

Interaction on NLC attitude questions about children: the ‘stroppy’ respondents

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Table 1 Sources of data, interviewer and respondent details for this research

Data source	How was it administered?	How was it monitored?	Who recorded the data?	How many questions (duration)?	How many and who were the respondents?	Who was the interviewer?	Where were the respondents from?
1. <i>Negotiating the Life Course</i> (NLC) Survey Wave 1 1997							
Interviewer comments	Notes at time of interview	Notes	Interviewer	NA	NA	AIFS interviewers	Australia-wide
Structured questionnaire (all)	CATI	Coded questionnaires (no audio-tapes)	Interviewer	About 299 questions (about 40 minutes)	2,231 male and female respondents in total	AIFS interviewers	Australia-wide
2. <i>Women on Children</i> (WOC) Survey (Sample of NLC Wave 1 respondents) 1998/9							
Pre-call	By telephone	Audio-tape	MM	NA	25 women from NLC Wave 1	MM	NSW, ACT
Structured questionnaire (part)	By telephone	Audio-tape	AI	About 10 questions (4–15 minutes)	27 women aged 20–54 interviewed in NLC Wave 1 and WOC	AI	NSW, ACT
In-depth interviews	Face-to-face	Audio-tape	MM	Variable	3 women aged 15–49 interviewed for NLC Stage 1 and WOC	MM	NSW, ACT

Notes: AI Annie (Pseudonym for AIFS interviewer). ACT Australian Capital Territory. AIFS Australian Institute of Family Studies. CATI Computer-assisted telephone interviews. MM Marian May. NA Not applicable. NSW New South Wales. UQ University of Queensland.

Table 2 WOC Survey sample, 1998

Pseudonym	Age ^a	Completed secondary education ^b	Children ever born	Total children ^c	More children? ^d
Annegret	34	Yes	1	2	1
Lyn	38	Yes	2	2	0
Chrissy	46	Yes	0	0	0
Andrea	35	Yes	2	3	1
Tonia	30	Yes	3	4	1
Kristen	43	No	2	3	1
Sonya	27	Yes	3	3	0
Dale	31	No	0	1	1
Jess	35	Yes	0	2	2
Joanne	49	Yes	4	4	0
Ricky	38	Yes	2	2	0
Tina	35	Yes	0	1	1
Merilyn	48	No	3	3	0
Noelle	37	Yes	2	2	0
Carol	36	Yes	2	2	0
Melinda	38	No	2	2	0
Edith	42	Yes	4	4	0
Coral	36	Yes	2	2	0
Karen	35	Yes	3	3	0
Liz	50	No	2	2	0
Nadia	54	No	3	3	0
Helen	47	No	4	4	0
Jenny	37	Yes	4	4	0
Kerry	54	Yes	4	4	0
Beverly	47	Yes	0	0	0
Lindy	50	Yes	2	2	0
Debra	46	No	4	4	0

Notes: ^a Age at time of Wave 1 NLC (respondents were approximately two years older by the time of the WOC telephone interview). ^b Educational level (secondary only): 1 'completed secondary'; 2 'incomplete secondary'. ^c Total number of children respondent thought she would have in future plus children already born when asked in 1997. The questions asked were: 'How many children have you ever had?' and 'How many (more) children do you think you will have in the future?'. ^d Number of additional children respondent thought she would have in future when asked in 1997, in response to the question, 'How many (more) children do you think you will have in the future?'.

Source: NLC 1997.

Table 3 Responses to Question 194 of 27 WOC respondents, NLC Wave 1, 1996–7 and WOC Survey, 1998

