



Millersville University
SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY

CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
AND RESEARCH PROJECT

Civic and Community Engagement Research Series

Center for Public Scholarship and Social Change

October 2014

Third Street Neighborhood Improvement Program Pre-test

Report: Comparison Between Renters and Home Owners

Conducted for Lancaster Housing Opportunity Partnership

Mary H. Glazier, Director and Professor of Sociology

Dana E. Wile

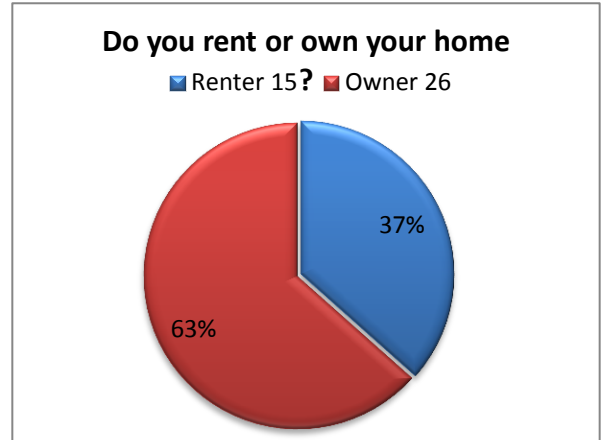
Benjamin P. Shoff

Millersville University
SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY

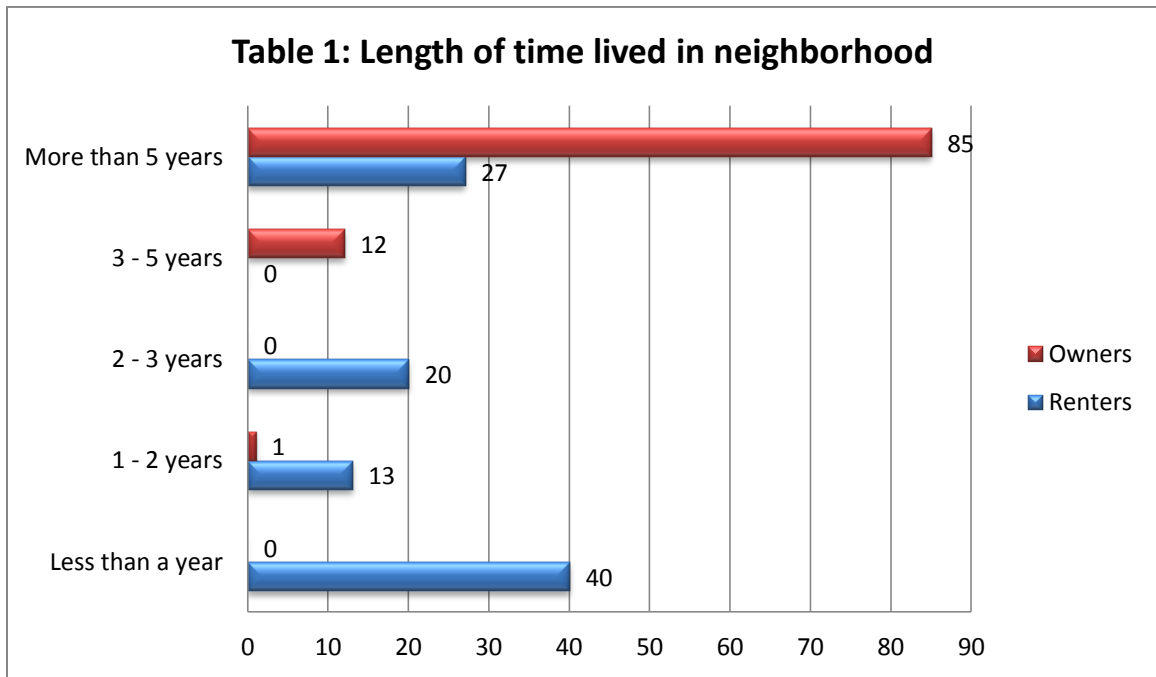
Huntingdon House
8 S. George Street
P.O. Box 1002
Millersville, PA 17551-0302
717-872-3049

<http://www.millersville.edu/ccerp/research.php>

Millersville University students surveyed 41 residents of the 200, 300 and 400 blocks of North Third Street, Columbia PA during May and June 2014. The survey respondents consisted of 26 persons who own their own homes and 15 who rent. This report compares responses of homeowners and renters.



