



Dreams, Race, and the Black Lives Matter Movement: Results of a Survey of American Adults

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Abstract

This study considers the relationship between dreaming and race in light of the public protests following the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020. Findings are presented from an online survey about dreams and the Black Lives Movement (BLM) gathered from 4,947 demographically diverse American adults sampled between June 15 and June 19, 2020. The results show that the people most likely to have dreams about the public protests were those who support BLM, who are highly educated, and/or who have high dream recall. The dreams themselves tended to be anxious, fearful, and nightmarish, with several recurrent themes: references to George Floyd, participating in protests, threats to one's home, concerns about the pandemic, and conversations about BLM. The findings of this study contribute to a growing research literature showing that dreams, dream recall, and dream sharing can vary significantly depending on people's racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. This study also provides new evidence that dreams have meaningful content relating directly to current events and public affairs. Practical implications for therapists and pastoral counselors are discussed.

Keywords Dreams · Nightmares · Race · Black lives matter

The phenomenon of dreaming appears to be a universal feature of the human experience, a claim based on extensive research in both neuroscience (Kandel et al., 2012; Kryger et al., 2005; Maquet et al., 2003) and cross-cultural history (Lohmann, 2003; Mageo & Sheriff, 2020; Tedlock, 2005; Von Grunebaum & Callois, 1966). At the same time, different people and groups can experience and think about dreaming in quite different ways, as the same anthropologists and historians, along with psychologists who examine how people's dreams are shaped by their personal life circumstances, will attest. These two complementary propositions about dreaming—its universality and its cultural/psychological specificity—provide the framework for the following study of dreams in relation to race, ethnicity, and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in the contemporary American context. Prompted by protests in the United States and other countries around the world

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in response to the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, this study has the goal of contributing to knowledge about dreams in relation to contemporary dynamics of race and ethnicity, with an eye towards the practical concerns of pastoral caregivers and therapists.

Previous works have considered dreaming and race from historical, cultural, and psychological perspectives. For example, Sobel's *Teach Me Dreams* (2000) offers a detailed analysis of dozens of dreams of White settlers and soldiers, Black slaves, and displaced Native Americans from the late 17th to late 19th centuries. White's *Midnight in America: Darkness, Sleep, and Dreams During the Civil War* (2017) has a chapter on African American dreams, including a thoughtful discussion of Harriet Tubman's dreams and visions and their impact on her efforts to free slaves via the Underground Railroad. White finds many of the dreams reported by slaves from that time had a deeply spiritual quality: "Such dreams gave slaves a sense of autonomy in their religious lives that they lacked in their daily work and social interactions" (p. 99). The same theme appears in two works by Shafton, "Black Dreamers in the United States" (1996) and *Dream-Singers: The African American Way With Dreams* (2002). Shafton's explorations of the dream beliefs and practices of contemporary Blacks in the United States involved interviews with more than a hundred African Americans, many of whom he found to be deeply engaged with transpersonal aspects of dreaming (visitations, prophecies, revelations), aspects that mainstream, mostly White American psychologists tend to ignore or dismiss.

Other works have approached dreams, race, and ethnicity from a psychological perspective. Both Bynum's *Families and the Interpretation of Dreams* (1993) and Adams's *The Multicultural Imagination: "Race," Color, and the Unconscious* (1996) offer critical examinations of broader issues of race, ethnicity, history, and social inequalities and how they factor into individual dreams. All of Taylor's works, including *Dream Work* (1983) and *Where People Fly and Water Runs Uphill* (1992), emphasize the complex, often ignored or repressed influences of race and ethnicity on how people dream and how they make sense of their dreams. Critical reappraisals of Freud's and Jung's thinking about race and ethnicity can be found in Brickman's *Race in Psychoanalysis: Aboriginal Populations in the Mind* (2017), Brewster's *The Racial Complex: A Jungian Perspective on Culture and Race* (2019), and Sliwinski's *Dreaming in Dark Times: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (2017).

