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## Habitual Offender Monitoring Enforcement (H.O.M.E.) Task Force: Combating Auto Thefts Committed by Habitual Juvenile Offenders

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**Nova Southeastern University  
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and  
School of Criminal Justice**

**Habitual Offender Monitoring Enforcement (H.O.M.E.) Task Force: Combating Auto  
Thefts Committed by Habitual Juvenile Offenders**


**By  
Anika M. Dzik**


**An Applied Dissertation Presented to the  
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and  
School of Criminal Justice of  
Nova Southeastern University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
**Doctor of Philosophy****


**Nova Southeastern University  
2019**

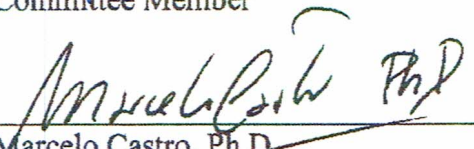
## Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Anika Dzik under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Philosophy at Nova Southeastern University.

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without frustration, you made me a better student and allowed me to see the bigger picture. Finally, I would like to thank the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office for allowing me to use the data.

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### Abstract

Habitual Offender Monitoring Enforcement (H.O.M.E.) Task Force: Combating Auto Thefts Committed by Habitual Juvenile Offenders. Anika Dzik, 2019: Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education, School of Criminal Justice.

Descriptors: habitual juvenile offender, auto theft task force, intensive supervised probation, targeting juvenile crime

Pinellas County was combating a juvenile auto theft-problem evidenced by a major increase in juveniles breaking into and stealing cars across all city jurisdictions. Due to the auto theft-problem, the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office created the Habitual Offender Monitoring Enforcement (H.O.M.E.) Task Force that includes multiple law enforcement jurisdictions within the county to address the problem. The purpose of the H.O.M.E. Task Force is to strictly enforce court-ordered sanctions by intensively supervising juveniles to decrease the likelihood of them committing more crimes. The H.O.M.E. Task Force focuses specifically on habitual juvenile offenders and the auto theft-problem, which is currently one of a kind in the country.

The study examined the impact that the H.O.M.E. Task Force has had on the juvenile auto theft-problem for the first two-and-a-half years of it being established. Secondary data from August 2016 to December 2018 was provided by the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office H.O.M.E. Task Force. Results showed that the task force correctly selected which juveniles to monitor in relation to the auto theft-problem. Analysis showed there is a significant negative correlation between arrests for violating court-ordered sanctions and a decrease in auto theft-related crimes among juveniles monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force. The implications of these findings support that other law enforcement agencies apply the same strategies the H.O.M.E. Task Force used to combat juvenile crime. It is suggested that future research consider evaluating compliance check outcomes and the use of electronic monitors on juvenile recidivism rates.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Nature of the Research Problem**

In recent years, Pinellas County has been hit with an epidemic of juvenile auto thefts. Pinellas County was ranked number one in the state of Florida for juvenile auto thefts when the problem began in 2014 (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2018). Auto thefts by juveniles had the largest increase from 196 in 2013-2014 to 336 in 2014-2015. Community stakeholders decided then to create a think tank to combat the teen auto theft-problem in Pinellas County. One of these strategies included the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) creating a juvenile task force dedicated to combat the habitual offenders committing auto thefts. Four additional strategies will be discussed in a later section.

This study mainly focuses on the impact of the task force dedicated to habitual juvenile offenders with consideration to the other four strategies. When the juvenile justice processes were evaluated by the PCSO, it was evident that better communication between stakeholders and enforcing court-ordered sanctions on juveniles would be essential to addressing the problem. Since then, the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office has partnered with nine jurisdictions to combat this problem. These jurisdictions include St. Petersburg Police Department, Clearwater Police Department, Pinellas Park Police Department, Largo Police Department, Tarpon Springs Police Department, Pinellas County School District, Florida's 6<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office, and the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. The goal was to decrease juvenile crime, specifically auto related-thefts by habitual offenders.

The Habitual Offender Monitoring Enforcement (H.O.M.E.) Task Force is a unit of law enforcement officers from all jurisdictions in Pinellas County. H.O.M.E. is responsible for monitoring all juveniles that meet specific criteria to prevent habitual offenders from recidivating. Generally, these criteria include juveniles on probation with a history of auto theft-related charges such as property crimes. Learning the impact of H.O.M.E. would not only reveal if crime rates and recidivism were decreasing by these efforts, but also could lead to recommendations for other law enforcement agencies with similar juvenile problems. Recommendation topics may include a specialized unit, open communication with other stakeholders, and strategies for monitoring juveniles, etc. The purpose of this study is to learn if the H.O.M.E. Task Force is fulfilling the goal of reducing juvenile auto thefts, by acting as a liaison between stakeholders and enforcing court-ordered sanctions.

### **Background & Significance**

Prior to the H.O.M.E. Task Force being established, the St. Petersburg Police Department and Tampa Police Department noticed there was an increase of stolen vehicles in their respective jurisdictions. It was realized that the majority of the stolen cars were unlocked with 39% (Sampson & Gartner, 2017). Twenty-five percent of juveniles had access to a key, 11% of the cars were running, 24% unknown, and 1% forced entry (Sampson & Gartner, 2017). The police departments tried educating the public of this problem by reminding them to lock their vehicles. Unfortunately, this method was ineffectual. A closer look at the problem revealed that the offenders stealing cars were juveniles. Also, these juveniles were driving the stolen vehicles across the Howard Franklin Bridge that connected the two jurisdictions. From this point, a

collaboration was created between the St. Petersburg Police Department, Tampa Police Department, and the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office – which resulted in the establishment of the Auto Theft Task Force in August 2015 (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, 2015).

According to the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (2015), there was a 31% increase in auto thefts when comparing the first six months of 2013 and 2014. From January to July 2015, 75% of the 520 stolen cars reported were known to be unlocked. The drastic increase of auto thefts was concerning enough; however, there were additional dangerous factors.

Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) found with more stolen cars by juveniles, there was an increase of fleeing from police which often include driving dangerously, running red lights or stop signs (Anderson & Linden, 2014). This put the juvenile and others around at risk of being injured or killed. Auto thefts influence other criminal activity such as street crime robberies (Anderson & Linden, 2014; Force, 2016). Pinellas County has already noticed an increase in other criminal activity due to the high rate of auto thefts (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, 2015). Furthermore, juveniles have stolen guns from unlocked cars.

In the United States between 2005 and 2010, 93% of gun thefts occurred during a property crime (Langton, 2012). Offenders with more guns put themselves and others at risk of being shot. A stolen gun from an unlocked car in Jacksonville killed an officer in Tarpon Springs (Peluso, 2013; Sampson, 2015). Peluso (2013) suggests that auto theft is a gateway crime that starts at lower level property offenses and leads to other more

violent crimes. For these reasons, the serious nature of auto thefts extends beyond the crime itself.

In August 2016, the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office decided it was necessary to pull together more resources to combat the problem. This led to the creation of the H.O.M.E. Task Force which included sheriff's deputies and officers in jurisdictions across the county such as St. Petersburg, Pinellas Park, Clearwater, and Largo (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, 2015).

Auto thefts in Pinellas County drastically increased from 196 occurring in 2013-2014, to 336 in 2014-2015, and 416 in 2015-2016. Dade County ranked second with 161 occurring in 2013-2014, 193 in 2014-2015, and 255 in 2015-2016. Pinellas County had close to double the amount of juvenile auto thefts when compared to Dade County in 2015-2016. Most other counties had significantly less, under 100 auto thefts per year. Only four counties out of 67 had over 100 auto thefts during this time. Broward and Orange Counties came in third and fourth place in the highest number of auto thefts, respectively (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2018). Not only is victimization of vehicle owners occurring at a higher rate, but it is also causing juvenile deaths (Sampson & Gartner, 2017).

Between 2016 and 2018, nine juveniles died from crashing stolen vehicles. Three female juveniles drowned in a stolen car after driving off the road and into a pond (McNeill, Morel, & Marrero, 2016). Three male juveniles died after crashing into another car, a fourth juvenile ejected from the car and survived with minor injuries (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, 2017). Two juveniles crashed into a tree, causing severe injuries leading to one death (Capriel & Frago, 2018). Most recently, two juveniles lost control of

a stolen car, causing the car to roll and then crash into a tree (Sampson, 2018). However, not all car accidents caused by juveniles in stolen cars make the news. An investigation through 18 months of police reports found that juveniles crash a stolen vehicle every four days in Pinellas County (Sampson & Gartner, 2017).

An incident that brought more awareness of the serious nature of the issue occurred on August 6th, 2017. Six juveniles were involved in thefts of two vehicles; four were in one vehicle and two in the other. The four-juvenile vehicle crashed into a car that occupied a driver. The two-juvenile vehicle drove at speeds approaching 120 mph and played a “cat and mouse game” (Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office, 2017, 11:10). As a result of this reckless driving, the stolen car with four juveniles crashed into the car of a man driving to work. Three of the juveniles of the in the four-juvenile vehicle died and one was ejected from the vehicle with minor injuries. According to the Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office, the six juveniles, ages 14 to 18 years old, had a combined 126 previous arrests. Nineteen of these arrests were for grand theft auto. Other charges included aggravated assault with a weapon, firing a weapon in public, burglary of an occupied dwelling, fleeing and eluding, armed burglary, and armed robbery. Thirty-nine of the charges were for violating probation. The juvenile detention center booked them a total of 43 times. These juveniles were already being monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force with only curfew sanctions. A few of them had just been release from the juvenile detention center days before the incident. The sheriff and families blame it on the lack of consequences (Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office, 2017; Morel, Gartner, & Sampson, 2017).

H.O.M.E. assists the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice to enforce court-ordered sanctions such as curfew, home detention, home detention with an electronic monitor, and graduated sanctions. Officers check on juveniles regularly to see if they are abiding by their curfew and/or home detention. The goal is to closely monitor juveniles to deter them from committing more crimes. There is no other known juvenile task force designed the way H.O.M.E. is to focus on habitual offenders, enforce their court-ordered sanctions, and to have a partnership between multiple jurisdictions. Typically, other jurisdictions do not have law enforcement officers speaking with the state attorney's office, judges, and the juveniles' probation officers on a regular basis. The collective of these entities makes for better execution of law and allows juveniles to be connected with appropriate services.

### **Barriers & Issues**

A possible barrier to completing this study is not being approved to access part or all of the data requested. In this situation, the researcher could work with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office to find a solution to access data that could be analyzed and fulfill the purpose of this study. For example, changing the research questions may be a solution. Additionally, there is no other task force specific to habitual juvenile offenders and auto thefts in the State of Florida or any other state. Although law enforcement task forces are common, there are limitations to only having one task force to collect data from and no others to use as a comparison.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the H.O.M.E. Task Force on the reduction of juvenile crimes, specifically auto thefts by habitual offenders.

Officers of the task force regularly complete compliance checks on juveniles with court-ordered sanctions such as curfew and home detention. By closely monitoring juveniles, officers are able to determine whether sanctions are adhered to.

This study is interested in learning if violation of court-ordered sanctions predicts whether juveniles will commit further auto theft-related crimes. Learning if a juvenile violates his or her court-ordered sanctions predicts the likelihood to commit another auto theft could influence the way violations are handled in the future. The relationship between juveniles monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force versus those that are not with respect to predicting auto thefts will be evaluated to understand the outcomes of each group.

Juveniles' charges will be categorized by crime types to measure the auto theft-problem against other crimes. These crime types will be compared in all three research questions to learn the prevalence of each during the studied time frame broken down by year and if a juvenile was monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force or not. The breakdown of each will show which crime types were significantly different and to what extent do they have practical significance. Crime types were assessed for correlations to reveal if H.O.M.E. juveniles have certain crime patterns. This should be helpful to foster focusing on combatting the juvenile auto theft-problem.