Owners and renters responding to the survey differ in terms of the length of time they have lived in the neighborhood. The vast majority of homeowners have resided in the neighborhood for five year or more, whereas 40% of renters have lived their less than one year.

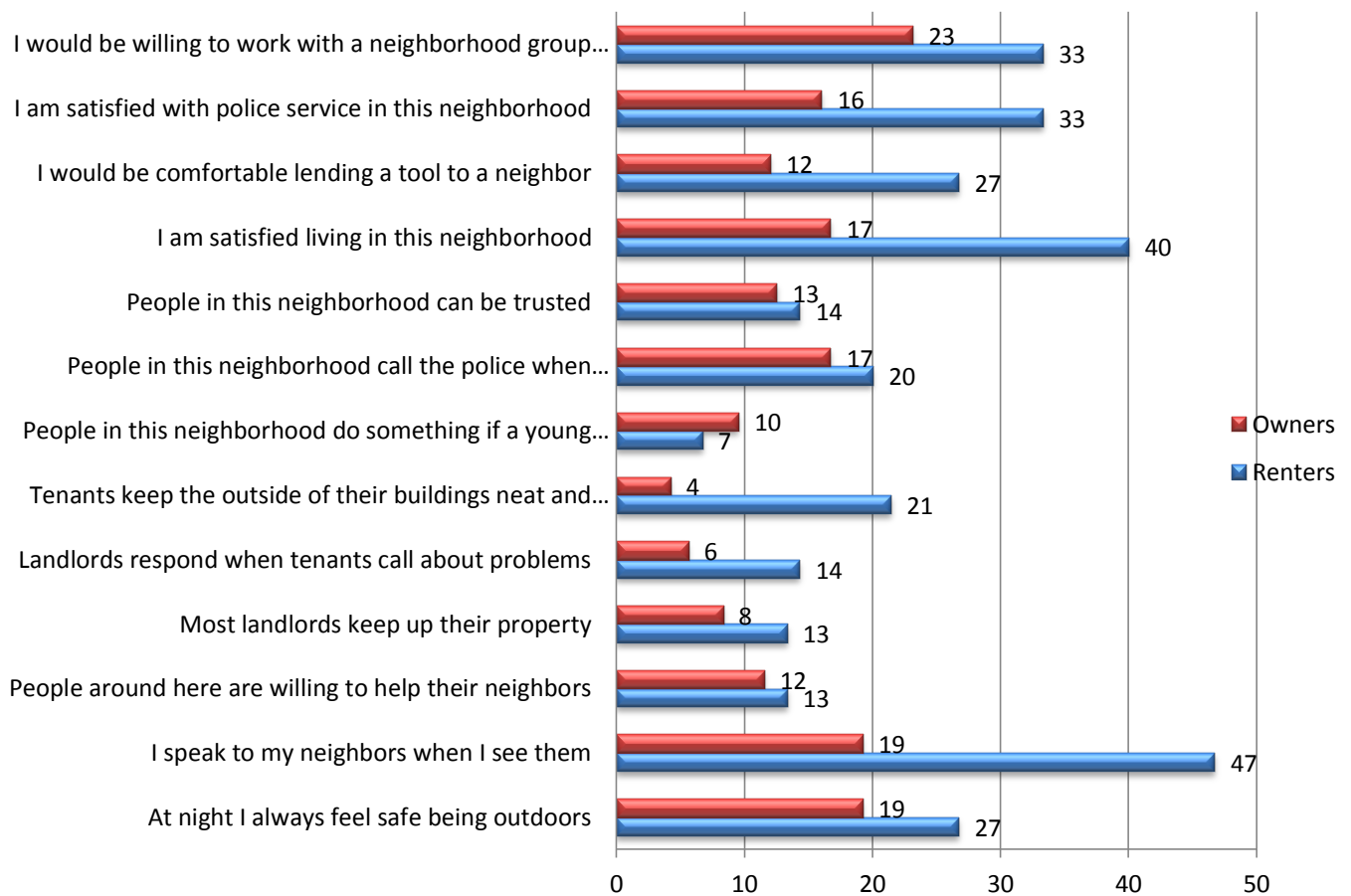


There are many similarities and some differences the responses homeowners and renters gave to survey questions as displayed in the figures and tables below. The first question of the