Empirical investigations of dreams, race, and ethnicity seem to be fewer in number. A study by Pagel and Vann involved 265 participants whose racial/ethnic self-identification yielded a sample of 21% Whites, 35% Filipinos, 17% Japanese, 13% Hawaiians, and 14% others (Pagel & Vann, 1992). In their analysis of the participants' responses to questions about dream recall, dream sharing, and other forms of dream-influenced waking behavior, Pagel and Vann found that "race was not significantly associated with any of the dream use items" (233) According to a review by Domhoff of content analysis studies of dreams from people in both large-scale nations (e.g., Japan, Canada, Peru, India) and small-scale societies (e.g., indigenous communities in Australia, the Amazon, and the American Southwest), several basic patterns of dreaming appeared consistently across the various groups: more aggression than friendliness, more being the victim rather than the initiator of aggression, and more misfortune than good fortune. Several differences emerged, too, for instance, a higher frequency of animal characters in the dreams of people living in indigenous communities versus modern nations. Thus, Domhoff (1996) concludes, "The variations in dream content from culture to culture seem to relate to unique cultural patterns" (p. 128).

More specific findings about dreams, race, and ethnicity appeared in two recent papers (Bulkeley & Schredl, 2019; Schredl & Bulkeley, 2019) analyzing different

aspects of a large demographic survey of American adults ($N = 5,255$). One of the papers found that Blacks reported an overall more positive attitude towards dreaming compared to Whites (Bulkeley & Schredl, 2019). More specifically, Blacks had higher frequencies of agreement with the positive statements about dreams (e.g., “Dreams can anticipate things that happen in the future”) and lower frequencies of agreement with the negative statements (e.g., “Dreams are random nonsense from the brain”) compared to Whites. The second paper analyzed the participants’ answers about dream recall and dream sharing and found that Blacks report a lower dream recall frequency than Whites, while Hispanics report a much higher recall frequency. Whites and Blacks share dreams at about the same frequency, with Hispanics having a much higher dream-sharing frequency (Schredl & Bulkeley, 2019).

This paper examines the relationship between race, ethnicity, and dreaming by drawing on the responses of 4,947 demographically diverse American adults who answered questions in an online survey about dream recall, dream sharing, support for the BLM movement, and dreams about the recent protests against racial injustice. The following analyses address four basic questions. First, do the results of this study confirm or contradict previous findings about race and ethnicity in relation to dream recall and dream sharing? Second, how does support for the BLM movement relate to dream behaviors? Third, who is more likely to have dreams about public protests, and what are the recurrent themes in those dreams? And fourth, what practical insights can pastoral counselors and psychotherapists draw from these findings? Many previous studies have found that dreams are directly responsive to large-scale social phenomena, especially disasters such as fires, earthquakes, hurricanes, wars, terrorist attacks, and most recently the COVID-19 outbreak (Schredl & Bulkeley, 2020; Bulkeley & Kahan, 2008; David & Mellman, 1997; Hartmann & Basile, 2003; Pagel et al., 1995; Siegel, 1990; Wood et al., 1992). In addition to the above four questions, this study also reflects more broadly on the various ways in which the protest-related dreams express people’s feelings and experiences during a time of heightened collective awareness about issues of racial and ethnic injustice.

Methods

Participants

Overall, 4,947 Americans 18 years and older in age completed the online survey (2,701 women, 2,246 men; only these two gender categories were available as options). The mean age of the sample was 47.71 ± 17.49 years (range: 18 to 98 years). The ethnicity of the sample was as follows: White ($N = 3,271$), Black ($N = 606$), Hispanic ($N = 669$), and other ($N = 401$), with other reported as Asian ($N = 166$), Native American ($N = 45$), mixed ($N = 68$), other ($N = 115$), and Middle Eastern ($N = 7$). Educational background was elicited in six categories: no high school ($N = 238$), high school graduate ($N = 1,562$), some college ($N = 1,060$), 2-year college ($N = 582$), 4-year college ($N = 958$), and post-graduate ($N = 547$). Political orientation was distributed as follows: very liberal ($N = 643$), liberal ($N = 862$), moderate ($N = 1,518$), conservative ($N = 818$), and very conservative ($N = 598$), with 508 participants stating that they were not sure about their political orientation.

