

**EMS and Fire Services Regionalization Study:
Telephone Survey Report
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Executive Summary

Almost all respondents who had an opinion were either satisfied or very satisfied with their city's EMS and fire services. Eight of ten (80.6%) of the respondents were either satisfied (27.7%) or very satisfied (52.9%) with their city's EMS. Most of the remainder were either neutral (4.1%) or did not have an opinion (14.1%). Similarly, seven of ten (69.8%) of the respondents were either satisfied (26.9%) or very satisfied (42.9%) with their city's fire services. Most of the remainder were either neutral (5.1%) or did not have an opinion (24.7%).

When asked without reference to cost and quality considerations, approximately half of the respondents felt that it is important for their city to run its own EMS and fire services independently of other cities. However, when tied directly to cost and quality considerations, only 23.3% of the respondents felt that it is important for their city to run its own EMS and fire services.

Overall, across different questions, approximately two-thirds to three-fourths of the respondents said they would favor a merger of their city's EMS and fire services with those of surrounding cities. The support for a merger increased by over ten percent (10.4%) when posed in terms of improving services rather than controlling costs.

Over three fourths of the respondents supported a merger of both EMS (78.5%) and fire services (77.9%) if it saves money while improving services. Similarly, three fourths of the respondents supported a merger of both EMS (76.1%) and fire services (75.5%) if it improves services (76.1%) while controlling costs.

Citizens were slightly less willing to support the merger based on saving local business insurance costs. Approximately two-thirds (65.1%) either agreed (49.9%) or strongly agreed (15.2%) that the merger of EMS and fire services should occur if it saves local business insurance costs.

The quality of service was consistently more important than controlling costs or maintaining independent EMS and fire services. Nearly half (48.9%) of the respondents selected improving quality as their highest priority, followed by maintaining independence (27.7%) and controlling cost (23.4%).

There was a strong correlation throughout the survey between education and support for, or opposition to, a merger. Support for a merger generally increased with education level. Respondents with a high school education or less were 8-25% less in favor of a merger than other educational groups. Nevertheless, when tied to cost and quality considerations, approximately 56-73% of respondents with a high school education or less favored a merger. All other education groups favored a merger at higher percentages.

Introduction

This report summarizes the results of a telephone survey of registered voters in the seven cities of Berea, Brook Park, Brooklyn, Middleburg Heights, Olmsted Falls, Parma, and Parma Heights. The survey sought to determine the current level of satisfaction with Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and fire services, and the level of support for the idea of consolidating EMS and fire services.

The survey was conducted on April 3, 4, and 6 between the hours of 5:00 and 9:00 pm, using the CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system of the Baldwin Wallace College Public Interest Research Center (PIRC).

Sample and demographics

A random digit dial sample was purchased from a professional sample vendor. A total of 471 surveys were completed. The results, which are valid plus or minus five percentage points, can be generalized to the entire population of registered voters in the seven cities.

Because the demographics of registered voters are not available at the local level (they are estimated at the national level, but not at local levels), the sample cannot be definitively analyzed for its representative or non-representative character. However, the sample demographics can be compared to the demographics of the entire adult population of the seven-city region, yielding a rough estimate of the overall representative or non-representative character of the sample. This comparison yields the conclusion that the sample was very representative overall, and where it diverged it did so in predictable ways that did nothing to undermine the validity of the survey results.

Representation by city

The sample is very representative overall by city and, where it deviates, it does so usefully by slightly increasing the representation of smaller cities and slightly reducing the representation of Parma. See Figure 1 below which shows the percentage of responses for each city, and Table 1 which compares the sample percentages with the actual percentages of registered voters and overall population.

Figure 1: Percentage of responses for each city

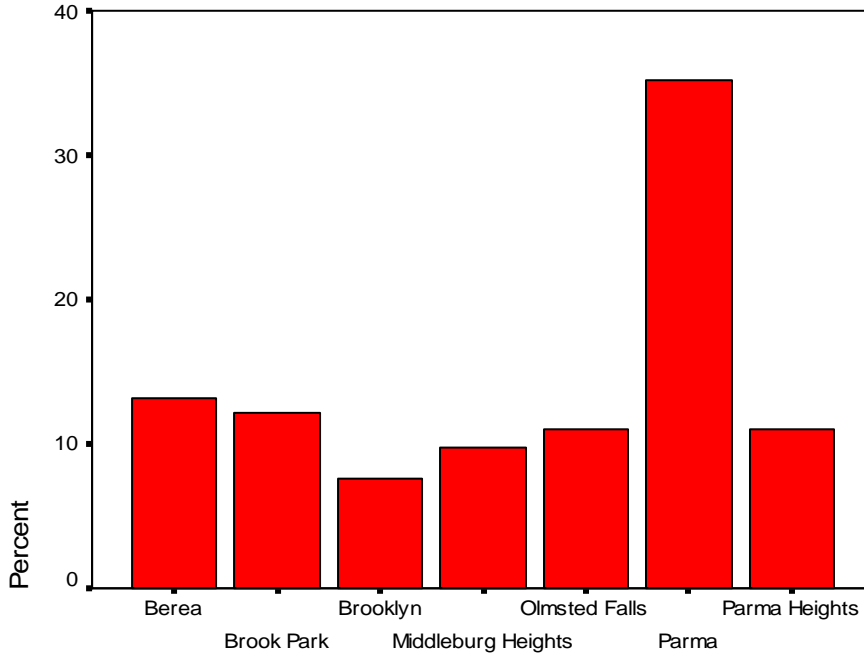


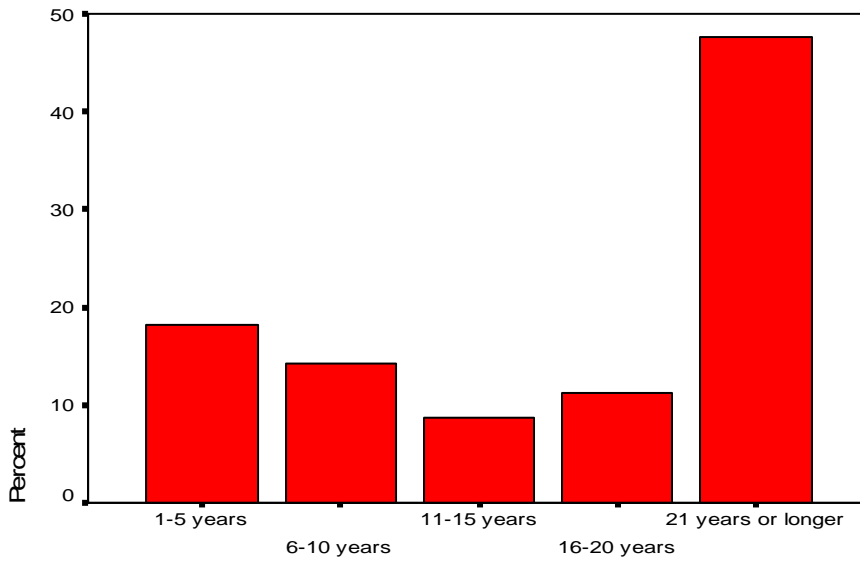
Table 1: Comparison by city of sample percentages with actual percentages

City	Number	Percentage of sample	Actual percentage of registered voters	Actual percentage of population
Berea	62	13.2	10.5%	10.3%
Brook Park	57	12.1	11.6%	11.4%
Brooklyn	36	7.6	6.3%	6.2%
Middleburg Heights	46	9.8	9.8%	8.8%
Olmsted Falls	52	11.0	5.2%	4.8%
Parma	166	35.2	44.8%	46.6%
Parma Heights	52	11.0	11.6%	11.8%

