

## **Table 7—Why Race May Not Matter in Opportunity Theories**

- **Race or ‘being black’ (i.e., the values, beliefs, emotional states, personality traits, etc. of black people) does not matter so much in explaining violence; only opportunities for violence matter**
- **Because opportunities for violence are neither black nor white, differences in violence across black and white communities may simply reflect these opportunities and not differences in the number of motivated offenders**
- **Therefore, high rates of violent crime in urban poor black communities tell us nothing about what it means to be black; in other words, they say nothing about black-only experiences like slavery, Jim Crow or how blacks might have coped with those experiences (i.e., violent values, racial self-hatred, group self-hatred, displaced aggression, feelings of emasculation, oversensitivity to slights, etc.)**
- **Because holding violent values and using violence to resolve disputes was commonplace in traditional America and survives in a number of places today, holding violent values and using violence as self-help cannot be a basis for lumping blacks together or distinguishing (splitting) them from whites**
- **Because blacks may be more likely to live in stateless spaces, where the law is absent, weak or unavailable, they may simply be people who live in special types of places with more OPPORTUNITIES for violence rather than special types of people with special, black-only motivations for violence.**