Research instrument

For eliciting dream recall frequency, a 6-point scale was used: “How often, if ever, do you usually wake up remembering a dream?” (coded as 0 = *never*, 1 = *less than once a month*, 2 = *1 to 3 times a month*, 3 = *once a week*, 4 = *several times a week*, 5 = *almost every morning or more often*). The retest reliability of an almost identical scale was high: $r = .85$ with an average retest interval of 55 days (Schredl, 2004). The question about dream sharing (“How often, if ever, do you talk with other people, like family and friends, about your dreams?”) used the same 6-point scale as the dream recall question.

To elicit a dream report, the question was posed, “In the past few weeks, have you had a dream during the night that you feel is related to the recent public protests about racial injustice?” with the options: “Yes, I have (Please describe a dream of this type, even if it is just a fragment, in as much detail as you can remember, including the settings, characters, actions, thoughts, and emotions)” or “No, I haven’t.”

The question about political orientation was worded as follows: “In general, how would you describe your own political viewpoint?” with the categories “very liberal,” “liberal,” “moderate,” “conservative,” “very conservative,” and “not sure.” For the statement “I support the Black Lives Matter movement,” five alternatives were presented: *strongly agree* = +2, *somewhat agree* = +1, *somewhat disagree* = -1, *strongly disagree* = -2, and *don’t know* = 0.

Procedure

The survey was conducted using an online interview administered by YouGov, a public opinion and data company, to members of its panel of 2 million individuals who have consented to take part in anonymous surveys. Email messages were sent to panelists selected at random from the base sample of U.S. adults. The message invited them to take part in a survey and provided a generic survey link. Once a panel member clicked on the link, they were sent to the survey for which they were most required, according to the sample definition and quotas. The responses for this survey were gathered between June 15 and June 19, 2020. The 322 responses to the question regarding dreams about the public protests about racial injustice were inspected by both authors and sorted into three groups: (1) dreams directly related to public protests about racial injustice, including acts of racism, violent policemen, participating in a protest, etc., (2) dreams with negative emotions not explicitly related to racism or public protests, and (3) dreams with other topics. The authors judged a considerable number, 118 of the 322 responses, to be not actual dreams because the participants were either speaking metaphorically of dreams as fantasies, or making a personal statement, or their response was so short and/or fragmentary as to be unintelligible. These nondream responses were not included in the present analysis of 204 (see Table 1). The complete set of unfiltered responses is available upon request for inspection and reanalysis in the Sleep and Dream Database.

Statistical analysis

Statistical procedures were carried out with the SAS 9.4 software package for Windows. Ordinal regressions (cumulative logit analyses) were used for analyzing the effect of different predictors on the five-point variable Supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement.

Table 1 Topics of Dreams Analyzed in the Present Study ($N = 204$)

Category	N	%	Examples
Dreams directly related to the recent public protests about racial injustice	143	70%	I was in a peaceful protest and the police attacked us. I was shot in the leg. There were corona virus people raiding everywhere using the black matter thing to their own advantage. I dreamed rioters were shooting at my home. Dreamed of police brutality against a family member. Blacks getting shot in the back.
Nightmares/bad dreams not related directly to the recent public protests about racial injustice	50	25%	I am lost in a crowd and can't find my daughter. My dog getting hit by a car. Dream about my roof leaking and the landlord doing nothing about it. A River was running through the basement and they didn't care. I felt like no one cared and I had no control.
Other topics	11	5%	Barack Obama came into a hotel room I was sharing with my partner. He laughed at us because the beds were unmade and we were embarrassed. That they will be peace among everyone. I am fishing and catching a record fish.

A logistic regression was computed for the variable of reporting a dream that is related to public protests about racial injustice.

Results

The majority of the participants supported the BLM movement; about 28% were not in agreement (see Table 2). The major factor associated with the attitude to the BLM movement was political orientation (very large effect size), meaning the more conservative a person was, the more likely they did not support this movement (see Table 3). Black participants were more often supporters than Whites (keep in mind that this effect is controlled for all other variables entered simultaneously in the regression analysis depicted in Table 3). Participants identifying themselves as Hispanic were also more likely supporters than White persons, whereas other ethnic groups did not differ from White participants regarding supporting the BLM movement. In terms of gender, age, and education, higher levels of BLM support were found among women, younger people, and people with higher levels of education (see Table 2). Interestingly, people with high dream recall were also more likely to support the BLM movement, with a small but significant effect.

