Merchants in the Motor City:
An Assessment of Arab and Chaldean Business Owners' Perceptions Toward Public Officials and Law Enforcement

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A B S T R A C T   A N D   A R T I C L E   I N F O R M A T I O N

Detroit is known for its socio-economic problems and its high crime rates. These issues are harmful to the business community, however, little is known about business owners' experiences and perceptions in high-crime environments. This qualitative study examines the challenges facing business owners and highlights Arab and Chaldean participants' perceptions in some of Detroit's most violent and disorderly areas. The study discusses the role of legal cynicism, legitimacy perceptions, and the fear of crime in shaping perceptions of local government officials and law enforcement. The findings from in-depth interviews indicate that while participants were not tolerant of crime and delinquency, they possessed unfavorable perceptions toward city authorities. Furthermore, of the ethnic groups studied, Arab business owners were most concerned about unfair business regulations, the poor performance of police, the threat of violent crime, and declining residential communities. The implications for the safety and security of urban spaces are discussed.

Many of the immigrant-owned businesses in the city of Detroit are located in areas characterized by delinquency and violent crime. This study focuses on the perspectives of Arab and Chaldean merchants in these areas. It examines attitudes toward crime, delinquency, public officials, and police. Arab business owners in the Metro Detroit area are predominantly Muslim immigrants from Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, and other Middle Eastern countries. Chaldeans, the other highlighted group in the study, originated from a northern province in Iraq. They are predominantly Chaldean Catholic and are native Aramaic speakers. These immigrant groups began arriving in Michigan during the 1920s in search of employment, and some of them found jobs in the auto industry. However, due to experiences of discrimination, many of them relied on their knowledge of business and elected to start their own small enterprises in the city (Sengstock, 2005; Spurlock & Liedka, 2013).

Though culturally distinctive, these ethnic communities can be examined together given their resiliency and common experiences. They value hard work and productivity, as demonstrated in their contribution to business and entrepreneurship, however, they also face some daunting challenges. High crime rates, understaffed police stations, and dilapidated neighborhoods are just a few of the many

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challenges that impact Detroit's business community (Crichlow & McGarrell, 2015; Krysan & Bader, 2007; Welch 2012). Still, little is known about the plight of immigrant business owners who comprise a large segment of the business community in Michigan's largest city.

Areas of increasing concern include problems with violent crime, vandalism, disorderly customers, and the unresponsiveness of police. Some business owners have also been the targets of hate crimes (Fine, 1989; Levin, 2012; Welch 2012). In addition, small business owners must navigate the often stifling bureaucracy involved in business compliance regulations, building codes, and zoning boards (Dalmia, 2013). Many of them possess unfavorable perceptions toward city authorities, and they are concerned that the enforcement of these rules may be left to the discretion of corrupt public officials (Dudar, 2013). Business owners have also complained about the heavy fees involved in obtaining permits and business licenses (Dalmia, 2013). It is believed that Arab and Chaldean business owners in particular have been unfairly targeted with violations by police and city authorities, and this has led to growing legal cynicism (Dudar, 2013; Smith, Tang, & San Miguel, 2012).

In order to increase knowledge on these issues, this study presents a qualitative assessment of interviews with 39 small business owners of various ethnic backgrounds who operate in some of Detroit's most disorderly neighborhoods. The Middle Eastern participants (Arabs and Chaldeans) are compared to the non-Middle Eastern participants in the sample (White and Black business owners). The study makes the case that Arabs and Chaldeans are worthy of special focus due to their similar experiences in violent locales and the shared cognitive landscape of immigrant merchants in the United States. The inclusion of other racial groups in the study provides rich comparison and helps to support the conclusions about the unique experiences of Arabs and Chaldeans. The study highlights the perspectives of these business owners and contributes to a growing body of research on perceptions of criminal justice issues among immigrants and ethnic minorities. This emphasis underlines the point that the perspectives of under-researched ethnic minorities do matter.

The respondents' perceptions of crime, delinquency, and city authorities can be understood within a conceptual framework that includes legal cynicism, procedural fairness, the fear of crime, and legitimacy perceptions. Based on prior research, it is believed that legal cynicism, perceptions of procedural fairness, and the fear of victimization can influence perceptions of state legitimacy as well as perceptions regarding the legitimacy of police (Carr,

Napolitano, & Keating, 2007; Tyler & Fagan, 2008). The salience of these conceptual relationships is examined, and the implications for urban policy in Detroit are discussed.

