

PROJECT FIVE

THE AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page number</u>
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Methodology	2
3.	Results	2
4.	Discussion	3
5.	Summary	18

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PROJECT FIVE

THE AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS

Introduction: The Australian Democrats were formed in mid-1977 under the leadership of ex-Liberal Minister Don Chipp. The party was formed primarily to provide a vehicle for the Victorian Senate Campaign of its Leader and to a lesser extent to provide a power base in the Senate for the same man.

In this context the aim of the party was to win support in roughly equal proportions from both major political groupings by gaining (Senate) votes from the "middle-ground". In the lower house the party furthered this strategy by contesting as many seats as possible, winning votes from weakly-aligned pro and anti-Labor groups, and then returning this support via a two-sided how to vote card.

No one has ever demonstrated to my satisfaction that this sort of electoral tactic in the lower house has had any net impact on the outcome in any House of Representatives seat.

It is impossible without strong attitudinal evidence to argue that the Democrats provide some sort of "half-way house" to siphon first-preference votes from the non-Labor parties.

In a lower-house seat where Labor won 60 percent of the second preferences of a ten-percent Democrat primary vote, I would argue that this six percent was first "stolen" from the ALP primary vote.

For Labor to congratulate itself on winning 60 percent of the Democrats' second preferences in the above case is silly. Rather, we should have first asked ourselves why the Democrats were able to "steal" six percent of our primary vote in the first place.

Irrespective of the acceptance or otherwise by the reader of this argument, one thing can be said with some certainty about Australian Democrat voters:

As a group, they are less strongly committed to the three major political parties than those persons who in 1980 lodged a first-preference vote for the Labor, Liberal or National Country parties.

This being the case, we would expect to find some positive correlations between our long-run volatile groups and Democrat voters in 1980. We would also expect to find some overlap between groups which had drifted towards Labor between 1966 and 1980 (including working women and clerical workers) and the 1980 Democrat voters.

The current project therefore provides a useful check on the earlier conclusions reached in projects one to four, and it also serves to "flesh out" the picture of our "volatile" or "swinging" voters.

Methodology: The primary vote for Australian Democrat candidates in all contested seats in 1980 was tabulated and run as an additional political variable in the 1980 analysis described in project four. In this manner, pearson correlations were prepared and presented in a format similar to that used in project four.

Results: The results are presented in the form of a pearson r table and bar-chart figures and are included where appropriate in the following discussion.

Discussion: Table 5.1 presents the top 26 demographic correlations with the 1980 Democrat vote.

Here we can see a strong bias towards home-buyers and towards the white-collar occupation groups (including the important female clerical group) and against the blue-collar and rural occupation groups.

There is a comparable (and probably linked) bias towards the upper-income groups and against the lower-income groups.

If we put aside the home-buyers, family size and income groups which were not included in project two, we can see that all demographic groups included in the top portion of table 5.1 (the pro-Democrat groups) had positive correlations with long-run volatility in project two; and almost all groups in the lower portion of table 5.1 (the anti-Democrat groups) had negative correlations with long-run volatility.

In broad general terms then there are strong positive links between the 1980 Democrat voters and the groups which drifted towards Labor between 1966 and 1980, and/or the long-run volatile groups; and there are strong negative links between the 1980 Democrat voters and long-run stable groups and groups which swung away from Labor between 1966 and 1980 (e.g. miners and farmers).

I will reserve comment on the home-buyers, family size and income groups until later discussion on the bar-chart figures.

* * *

PEARSON R TABLE

Political Variable - 142 - 1980 -

AUST. DEMOCRATS

PEARSON R	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES
+ .47	V 30 MALES - SALES
+ .46	V114 TWO CHILDREN
+ .42	V 84 HOME BUYERS
+ .41	V 72 FEMALES - INCOME - \$7,000 TO \$8,000
+ .41	V 27 MALES - PROFESSIONALS
+ .40	V 79 DIPLOMA
+ .40	V 28 MALES - ADMINISTRATIVE
+ .39	V 63 MALES - INCOME - \$9,000 TO \$12,000
+ .38	V101 FAMILY INCOME - \$15,000 TO \$18,000
+ .34	V100 FAMILY INCOME - \$12,000 TO \$15,000
+ .33	V 40 FEMALES - CLERICAL
+ .32	V 64 MALES - INCOME - \$12,000 TO \$15,000
+ .32	V137 NO RELIGION
- .32	V 44 FEMALES - TRANSPORT
- .32	V 31 MALES - FARMERS
- .34	V107 UNEMPLOYED PENSIONS
- .37	V 95 FAMILY INCOME - \$5,000 TO \$6,000
- .38	V 91 HOME - WEEKLY RENT - \$0 TO \$29
- .38	V 59 MALES - INCOME - \$5,000 TO \$6,000
- .38	V 46 FEMALES - SERVICE
- .38	V 32 MALES - MINERS
- .39	V 48 FEMALES - OTHER (WORKFORCE)
- .39	V 97 FAMILY INCOME - \$7,000 TO \$8,000
- .40	V 33 MALES - TRANSPORT
- .42	V116 FOUR OR MORE CHILDREN
- .42	V 96 FAMILY INCOME - \$6,000 TO \$7,000

TABLE 5.1

Figure 5.1 shows the age-vote correlations for the 1980 Democrat voters. Figure 5.1 is a pale imitation of the comparable long-run volatility figure shown in lower figure 2.1 on page 4.11 of project two, with the Democrats gaining support from the volatile Labor voters aged 30 to 44 and the stable Labor voters aged 45-49.

However the point which is perhaps most worthy of comment is the general weakness of the age-vote links across all groups. Both the ALP and the Democrats failed in 1980 to gain appreciable support from the long-run volatile groups aged 25-44.

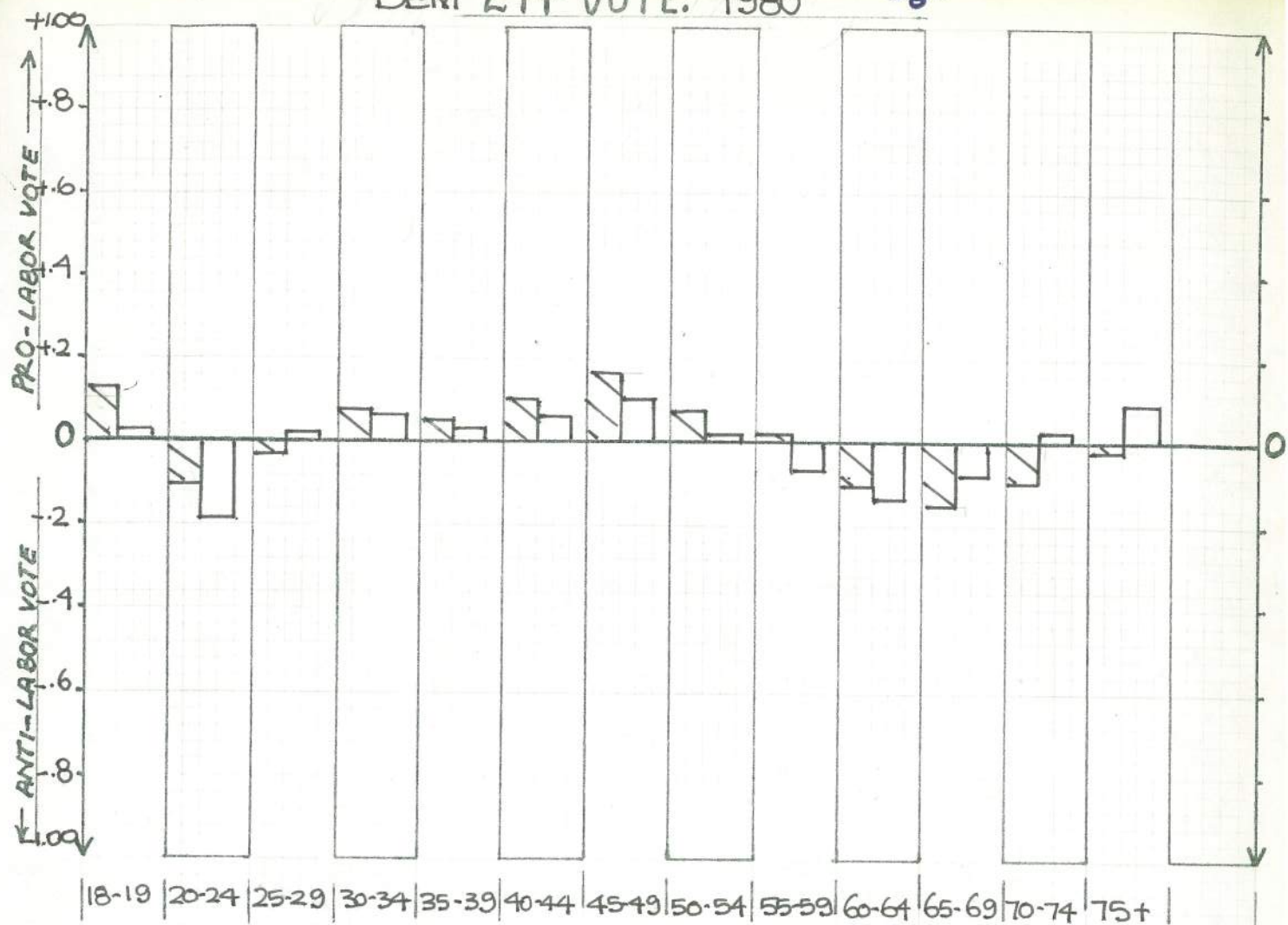
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Figure 5.2 shows the occupation-vote correlations for the 1980 Democrat vote (with the pro-Democrat and pro-Labor groups marked with asterisks).

In project four I said that the Democrats had picked up support from female ALP voters and male non-Labor voters. This attitudinal evidence is certainly backed up by figure 5.2.

