Marianas Reunification – What do the people of Saipan think about Guam reuniting with the Mariana Islands?

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Abstract

This research essay was created by Ramon C. Herrera Jr. as a research project regarding Marianas reunification for his English Composition at Northern Marianas College. The public’s opinion regarding reunification was surveyed coming to a conclusion that many were for it or unsure. Reunification possibilities and benefits were discussed and information regarding it were found from different academic resources. The research essay could have used an interview, but no individual had answered any contact that tried to reach out to them. In the end, public opinion was the main focus, and the question was still answered satisfactory to the expectations of the essay’s author.

**Introduction**

This research essay investigates Saipan’s viewpoint on the reunification of Guam back into the Mariana Islands. Although Guam is considered a “Mariana Island” since its discovery in 1521 by Spaniard explorer, Ferdinand Magellan; Guam in the present is very much considered a separate entity from the rest of the now “Northern Mariana Islands”. This essay will provide much insight on many aspects of the Mariana Islands over the years, as well as give background through different resources and public opinion. The essay will entail much history while also giving the positive and negative points in Guam’s reunification into the Mariana Islands.

Background

This essay will peak personal interest to many different people within Saipan. It is of importance because not much has been mentioned of the separation of Guam from the Mariana Islands while the Northern Mariana Islands became the Commonwealth it is today. History books don’t delve much into the details and only explain that since the Northern Mariana Islands were sold separately, Guam just ended up being sold to the U.S. Though this reason may sit as a satisfactory answer to others, curiosity can’t help but to find out more about this topic.

Literature Review

*The Secret Guam Study* written by Willens and Ballendorf looks into the status of U.S. territories. The text explains Guam having split from the Mariana Islands after World War Two and the reasons it stays a separate entity. It also explains the importance of political status and the possibility of reunification (p. 131-137, 177-178). It was a very helpful book that delved into the past and present of Guam’s political status, as well as the future of Guam’s political status.

The article found on the governor of Guam’s website, *Marianas Governors Unify Efforts on Military Buildup, Federal Mandates, and Economic Growth,* by Janna Fernandez focuses the possibility of reunification. The article stresses that the Mariana Islands are experiencing similar problems that only working together may solve, this only strengthens the idea that reunification is key to helping both the NMI and Guam. The summit provided background and a framework of the possibility of benefits if we reunified and worked together.

An academic journal article by Sam MacPhetres as a book review of *The Secret Guam Study* gives an overview of how helpful and reliable the book is. He also explains in his own opinion, that reunification isn’t a bad idea, but would not be so easy to achieve. He says how the NMI and Guam are slowly becoming different despite both being U.S. and close together. His article gave much perspective to the book that people may seem to miss while reading themselves.

Research Questions

The primary research question that will be given insight to is “What do the people of Saipan think about Guam reuniting with the Mariana Islands?” Some secondary questions include “What are some pros and cons to reunification?” and "Would reunification and possibly a statehood be possible in the near future?" and also "Why does Saipan not want to reunite or vice versa?"

Methodology

This Marianas Reunification essay can be replicated like so. Starting the essay requires research questions that need to be answered. Then, surveying and interviewing must be done to make the essay more credible. Lastly, the information must be put together which is the hardest part.

Creating research questions is easy, finding a purpose to the essay is the reason for answering the research questions. Figure out what exactly is a good topic that need to be answered. Research questions must not be too general as well as not being too specific, for the answer may be very vague or very straight to the point.

Next, surveying and questioning was a must. Make survey questions specific so they can be put together and used to answer your research question. You can find much information from surveys alone, either quantitative or qualitative data, both are helpful but qualitative is much more supportive. Find credible individuals or organizations that can help give a credible answer to support the essay, for a study such as this, a government official or expert on reunification are the best choices to seek.

Finally, you must put your information together as the research essay. Start with an introduction of the essay, background of why it is important or interesting, then find academic resources that will help answer and support the essay. Add the research questions, methodology or how it was created, the findings and analysis from surveys and questioning, discuss the essay and conclusion.

Findings and Analysis

The findings of the survey questions were about twenty-five, but very qualitative. The survey was made online hosted by the website “SurveyMonkey”. Only one individual saw reunification as useless in the final survey, while from the pilot survey, there were more that deemed reunification as useless. Majority also did not even have knowledge of why Guam and the NMI are separated today. Many thought, as expected, that Guam and the NMI are also becoming too different from each other. Others thought, also as expected, that since we were together before, reunification would be fine. Based on the surveys, it seems that most of the locals are the only ones who do not want to reunify with Guam, while others born here, but not recognized as an true local with at least 25% local islander blood, were very open minded to it. The surveys met the expectations regarding the topic of reunification.

Discussion

The research questions were answered but not exactly in the way that was expected. Ultimately, majority of the people of Saipan that were surveyed were either unsure or for the reunification of the Mariana Islands. While the locals who were surveyed said “no” to reunification. The pros and cons of reunification were explained in the main literature that was used and also in the articles that were found, with pros of reunification being more numerous than cons. The book mainly answered the third question in that reunification may be possible but would take much time before happening. The last question’s answer was met within the surveys. Many people thought negatively of reunification only because the Northern Marianas and Guam are becoming different from each other.

Conclusion

Many facts were elaborated upon and Saipan’s public opinion will help individuals decide from a more enlightened point of view whether reunification would be a good or bad idea. Within the months of the research project, a lot had been done and the findings were conclusive in answering the questions. Reunification is possible for the Mariana Islands, but the exact percentage of that possibility is a whole different and more extensive research project altogether.

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APA Format: Appendices

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

1. How strongly do you feel the Mariana Islands should stick together?
2. Do you think Guam should be reunified?
3. Do you think the NMI could benefit from reunification?
4. Do you know why Guam separated?
5. Have you heard of Guamanians disliking Saipanese, vice versa (Saipanese disliking Guamanians), or both?
6. Does the previous question affect your opinion on reunification? In a negative or positive way? If you answered yes to this question, please explain how you feel.
7. Do you think that Guam and the NMI would work well together should we reunify? Please explain why or why not.
8. These are some benefits from reunifying with Guam. Please rate how important you feel each one would be.
   1. The Mariana Islands (as a whole) would be able to achieve statehood.
   2. Businesses would be able to trade easier, boosting our economies.
   3. Less money would be spent for the government would become centralized.
9. Do you think that the government being centralized/combined would be a sacrifice worth taking? Please explain why or why not?
10. Demographics

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Appendix B: Pilot Survey Results

Appendix C: Final Survey Results

Appendix D: Research Plan and Research Schedule

**Research Plan**

August: Developing topic, reading literature, research project proposal.

September: Presenting research proposal, contacting numerous sources, pilot surveys

October: Interviews, questionnaires, analyzing data

November: Countless drafts and editing (writing process), last minute research support

December: Final draft

**Research and Writing Schedule**

August:

* Topic development
* Literature Research and Reading

September:

* Research project development
* Proposal Essay
* Surveys (Public Opinion, etc.)
* Data collecting
* Contacting the Governor of Saipan & Guam for personal quotes via e-mail and telephone to their offices as well as contacting the authors of “The Secret Guam Study” via e-mail as well.

October:

* More interviews
* Surveying older citizens of Saipan and historians on island to get personal opinions and knowledge.
* More Data collecting
* Analyzing gathered data
* More data research for essay support
* Sending the surveys to be answered by government officials and authors of books to be used as reference and sources for essay project.

November & December:

* (other numerous drafts from September to December revisions)
* 1st (rough) draft
* 2nd draft
* FINAL DRAFT