Other possible influencing factors on the data outcome were considered throughout the study. Known factors include the other three strategies Pinellas County is currently using to combat juvenile auto thefts. Newly implemented strategies are social work services through H.O.M.E. navigators, the new prolific juvenile offender bill, and new programs and treatment options for habitual offenders.

The results of this study may lead to recommendations for other law enforcement agencies, including in other jurisdictions to combat juvenile auto thefts. Also, the results may be generally informative by adding to the current literature because there are no other known specialized juvenile task forces similar to the H.O.M.E. Task Force.

### **Definitions of Terms**

Terms used throughout this study may have different meanings to individuals, depending on their background. For example, the definition for juvenile may be different by state or subject. For this reason, defined terms are important to understand the topic and research. Throughout the course of this work, the following terms and definitions are utilized:

**Delinquency:** Behaviors that fall within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court and result in processing by official juvenile justice agents (Elrod & Ryder, 2014).

**Disposition Hearing:** The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (n.d.b, para. 14) defines a disposition hearing as when the “court determines the sanctions, conditions, and services imposed on a youth who has committed a delinquent act.”

**Juvenile:** “Child” or “juvenile” or “youth” means any person under the age of 18 or any person who is alleged to have committed a violation of law occurring prior to the time that person reached the age of 18 years (Fla. Stat. § 985.3(7), 2017).

**Prolific Juvenile Offender:** According to Fla. Stat. § 985.255 (1)(J) (2017), A child is a prolific juvenile offender if the child:

1. Is charged with a delinquent act that would be a felony if committed by an adult;



2. Has been adjudicated or had adjudication withheld for a felony offense, or delinquent act that would be a felony if committed by an adult, before the charge under subparagraph 1.; and

3. In addition to meeting the requirements of subparagraphs 1. and 2., has five or more of any of the following, at least three of which must have been for felony offenses or delinquent acts that would have been felonies if committed by an adult:

a. An arrest event for which a disposition, as defined in s. 985.26, has not been entered;

b. An adjudication; or

c. An adjudication withheld.

**Recidivism:** According to Merriam-Webster, recidivism is a tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behavior; *especially:* relapse into criminal behavior.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Literature Strategy Search**

This literature review is focused on research related to community sanctions, interactions between law enforcement and juveniles, including juveniles, under court-ordered sanctions; strategies to address the problem; and the theoretical framework.

Online search methods were primarily used to gather peer-reviewed literature. Databases searched include ProQuest, SAGE, and JSTOR.

Additionally, new articles and press releases were used due to the nature of the problem and information available. Although these news articles and press releases are not peer reviewed, the information comes either directly from a law enforcement agency or was provided to the media by a law enforcement agency. The news articles and press releases are assumed as accurate because law enforcement agencies collect and document the information themselves through their normal duties.

### **Community Sanctions**

#### **Probation**

Probation can be court-ordered for a juvenile to abide by for a certain amount of time depending on the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice's (FDJJ) recommendation. Probation terms are usually three, six, nine, or 12 months. In some cases, the Judge will order indefinite probation' which lasts until the juvenile is considered an adult by FDJJ. Court-ordered mandates may include curfew, attending school, taking medication as prescribed, complying with counseling, and attending a day program or after school program (FDJJ, n.d.). Lack of compliance can result in a technical violation of probation. Juveniles can also get a violation of probation by getting a new charge, whether felony or

misdemeanor. Juvenile probation officers must use the effective response matrix before referring the juvenile back to the courts for any violations. The effective response matrix may suggest the juvenile participates in an alternative discipline to a punishment. For example, write a letter of apology or participate in community service before referring them to the court (FDJJ, n.d). All violations of probation completed by law enforcement results in the juvenile being taken into custody and referred directly to court. The court can then decide to change their detention status from being out in the community to home detention with or without an electronic monitor, or secure detention.

### **Intensive Supervised Probation**

In some cases, juveniles require a higher level of supervision than traditional probation. The H.O.M.E. Task Force used an intensive supervised probation (ISP) model. ISP is very closely supervised with strict enforcement. Generally, ISP means more contact with probation officers and law enforcement to ensure the juvenile is complying with his or her court-ordered probation or other sanctions.

Vidal and Woolard (2017) found that tough or punitive relationships between youth and officers were found to have a higher number of technical violations but fewer counts of new delinquent offenses. The support of the youths' parents was associated with fewer new delinquent offenses. Also, parental monitoring – defined as parental knowledge of a child's whereabouts or activities – was linked to both fewer new delinquent offenses and fewer technical violations (Hoeve et al, 2009; Vidal & Woolard, 2017). This evidence supports intensive supervision by showing the important role of the probation officer and the youths' parents. Thus, highlighting the possible benefits of a

joint effort between the parent and probation officer to use successful interventions on offending youth.

Researchers studied the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice's (KDJJ) Intensive Supervision Team Program (ISTP) to learn its impact on juveniles (Lowe, Dawson-Edwards, Minor, & Wells, 2008). ISTP was a community-based placement for committed juveniles who no longer required the level of supervision and care provided by juvenile facilities but needed more intensive supervision than regular probation. This program was also for high risk, out-of-home placed youth on probation. Youth selected usually had a history of offenses, repeated violation of probations or supervised community placement, or have other problems in their personal and home life. The team was comprised of KDJJ community workers and law enforcement officers. Using an intensive supervision strategy allowed the team to establish whether the juveniles were in compliance with their curfew or other sanctions to reinforce the importance of strict supervision of all court-ordered conditions, and to receive input from family members on the juvenile's behavior. Other goals of this program were to build a stronger relationship between local law enforcement and KDJJ, to collaborate with the youths' family on their progress, and to deter other youths from delinquent acts by promoting awareness of the serious nature (Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice, n.d.). Team members reported juveniles were receiving more technical violations than new felony or misdemeanor charges with the program (Lowe et al., 2008). At the start of the program, about 40% of juveniles were compliant with their curfew. A year later, 87% of juveniles complied with their curfew. Although the program was successful in increasing juveniles complying

with their sanctions, there are no other published findings about this program (Kentucky finds success, 2003).

Another program using intensive supervised probation methods to supervise high-risk youths was compared to a control group that was given standard probation. Hyatt and Barnes (2014) found that participants were not charged with significantly more or fewer charges than the control group. This is true across different types of offending such as violent, non-violent, property, and drug offending. Participants absconded more frequently and were more likely to be incarcerated at least once within 12 months (Hyatt & Barnes, 2014). Researchers concluded that ISP is not meant to reduce offending but remove non-complying offenders from the community (Hyatt & Barnes, 2014). These findings suggest ISP fails to reduce offending and has negative implications due to the key goals of being more severe, invasive, and restrictive than regular probation (Hyatt & Barnes, 2014).

Due to the mixed results of a number of studies on intensive supervised probation, researchers conducted a meta-analysis that included 27 studies on ISP. Findings suggested that although participants in ISP were not more likely to engage in criminal activity, the level of strict supervision did not have an effect on recidivism compared to traditional supervision (Bouchard & Wong, 2018). Yet, specific participant characteristics such as race, offense, violent or nonviolent, program characteristics e.g. size, protocols, intensity of treatment and other variable e.g. implementation quality characteristics could account for the mixed results (Bouchard & Wong, 2018). For this reason, researchers suggest more research done on ISP.

Implementing ISP can be costly due to resources involved. These include the number of probation and law enforcement officers required to consistently monitor the juveniles in the community (Bouchard & Wong, 2018). Traditional probation typically involves one probation officer monitoring a certain number of juveniles. ISP requires additional supervision that includes probation officers and law enforcement officers supervising juveniles. Unless the juvenile is abiding by his or her sanctions, he or she can get caught deeper in the juvenile justice system on technical violations (Bouchard & Wong, 2018). Traditional supervision would be more appropriate if there are no significant benefits to ISP. ISP is comprised of severe, invasive, and restrictive characteristics that also increase cost to limited resources in juvenile justice (Bouchard & Wong, 2018). Technical violations also use resources when juveniles are being processed through the court system. In contrast, an intense level of supervision could deter more serve juvenile offenders from committing new crimes in a couple ways. For example, juveniles abide by their sanctions more than with traditional supervision. On the other hand, they can be taken into custody on a technical violation before they can pick up a new felony or misdemeanor charge.

### **Electronic Monitoring**

There are many situations where a juvenile could be court-ordered to wear an electronic monitor (EM). Judges can order a juvenile on EM (1) if juveniles score for home detention with an EM on the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) at their advisory hearing as a pre-trial detention status; (2) as a graduated sanction with their disposition (curfew monitored by an EM); and (3) by the Prolific Juvenile Offender

(PJO) statute that requires the juvenile to wear an EM once they are released from the detention center and until their disposition.

Reasons behind a court-ordered electronic monitor include tracking the offender, remotely monitoring court-order sanctions, and deterring criminal activity (NIJ, 2011). Global Positioning System (GPS) electronic monitors allow for inclusion and exclusion zones to be built with schedules. Violation notifications include strap alerts, zone alerts, low battery alerts, and no GPS connection alerts. These alerts allow for violations to be caught in a timely manner. Electronic monitors are a tool for juveniles to stay in the community and be closely monitored. Enforcing sanctions can be as easy as building a schedule for the juvenile to be at home all day on home detention, or just for curfew. Other court-ordered requirements can be monitored such as school and/or program attendance. The idea is offenders will know they are being closely monitored and any deviations from the court-ordered requirements could result in a violation. If offenders commit a crime while on an electronic monitor, their location may confirm their involvement (Florida Senate Committee on Criminal Justice, 2004). On the other hand, it could be his or her alibi to not being involved in committing a crime (OJJDP, 2014).

Advantages to electronic monitoring include decreased costs, decreased recidivism, and real time monitoring in the community (Florida Senate Committee on Criminal Justice, 2004; NIJ, 2011; OJJDP, 2014). Per juvenile, it costs about \$5.50 to \$10 a day for electronic monitoring and about \$100 to \$160 a day in a detention center which is a significant cost savings (OJJDP, 2014). Juveniles are able to stay in their community instead of being locked up away from his or her home, family, school, and providers such as therapist or other doctors. It eliminates the negative effects of a juvenile being held in

a detention center. If the courts allow, the juvenile may also obtain a job to pay for the cost of their sanctions, restitution and other related costs.

There are also, disadvantages including false positive alerts, the emotional impact and stigma of wearing an electronic monitor, and the possibility of tampering (NIJ, 2011; OJJDP, 2014). False positives can happen if the monitor is not functioning properly or the GPS signal is weak. If the GPS signal is weak at the place of employment, the offender is required to take a break from what they are doing to walk outside for approximately 15 minutes to regain signal (NIJ, 2011). Wearing an electronic monitor could affect the offender emotionally with the associated stigma (NIJ, 2011). Thus, employers may not want an employee with an electronic monitor visible to customers that takes frequent breaks to regain signal (NIJ, 2011).

### **Interactions Between Law Enforcement and Juveniles**

Typically, law enforcement deals with adults more often than juveniles (Golden, 2015). Not many officers have frequent interactions with juveniles unless they are a school resource officer. The juvenile justice system handles juveniles differently than the adult system. For example, if a child gets in trouble with the law, officers use their discretion to issue a warning, divert the child to community-based services, or formally refer them to the court by arrest (Wilson & Hoge, 2013). An officer is more likely to just send a minor home under the influence of drugs or alcohol compared to if they were an adult (OJJDP, 2018).

While there are certain laws and restrictions an officer must abide by, there is room for discretion. Officers usually use their knowledge of legal factors, extralegal factors, and experience with similar situations in their decision making (Wilson & Hoge,



2013). Law enforcement officers typically only receive brief training on juveniles during the academy (Golden, 2015). Youth-specific trainings and research on law enforcement interactions with juveniles are not as widely available as they are for adults (Golden, 2015; OJJDP, 2018). The International Association of Police of Chiefs is trying to change this by researching and advocating for more youth-specific training law enforcement (Golden, 2015).

