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Concepts of Reality

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CONCEPTS OF REALITY

A Survey

Presented to

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by

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CRITERIA OF REALITY

Hypothesis

Beliefs concerning religion, God, ethics, and morals will be accepted from known sources without questioning, whereas the scientific ideas will be the result of thought, questioning, and empirical testing.

Purpose

The aim of this study is to indicate the sources of metaphysical beliefs among Ouachita Baptist University students in the areas of religion, God, morals, ethics, and science.

Method and Procedure

A questionnaire (see pages 2-3) was designed to find indications of metaphysical sources. The questionnaire is a portion of the instrument used in A Study of Modern Man by Dr. T. C. Kahn, and the portion used is from Dr. Kahn's own questionnaire entitled "Truth". The validity of the questionnaire has been tested by Dr. Kahn and his associates, and the portions of his questionnaire are used with Dr. Kahn's approval. Three sections of Dr. Kahn's questionnaire were given to a random sample of Ouachita students consisting of approximately equal numbers of freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The characteristics of subject major, age, grade-point average, etc. were not used as classifying characteristics in this study.

DIRECTIONS: Read the following statements which were designed to help you decide how you obtain your ideas about religion, right and wrong, science, other people, and yourself. Place a check in the box that best applies to you. You need not be exact since this questionnaire represents an estimate or guess. Circle the % which represents the extent that the statement applies to you. LOOK OVER EACH ENTIRE SECTION BEFORE ANSWERING.

EXAMPLE: John believed that most of his ideas on religion came from what others had said or written: from his priest, the Bible and friends. Therefore, in section I,a he put a check in the box "very much." He thought 70% of his beliefs came from this source so next he circled 70%. About 20% of his beliefs came from inner feelings (I,b). He thus checked some and circled 20% in I,b. Then he checked "little in I,f. Since his total was now 100% in this section, John went on to section 2, an d repeated the process. He completed the questionnaire this way.

SECTION I

My ideas of God and religious beliefs come from:

(a) What someone whom I trust has told me or has written.
__All: 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some: 20% 30% __Little 10% __None 0%

(b) What I feel in my heart is true without outside evidence
__All: 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __Little 10% __None 0%

(c) What seems reasonable, logical, what my common sense tells me.
__All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __Little 10% __None 0%

(d) What I can see, feel, or hear. What can be demonstrated or proven.
__All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __Little 10% __None 0%

(e) What seems to work out well in practice and suits my purpose.
__All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __Little 10% __None 0%

(f) What I do automatically, without thinking whether it is true or if I trust the person who said it.
__All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __Little 10% __None 0%

SECTION II

My ideas regarding right and wrong, my moral values and ethics come from:

(a) What someone I trust has told me or has written.
__All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __Little 10% __None 0%

(b) What I feel in my heart is true without outside evidence.
__All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __Little 10% __None 0%

(c) What seems reasonable, logical, what my common sense tells me.
__All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __Little 10% __None 0%

(d) What I can see, hear, or feel. What can be demonstrated or proven.
__All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __Little __None 0%

(e) What seems to work out well in practice and suits my purpose.
__All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __Little 10% __None 0%

(f) What I automatically do, without thinking whether it is true or if I trust the person who said it.
__All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __Little 10% __None 0%

SECTION III

My ideas of what science should be come from:

(a) What someone Itrust has told me or written.
___All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
___Some 20% 30% __Little 10% ___None 0%

(b) What I feel in my heart is true without outside evidence.
__All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __ Little 10% ___None 0%

(c) What seems reasonable, logical what my common sense tells me.
__All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __Little 10% ___None 0%

(d) What I can see, feel, or hear. What can be demonstrated or proven.
___All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
___Some 20% 30% __ Little 10% __None 0%

(e) What seems to work out in practice and suits my purpose.
___All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __Much 40% 50% 60%
____Some 20% 30% __Little 10% ___None 0%

(f) What I do automatically, without thinking whether it is true or if I trust the person who said it.
__All 100% __Very much 70% 80% 90% __ Much 40% 50% 60%
__Some 20% 30% __Little 10% __None 0%

Analysis of Data

The six alternatives from which data is gathered are indicators of six philosophical viewpoints from which to make decisions within the fields indicated. These viewpoints and corresponding alternative are as follows: (1) Authoritarianism is blind submission to someone or something as the authority on some subject. Alternative A would indicate this belief. (2) The next view is that of the intuitionists who believe in direct knowledge without rationalization or thought process. This concept is indicated by a response to alternative B. (3) The choice of alternative C would indicate rationalism which gains its ideas from reason and thought. (4) Empiricism is the use of observation and experience and is represented by the choice of alternative D. (5) The use of what is practical or pragmatism is the school of thought indicated by alternative E. (6) A structuralist is concerned about the construction of ideas and systems and is not concerned primarily with the truth value nor the practical values of the idea. The structuralist would most likely select alternative F as his answer. These are the philosophies behind the alternatives, and the consideration of how the data is analyzed must now be viewed.