Literature Review

Legal Cynicism and Legitimacy

Legal cynicism may be an important concept when it comes to understanding business owners' attitudes. Legal cynicism can be defined as a cognitive state in which legal norms are no longer binding or are too weak to warrant social trust (Kapsis, 1978). In a criminological context, high levels of legal cynicism are often associated with high crime rates and often result in a loss of trust toward law enforcement (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998; Tyler & Fagan, 2008). Legal cynicism also reflects a social process in which the unresponsiveness of the authorities may lead to the perception that law enforcement agencies are illegitimate (Kirk & Papachristos, 2011). It is a cultural frame in which the agents who exercise the power of the state are seen as illegitimate, and this includes perceptions of police, courts, and corrections agencies (Kirk & Matsuda, 2011).

Prior studies have argued that legal cynicism is caused by neighborhood structural conditions and variations in police practices (Kirk & Matsuda, 2011; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011). Where community members possess unfavorable perceptions of the police, or public officials in general, this is usually also reflected in low levels of trust (Tyler & Fagan, 2008). The law enforcement agencies that exercise powers on behalf of the state clearly have a stake in citizens' trust as they seek to use it as leverage for the co-production of security (Tyler & Fagan, 2008).

Legal cynicism cannot be properly understood without addressing the issues of trust and legitimacy perceptions. Like the police, the legal system itself also needs legitimation to stay intact, and despite allegations of serious policy failures, legal systems may continue to maintain public deference when individuals view them as legitimate (Beetham, 1991). Citizens accept the state's exercise of power when they view the authorities as morally appropriate. Such attitudes are based on a process of internalization in which the members of dominant and subordinate groups share similar beliefs about authority, and these beliefs help to sustain law and order in civil societies (Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Fagan, 2008).

State legitimacy is therefore the product of interactions that sustain the shared moral reasoning and values between the state and the individual

(Beetham, 1991). According to Weber (1978), citizen cooperation is based on the normative judgments of the exercise of power rather than the sanctions and incentives that are designed to shape behavior, and the development of this cooperation is related to the manner in which the authorities exercise their power over time. Legitimacy, moreover, can be viewed as a social response to the prestige that citizens grant to the state, and it can be sustained by long-standing traditions, charismatic political leaders, and citizens' trust in the rationality of the rule of law (Weber, 1978).

This is consistent with John Locke's perspective that legitimacy in civil societies depends on a transfer of authority that is based on the consent of individuals and their willingness to commit to a social contract with the state (Locke, 1690/1990). Legitimacy then fuels the obligation to obey, and if the conditions of legitimacy are not met, then citizens would no longer feel obliged to obey the instructions of police and other agencies that enforce the law (Weber, 1918/1991). Furthermore, the legitimacy of political authority is derived from the social values and obligations associated with citizenship, rather than self-interest, and the authorities often try to appeal to this legitimacy in order to gain cooperation and deference to the law (French & Raven, 1959; Kelman & Hamilton, 1989; Tyler & Darley, 2000).

Another perspective is that immigrants' attitudes toward the state, as well as the legal system, can be based on either subcultural or attenuated values (Warner, 2003). According to the subcultural approach some individuals are immersed in an oppositional culture from an early age, and they internalize definitions of behavior that reject mainstream values (Cohen, 1955; Kornhauser, 1978). These individuals possess an unfavorable attitude toward the rule of law and a negative disposition toward police officers and other agents of formal social control (Leiber, Nalla, & Farnworth, 1998).

This subculture, sometimes described as a street culture with its own code of conduct, operates within the rubric of community disadvantage and social isolation that fosters disaffection with the police (Anderson, 1999; Wilson, 1987). In such contexts, the police are viewed as ineffective or inaccessible to members of the community who do not want to be labeled as 'snitches' (Rosenfeld, Jacobs, & Wright, 2003). This gives rise to legal cynicism, as the perception that the law and agents of the law are ill-equipped to ensure public safety increases (Kirk & Papachristos, 2011). Legal cynicism may be a product of the cognitive landscape in such communities where the informal settling of disputes is a much more desirable option than calling the police for service (Carr et al., 2007).

Some individuals' resistance of the law is not necessarily an indication that they are wholly oppositional to the law (Ewick & Silbey, 1998). Immigrant business owners may possess attenuated and potentially paradoxical views regarding police, crime, and city authorities in general. With such attenuated values, there is no clear rejection of mainstream values. Rather, individuals may be intolerant of crime while maintaining an unfavorable disposition toward the police (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998), and the normative values that sustain supportive dispositions toward police can be attenuated and replaced by legal cynicism (Warner, 2003).