Survey	Respondent	Statements 1–7	Respondent	Statements 1–7
NLC Wave 1	Annegret	3 4 4 2 4 2 4	Carol	2 2 2 2 4 2 4
WOC		3 4 4 3 5 2 4		2 4 4 2 4 2 4
NLC Wave 1	Lyn	1 5 5 1 5 1 1	Melinda	1 4 4 1 4 2 1
WOC		1 4 4 1 5 1 1		1 4 4 1 5 1 1
NLC Wave 1	Chrissy	5 1 5 2 5 1 5	Edith	1 1 5 2 5 1 2
WOC		5 1 4 -1 5 1 5		2 2 4 2 4 2 2
NLC Wave 1	Andrea	2 1 2 1 5 1 1	Coral	4 2 2 4 4 2 4
WOC		1 4 4 1 5 2 1		2 1 4 2 4 2 4
NLC Wave 1	Tonia	2 2 2 2 4 2 4	Karen	4 4 4 2 5 4 4
WOC		2 2 4 1 4 1 4		4 4 4 2 5 3 4
NLC Wave 1	Kristen	1 4 4 1 4 4 1	Liz	4 2 4 2 4 1 4
WOC		1 4 4 2 5 5 1		4 2 4 2 4 1 4
NLC Wave 1	Sonya	2 1 4 2 5 2 2	Nadia	1 4 4 2 5 4 4
WOC		2 4 5 2 5 1 1		2 4 4 4 5 2 1
NLC Wave 1	Dale	5 5 5 1 4 2 3	Helen	1 2 4 2 4 3 4
WOC		5 4 4 1 5 1 5		1 4 5 1 5 2 1
NLC Wave 1	Jess	4 4 4 2 4 2 4	Jenny	4 4 4 2 4 2 2
WOC		4 5 5 R 5 1 1		4 4 4 1 5 1 5
NLC Wave 1	Joanne	2 4 4 2 5 2 2	Kerry	2 4 4 2 4 4 4
WOC		2 4 4 2 5 2 1		4 4 4 2 4 2 4
NLC Wave 1	Ricky	4 1 5 1 4 1 4	Beverly	4 4 4 4 4 2 4
WOC		2 1 5 1 5 1 2		5 4 4 4 5 1 5
NLC Wave 1	Tina	4 4 4 2 5 2 5	Lindy	2 4 4 2 4 2 4
WOC		4 2 2 1 4 1 5		4 4 5 2 5 2 4
NLC Wave 1	Merilyn	2 4 4 2 4 3 2	Debra	1 1 2 1 4 1 5
WOC		2 4 4 2 4 4 2		2 1 2 1 4 1 5
NLC Wave 1	Noelle	2 4 4 2 4 2 3		
WOC		1 2 2 1 5 2 2		

Notes: 1 strongly agree; 2 agree; 3 mixed feelings; 4 disagree; 5 strongly disagree; R refused; -1 don't know.

Responses that differ between the two surveys are shaded.

Sources: NLC 1997, WOC Survey 1998

Table 4 Responses to Q194

State- ment No.	Strongl y agree	Agree	Mixed feelings	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/ Refused	N
1.	6	10	1	7	3		27
2.	4	5		17	1		27
3.		3		18	5	1	27
4.	11	11	1	3		1	27
5.				9	18		27
6.	12	12	1	1	1		27
7.	9	4		8	6		27

Source: WOC Interview Schedule, 1998

Negotiating the Life Course Questions 193 and 194

Q193: I'm going to read you some statements about children and I'd like you to tell me whether you **STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, DISAGREE** or **STRONGLY DISAGREE** with each one:

Q194: Do you **STRONGLY AGREE, AGREE, DISAGREE OR STRONGLY DISAGREE?**

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. A life without children is not fully complete | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. Children have too great an impact on the freedom of the mother | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Children have too great an impact on the freedom of the father | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. Watching children grow up is life's greatest joy | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. It is better not to have children because they are such a burden | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. Whatever career a woman may have, her most important role in life is still that of becoming a mother | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Source: NLC 1997

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----|------------|
| 1 | Strongly agree | R | Refused |
| 2 | Agree | -1 | Don't know |
| 3 | Mixed feelings | | |
| 4 | Disagree | | |
| 5 | Strongly disagree | | |

Criteria for formulating attitude statements:

1. Avoid statements that refer to the past rather than to the present.
2. Avoid statements that are factual or capable of being interpreted as factual.
3. Avoid statements that may be interpreted in more than one way.
4. Avoid statements that are irrelevant to the psychological object under consideration.
5. Avoid statements that are likely to be endorsed by almost everyone or by almost no one.
6. Select statements that are believed to cover the entire range of the affective range scale of interest.
7. Keep the language of the statements simple, clear, and direct.
8. Statements should be short, rarely exceeding 20 words.
9. Each statement should contain only one complete thought.
10. Statements containing universals such as *all*, *always*, *none*, and *never* often introduce ambiguity and should be avoided.
11. Words such as *only*, *just*, *merely*, and others of a similar nature should be used with care and moderation in writing statements.
12. Whenever possible, statements should be in the form of simple sentences rather than in the form of compound or complex sentences.
13. Avoid the use of words that may not be understood by those who are to be given the completed scale.
14. Avoid the use of double negatives.

