25 Years after Chacmool 1989: Investigating Archaeologists' Engagement with Feminist Theory through Textual Macroanalysis

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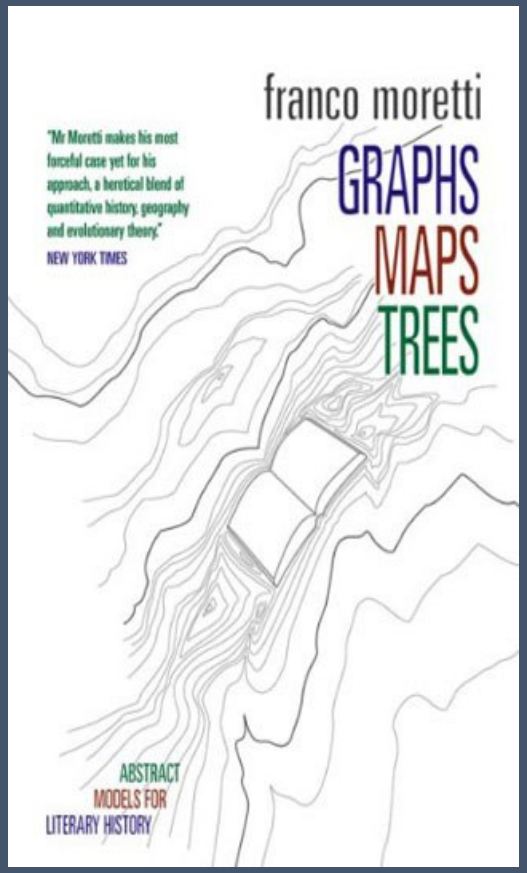
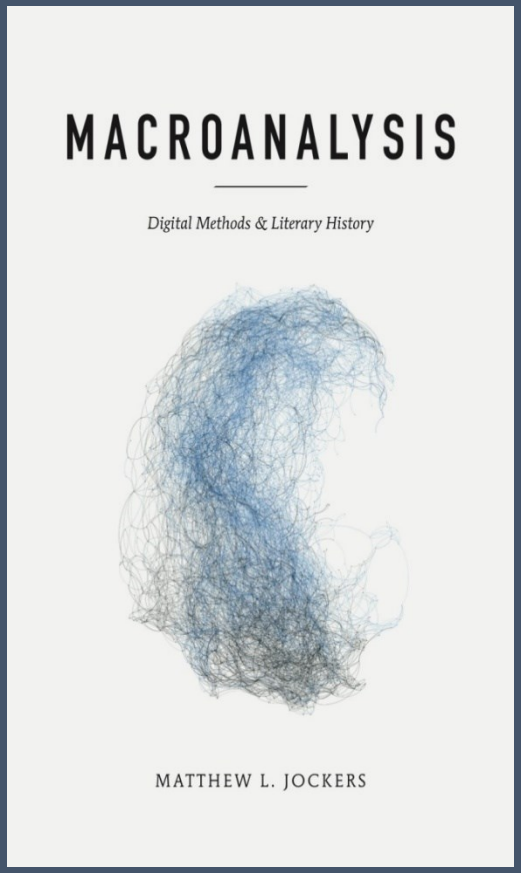
What is Textual Macroanalysis?





