

Cultural Neuroscience Approach to the Understanding of Self

It has been well documented that the independent and interdependent self-construals characterize self-concept in the Western and East Asian cultures, respectively, and influence people's social behaviors. What are the neural bases of cultural differences in self-concept? We have recently employed brain imaging techniques such as functional magnetic resonance imaging and event related brain potential to address this issue. Our approach consists of both comparing brain imaging results from two cultural groups and priming one cultural group with specific cultural symbols or self-construals. Our studies of both self-face recognition and self-trait judgments uncovered neural substrates underlying the cultural differences in self-referential processing in multiple brain areas and in multiple time windows. The transcultural brain imaging findings help to understand the neural bases of cultural difference in self-concept.