

## Aligning the Paradigms

Selecting and Fine-Tuning the Appropriate Research Methodology and Presentation Mode within the Paradigm Continuum that most accurately Accesses and Represents the Human Phenomena under consideration. Proposition:

1. Following in the [Boasian Tradition](#), if the **goal** of a particular research project is to understand the **meaning of some particular human phenomena** (e.g., material culture, ecological pattern, social system, religious expression), be it in time (archaeological) or space (ethnographical). Be very clear in understanding that which you seek to know, the goals of your research.
2. And as **human phenomena** (the *what* we seek to study) is a **construction** of many and differing cultural conditions, reflecting many and **differing world view paradigms** (ranging from praxis to ideational). See [Social Constructivism](#)
3. And given the previous assertion, on the other hand, as there is an inexorable relationship between the particular **research tools** and **modes of presentation** we utilize in anthropology (the *how* we study) and a particular ontological and epistemological **paradigm** (ranging from positivism to constructionism) within which those tools and modes are embedded. See [Kuhn's Paradigm Shift](#) and the [Antecedents of Anthropology](#) as a social science.
4. And as there is a **co-determinate relationship** between *what* we study and *how* we study it. That is, the **particular research tools and modes of presentation** we utilize (the *how*) directly influence our ability to accurately and authentically both **access** as well as **represent** human phenomena (the *what*). We don't want to try to force square pegs into round holes. See [Orality and Literacy](#)
5. Then does it not follow that we must be very deliberate in selecting the most appropriate set those **research tools** and **modes of presentation**, embedded in their particular **theoretical paradigm**, that most accurately and authentically accesses and represents the **particular human phenomena**, embedded within its **world view paradigm**, under question? Must we not be very cognizant of the alignment of the paradigms?

Given an anchoring in some point along the paradigm continuum of positivism and constructionism, the research design and prospectus must include a consideration of the associated and appropriate research tools, evaluative criteria, analysis/interpretation, and presentation format/mode to be used. The focus here is on qualitative approaches, rather than quantitative approaches.

**Thus seek the best research design** (set of research tools and modes of presentation embedded in a particular theoretical paradigm) **that best accesses and can describe the particular human phenomena under study**. As anthropologists we have been entrusted with the highest of responsibilities to get that which is most cherished by others accurately and authentically represented. See [Two Paradigms Summary](#)