This is an excerpt from one of the interviews undertaken by Hannah Scaife (2016) for her Master’s degree in Psychology. This excerpt, and that of five other interviews, are used to highlight her use of Thematic Analysis as a tool for the analysis of qualitative data. Further details on her use of Thematic Analysis, and an exercise to allow you to explore its application, is given in Chapter 11 of the book by Opie and Brown (2019).

Note: where (.) is used this indicates a very short pause and (.*n*) indicates a pause of approximately *n* seconds.

**Excerpt of interview transcript: R67KJ**

I: With a focus on your internal sense of self, your own identity, erm, can you describe the process by which you feel you built an understanding of your own gender and sexual identities?

R67KJ: [laugh]

I: It’s a big question isn’t it?

R67KJ: You know, it’s something I’ve never really thought about. I’ve always (.) known I’m a female and I’ve always been happy knowing that I’m a female. I’ve always been happy knowing that I’m a female who likes other females. It’s a bit of a (.3) as a child, I was never one of those (.2) I was a tomboy, but I had dolls. [laugh] I was quite happy to play, play with dolls. But then my brother had cars, I’d quite happily play with cars, I’d quite happily climb trees. I just, I’ve always known (.3) I think there are struggles with being female aren’t there? Getting used to (.4) it’s kind of, your teenage years isn’t it, when you start to get a bit of an identity. I was nonplussed, before that, as long as I was doing what I enjoyed. I used to wear dresses to parties [laugh] dresses when I was a teenager, but never (.) as I’ve got older, never been interested.

I: So what happened, when you were a teenager, can you remember when you first started to feel like, oh I don’t feel comfortable in a dress, or, or did that not happen?

R67KJ: Erm, I would wear them on special occasions, I was quite happy, I went to my, my leaving dos and proms and whatever in dresses, but I never (.) I just didn’t. I don’t think there was any defining moment. I think when I was 15, 16, is where (.2) I came to the conclusion that something’s not quite right with me. Like all my mates, you know, kissing boys and whatever and I had no, no desire. I did, but I had no desire to have a relationship with any of them, no desire to take anything any further, I just weren’t interested. Erm, so I (.2) at the age of 16 I think I was just like, nah, I was very concerned about who I was I think. Because I grew up in a, a village, so it weren’t spoke about. There was only one black person in the village, let alone, like, a gay person in the village, so, in the middle of England, so I just (.) thought no, just ignore it, it’s not, it’s just a phase, don’t think about it. Because I started (.) to feel attracted to girls (.2) but, at the back of my mind if that makes sense. Not, sort of, oh god I’m going to go and do something about it, because, at 16 in the 80s and 90s you didn’t, [laugh] you didn’t do it. There was nobody gay in school, there, you know, it was a case of just getting on with your life and (.) going out riding your bike [laugh].

I: So then, at what point do you think you decided to stop kind of ignoring it and thinking of it as a phase, and embrace it as who you are?

R67KJ: I think when I got to college, I mean this is all (.2) I think I’ve always known but never acted. So when I got to college, I (.) there was certain girls who, you know, you’d sort of daydream about I suppose, and think I, you know, I could see myself in a relationship with them or, or whatever, I never ever thought, you know, boys, I’d liked to have settled down, get married and have kids with a boy, it’s never (.) never entered my head. So (.2) I came out on the day of my A Level results, actually.

I: [laugh] big day!

R67KJ: [laugh] Yeah. To a friend. Erm, but it was one of them where I said aw don’t (.) and she said are you going to tell me you’re pregnant? I was like no. You going to tell me you’re gay? I was like yeah I think I am, but you know when, I just never wanted to say yes, I definitely am. I was like I think I am I don’t know, maybe I am, I’m not sure. Erm, just for a bit of denial to myself really, so I’ve got a get out clause, in case it weren’t true

I: [laugh]

R67KJ: that I could then turn around and go oh actually no, it was just a phase. But the more I got into college and the more, and I, and I met a gay lad, and I don’t know it just felt a lot easier to tell my parents and.

I: so meeting somebody that you felt had a similar, sort of, feeling?