survey asked, "The following is a list of things that affect how people feel about living in their neighborhood. Please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree." The data reported in Table 2 show that while there are not large differences between homeowners and renters, in most instances, it is the renters who express more positive attitudes about various aspects of their neighborhood. Looking at the "strongly agree" responses,

- 47% of renters say they speak to their neighbors when they see them compared with 19% of homeowners
- 40% of renters are satisfied living in this neighborhood compared with 17% of homeowners
- 33% of renters are willing to work with a neighborhood group compared with 23% of homeowners
- 33% of renters are satisfied with police services in this neighborhood compared with 16% of homeowners.

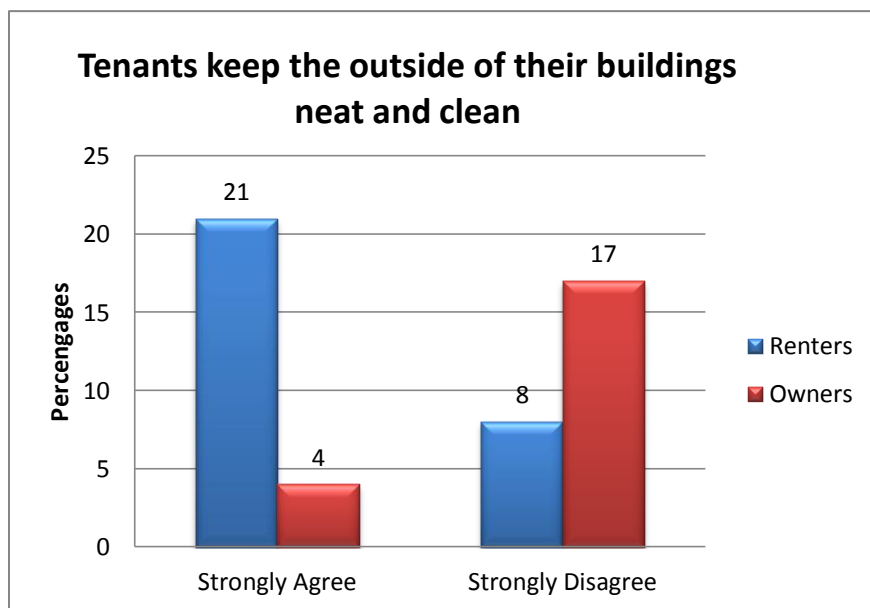
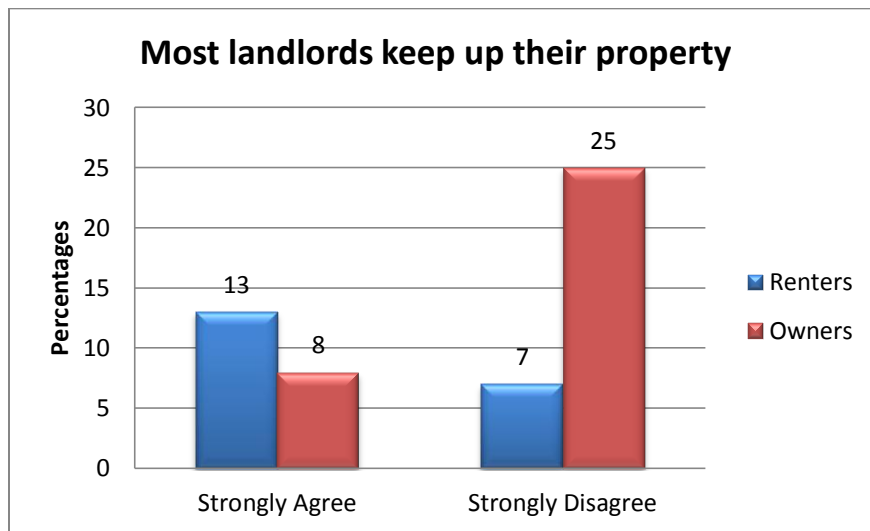
Table 2: Percentage of Owners/Renters who Answered "Strongly Agree"