Here we can see the Democrats gaining strong support from male professional, administrative and sales (anti-Labor) groups and from the female craftsmen (pro-Labor) group. I suggest that the reader here turns back to the comparable 1980 ALP vote-occupation figure 4.15 on page 109 of project four, to confirm these trends.

The Democrats also gained strong support from both male and female clerical workers (female clerks outnumber male clerks two to one) while the rural farmer and miner groups and the blue-collar transport group were hostile to the Democrats in 1980.



2PP SWING:

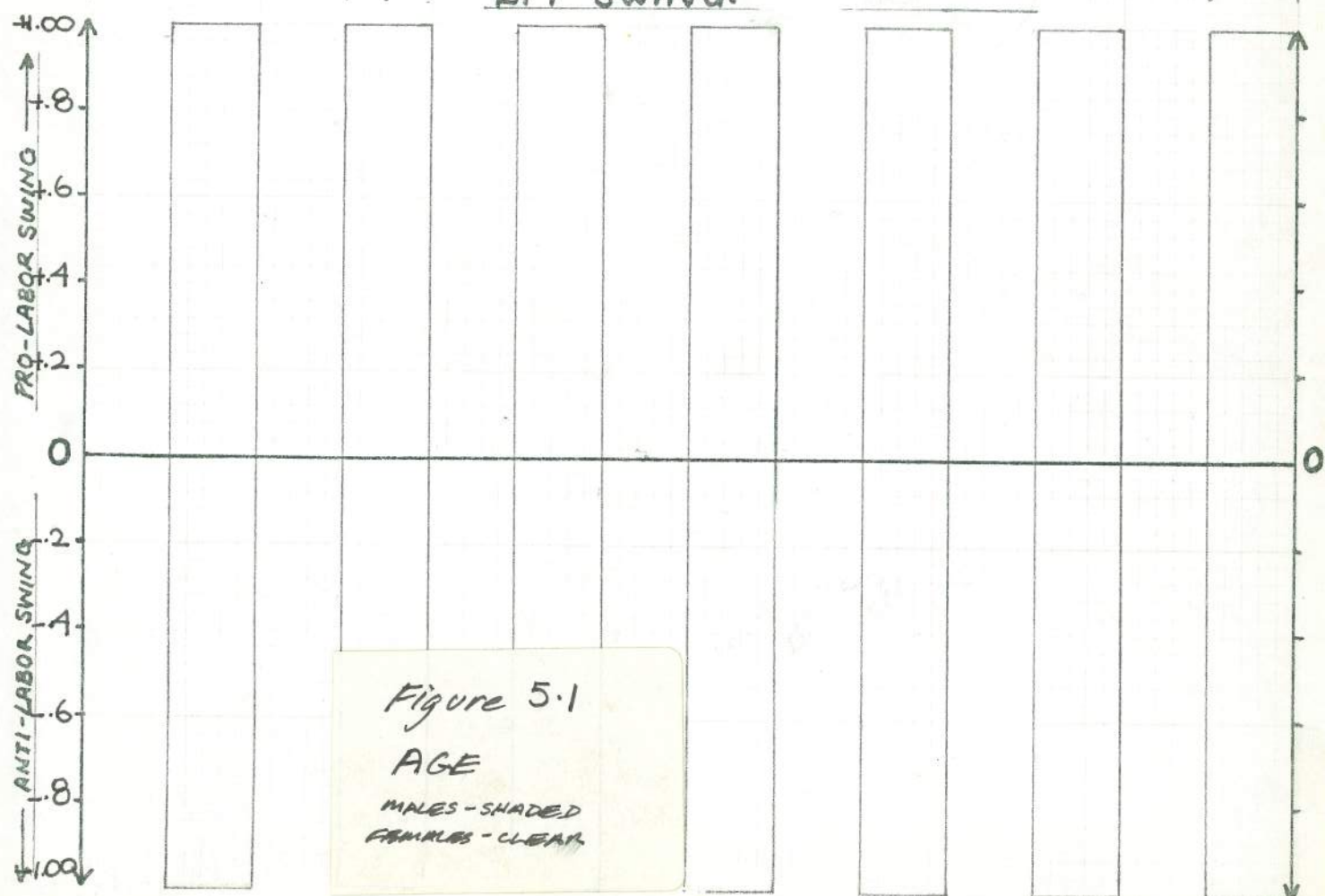
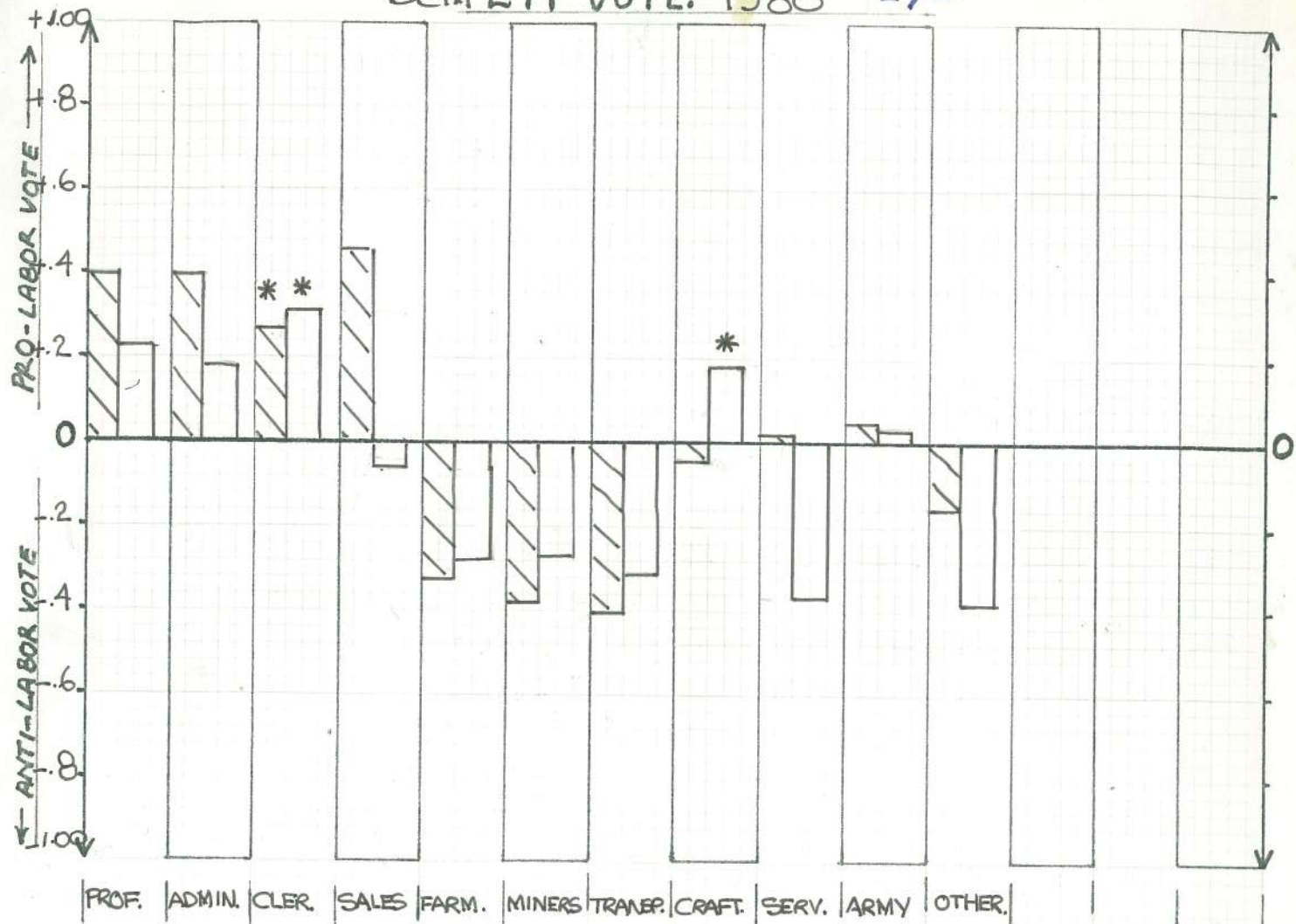


Figure 5.1

AGE

MALES - SHADED
FEMALES - CLEAR



2PP SWING:

* PRO-ALP

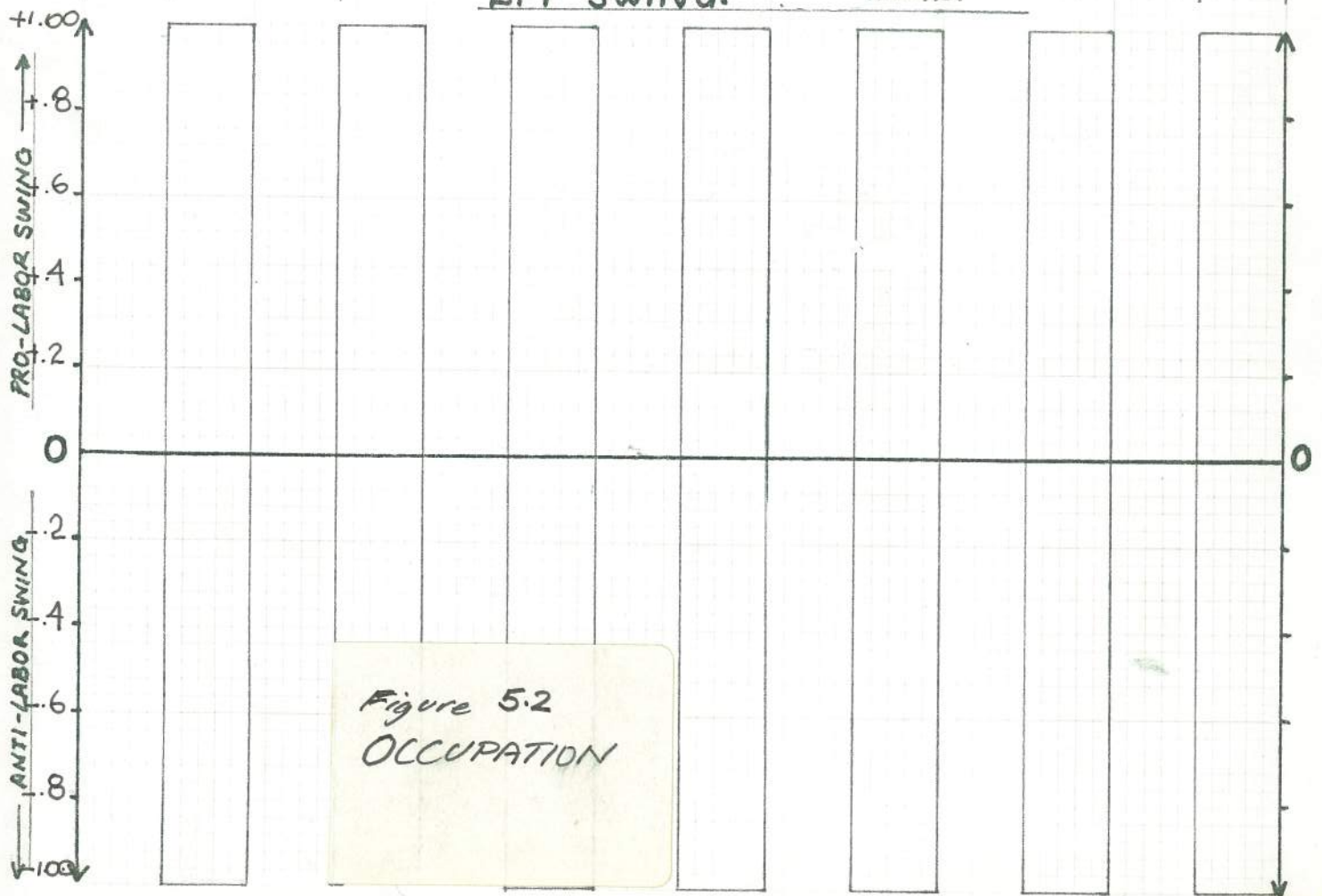


Figure 5.2
OCCUPATION

There are only two safe general conclusions which can be derived from a consideration of figure 5.1 in conjunction with the other evidence. The first is that Labor in 1983 would find it very difficult indeed to win increased support from the following groups which are both stable and anti-Democrat: farmers, miners, transport workers and female service workers.

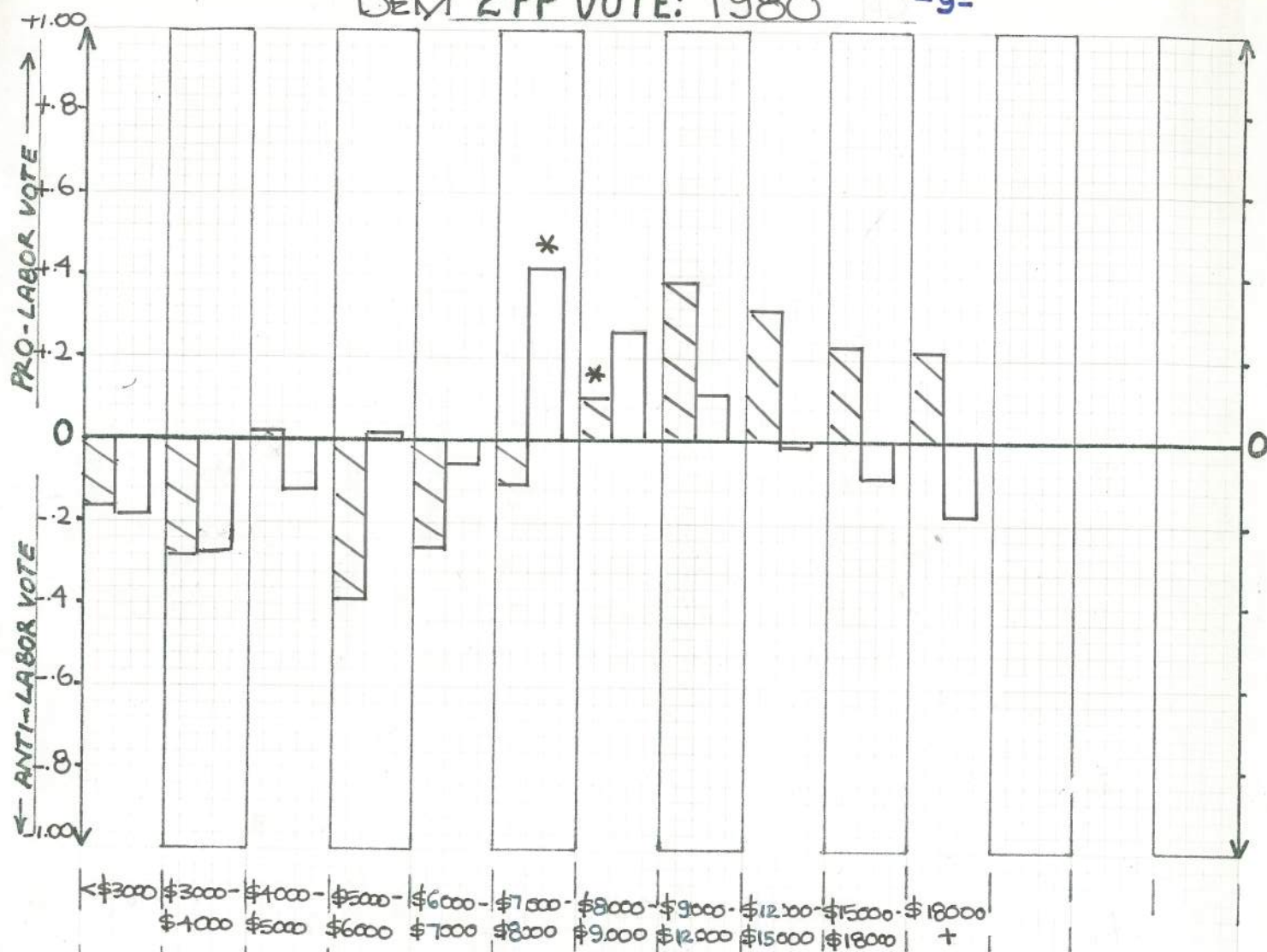
The second conclusion is that Labor in 1983 can gain increased support both in first and second preferences from male and female clerical workers and female craftsmen. Between 1966 and 1980 these three large pro-Democrat groups were drifting towards Labor quite strongly and the male and female clerical workers were also shown in project two to be one of the key long-run volatile groups between 1966 and 1975.

In 1976, male clerical workers comprised 8.4 percent of the male workforce; female clerical workers comprised 31.1 percent of the female workforce and female craftsmen comprised 10.7 percent of the female workforce.

Figure 5.3 shows the individual income correlations for the 1980 Democrat voters. If we examine the outline of the male income correlations we see clearly the "kink" or "hiccup" referred to earlier for the low-tax \$4000 to \$5000 income range. We can assume this reflects the partial success of tax-dodging techniques employed by pro-Democrat white collar groups shown in figure 5.2.

Male support for the Democrats increases for increasing male income levels above \$8000 and then tapers off above the 1976 \$9000 to \$12000 annual income range.

For females, the income correlations generally lag about .65 "behind" the males - a reflection of 1976 wage-sex differences. The two pro-ALP/pro-Democrat income groups are marked with asterisks.



2PP SWING:

*PRO-ALP

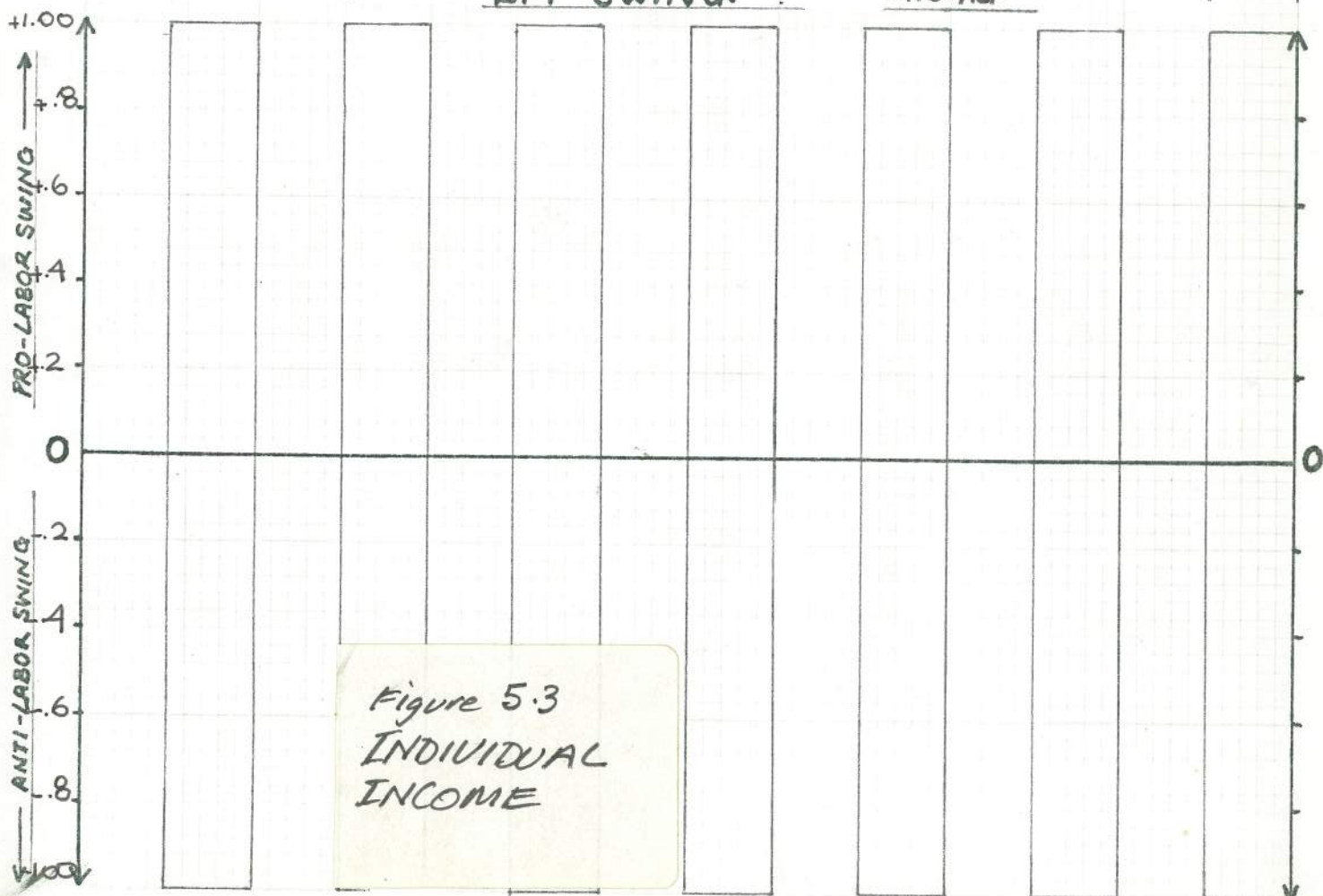


Figure 5.3
INDIVIDUAL
INCOME

Figure 5.4 shows the family income correlations. Here we see the outline of a curve similar to the 1980 ALP income-vote figure 4.17 (shown on page 111 of project four) except that the Democrat curve has moved "up-market" by between two and three income ranges. The lack of support shown the Democrats from low-income older/rural groups forces the Democrat income curve down for families earning less than \$6000, while the lack of support from pro-ALP blue-collar groups pushes the Democrat-income curve into the negative area for families earning \$6000 to \$9000.

The pro-Democrat/pro-ALP groups (families earning \$9000 to \$15000) are marked with asterisks.

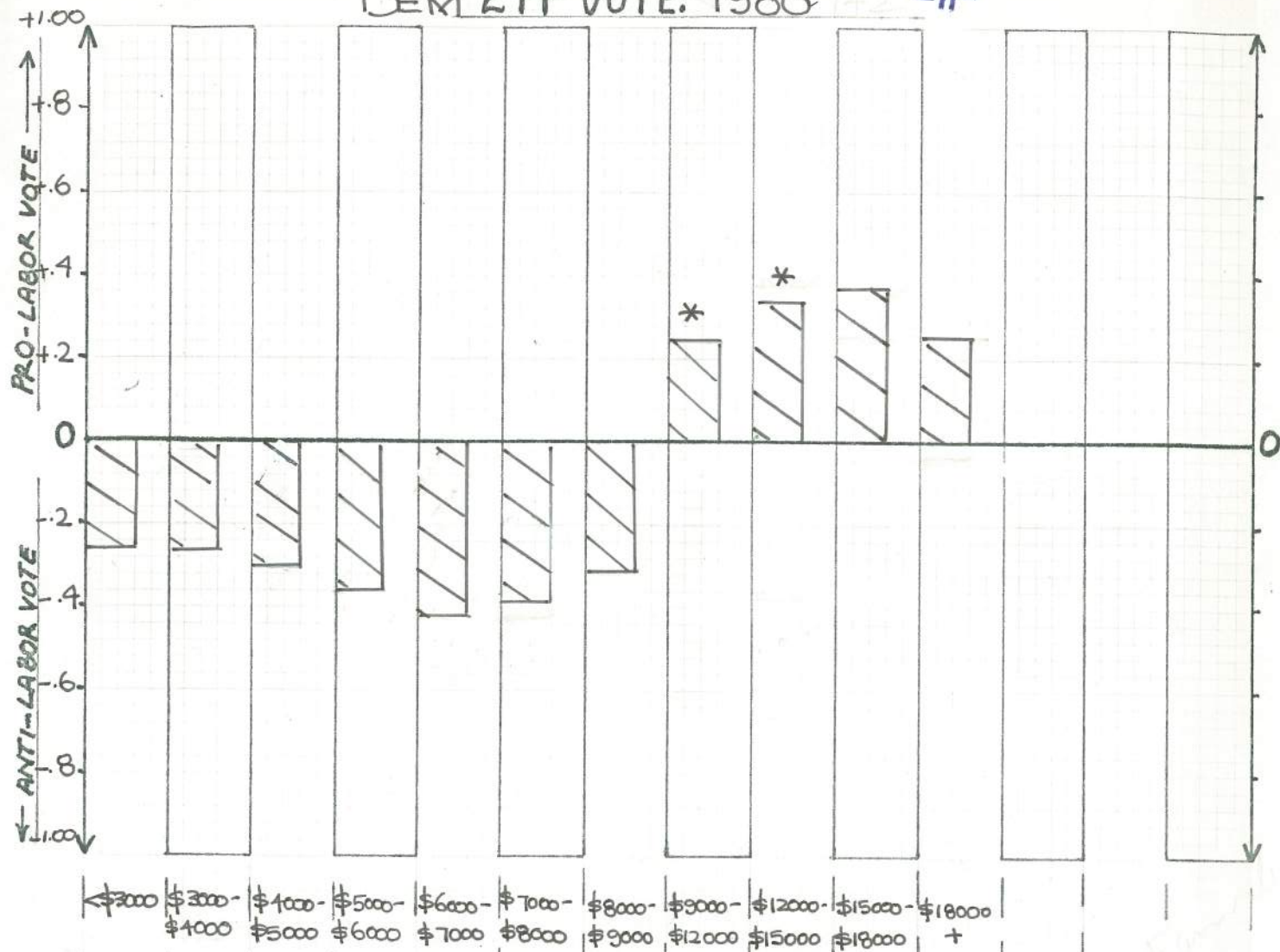
The upper-white-collar support for the Democrats is reflected in the positive correlations between the Democrat vote and families earning more than \$15000 a year.

Figure 5.5 shows that - despite its upper-white-collar/higher income bias, the Democrat voters tend to be employees, rather than employers or the self-employed. The negative correlation of .20 shown to the left of figure 5.5 is much weaker than the negative correlation of .65 for the 1980 ALP vote (figure 4.18, page 113, project four), but it is negative nonetheless.

We can conclude that the Australian Democrats weakened Australia's class-vote links to attract a base of support, but the new party certainly did not destroy or even fracture the employer/self employed base of the Liberal and National Country parties.

The Democrats in 1980 received neutral support from working women and from public servants.

The high Democrat vote from persons working less than 35 hours a week is a reflection of the (pro-Democrat) upper-white-collar component of this section of the workforce.