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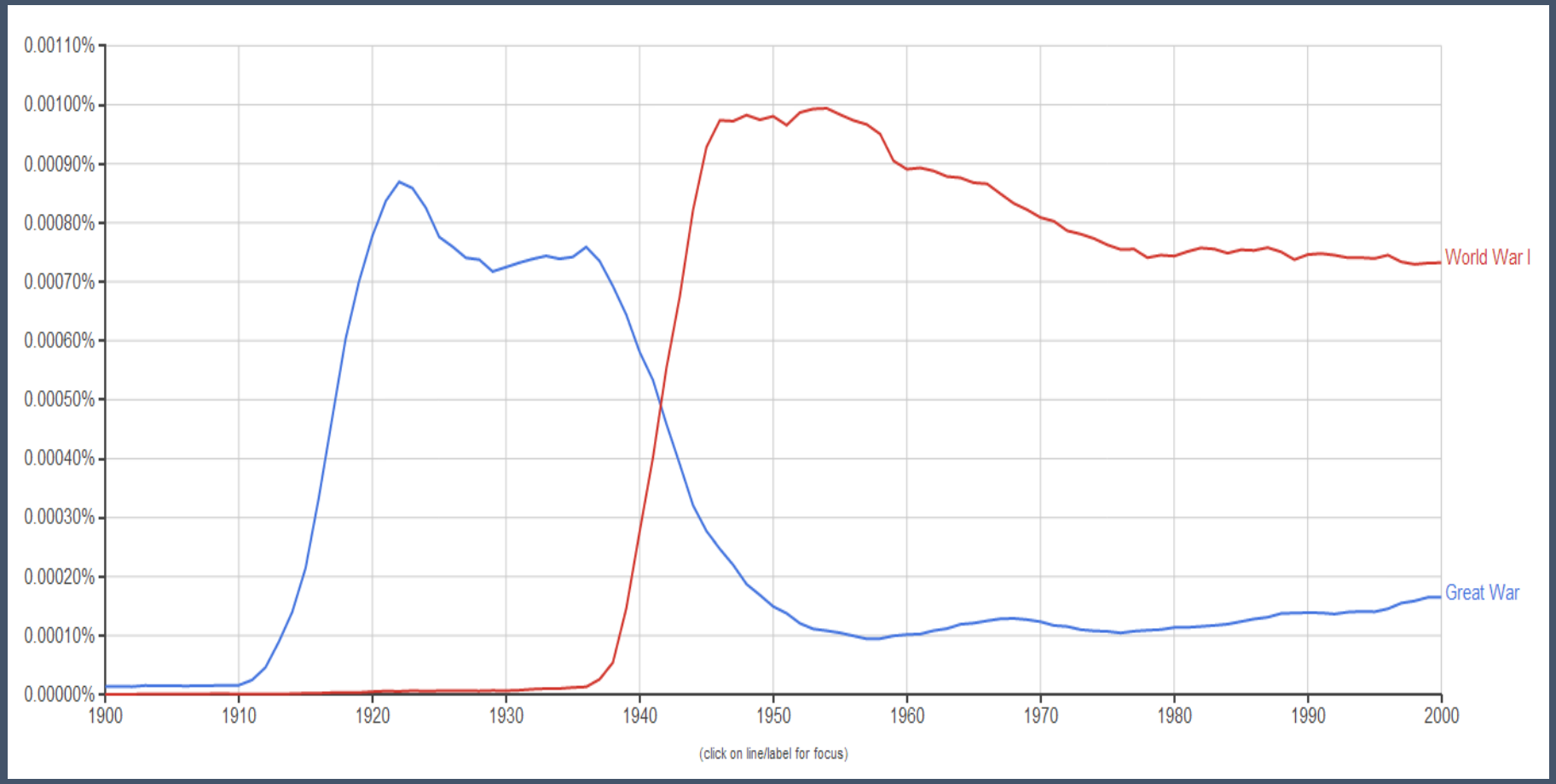
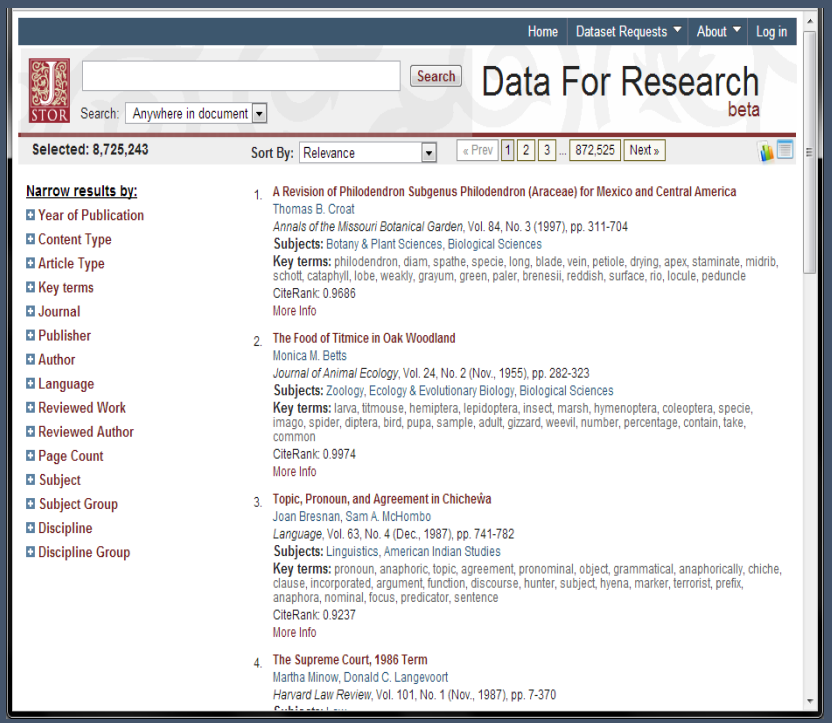