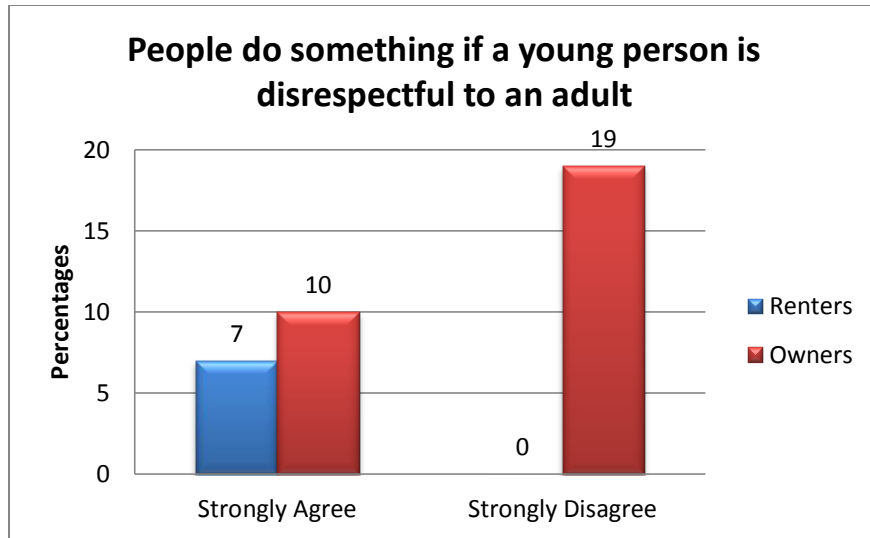


There are also three other items where residents and homeowners differ sharply in terms of the percentage who strongly agree and the percentage who strongly disagree. As the figures below show, a larger percentage of homeowners than renters strongly disagree with the statements that

- Most landlords keep up their property
- Tenants keep their the outside of their buildings neat and clean
- People do something if a young person is disrespectful to an adult.

On the other hand, renters are more likely than homeowners to strongly agree or agree with those statements.





