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: 7FTN7**

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

7FTN7: Ermmmm, so do you mean like, how I decided I was female and gay?

I: Yeah, if that’s how you identify yourself then the question is about by what process you feel you came to those conclusions.

7FTN7: Ok. Well. Erm I never, I’ve never thought of questioning my gender. Erm, you know, I’ve always assumed I was female. And there have been points in my life where I’ve felt like I haven’t fit in with the stereotype, because I’ve never been very stereotypically girly, never liked wearing dresses or wearing makeup or going shopping or hanging out with girls, kind of thing, or boys or anyone [laugh]. Erm so there’s been times you know in my life where I’ve felt self conscious about that or worried about that or (.) not like necessarily down about it but maybe a bit insecure about it. But erm, it never crossed my mind that I was anything else. I just felt like this is what I am, and this isn’t like most people, and that sucks, but then as I got older, I mean I also tried like being more girly, and to, to wear different clothes and do things that I was uncomfortable with you know, like going on nights out to like clubs and things wearing dresses and heels and things like that. Especially when I first came to uni I decided I was going to try and do that so I came to uni with dresses [laugh], erm (.) but that did not work and that made me extremely miserable and even more uncomfortable and I realised I am far more comfortable if I can just be myself, and (.) so then I just accepted that I can be my version of female and that’s fine, and I think reading a lot about feminism helped to get me to that point, where it’s like (.) however you are it’s fine. And you can define your own gender and your own version of being a girl. So I did that, and now I feel fine and comfortable with my gender identity even if that may sometimes be different from the stereotype. And, my sexuality, similar kind of story in that when I was younger in school and I started liking women, at first I was like ‘no, it’s fine, it’s not, it’s fine, you just wanna be friends with them’ [laugh], erm and then I realised that that wasn’t true so then I was like ‘no, I do fancy this girl, but it’s just this girl, that’s it, like, it’s just this girl’. But then I fancied more girls so then I identified within myself as bisexual for a while. Because I hadn’t told anyone at this point at all. Erm so I just decided, I just went with that for a while. But then as time went on I never felt any attraction towards men in any way and I wanted to explore being with women more because I had boyfriends but never girlfriends. Erm, so then I guess at some point around that stage I accepted to myself that I was gay, and and then I, when I first started wanting to speak to women in that way it was online. Before i told anyone in real life, and I started identifying as gay that way, like just from talking to people online, not through people who knew me, and then eventually when I felt more comfortable with that, that’s when I started telling people in real life. And I was never really, after that stage (.) and after like having my first girlfriend I was never really uncomfortable with it and there’s never been a problem with it since. Erm, so that’s how I came to being a gay female [laugh].

I: So you mentioned reading feminist literature, and that that had an impact on you feeling more comfortable accepting who were in terms of gender. So at what point did you get exposed to that and how did that happen, and were there any other things that you feel might have impacted on you reaching a point where you felt you could define your own female gender?

7FTN7: well (.) I think I was kind of completely oblivious to feminism errr, until (.) probably until I went to uni I think and my friend S\*\*\*\*\* who lives in Liverpool, was at a separate uni to me at the time, and she started speaking to me about it and giving me information about it, and introducing me to authors like Caitlin Moran erm (.) and I think then I just started reading more about it and then with Facebook becoming more of a thing I guess while I was in uni, and following news outlets on Facebook then you start to see more articles and get more information, and then, so I guess it started from there, and then I started exploring like feminist music, feminist books and things like that. And then I met H\*\*\*\*\* [laugh], erm and you know H\*\*\*\*\* had these ideas too, being more advanced in [their] life than I was when we met, erm and so then I shared things with H\*\*\*\*\*, so that was (.) that was how I kind of got introduced to feminism and made it kind of an integral part of my life, not just something that I read but something that I like really identified with and cared about. Erm (.) but then also there’s things about me even though I’m not stereotypically girly that are still really girly, like, I mean I’ve got big boobs [laugh], erm (.) and I don’t know I do like, I do wear like some makeup and things like that, so I just realised that nothing can like (.) make it, make me being a girl like, not legitimate. Because I am. And, and (.) and I think that’s it.

I: The other thing was about if you think that there’s other things, so now it sounds like as well as what you were reading at the time there were people that you met and knew that had an impact. Do you think that there’s anything else that contributed to you feeling like you had a greater understanding of your gender?

7FTN7: Hmmmm (.) I don’t think so, I don’t think there’s anything else.

I: Ok and, in terms of your sexuality, you said that it was easier to come out to people who weren’t part of your life at the time, so it sounds like in terms of what had an impact there it was having a space where you could discuss that and explore it without it impacting on your social or family life.

7FTN7: Yes.

I: So do you think there are any other things, is it, do you think that is the most integral thing in terms of being able to declare who you were?

7FTN7: Yeah I think so because it meant that you could like explore it, and kind of like try it on in a way, but without there being any consequences in your life if you changed your mind like it didn’t feel, obviously coming out felt like a big deal and if you do it you can’t change your mind. So doing it like online in this way meant that you could speak to people that were similar, read about stuff, and find out more about yourself before you took it out into a way that was going to impact you.

I: Did it, do you feel like you had any negative reactions either at that point or when you came out to people who were already in your life?

7FTN7: Erm not negative, no. Erm (.) nothing bad at all, nothing really negative. There were things like people thinking it was a phase, or, erm (.) people saying that it wasn’t a real thing or something like that, but nothing that I feel was like personal or nothing that ended badly for me really.

I: Do you think it made a difference then when you had relationships with women that it like legitimised it for other people, rather than them thinking that it was a phase?

7FTN7: Yeah, actually I didn’t want to come out until I had a girlfriend, probably maybe for that reason because I felt like it was easier to say to people ‘this is my girlfriend and I’m gay’ than by telling them that you’re gay because I guess yeah it made it seem more legitimate and I had more of a reason as well, so even things did go wrong then (.) I was doing it for someone.. not for someone because it was for myself as well, but it wasn’t like if it all went wrong I would lose everything. So maybe it was kind of like safety as well, like safety net.

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.

Scaife, H.Z. (2016). ‘A qualitative exploration of sexual and gender identity in non-heterosexual women, specifically focused on identity formation, fluidity and intersectionality’. MSc thesis, Manchester Metropolitan University.