R67KJ: Yeah because he was really (.) camp (.) and there was no escaping the fact that he was gay, whereas for me I think a few people were surprised. But not because I’d been really really feminine and talking about boys all the time, but because I was kind of, a nothing, do you know what I mean, like I didn’t say one way or another what, who I was, erm, so yea it was, and then he was like aw we’ll go out. Because I did come out to a couple of people and he found out and we ended up becoming friends and going out on the scene and stuff. In fact, no actually, what happened, I (.) knew there was something not quite right, and I rung this phone number. I’d just passed my driving test and I thought I’m just (.) tell my mum and dad I’m going out for a drive, I went out for a drive and I found a phone box in the next town, rung this number, in this town, and I said I think I’m (.) gay, what do I do about it? This support thing, and they said you can come along to this youth session, erm, so I went out , just took myself off in the car and went to this session.

I: Hmm

R67KJ: met some people there, they were like oh you need to come over to [city], because we’ve got a bigger group there. And I went over there, and there was about 20, 30, like teenagers, young people in this group that I got friendly with, and went every week and didn’t tell my mum and dad [laugh] where I was going.

I: and do you think that made you feel differently about yourself, when you, when you had other people to, to talk to and a place where you could feel?

R67KJ: Yeah because you become almost, because I was in a village and I went to the next, the next city. It was only 20 minutes down the road but a whole different mentality. So you’ve got (.) people where it’s just an everyday thing, and, just sort of sat chatting to them and just talking about stuff and then we’d go to the local, erm, bar that was just around the corner and just went from there really, just sort of become more and more comfortable and I thought I can’t (.) I’ve had a very honest and very good relationship with my parents so I can’t not tell them so I ended up telling them. Erm, which didn’t go down well with my dad. My mum cried, my dad said to me, it’s not normal, it’s not natural, erm, but, you’re my daughter and I love you. And that was all he said on it. So (.) it’s a bit of a hard one really because there was that little bit of (.2) getting used to it and going yeah this is who I am and that ain’t going to change (.) to then it just becoming (.) me. Do you know what I mean? I’ve not had any massive revelation about it, I’ve not had any huge dramas about it. It’s just who I am, and I’ve been lucky enough for people in my life to accept it and to have a friendship circle that the majority of people are. So it’s not really (.) I do count my blessings with it. Especially when you see what some people go through to be themselves. But wheth, whether it’s because I’ve got a strong character anyway (.) it’s always been a (.) I’m \*\*\*\*, I (.) I like music, I like this, I like that, I just happen to be gay.

I: So it’s just one part of what makes up

R67KJ: yeah

I: your identity as a whole?

R67KJ: Yeah, I mean, when you first come out there’s that bit of a buzz isn’t there, because it’s a, unique and it’s unusual and people are like oh my god, especially back then, like in the 90s (.2) people were like ohh, you know, like didn’t know many gay people and stuff. Even when I first moved to [city], you would go on GaydarGirls and there would be 30 people (.) you, you just didn’t, people were so underground, you didn’t find people, they went, there was one club night that people went to (.) erm (.) and that was 2000. And then (.) as the years have gone by it’s crept up and crept up and there’s, you know, I just remember thinking to myself there’s 300 people

I: [laugh]

R67KJ: on Gaydar now. Do you know what I mean, and slowly but surely people have started to come out and feeling more confident to come out

I: Hmm

R67KJ: and be themselves. But, for me I’ve really noticed it and I don’t know why. Probably because I’ve not had an issue with it, I don’t know.

I: Do you think when you moved away from home, that made any difference to how you felt? Moving to a new city and not living with family any more.

R67KJ: Yeah definitely. I mean I (.3) where I came to uni obviously I didn’t know anybody, my mum and dad just, you know, when I come to see [city], I was like yeah this, I’ve seen loads of unis and this is where I wanna be. Erm (.) and the first few weeks in [city] so you know people are just getting to know each other and and it’s like you know, and I (.) I just made no qualms about it, I was just like everybody knew from the off, who I was. Because I thought what is the point of coming here, somewhere new, somewhere where i can be me, myself, without old school friends who think they know me but don’t really know me. I can start afresh, and (.) meet people or whatever, erm (.) and everybody at halls was just absolutely fantastic, so, just, it was more about going out and I become more of a (.) a rocker than a gay person, do you know what I mean? [laugh] We used to wear our baggy jeans and chains and tshirts and go and dance and (.) it was just a secondary thing. It wasn’t the primary thing for me. Everything else was the primary thing of meeting friends (.) you know, forming friendships. I’d already had experience of female relationships before I went to uni so (.3) but, yeah, it was. It is better, being away from parents and stuff. Because I don’t want them to feel embarrassed, sounds really odd [laugh], I’m comfortable with who I am but I’m not naive to think that other people in the world are (.) are comfortable with it. I’m not one of them who likes to force my sexuality and my identity on other people.