### **Specialized Juvenile Units**

Generally, law enforcement agencies do not have a specialized unit dedicated to juveniles unless it is gang-related or part of a community program for officers to build a relationship with children. Community-based programs where officers meet children to education them or build a positive relationship with law enforcement are common. Jurisdictions that have gang-related issues may have a number of officers dedicated to addressing the issue. For example, Chicago had a program called Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project during the years 1992 through 1995 to reduce serious violence in a gang-ridden neighborhood (Spergel, 2003). Evaluation outcomes found the project reduced arrests for violent crimes, serious violent crimes, and drug crimes but no effect on property crime arrests or total arrests (Spergel, 2003). This program was limited to one neighborhood and only juveniles involved in gangs. Recently, Chicago has been experiencing a similar problem to Pinellas County with an increase in juvenile auto-related thefts, but specifically carjackings (Gornor, 2018). Police blamed it on the lax juvenile justice system policies, but they currently do not have a law enforcement unit dedicated to auto thefts by juveniles (Mahtani, 2019).

Law enforcement auto theft task forces were commonly formed during the 1990's to combat the rise in carjackings and other types of auto thefts. Outcomes of the task forces efforts were generally positive in reducing crime. Auto thefts dropped to over half the rates in the previous years with these efforts. For example, the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority reduced auto theft by 57%, and the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council reduced vehicle theft by 77% (Thompson, 2019). Successes can be attributed to the task forces being specially equipped with the tools, knowledge and resources to aid in combating a certain issue that patrol officers do not have (Thompson, 2019).

Although law enforcement task forces are common, units with a focus on habitual juvenile offenders and auto thefts are not. The most similar task force to H.O.M.E. is one in Nashville with a focus on carjackings and stolen guns from unlocked cars primary by juveniles. However, the focus is not on juveniles specifically but on the violent crimes. It just happens to be largely committed by juveniles. Nashville has seen an increase in stolen firearms and cars in recent years. The task force started in 2017 when there was a noticeable increase of juveniles in possession of a firearms and using the firearms to commit violent crimes. For example, five teenagers were involved in multiple carjackings and murdered someone using a loaded stolen firearm (CNN Wire, 2019). Nashville's District Attorney's Office has asked judges to hold juveniles that come in with a gun charge for 30 days no matter their prior criminal history. Crime rates have decreased since the task force was established, yet they are experiencing more violence from juvenile suspects (Nance, 2019). Nashville grand jurors wrote to their legislators pleading for new gun laws because guns were constantly being stolen from unlocked cars even

with law enforcement campaigning to lockup cars and gun. The proposed gun laws would hold parents responsible for not properly securing their gun when storing it if their child uses in connection to a crime (Boucher & Tamburin, 2018). Nashville has taken similar steps to Pinellas County in response to the juvenile auto theft-problem by creating a juvenile task force, asking for the public's help by locking their cars, and asking for new laws to prevent future crimes.

In an article titled "Washington State Sets Up Curb to Auto Theft" (2007), the state of Washington addressed its auto theft-problem by adopting new stricter and harsher policies. The combination in Washington State of both underfunded law enforcement and weak laws allowed offenders to avoid being incarcerated for long durations which contributed to more auto thefts. Law changes allowed for longer sentences with fewer prior offenses for both adults and juveniles. Auto thefts dropped steadily from 2005 with 41,290 through 2009 with 21,246 (WATPA, 2013). From 2009 to 2016, auto thefts rose again to 29,399 in 2016 and decreased to 27,139 in 2017 (WATPA, 2017). Auto thefts decreased the same year the new laws were implemented but it is unknown why in 2009 that changed.

### **Target Population**

#### **Chronic Offenders**

Fox and Farrington (2016) researched different types of burglary offenders from law enforcement records that occurred in one Florida county between 2008 and 2009. The authors researched when chronic offenders began their criminal career. Roughly fifth-three started early between ages 7 and 14, 38.5% were adolescents 14 to 21 years old, and 8.9% were over 21 years old. Age was significant for those categories as young

starters and high rate offenders with 90.5% and 95.6% starting when they were an adolescent, respectively. In terms of criminal career length in years, 93.8% of high rate offenders were 0.1-5 years, and 81.6% of chronic offenders were 5.1-25 years. For these reasons, it is important to focus on juvenile habitual offenders. Fox and Farrington (2016) suggested that if chronic juvenile offenders were not addressed, they would continue into adulthood as a chronic offender and have a long criminal career. These findings being specifically from burglary offences are important to this study because burglaries are related to auto thefts. The offender breaks into a car before attempting to steal the car, which makes burglaries common for those that commit auto thefts.

### **Why Steal Cars?**

Stealing cars seems to be socially motivated by juveniles as some call themselves the “[grand theft auto] squad” (Sampson & Gartner, 2017, para. 36). They steal cars when they get the chance to, just to have a “joyride.” Kellett and Gross (2006) described joyriding as stealing a car to drive it around for fun. This often involves testing the car to see how fast it can go and trying different maneuvers. Juveniles in one study described stealing cars as getting a rush, some even compared it to being addicted to drugs or drinking alcohol (Kellett & Gross, 2006; McCathy, Capron, Jamieson & Carey, 2008). A high recovery rate within a short time indicates that cars are being stolen for joyriding rather than for profit (Anderson & Linden, 2014). Another study asked juveniles why they stole cars, 93% saying for joyriding, 87% indicating for transportation, and 84% claiming for the thrill of it (Anderson & Linden, 2014). These juveniles also said they started stealing cars at age 13 and that 73% were taught by friends.

### Strategies

Pinellas County is using five strategies to address the habitual juvenile offender and auto theft-problem. Strategies include (1) H.O.M.E. Task Force, (2) H.O.M.E. navigators that provide social work services, (3) Prolific Juvenile Offender (PJO) bill, (4) updated Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) scoring, and (5) more program and treatment options for teens with a variety of services and activities. This study's focus is on the impact of H.O.M.E. on juvenile crime. However, other strategies that are currently in place will be considered when measuring the impact of H.O.M.E.

### **Habitual Offender Monitoring Enforcement (H.O.M.E.) Task Force**

The purpose of the H.O.M.E. Task Force is to monitor juveniles and enforce court-ordered sanctions to reduce juvenile crimes. Generally, only juveniles with auto theft-related crimes are monitored. These juveniles are checked regularly and closely supervised. The unit is comprised of ten officers from five law enforcement agencies in Pinellas County, including sheriff's deputies. Officers conduct regular unannounced compliance checks on juveniles with curfew, or home detention. If they are not in compliance, the juvenile receives a law enforcement violation of probation. Officers also arrest juveniles with outstanding pick up orders or probable cause affidavits and locate absconders and runaways. Civilian staff on the task force include six Juvenile Electronic Monitoring Specialist (JEMS) and two investigative crime analysts. JEMS install, remove, and monitor juveniles court-ordered sanctions with an electronic monitor.

Crime can be transient in nature, especially with multiple jurisdictions within a county. Pinellas County has 11 municipal law enforcement agencies which makes it easy to cross jurisdictions. Grand theft motor vehicle and burglary are particularly transient

because of the nature of the crimes. Burglarizing and stealing cars can lead to crossing jurisdictions. Communication between jurisdictions is essential in addressing the juvenile auto theft-problem. Disseminating information of intelligence regarding criminal acts helps investigators to close cases and in keeping tabs on the offenders. Sharing information also helps if the offender moves into a different city within the county.

Before the task force was established, juveniles could use the lack of communication between jurisdictions against law enforcement. The task force is designed to coordinate efforts with law enforcement officers, the department of juvenile justice, and the state attorney's office. The collaboration of these entities help go through the juvenile justice system from start to finish of a case. From the juvenile being taken into custody, to disposition and after, stakeholders work together to support each other's efforts.

### **H.O.M.E. Navigators**

Juveniles and their families in the juvenile justice system can benefit from wraparound services in certain situations. H.O.M.E. navigators are social workers that work with and connect juveniles and their families in need to services. The goal is to decrease recidivism by addressing factors that can lead juveniles to crime. Navigators can connect juveniles to services that address issues, including substance abuse, mental health problems, and other aggravating factors that can lead him/her to crime (Gartner & Sampson, 2017). Some of the rationale for families using these wraparound services include helping to meet their basic needs, counseling, education services, housing and work assistance.

Juveniles are referred to a navigator when an officer recognizes the family can benefit from the services. For example, if a family is about to be evicted or have to move suddenly. Navigators can assist the family in finding a new home or possibly with other financial assistance. Assisting the family in these types of situations could help juveniles from potentially becoming homeless. Mulvey (2011) found that factors that distinguish low- from high-risk offenders are lower levels of substance abuse and level of stability in their daily routine. Stability in their daily routine is measured by their living arrangements, work, and school attendance. For these reasons, navigators helping the family could affect recidivism rates by preventing substance abuse and improving stability in their daily routine.

### **Prolific Juvenile Offender Bill**

Florida juvenile justice stakeholders and legislators recognized that there was a problem with prolific juvenile offenders in the juvenile justice system. Prolific offenders commit crimes repeatedly, with the harshest punishment possible being 21 days in the juvenile detention. However, in many cases, this specific type of juvenile usually only spends a few days in detention due to being let out early or receiving home detention with or without an electronic monitor. This was not serving as a proper deterrent. The risk with speedy release from detention is the rate at which these same prolific juveniles soon re-offend, sometimes a few days later (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, 2017). If the juveniles had been held for a longer period of time, there would be less crime. For these reasons, legislators passed the Prolific Juvenile Offender (PJO) bill. This bill specifically targets juveniles who have been found guilty on five crimes that include at least three felonies (Fla. Stat. § 985.255 (1)(J), 2017). Once a juvenile is labeled a PJO, the juvenile

justice system is allowed to hold them for 21 days in detention then release them on an electronic monitor until the disposition of their case. In some cases, the judge is allowed to hold the juvenile for longer in the detention center.

The PJO bill took effect on October 1, 2017. Since the bill has only been in effect for just about two years, there are little data on its impact. During the Florida Bar Criminal Justice Summit in 2018, panelist of the Steering Committee discussed the PJO bill. Only 222 juveniles across Florida had received this designation in the first year. The law was created not to be a “cookie-cutter” approach but to focus on the individual needs of offenders. Panelists agreed the law is serving its purpose in only effecting a certain group of juveniles.

### **Detention Risk Assessment Instrument**

When juveniles are arrested, a screener screens them using the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI), which determines the suggested detention status. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ) makes a recommendation based on the score and suggests a detention status for the juvenile to the judge at their initial detention hearing. In most cases, FDJJ goes with the suggested detention status; however, mitigating factors can lead to overriding the score to recommend a different detention status. An example of this would be if the DRAI score suggests a juvenile be on home detention without an electronic monitor but they have a history of running away or committing crimes at night. In these cases, FDJJ may recommend home detention with an electronic monitor in order to track the juveniles in case they runaway or leave their house at night. On the other hand, mitigating factors could also lead the judge to depart downward from the DRAI to a less severe detention status.



Juvenile justice stakeholders noticed that prolific car burglars were not being held as long as the stakeholders desired. They were getting out of detention within days, soon to re-offend with the same crime (Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, 2017). The revolving door became frustrating for law enforcement, soon re-arresting and offenders receiving little consequence. Additionally, the increase of juvenile deaths caused by joyriding in stolen cars became increasingly concerning. Thus, the department of juvenile justice decided to review the DRAI scoring and make necessary changes. Updates include considering the auto theft-problem and incorporating the new PJO law into the instrument. The new DRAI was implemented on July 1st, 2019 (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, n.d.).