2PP SWING: * PRO-ALP

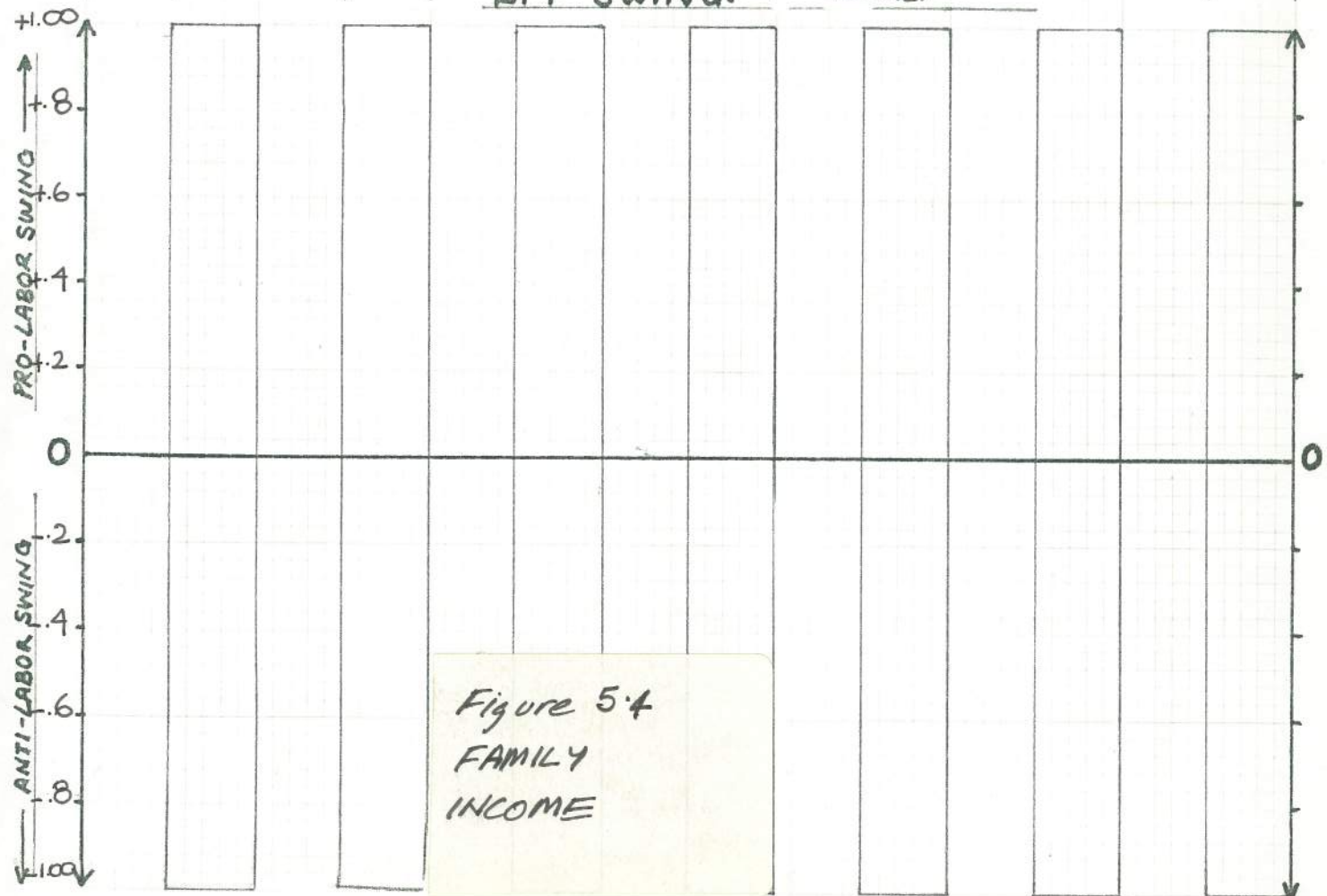
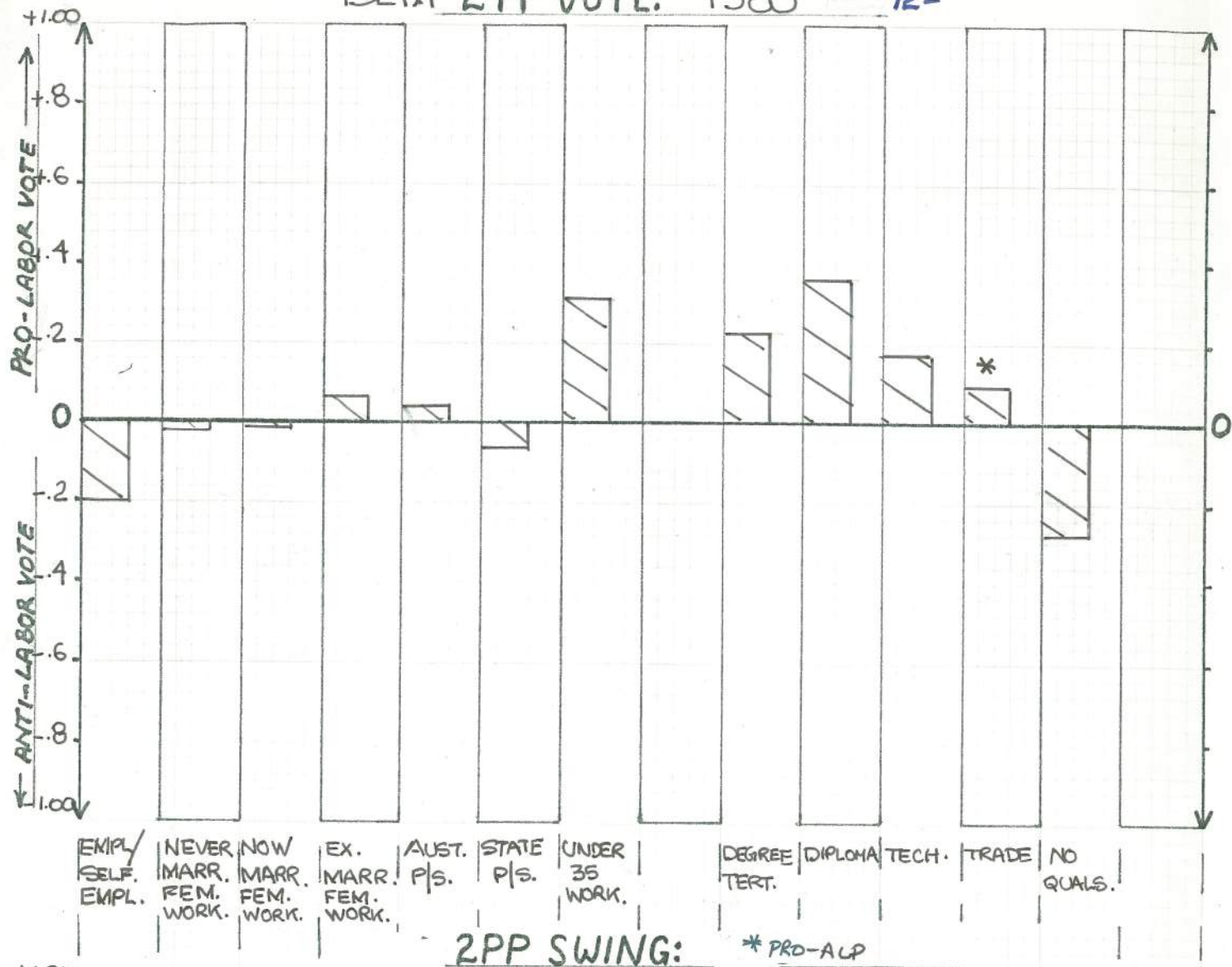


Figure 5.4
FAMILY
INCOME



2PP SWING:

* PRO-ALP

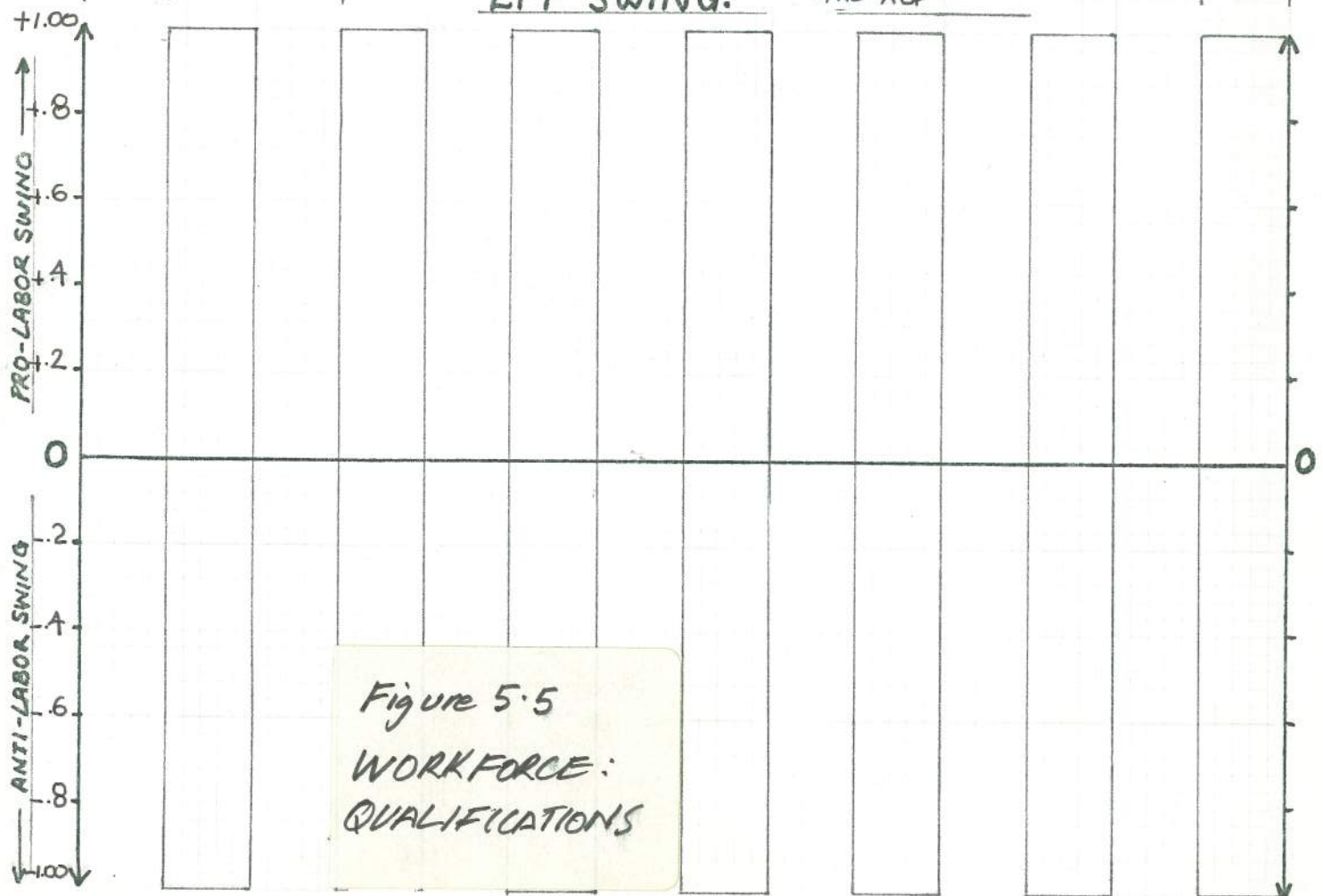


Figure 5.5
WORKFORCE:
QUALIFICATIONS

In terms of education the Democrats gained quite strong support from the group of diplomats.

I have mentioned elsewhere that this is a particularly obnoxious group for the ALP (with a negative correlation in 1980 of .59) so it is interesting to see here one of Labor's major areas of weakness coinciding with a major area of strength for the Democrats. I would argue along the lines of my introductory remarks, that the upper-white-collar diplomats would be the sort of persons "stolen" from the Liberals by the Democrats, who would have returned their second preference vote to non-Labor.