The findings on dream recall mostly corresponded with previous research on this question (see Table 4). Whites and Blacks have about the same level of dream recall, with Hispanics having higher frequencies than both. On the question of sharing one's dreams with other people (see Table 5), Blacks share their dreams more frequently than do Whites, and Hispanics do so more than both Whites and Blacks. In addition to the differences, the similarities should be noted. Fully half of the participants from all racial and ethnic groups recalled dreams at least once per week; the percentage of people with no dream recall is very small in all groups.

Turning to the dream reports, the majority were directly related to the recent public protests about racial injustice (see Table 6), reflecting in sometimes painful detail the social

Table 2 Participants Supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement ($N = 4,947$)

Category	N	Percent
Strongly agree	2,177	44%
Somewhat agree	1,009	20%
Don't know	382	8%
Somewhat disagree	473	10%
Strongly disagree	906	18%

conflicts and tensions in waking life. About one quarter of the reports were negatively toned dreams that the participants associated with the recent public protests about racial injustice even though the dreams did not include direct references to the events. Lastly, a small group reported dreams with other topics.

Among the dreams that were directly related to protests, the following themes were noted:

- References to George Floyd: “I keep replaying the guy dying and saying ‘I can’t breathe, Momma.’”
- Participating in a protest: “I was attending a BLM protest and there was another family right next to me. A can got thrown near us and we got tear gassed and somehow police had surrounded us and we had to run to escape their beating. I tried to help the family but one of their children got taken so i went with her and we got taken to a cell which we remained in for hours. A police officer came up to us and was about to hit us in the face when i woke up.”
- Threats to one’s home by protestors: “I’ve had dreams my home is broken into and myself and my family were hurt by others. I woke up and was in a funk for the rest of the week. I refuse to watch the news nowadays.”
- Concerns about pandemic and protests: “Was attending a protest with friends in the dream and no one was wearing face masks, and it was a stressful dream because no one was listening to me about the importance of our face masks during the protest!”
- Talking with people about BLM and racism: “People from high school were apologizing for things they said that were problematic (racist, homophobic, sexist, etc.), and I was trying to point out that they were apologizing without making any changes. They needed to act to create a better community.”

Table 3 Ordinal Regression Analysis for Supporting Black Lives Matter Movement ($N = 4,439$)

Variable	Supporting Black Lives Matter Movement			
	β	χ^2	p	Effect size
Age	-.0831	22.5	< .0001	0.143
Gender (1 = male, 2 = female)	.1157	48.3	< .0001	0.210
Education	.0896	27.9	< .0001	0.159
Political orientation	-.7324	1280.8	< .0001	1.274
Ethnicity: Black vs. White	.2523	165.9	< .0001	0.394
Ethnicity: Hispanic vs. White	.0370	4.8	.0284	0.066
Ethnicity: Other vs. White	-.0122	0.5	.4666	0.021
Dream recall frequency	.0610	12.8	.0003	0.108

β = Standardized estimates

Table 4 Dream Recall of Participants (*N* = 4,947)

Variable	Whites (<i>N</i> = 3,271)	Blacks (<i>N</i> = 606)	Hispanic (<i>N</i> = 669)	Other (<i>N</i> = 401)
Almost every morning or more often	10%	13%	14%	14%
Several times a week	27%	23%	25%	25%
Once a week	16%	14%	19%	16%
One to three times a month	19%	19%	17%	20%
Less often than once a month	23%	23%	18%	18%
Never	6%	7%	6%	8%
Once a week or more	52%	50%	58%	54%
Once a week or less	48%	50%	42%	46%

Among the bad dreams and nightmares not directly related to protests, several had themes and emotions that the dreamers associated with the BLM protests. These indirect dreams bring protest-related themes, emotions, and conflicts into other settings that are more familiar and personally meaningful to the dreamer:

Even though it was sort of like the protests, it was my MOM who was laying on the ground beside a car, bleeding from the abdomen (as if she were shot) but my mom is 85 and in a nursing home and has pancreatic cancer. I haven't been able to visit her since the nursing home lockdown began. My mind conflated the protest violence with my mom's situation.