### **Programs and Treatment Options**

Another approach to combating the juvenile problem is to provide teens' access to more programs. Programs can include a variety of services and/or activities. Activities like playing a sport could keep juveniles busy in a positive way while being supervised by an adult. Services could address any issues the juvenile may be having such as tutoring, counseling, or mentorship. The expectation is that as more programs are available, more juveniles will participate which could prevent them from committing crimes. Each program has different requirements the juveniles must meet to be eligible. For example, some are based on the area code the juvenile lives or require the program to be a court-ordered sanction. Certain types of criminal charges such as violent or sexual natured crimes would prevent a juvenile from being eligible to some programs.

Programs that were available to juveniles in Pinellas during the studies time frame include AMIKids, Paxen, and Evening Reporting Center (ERC) (Florida Department of

Juvenile Justice, 2017). According to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Comprehensive Accountability Report 2016-2017, recidivism rates were 53% for AMIKids and 60% for Paxen. ERC is a newer program so there is currently no statistic available for the recidivism rate. Paxen has since closed and re-opened as a new program called Pinnacle. Other new programs include Project Bridge and the Youth Advocate Program (YAP). Project Bridge has been successful in meeting their performance goals which includes participates not having any new law violations during the program, completing goals created specifically for them, and being matched to a pro-social supportive adult (Eckerd Connects, 2019). Project Bridge has also helped participates complete vocational certification classes, be matched to an employer, receive a GED (Eckerd Connects, 2019). The only performance outcome Project Bridge did not meet was because juveniles received law violations a year after being released from the program (Eckerd Connects, 2019). The YAP has been implemented in other regions with success (Karcher & Johnson, 2016). Successful completion of the YAP positively correlated with education and employment, and negatively correlated with criminality. The opposite was found to be true for those that did not complete the program. As these things improved, the severity of the criminal offenses (e.g. status offense, felony, misdemeanor) lessened, their school attendance increased, and they applied more effort in obtaining employment compared to similar youth who had not yet begun the program (Karcher & Johnson, 2016). Most of the program outcomes being offered to Pinellas County juveniles have found success in making positive changes. Programs found to be ineffectual have been shuttered with the new programs, taking a different approach.

### Theoretical Framework

Many studies on juvenile auto theft have used the routine activity theory (Pollock, Joo & Lawton, 2010). Felson and Cohen's (1980) routine activity theory infers that crime occurs when there is a suitable target, lack of a suitable guardian, and a likely motivated offender. Breaking the presence of one or more of these elements is enough to prevent crime. The combination of juveniles without supervision and unlocked cars with keys in it fits this description. In contrast, a juvenile with supervision by home detention, curfew, and/or an electronic monitor could be used as a guardian. Also, these sanctions would remove suitable targets. The offender may not be as motivated due to the level of supervision and the higher risk of being caught.

A similar theory, situational crime prevention, is aimed at eliminating criminal or delinquent tendencies of a specific crime. Rather than trying to change offender behaviors, prevention is done by changing the opportunities for crime. It is based on five elements: (1) increasing difficulty of crime, (2) increasing immediate risk of getting caught, (3) reducing rewards of offending, (4) removing excuses for offending, (5) reducing temptations and provocations (Freilich & Newman, 2017). Sanctions that require a higher level of supervision by the H.O.M.E. Task Force support these five elements. The goals of the task force align with situational crime prevention with the exception of two implications, displacement and direct enforcement of sanctions (Freilich & Newman, 2017). Displacement does not occur or is limited according to this theory. It is unknown, but possible, that juvenile crimes have been displaced due to take forces strict enforcement of sanctions. Direct sanctions are not supported by situational crime prevention which the task force relies heavily on. Felson (2018) suggested applying this

theory to auto thefts would be more surveillance cameras, security, and lighting for parking areas. A similar strategy is to encourage the public to lock their car doors. This was used by the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office but did not result in an impact on the juvenile auto theft-problem.

### **Conclusion**

The auto theft-problem in Pinellas County by habitual juvenile offenders is being addressed in a unique way, with a specialized juvenile task force. This multi-jurisdictional task force is the only one known of its kind. Although, there are other types of task forces for auto thefts, gangs, or neighborhoods, there are none specific for habitual juvenile offenders. The collaboration between stakeholders including the state attorney's office, probation officers, and law enforcement officers is to help with better communication and effective responses. For these reasons, looking at the impact of these efforts on juvenile crime will add to the limited literature on this topic. In addition, this study could provide recommendations for other law enforcement agencies.

### **Research Questions**

For the proposed study, the following quantitative research questions were addressed:

RQ1: What is the prevalence of each type of crime committed separately by juvenile during the years 2016 through 2018?

RQ2: What proportion of each crime type did juveniles monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force commit compared to juveniles not monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force commit separately during the years 2016, 2017 and 2018?

RQ3: Is there a correlation between the proportions of certain types of crime committed by juveniles monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force during the years 2016-2018?

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The proposed study seeks to examine the H.O.M.E. Task Force and its impact on juvenile crime using a quantitative research design with an experimental approach. The H.O.M.E. Task Force differentiates itself from other task forces in Florida and in the country. Studying the impact of the task force could add to the limited literature on this topic and provide recommendations to other law enforcement agencies. The quantitative research questions reveal how crime rates have been influenced by the H.O.M.E. Task Force and if influenced, to what extent.

### **Participants**

The quantitative research questions will be using secondary data collected on juveniles that have come in contact with law enforcement in Pinellas County. The juveniles have either committed a crime, are supervised by the H.O.M.E. Task Force, or a combination of these. Juveniles are deemed by their age and the guidelines of FDJJ. Some juveniles are 18 years old but, by FDJJ guidelines are still in the juvenile justice system. There will be no sampling method or random selection done due to the nature of using the total population for each group.

### **Research Design and Methodology**

This study is a quasi-experimental research using a within-subject approach and a single-group interrupted time-series design. This research design allowed the data to show data at multiple points overtime before and after the treatment. All research questions analyzed data in the time frame from implementation of the task force in

August 2016 through December 2018. Since these are secondary data, there was no data collection needed other than to request it from the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.

### **Crime Type Variables**

Arrest charges were categorized by assessing which broad category it would best fit under. Charges that did not fit into any of the groups were found to be anomalies and not relevant to the purpose of the study. Crime type categories include auto theft-related, property, person, public disorder/obstruction, traffic, drug, fraud, weapon, and violation. See Appendix for a breakdown of categories with a count of each charge included.

The study is aimed at assessing the impact of the H.O.M.E. Task Force on auto theft-related crimes by juveniles. For this reason, auto theft-related crimes include charges such as grand theft of a motor vehicle, burglary of conveyance, trespassing of conveyance, possession of burglary tools, and carjacking. Juveniles that were charged with the attempt of one of these crimes were also included in the auto theft-related crimes group. Burglary is defined as the act of breaking into a vehicle irrespective of if the vehicle was stolen; therefore, all auto thefts involve a burglary. Often times it is easier for law enforcement to substantiate a burglary charge not in conjunction with an auto theft because often despite there being demonstrable evidence of the burglary, proving the juvenile drove the vehicle is a harder task. Even if there is proof of a vehicle theft, often law enforcement is only able to substantiate a trespassing charge on passengers. Carjackings are similar to committing an auto theft because a car is being stolen. However, carjackings are actually robbery when the item being taken over is a vehicle.

Under Florida law there are specific statues regarding vehicles for both auto theft and burglary, these are specifically grand theft motor vehicle and burglary to a

conveyance. This study uses both those statues and the garden-variety burglary, and the distinction should be understood. Yet, not all burglaries or trespasses are auto-related crimes. For these reasons, only burglary and trespass of a “conveyance” will be included. Conveyance is generally a vehicle and rarely a vessel. Burglary and trespass charges of a “structure” will be categorized under property crime and not auto theft-related as it generally relates to buildings, not vehicles.

Another unique category that should be defined is public disorder/obstruction. This category includes crimes such as resisting an officer, providing a false name to a law enforcement officer, tampering with an electronic monitoring device, loitering and prowling, and disorderly conduct. This crime type was created to be an inclusive way to measure charges pertaining to juveniles attempting to evade police, were in the process of committing a crime, and were likely causing distress or harassment in a public place.

### **Data Analysis**

For the purposes of this quantitative method, SPSS will be used to analyze the quantitative data in order to answer the research questions. An overview of analysis to answer each research questions follows.

*RQ1: What is the prevalence of each type of crime committed separately by juvenile during the years 2016 through 2018?*

A prevalence table was used to show the frequency of each type of crime committed separately by juveniles in 2016 through 2018. Types of crimes were separated by each new charge type (i.e. auto theft-related, property, person, public disorder/obstruction, traffic, drug, fraud, weapon, and violation). Statistics such as mean,



mode, minimum, and maximum were calculated for the time frame together. Prevalence of crime types were also counted separately by year. Both tables include statistics by frequencies and proportions of crimes committed. A multivariate within subjects' effects table using Wilk's Lambda followed by a univariate test using sphericity assumed was conducted to learn the significance of each crime type.

*RQ2: What proportion of each crime type did juveniles monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force commit compared to juveniles not monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force commit separately during the years 2016, 2017 and 2018?*

A repeated measures ANOVA test was conducted to compare the total number of juveniles that were monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force to juveniles that were not monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force in the categories auto theft-related, property, person, public disorder/obstruction, traffic, drug, fraud, weapon, and violation per year. The data were scored per juvenile by the year and number of times they were arrested for a crime in each category. A multivariate within subjects' effects table using Wilk's Lambda followed by a univariate test using sphericity assumed was conducted to learn the significance of each crime type. An ANOVA between subjects' effects test was conducted as a follow-up to determine where the differences exists among the years.

*RQ3: Is there a correlation between the proportions of certain types of crime committed by juveniles monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force during the years 2016-2018?*

A correlation was used to measure if there is a relationship between certain types of crimes that juveniles monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force committed. All arrests made by H.O.M.E. officers were included. Types of crimes were separated by each new

charge type (i.e. auto theft-related, property, person, public disorder/obstruction, traffic, drug, fraud, weapon, and violation of probation). The correlation coefficient results indicate a positive correlation if between 0 and 1 when comparing the independent variable and dependent variable. A negative correlation coefficient is indicated if between 0 and -1. If there is no correlation the coefficient is 0. Another statistical test is followed up for each group that a correlation is found to learn what crime types have the strongest correlations.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Research Question 1

What is the prevalence of each type of crime committed separately by juvenile during the years 2016 through 2018?

Table 1 shows that overall, violating court-ordered sanctions was the number one reason juveniles were arrested in Pinellas County between August 2016 and December 2018 with a .35 proportions mean. The violation category had the highest prevalence and the largest possible variation per juvenile ( $M = .35$ , range = 0-24). Violating court-ordered sanctions is not a new law violation. Only looking at new law violations, auto theft-related crimes were the most prevalent new law violation committed by juveniles ( $M = .18$ ) followed by public disorder/obstruction ( $M = .14$ ), and property ( $M = .13$ ). By frequency, drug crimes occurred slightly more frequently and had a larger range ( $M = .53$ , range = 12) than crimes against persons ( $M = .52$ , range = 10). However, the proportional statistics suggest crimes against persons ( $M = .09$ ) occurred slightly more when compared to the drugs category ( $M = .08$ ). The three crime types that occurred the least were weapon, traffic, and fraud with proportional means of .02 or less. Crime types by frequency per year are illustrated in Figure 1.

Table 1  
Prevalence Table of Crime Types by Juveniles Pinellas County August 2016-December 2018

Crime Type	Frequencies				Proportions	
	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Violation	0	24	3.38	4.211	.35	.299
Auto theft-related	0	14	1.57	2.215	.18	.243
Public disorder/obstruction	0	13	1.21	1.579	.14	.180
Property	0	9	.89	1.301	.13	.217
Drug	0	12	.53	1.044	.08	.186
Person	0	10	.52	1.006	.09	.204
Weapon	0	4	.15	.489	.02	.091
Traffic	0	4	.06	.331	.01	.036
Fraud	0	8	.04	.346	.00	.037

Note. *M* = Mean. *SD* = Standard Deviation.