(A. L. Edwards 1957. **Techniques of Attitude Scale Construction**. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts. pp.13–14)

STATEMENT 1

Segment 2 Kristen (Strongly agree/Strongly agree)

167. Int: and the first one is, a life without children is not
168. fully complete. do you strongly agree, agree,
169. disagree, or strongly disa[gree
170. Kristen: [↑we::l] i think a lot of
171. people it's different but to me: because i've always
172. wanted them and because (.) •hh u:m (.) my periods
173. have never been regular, it's very important to me.
174. Int: ri:ght. °right°=
175. Kristen: =so:: you kno:w (.) because i never got my periods
176. regular, and i thought i couldn't have children •hh=
177. Int: =°right°=
178. Kristen: =so:: to me=and because i looked after children when
179. i was younger,
180. Int: ye[a:h
181. Kristen: so[rt of knew what to do, and everything, •hh i
182. didn't feel complete unless i had children=so- (.) it
183. was very important to me, yeah.
184. Int: (°ri:ght.°) so a life without children is not fully
185. complete. do you agree with that.
186. Kristen: u:m (0.6) we:l]- to me, if you're speaking [to °me°
187. Int: [>↑yeah
188. ↑yeah to ↑you=this is [your] own=
189. Kristen: [yeah
190. Int: =([personal opinion) <]
191. Kristen: [yeah] u:m for me, yes. [because
192. Int: [so would
193. you- would you say you agree, or strongly agree.
194. Kristen: i'd strongly agree with [that.
195. Int: [strongly agree=
196. Kristen: =yeah=because children i think make your life really,
197. Int: right=
198. Kristen: =°yeah°=
199. Int: =now the next question is ((next question))

[MMP#6:167-99]

Segment 3 Annegret (Mixed feelings/Mixed feelings)

88. Int: •hhhh and the first one is, a life without children is not
89. fully complete. do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or
90. [strongly disa-
91. Annegret: [t! o(h) \$i remember these questions from last time\$
92. •hhh [u::hmmm ha ha:::]]

93. Int: [>yeah, well you do:, (they're funny question-)<]
 94. Annegret: =\$they were silly last time too\$ [•hhh]=
 95. Int: [o(h) heh heh]
 96. Annegret: =um heh u:m (1.0) hhh
 97. (0.3)
 98. Int: >i'll read it out again.<=
 99. Annegret: =>yeah no no i remember it< [um •hhh
 100. Int: [>oh you remember it<
 101. Annegret: hhhhhh (2.0) it's a really hard one to answer
 102. becau::se (.) >you know< um life is different now
 103. with a child than it was before a child, and i wouldn't-
 104. •hh i mean if i hadn't had a child i probably wouldn't
 105. regret not having one, but-, hh having had one, it's a
 106. very (.) important part of my life [so, (.) •hhh] i c- i=
 107. Int: [yeah yeah]
 108. Annegret: =don't think i can actually (1.0) °i think° i have to be
 109. neutral on that one¿ hhhh=
 110. Int: =sure. i'll- >i'll just read that again< a life without
 111. children is not fully complete. (.) so you- you're
 112. neutral, neither agree nor di[sagree.
 113. Annegret: [yeah. yeah.

[MMPH#1:88-113]

STATEMENTS 2 and 3

Segment 4 Kristen (Disagree/Disagree)

201. Int: =now the next question is, children have too - >sorry
 202. the next statement< children have too great an impact
 203. on the freedom of the mother. do you strongly agree,
 204. a[gree,
 205. Kristen: [ah what does that mean. like==
 206. Int: =>children have< too much impact °on the freedom of
 207. the mother°
 208. (1.0)
 209. Kristen: what does that mean.
 210. Int: a::h so children (0.3) u::m (0.3) t! (0.6) well- if
 211. you- if the- if you have children,
 212. Kristen: mm
 213. Int: they actually inhibit the freedom of the mother. a
 214. lot.
 215. Kristen: what=they depend on me a lot?
 216. Int: a::h so it actually means that you have a lot less
 217. freedom than (°you would have if you hadn't had
 218. °). [like the way the qu==