Another dreamer wrote:

A friend and I were using computers in a public place, like a library, and security guards unexpectedly began kicking us out of the place. They were super aggressive and violent, pushing us and destroying our property. It reminded me of the violent way police have reacted to the protests and “enforced” the curfew that was imposed in New York City. It made me feel unpleasant and I wasn't able to go back to sleep afterwards.

Overall, 204 participants (4.12%) reported dreams that they related to the recent public protests about racial injustice (see Table 6). The major factor related to reporting a dream was dream recall frequency, followed by supporting the BLM. That is, participants

Table 5 Dream Sharing by Participants (*N* = 4,947)

Variable	Whites (<i>N</i> = 3,271)	Blacks (<i>N</i> = 606)	Hispanic (<i>N</i> = 669)	Other (<i>N</i> = 401)
Almost every morning or more often	3%	5%	9%	6%
Several times a week	9%	13%	17%	12%
Once a week	11%	9%	13%	13%
One to three times a month	15%	14%	15%	16%
Less often than once a month	40%	34%	28%	33%
Never	23%	25%	18%	20%
Once a week or more	23%	27%	39%	31%
Once a week or less	77%	73%	61%	69%

Table 6 Logistic Regression Analysis for Reporting a Dream Related to Recent Public Protests About Racial Injustice ($N = 4,947$)

Variable	Reporting a dream (Yes/No)			
	β	χ^2	p	Effect size
Age	.0055	0.0	.8968	0.004
Gender (1 = male, 2 = female)	.0369	0.8	.3627	0.025
Education	.1259	9.8	.0018	0.089
Supporting Black Lives Matter Movement	.1993	15.7	< .0001	0.113
Ethnicity: Black vs. White	.0387	1.1	.3024	0.030
Ethnicity: Hispanic vs. White	-.0563	1.5	.2142	0.035
Ethnicity: Others vs. White	-.0128	0.3	.6107	0.016
Dream recall frequency	.3504	57.2	< .0001	0.216

β = Standardized estimates

supporting this movement were more likely to report a dream related to the recent public protests about racial injustice. The only other variable associated with reporting a protest-related dream was higher education. Ethnicity, gender, and age were not related to reporting a dream.

Discussion

Overall, the findings indicate that the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, and the events that followed did affect dreaming among Americans, mostly in a negative way. Dreams related to recent public protests were more often reported by individuals who had high education and high dream recall and who supported the BLM movement. Interestingly, being Black was *not* related, independently of these other factors, with dreaming about the protests. Dreams were reported by people from various racial and ethnic backgrounds. The first three questions raised in the introduction can be clearly answered by these findings. (1) This study confirms previous findings about race and ethnicity in relation to dream recall and dream sharing. (2) Support for the BLM movement was higher among people with high dream recall and among people who reported a dream about recent protests. (3) The public protests about racial injustice have indeed registered widely in people's dreams (confirming the idea that dreaming can be responsive to collective social realities), especially in the dreams of people with high education, high dream recall, and/or support for the BLM movement, and these dreams were mostly frightening and nightmarish.

Several limits need to be acknowledged when considering these results. The authors are both White men, mid-career academics, one from the United States and one from Germany, and thus our perspectives are inevitably influenced by these backgrounds. As long-time dream researchers, we are familiar with the pervasive power of unconscious biases, and we have tried to keep this clearly in mind at every level of the process. The participants, although drawn from a large and diverse group, do not necessarily represent a perfect sample of the American population as a whole, nor its various racial and ethnic groups.

Sharing dreams in the impersonal context of an online survey might not have felt comfortable for some people, suggesting the percentage of people reporting a dream may be artificially low. It is also possible the dream report percentage is misleadingly high; perhaps the time when the survey was conducted (June 15–19, 2020) was the peak of dreaming about the BLM protests and dropped off soon thereafter. These uncertainties mean that caution is necessary in drawing any conclusions here.