Figure 1

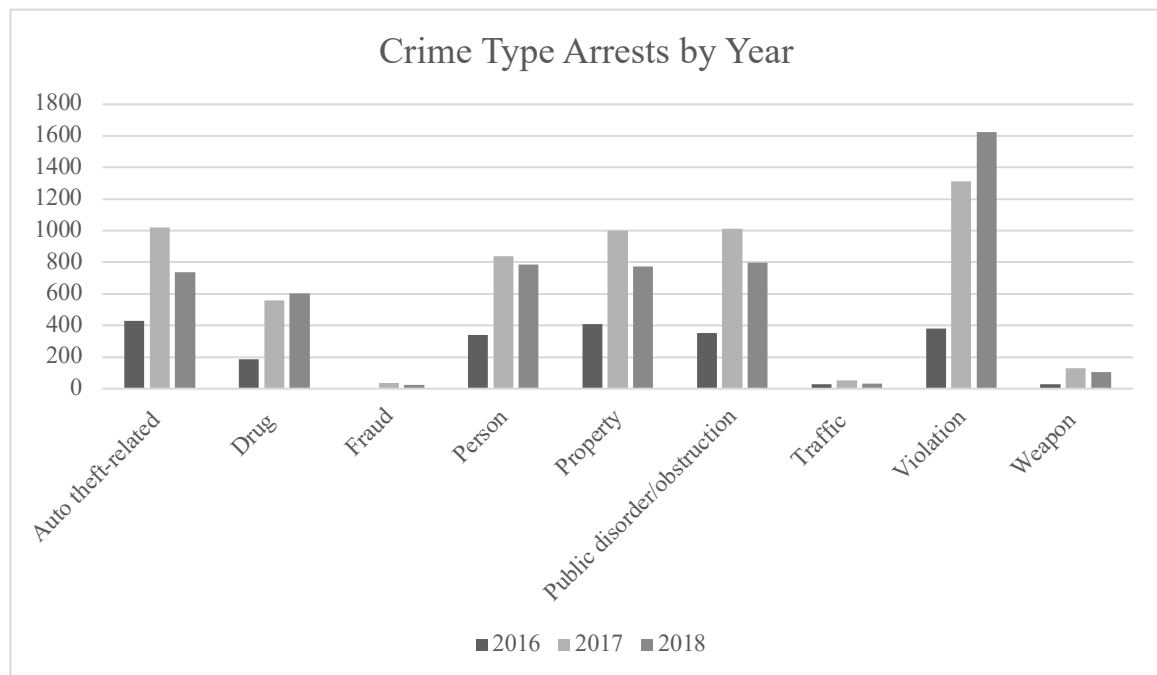


Table 2 shows the means by frequency and portions of each crime type by year.

From 2016 to 2017, all crime types increased as represented in the means of frequency

and proportion. The increase in all crime types may be explained by only the last six months of arrests were included in the 2016 data. Using proportions, crime types that decreased from 2017 to 2018 include auto theft-related crimes by 28%, property by 17%, and public disorder/obstruction by 22%. Crime types that increased from 2017 to 2018 include drug by 14% and violations by 29%. Fraud, person, traffic, and weapon crime types were the same or similar between 2017 and 2018.

A purpose of this study is to learn if violating juveniles for not abiding by their court-ordered sanctions influences recidivism rates. More specifically, monitoring and violating juveniles that also tend to commit auto theft-related crimes. From 2017 to 2018, auto-related thefts decreased by 28% and violations increased by 29%. It appears that as violations increased, auto theft-related crimes and other crime types decreased.

Table 2  
*Means of Crime Type Per Year from August 2016 to December 2018*

Crime Type	2016		2017		2018	
	Frequency	Proportion	Frequency	Proportion	Frequency	Proportion
Auto theft-related	.44	.04	.46	.07	.36	.05
Drug	.19	.02	.25	.06	.30	.07
Fraud	.00	.00	.02	.00	.01	.00
Person	.34	.05	.38	.12	.39	.11
Property	.42	.06	.45	.12	.38	.10
Public disorder/obstruction	.36	.04	.45	.09	.39	.07
Traffic	.03	.00	.02	.00	.02	.00
Violation	.39	.03	.59	.05	.80	.07
Weapon	.03	.00	.06	.01	.05	.01

The multivariate within subjects' effect test measuring crime type by year was significant using Wilk's Lambda = .909,  $F(18,16684) = 45.039$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $\eta^2 = .046$ . This means there is a significant difference between the means of the crime types when

measured per year with a small effect size of practical significance. Univariate test using sphericity assumed of the year by crime time were conducted as a follow-up shown in Table 3. All crime types were significant at the .05 alpha level except for traffic ( $p = .082$ ). Drug, person, property, public disorder/obstruction, and violation all had a partial eta squared of  $.01 < .06$  which indicates a small effect size. Auto theft-related, fraud, and weapon all had a partial eta squared that was  $<.01$  which is a null effect size.

Table 3  
*Univariate Test using Sphericity Assumed of Year by Crime Type*

Crime Type	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Person	12.666	2	6.333	82.971	.000	.019
Violation	3.390	2	1.695	69.371	.000	.016
Property	9.590	2	4.795	62.799	.000	.015
Public disorder/ obstruction	5.671	2	2.836	60.919	.000	.014
Drug	4.986	2	2.493	59.206	.000	.014
Auto theft-related	2.488	2	1.244	35.897	.000	.009
Weapon	.128	2	.064	12.572	.000	.003
Fraud	.014	2	.007	5.308	.005	.001
Traffic	.009	2	.004	2.498	.082	.001

## Research Question 2

What proportion of each crime type did juveniles monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force commit compared to juveniles not monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force commit separately during the years 2016, 2017 and 2018?

The relationship between juveniles in Pinellas County being monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force to those that are not were compared to learn differences in crime types and years. The H.O.M.E. Task Force was established in August 2016. The first year was a time for deputies/officers assigned to the new task force to learn their new duties and procedures to work towards the goal of decreasing the habitual juvenile offender

problem in the county. The task force was building partnerships with the department of juvenile justice, state attorneys, and other related entities. Consequently, it is expected that the first year of statistics on crime types for the H.O.M.E. juveniles to be low and inconsistent when compared to the years that followed.

During the first year, H.O.M.E. juveniles were arrested for violations at a higher rate than those that were not monitored by the task force. It was also found that juveniles monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force were arrested at a much higher rate than those that were not for committing auto theft-related crimes. In the subsequent two years this higher arrest rate trend continued. In fact, the rate increased from what it was the first year, as it relates to auto theft-related crime rate with there being a bigger difference between H.O.M.E. compared to non-H.O.M.E. juveniles being arrested for violations and auto theft-related crimes. H.O.M.E. juveniles had means of .16 in 2016, .23 in 2017, and .27 in 2018. Non-H.O.M.E. juveniles had means of .00 in 2016, .01 in 2017, and .01 in 2018.

Property crimes were initially more than three times higher for H.O.M.E. juveniles than non-H.O.M.E. juveniles but leveled out to be the same or similar in the next two years. It appears H.O.M.E. juveniles started out committing more property crimes when the task force was first established then decreased over the years. It is possible that H.O.M.E. juveniles started out with property crimes and transitioned into auto theft-related crimes. H.O.M.E. juveniles had a spike in the public disorder/obstruction category in 2017 then decreased the following year. Public disorder/obstruction crimes typically involve juveniles resisting arrest or providing a false name to officers. Perhaps H.O.M.E. juveniles built a relationship with their assigned

H.O.M.E. officer which reduced the likelihood of them evading police. Crimes against persons were typically higher for non-H.O.M.E. juveniles.

Drug crimes had higher means and increased in each year for non-H.O.M.E. juveniles with .02 in 2016, .06 in 2017, and .08 in 2018; H.O.M.E. juveniles showed .03 in 2016, .06 in 2017, and .04 in 2018. Crimes against persons were the most common types of crimes committed by non-H.O.M.E. juveniles. This group had much higher means than the H.O.M.E. juveniles in 2017 with a difference of .05 and a .08 in 2018. Property crimes were higher in the H.O.M.E. group in 2016 with .17 compared to .05 in the non-H.O.M.E. group. Both groups occurred proportionally at the same rate in 2017 and only had a .02 difference in 2018. The property crimes category does not include property crimes related to auto thefts which is a separate category. The auto theft-related category includes crimes such as grand theft motor vehicle and burglary of conveyance. Public disorder/obstruction increased in both groups from 2016 to 2017. From 2017 to 2018, non-H.O.M.E. juveniles were arrested proportionally the same with .08 in both years. However, H.O.M.E. juveniles were arrested for crimes in this category half as much from .12 to .06 during the same time frame.

Fraud and traffic crime arrests were so rare that the means were .00 for all three years. The weapons crime category was also rare in both groups with similar results. Non-H.O.M.E. juveniles had a means of .00 in the first two years then increased to .01 in 2018. H.O.M.E. Juveniles had .01 in 2016, .02 in 2017, and .01 in 2018.

From 2017 to 2018 as violations for H.O.M.E. juveniles increased, auto theft-related, drug, person, property public disorder/obstruction, and weapon crimes decreased. Juveniles not monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force did not see a decrease in most of



these crime types during the same time frame. In fact, non-H.O.M.E. juveniles' arrests stayed the same in the person, property, drug, and violation categories. Crimes involving drugs and weapons increased. Auto theft-related decreased by .01 for non-H.O.M.E. juveniles compared to a decrease difference of .08 for H.O.M.E. juveniles. For this reason, the decrease in auto theft-related crimes by H.O.M.E. juveniles can be attributed to being monitored by the task force. The decrease in property crimes for H.O.M.E. juveniles (.03) from 2017 to 2018 may not be solely the result of being monitored because non-H.O.M.E. juveniles (.02) had a similar decrease.

Table 4  
*Descriptive Statistics of H.O.M.E vs Non- H.O.M.E. Juvenile Arrests in Crime Groups by Year*

Crime Type	2016 <sup>a</sup>		2017 <sup>b</sup>		2018 <sup>c</sup>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
H.O.M.E.						
Auto theft-related	.09	.232	.15	.259	.07	.178
Drug	.03	.128	.06	.182	.04	.132
Fraud	.00	.033	.00	.034	.00	.039
Person	.05	.183	.08	.221	.05	.170
Property	.17	.303	.13	.242	.10	.207
Public disorder/obstruction	.07	.194	.12	.206	.06	.149
Traffic	.00	.044	.00	.036	.00	.032
Violation	.16	.257	.23	.315	.27	.355
Weapon	.01	.055	.02	.084	.01	.079
Non-H.O.M.E.						
Auto theft-related	.02	.135	.05	.195	.04	.178
Drug	.02	.145	.06	.227	.08	.261
Fraud	.00	.008	.00	.042	.00	.047
Person	.05	.207	.13	.323	.13	.324
Property	.05	.212	.13	.318	.11	.303
Public disorder/obstruction	.03	.159	.08	.247	.08	.247
Traffic	.00	.036	.00	.053	.00	.037
Violation	.00	.051	.01	.057	.01	.070
Weapon	.00	.045	.00	.081	.01	.082

*Note.* *M* = Mean. *SD* = Standard Deviation.

<sup>a</sup>Non- H.O.M.E. N = 919; H.O.M.E. N = 1,239; Total N = 2,158. <sup>b</sup>Non- H.O.M.E. N = 2,426; H.O.M.E. N = 3,537; Total N = 5,963. <sup>c</sup>Non- H.O.M.E. N = 2,398; H.O.M.E. N = 3,091; Total N = 5,489. Grand Total = 13,610.