219. Kristen: [↑o::h-
220. Int: =the way the=statement is (),=
221. Kristen: =yea::h=
222. Int: =children (.) inhibit your freedom too much.
223. Kristen: no:: i don't think so.
224. Int: so [now-] would you say you disagree or=
225. Kristen: [no.]
226. Int: =strong[ly °disagree°]
227. Kristen: [i- d-] i disa- i disagree with that
228. one. (0.3) yeah.=cos i think if you're gunna •h- i
229. think if you- really wanted children in the first
230. place, (0.6) •hh u:m then it's- it's not really a job
231. it's- you know >the sort of thing< you enjoy doing
232. like anything=like if you enjoy doing something,
233. [•hh] then it's not a=
234. Int: [yeah]
235. Kristen: =problem but if it's something that you've (.) got,
236. and you don't know (.) •hh how to handle it, well
237. then it's a different kettle of fish=[like] to=
238. Int: [yeah]
239. Kristen: =me, i like it because •hh she fills in my time, and
240. she's more company.
241. Int: yeah. [°yeah°
242. Kristen: [you know than my actual husband is=which is
243. good to me, because i think if i didn't have
244. children, i think i'd f- think i'd be u:m (2.0) >not
245. that i have childre- children for that reason< but i-
246. but (.) um i think i get a lot more out of the kids
247. than what i do with my own husba[nd=w]ell=
248. Int: [right]
249. Kristen: =with both of them really, [•hh=
250. Int: [yeah]
251. Kristen: =because (.) they sort of- (.) you know, he goes off
252. and does his own thi:ng, and i don't mind that=but
253. •hh they're- they're very good company for me=i get
254. the break when she goes to kindy and things like
255. that, •hh so i do get the break=an i've got a carer
256. that looks after her, so that i can go out one night
257. to: a restraunt >and that< so- •hh but- on the whole,
258. (0.3) um •hh no, i think it gives me something to
259. do=i think you know y- (.) it gives me: (.) i think
260. i'd be bored silly if i didn't have kids=i'd- i
261. wouldn't know what to do with myself really=i think
262. •hh they sort of fill my lif:e you know they make it
263. more fulfillingz
264. Int: °yeah°
265. Kristen: yea:h.

266. Int: but- i mean these sort of questions- (are sort of)
 267. Kristen: yeah. yeah.
 268. Int: the next- the next one is, children have too great an
 269. impact on ((Annie goes on to the next statement))

[MMPH#6:201-69]

Segment 5 Jess (Statements 2 and 3: Disagree/Strongly disagree)

92. Int: (° children have too great an impact
 93. on the freedom of the mother. (°do you strongly agree
 94. agree disagree or strongly disagree°)
 95. Jess: have too much impact?=
 96. Int: =yep
 97. Jess: on the mother >as opposed to the father,< o:r-
 98. Int: oh well we ask that ([)
 99. Jess: [so tha[t-
 100. Int: [it says children have too
 101. great an impact on the freedom of the mother [(and]=
 102. Jess: [yes]
 103. Int: =the next one) children have too great an impact on the
 104. freedom of the father.
 105. Jess: oh a:::h disagree:.
 106. Int: disagree. and what about the father.((baby squeals))
 107. Jess: °a:::[h°
 108. Int: [>you've got strongly disagree, disagree, agree or
 109. strongly agree<
 110. Jess: stro- oh hang on=i'd better get him, hold on
 111. (34.0)((attends to baby))
 112. Jess: he||o:::?: huhm huhm •hh
 113. Int: you right?
 114. Jess: yess. fire away=now let's see, the first of them. now-
 115. just- have too great an impa:ct, [and i said, what was=
 116. Int: [on this-
 117. Jess: =it?
 118. Int: a:h no:w (.) children have too great an impact on the
 119. freedom of the mother. now do you strongly agree,
 120. >agree, disagree or strongly disagree<
 121. Jess: yeah strongly disagree actua[l]ly probly,] yea::h
 122. Int: [°strongly disagree°]
 123. Jess: they're that- i mean- they deserve everything. i mean-
 124. Int: °right° (that's [])
 125. Jess: [mm]
 126. Int: (°children have too great an impact on the freedom of
 127. the father°) do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or
 128. strongly disagree with that.
 129. Jess: ↑o:h that's a hard one, °isn't it.° (2.0) because it's a