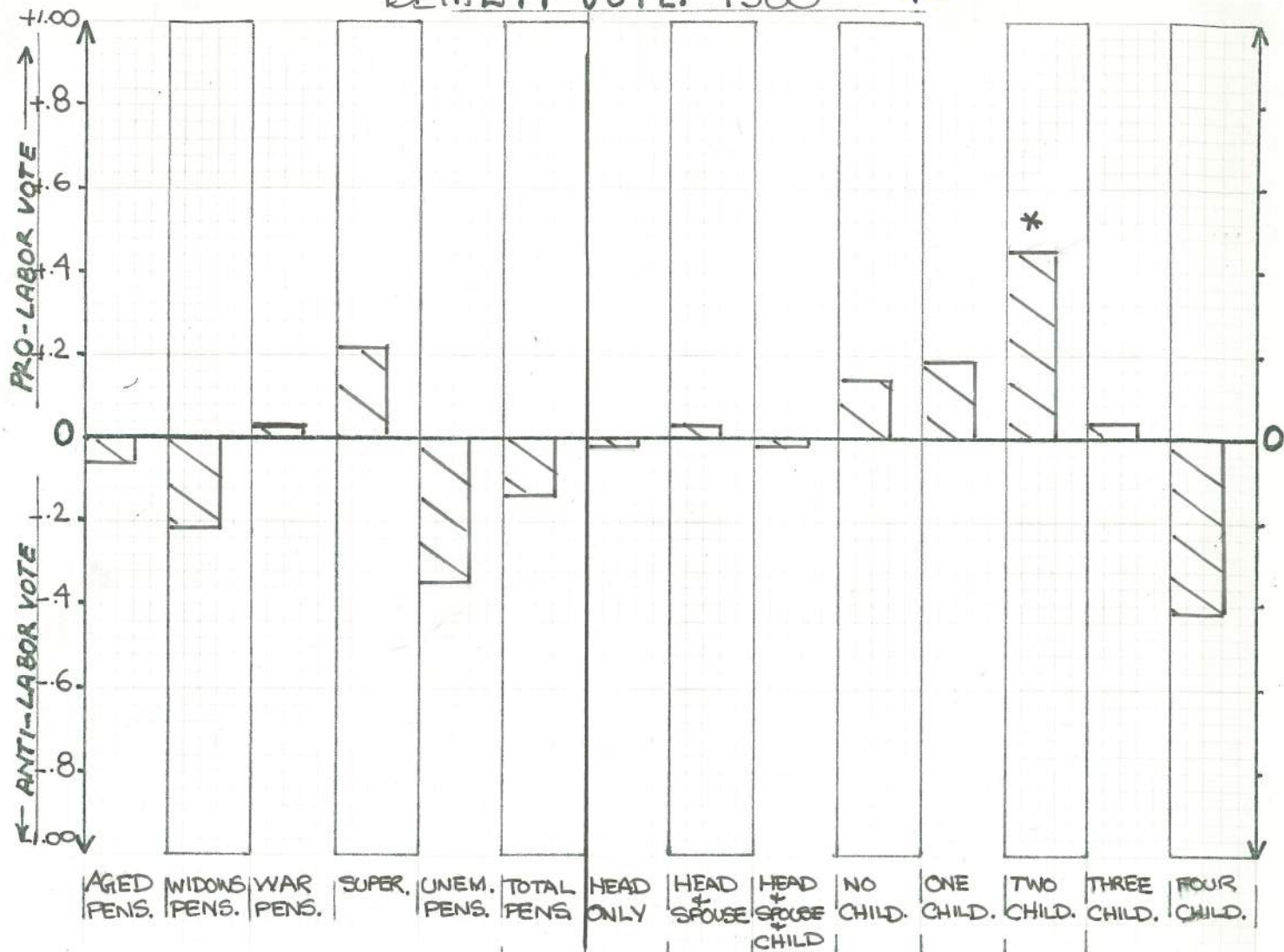
There is no evidence presented anywhere in the earlier projects to suggest that the ALP may have gained in 1980 by a preference leakage from this hostile anti-ALP group.

Figure 5.6 shows the Democrats in 1980 fared badly among all pension recipients (except superannuants).

The family results on the right-hand side of figure 5.6 show that both the ALP and the Democrats gained support in 1980 from two-child families. Family size and voting behaviour was discussed on pages 66 to 69 of project four, where it was stated that two-child families tend to be "...high income or very high income (\$9000 to \$18000) families with father a craftsman and mother a clerk..."(page 69).

So the overlap here between the Democrat and the ALP voters would appear to be due to marriages between blue-collar and white-collar workers to form two-income families in the higher wages bracket.

The two-income family nature of the Democrat voter is confirmed by figure 5.7 which shows a moderately strong correlation between minded pre-school age children and the 1980 Democrat vote.



2PP SWING: * PRO-ALP

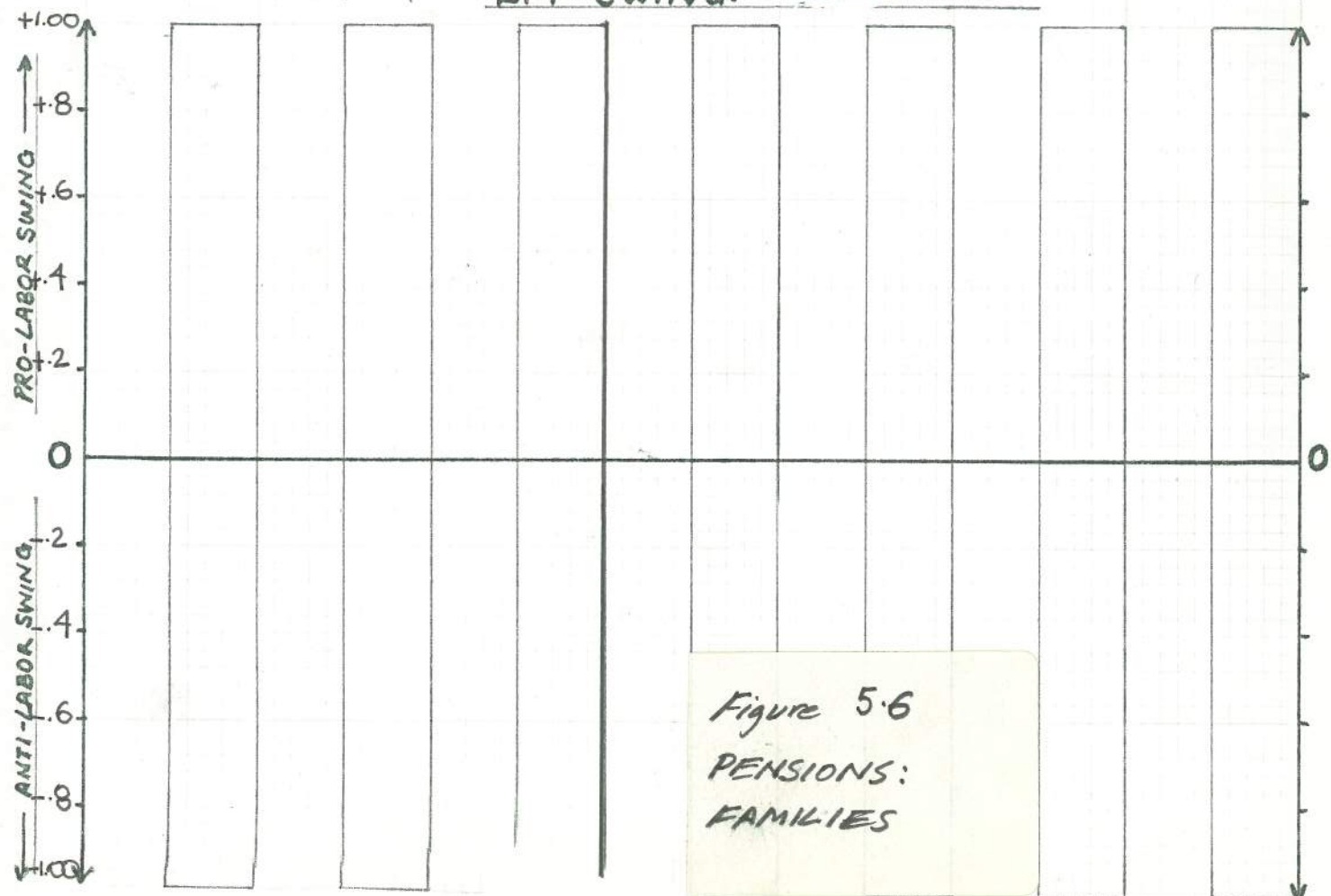
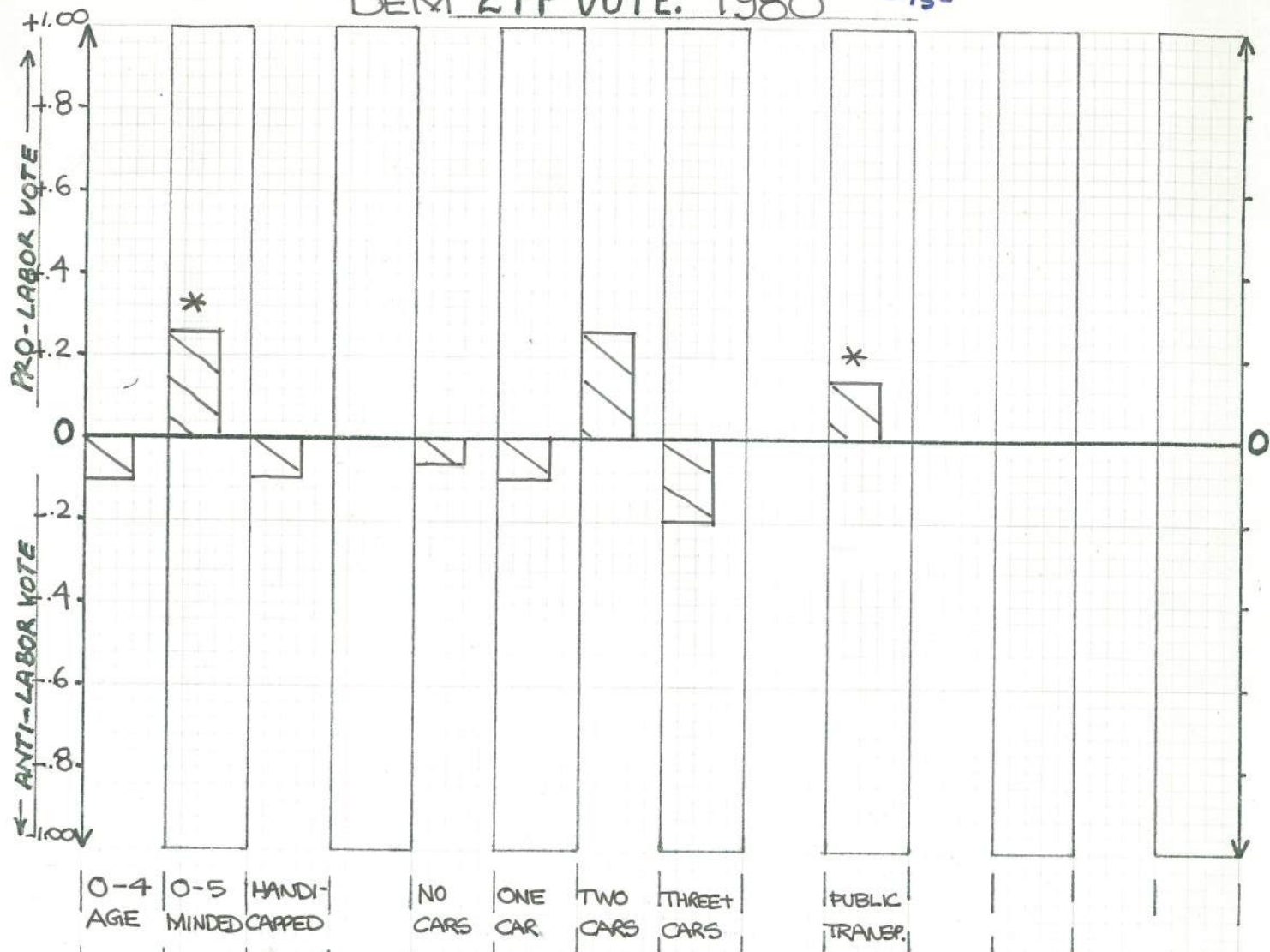