Length of residence in city

Nearly half (47.6%) of the respondents had lived in their city for 21 years or longer. Over two thirds (67.6%) of the respondents had lived in their city for over ten years. Approximately one third (32.5%) had lived in their city for ten years or less. See Figure 2 below:

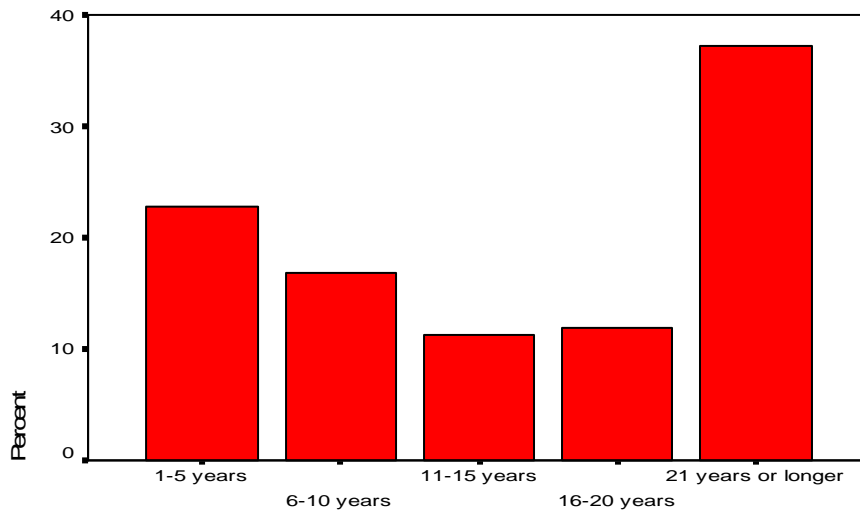
Figure 2: Length of residence in city



Length of residence at same address

Over a third (37.2%) had lived at the same address for 21 years or longer. Six out of ten (60.4%) had lived at the same address for over ten years. See Figure 3 below:

Figure 3: Length of residence at same address



Age of respondents

Approximately half (48%) of the respondents were between the ages of 41 and 60. Approximately one fifth (18.7%) were 71 years of age or older, and 12.0% were between the ages of 61 and 70. See Figure 4 below:

Figure 4: Age of respondents

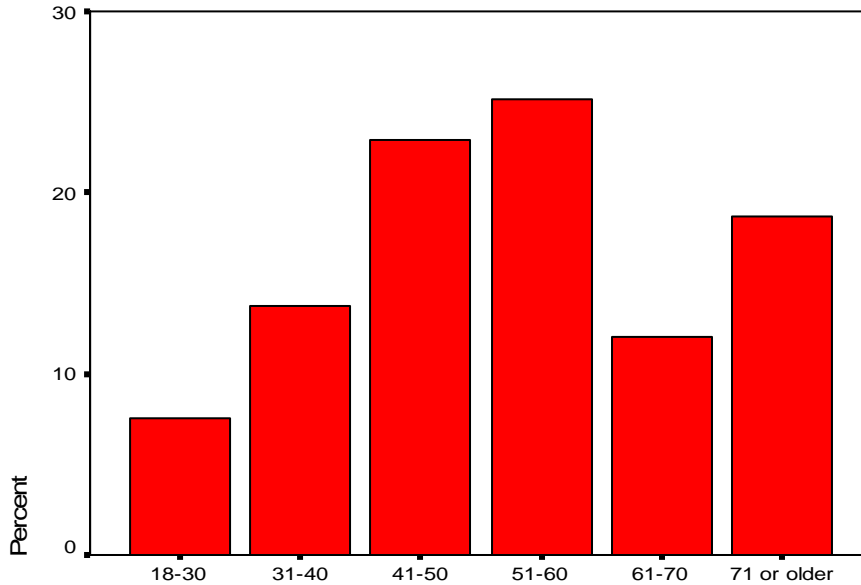


Table 2 compares the age demographics from the sample to the ages of the general population. Participation in the survey mirrors established and well-documented voting participation trends: older voters tend to vote more than do younger voters in proportion to their overall numbers. (Note: Since ages of registered voters are not available, this comparison should be considered suggestive only; it has no bearing on the validity of the sample.)

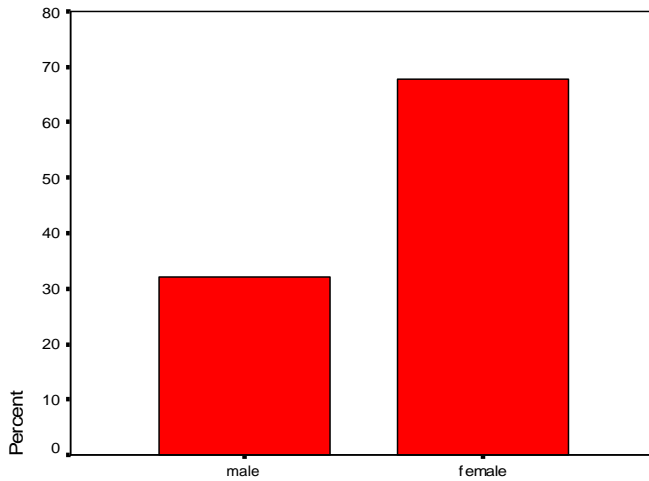
Table 2: Comparison by age of sample and general population percentages

Age	Sample percentage	General population percentage
18-30	7.6%	16%
31-40	13.8%	19%
41-50	22.9%	19%
51-60	25.1%	15%
61-70	12.0%	12%
71 or older	18.7%	19%

Gender of respondents

Approximately one third (32.1%) of the respondents were male, and two thirds (67.9%) were female. See Figure 5 below. In the actual population of the region, 52.4% are female and 47.6% are male, so females are overrepresented in the sample and males are underrepresented. However, male and female responses to the survey questions did not differ significantly from each other, so the discrepancy in the sample did not affect survey results.

Figure 5: Gender of respondents



Education level of respondents

Approximately three out of ten (29.0%) respondents had a high school education or less, three of ten (30.1%) trade school or some college, and three of ten (30.1%) a college degree. Approximately one of ten (10.8%) reported at least some post-baccalaureate education. See Figure 6 below:

Figure 6: Education level of respondents

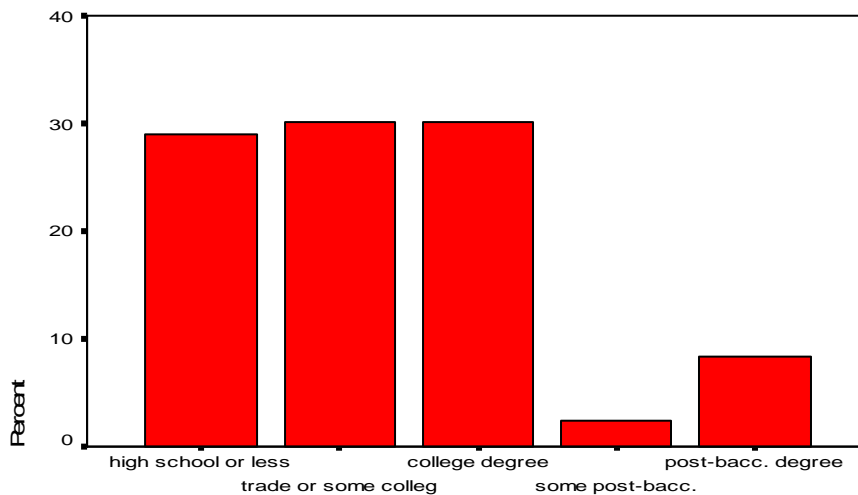


Table 3 compares the education demographics from the sample to the education demographics of the general population. Like age above, this data mirrors established and well-documented voting trends: highly-educated voters tend to vote more than do lower-educated voters in proportion to their overall numbers. (Note: Since education levels of registered voters are not available, this comparison should be considered suggestive only; it has no bearing on the validity of the sample.)

