

# Youth Criminalization



STOP  
Defending Us  
from Our  
Beloved  
SONS

# Examples of criminalization: The process by which behaviors and individuals are transformed into crime and criminals.

- ▶ Skateboarding & Rollerblading~damage property, loitering
- ▶ Basketball bans (no public hoops)~fear it will “attract” crime
- ▶ Curfews



# Examples of criminalization:

- ▶ Gay, transgender, and gender nonconforming youth are over-represented in the juvenile justice system—approximately 300,000 gay and transgender youth are arrested and/or detained each year, of which more than 60 percent are black or Latino.
- ▶ Though gay and transgender youth represent just 5 percent to 7 percent of the nation's overall youth population, they compose 13 percent to 15 percent of those currently in the juvenile justice system (Hunt & Mills 2012).

FIGURE I

## Youth in Confinement: 1975–2010 (rate per 100,000)

The rate of youth confinement in the United States dropped by 41 percent between 1995 and 2010, from 381 per 100,000 youth to 225 per 100,000.

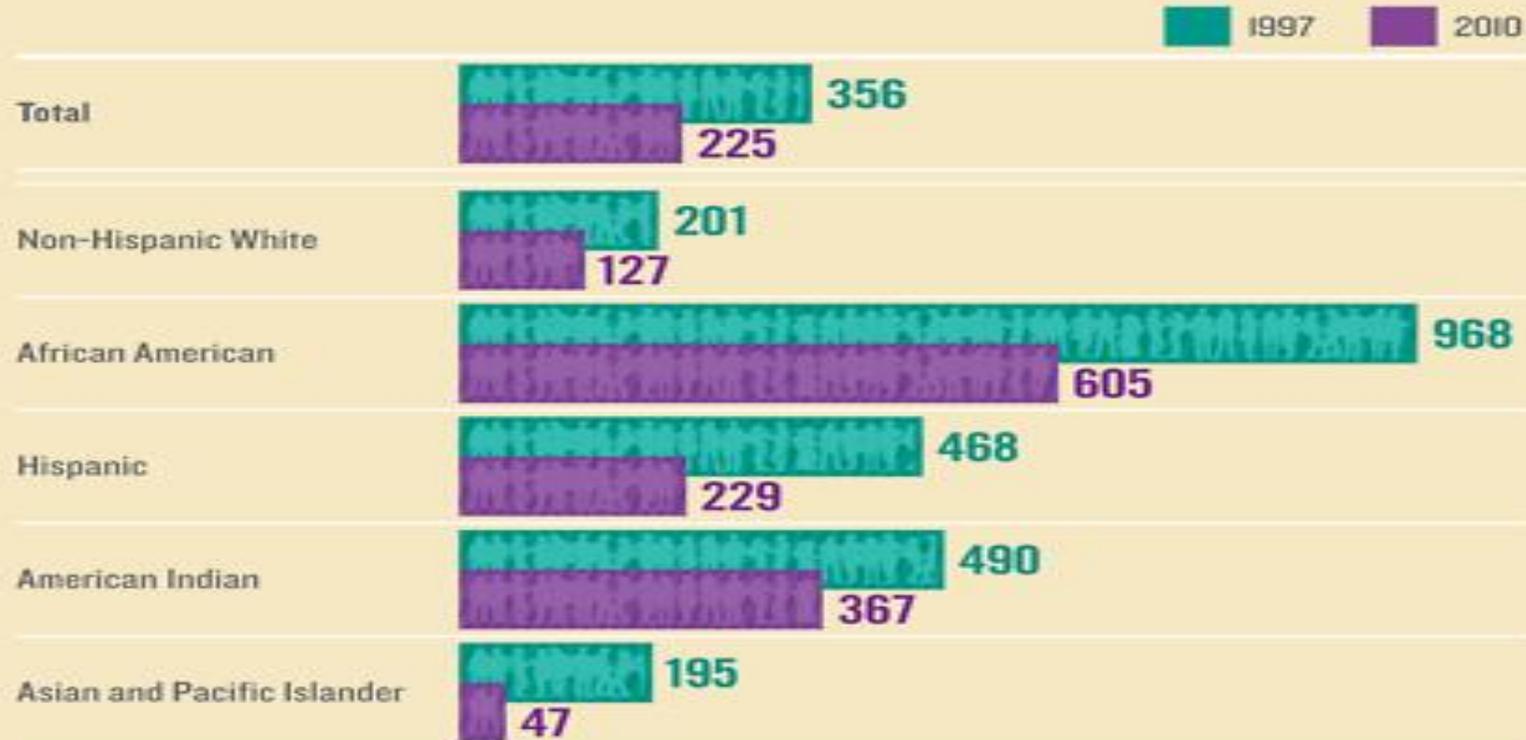


**SOURCES** 1975–1995: Smith, Bradford. (1998). "Children in Custody: 20-Year Trends in Juvenile Detention, Correctional, and Shelter Facilities." *Crime & Delinquency*, 44 (4), pp. 526–543. and 1997–2010: Sickmund, M., Sladky, T.J., Kang, W., and Puzzanchera, C. (2011) "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement." [www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/](http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/)

**FIGURE 2**

### Youth in Confinement by Race (rate per 100,000)

The decline in youth confinement has occurred across all five largest racial groups, but large disparities remain in youth confinement rates by race.