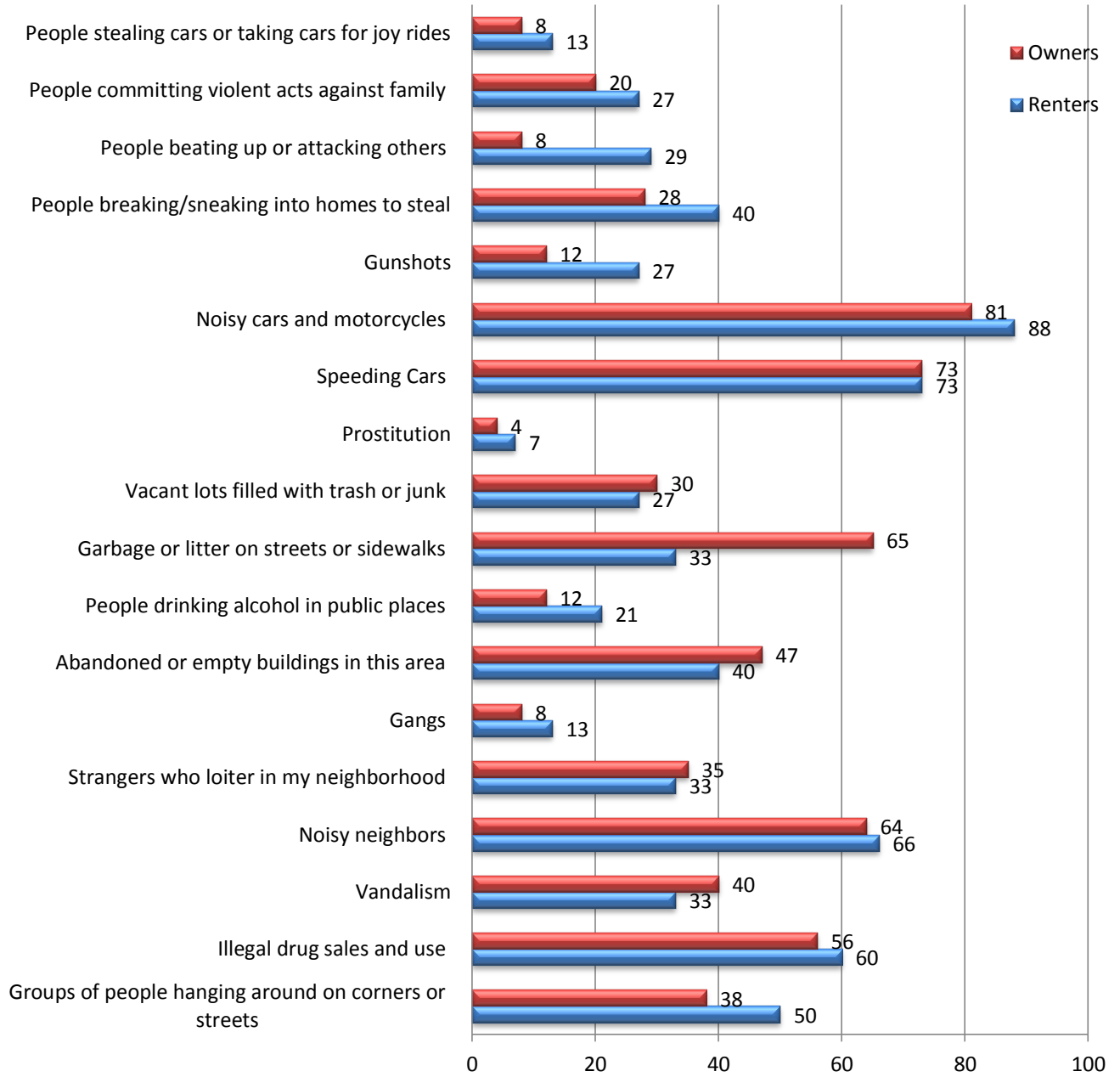
The second question of the survey asked respondents to identify things that are problems in their neighborhood. The exact wording of the question is, “We would like to know whether you think the following conditions are problems in your neighborhood. Please say whether each of these things is no problem, some problem, or big problem.”

What is most striking about the responses of homeowners and renters is how similar they are. Table 3 shows the percentage of homeowners and renters who described each of the following neighborhood situations as “some problem” or “big problem”. The top two problems chosen by both renters and homeowners are

- “noisy cars and motorcycles”
- “speeding cars”.