A multivariate within subjects' effect test was conducted to determine if there were a significant difference in crime type means per year when H.O.M.E. vs. non-H.O.M.E. variables were included. Results indicated there was a significance using Wilks' Lambda = .934,  $F(18,16680) = 32.361$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $\eta^2 = .034$ . The partial eta squared of .034 indicates a small effect size of practical significance. Table 5 shows the univariate test using sphericity assumed of crime type per year by H.O.M.E. vs. non-H.O.M.E. All crime types were significant at the .05 alpha level except for fraud ( $p = .876$ ), traffic ( $p = .766$ ), and weapon ( $p = .266$ ). Violation had a small effect size ( $\eta^2 = .048$ ). Auto theft-related, drug, person, property, and public disorder/obstruction had a null effect size with a partial eta squared being less than .01 which is the minimum value to have a small effect size.

Table 5

*Univariate Test using Sphericity Assumed of Year by H.O.M.E. vs. Non-H.O.M.E.*

Crime Type	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Violation	9.822	2	4.911	211.128	.000	.048
Auto theft-related	1.925	2	.962	27.952	.000	.007
Person	2.680	2	1.340	17.624	.000	.004
Property	2.256	2	1.128	14.821	.000	.004
Public disorder/obstruction	1.313	2	.657	14.149	.000	.003
Drug	.854	2	.427	10.165	.000	.002
Weapon	.014	2	.007	1.324	.266	.000
Traffic	.001	2	.000	.267	.766	.000
Fraud	.000	2	.000	.133	.876	.000

The test of between subjects' effects of year by H.O.M.E. vs. non-H.O.M.E. is depicted in Table 6. All crime types except for fraud and traffic were significant. Crime types that had an effect size of practical significance were violation with a large effect size ( $\eta^2 = .424$ ), auto theft-related had a medium effect size ( $\eta^2 = .071$ ), and crimes

against person's had a small effect size ( $\eta^2 = .015$ ). Drug, property, public disorder/obstruction, and weapon had a partial eta squared less than .01 which indicates a null effect size.

Table 6  
*Test of Between Subjects' Effects of Year by H.O.M.E. vs. Non-H.O.M.E.*

Crime Type	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Violation	82.877	1	82.877	3073.078	.000	.424
Auto theft-related	10.691	1	10.691	317.550	.000	.071
Person	4.276	1	4.276	62.355	.000	.015
Property	.898	1	.898	14.916	.000	.004
Public disorder/obstruction	.843	1	.843	18.828	.000	.004
Drug	.275	1	.275	6.845	.009	.002
Weapon	.055	1	.055	10.918	.001	.003
Fraud	.001	1	.001	.539	.463	.000
Traffic	.005	1	.005	2.780	.096	.001

As a follow-up to the repeated measures ANOVA, ANOVA test of between-subjects' effects were conducted by year to identify where the differences exist shown in Table 7. Auto theft-related, public disorder/obstruction, and violation were significant at the .05 alpha level in all three years. Auto theft-related had a small effect size in 2016 ( $\eta^2 = .031$ ) and 2017 ( $\eta^2 = .043$ ). Violation had a medium effect size in 2016 ( $\eta^2 = .098$ ) and a large effect size in 2017 ( $\eta^2 = .259$ ) and 2018 ( $\eta^2 = .269$ ). Crimes against persons had a small effect size in 2018 ( $\eta^2 = .014$ ). Crime types that were significant at the .05 alpha level but had a null effect size included 2018 drug, 2017 person, 2018 person, 2017 weapon, and property and public disorder/obstruction all three years.

Table 7  
*ANOVA Test of Between-Subjects Effects of H.O.M.E. vs. Non-H.O.M.E. on Year and Crime Type*

Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
2016 Auto theft-related	3.450	1	3.450	131.864	.000	.031
2017 Auto theft-related	8.315	1	8.315	186.127	.000	.043
2018 Auto theft-related	.851	1	.851	26.856	.000	.006
2016 Drug	.008	1	.008	.379	.538	.000
2017 Drug	.004	1	.004	.082	.775	.000
2018 Drug	1.117	1	1.117	19.711	.000	.005
2016 Fraud	.001	1	.001	2.442	.118	.001
2017 Fraud	.000	1	.000	.228	.633	.000
2018 Fraud	1.309E-6	1	1.309E-6	.001	.980	.000
2016 Person	.001	1	.001	.014	.906	.000
2017 Person	1.756	1	1.756	19.136	.000	.005
2018 Person	5.199	1	5.199	59.078	.000	.014
2016 Property	.298	1	.298	6.578	.010	.002
2017 Property	.375	1	.375	4.193	.041	.001
2018 Property	2.480	1	2.480	31.971	.000	.008
2016 Public disorder/obstruction	.945	1	.945	33.571	.000	.008
2017 Public disorder/obstruction	1.047	1	1.047	18.395	.000	.004
2018 Public disorder/obstruction	.164	1	.164	3.126	.077	.001
2016 Traffic	.002	1	.002	1.705	.192	.000
2017 Traffic	.000	1	.000	.100	.752	.000
2018 Traffic	.003	1	.003	2.369	.124	.001
2016 Violation	7.620	1	7.620	453.800	.000	.098
2017 Violation	36.164	1	36.164	1458.730	.000	.259
2018 Violation	48.916	1	48.916	1532.948	.000	.269
2016 Weapon	.005	1	.005	2.106	.147	.001
2017 Weapon	.052	1	.052	7.749	.005	.002
2018 Weapon	.012	1	.012	1.866	.172	.000

### Research Question 3

Is there a correlation between the proportions of certain types of crime committed by juveniles monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force during the years 2016-2018?

The results of this research question are shown in Table 8. Auto theft-related crimes had a significant negative correlation at the 0.01 level with drug ( $r = 1.46$ ), person ( $r = -.235$ ), property ( $r = -.186$ ), public disorder/obstruction ( $r = -.086$ ), and violation ( $r = -.347$ ). These findings suggest that as H.O.M.E. juveniles commit more auto theft-related crimes, the less they will commit crimes that involve drugs, persons, property, public disorder/obstruction, and violation. The opposite is also true, the less auto theft-related crimes committed by H.O.M.E. juveniles, and the more the same juveniles will commit the negatively correlated crime types. This suggests H.O.M.E. juveniles that tend to commit auto theft-related crimes do not commit the negatively correlated crimes. Although there appears to be juveniles that do not commit auto theft-related crimes being monitored by H.O.M.E. due to the negative correlations, these juveniles were found to meet the criteria to be monitored by the task force. The main criteria is having a history of auto theft-related crimes. The intensive supervision these juveniles receive once they found to meet the criteria may deter them from committing auto theft-related crimes. Yet, they are still being closely monitored so they may be more likely to be arrested for other offenses.

Weapon crimes had a significant negative correlation to auto theft-related ( $r = -.080$ ) at the 0.05 level, which also means that as H.O.M.E. juveniles commit more auto theft-related crimes, the less they will commit crimes involving weapons. The drug category had negative correlations to the same crime types as the auto theft-related category (auto theft-related, persons, property, public disorder/obstruction, and violation) at the 0.01 significance level. Similarly, as H.O.M.E. juveniles commit more drug-related

crimes, they commit fewer auto theft-related, person, property, public disorder/obstruction, and violation crimes.

The violation crime type had a negative correlation at the 0.01 significance level to auto theft-related ( $r = -.347$ ), drug ( $r = -.146$ ), person ( $r = -.242$ ), property ( $r = -.281$ ), and public disorder/obstruction ( $r = -.242$ ). As violations decrease, auto theft-related, drug, person, property, and public disorder/obstruction crimes increase. In contrast, as violations increase, these negative correlations suggest these crimes will decrease.

Crimes related to persons had a significant correlation at the 0.01 alpha level to property ( $r = -.122$ ) and violation ( $r = -.242$ ). Property crimes were found to have a significant negative correlation at the 0.01 alpha level to person public disorder/obstruction ( $r = -.149$ ), violation ( $r = -.281$ ), and weapon ( $r = -.085$ ). Public disorder/obstruction had a negative correlation at the 0.01 alpha level to drug ( $r = -.145$ ), person ( $r = -.120$ ), and violation ( $r = -.242$ ). The categories of fraud and traffic had no significant correlations to any other crime types or between the two. Thus, crimes related to fraud and traffic committed by H.O.M.E. juveniles do not predict an increase or decrease of any crime type.

Table 8

*Correlation Crime Types Committed by H.O.M.E. Juveniles August 2016-December 2018*

	Auto theft-related	Drug	Fraud	Person	Property	Public disorder/obstruction	Traffic	Violation
Drug	-.146**							
Fraud	-.018	-.012						
Person	-.235**	-.113**	-.040					
Property	-.186**	-.146**	.023	-.122**				
Public disorder/obstruction	-.086**	-.145**	-.034	-.120**	-.149**			
Traffic	-.005	-.003	-.018	-.050	-.078*	.045		
Violation	-.347**	-.236**	-.061	-.242**	-.281**	-.242**	-.044	
Weapon	-.080*	.020	-.027	-.028	-.085**	-.037	-.011	-.143**

Note. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **Research Question 1**

Research question one examined the prevalence of each type of crime committed separately by juvenile. Overall, violating court-ordered sanctions was the number one reason juveniles were arrested in Pinellas County. Violating court-ordered sanctions is not a new law violation. For this reason, auto related-thefts were the most prevalent new law violation crime type. This verifies the juvenile auto theft-problem in Pinellas County and justification behind creating a task force specialized to combat the problem.

Public disorder/obstruction crimes were the second most prevalent new law violation with a proportional mean being slightly less than auto theft-related crimes. Juveniles in Pinellas County are arrested for public disorder/obstruction crimes almost as much as auto theft-related crimes. Property crimes were the third most prevalent crime type. Thus, two of the top three new law violations were property related. The other crime type, public disorder/obstruction, implies juveniles tend to also get arrested for crimes like resisting an officer, disorderly conduct, loitering and prowling, and fleeing and eluding police at a high rate in the county as well. The findings suggest that along with the auto theft-problem, there is a property crimes and public disorder/obstruction crimes problem.

### **Research Question 2**

Research question two compared the proportions of juvenile arrests by crime type, year, and whether the juveniles were monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force. H.O.M.E juveniles were arrested for auto theft-related crimes and violations more than those that were not monitored by the task force. According to Bouchard and Wong (2018), one

reason there were mixed results in a number of studies that examined the outcomes of intensive supervised probation was that this type of supervision may only work for specific participants. It appears the task force correctly selected which juveniles to monitor. The evidence of this is in the large proportion of auto theft-related crimes and violations committed by H.O.M.E. juveniles compared to those not monitored by the task force. The selection criteria can then be applied in other jurisdictions that have a similar auto theft-problem in order to focus on the juveniles behind the crimes.

Similar to the findings of Vidal and Woolard (2017) and Lowe et al. (2008), this study found that punitive relationships between juveniles and officers lead to a higher number of technical violations, but fewer counts of new delinquent offense. As violation arrests increased, auto theft-related crimes decreased. This suggests that holding juveniles accountable to abiding by their court-ordered restrictions reduces auto theft-related crimes. Using the task forces strategy of strictly enforcing court-ordered sanctions works in combatting the auto theft-problem and can be applied in other jurisdictions with a similar problem.

### **Research Question 3**

Research question three measured the found correlations between crime types that H.O.M.E. juveniles committed. Auto theft-related crimes had the largest negative correlation to violations which implies auto theft-related crimes having the largest decrease among crime types because of the violations. Therefore, the H.O.M.E. Task Force is accomplishing the goal of decreasing auto related-thefts by closely monitoring juveniles and enforcing court-ordered sanctions. Violations decreased not only auto theft-related crimes, but also drug, person, property, public disorder/obstruction, and weapon



crimes. Bouchard and Wong (2018) found that intensive supervised probation may work if the program has the right components (e.g. size, protocols, intensity of treatment, and/or implementation quality). The data provided convincing evidence that the task force has the right components to combat crime by habitual juvenile offenders. Closely monitoring juveniles on their court-ordered sanctions can reduce other juvenile crime problems. This strategy can inform decision making when combating juvenile crime to reduce recidivism.

