

Diffraction as conceptual framework and analytic tool in ethnographic fieldwork Ellen K Foster

In this progress report presentation I will discuss, in the hopes to garner constructive feedback, one of the major pieces of my analytical framing -- which also serves as a sort of methodological device. In developing and editing my dissertation I have been playing around with different conceptual framing possibilities. In the more recent iterations, I have highlighted and made better use of Donna Haraway's and Karen Barad's conceptual tool of the 'diffraction grating' (taken from the world of physics) to create diffracted readings of my work on diverse groups within the Maker Movement. While the diffraction grating has been a helpful metaphor in my work for some time now, I am more recently working to foreground it as the key concept in my analytic framework.

The first part of this presentation will work to explain the 'diffraction grating' by reviewing foundational work done by Haraway, Barad, and other scholars in order to reveal more complex patterns of meaning-making within the world. As they reveal, it is a way to complicate one-sided or even binary readings of data. I will then turn to my own data and demonstrate how this concept helps to provide an analytic framework and allows for diverse readings of the Maker Movement, its values, intentions, and most greatly its effects. This will be helpful for me moving forward as I decide in which ways to leverage diffraction.