

PREFACE

Introduction to the Field

Cultural neuroscience and global mental health is an interdisciplinary field of study that integrates theoretical, methodological, and empirical approaches in cultural neuroscience to address grand challenges in global mental health. The study of cultural neuroscience and global mental health addresses how evidence-based research that identifies root causes and risk and preventative factors in global mental health can help to improve and achieve health equity for all people across the world. The goal of discovery and delivery science to find cures, preventions, and interventions for global mental health fulfills one of the human development goals to cure disease and improve health for all. Mental health for all is crucial to the development of security and empowerment across societies and nations. The achievement of health equity for all reflects the total and complete well-being of individuals, societies, and nations and the human capability to live a long and healthy life.

Brief Description of History and Developments of the Field

The history of the field of cultural neuroscience and global mental health builds from the international collaboration of interdisciplinary networks of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. The growth of the field has been steadily shaped by several major developments. The emergence of cultural neuroscience as a research field traces back to the epistemological understanding of the mutual influences of culture and biology on human health throughout intellectual history. In the 7th century, Isidori of Seville introduced the conceptual notion of human diversity and early conceptualizations of culture in his encyclopedia *Etymologiae*. The epistemology of ancient Western and Eastern philosophical thought, from Locke to Lao Tzu, reflects cultural variation in conceptualizations of the notion of object and the environment. Contemporary notions of cultural influences on mental health build from ancient philosophical thought of culture and human nature and expand into detailed efforts of scientific observation to investigate the influences of culture

on the human mind, brain, and behavior. The notion that cures for mental health arise from cultural practices and their underlying neurobiological bases exemplifies the rationale and goal of scientific efforts in cultural neuroscience.

The systematic study of cultural influences on the human brain strengthens the human capability for the achievement of health equity. In 2011, the scientific initiatives of the International Cultural Neuroscience Consortium, an interdisciplinary organization of researchers, led to the coordination of social and financial investment for priority setting in the systematic study of cultural neuroscience. Chief priorities include the expansion of theoretical, methodological, and empirical approaches in cultural neuroscience to address reducing the gap in population health disparities. The development of cultural neuroscience as a research field has steadily grown with targeted capacity-building initiatives that have led to the establishment and achievement of interdisciplinary goals. The advancement of evidence-based research provides a foundation to systematically address issues of culture in health equity and health policy.

The political will and commitment for the achievement of health equity for all has been recognized across all nations through the Sustainable Development Goals program of the United Nations and the World Health Organization Mental Health program. The Movement for Global Mental Health reflects the systematic coordination of collaborative efforts to achieve mental health for all through the societal efforts of researchers, policymakers, and advocates. In 2011, the research agenda and priority setting of the Grand Challenges in Global Mental Health Initiative strengthened the political commitment of nations to the achievement of health equity. Social and financial investment in the research agenda and priorities for global mental health promotes efforts in human development and empowerment for the achievement of health equity for all. Plans of action to achieve health equity and to discover cures for mental health require long-term investment, support, and responsiveness of stakeholders to coordinate for integrated research and policy interventions.

Broad Review of the Chapter Contributions

The effective coordination of research and policy stakeholders to support the efforts in discovery and delivery science for the elimination of mental, neurological, and substance abuse (MNS) disorders reflects a chief goal of cultural neuroscience and global mental health. The *Handbook* consists of chapters that provide a detailed and comprehensive review of the main themes and topics in the interdisciplinary field of cultural neuroscience and global mental health. The chapters develop main themes and topics in cultural neuroscience and global mental health that identify root causes and risk and protective factors in mental health across cultural settings. The international authors contribute on themes and topics of research in cultural neuroscience and global mental health from distinct regions across the world. The *Handbook* provides a foundation of research that raises awareness of the global burden in mental health and contributes to international aid and

development programs. The development and implementation of mental health policy and practice reflect the culmination of coordinated efforts of researchers, advocates, and policymakers to provide evidence-based research for plans of action that promote mental health for all.

Mission of the Field

Mental health is vital to the development and empowerment of individuals, societies, and nations. The promotion of mental health practices and policies that advance plans of action for the elimination of mental health disorders enhances health equity for all. The achievement of total well-being for all relies on the sustained commitment to practices and policies that ensure human security and empowerment. The strengthening of human capabilities for protection from vulnerabilities, from poverty to armed conflict, and for empowerment, including social and economic equality and independence, expands the range of human freedoms that ensure human fulfillment. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals plan of action includes the elimination of diseases by 2030 to achieve good health and well-being for all. The goal to eliminate mental health disorders and disease reflects global objectives that are at the core of the development mission. Sustained action and investment toward such goals of the development agenda are necessary for the promotion and, ultimately, the achievement of health equity and equality for all.

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