Before I began my study of gym subculture, I asked the receptionist if it would be okay for myself to stay in the gym for an hour to write a paper. The receptionist asked defensively, “what are you writing for?” I replied, I am a college student and I am writing about gym subculture for a class”. Upon hearing my response, the receptionist that tensed up, immediately relaxed. After a brief pause, he said “sure, no problem”. Thus, my privilege, as a college student that is preparing to write a paper for his coursework, enabled me to gain access to the gym to study gym subculture. The powers are the advantages that I obtain due to my privileges.

As a 25-year-old male American citizen of Bengali descent, people with the same description are very common in this part of Central Brooklyn. In fact, some of the gym attendees have a very similar description to myself. Normally, I would be seen as a regular gym member. However, my presence of standing in different places in the gym as I collected information in my notebook, made me stand out like a sore thumb during my observation.

For the sake of obtaining more information about the insider perspective of gym subculture, I contacted my friend, Naeem, and asked him if he would be available for an interview. I explained that his cooperation was necessary in order to complete my assignment on gym subculture. In response, he sighed and reluctantly agreed. In this case, I used my privileges as a friend and a college student to persuade Naeem to meet with me for an interview.

During the interview, I asked him over 20 questions regarding his relationship to the gym, about his routines before going to the gym, and about his routines within the gym. The questions regarding his relationship to the gym would enable me to compare and contrast our assumptions, intrigues, and disturbances. I asked questions regarding his routines before going to the gym and his routines within the gym to learn more about the gym subculture. His input was very useful. So much so that I realized that I missed 8 rituals in my observation. As a result of the lengthy interview, I used my privilege as a friend to repeatedly persuade him to patiently answer all of my questions to which he assented.

The information that I obtained from the interview helped me develop interpretations by relying on the information of myself as an outsider, my past experience as an insider, and my informants’ experience as an insider. The information had led me to develop a few conclusions. For example, a concern of whether or not most gym attendees were stretching before they exercised. Based on the fact that I missed so many rituals, I concluded my fault laid with my lack of attention to details. In the future, I will attempt to be more attentive. A third interpretation was that my friend and former gym partner, Naeem, was perhaps not the best informant. This is because our past as gym partners may have contributed to the reason we shared the same intrigues and disturbances about the gym. As a result, I did not glean any new information about gym subculture. In conclusion, I believe our privileges can help us as ethnographers to perform our fieldwork study on various subcultures. In this case, I used my privileges as a college student and friend in order to learn more about gym subculture.