Nevertheless, the large variations in terms of the sociodemographic background of the participants and their detailed responses offer a relatively broad and inclusive view of American public sentiment at this particular point in time. Thus, the results of the regression analysis (using the raw, unweighted survey data) investigating the factors associated with supporting the BLM movement and the reporting of dreams associated with the recent public protests about racial injustice seem to be valid.

It is also reassuring to note the consistency of this study's results with the previous study of dream recall and dream sharing (Schredl & Bulkeley, 2019). The present findings show dream recall highest among Hispanics, with Whites about the same as Blacks. This almost exactly replicates the findings of the previous study. The present study also finds more dream sharing among Hispanics than Whites, although in the present study the Black participants report sharing dreams somewhat more frequently than Whites, not equally with Whites as was found in the 2019 study. The racial and ethnic differences on these two questions do not lend themselves to an easy explanation, but the differences should not overshadow the significant similarities: *Remembering dreams and talking about them with other people is a common phenomenon among members of all racial and ethnic groups.* About half the overall population remembers a dream once a week or more often, and about a quarter shares a dream with someone else once a week or more often.

The findings on support for the BLM movement reveal a significant majority in favor, especially among non-Whites, political liberals, women, younger people, and people with higher education. Those characteristics of BLM supporters might not be surprising, but what does seem surprising is the tendency of people with higher dream recall to support BLM, independently of the other demographic variables. At least three possible explanations for this finding can be considered. First, previous research has associated high dream recall with the personality trait of openness to experience (Schredl & Goritz, 2017). This might predispose such people to be more receptive to a progressive movement calling for new awareness, change, and social reform. Second, some high dream recallers have a significant history with personal and/or collective trauma (Barrett, 1996; Cartwright, 2010; Hartmann, 2011). It is possible that extensive media coverage of recent and historical instances of racial injustice elicited a sympathetic response among this group of people. Third, almost by definition, people with high dream recall tend to have a great deal of familiarity with their unconscious minds. If they have enhanced their familiarity through psychotherapy, formal education, and/or personal study, they may over time develop a high degree of knowledge about psychological processes operating outside of waking awareness. This might give them more comfort with, and respect for, a movement calling for greater public attention to unconscious biases that cause systemic social injustice.

Lacking the ability to perform follow-up interviews with the survey participants, it is difficult to confirm or disconfirm these possibilities. This is also true with the dream reports, which are eloquent in their emotional honesty but offer no additional context or personal associations to help in illuminating their meanings. Some insights can perhaps be gleaned by looking for other kinds of interpretive context. For example, the dreams gathered in this survey, brief as they are, have similarities with the dreams discussed in Black cultural traditions going back centuries, as cited in the introduction. The idea of dreaming

as a powerful means of articulating community concerns and prophetic calls for justice has a long historical presence in these traditions, ultimately reaching back to ancient African and Abrahamic religious teachings (Bulkeley et al., 2009; Bynum, 1993; Jedrej & Shaw, 1992). The dreams in this study may also be compared with other collections gathered during times of dramatic social upheaval, whether from natural disasters, war and terrorism, or political conflict (Bulkeley & Kahan, 2008; David & Mellman, 1997; Hartmann & Basile, 2003; Pagel et al., 1995; Siegel, 1996; Wood et al., 1992). The leitmotif in these dreams, not surprisingly, is fear and vulnerability. It might seem that nightmarish dreaming like this is merely symptomatic and best ignored or treated with medications. However, some researchers have suggested that such dreams can have a cathartic and potentially therapeutic effect in promoting emotional honesty, self-awareness, and psychological resilience (Barrett, 1996; Hartmann, 2011; Siegel, 1990).

The greater likelihood of people with high dream recall to report a protest-related dream makes sense insofar as these are the people most likely to be paying attention to their dreams in the first place. The tendency of people with higher education to report more of these dreams is less easily explained. Perhaps they have more of these dreams because they have more familiarity with complex social systems, more knowledge of history, and/or more exposure to racial and ethnic diversity. Little empirical research has been done on dreams and variations in educational achievement, so this remains an open question.