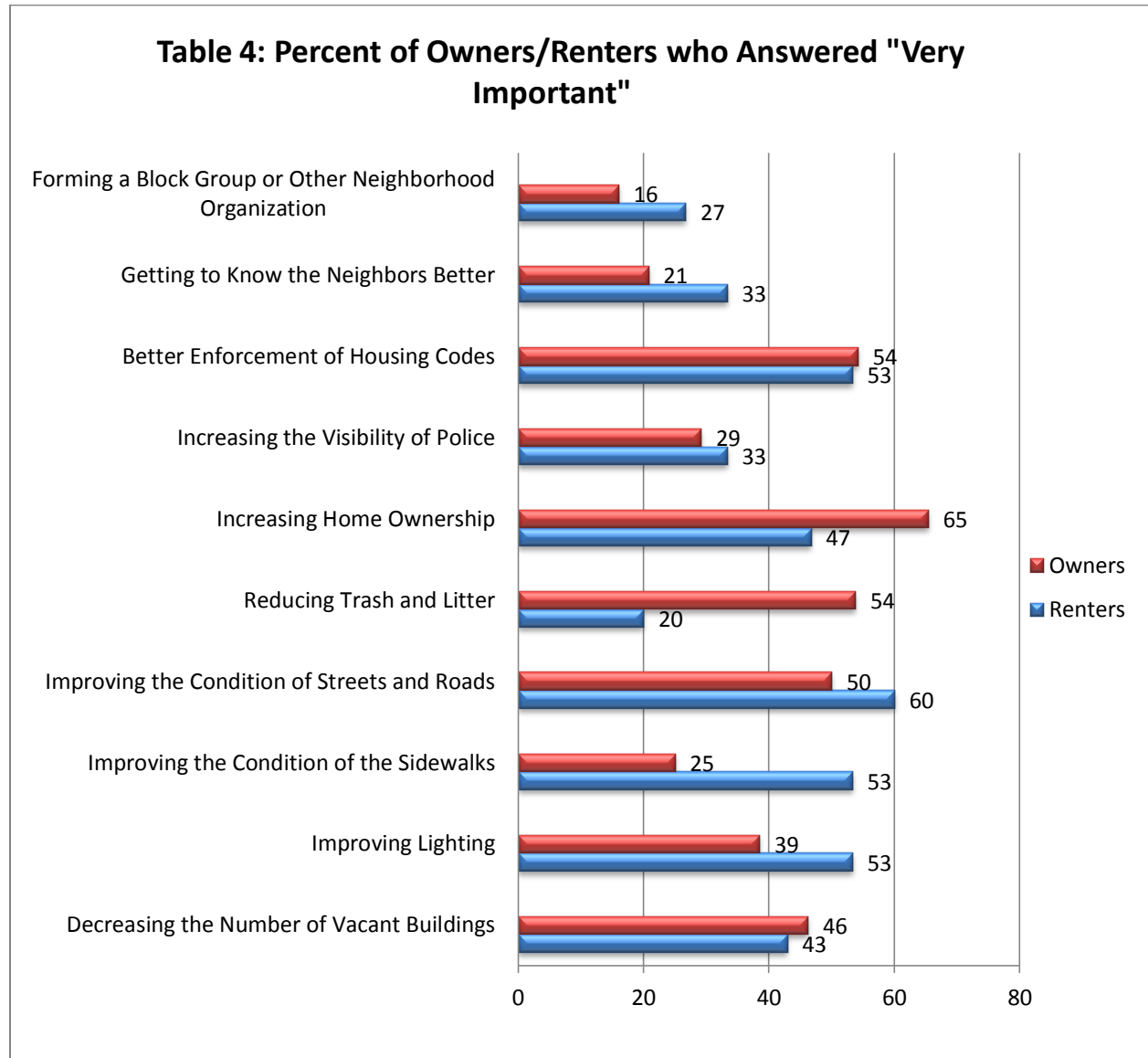
Renters’ third choice is “noisy neighbors” whereas homeowners by a slight margin select “garbage or litter on city streets”. Renters seem to be slightly more likely than homeowners to designate criminal activities such as “people beating up others” as a problem, but in most instances the differences between homeowners’ and renters’ responses are small.

Table 3: Percent who responded "some problem and "big problem"



The third question the survey asked was, “We would like to know what kinds of changes in your neighborhood are important to you. Please say which of these possible changes is not important, somewhat important, or very important to you.” Again, it is the similarity of responses of homeowners and renters that is most striking. It is also interesting that a greater percentage of renters than owners answered that it was “very important” to form a block group or other neighborhood organization, to get to know their neighbors better, to increase police visibility, to improve conditions of streets, roads and sidewalks and to improve lighting.

Table 4: Percent of Owners/Renters who Answered "Very Important"



When respondents were asked if they wanted to move out of the neighborhood, 33% of renters said yes in contrast to 45% of homeowners. Homeowners most often noted parking, conditions in the neighborhood and concerns about safety and crime as reasons why they would like to move. Each of the five renters who wanted to move selected a different reason. These were conditions in the neighborhood, concerns about safety and crime, their place is too small, the school district, or needing more room.

The final question was, “What are some situations that come up in our lives that are difficult to handle that you would like to know more about?” As Table 5 illustrates, a greater percentage of renters than homeowners expressed interest in every topic. Top choices included getting more education, getting medical and dental care, getting a better job, budgeting money and child care.