Table 3: Comparison by education level of sample and general population percentages

Education level	Sample percentage	General population percentage
High school or less	29.0%	52.5%
Trade school or some college	30.1%	28.5%
College degree	30.1%	13.3%
Post- baccalaureate	10.8%	5.7%

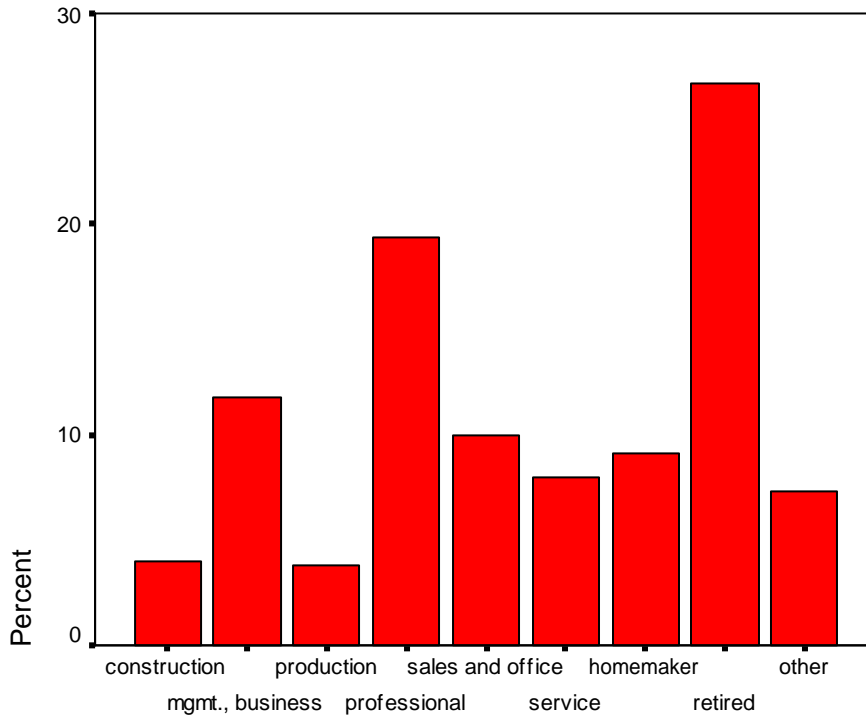
Occupation of respondents

Approximately one fifth (19.3%) of the respondents worked in professional occupations. Over one fourth (26.7%) were retired. All other occupational categories contained less than twelve percent of the overall respondents. Table 4 and Figure 7 summarize the respondents' occupations (occupational categories are taken from the U.S. Census):

Table 4: Occupation of respondents

Occupation	Number of respondents	Percentage of sample
Construction or maintenance	18	4.0%
Management, business, and financial operations	53	11.8%
Production, transportation, and material moving	17	3.8%
Professional and related	87	19.3%
Sales and office	45	10.0%
Service	36	8.0%
Homemaker	41	9.1%
Retired	120	26.7%
Other	33	7.3%

Figure 7: Occupation of respondents



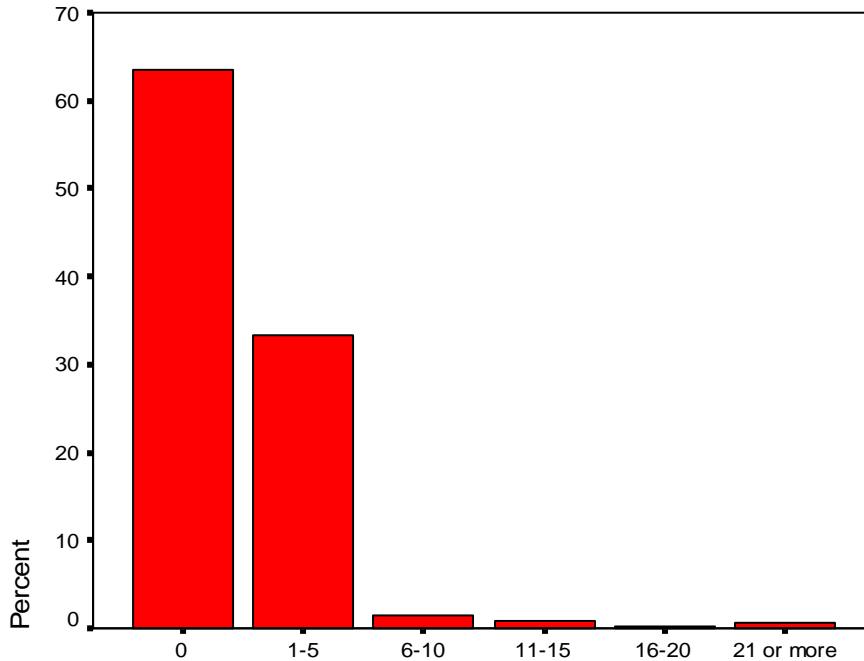
Respondents' usage of EMS and fire services

Approximately two thirds (63.4%) of the respondents reported never using their city's EMS or fire services, and one third (33.4%) reported using them between one and five times. Almost all (96.8%) of the respondents had used EMS and fire services five times or less. Fifteen respondents (3.2%) reported using their city's EMS or fire services six times or more. Table 5 and Figure 8 summarize these data:

Table 5: Respondents' usage of EMS and fire services

Number of uses	Number of respondents	Percentage of sample
0	298	63.4%
1-5	157	33.4%
6-10	7	1.5%
11-15	4	0.9%
16-20	1	0.2%
21 or more	3	0.6%

Figure 8: Respondents' usage of EMS and fire services



Respondents who were 61 years of age or older were approximately 5-25% more likely than other age groups to use EMS or fire services at least once. Men were 10% less likely than women to report using EMS or fire services. Every increase in education corresponded to an increase in the likelihood of the respondent reporting never using EMS or fire services; respondents with a post-baccalaureate degree were 20% less likely than respondents with high school or less to report using EMS or fire services.

In the data analysis that follows, variations across demographic categories are described if and when they occur. Otherwise, the reader should assume there were no noteworthy variations.

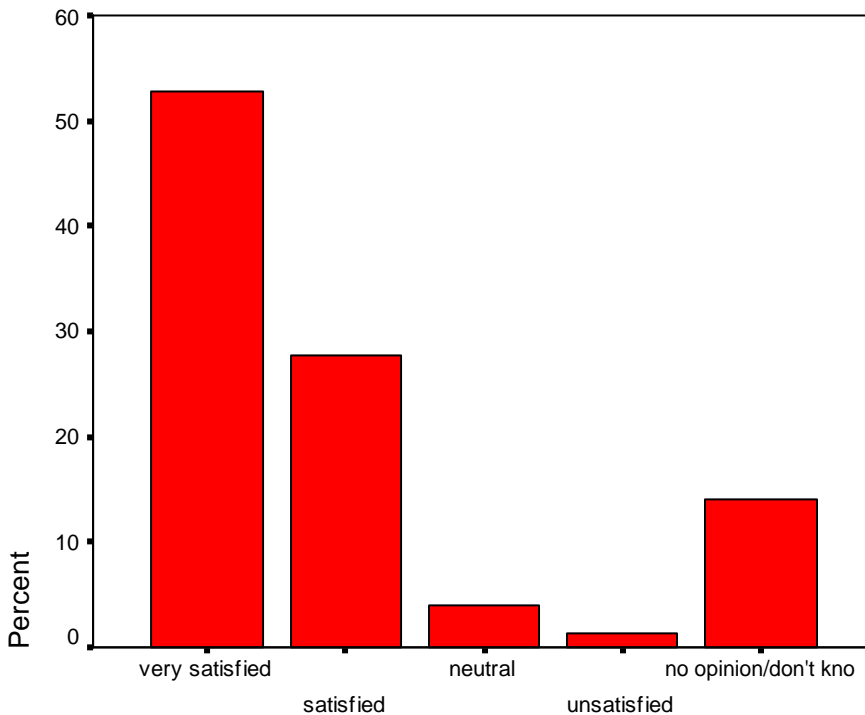
Survey Results

Satisfaction with EMS and fire services

Almost all respondents who had an opinion were either satisfied or very satisfied with their city's EMS and fire services. Only six respondents (1.3%) expressed dissatisfaction with their city's EMS, and two respondents (0.4%) expressed dissatisfaction with their city's fire services.