**SOURCE** Sickmund, M., Sladky, T.J., Kang, W., and Puzzanchera, C. (2011) "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement." [www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/](http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/)

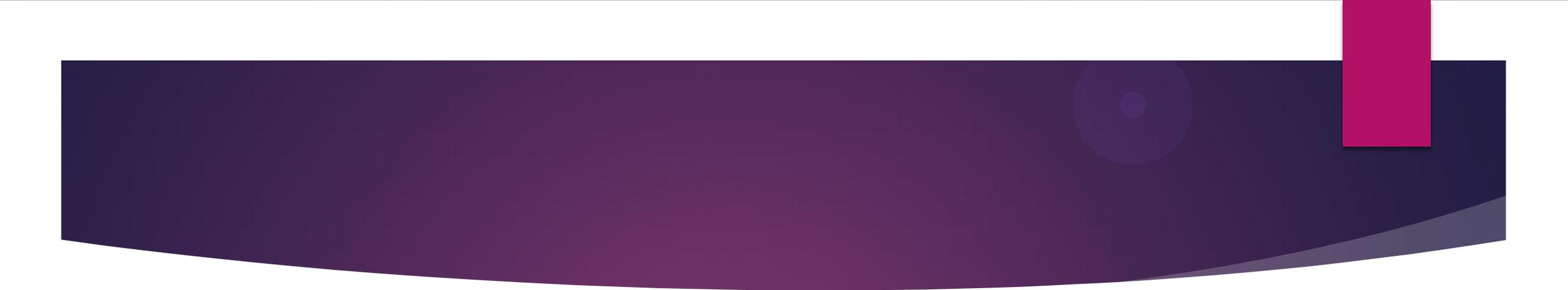
# Basic Definitions

## **Race:**

- ▶ Associates differential value, power and privilege with characteristics
- ▶ Establishes hierarchy among the different groups

**Power:** ability of individuals or members of a group to further the interests they hold even when there's resistance.

**Racism:** practices that work to reproduce a racial hierarchy where some benefit while others are oppressed. \*Based on power



## **Structural Racism:**

Accumulated effects of centuries of racialized practices within different social and economic structures.

**Social Darwinism:** survival of the fittest concept applied to society.

**~Dehumanization~** demonizing others by making them seem less than human. Often, attributing animal characteristics to people (Jewish, Latinos, Blacks, etc)

**How do we see this today?**



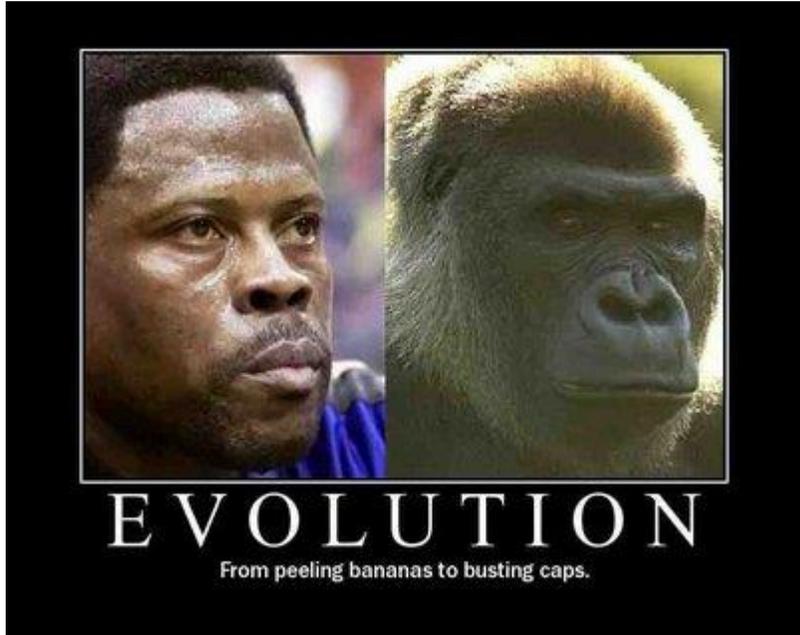
THE BRITISH LION AND THE IRISH MONKEY.