The method of grading the questionnaires was a percentage basis. Each response was recorded on a total sheet in the appropriate category and then the total number of responses were compared with the total number of possible responses to determine the percentage of response. Since each question has a provision

for a response of "None" (0%), then each person taking the questionnaire is responding to each question; therefore, the total number (43) of those taking the test will be the basis for determining the percentages. The total number of responses within each category is thus divided by 43 to find the percentage within that classification. These percentages are then recorded on percentage tables (see tables I-III, pages 15-17) and are used as the basis for comparison of the sources of metaphysical beliefs. For an example, the response Section I, alternative D, classification of Little (see Table I, page 15) is 16.3%. To reach this figure, the number of responses (7) is divided by the total possibility of responses (43) as follows:

$$\frac{7}{43} = 16.28\% \text{ or } 16.3\% \text{ to the nearest tenth}$$

Thus this figure is entered as the precentage of response for the proper category. All of the other percentages were also compiled in this way. These results are then graphed (see graphs I-VI, pages 18-23), and the alternatives and sections were compared from the graphs. The comparison and analysis of this data can be seen below.

The authoritarian view seems to have rather wide support in all areas of this study with 16.3% gaining 80% of their religious beliefs from known authorities, 18.6% stating that 50% of their moral concepts are of authoritarian origins, and 11.6% saying that 70% of their scientific concepts are from

different authorities. Another figure supporting authoritarianism is the 14% who said 70% of their religious concepts were from established sources. This alternative is also one of the few areas where a percentage states that all (100%) of their beliefs comes from one area. In this instance, 4.7% stated that all their scientific views came from what someone has said or written; moreover, 2.3% stated that 90% of their morals came from the same source, 4.7% say 80% of their moral concepts are from outside authorities, and 9.3% view authority as the source of 80% of their scientific beliefs. Looking at the graphs, one sees far more support of the Very much category on the authoritarian graph (see graph I, page 18) than any other graphs (see graphs II-VI, pages 18-23). The highest point (highest means of support percentage wise) for the 50% category is found on the authoritarian alternative graph. There several possible explanations for this wide support of authoritarianism. First, the survey was taken in the Bible Belt of our nation, and in this section of the country, the Bible is looked upon as the authority to all the questions of life. Many students checked alternative A and then wrote "The Bible" immediately following the question. The Bible is also seen as the source of "true ethics and morality" as one student stated in Section II of his questionnaire. A second possible explanation to the question of authority is the traditions of the southern part of our United States. The South

has traditionally been a rural society with authoritarian familism as one of its basic elements. The family has been primarily an economic unit with the father as the source of all decision making. Although this emphasis is on the wane, it still carries over into present philosophies. Another element is the feeling of inadequacy in scientific fields. The small amount of technology and industry has been cited by many sociologists for the South's traditional thoughts concerning science. One student stated, "I must accept the scientific knowledge of others because my knowledge of scientific is so limited. Thus this feeling concerning science could be a possible explanation for the major role of authority in science."

Alternative B seems to be one of the major sources of religious and moral beliefs, but it is one of the least acceptable means within the field of science. 2.3% say that 100% of their religious beliefs are intuitive in origin, 2.3% state that 80% of their religious concepts are from the same origin, 7% see the origin of religious beliefs to be 70% intuitive, and 4.7% view intuition as the means of 60% of their religious concepts. In ethics and morality, 4.7% place alternative B as the only (100%) source of ethical decisions, another 4.7% place the percentage at 80%, 9.3% see this source as the source for 70% of their ethical concepts, and 27.8% (one of the larger percentages) use intuition in 20% of their ethical considerations.

The scientific beliefs are where the intuitive method loses its appeal, for none of those polled indicated use of the intuitive more than 50%. A small portion (2.3%) use the intuitive for 50% of their beliefs about science, none indicated the use of 40%, 2.3% indicated a 30% use, and 4.7% indicated a 20% use. Although 23.3% stated a 20% use of the elements of intuition, a high indication (67.4%) of no use (0%) was also present. Thus, a great majority use no intuition at all in the consideration of science. There are two possible explanations concerning the results related to alternative B. First, the nature of science would lead one to an objective view of natural science, whereas the nature of United States' ethics, morality, religion, and concepts of God will tend towards the subjective. Scientific evidence is based upon the methodology of an objective scientist, while the ethics and concepts of God are based upon a subjective relationship with God. A second possibility is that our educational system teaches science as objective and morality as the subjective knowledge of the individual.

Rationalism is not used extensively in the field of religious conceptualization, nor does the method have much more appeal in the area of ethical formulation. The largest figures are 14% who use this method 20%, and 27.8% who use the method only 10%. The greatest factor in the use of reason in religion is found in the 41.9% who use this method none (0%) at all. This

negative factor is the strongest indication that rationalism is generally rejected in the formulation of religious concepts and in the formulation of concepts of God. The nature of a Protestant tradition of salvation by faith is the possible explanation here.

In the ethical considerations, the appeal to rationalistic elements is rather bankrupt itself for only 2.3% use any of the precentages above 50%. Of the percentages the highest figures are in the 30%, 20%, and 10% range and these percentages listed respectively are 16.3%, 23.3%, and 14.0%. There is also a high negative factor, for 30.1% never(0%) use rationalism as a method of ethical formulation.

Rationalism is much more a factor in the field of science; however, one does not find extensive support for rationalism in the scientific field. 2.3% use the method for 80% of their scientific beliefs, 9.3% use the method 50%, 4.7 use it 40%, 18.6% use the method 30%, 21% is the percent for 20%, and 11.6% use the means 10%. There is also a large negative factor in the use of rationalism in scientific formulation. This factor is 32.9% who never (0%) use rational elements in scientific inquiry. Thus the use of the rational is found more in the field of science and could be considered a greater factor except for the large percentage of individuals who never use this method.

Alternative D, empiricism, is the next to be considered in relation to the formulation of basic concepts. Religious use of empiricism is not great as is shown by the low acceptance of the concept. None (0%) use empiricism in the 70% - 100% categories, and rather small percentages appear in the 10%-60% classifications. The largest percentage of individuals fall in the 10% category (excluding 0% element). One also sees a percentage of 62.8% in the "None" column which indicates a majority have completely rejected empiricism in their religious concepts. The situation is almost the same in the relation between empiricism and ethical decision-making. The highest category supported is 50% (Much), and it is indicated by only 2.3%. Likewise is found a percentage (65.1%) which completely rejects any form or use of empiricism.

The area of scientific concepts seem to be the result of much empirical considerations. 4.7% of the individuals state that 100% of their science beliefs are the result of empirical evidence, another 4.7% see empirical evidence as the source of 80% of their scientific concepts, and still another 4.7% see 70% of their science as being from empirical reflection. One 9.3% sees the value of empiricism in terms of 60% of the scientific beliefs, and another 9.3% view 50% of their concepts of science as originating in empirical evidence. Also there is a smaller percentage who reject empiricism than in the ethical and religious concepts. Only 22.9% expressed no use of

empiricism in scientific inquiry. Thus, the evidence would indicate empiricism is a rather valid tool of forming scientific concepts.

About all that can be said about alternatives E and F is that there few pragmatists and structuralists within the sample.. This factor can be observed by looking at graphs V and VI (see pages 22 and 23). All three areas agree upon not using pragmatism, or structuralism. Religious concept forming rejects categories 50% - 100% completely. in relation to pragmatic considerations. Categories 10% - 40% are rejected or consists of low percentages, and 72.1% never use elements of pragmatism in religious concepts. The field of ethical and moral considerations presents no use of pragmatism in categories 40% - 100%. There are 81.4% of those polled who state they never use pragmatism in ethics. The results in science are also against the use of pragmatism in natural science. 76.6% also state that they never mix science and pragmatism, Thus pragmatism seems to be ruled out as a means of learing.

If the attitudes towards pragmatism are negative, the attitudes toward the structuralism of alternative F are even more negative. One has only to look at graph VI (see page 23) to notice the plotting of points along the 0 axis and see rejection of this concept of beliefs. The high percentages in the "None" category show the rejection of structural considerations.

These percentages are as follows: religion - 86%, ethics - 74.4%, and science - 93.0%. Therefore, structuralism has been rejected through the interpretation of percentages and the plotting of points on a graph.

In addition to the above data analysis, there are several points of difference and comparison between the religious, ethical, and scientific sources (see graphs I-IV, pages 18-23). The main trend that can be observed is that there are very few real wide gaps among the three sources measured. This indicates that most beliefs from all three areas are not the product of any one source. A rather high correlation might also be present among the religious, ethical, and scientific beliefs. Probably the greatest correlation can be seen among the results of pragmatism and structuralism (see graphs V-VI, pages 22-23). The rejection of these two methods is represented by curves that are almost parallel and at certain points run together.

Another source of close correlation is in the graph of rationalism (see graph III, page 20). There is a high degree of correspondence between the curves of the ethical and scientific, and a lesser correspondence among all three of the areas. A final note of comparison is the category of "None" where there is more objection to reason in religious concepts than in the ethical or scientific fields. The fact that a great opposition

is found in the scientific field in relation to the use of rationalism is also an interesting feature. A possible explanation is found in the comment of one student who stated, "I can't take a rational view, because scientific advancements happen too fast for me to do so." Other comments indicated a general feeling of inadequacy in the scientific field and thus a feeling of not being capable of rational decisions within the scientific field. The factors related to the rational implications would tend to reject the hypothesis of this study.

Another intreesting point of comparison is the use of intuitionism in the process of concept formulation (see graph II, page 19). Although there is not overwhelming support for this method in the fields of ethics and religion, there is a high percentage of rejection in the field of science. 67.4% say they never use intuition in the process of scientific concept formulation. Another interesting area of comparison is the correspondence between th curves of the religious and ethical considerations. The entire curves run rather close together and are the same in the 90%, 30%, and 0% categories indicating a possible common source of concept formulation.

Three elements could be indicated by the results of authoritarianism (see graph I, page 18). First, the highest point of acceptance is found in the ethical considerations where 18.6% use authoritarianism in 50% of their ethical concepts.

A second fact is that the highest area of rejection of authoritarianism is in the field of science where 20.8% state they never use (0%) authoritarianism in the scientific field. One final consideration is that the area of religion is one of the highest elements using authoritarianism (16.3% use authority 80%, and 14% use authority 70%); moreover, religion has the lowest percentage of rejection in the category of authority (4.5% are in the classification of 0%). The possible explanation is again found in the acceptance of the Bible as the authority of religious teaching (see above, page 6).

In regards to empirical testing, the scientific considerations show greater uses that the fields of religion and ethics. There are 4.7% who state that empiricism is the basis of all (100%) of their scientific beliefs. The graph shows acceptance of empiricism in all the categories except the 90% classification. In the field of religion, there is no acceptance of the use of empiricism until 60% is reached, and ethical considerations reject empiricism until reaching the 50% category. The category of "None" likewise shows more use of empiricism in science. Only 22.9% reject empiricism completely in the sciences. The reason could be the nature of science as compared to the nature of ethics or the nature of religion. The nature of science is based upon empirical evidence, the nature of religion is faith, and the nature of morality are cultural standards.

TABLE I

PERCENTAGES FOR SECTION I

	All	Very much			Much			Some		Little	None
	100%	90%	80%	70%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	0%
A	0	0	16.3	14	16.3	7	11.6	7	16.3	7.2	4.5
B	2.3	0	2.3	7	4.7	0	14	11.6	18.6	27.8	14
C	0	0	2.3	0	0	0	7	7	14	27.8	41.9
D	0	0	0	0	2.3	2.3	4.7	2.3	9.3	16.3	62.8
E	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.3	0	2.3	23.3	72.1
F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	86

TABLE II

PERCENTAGES FOR SECTION II

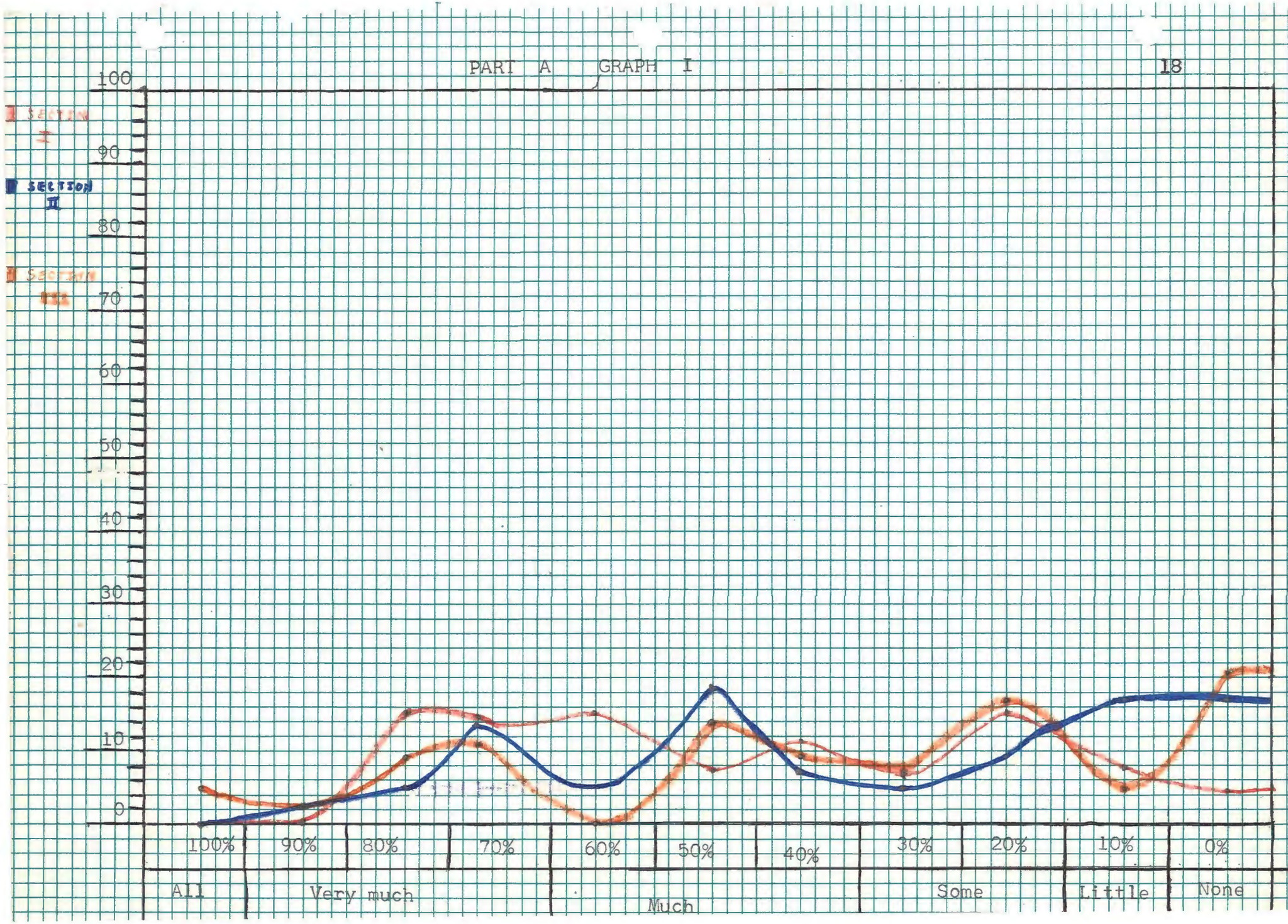
	All	Very much			Much			Some		Little	None
	100%	90%	80%	70%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	0%
A	0	2.3	4.7	14	4.7	18.6	7.0	4.7	9.3	17.4	17.3
B	4.7	0	4.7	9.3	0	7.0	9.3	11.6	27.8	11.6	14.0
C	0	2.3	0	0	0	4.7	9.3	16.3	23.3	14	30.1
D	0	0	0	0	0	2.3	0	7.0	7.0	18.6	65.1
E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.3	7.0	9.3	81.4
F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.3	0	23.3	74.4

TABLE III

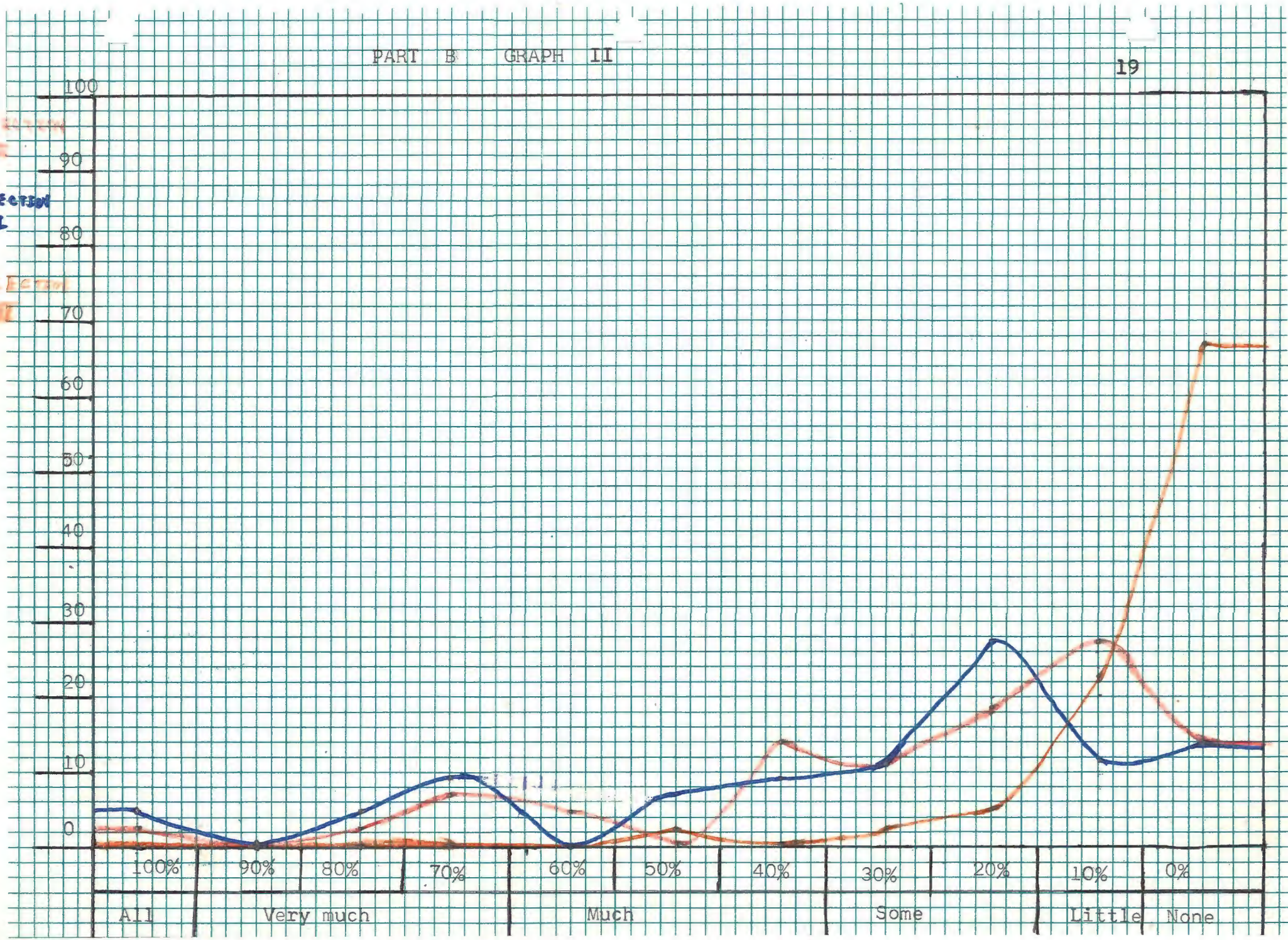
PERCENTAGES FOR SECTION III

	All	Very much			Much			Some		Little	None
	100%	90%	80%	70%	60%	50%	40%	30%	20%	10%	0%
A	4.7	2.3	9.3	11.6	0	14.0	9.3	7.0	16.3	4.7	20.8
B	0	0	0	0	0	2.3	0	2.3	4.7	23.3	67.4
C	0	0	2.3	0	0	9.3	4.7	18.6	21.	11.6	32.9
D	4.7	0	4.7	4.7	9.3	9.3	4.7	4.7	21	14.0	22.9
E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.7	4.7	14.0	76.6
F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.3	0	4.7	93.0

PART A GRAPH I

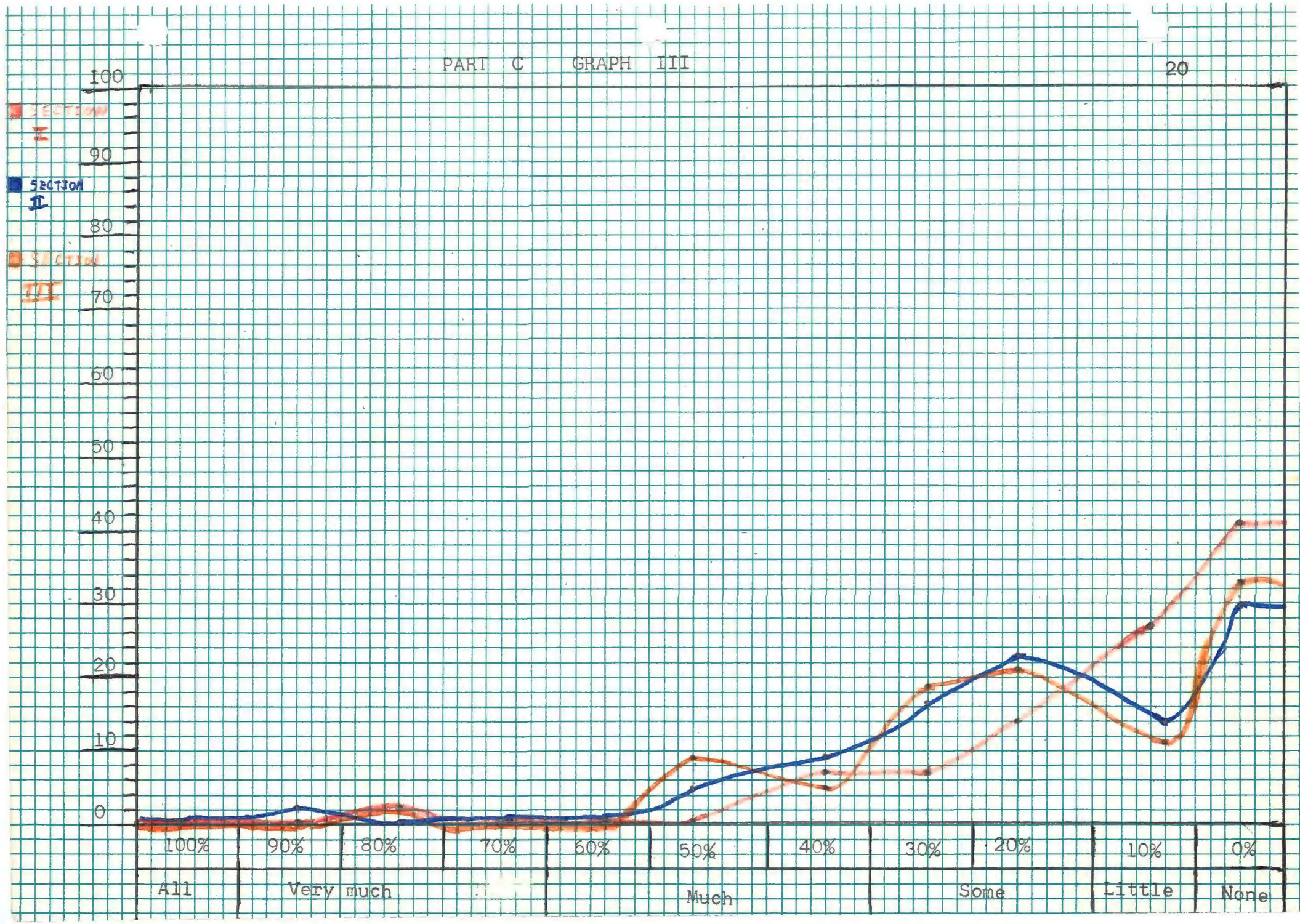


PART B GRAPH II

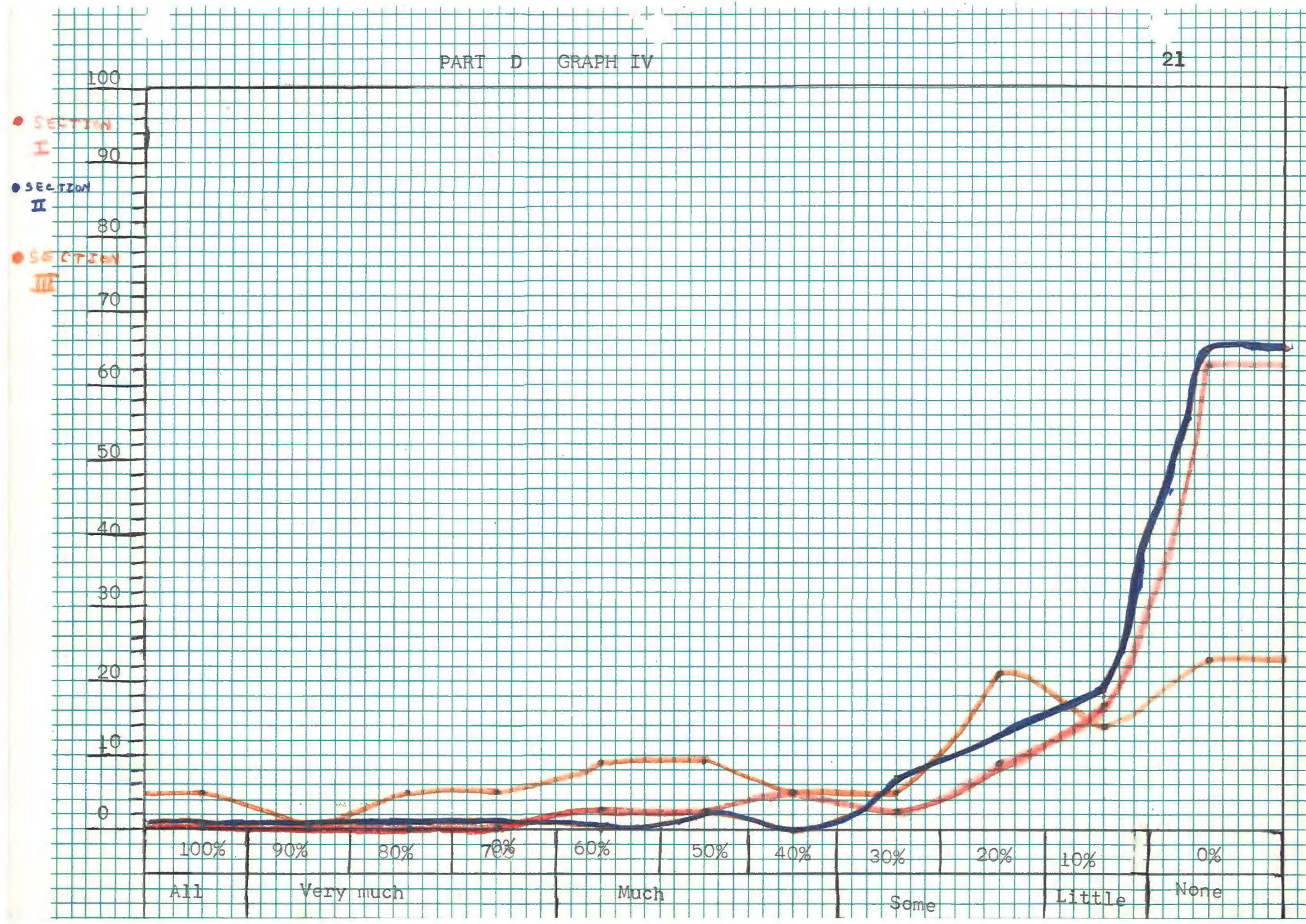


PART C GRAPH III

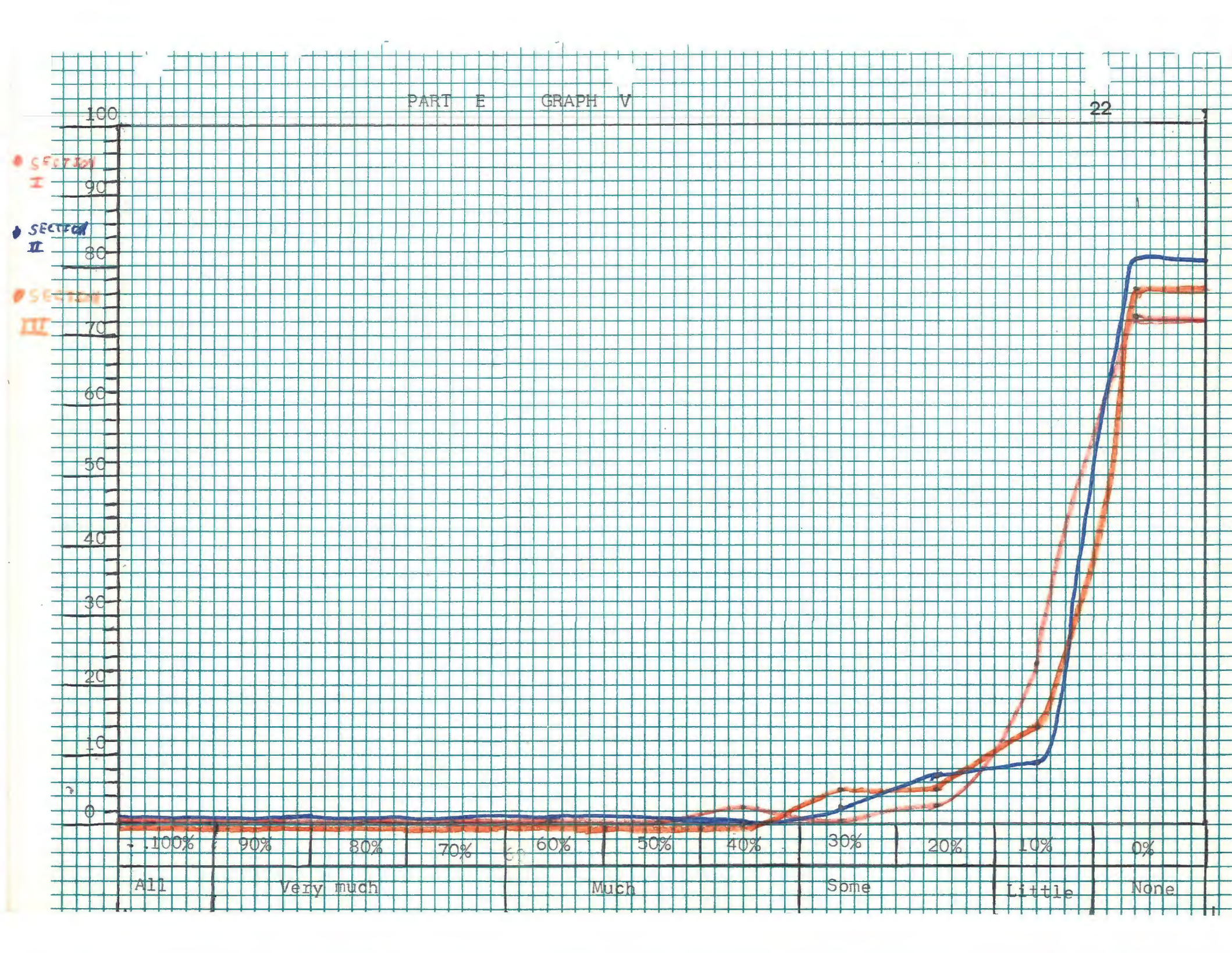
20



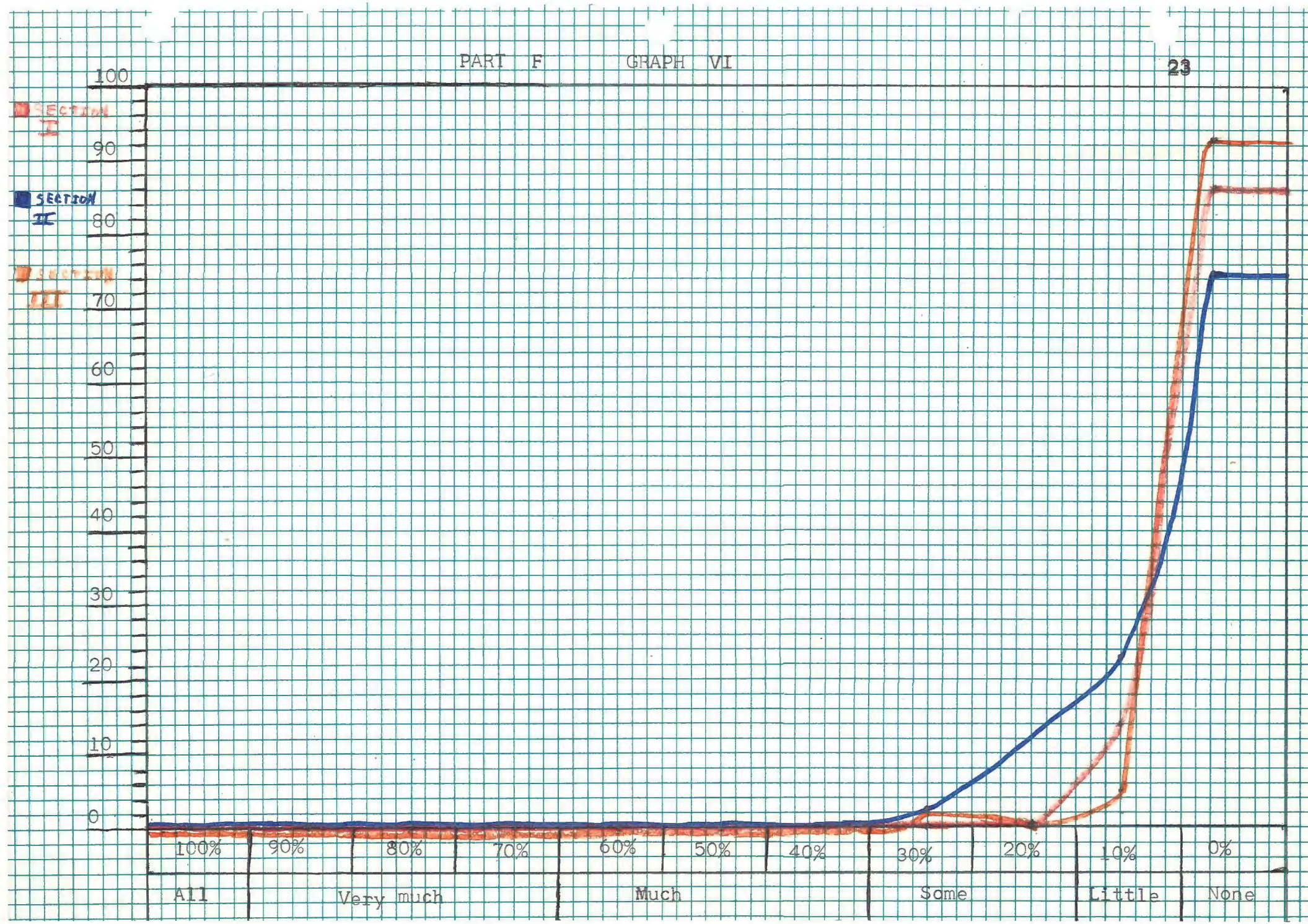
PART D GRAPH IV



PART E GRAPH V



PART F GRAPH VI



Conclusions

(1) The first conclusion is in regard to the hypothesis which stated, "Beliefs concerning religion, God, ethics, and morals will be accepted automatically from known sources without questioning, whereas the scientific ideas will be the result of thought, questioning, and empirical testing." Generally, the data supports this hypothesis. Concepts of God stem most from authoritarianism with intuitionism as the second major source of beliefs. A large part of ethical decisions are derived from authoritarianism and intuitionism. By contrast, scientific considerations were the leading elements in the area of empiricism. The major element which would not support this hypothesis is the data related to rationalism. In the area of rationalism, science is the leading subject, but science is also the subject with a rather high rejection rate (32.9% in the 0% area).

(2) There is not any single source which supplies the bulk of concepts. The graphs reveal a variety of sources as responsible for each area of concepts.

(3) Little use is made of pragmatism and structuralism in the formulation of basic principles.

(4) Some of the ideas of scientific inquiry were the result of authotitarianism.

(5) The results of this study should be considered as indica- of possible trends and not as conclusive. For example, some of the evidence seems to support the hypothesis while other evidence seems to reject the hypothesis. More study would make the study more conclusive.

(6) There is a need for considerably more study in the area of formulation of metaphysical concepts. Many questions have been raised but are unanswered by this study.