160. Jess: yea:::hh=i- (.) the wording then even-
 161. Int: yeah. so i can't actually change the wording
 162. Jess: that's ri:ght. [u::m
 163. Int: [yeah
 164. Jess: ↑i ↑mean d- it is. it is. it is.magnificent. (0.6) •hh °but
 165. anyway but- it's um- there are other things that are
 166. magnificent too° •hh
 167. Int: (i'll just write here,) one of life's greatest joys
 168. Jess: ye:s
 169. Int: ()
 170. Jess: °yes°
 171. Int: ()
 172. Jess: °mm hm°
 173. Int: A:ND i mean you can always refuse to answer any of these
 174. questions
 175. Jess: yeah [true.
 176. Int: [()
 177. Jess: yeah
 178. Int: so (if you want to do that)
 179. Jess: u:m (3.0) mm (1.3) [but that does- it puts you in the=
 180. Int: [(well you-
 181. Jess: =position of being absolute
 182. Int: °mm°
 183. Jess: when in fact you sort of know it's magnificent but then
 184. there are other magnificent things too
 185. Int: well the other thing there is- i mean- () option
 186. you don't have to leave it out)
 187. Jess: mmm it is isn't yeah (1.0) t! i'll leave it out.
 188. Int: okay (well)
 189. ((clunk - dropped phone??))
 190. Jess: >sorry<
 191. Int: >that's alright< A:H- ((goes on to next statement))

[MMP#9:138-91]

Segment 7 Annegret (Agree/Mixed feelings)

125. Int: watching children grow up is life's greatest joy.
 126. (.) and again do you strongly °agree,
 127. agr[ee, disagree, (or) strongly disagree°]
 128. Annegret: [u:::m] i
 129. wouldn't have said that it was - (.) naw (.) i
 130. i've >never even thought about whether it was<
 131. •hhhhh the greatest joy ↑u:::m hhh (2.0) ↑no, i
 132. don't think it's life's greatest joy=i'd express
 133. it- neutral i guess. on that one as well.

[MMPH#1:125–33]

Segment 8 Carol (Agree/Agree)

148. Int: watching children grow up, is life's greatest joy.
149. °do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly
150. disagree°
151. Carol: ↓oh (.) agree. but >you know< getting your (.)
152. postgraduate quals is pretty good,
153. Int: ah huh [huh
154. Carol: [hh hh
155. Int: so was that equivalent to that?
156. Carol: •hh yea(h)h [huh •hh
157. Int: [huh huh [huh
158. Carol: [hh hh •hh
159. Int: (10.0) ((either pause or soft talk or both))
160. Carol: oh yeah

[MMPH#15:148–60]

STATEMENT 5

Segment 9 Lyn (Strongly disagree/Strongly disagree)

136. Int: it is better not to have children because they are such a
137. burden. do you strongly agree, agr[(ee disagree)
138. Lyn: [am i talking for
139. myself or (.)[i- in general.
140. Int: [↑yeah talking for yourself.
141. Lyn: oh >for myself.< er strongly disagree.

[MMPH#2:136–41]

STATEMENT 6

Segment 10 Carol (Agree/Agree)

165. Int: =°yeah.° a working mother can establish just as warm
166. and secure a relationship with her children, as a
167. mother who does not work.
168. Carol: •hh ↑o:::h. ↑no:. that's ↑a::wfu::]. ↑oh ↑that's a
169. ↑really ↑awful ↑question.

170. Int: is it?

171. Carol: ↑yea::h. it's really unfair.

172. Int: (what makes) you think it's unfair.

173. Carol: ↑to::h ↑because (.) ↑you ↑kn_ow, i mean- working women

174. have got enough guilt on them as it i:s. u::huck •hhh

175. ↑LOOK. ↑SEE THE THING IS FOR ME, um=and i really have

176. to challenge the validi- i think it's too broad. •hh

177. it dePENDS. it really depends on the type of work,

178. and the HOURS that are put- that- that takes her away

179. from the family and the child. •hh cos i don't think

180. it's just quality time=it's gotta be quantity of

181. time.=and whether it- she's- •hh she's engaged in a

182. workplace that's got family friendly practices. and-

183. and flexibility.

184. Int: so ↑when um- the ques- the statement is actually a

185. working mother is able to establish (.) just as warm

186. and secure a relationship with her child, as a mother

187. who does not work,=

188. Carol: =ye- de[pend]ing (0.3) on [the nature

189. Int: [um] [>depending on the nature<

190. Carol: of the work.

191. Int: would you agree or disagree with this state[ment.

192. Carol: [mmm,

193. Int: >i mean if it's possible or not possible< °is the

194. question°

195. Carol: i think it's possible, (.) yes so, you can put agree,

196. •hh bu[t i thi-

197. Int: [but you'd want [(to put)

198. Carol: [i- i- put in a comment there,

199. that it really depending on the nature (1.3) um (0.6)

200. of the work=•hh and ↑also the age of the child.

