

Quantitative Analysis of Paradigm Shifts
in American Anthropology:
The Hermeneutics of Language

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HYPOTHESIS

- The time frames for the four major theoretical paradigms in American Anthropology (Salvage, Acculturation, Resistance, and Post-Modern) can be distinguished through quantification of word choice variation.
- This methodology refines and modifies the qualitative findings of Edward Bruner (1986) and Thomas Patterson (2001).

Essential Literature

- Dumont, Jean-Paul: Prologue to Ethnography or Prolegomena to Anthropography (1986)
- Blakey: Man and Nature, White and other (2010)
- Jordon, Glenn: On Ethnography in an Intertextual Situation: Reading Narratives or Deconstructing Discourse? (2010)

Sequential Models of Paradigms in Anthropology

- Bruner: *Ethnography as Narrative* (1986)
 - 1930s-1940s (acculturation): “the dominate story constructed about Native American culture change saw the present as disorganization, the past as glorious, and the future as assimilation” (Bruner, 139).
 - 1970s (resistance): “the golden age is in the future, as the indigenous people struggle against exploitation and oppression to preserve their ethnic identity” (Bruner, 140).
- Patterson: *A Social History of Anthropology in the United States*(2001) .
Chapter Headings
 - 1. 1776-1879: Anthropology in the New Republic
 - 2. 1879-1929: Anthropology in the Liberal Age
 - 3. 1929-1945: Anthropology and the Search for Social Order
 - 4. 1945-1973: Anthropology in the Postwar Era
 - 5. 1974-2000: Anthropology in the Neoliberal Era

PARADIGMS

- DEFINITION: Popular narrative structures used to conceptualize a position in a meaningful, theoretical way. A paradigm is used to promote (or demote) a concept. They are usually referred to as theoretical models. (Bruner 1986)
- Shifts generally take place over a ten year period.
- Many words experience lag in either acceptance or rejection.

PARADIGMS (Interpretation)

1895-1929: Salvage Anthropology

- 1930-1954: Acculturation
- 1955-1979: Resistance
- 1980-2004: Post-Modern

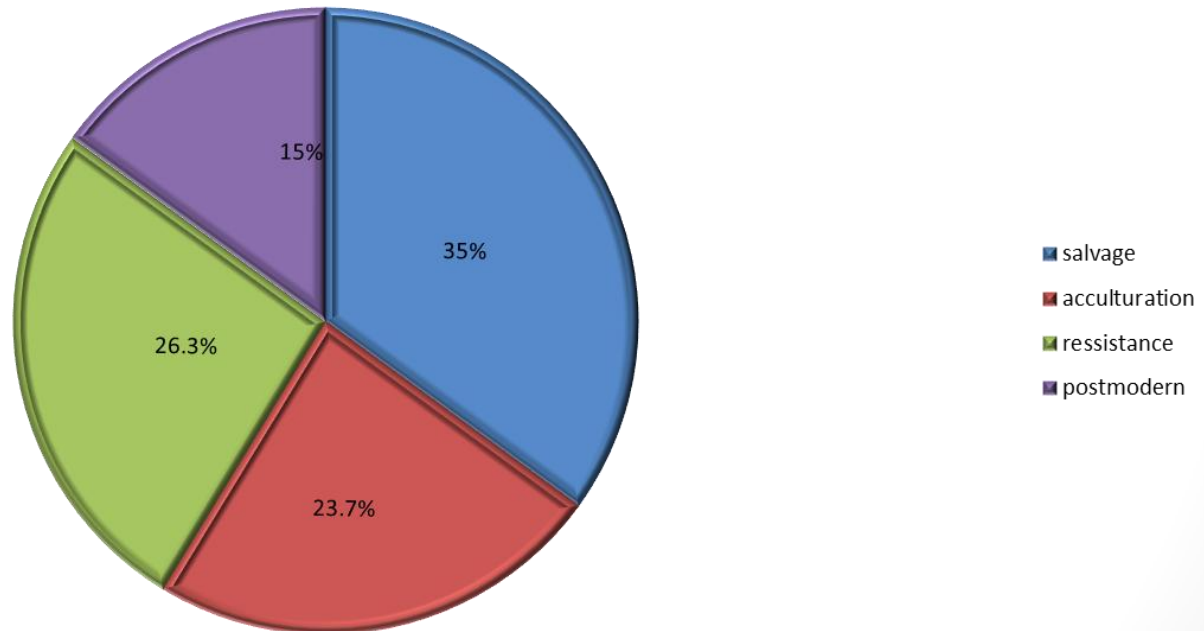
DATA SET

- *American Anthropologist*: academic journal
 - 1895-2004
 - 22 groupings
 - 5 year intervals
 - e.g. 1895-1899, 1900-1904, ..., 2000-2004
 - 29 words in the test set
 - 4 words predictive of the 4 paradigms:
 - Salvage: primitive
 - Acculturation: extinct
 - Resistance: education
 - Post-modern: colonization