books.google.com/ngrams

How can we use textual macroanalysis in archaeology?

The JSTORr Package and R



dfr.jstor.org

github.com/benmarwick/JSTORr

A Brief Case Study:
Gender Research and the Role of Feminist Theory

Hanen and Kelley (1992)

- 1989 “The Archaeology of Gender” Chacmool Conference
- “Feminism / feminist” in <20% of abstracts

Geller (2009)

- 2004 “Que(e)rying Archaeology” Conference
- “Feminism / feminist” in 4% of abstracts
- 16% of presentations focused on divisions of labor

A Brief Case Study:
Gender Research and the Role of Feminist Theory

Are the patterns identified by these quantitative studies apparent in the work of archaeologists more broadly?

A Brief Case Study:
Gender Research and the Role of Feminist Theory

1) “Gender” would be mentioned in more articles and with a higher relative frequency than “feminism / feminist” through time

2) Words associated with key feminist concepts would not be highly correlated with “gender” through time

Results

Number of articles containing
Gender: 364
Feminist: 81
Feminism: 29

Total articles: 5688

Total word count:
Gender: 2741
Feminist: 488
Feminism: 103

“Feminist scholars point to the androcentric biases of the ethnographic genre, and archaeologists who employ these studies…commonly project these biases into the past” (Stahl 1993:250)

“Feminist theory has…turned our gaze inward, to be self-reflexive about how gender bias and a lack of diversity has affected the work that archaeologists produce” (Wilkie and Hayes 2006:253)

“while postprocessualism has opened up a space for an archaeology of gender, postprocessualism may not be sustainable as a critique or approach without a feminist archaeology” (Little 1994:540-541)