### **Root of the Juvenile Crime Problem**

Focusing on juvenile crime has the potential to have a significant impact on future adult offending. According to Fox and Farrington (2016), 52.6% of criminal career offenders of burglary offences started between the ages of 7 and 14, and 38.4% started between 14 and 21 years old. This study suggests the majority of criminal career offenders start as a juvenile and continue their offending throughout their life. If law enforcement, the courts, and other stakeholders were able to appropriately address juvenile crime, the likelihood of juveniles continuing their offending into adulthood may decline.

More training for law enforcement on juveniles could help officers better understand and better address the problem. From the current literature, there is very little youth-specific training available for officers (Golden, 2015; OJJDP, 2018). Although law enforcement generally deals mostly with adults, having youth-specific training can be very beneficial in cities with a juvenile crime problem. Officers equipped with the knowledge of how their local juvenile system works or how to contact juvenile probation officers to speak with them can make a difference in bridging a gap in communication

between stakeholders. This could also help officers in their decision making when they encounter a situation with a juvenile (Wilson & Hoge, 2013).

Programs and treatment options for juveniles have the potential to address the root of the problem and diminish juvenile offending. Finding a suitable program or treatment for each juvenile can support them in getting the help they need in various aspects of their lives. Current Pinellas County programs have found successes with decreased juvenile new law violations, in gaining new skills and certifications, and earning a GEDs, as well as meeting other goals. All of these factors can contribute to deterring offending and the juveniles being more likely to succeed outside the criminal system. Although these programs appear to have improved juveniles' lives, it is unknown if these programs have had an impact on juvenile crime rates in general, habitual offenders, or the auto theft-problem.

### **Monitoring Juveniles**

It is unknown what percent of juveniles were compliant with their curfew sanctions during this study or if/how the percent of compliant juveniles changed over time. For this reason, it is unknown how H.O.M.E. juveniles compare to the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice's Intensive Supervision Team Program. Similarly, the abscond rate was not measured so it is unknown if H.O.M.E. had an effect on the abscond like the Hyatt and Barnes (2014) study.

Supervising juveniles on an electronic monitor ensures they are mostly at home or at school instead of out looking for vehicles to burglarize or steal. However, if he/she deviates from their schedule or tampers with their electronic monitor, an electronic monitoring specialist will immediately be alerted. In this case, law enforcement can

respond immediately to address the situation. According to Classical School of Criminology, repercussions that are swift, certain, and serve will deter criminals from committing crimes or violating sanctions (von Hirsch, 1976). The H.O.M.E. Task Force strictly supervises juveniles on electronic monitors which likely also had an effect on the decreased auto theft-related crimes. Similar to sanctions such as curfew and home detention, these sanctions with the addition of an electronic monitor only works as well as they are enforced.

Harnes and Barnes (2014) found that non-complying offenders on intensive supervised probation were removed from the community but did not reduce offending. Although the H.O.M.E. Task Force also had an impact on removing non-compliant offenders from the community, the task force did have a reduction in arrests. In opposition to the Harnes and Barnes study, the H.O.M.E. Task Force reduced offending outweighing the negative consequences of the more serve, invasive, and restrictive probation.

Studies have found traditional probation a better fit for some juveniles and intensive supervised probation more appropriate for others. The key is to have specific criteria for he/she to be eligible for intensive supervised probation. Basic criteria for ISP could be habitual offenders that are constantly violating traditional probation. This can further be narrowed down to a specific problem such as an auto theft-problem like Pinellas County.

### **Targeting Juvenile Crime**

Law enforcement task forces with a specific mission have been successful in combating crime rates vis-à-vis the area they target. Similar to the success of the

H.O.M.E. Task Force, a gang violence reduction project had success in their goal of reducing serious violence in a gang-ridden neighborhood. The Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project reduced violent crimes, violent serious crimes, and drug crimes (Spergel, 2003). This project did not have an effect on property crime arrests or the total arrests, but the goal was to reduce serious violence which they did (Spergel, 2003).

A number of studies have found law enforcement task forces specific to auto theft to be successful in reducing the auto theft rate (Thompson, 2019). Studies attribute the success of these programs to being specially equipped with the tools, knowledge, and resources that officers generally do not have (Thompson, 2019). The H.O.M.E. Task Force is equipped with access to certain databases, trainings, electronic monitoring system, and crime analyst to name a few. These tools better equip the officers assigned to the task force to address the juvenile crime problem. Having access to these tools increases the success of the task force by expanding the members knowledge and ability to strictly monitor and enforce juveniles on court-ordered sanctions.

A task force in Nashville focused on carjackings and stolen guns, primarily caused by juveniles, has a similar mission to the H.O.M.E. Task Force. The Nashville task force does not explicitly monitor juveniles, but efforts are to combat the auto theft-problem in general that happens to be primarily juvenile offenders. Crime rates in Nashville have decreased due to the task forces efforts, yet violence is still on the rise. For this reason, law enforcement officers are campaigning for new gun laws that would hold the public accountable if one's gun is stolen, and it was not properly locked up. Although Pinellas County has not campaigned for new gun laws related to the juvenile

crime problem, law enforcement has campaigned for new laws related to prolific juvenile offenders. In result, Florida established a new law that requires juveniles be deemed a Prolific Juvenile Offender (PJO) if they meet certain criteria.

Proposed new laws came out of these two task forces being established and learning more about the problem. Law enforcement alone may not be able to solve the problem. New laws are needed in some cases that allow law enforcement, the courts, and other stakeholders to better combat the problem. For example, laws that would give the courts the ability to hold juveniles in detention or be monitored on an electronic monitor for longer. From these task forces work, new problems and possible solutions were realized that could diminish the barriers from getting closer to solving the crime problem.

Washington State had the same idea to propose stricter and harsher policies that would allow the courts to hold juveniles in detention for longer (Washington State Sets, 2007). Likewise, the PJO statute in Florida allows the courts to order a juvenile to a longer time in detention and to be supervised on electronic monitor in the community until their cases are resolved. The impact of the PJO is unknown at this time because it is still new. It is possible the new statute would drastically decrease crime rates over time similar to the outcomes of stricter policies in Washington State.

Florida is also changing policy to address the juvenile crime problem by updating the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI). This instrument provides a detention status recommendation to the juvenile courts. An update to the DRAI would change the way juveniles are scored for either a type of community supervision or secure detention. Changing the way juveniles are supervised between sanctions in the community and being in secure detention may improve crime rates. This could be due to removing more

or less offenders from the community. The sanctions could also act as a deterring effect that makes juveniles want to not be on those sanctions again. The new DRAI was implemented July 1, 2019. Therefore, there is no data currently available to research the impact of the changes. Even with the DRAI changes, juvenile judges have the power to depart upward or downward from the assessment and order the sanctions they find most appropriate. A study on the DRAI scores, what the judge orders, and the recidivism rates of those juveniles would be telling.

Dewy Caruthers has been researching the auto theft-problem in Pinellas County since the beginning of the problem. Caruthers (2019) thus far, has found that there is a strong correlation between the inception of H.O.M.E. and the drop in Pinellas juvenile auto theft arrests. Nonetheless, Caruthers (2019) posits that law enforcement is making every possible effort to combat the problem, but the problem cannot be fixed by arrests alone.

### **Applied Theory Outcomes**

The routine activity theory seems to support the results of this study. The more juveniles have the freedom to roam outside in neighborhoods, the more likely they are to offend. The evidence of this is found in research question three that examines the correlation between crime types. The more a juvenile is violated on his/her court-ordered sanctions, the less likely he/she is to commit a crime. Violating juveniles when breaking court-ordered sanctions holds them accountable and acts as a strong deterrent. The court-ordered sanctions typically include being home during curfew hours and/or home detention which is 24/7 with a few exceptions like school or medical appointments. Consequently, juveniles do not have opportunities and are less motivated to find a

suitable target to burglarize or commit other crimes while being supervised on these sanctions.

Juvenile judges court-order sanctions to change the amount of opportunities for crime. However, the court-ordered sanctions only work as well as they are enforced and monitored. Without a high level of supervision, juveniles can break those sanctions without any stakeholders learning of it. The H.O.M.E. Task Force has been successful at bridging this supervision gap. This gap speaks to the situational crime prevention theory that argues prevention is accomplished by changing the opportunities for crime instead of trying to change the offenders' behaviors (Freilich & Newman, 2017). H.O.M.E. officers have been able to increase the difficulty of committing crime by strictly enforcing sanctions such as curfew and home detention, which increases the immediate risk of getting caught and being re-arrested. This then reduces the rewards of offending, removes excuses for offending, and reduces temptations and provocations. Although there is a possibility of crime displacement and the court-ordered sanctions are directly enforced, the situational crime prevention theory still resonates with the problem.

It is possible the same habitual juvenile offenders in Pinellas County are moving their crimes into nearby counties. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justices reports that as auto thefts decreased in Pinellas County between years 2016-2017 to 2017-2018, neighboring counties Pasco, Polk, and Sarasota had an increase in auto thefts. These statistics are only auto thefts that resulted in a juvenile arrest. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (2019) reports that motor vehicle thefts increased from 2017 to 2018 in the neighboring counties Sarasota, Manatee, and Polk. Both the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement conclude there is an

increase in auto thefts in Polk County and Sarasota County. Although, it is unclear if there is a direct relationship between Pinellas County auto thefts decreasing and nearby counties increasing.

A way to address the auto theft-problem indirectly is have a campaign to educate and remind the public to lock their cars and practice other safety measures. In 2017, the Florida Sheriffs Association announced a state-wide effort to provide public awareness and prevention of home and automobile burglaries called “Operation Deadbolt” from June 12<sup>th</sup> 2017 to August 5<sup>th</sup> 2017. As a result of 23 counties participating, there were 4,844 burglaries, 387 firearms stolen, \$507,620 in stolen goods recovered, and 630 arrests (Florida Sheriffs Association, 2017). Operation Deadbolt was not specific to either juveniles or adults, just automobile burglaries. Nonetheless, speaking to the situational crime prevention theory, the statewide operation shrinks the possibility of auto thefts being displaced to a neighboring community.

Pinellas County has used this strategy in the early years of the auto theft-problem and did not find it to have an impact. However, Pinellas County continues with a similar public campaign by officers checking for unlocked cars. Officers will lock the car doors they find unlocked and leave an informational brochure on their windshield. The Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office (JSO) also in Florida, seem to be successful in their campaign called the “#9pmroutine” (Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, 2018; Purdy, 2017). JSO posts on social media daily to remind the public to lock their cars by 9 p.m. to create a habit of making sure their cars are locked. From 2017 to 2018, auto burglaries decreased 22.99%, auto thefts decreased by 1.29%, and carjacking’s decreased by 20.28%. It is unclear if the social media campaign that began in 2017 directly had an



influence on decreased auto theft-related crimes or not. Nevertheless, the social media campaign seems to be the only obvious change that would have a direct impact on the auto theft-related crimes (Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, 2018).

Other theories that may apply are the general deterrence and specific deterrence theories. General deterrence speaks to the would-be criminals to think twice about committing a crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). This is done by the punishment outweighing the reward of acting on a crime. Specific deterrence is tailored to those that have committed a crime to be deterred from committing future crimes due to the punishment (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Specific deterrence can be applied to H.O.M.E. juveniles who have been arrested and have already received court-ordered sanctions. Due to the outcomes, H.O.M.E. juveniles may be reluctant to re-offend. Friends of H.O.M.E. juveniles, or those that know of them, may be deterred from offending due to seeing others get arrested and go through the juvenile justice system. A motivating factor of deterrence for both general and specific, are violations of court-ordered sanctions. Juveniles may hear of, or witness their peers get caught violating sanctions which makes them question their desire to violate. Likewise, a juvenile who has experienced the consequences of a violation could deter them from following through in re-offending.