	1895-1899	1900-1904	1905-1909	1910-1914	1915-1919	1920-1924	1925-1929	1930-1934	1935-1939	1940-1944	1945-1949	1950-1954	1955-1959	1960-1964	1965-1969	1970-1974	1975-1979	1980-1984	1985-1989	1990-1994	1995-1999	2000-2004	total
pages	283	363	254	429	203	372	745	338	598	357	191	209	322	125	158	205	97	142	263	159	80	173	6066
words	102213	93687	141402	133013	53498	130141	266734	129973	248098	159167	85398	91947	145610	130894	87322	111440	50331	72922	132687	78931	57105	126405	2628918
% of pages	4.7	6.0	4.2	7.1	3.3	6.1	12.3	5.6	9.9	5.9	3.1	3.4	5.3	2.1	2.6	3.4	1.6	2.3	4.3	2.6	1.3	2.9	100
% of words	3.9	3.6	5.4	5.1	2.0	5.0	10.1	4.9	9.4	6.1	3.2	3.5	5.5	5.0	3.3	4.2	1.9	2.8	5.0	3.0	2.2	4.8	100

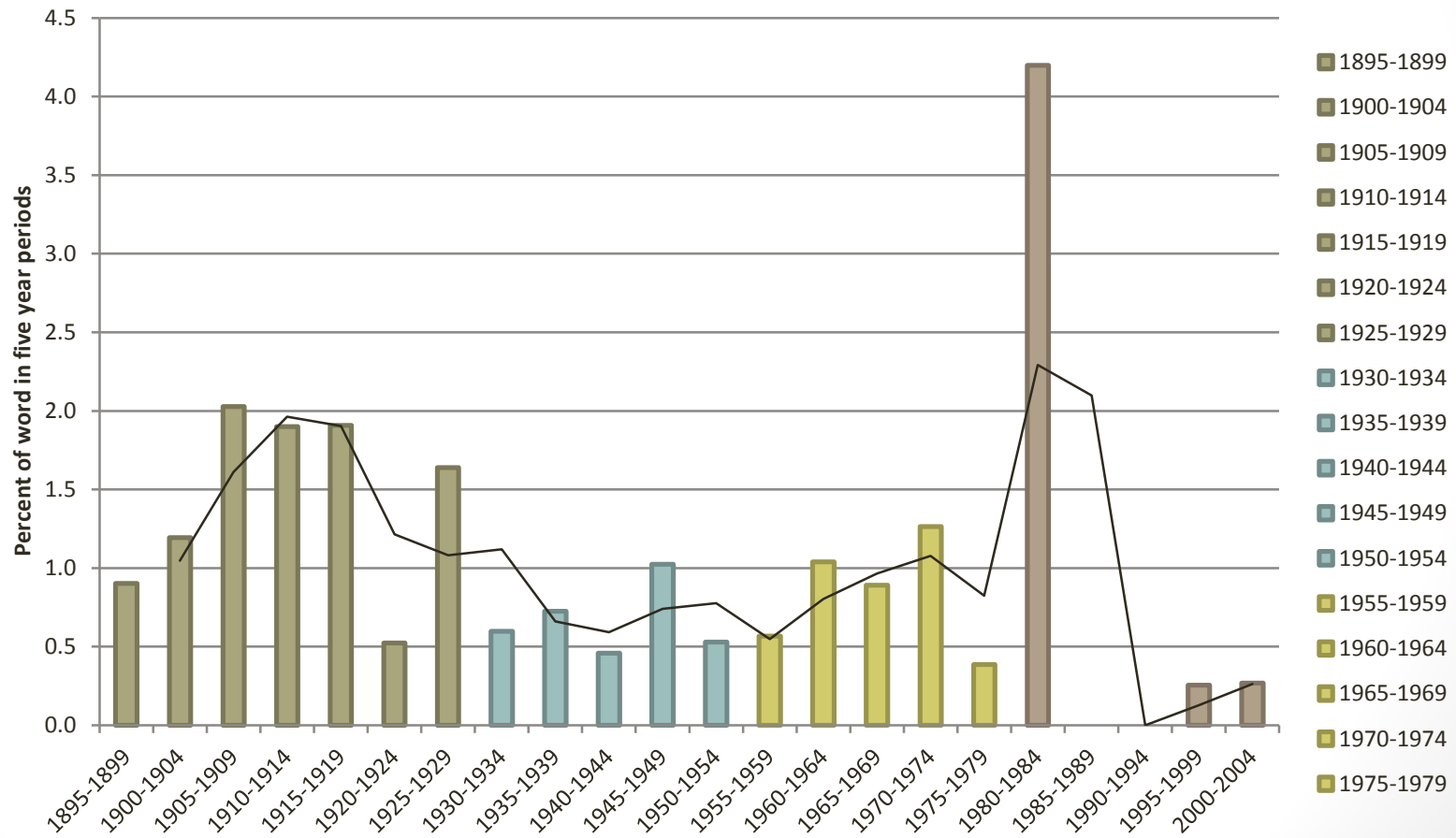
Percent of total words in paradigm

Total Words in Paradigm

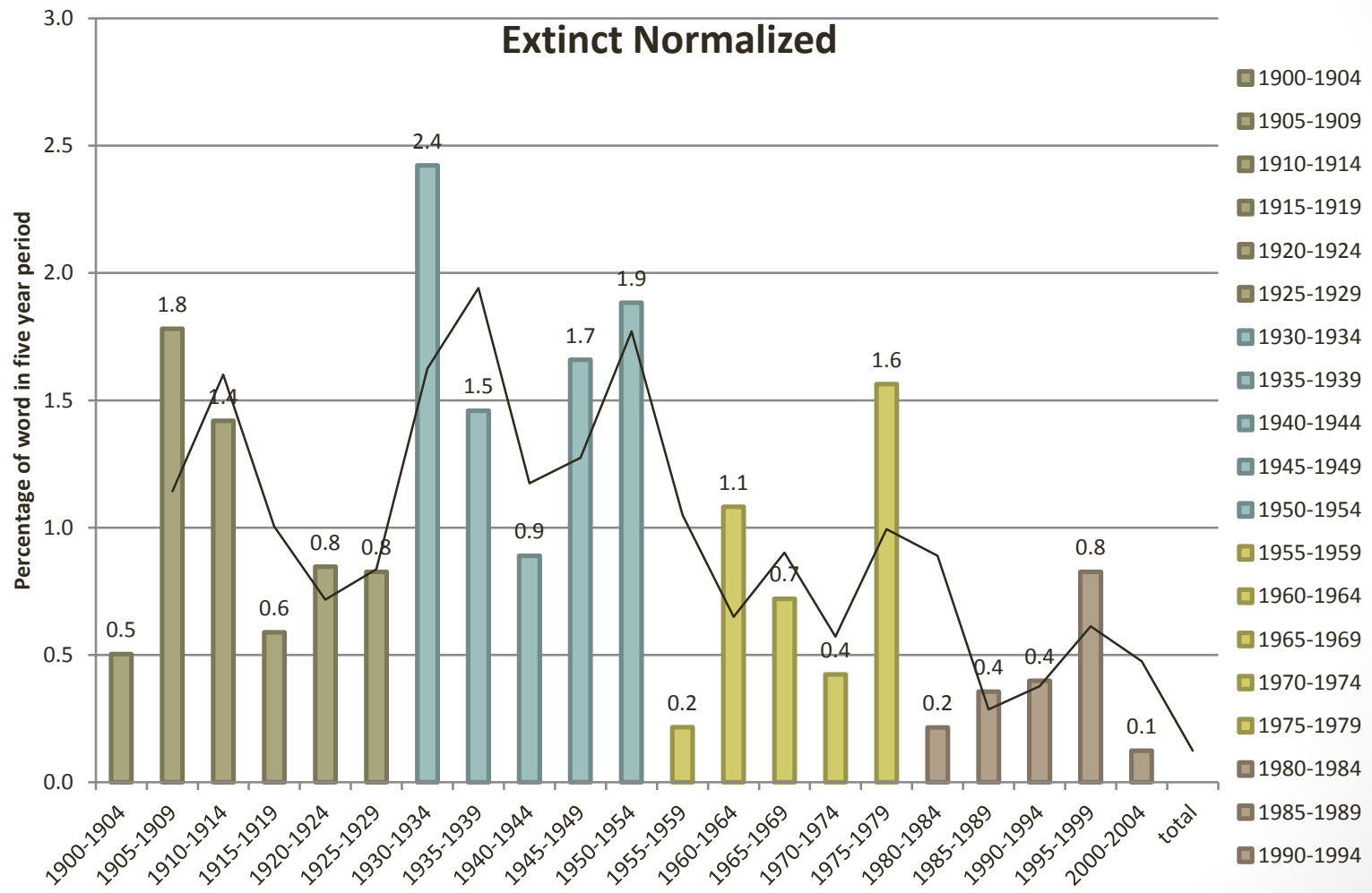