Figure 5.6
PENSIONS:
FAMILIES



2PP SWING: *PRO-ALP

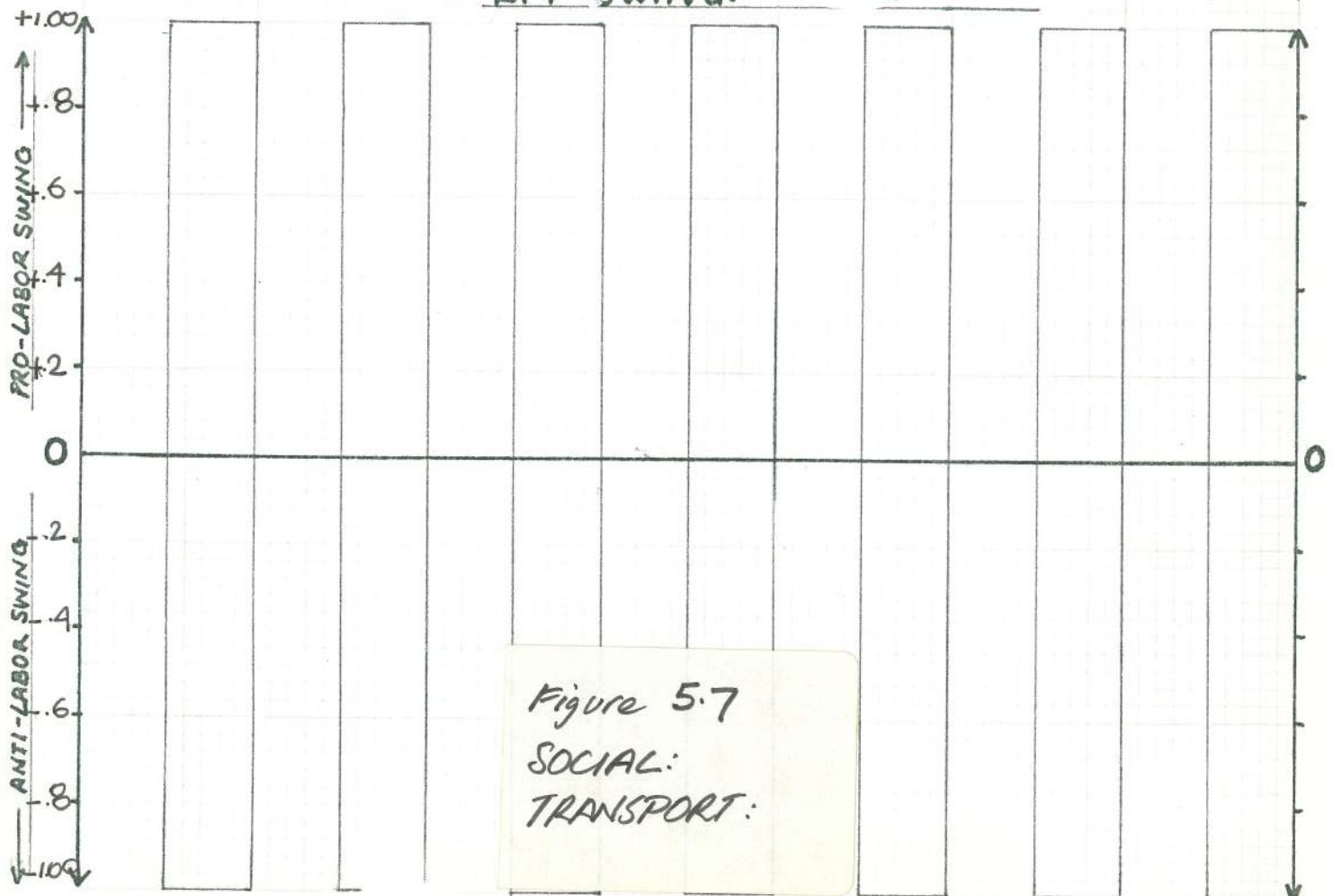


Figure 5.7
SOCIAL:
TRANSPORT:

Further supporting evidence for the two-income family Democrat thesis is provided by the positive transport correlations for the 1980 Democrat vote and two-car families, and the use of public transport (shown on figure 5.7).

Figure 5.8 shows the Australian Democrats in 1980 won strong support from all home-buyers (about one-third of all homes), especially those paying more than \$150 a month mortgage in 1976 (more than \$240 a month on today's CPI figures).

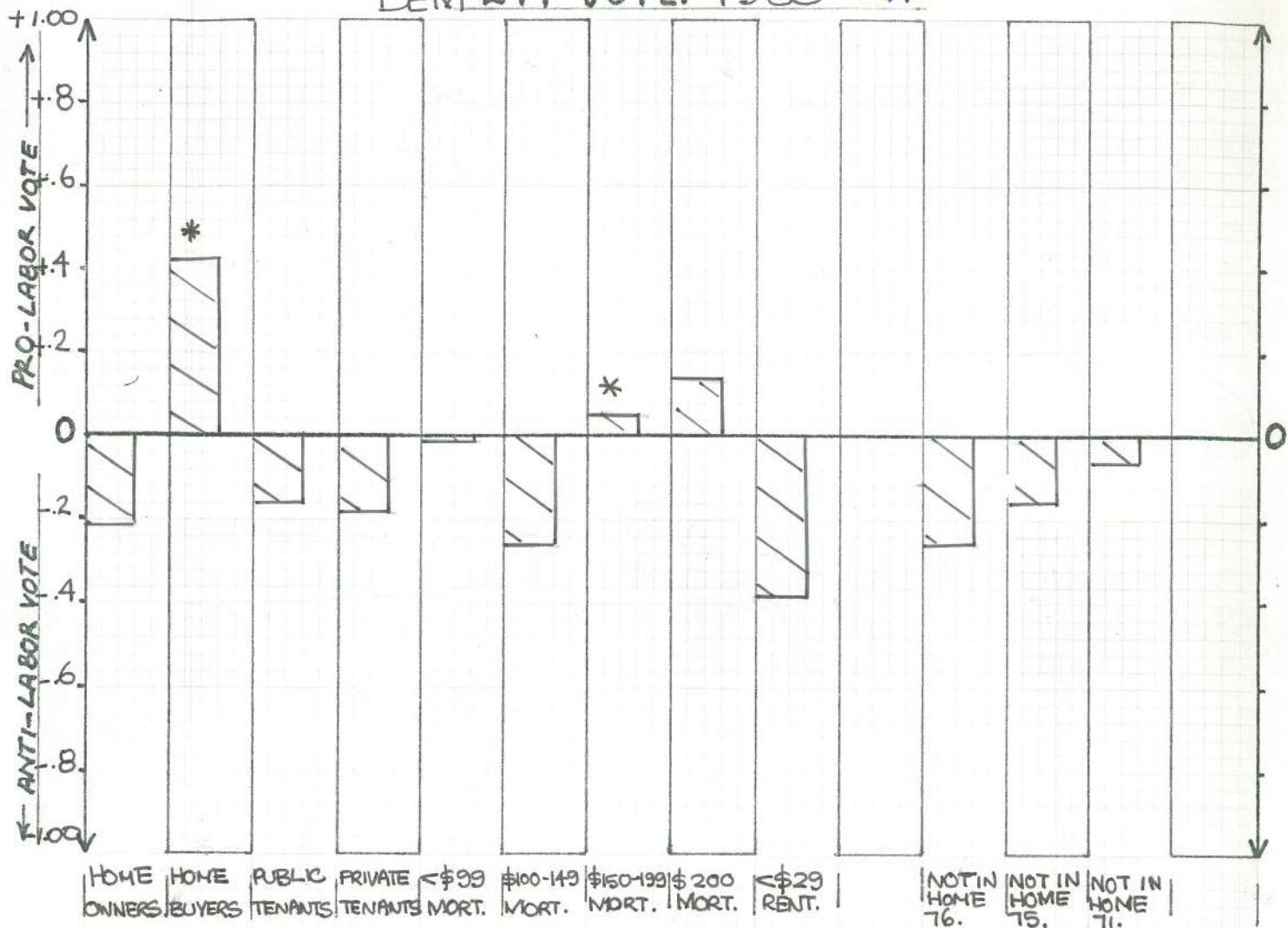
We can see from earlier "home" figures in project four that home-buyers swung marginally towards Labor in 1977-80 and provided a low level of support for Labor in both 1977 and 1980.