### **Limitations**

The current data collection system has some important limitations for gauging the impact of the H.O.M.E. Task Force intervention. Only looking at crime rates and arrest rates does not include all offense reports that are related to the auto theft-problem. In some cases, officers give warnings or tickets to the offender but stop short of an arrest.

Not all cases are formally processed. Looking at offense reports would be an all-inclusive approach to researching the auto theft-problem. However, this study only focused on crime rates and arrest rates. Furthermore, this study did not include crime rates for surrounding counties to control for displacement.

The data do not include the time frame each individual juvenile was monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force. There is no start date of when the juvenile met the criteria of H.O.M.E. to be supervised by the program. Furthermore, there are no end dates to indicate when these juveniles stopped being supervised by the H.O.M.E. Task Force for any reason. Reasons may include but are not limited to the juveniles' probation terminated, he/she was committed to a program, moved out of the county, or was direct filed. The only time frame currently available is between years 2016 to 2018, without any indication of how long each juvenile was monitored by the H.O.M.E. Task Force during these years.

Juveniles can only be identified as wearing an electronic monitor at time of arrest which would result in a violation of their electronic monitor. Thus, the only difference that can be measured with the current available data is by arrest charges and if they had an electronic monitor on at the time. It is not currently documented what juveniles successfully completed their electronic monitor sanctions without an arrest of a new charge or violation. Additionally, there is no documentation of how long each juvenile had an electronic monitor. There are currently no data available to measure differences between juveniles that did and did not receive electronic monitors.

At this time, there are no other known multi-jurisdictional partnership such as the H.O.M.E. Task Force with a specific focus on habitual juvenile offenders and auto thefts.

Thus, there is no way to compare the outcomes of this program to another. The comparison was solely be based on data the year the program was established and the two years that followed. Using only two and a half years of data does not allow for a trend to be established. Therefore, data over more years are required to establish any stable trends.

### **Implications of Findings**

The H.O.M.E. Task Force was created to address the auto theft-problem committed by habitual juvenile offenders. The findings support the creation of the task force by validating there is a juvenile auto theft-problem and the H.O.M.E. Task Force monitors juveniles that are contributing to the problem. The findings also confirm that the H.O.M.E. Task Force fulfills the goal of addressing the auto theft-problem. The intensive supervision approach translates into a high number of violations of court-ordered sanctions and lower number of auto theft-related crimes simultaneously. Furthermore, violations are negatively correlated with auto theft-related crimes. The reduction in auto thefts appears to also be impacting the death rate of juveniles engaged in these crimes and public safety. Since November 2018, there have not been any juvenile deaths related to the auto theft problem.

There is currently no known juvenile task force like the H.O.M.E. Task Force. The unique nature of this law enforcement unit addressing habitual offender juveniles that contribute to the auto theft-problem can be an example for other law enforcement agencies. This unit can be a template for other areas that may have a similar problem. If not auto thefts, perhaps another juvenile crime problem can be addressed using the same or similar methods. The findings of this study had a negative correlation between violations and multiple crime types.

Implications of this study suggest with the right methodology, juvenile crimes can be reduced by law enforcement and partnering agencies if juveniles are held accountable by their court-ordered sanctions. Abiding by their court-ordered sanctions of going to school and being home for curfew alone may have an effect on crime rates. Juveniles will more likely abide by their sanctions if they knew that they may be checked on at any moment and violated if not in compliance. These sanctions plus an electronic monitor may diminish the chances of a juvenile re-offending or violating while being directly supervised. Even if they do decide to re-offend or violate, law enforcement will be alerted immediately to respond accordingly and lessen the chances of the juvenile further negatively impacting the community. This requires juveniles on electronic monitors to be supervised around the clock in order for law enforcement to be immediately alerted. Responding too late to a juvenile abandoning their allowed scheduled zones could have harmful repercussions to the juvenile and the community.

A caveat to implementing stricter sanctions on juveniles is that not all juveniles should be intensively supervised. Only juveniles who meet certain criteria should be closely monitored. Intensive supervision on juveniles who do not meet the determined criteria has negative implications by imposing harsher sanctions than necessary without an effect on recidivism rates (Bouchard & Wong, 2018; Hyatt & Barnes, 2014). For this reason, it is important to thoroughly research the problem that needs to be addressed and determine the appropriate criteria for intensive supervision.

Law enforcement training on youth-specific crime and the juvenile justice system in general could help curtail a juvenile crime problem. Officers being better equipped with the knowledge to address the issue when confronting a juvenile could have an

influence on the problem. Without the basic understanding of how juvenile court-ordered sanctions are implemented hinders an officer from handling the situation to the best of their ability. Additionally, open communication allows the ability to connect on any issues that arise and have a better understand between stakeholders. This includes neighboring law enforcement jurisdictions. Crimes committed in neighboring cities or counties can be difficult to connect. However, a partnership between neighboring jurisdictions can diminish this problem, increase the likelihood of solving crimes, and decrease the chances of crime being displaced.

From a researcher's standpoint, it is important to document data in detail from the beginning of a new endeavor so they can be easily extracted and studied. This study was not able to analyze additional research questions pertaining to juvenile compliance checks or juveniles on an electronic monitor and the impact of these supervision strategies on crime rates. Thus, it is important to thoroughly document the data in a way that can be extracted for research. Otherwise, it would take an extensive amount of time and resources to piece together and document the necessary data. Furthermore, without the correct data, there is no way to accurately analyze the effect of compliance checks or electronic monitors on crimes to make a correlation between the variables.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

It is evident that Pinellas County juvenile crime rates decreased due to the efforts of the H.O.M.E. Task Force. However, there is a possibility that crime was displaced in other locations. Juveniles could be traveling outside of Pinellas county to commit crimes to avoid being apprehended by the H.O.M.E. Task Force or local law enforcement officers that are familiar with them, their co-defendants, their behaviors, and routines.

Researching if auto theft-related crimes have been displaced into surrounding counties could reveal if crime rates have actually decreased or disbursed to other areas.

This study also intended to research juveniles supervised with an electronic monitor and curfew compliance checks to learn if the outcomes had an influence on recidivism rates. Yet, because there was no specific time frame available to measure how long each juvenile were on these sanctions, there was no way to analyze the data to get accurate statistics. Similarly, this study could be replicated to include the time each juvenile was intensively supervised. Including the length of time a juvenile was monitored could reveal their likelihood to recidivate or be deterred from crime. Additionally, the time juveniles spent in detention or in a commitment program could be included to learn how much of this variable accounts for lowered recidivism rates.

Other variables for future research include the effect of community programs, H.O.M.E. navigators, the prolific juvenile offender (PJO) statue, and the Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (DRAI) changes on the habitual juvenile offenders and auto theft-problem. Community programs and H.O.M.E. navigators could provide support to juveniles and their families to address issues that may deter them from delinquent behavior. The PJO statue requires juveniles to spend 21 days in detention and wear an electronic monitor after until the case's disposition. Being held in detention and on an electronic monitor could play a role in deterring juveniles from committing more crimes. Lastly, the changes made to the DRAI scoring methodology may influence crime rates by suggesting different pre-trial sanctions than the previous version of the assessment.

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## Appendix

Crime type groups for research questions 1 and 3. Includes all arrests made on juveniles in Pinellas County from August 2016 to December 2018.

### *Crime Types Count by Charges and H.O.M.E. vs Non-H.O.M.E.*

<b>Crime Types</b>	<b>Non- H.O.M.E.</b>	<b>H.O.M.E.</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Auto theft-related Crime</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>1481</b>	<b>2188</b>
Burglary - conveyance	423	766	1189
Grand theft motor vehicle	182	582	764
Trespass - conveyance	65	47	112
Armed burglary	15	47	62
Dealing in stolen property	20	29	49
Carjacking	1	6	7
Possession of burglary tools	1	4	5
<b>Drug</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>1350</b>
Possession of marijuana	448	297	745
Possession of controlled substance	323	151	474
Possession with intent to sell	39	27	66
Sale or delivery of controlled substance	33	10	43
Possession of cocaine	0	8	8
Intro/possession of contraband in a county detention facility	2	4	6
Trafficking drugs	0	2	2
Possession of certain drugs without prescriptions	2	0	2
Possession of THC oil	2	0	2
Manufacture of marijuana	1	0	1
Possession of drug paraphernalia	0	1	1
<b>Fraud</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>66</b>
Fraudulent use or theft of credit card	18	27	45
Counterfeiting or possession of a counterfeit payment	4	2	6
Unauthorized possession of a driver's license or identification	4	1	5
Fraudulent use of personal identification information	1	4	5
Hiring with intent to defraud	2	0	2
Having in possession uncurrent bills	0	2	2
Scheme to defraud	1	0	1
<b>Person</b>	<b>1475</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>1964</b>
Battery	1269	410	1679
Assault	98	57	155
Sexual battery	33	3	36



Lewd & lascivious	28	6	34
Child pornography	15	2	17
Stalking	6	2	8
Threatening a public servant	4	3	7
Child abuse	6	0	6
Murder	4	2	6
Neglect of a child	3	0	3
Culpable negligence	1	2	3
Kidnapping	3	0	3
False imprisonment	2	0	2
Video voyeurism	2	0	2
Elderly abuse	0	2	2
Manslaughter	1	0	1
<b>Property</b>	<b>1349</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>2184</b>
Burglary - structure	232	258	490
Petit theft	319	113	432
Grand theft	210	157	367
Retail theft	239	73	312
Criminal mischief	155	77	232
Robbery	76	88	164
Trespass - structure or other	100	62	162
Arson	11	5	16
Theft of property by employee	5	0	5
Theft of a fire extinguisher	1	1	2
Intentional burning of lands	0	1	1
Possession or use of an antishoplifting device	1	0	1
<b>Public disorder/obstruction</b>	<b>1017</b>	<b>1143</b>	<b>2160</b>
Resisting an officer	353	491	844
Disorderly conduct	324	97	421
Loitering and prowling	140	174	314
Fleeing and eluding police officer	39	120	159
Tampering with an electronic monitoring device	3	147	150
Disruption of school function	74	34	108
Providing false name or identity to LEO	43	49	92
Tampering with a witness	17	6	23
Tampering with physical evidence	5	12	17
Obstruction by disguised person	8	8	16
Obstruction/preventing of extinguishment of fire	10	3	13
Obstruction	1	1	2
Violation of community control or ordinance	0	1	1
<b>Traffic</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>114</b>
No valid driver's license	19	19	38
Leaving scene of an crash involving injury	6	16	22

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Leaving scene of an crash involving property damage	8	12	20
Driving without a license	5	7	12
Reckless driving	6	5	11
Driving under the influence	8	2	10
No motor vehicle registration	1	0	1
<b>Violation</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>3177</b>	<b>3320</b>
Violation of probation (VOP)	129	2471	2600
Violation of home detention (VOHD)	14	706	720
<b>Weapon</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>264</b>
Possession of a firearm	48	90	138
Possession of a weapon on school property	33	15	48
Carrying a concealed weapon	14	7	21
Possession of firearm or ammunition	1	19	20
Throwing a deadly missile	9	6	15
Threatening communication of shooting or destructive device	6	4	10
Discharging a firearm in public	4	2	6
Making or discharging a destructive device	1	1	2
Alteration or removal of firearm serial number	1	1	2
Use of BB gun air or gas-operated funs/weapons by minor	1	0	1
Improper exhibition of dangerous weapon	1	0	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5743</b>	<b>7867</b>	<b>13610</b>