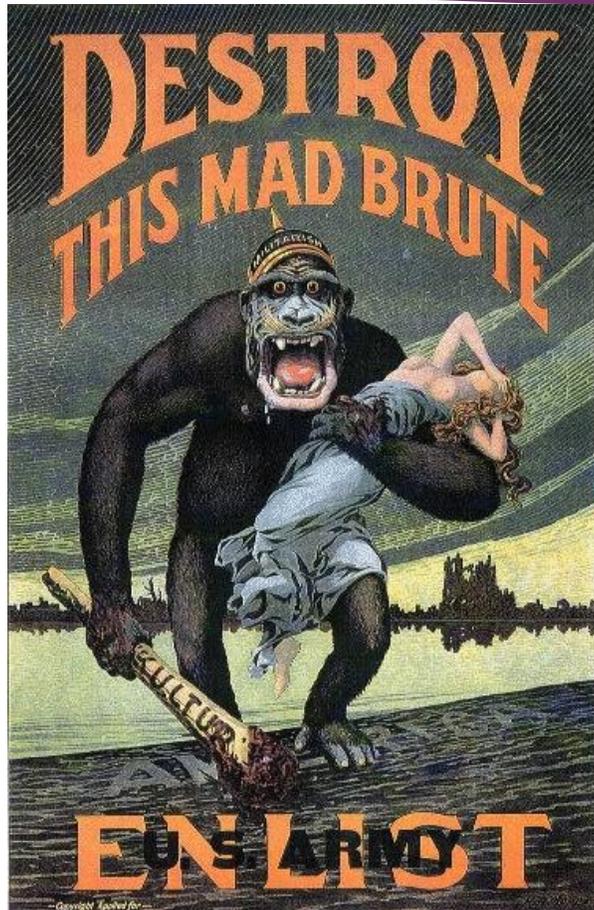
Monkey (Mr. Storkell). "One of us MUST be Put Down."



**Жи́ды, как крысы,  
поглощают  
достояние  
вашего народа!**

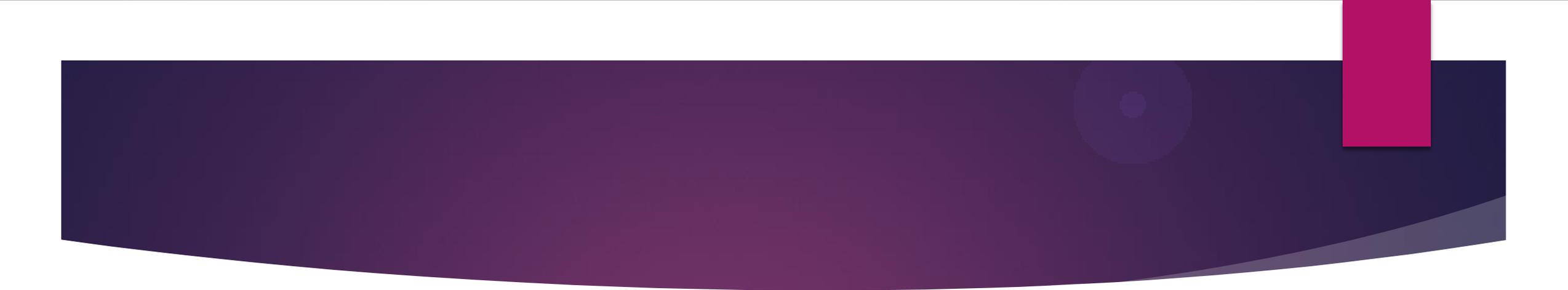
**Гоните жидов из страны!  
Только так вы быстро закончите  
эту бессмысленную войну!**





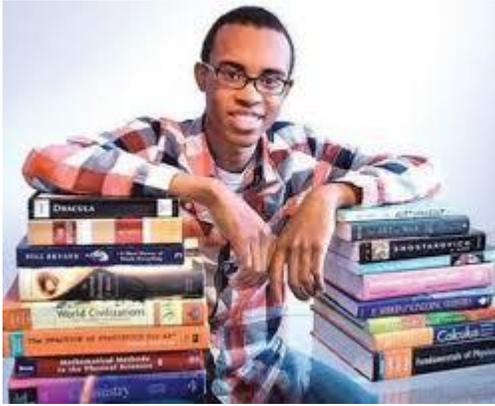
# Primate in Chief



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- ▶ Goff et al (2014) found evidence in four studies that Black boys are seen as older and less innocent than other children. The Black/ape association predicted racial disparities in police violence toward children.
  - ▶ Darren Wilson's account of Michael Brown as having "the most aggressive face...it looks like a demon. That's how angry he looked....he made a grunting like aggravated sound. I had never seen anyone look like that...very aggravated, aggressive, hostile."
  - ▶ Black boys/men's media portrayal as aggressive, thuggish, gangster

Less of this...





More of this...



# Discussion:

- ▶ What are other examples of ways in which we as a society dehumanize certain groups to explain violence, genocide, war crimes and human rights violations?
- ▶ Using the articles you read for this week, how may the portrayal of young Black men influence our beliefs and attitudes towards this group? How is it reinforced?
- ▶ What can you as an individual do/say to bring awareness to these social mechanisms, structures and processes?

# Sources

- ▶ <http://www.usprisonculture.com/blog/2013/12/27/10-things-to-know-about-juvenile-justice-youth-criminalization-in-2013/>
- ▶ <https://www.good.is/articles/three-anti-youth-policies>