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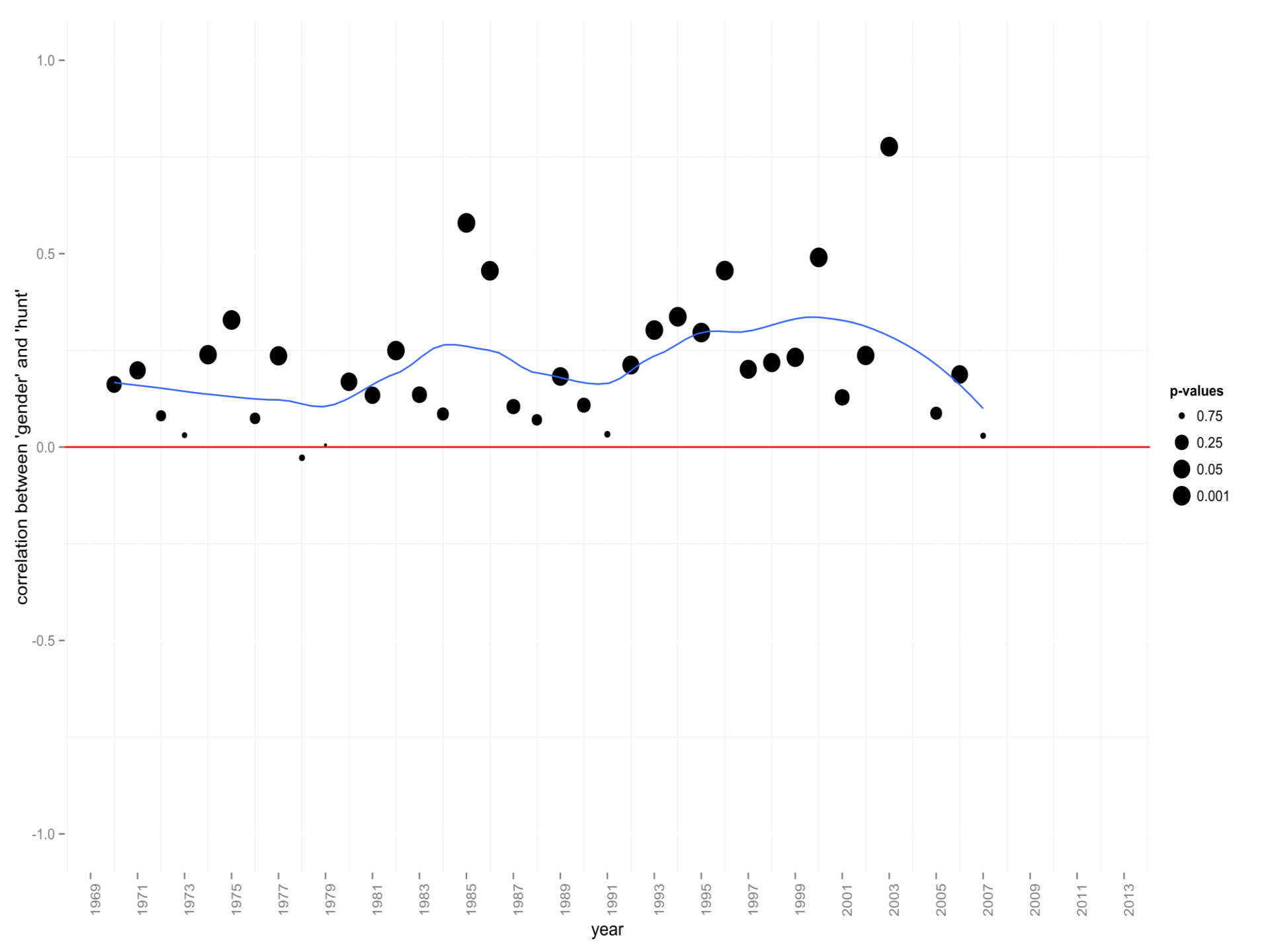
Recent Developments within Feminist Theory

1) Problematized investigations of sexual/gendered divisions of labor
    - key words: labor, division, role, hunt, hunter, gather, gatherer

