12/2016 8:32 PM <a href="#">View respondent's answers</a>
Little to none 10/12/2016 9:22 AM <a href="#">View respondent's answers</a>
I don't know 10/11/2016 9:51 AM <a href="#">View respondent's answers</a>
Our village represetatives are fairly active. However I am more concerned with our federal representatives. 10/9/2016 2:51 PM <a href="#">View respondent's answers</a>

### Appendix C:

Do you think the citizens of the CNMI should be more involved in elections?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0

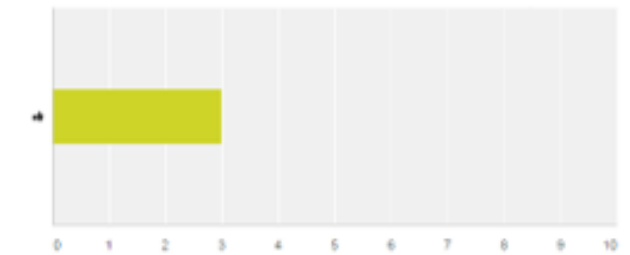


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	100.00% 12
No	0.00% 0
Total	12

### Appendix D:

On a scale from 1-5, 5 being the highest, how important is voting to you?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Weighted Average
→	16.67% 2	16.67% 2	33.33% 4	16.67% 2	16.67% 2	12	3.00

Appendix E:

**Age:**  
**Why do you think it is important to vote in the CNMI?**  
**Have you voted this election?**

1.) Theodore Parker – Pharmacist

Age: 54

Why do you think it is important to vote in the CNMI?

- "The whole purpose of being in a democracy is to participate in it, and the way to participate in a democracy is to vote".

Have you voted this election? YES

2.) Kira Sablan

Age: 23

Why do you think it is important to vote in the CNMI?

- "To have my voice be heard and because it is a responsibility of being a U.S. Citizen"

Have you voted this election? YES

3.) Trina Ho

Age: 39

Why do you think it is important to vote in the CNMI?

- "To exercise our right to vote, and to have a say for other people who are not able to as well."

Have you voted in this election? YES

Appendix F:

Erica Leon  
 Guernsey  
 EN101-0892

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2C0T7YD>

KBA- This is a good survey and relevant to the community I think, and this is my personal opinion that there are some

issues you may consider including such as asking if the person is aware of the different party platforms and should those be more transparent? To me it is unclear who is providing what another issue is to get more people tell me they tend to vote their affiliation rather than the issues, but for people not affiliated it makes it difficult to decide on often to vote for. Also there is a problem with community representation. There are no representatives for the individual segments within the community. Such as the women, men, girls, youth, senior citizens as well as by nationality- Japanese, Korean, Tag, American, Filipino, Chinese, Bangladeshi, Canadian, Chinese and other issues.

WPS- I feel that you could change the wording of some of your questions and also change some completely. Your first 3 questions are basically asking the same things so I suggest changing questions 2 and 3. Page the help.

YAB- I believe interesting survey for people who had recently turned 18 and I understand it voting and believe that their vote count matter, while others have been passed 18 years for a while

and did have never participated in elections. Great questions, but I feel I like your questions because it gets the job done and they give you a lot of ideas for your research but not the numbers could use a bit of grammar corrections, your question #1 could be split into two questions.

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N77- interesting.

SM1

SM- Your questions are great because they are detailed, but I feel it would be great to add a little more detail, or some options along with the comment box on the question of why do they not vote.

APB- The survey is very interesting and has questions that are important to ask.

RA- Your survey is simple and straight to the point. My suggestion to have more answers and data for your topic is to ask questions about how they are able to get information about each candidate running in the local elections. It would help see if people do get involved in local elections and

are making the choice to vote. Otherwise, great job!

MS- In Great Amazing job, it was really thoughtful that you ask question #4 because there is a variety of reasons for abstaining to vote question #5. By asking question #5, you show that you are really interested. Question #5 was really impressive. I haven't seen any like it in other surveys. I think this would definitely appeal to survey takers. I think you can get more information by asking a question who all their ideas have to do on their opinion of all and explain themselves. In the way, you can learn about why they think abstain are important. That could be part of the structure of your research paper. The interview options. I think you did a really great job!

AG- I love to like you have a very interesting topic and survey so well. I think this is something that needs to be addressed.

EB- The questions are relevant and accurate. I liked you had multiple choice options however be wider your questions. Great job work!

CC- interesting.



# Methods of Research

- Newspaper
  - Online Resources
  - Academic Journals/Books
  
  - Interviews:
    - Online Interviews
    - Surveys
- 