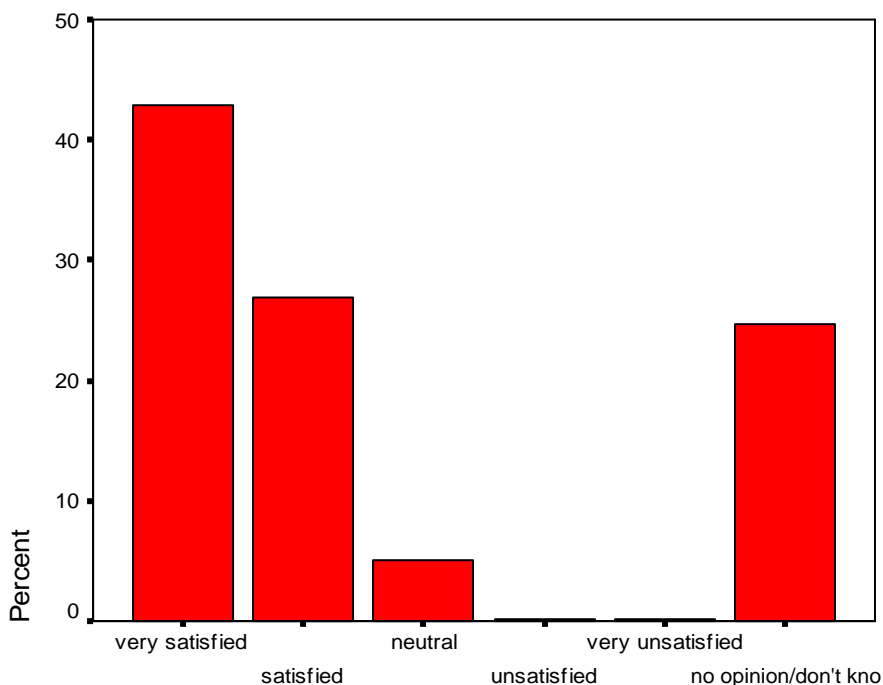
Eight of ten (80.6%) of the respondents were either satisfied (27.7%) or very satisfied (52.9%) with their city's EMS. Most of the remainder were either neutral (4.1%) or did not have an opinion (14.1%). See Figure 9 below:

Figure 9: Satisfaction with EMS



Similarly, seven of ten (69.8%) of the respondents were either satisfied (26.9%) or very satisfied (42.9%) with their city's fire services. Most of the remainder were either neutral (5.1%) or did not have an opinion (24.7%). See Figure 10 below:

Figure 10: Satisfaction with fire services



The data show a general upward trend in satisfaction as length of residence increases. See Table 6:

Table 6: Satisfaction by length of residence in city

Length of residence in city	Percentage satisfied with EMS	Percentage satisfied with fire services
1-5 years	74.4%	61.1%
6-10 years	77.3%	66.7%
11-15 years	82.9%	65.9%
16-20 years	81.1%	71.7%
21 years or longer	83.4%	74.1%

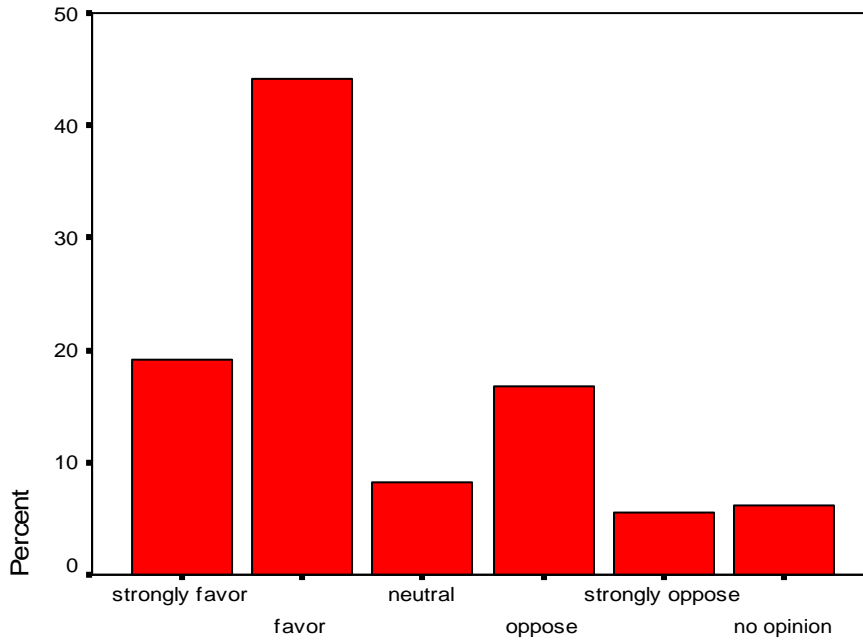
Support for a merger

Overall, across different questions, approximately two-thirds to three-fourths of the respondents said they would favor a merger of their city's EMS and fire services with those of surrounding cities. The level of support for the merger was approximately seven percent higher when the benefits were posed in terms of improving services rather than avoiding cost increases. This suggests a slightly higher concern for the quality of service than saving money.

When posed in terms of avoiding future cost increases (question #7), approximately two-thirds (63.3%) of the respondents either favored (44.2%) or strongly favored (19.1%) the

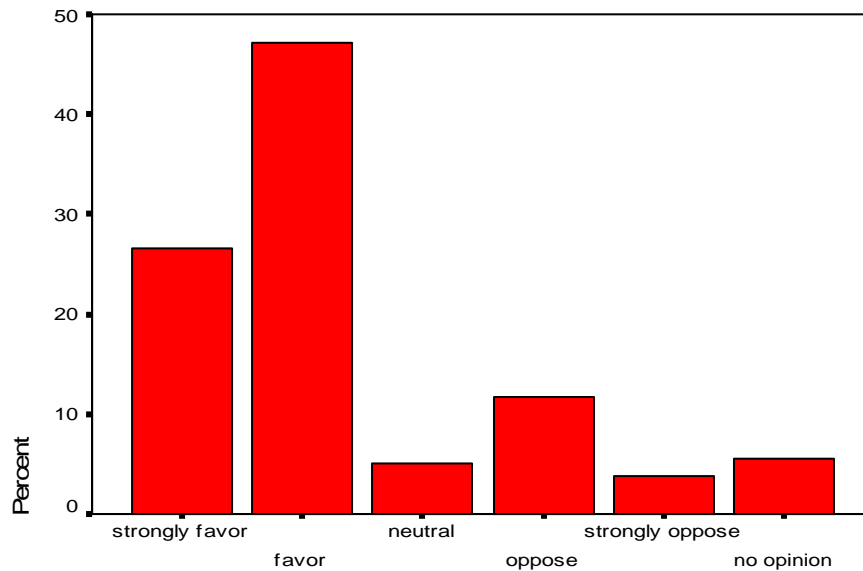
merger, while between one fifth and one fourth (22.3%) either opposed (16.7%) or strongly opposed (5.6%) the merger. An additional 8.2% were neutral, and 6.2% expressed no opinion. See Figure 11 below:

Figure 11: Support for merger to avoid future cost increases



The support for a merger increased by over ten percent (10.4%) when posed in terms of improving services: nearly three fourths (73.7%) either favored (47.1%) or strongly favored (26.6%) the merger. Opposition declined by 6.6% when posed in terms of improving services; 5.1% were neutral, and 5.6% expressed no opinion. See Figure 12:

Figure 12: Support for merger to improve services

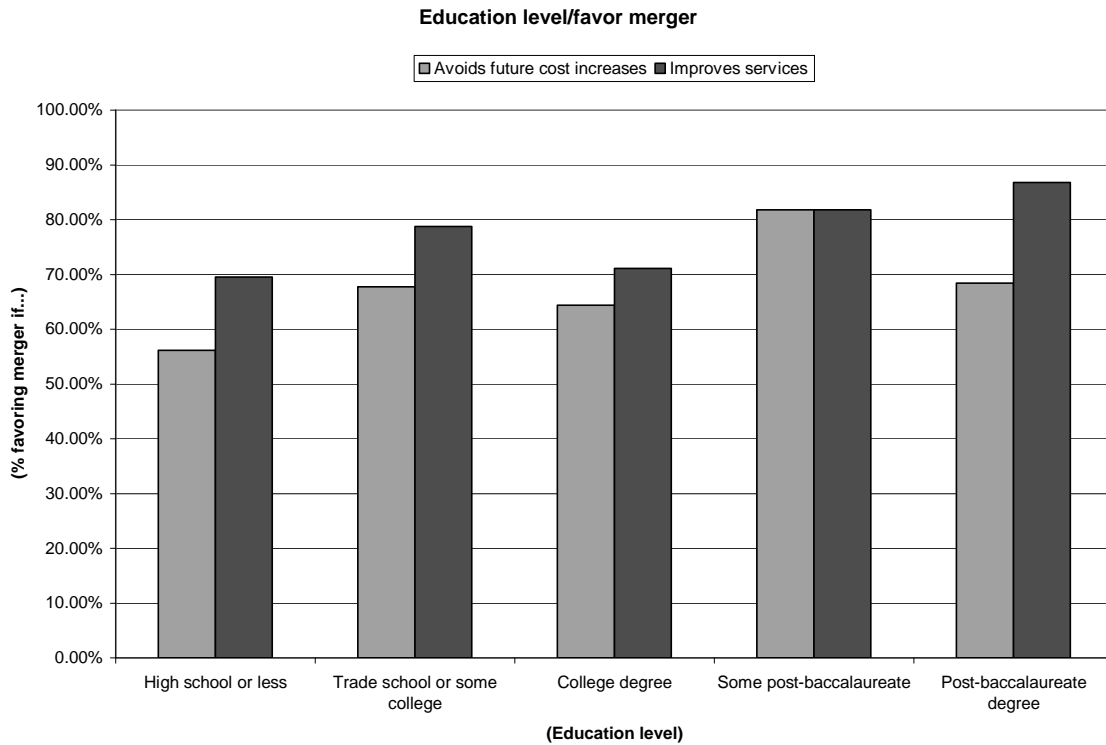


Support for a merger increased with education level. Respondents with a high school education or less were approximately 8-25% less likely than respondents in other education categories to favor a merger. See Table 7 and Figure 13 below:

Table 7: Support for merger by education level

Education level	Favor merger if avoids future cost increases	Favor merger if improves services
High school or less	56.1%	69.5%
Trade school or some college	67.7%	78.7%
College degree	64.4%	71.1%
Some post-baccalaureate	81.8%	81.8%
Post-baccalaureate degree	68.4%	86.8%

Figure 13: Support for merger by education level



Over three fourths of the respondents agreed that a merger of both EMS and fire services should occur if it saves money while improving services (questions #13 and #14). For EMS, 78.5% agreed that the merger should occur if it saves money while improving services, compared to 14.2% who disagreed. For fire services, 77.9% agreed with the merger if it saves money while improving services, compared to 15.4% who disagreed. See Figures 14 and 15 below:

Figure 14: Level of agreement with EMS merger to save money

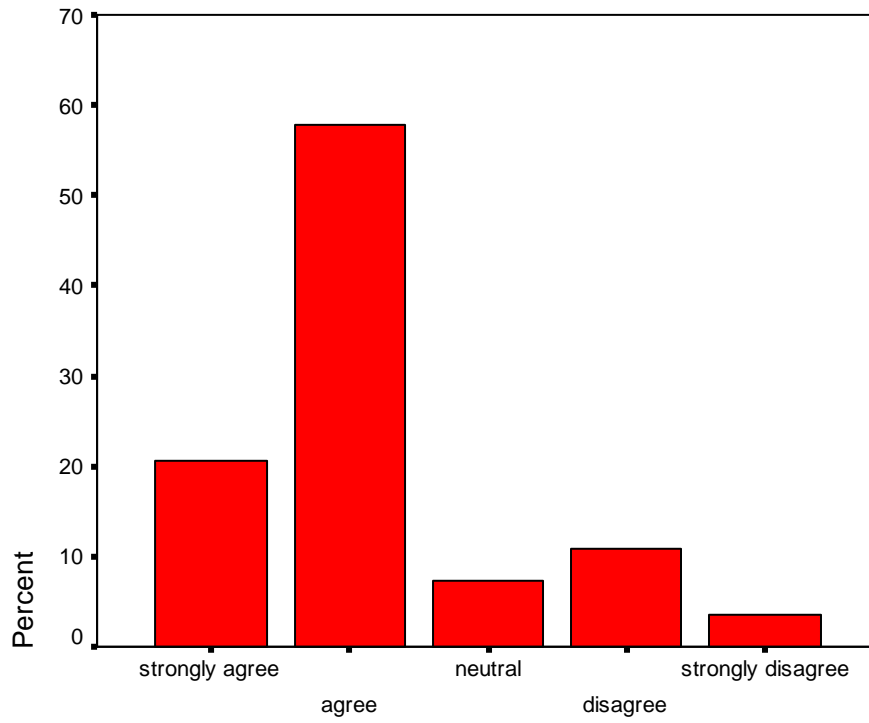
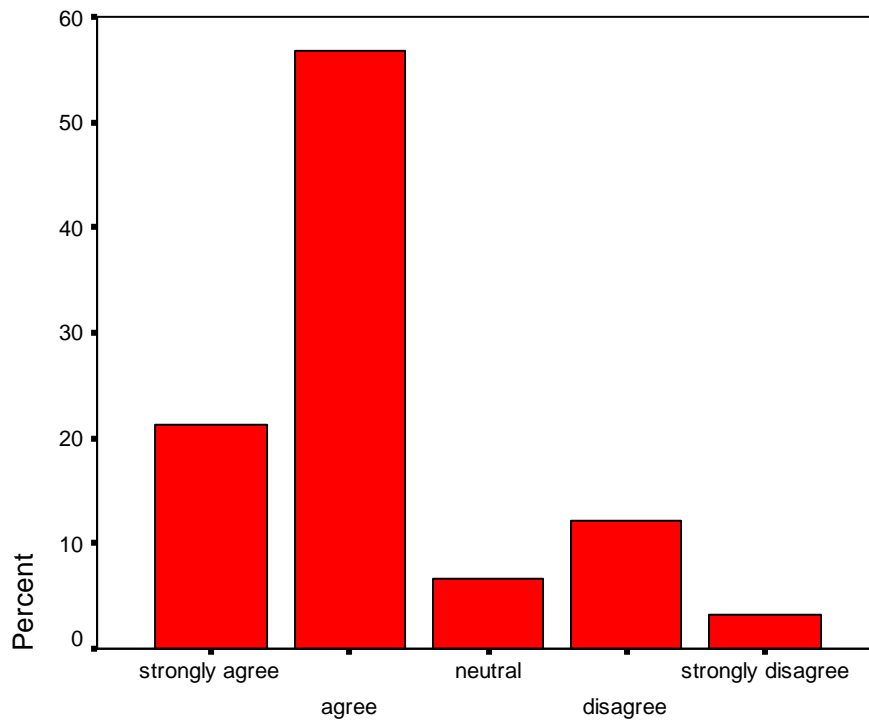


Figure 15: Level of agreement with fire services merger to save money



Similarly, three fourths of the respondents agreed that a merger of both EMS and fire services should occur if it improves services while controlling costs (questions #15 and #16). For EMS, 76.1% agreed that the merger should occur if it improves service while controlling costs, compared to 16.6% who disagreed. For fire services, 75.5% agreed that the merger should occur if it improves service while controlling costs, compared to 17.2% who disagreed. See Figures 16 and 17 below:

Figure 16: Level of agreement with EMS merger to improve service

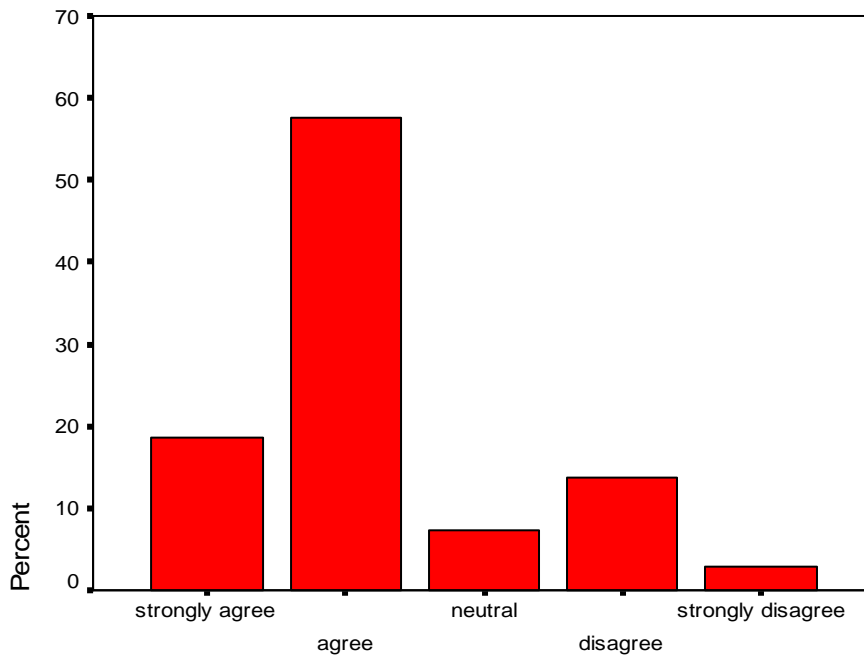
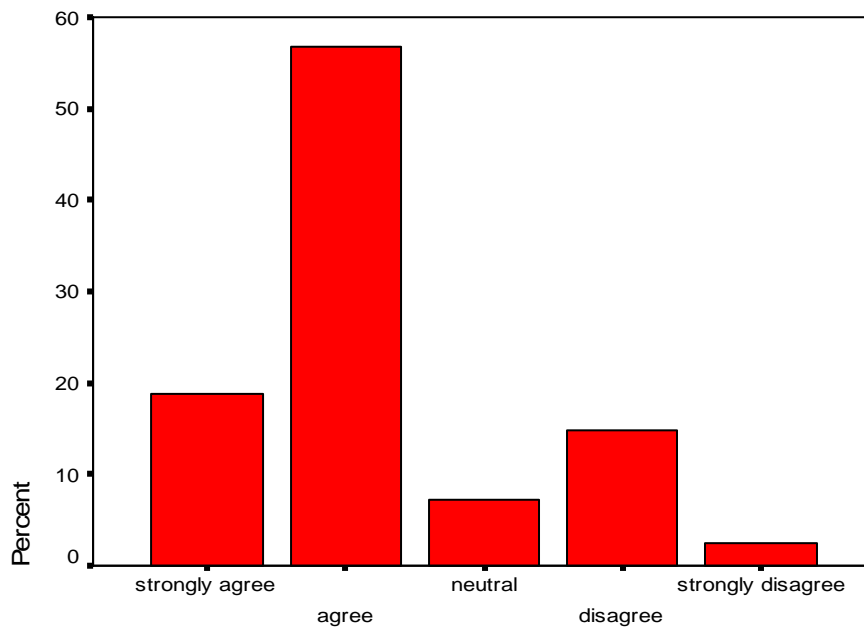
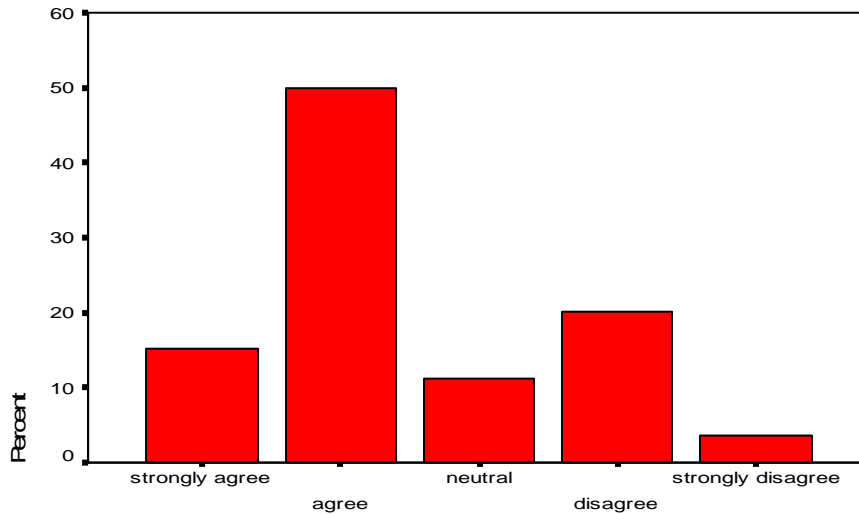


Figure 17: Level of agreement with fire services merger to improve service



Respondents were slightly less willing to support the merger based on saving local business insurance costs (question #17). Approximately two-thirds (65.1%) either agreed (49.9%) or strongly agreed (15.2%) that the merger of EMS and fire services should occur if it saves local business insurance costs. Approximately one fourth (23.7%) either disagreed (20.2%) or strongly disagreed (3.5%). See Figure 18 below:

Figure 18: Level of agreement with merger to save business insurance



Generally, support for a merger increases with education, as shown in Table 8:

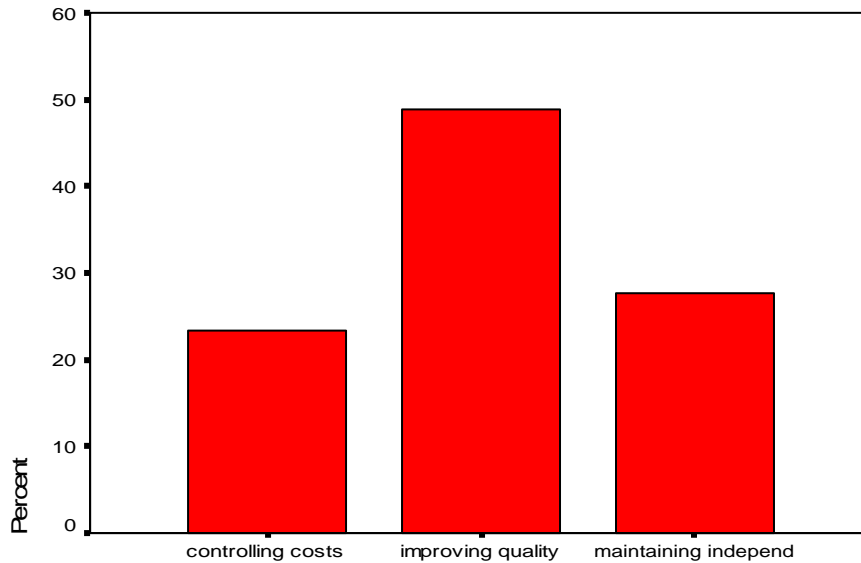
Table 8: Support for a merger by education

