

A cognitive theory of cultural meaning

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Abstrak

"Culture" and "meaning" are central to anthropology, but anthropologists do not agree on what they are. Claudia Strauss and Naomi Quinn propose a new theory of cultural meaning, one that gives priority to the way people's experiences are internalized. Drawing on "connectionist" or "neural network" models as well as other psychological theories, they argue that cultural meanings are not fixed or limited to static groups, but neither are they constantly revised and contested. Their approach is illustrated by original research on understandings of marriage and ideas of success in the United States.