Home-buyers were also strongly linked with the key long-run volatile age groups.

So, home-buyers comprise a group which is now moderately pro-Labor; which is strongly linked with both the Australian Democrats and the long-run volatile voters; which swung marginally to Labor in 1977-80; which the evidence indicates supported Labor in 1969, 1972 and 1974, and which swung against Labor in 1974-75, and 1975-77.

For all of these reasons, the large home-buyers group - especially those in the middle mortgage ranges of \$100 to \$200 in 1976 (\$200 to \$320 on today's CPI figures) should comprise a key group for Labor in 1983.

Evidence presented later in the project will also indicate that this group is located disproportionately the key marginal seats Labor has to win in 1983 to form a Government.



2PP SWING: *PRO-ALP

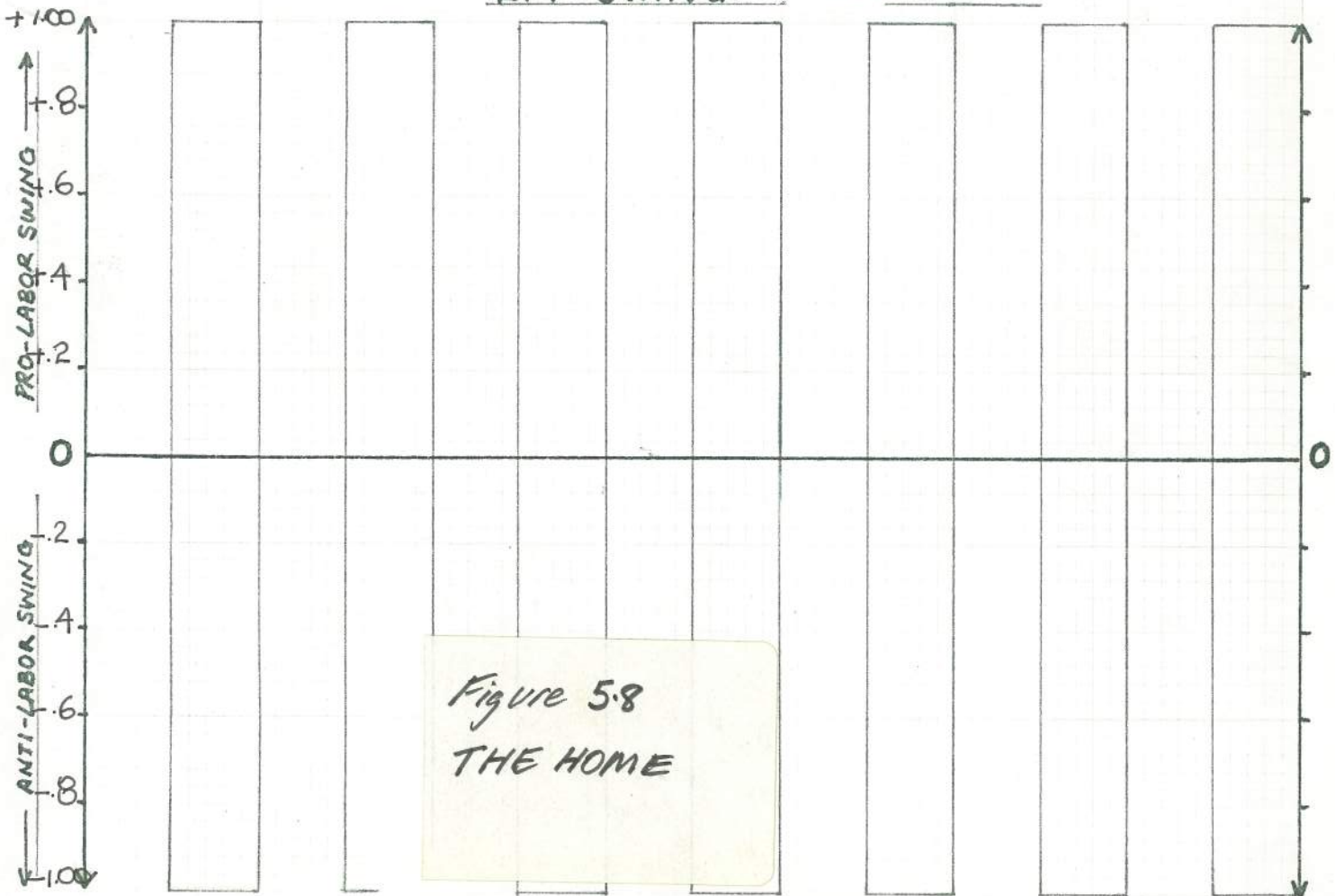


Figure 5.8
THE HOME

Figure 5.9 indicates that the overseas-born - especially the long-run volatile central-European and U.K. groups - supported the Democrats in 1980.

The right hand side of figure 5.9 also shows some overlap of the ALP and Democrat stereotypes for persons with no religious affiliations - a group which swung marginally to Labor in 1977-80.

A summary of the 1980 Democrat voter is presented below, with key areas of overlap with the 1980 Labor voters underlined.

AGE: Late forties.

OCCUPATION: Professional and Administrative workers (mainly from the males in these groups), Male sales workers, male and female clerical workers, female craftsmen.

INDIVIDUAL INCOME: Males earning \$8000 to \$9000, males earning \$9000 and above. Females earning \$7000 to \$8000, and females earning \$8000 to \$12000.

FAMILY INCOME: Families earning \$9000 to \$15000, and more than \$15000.

QUALIFICATIONS: Persons with degrees, diplomas, technicians certificates and trade qualifications.

PENSIONS: Superannuants.

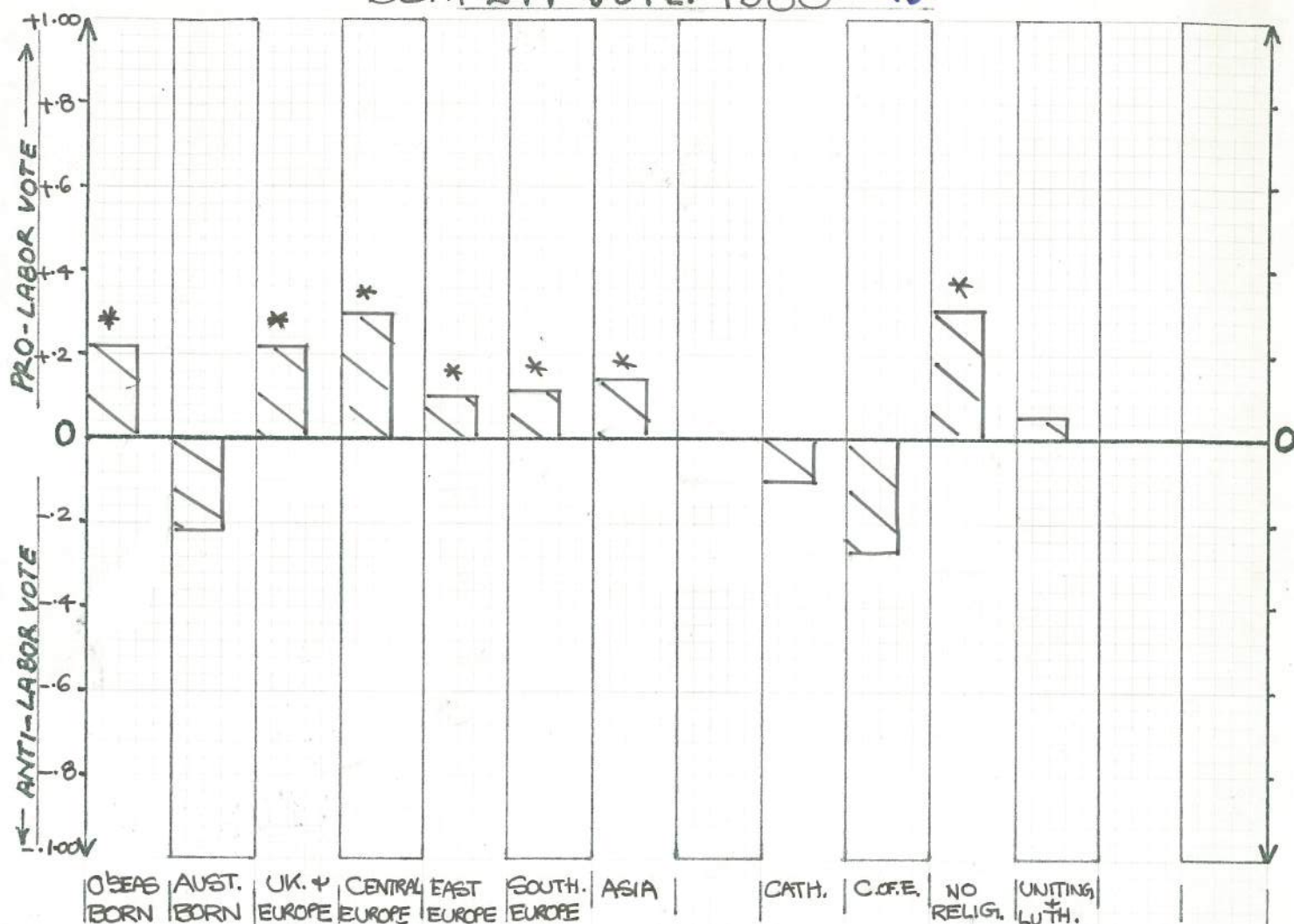
FAMILIES: Families with no children, one child, or two children. Families with minded children aged 0-5 years.

HOMES: Home buyers, paying monthly mortgages of \$150-\$199 and more than \$200.

TRANSPORT: Two-car families, public transport users.

ETHNICITY/RELIGION: All overseas-born groups, persons with no religion.

DEM 2 PP VOTE: 1980 -19-



2PP SWING: PRO-ALP



Figure 5.9
ETHNICITY:
RELIGION:

