Membership in the Jewish Community Center

Supplementary Report #1

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1982
Supplemental
Report

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Membership in the Jewish Community Center

In order to understand why people do or do not join the Jewish Community Center, we began by considering whether membership in some (other) athletic club or health facility was a deterrent to membership in the Center. To the degree people are primarily interested in specific activities (e.g. racquet ball) they might choose to join a newer or more specialized facility, and consider it an alternative to Center membership.

One way in which such a "conflict" between choices might be manifested is by the finding that persons who have (either individual or family) memberships in other athletic clubs or health facilities are less likely, than those who do not, to belong (either individually or as a family) to the Center. Relevant data, for the entire Greater Hartford Jewish population, are presented in table one.

TABLE ONE

Membership in Other Facilities Versus JCC

Memberships	Percent
1) Belong to JCC and no other facility	7
2) Belong to another facility and to JCC	11
3) Belong to other facility and not to JCC	27
4) Belong neither to JCC nor to other facility	54

From column 4) it can be seen that most Jewish households do not belong either to the Center or to any other athletic-health facility. Among those who do, however, there is some evidence of "conflict" between Center membership and belonging to another facility. A comparison of columns 2) and 3) indicates that those who belong to another facility are less likely to belong to the Center than persons who do not belong to another facility. (11% maintain both memberships while 27% belong only to another facility.)

People's residential location, and hence their ease of access to the Center, may also be involved. In other words, the degree to which membership in other facilities conflicts with belonging to the Center may be a function of people's place of residence. To examine this possibility, table two examines the same variables according to three locations: Core (including: Bloomfield, Hartford and West Hartford), other west-of-the-river towns, and east-of-the-river towns.

TABLE TWO

Other Facilities Versus JCC, by Area

Memberships	Core %	East %	Other West %
1) JCC and no other	12	3	2
2) Other and JCC	13	13	6
3) Other and not JCC	23	26	37
4) Neither	53	58	55

The total percentage of each area's Jewish population that belongs to the Center is highest in the Core (columns 1 plus 2 = 25%), followed by East (16%) and then other West towns (8%.) The degree to which membership

in another facility is a deterrent to Center membership appears to follow an inverse order; that is, other memberships seem most likely to be an alternative to Center membership in other West towns,[1] least likely to be an alternative in the Core, and East towns are intermediate, but closer to the Core in this respect.

We also asked respondents why they did or did not belong to the Center, and their answers help to clarify the emerging patterns.[2] We begin by looking at members' most important reasons for belonging, dividing respondents into the same three geographical areas. The results are summarized in table three.

TABLE THREE

Members' Most Important Reason for Belonging

Reason	Core %	East %	Other West %
To support the Center	33	25	38
Athletic facilities	25	38	62
Classes or groups (for self)	15	0	0
Children's programs	12	32	0
For Jewish experiences	6	6	0
Other	9	0	0

A clear and consistent difference among areas lies in the percent of members who consider the Center's athletic facilities their major reason for joining the Center. It is highest, by far, in non-core west towns where membership in other facilities is also most likely to conflict with Center membership. These findings may indicate that people in non-core west towns are especially likely to take an "instrumental" view of the Center, focusing upon its relative advantages or disadvantages primarily as a athletic facility.

We have not yet examined the other side of the coin though, namely, why people say they do not belong to the Center. These reasons, within the same three areas, are presented in table four.[3]

[1]Within the other West area, it is the South-West sub-area (New Britain, Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield) in which there seems to be the greatest conflict between membership in other facilities and Center membership. In this sub-area, 3% of those who belong to other facilities also belong to the Center compared to 44% who do not also belong to the Center.

[2]Those who were members were asked to indicate the most important reason for belonging. Non-members were asked the most important reason for not belonging.

[3]After this list of reasons was read to respondents, interviewers asked, "or have you never thought about joinin the Center." About one-third of all non-members claimed never to have thought about it. Because this response offers little substantive information, it has been excluded from the calculations in tables 4 and 6.

TABLE FOUR

Non-Members' Most Important Reason for not Belonging

Reason	Core %	East %	Other West %
Location	12	75	79
Hours	5	0	6
Policies	12	0	1
Membership fees	26	25	6
Facilities	12	0	1
No time	8	0	2
Other	26	0	4

Outside of the core area it seems clear that location is the overwhelming reason for not joining the Center (among people who have ever thought about joining.)

Reasons for not joining may, however, vary according to peoples' relative affluence or the presence of young children in their household. In table five we re-examine non-members' reasons for not joining according to whether any adult in the household (typically a spouse) is in a professional occupation (as an indicator of affluence) and whether there are children under 10 years in the household.

TABLE FIVE

Affluence and Children Among Non-Members

	In the Core Area			In the East Area			In Other West		
Reason	All	<10	Prof	All	<10	Prof	All	<10	Prof
Location	12	8	22	75	68	100	79	86	95
Hours	5	7	10	0	11	0	6	0	0
Policies	12	24	22	0	0	0	1	4	0
Membership fees	26	50	25	25	16	0	6	0	0
Facilities	12	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0
No time	8	11	14	0	5	0	2	3	0
Other	26	0	8	0	0	0	4	3	5

Table five indicates that for more affluent households (i.e. with a professional), location is a more significant reason for not joining the Center than in the overall population. In fact, outside the core area, location is virtually the only reason that professionals do not join the Center.

Table five also indicates that in households with children under 10 years, the Center's hours and policies tend to be more important reasons for not joining than in the overall population; and respondents' own lack of time is also a more important reason for not joining in households with children under 10 years of age.

A similarly more detailed analysis of why members have joined the Center is presented in table six.

TABLE SIX

Affluence and Children Among Members

Reasons	In the Core Area			In the East Area			In the Other West		
	All	≤10	Prof	All	≤10	Prof	All	≤10	Prof
To support Center	12	4	33	25	28	0	38	39	14
Athletic facilities	25	44	36	38	14	33	62	61	86
Classes or groups	15	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children's programs	33	43	20	32	58	67	0	0	0
Jewish experience	6	2	8	6	0	0	0	0	0
Other	9	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

The data in table six point (again) to what has been previously described as the instrumental view of the Center, focusing upon athletic facilities, on the part of residents of non-core west towns. In the Core and East towns, table six indicates that children's programs are, as would be expected, an important reason for joining among families with young children.