Implications for caregiving in pastoral and secular contexts

Not everyone has these kinds of dreams, but for those who do have them, they are emotionally impactful and have long-lasting effects on their lives. Especially during times of personal and collective crisis, unusually vivid dreams can appear to people who are not otherwise familiar with this aspect of their psychological and spiritual lives. For anyone who provides caregiving services to people experiencing a crisis situation, especially in a pastoral context, the following implications from the findings of this study can be emphasized.

First, these findings support the idea that dreams offer a valuable window into people's feelings and experiences during a collective crisis. To be clear, none of the dreams can be judged "right" or "wrong"; they are emotionally honest mirrors of the psychological and spiritual complexities of each individual's encounter with a rapidly and sometimes violently changing world. This makes them valuable for therapists and counselors and caregivers of all kinds as a source of insight and reflection for helping people navigate their way through the frightening uncertainties of the present towards a better future.

Second, the variety of threats and dangers highlighted in these dreams is remarkable, even when compared to dreams from other collective crises. In dreams of a natural disaster, for example, the primary threat comes from a single impersonal force of nature, such as a fire, hurricane, or earthquake. In dreams of war or terrorism, the threat usually comes from a specific enemy. However, in the dreams gathered during the first wave of protests following the murder of George Floyd, people feel endangered by threats coming from a bewildering array of directions: the police, protestors and looters, home invaders, amorphous crowds, the pandemic, civil war, and general societal breakdown. Many of these dreams have an apocalyptic quality, reflecting existential concerns and metaphysical anxieties that pastoral counselors may be especially well suited to help people address.

Third, the findings about dream-sharing frequencies among Blacks and Hispanics suggest that dreams, and the cultural traditions revolving around dreams, may *already* be playing a significant role in personal and collective health among members of these groups. As indicated by the literature review in the introduction, a veneration for dreaming has deep roots in African American communities, especially in relation to its prophetic and visionary powers. Judging by the dream-sharing evidence in the present study, this traditional interest in dreaming among Blacks has continued to the present day. Also mentioned earlier was the finding of a previous study by the authors that Blacks have a more positive attitude towards dreams compared to Whites (Bulkeley & Schredl, 2019). Taken together, these findings encourage more attention by both religious and secular caregivers to the cultural dream traditions that actively shape and influence people's dreaming experiences in response to contemporary challenges. These traditions often include the beliefs that dreaming is a source of encounters with the ancestors, anticipatory visions of the future, warnings of impending danger, divine revelations, healing energies during times of sadness and loss, and inspiration for new creativity. Such beliefs have passed from one generation to another for centuries, rarely discussed in the abstract but available when the need arises to provide trustworthy, time-honored guidance when strange dreams and troubling nightmares occur. Knowing this, pastoral caregivers can welcome the emergence of their clients' dreams, even their nightmares, as therapeutic allies and can invite deeper reflection on their traditional meanings and relevance to current life, both literally and symbolically.

Fourth and finally, the most encouraging dreams reported in the present survey involved the dreamers having personal conversations in vivid, highly emotional terms with other people about BLM, racism, and how to find better mutual understanding. These "dialogical dreams" seemed to create a space in which the dreamer could bring conflicting forces (e.g., friends or co-workers who disagree about BLM) into a relationship mediated by language rather than devolving into aggression and physical violence. The promise of such dialogical dreams is not that simply talking about our differences will lead to a utopia of racial harmony; to quote the dream cited above as an example of this type, people talking and apologizing wasn't enough—"They needed to act to create a better community." What these dreams suggest is the possibility that, through active conversations and honest dialogues, we can find a way to co-exist more peaceably, and perhaps even joyfully, as the following dream envisions:

In reality, I have 2 friends who had a falling out due to very different opinions about the BLM movement. In my dream, the two people reconciled and ate a family-style dinner together. Then the 3 of us danced.

Conclusion

This study has highlighted the dynamic interplay of dreaming, race, and culture in a contemporary American context. Especially during times of personal and collective crisis, dreams have a tendency to emerge in people's minds with extra intensity. For those who support the BLM movement, these are such times. What is notable, and potentially hope-inspiring from the perspective of this study, is the apparent continuity of dream-sharing traditions in African American communities, stretching across centuries from the ancient past to the perilous present. The continuity of these traditions offers a time-honored resource for psychological and spiritual health.

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