2) Highlighted the lack of attention to intersecting modes of power and oppression beyond gender
    - key words: intersectional, intersectionality, identity, race, queer, sexuality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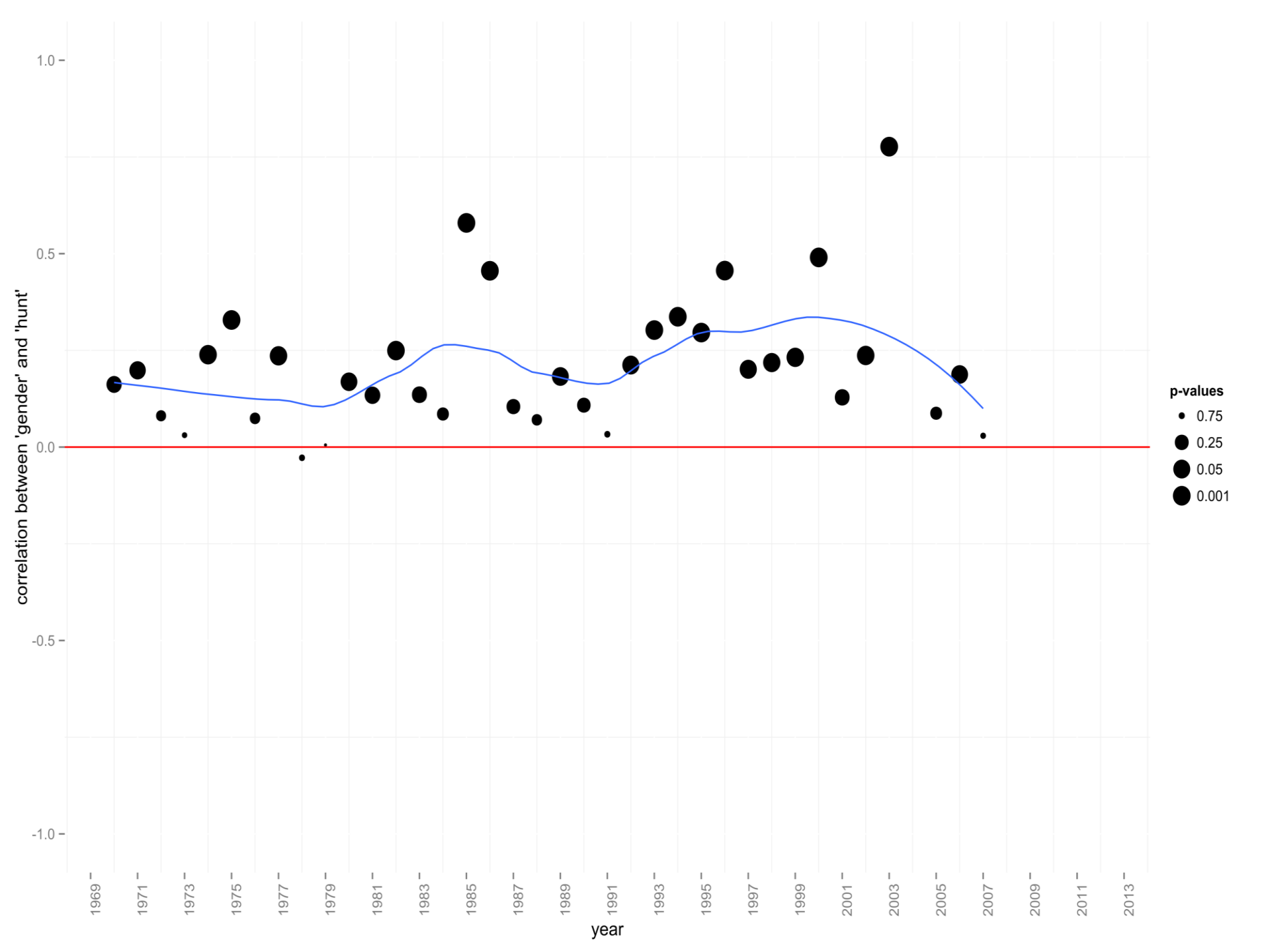
“major features are in agreement: (1) the wetlands are the focus of women's foraging…(3) men should have devoted time to logistical hunting of large game in the mountains (Kelly 1997:16)

“women shifted focus to grasses and other small seeded plants …men continued targeting large game” (Janetski et al. 2012:153)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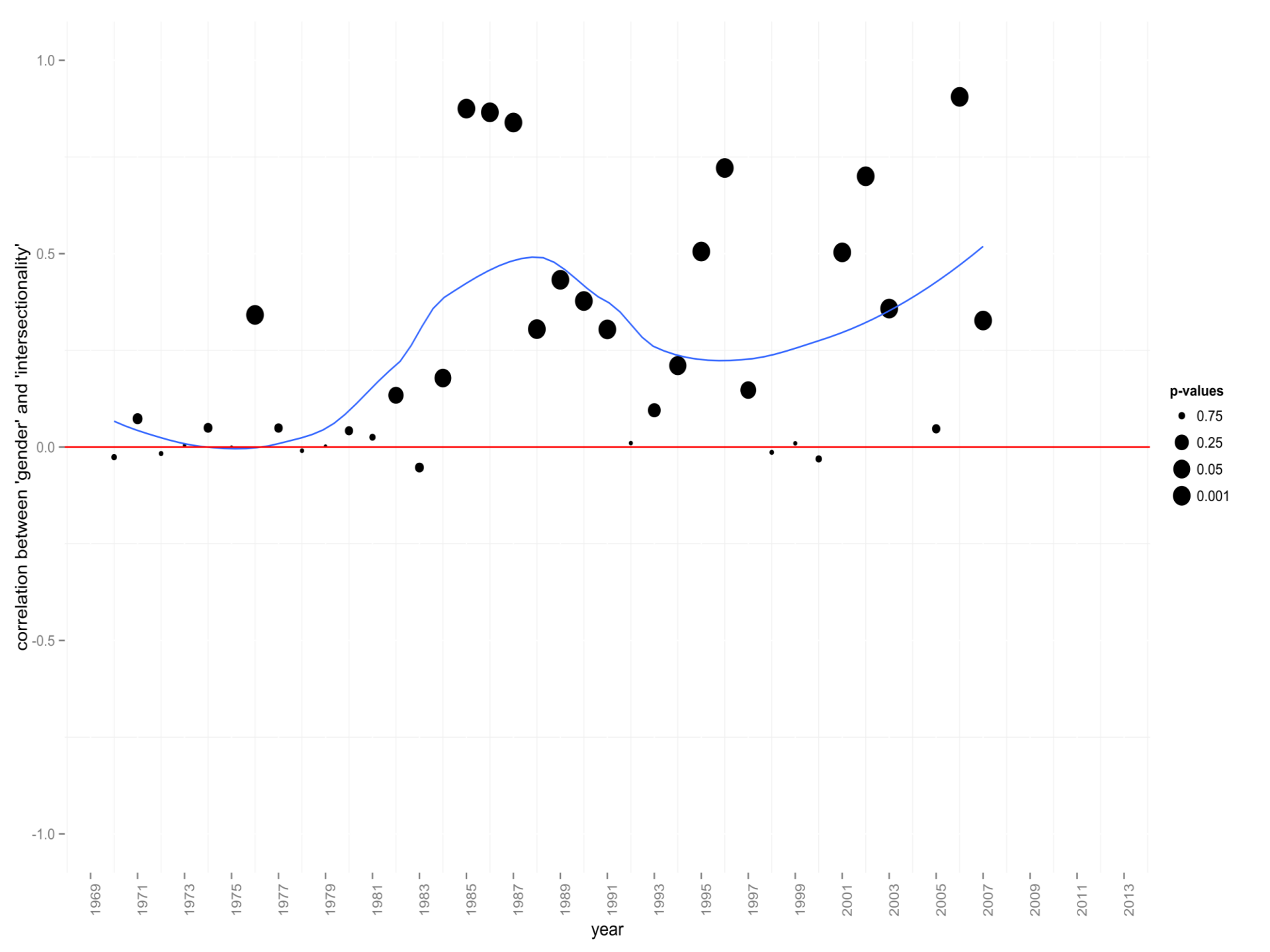
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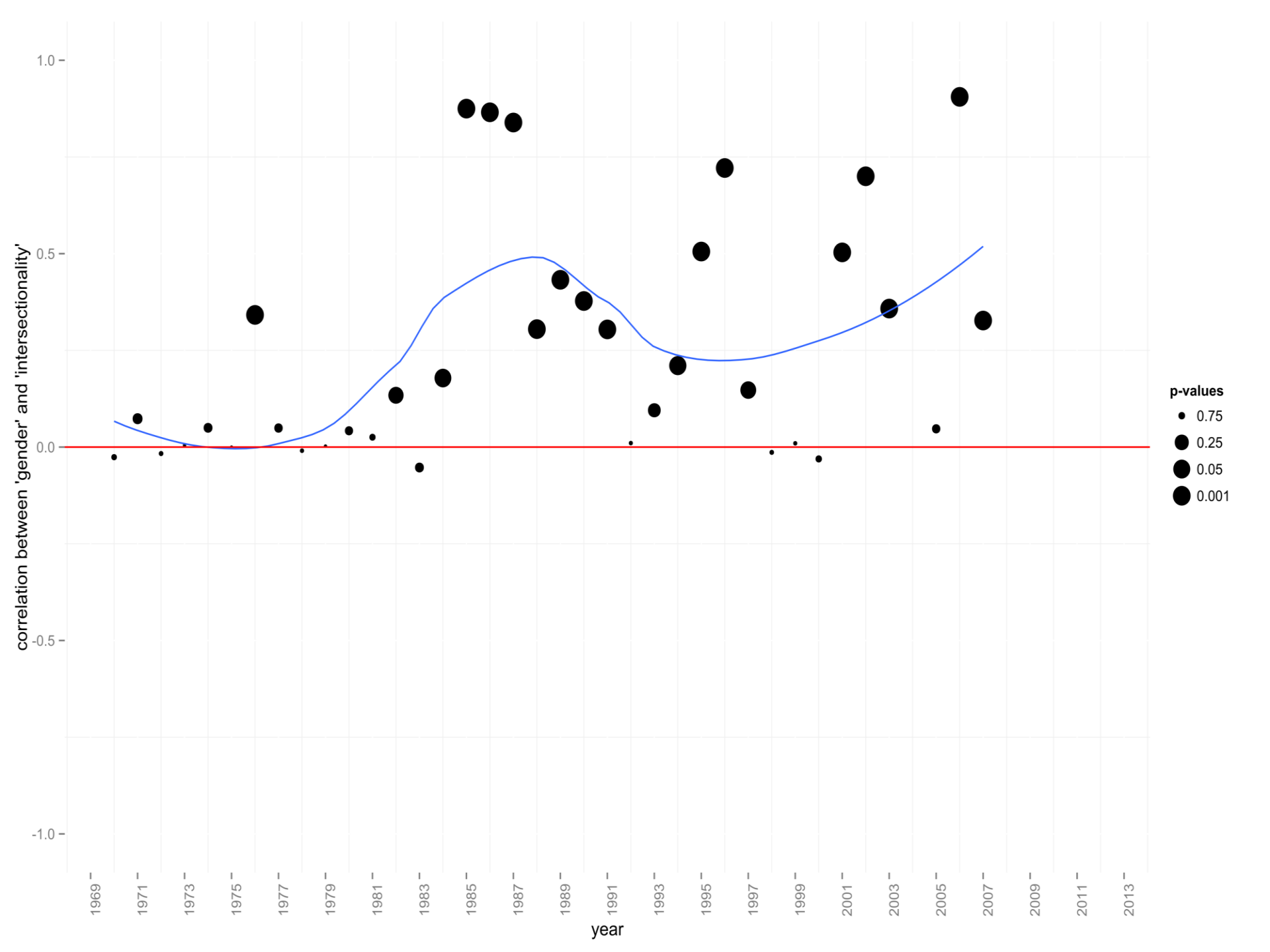
“feminist researchers may contribute to a long-standing debate…that reaches far beyond specific questions about gender…through investigating identity, we may productively explore the juncture between society and the individual” (Stockett 2005:574)

“notions of state power, racial formation, class relations, or gender practices become entwined in their conceptualization” (Paynter 2000:197)

“integration of a bioarchaeological approach and queer theory facilitates greater understanding of Maya conceptions about sex and gender”(Geller 2005:597-598)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Conclusions and Next Steps

Results complicate our understanding of the history of gender research in archaeology

Do these patterns reflect the work of archaeologists more broadly or only those publishing in these five journals?

Textual Macroanalysis in Archaeology

Track the emergence of new ideas in archaeological literature

Evaluate shifts in writing style, modes of explanation, and use of evidence through time

Construct accounts of archaeological history that reflect the work of archaeologists broadly rather than a select group of theorists

Useful Links

books.google.com/ngrams

dfr.jstor.org

github.com/benmarwick/JSTORr

https://github.com/benmarwick/kretzler-and-marwick-chacmool2014/blob/master/chacmool.rmd

Geller, Pamela L.
2005 Skeletal Analysis and Theoretical Implications. *World Archaeology* 37(4):597-609.
2009 Identity and Difference: Complicating Gender in Archaeology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 38:65-81.
Hanen, Marsha, and Jane Kelley
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Kelly, Robert L.
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1994 Consider the Hermaphroditic Mind: Comment on "The Interplay of Evidential Constraints and Political Interests: Recent Archaeology Research on Gender." *American Antiquity* 59(3):539-544.
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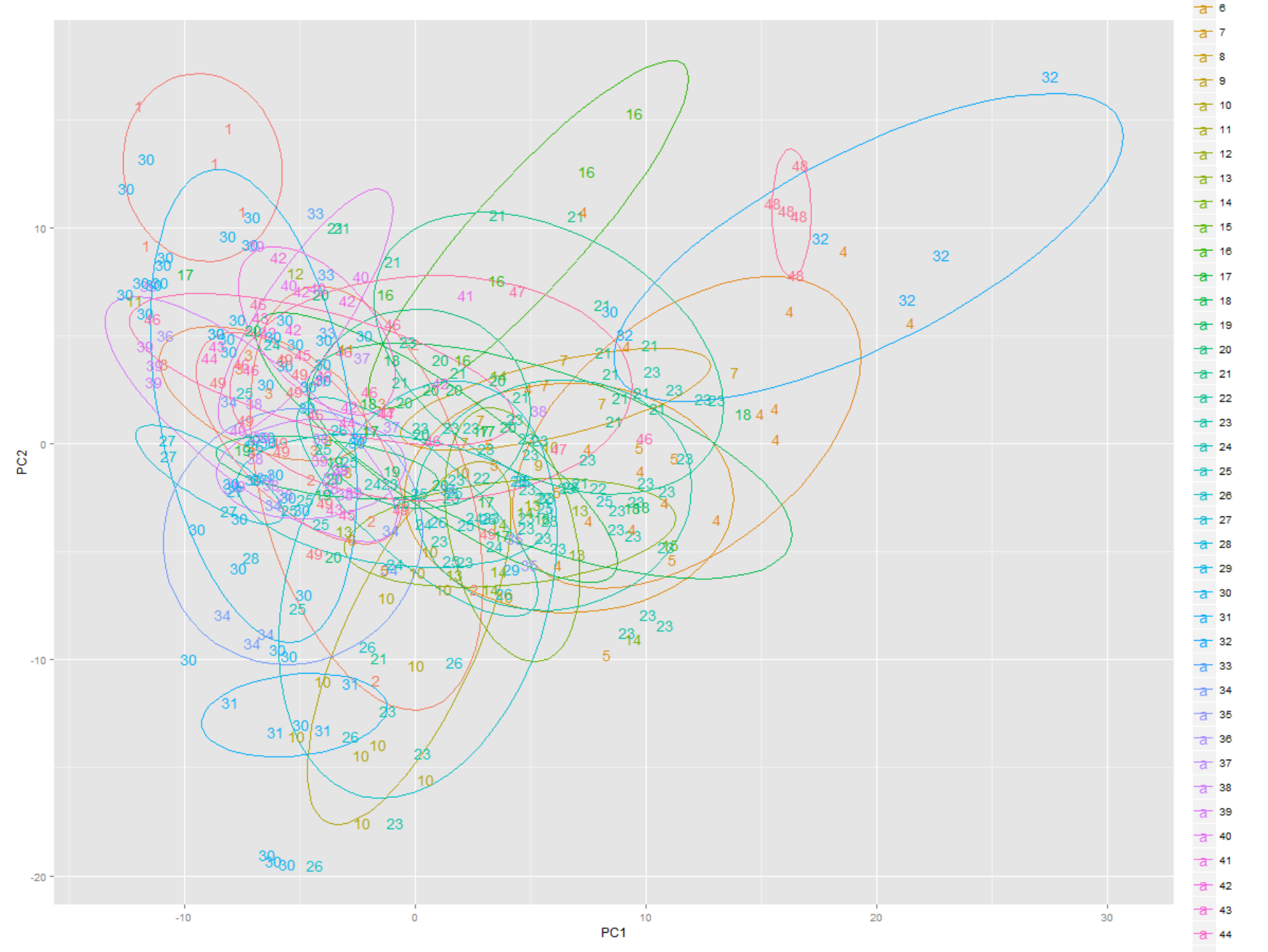
Stockett, Miranda K.
On the Importance of Difference: Re-Envisioning Sex and Gender in Ancient Mesoamerica. *World Archaeology* 37(4):566-578.
Wilkie, Laurie A., and Katherine Howlett Hayes
2006 Engendered and Feminist Archaeologies of the Recent and Documented Pasts. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 14(3):243-264.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“sex (a biological attribute) of an individual is nearly always revealing about their gender (a social attribute). Indeed, the jump from sex identification to social identity and behavioral inference is not a big one” (Larsen 2002:145)