I: Hmm

R67KJ: Do you know what I mean, I want, I don’t like going down the street and seeing straight people all over each other, so why should I, just because I’m gay think that I’ve got, do you know what I mean, the right to rub it in people’s faces. (.3) But people think that, you know, they’ve got that right.

I: Mmm. It’s interesting that you (.) are a person who recently got married

R67KJ: [laugh] yeah

I: So, you, that obviously is like a public declaration of your relationship.

R67KJ: I think, if (.2) before gay marriage become legal, I was quite happy not to get married. I always, I almost find it as a bit of a, oh great, there’s no excuse now, to not get married, because we can. Erm, but I think again, it’s happened at this time in my life because I’ve met somebody who is worth it, who I actually love, and (.) everything’s sorted slotted into place. It’s going to sound a bit cliché, but our families get on, our friends get on, we both want the same things out of life, and I spent majority of the 20s thinking that’s what I want, but I’m not going to force that issue I’m going to quite happily enjoy me being me and you know, meeting women and, not being promiscuous but [laugh] do you know what I mean? When you’ve supressed something for so long, I suppose that’s another journey isn’t it, to find out who you are, and who your type is, and who you want to surround yourself with in your life of, not just relationships but friendships and what’s the point of surrounding yourself with people who are negative and don’t accept you for who you are? And it’s probably took, probably my dad the longest. My mum was fine, straight off, she was ringing places and saying my daughter’s gay is there anything, you know, and she got information and stuff of how to. My dad wasn’t interested, he wouldn’t be in the same room as, like, my first girlfriend. And then as the years have gone on, he’s always been worried about my career, more than about my sexuality, but what he probably doesn’t understand is that (.) bad as it sounds, your sexuality can probably get you more places in a career than (.) not. [laugh] Because people, it’s harder and harder to discriminate against people now isn’t it, so (.) daft as it sounds it’s probably an advantage, in some respects. Erm.

I: Do you think it’s had any impact on your career, either way?

R67KJ: Erm (.) well equality monitoring is supposed to be separate to the job isn’t it, but I would question how much that is, especially when those questions are asked in the first place. Why ask them? It’s not going towards somebody’s, you know, the BME community, there’s, especially in my profession, there’s not enough BME community in it. How are you going to tell that from an application form if someone isn’t saying ‘I’m black, white, British’, er, black minority ethnic.

I: Oh ok.

R67KJ: people, you’re not going to find out who those people are unless they’re telling you. So, and the same goes with sexuality, because the, people can’t discriminate.

I: Hmm

R67KJ: And then people then have to have balances within the workforce don’t they? To show that they’re diverse. But erm, yeah so (.) what was I talking about? Oh, my wedding. Yeah so now it was the right time that I felt (.) my parents were comfortable, B\*\*\*\*\*’s [wife’s] parents’ were comfortable, the families are really supportive (.2) erm, so, why not? [laugh] I know a lot of my mates would be like I can’t believe that you’ve got married after all the things you’ve said about gay marriage and whatever, but for me it’s about, it’s a security thing as well (.) it’s like (.) knowing someone’s there and I’m there for somebody else. And to me it doesn’t matter who that is, does it? In terms of gender, sexuality. It’s the connection you have.

I: Hmm

R67KJ: But yeah if you, if it was a few years ago nah, my, I wouldn’t have done it. Because, that’s why I didn’t want my dad to do a speech at the wedding, because I didn’t want to make him feel awkward if he didn’t want to do it. But obviously my mam was like well ‘you’re doing it’, so he ended up doing it [laugh].

Opie, C. and Brown, D. (eds) (2019)*Getting Started in Your Educational Research: A Student’s Guide to Design, Data Production and Analysis.* London: Sage.

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