Representative of Salvage

primitive

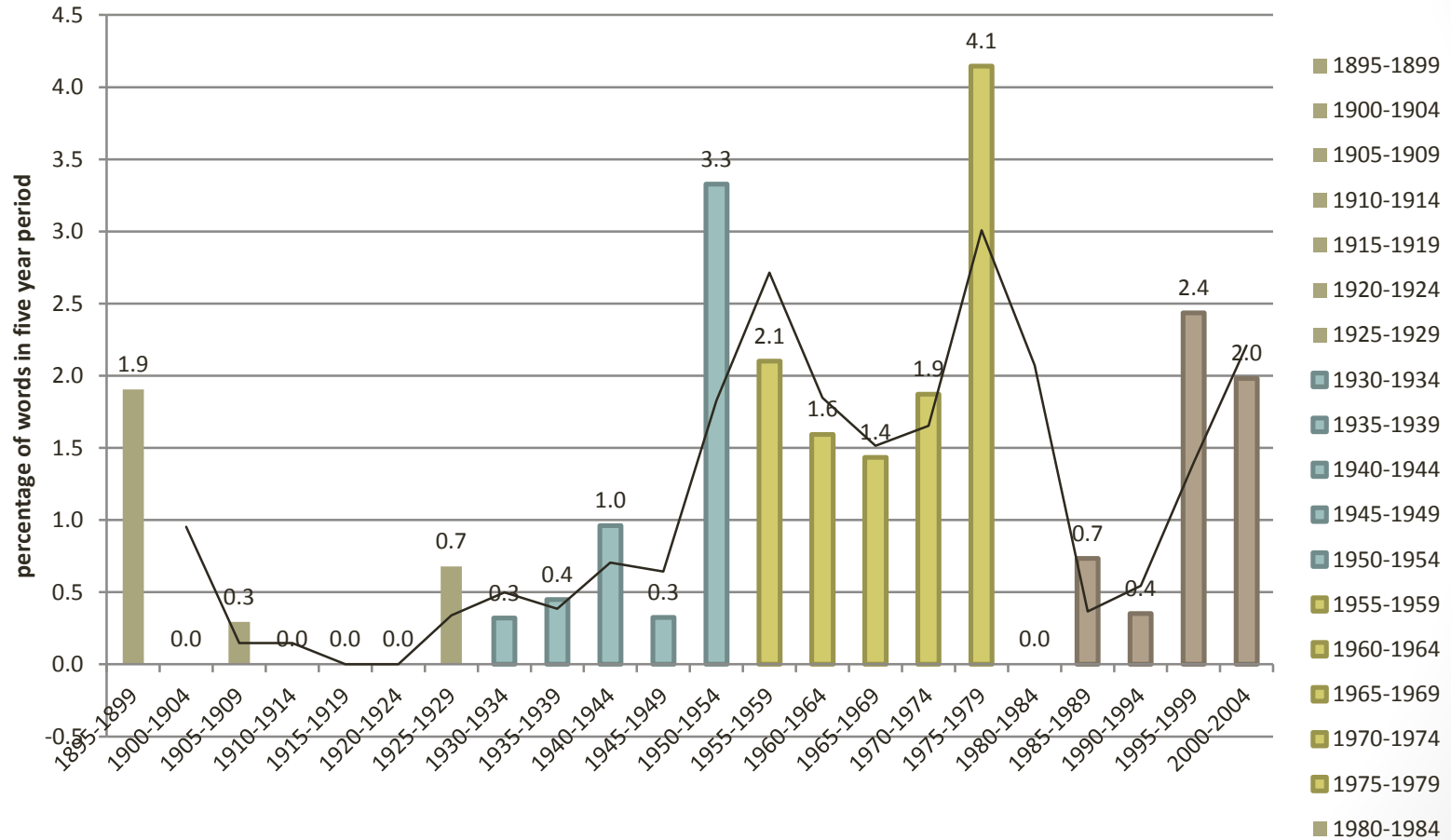


Representative of Acculturation



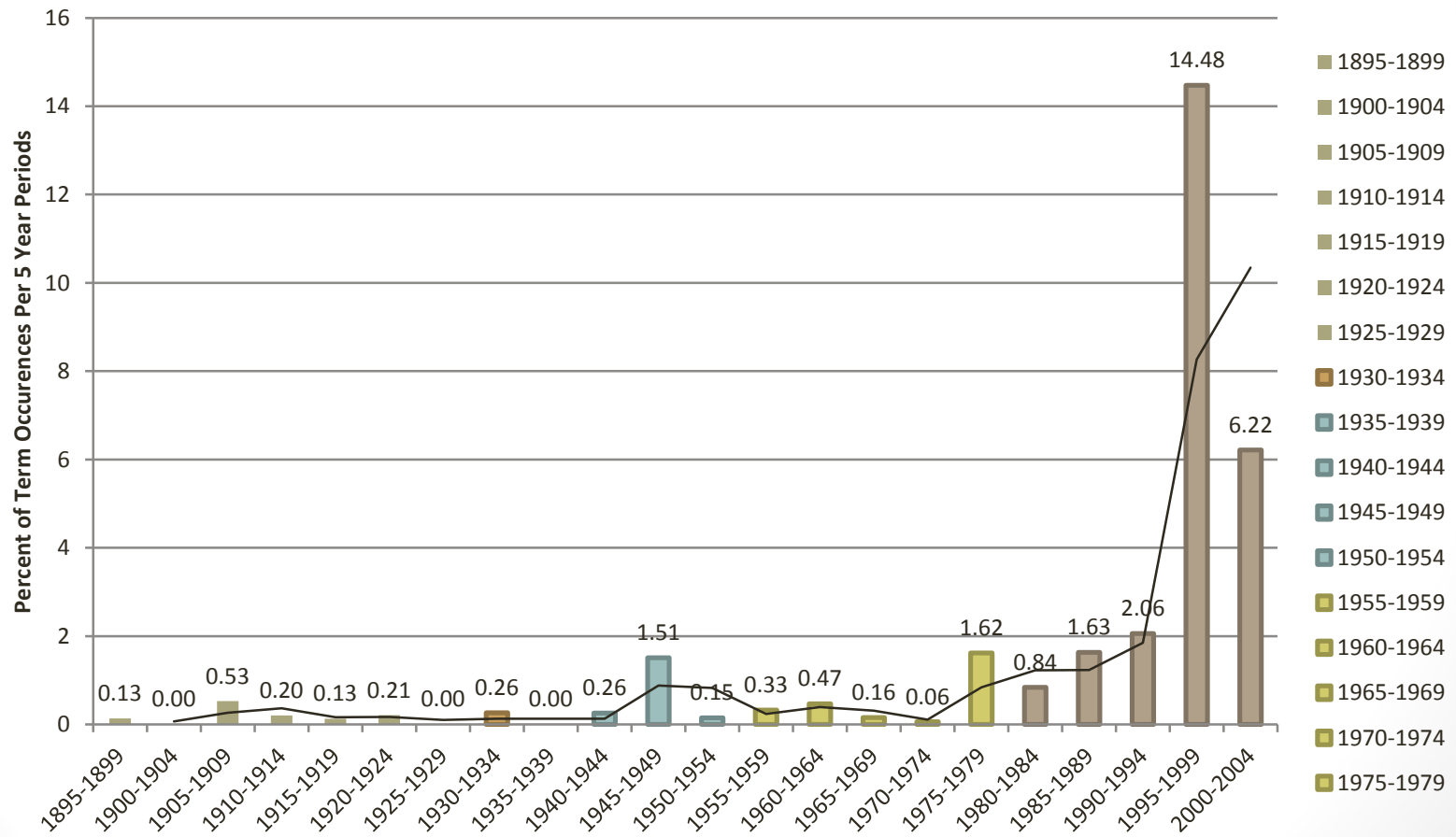
Representative of Resistance

education

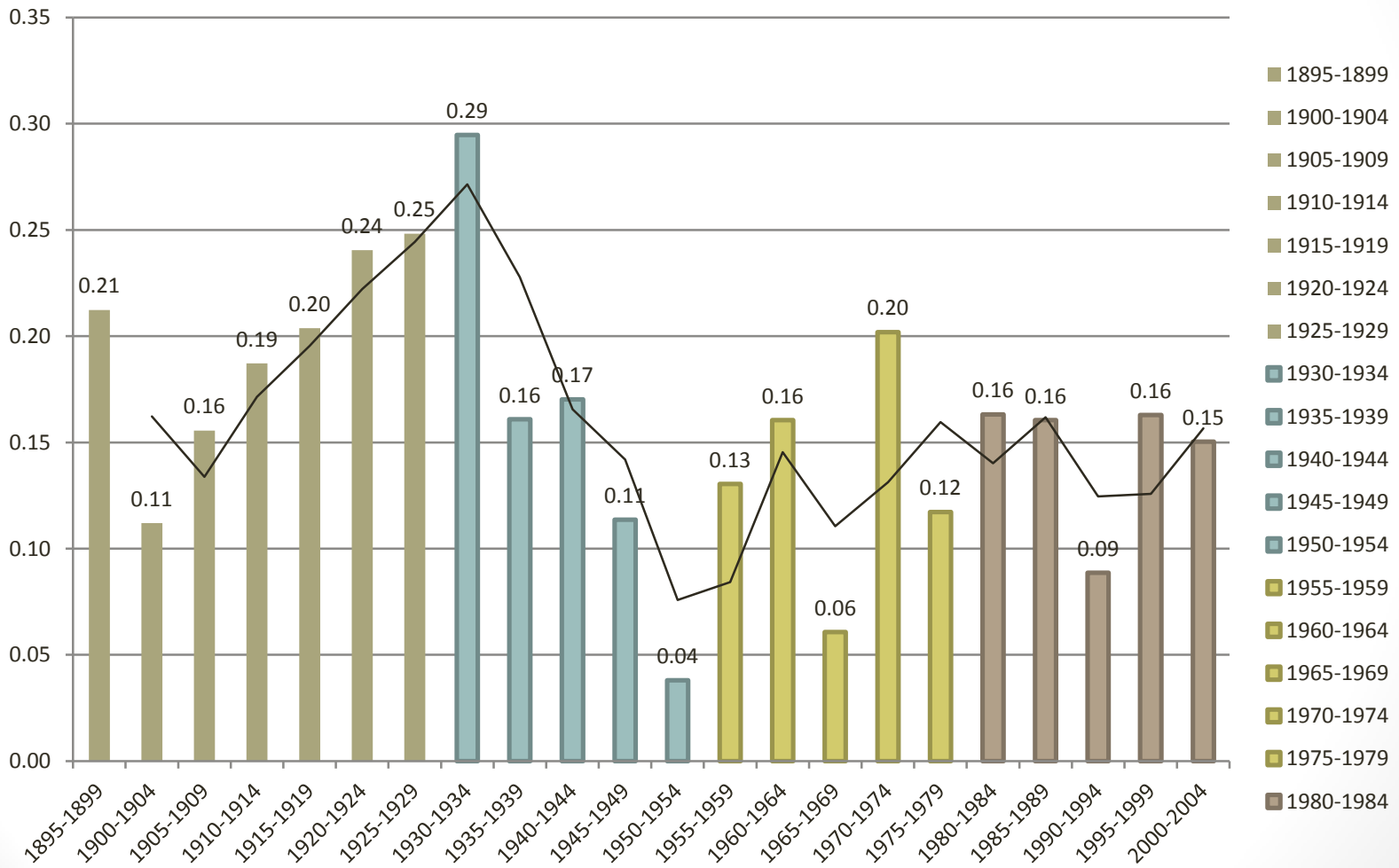


Representative of Post-Modern

colonial



Oddity "I"



CONCLUSION

- The different choice words can be used to conceptualize and isolate the major theoretical paradigms of American Anthropology.
- The paradigms defined by Bruner and Patterson are present, but may take on a different shape than previously distinguished.