201. Int: °yes.°

202. Carol: okay?=because i- for example, i personally- i think,

203. zero to two, (1.3) •hh they really should be: y- you

204. know, with (.) a one to one parent. (2.3) like- you

205. know, in one to one care.

206. (2.3)

207. Int: (° °) ↑um (.) i've written

208. down here, ah- (.) awful question, too broad. hh and

209. [invo](h)lves quantity (.) ah (.)=

210. Carol: [m(h)m]

211. Int: =and quality time spent with kids >zero to two years

212. old< and (.)zero to two year old °kids° need (.) one

213. to one care, [um- and in the middle of that sen-]

214. Carol: [•hh yeah- um- >just a minute<]

215. it's qu- it's- i think it's als- it's quantity,

216. Int: mm,=
 217. Carol: =ri:ght, (0.3) um (1.0) like- quantity of time, (0.6)
 218. also out of s- like. you know they get that argument
 219. about- you know, that it's quality of time that you
 220. spend [with] their [kids;
 221. Int: [yeah] [°yeah°
 222. Carol: •hh whereas i d- i don't agree with that,=i reckon:
 223. that (.) •hh for a child under three: (1.0) um (.)
 224. it's actually quality- ah- [quantity] of ti[me].
 225. Int: [quantity] [°yeah°=
 226. but obviously you could include quality in
 227. [that somewhere]
 228. Carol: [yeah.] yeah. yeah.
 229. Int: (°° °°) [•hh ↑um (.)
 230. Carol: [no.
 231. Int: ↑yeah ↑so, >i've written that it involves
 232. quantity=i'll underline quantity,
 233. Carol: m[m.
 234. Int: [(so [<)
 235. Carol: [good. [yeah.
 236. Int: [↑um (.) quantity °and quality° of
 237. ti[me] spent °with kids.°=
 238. Carol: [mm]
 239. Carol: =mm=
 240. Int: =zero to two year olds need one to one care, and it
 241. depends also if the job is- (.) is family friendly.
 242. Carol: mm. yep.

[MMPH#15:165–242]

Segment 11 Dale (Mixed feelings/Strongly disagree)

176. Int: whatever career a woman may have, her most important
 177. role in life is still that of becoming a mother. do you
 178. strongly agree, agree, disagree, or [strongly disagree]
 179. Dale: [oh]
 180. i'd probly strongly disagree [with tha:t,=
 181. Int: [°strongly disagree°
 182. Dale: =>i mean< it's individual choice,
 183. (2.0)
 184. Int: U:M (.) that's all the questions=sso that's great,

[MMPH#8:176–84]

STATEMENT 7

Segment 12 Jess (Disagree/Strongly agree)

196. Int: whatever career a woman may have, her most important role
197. in life is still that of becoming a mother. do you strongly
198. agree agree disagree or strongly disagree
199. Jess: mm it's couched in such- it's- it's very- i mean i hate- i
200. don't mean to be rude but the •hh [the w-
201. Int: [i didn't write the
202. questions
203. Jess: the wording i- i- i- comes back to clichés, (1.6) but i
204. mean i must- being thirty six and having a child and having
205. been a career woman all the time, •hh i'm now (.) realising
206. what an absolutely wonderful (.) gift this is, at the end
207. of a (.) hard working career type of (.) sscenario, and
208. •hh so: it's sort of strange to then go back to sort of-
209. household cliché type •hh words (like-) i'm- [i'm]=
210. Int: [right]
211. Jess: =probably stereotyping myself,but •hh you know what i mean
212. [it's that sort of-] um- because i ohhh huh huhh =
213. Int: [↑yea:h °yeah°]
214. Jess: =probably now after the career i think ye(h)s having a
215. child is one of the most important significant things one
216. can ever do, HA HA •hh so i sort of tend to think (.) yes
217. cos career is just a career is just as career, t! and a
218. life is something far more (.) precious.
219. Int: and you're (right in at the moment)
220. Jess: that's right.
221. Int: (and brand new)
222. Jess: yehhhhs <exactly (0.6) that's ri:ght (0.3) °so it's um-°>
223. hmm. [↑what was the question again?
224. Int: [↑so-
225. Int: ↑a:h (.) whatever career a woman may have, her most
226. important role in life is still that of becoming a mother.
227. Jess: yea:h. i think it i::s.
228. Int: so you agree? or stro[ngly] agree
229. Jess: [i strongly agree. (1.3) cos you're
230. forming another generation in a sort of indirect wa:y
231. Int: yeah ([)
232. Jess: [which is- °yeah that's right°
233. Int: oka:y, ↑look that's actually the last um (.) question
234. Jess: mm hm