Education level	Percentage supporting merger of EMS in order to...		Percentage supporting merger of fire services in order to...		Percentage supporting merger to save business insurance costs
	save money	improve service	save money	improve service	
High school or less	72.1%	71.9%	72.7%	70.6%	61.2%
Trade school or some college	80.9%	77.1%	80.7%	79.3%	65.9%
College degree	81.3%	75.9%	79.0%	73.6%	64.2%
Some post-baccalaureate	72.8%	81.8%	81.8%	81.8%	72.7%
Post-baccalaureate degree	86.8%	86.8%	84.2%	84.2%	79.0%

Respondents' priorities

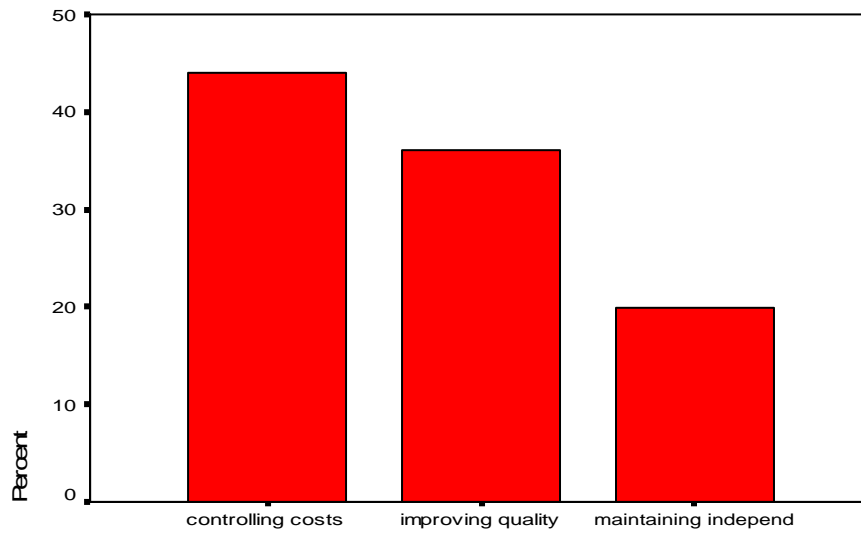
When asked for their highest priority among controlling costs, improving service, or maintaining independence, nearly half (48.9%) of the respondents selected improving quality as their highest priority, followed by maintaining independence (27.7%) and controlling cost (23.4%). See Figure 19 below:

Figure 19: Respondents' highest priority



When asked for their second highest priority, 44% selected controlling costs, 36.1% selected improving quality, and 19.9% selected maintaining independence. See Figure 20 below:

Figure 20: Respondents' second highest priority



Adding the percentages across the two questions, improving quality was selected by 85.0% of the respondents, controlling costs was selected by 67.4%, and maintaining independence was selected by 47.6% of the respondents.

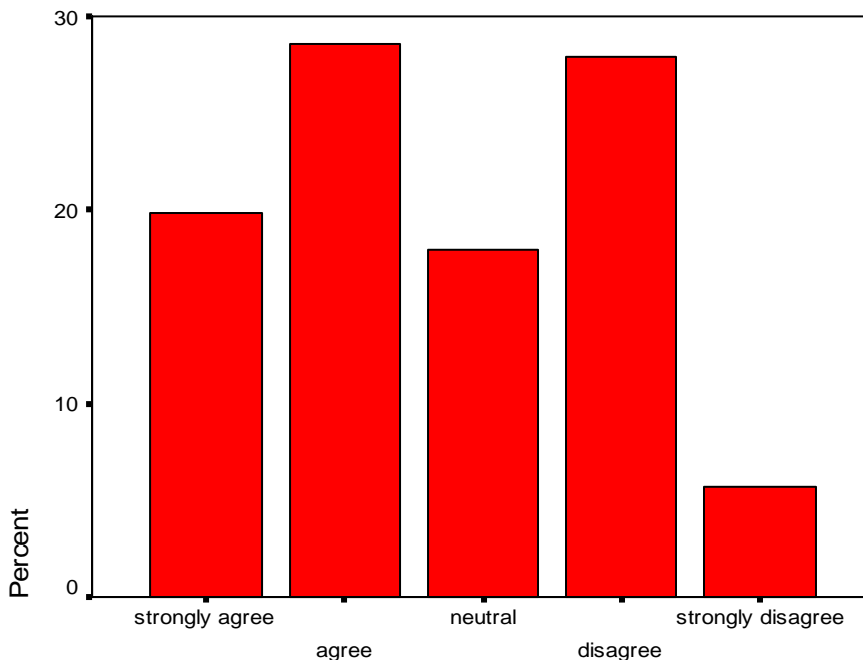
Respondents with a high school education or less were the only group to indicate that their highest priority is to maintain independent EMS and fire services. For this education category, approximately four of ten (40.6%) responded that their highest priority is to maintain independence, compared to thirty percent whose highest priority was to control costs (29.7%) or improve service (29.7%). All other education categories favored improving service over maintaining independence by 20% or more.

Importance of maintaining independence

When asked without reference to cost and quality considerations, approximately half of the respondents felt that it is important for their city to run its own EMS and fire services independently of other cities. However, when tied directly to cost and quality considerations, only one fourth of the respondents felt that it is important for their city to run its own EMS and fire services.

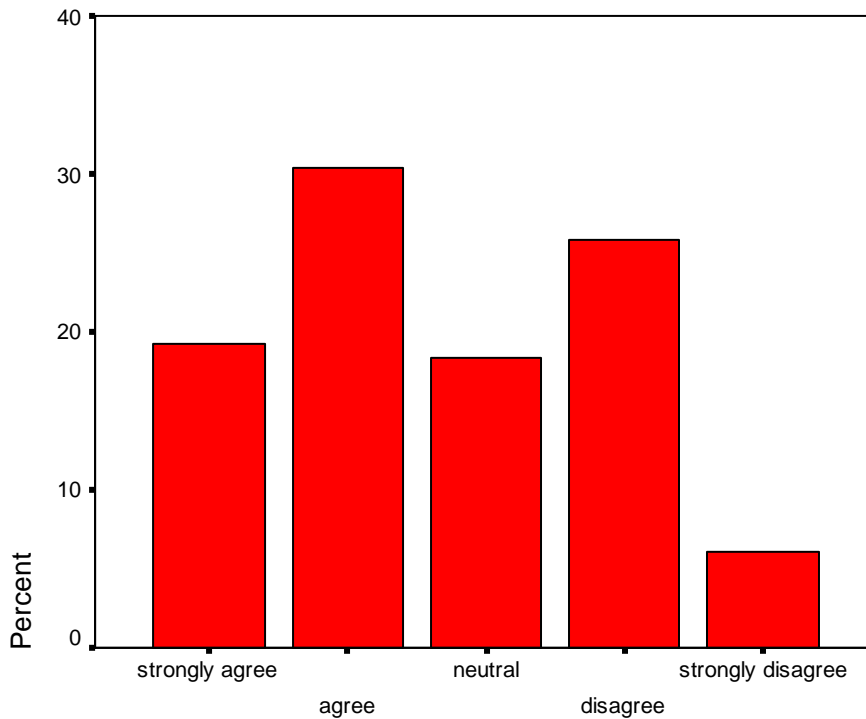
Apart from cost and quality considerations, nearly half (48.5%) of the respondents agreed (28.6%) or strongly agreed (19.9%) that it is very important for their city to run its own EMS independently of other cities. One third (33.6%) either disagreed (27.9%) or strongly disagreed (5.7%), and 17.9% were neutral. See Figure 21 below:

Figure 21: Importance of maintaining EMS independence, apart from cost and quality considerations



Similarly, apart from cost and quality considerations, half (49.7%) of the respondents agreed (30.4%) or strongly agreed (19.3%) that it is very important for their city to run its own fire services independently of other cities, and approximately one third (31.9%) either disagreed (25.8%) or strongly disagreed (6.1%). See Figure 22 below:

Figure 22: Importance of maintaining fire services independence, apart from cost and quality considerations



Generally, the importance of maintaining independence declines as education increases, as shown in Table 9:

Table 9: Importance of maintaining independence, by education (apart from cost and quality considerations)

Education level	Percentage who feel it is very important to maintain independent EMS (apart from cost and quality considerations)	Percentage who feel it is very important to maintain independent fire services (apart from cost and quality considerations)
High school or less	61.9%	64.2%
Trade school or some college	49.6%	48.9%
College degree	40.3%	41.1%
Some post-baccalaureate	36.4%	45.5%
Post-baccalaureate degree	29.0%	29.0%

However, when tied directly to cost and quality considerations, only 23.3% of the respondents felt that it is important for their city to run its own EMS and fire services. When asked if it is more important to maintain their city's independent EMS and fire services than improving services or controlling costs, 23.3% agreed, while two thirds (65.6%) either disagreed (52.3%) or strongly disagreed (13.3%). See Figure 23 below:

Figure 23: Importance of maintaining independence, when tied to cost and quality considerations

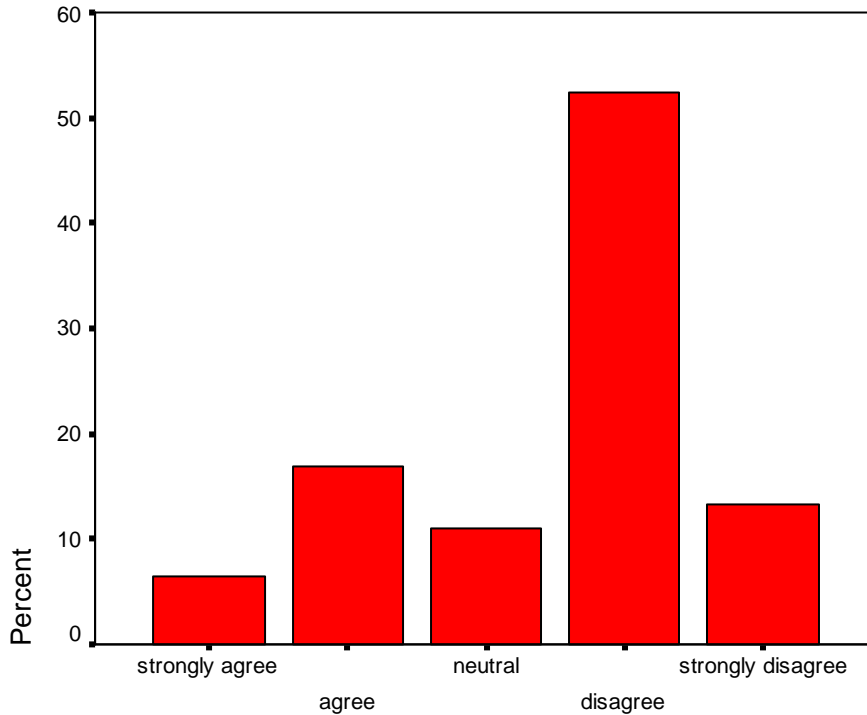


Table 10 shows these results by education:

Table 10: Importance of maintaining independence, by education

Education level	Percentage who feel it is more important to maintain independent EMS and fire services than control costs or improve services
High school or less	29.7%
Trade school or some college	22.9%
College degree	15.8%
Some post-baccalaureate	18.2%
Post-baccalaureate degree	21.0%

Appendix

Telephone Survey Questionnaire

**EMS and Fire Services Regionalization Study:
Telephone Survey Questions**

Hi, my name is [____]. I'm calling from Baldwin Wallace College. We are conducting a survey for several local city governments about their Emergency Medical and fire protection services. The survey will take approximately 4-5 minutes. Would you be willing to answer some questions?

yes [continue to qualifying questions]

no [*Is there someone else there who is a registered voter and willing to take the survey?*]

Qualifying questions:

Are you a registered voter?

yes [continue to the survey]

no [Kristin--don't include a "no" button here; let's avoid the problem we had with the POL241 poll...]

If no: I'm sorry, at this time we're only polling registered voters. Is there a registered voter in your home who would be willing to take the survey? Confirm with the new person that s/he is a registered voter, then continue to the survey. If no, Thanks anyway for your time.]

The survey

1. What city do you live in?

Berea

Brook Park

Brooklyn

Middleburg Heights

Olmsted Falls

Parma

Parma Heights

2. How long have you lived in [city]?

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

16-20 years

21 years or longer

3. How long have you lived at your current address?

1-5 years

6-10

11-15

16-20

21 or longer

Currently, [city] runs its own Emergency Medical Services, or EMS for short, which dispatches ambulances to residents' homes in emergencies. It also has its own fire department.

4. Approximately how often in the last 5 years have you used [city's] EMS or fire services?

0

1-5

6-10

11-15

16-20

21 or more

5. Are you very satisfied, satisfied, unsatisfied, or very unsatisfied with the current level and quality of [city's] Emergency Medical Services?

very satisfied

satisfied

neutral

unsatisfied

very unsatisfied

no opinion/don't know

6. How about with its fire protection services?

very satisfied

satisfied

neutral

unsatisfied

very unsatisfied

no opinion/don't know

7. If merging [city's] EMS and fire services with those of surrounding cities would help avoid future cost increases, while maintaining or improving the level of service, would you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose the merger?

strongly favor

favor

neutral

oppose

strongly oppose

no opinion

8. If merging [city's] EMS and fire services with those of surrounding cities would help improve services, without increasing costs, would you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose the merger?

strongly favor

favor
neutral
oppose
strongly oppose
no opinion

9. Which of the following three options do you feel is highest priority:
controlling the costs of EMS and fire service
improving the quality of EMS and fire service
maintaining [city's] independent EMS and fire service without a merger

10. Which of the three is second highest priority?
controlling the costs of EMS and fire service
improving the quality of EMS and fire service
maintaining [city's] independent EMS and fire service without a merger

Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements:

11. It is very important for [city] to run its own EMS independently of other cities.
strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

12. It is very important for [city] to run its own fire services independently of other cities.
strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

13. If merging the region's EMS saves money while improving service, we should do the merger.
strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

14. If merging the region's fire services saves money while improving service, we should do the merger.
strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

15. If merging the region's EMS would improve service while controlling costs, we should do the merger.
strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

16. If merging the region's fire services would improve services while controlling costs, we should do the merger.
strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

17. If merging the region's EMS and fire services saves local business insurance costs, we should do the merger.
strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

18. Maintaining [city's] independent EMS and fire services is more important than improving services or controlling costs.
strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

Thanks for your patience. I only have a few more questions to help refine our analysis.

19. What is your age?

18-30
31-40
41-50
51-60
61-70
71 or older

20. [Guesstimate the respondent's gender without actually asking it]

male
female

21. What is your level of education?

high school or less
trade school or some college
college degree
some post-baccalaureate
post-baccalaureate degree

22. Which of the following categories best describes your occupation...

construction or maintenance
management, business, and financial operations
production, transportation, and material moving
professional and related
sales and office
service
homemaker
retired
other

That's all the questions. Thanks for your time. Goodbye.

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