[MMPH#9:196–234]

Segment 13 Kerry (Disagree/Disagree)

142. Int: (
143.)
144. Kerry: now. the question. does the question mean either or,
145. or- um yes hhh
146. Int: whatever career a woman may have, her most important
147. role in life is still that of becoming a mother.
148. Kerry: well=if she has children, as well as a career=but (.)
149. not (.) <you know> if she doesn't have a career, then
150. obviously her career is, but- hh so then the
151. questions sometimes um don't really reflect (.) what
152. (.) <you want to know.> hhhh hah [hah hhh
153. Int: [i see
154. Int: so you're saying that (=
155. Kerry: ye::s
156. Int: (=)
157. Kerry: oh=i don't think that's necessarily true for some
158. women.
159. Int: (so you disagree with that)
160. okay. that's the end of the questions.

[MMPH#24:142-60]

Interaction on attitude questions about children: the ‘stropky’ respondents

Background to statements in NLC Q194

- routinely used in national and international surveys as part of other item pools
- 5 of 7 statements from International Social Survey Program (37 countries in 2001)
- S6 from US General Social Survey (since 1972?)
- S7 from 1971 Australian Family Survey

General findings on Q194

- attitude statements were problematic: intent, wording, coverage, comparisons, length
- ambiguity: hard to obtain clear responses
- interviewer forced to be directive
- quibbling, qualification, hedging
- outdated concepts encapsulated in statements

Number of turns at talk as a measure of trouble

- in theory, minimum possible 14 turns
- shortest 17 turns (Tina)
- longest nearly 200 (Kristen)
- length and complexity of interaction may not indicate a problematic answer
- minimal trouble-free/non-minimal trouble-free/non-minimal troubled

S1: A life without children is not fully complete

- 15 of 27 had trouble in interpreting statement; others not transparent
- ambiguity, repetition, clarification, pauses
- negatives ‘without’ and ‘not’ in combination with disagree/strongly disagree
- personal/general contradiction
- ‘disagree’ and ‘agree’ seemed to represent the same position for some people

S2 & S3: Children have too great an impact on the freedom of the mother/father

- 15 of 27 (S2), 10 of 27 (S3) had trouble
- ambiguity not transparent
- personal/general contradiction
- implied basis for comparison
- implicit limit in ‘too’
- qualifications: ‘it depends’
- acquiescence to formulation

S4: Watching children grow up is life's greatest joy

- 12 of 27 had trouble
- personal/general
- weighing up experience itself not comparing with other experiences ('in general for you')
- asking respondents who had no children
- single greatest joy an outdated concept?

S5: It is better not to have children because they are such a burden

- personal/general intent of statement
- answers show ambiguity and mixed responses
- this statement had fewest troubles in interaction

S6: A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work

- reluctance to speak for others
- quibbling, much qualification: 'it depends'
- leads to directive interviewer behaviour
- negotiated agreement often seems meaningless (e.g. Carol)
- statement may no longer adequately reflect the concept it is intended to cover

S7: Whatever career a woman may have, her most important role in life is still that of becoming a mother

- 7 of 27 had extended interaction
- strong responses
- personal/general intent
- 'becoming' or 'being'?
- ambiguous 'you'
- qualification

Stroppy respondents?

- Annegret, Carol, Jess, Dale, Kristen in particular
- women in non-mainstream situations
- experience in survey design and interviewing
- thoughtful women experiencing new social trends?

Non-response or mixed feelings

- Annegret (Statements 1,4) p267,288
- Jess (Statement 4) p286
- Chrissy (Statement 4) p291
- Carol (Statement 6) p299
- Karen (Statement 6) p301
- Helen (Statement 6) p301
- Dale (Statement 7)

Mixed feelings as non-response

- Statement 1 Annegret
- Statements 2 and 3
- Statement 4 Annegret, Jess, Chrissy
- Statement 5 Marilyn
- Statement 6 Carol, Karen, Helen
- Statement 7 Dale, Noelle