A study of respondents in three neighborhoods (Carr et al., 2007) provides evidence to support the procedural justice-cultural attenuation approach in which unfavorable dispositions are context-based rather than a wholesale rejection of formal control. The attenuated values thesis could be more reflective of the views of ethnic minorities in violent urban contexts than the subcultural thesis. Attenuation can also be thought of as a crisis of belief when it comes to the authorities, and it usually exists when levels of legal cynicism are high. It is possible that the presence of high levels of legal cynicism among Arab and Chaldean business owners in Detroit can reflect attenuated perspectives of authority.

Procedural Fairness and Racial Differences

Community members' perceptions of public officials may also be shaped by procedural justice (or procedural fairness perceptions). Procedural justice is a neighbor-concept to legal cynicism, and it can be defined as the perceived fairness of the criminal justice process. It is based on the rules of natural justice and the principle that all persons are entitled to the due process of law (Tyler, 1988). Although it generally includes individuals' attitudes toward the outcomes of criminal justice decisions, prior research has conceptualized it in terms of how individuals perceive their treatment by the police and other agents of the state. More specifically, it is the quality of decision making, quality of treatment, and the trustworthiness of the agents who exercise the power of the state (Tyler & Wakslak, 2004).

Extant research indicates that when respondents used ethical judgments of the appropriateness of law enforcement actions rather than their perceptions of the outcomes of procedures, these perceptions of fair and respectful treatment determine levels of legitimacy (Tyler, 1988; Tyler, Lind, & Huo, 2002). Furthermore, immigrant business owners' perceptions of unfair treatment may be connected to racialized beliefs about society (Crichlow & McGarrell, 2015). According to a conflict perspective

of racialized attitudes, differential perceptions can be explained by the belief that dominant social groups are treated more favorably by the authorities than subordinate groups (Simon & Burns, 1997).

Where members of dominant groups believe the status quo is threatened, or that there is competition for scarce resources, this can lead to social conflict. Such conflict is often manifested in behaviors that perpetuate hierarchies of race, class, and gender in which certain social groups are oppressed by dominant groups (Brunson, 2007; Brunson & Miller, 2006; Taylor & Lawton, 2012). When examining civil rights abuses in the US, researchers also found that subordinate groups, disproportionately comprised of racial minorities, were less likely to trust the criminal justice process, which was perceived to be largely controlled by the dominant racial majority (Blalock, 1967; Blumer, 1958). These findings are also relevant to racial minorities in Canada and other industrialized nations where aboriginal communities, and other oppressed groups, are overrepresented in prisons, and these trends have influenced citizens' fairness judgments about systems of law and justice (Chrismas, 2012).

Moreover, across ethnic groups, it is clear that there are deeply-rooted cultural factors that influence individuals' perceptions of life in the city. Huq, Tyler, and Schulhofer (2012) examined the effect of prior experiences of Muslim immigrants on their current attitudes toward the police and concluded that the experiences of these immigrants in their early years in non-democratic contexts impacted their expectations of the local police in the receiving countries. These immigrants generally possessed unfavorable attitudes toward police due to past experience of an oppressive police force. These studies have generally focused on the attitudes of residents, and it is yet to be determined whether the rubric of legal cynicism, procedural fairness, and legitimacy is also applicable to immigrant business owners who operate in disorderly areas.

Small business owners are an important part of urban communities, and their perspectives are worthy of consideration (Spurlock & Liedka, 2013). Store owners often develop meaningful relationships with the inner-city residents and commuters that comprise their regular customers (Gold, 2010). These individuals can be viewed as the eyes and ears of the community on the street, and their influence can provide a key crime prevention resource for local police (Crichlow & McGarrell, 2015; Duneier, Hasan, & Carter, 2000; Jacobs, 1961). Given that public officials who exercise the power of the state cannot govern effectively without public support, it is worthwhile to consider the perspectives of small business owners and their potential impact on the future management of urban spaces.

It may also be desirable for the police department and other city agencies to partner with small business owners in order to successfully achieve their crime reduction goals and enhance the quality of life in declining communities (Duneier, Hasan, & Carter, 2000). Indeed, there is some precedent for the transfer of state power to private entities for the creation of business improvement districts (Mallet, 1994). Such arrangements could empower Middle Eastern owners to play a more significant role in maintaining public safety in urban spaces (MacDonald, Golinelli, Stokes, & Bluthenthal, 2010). These partnerships will have little hope of success, however, if business owners view the state as illegitimate.

The Study Locale

An overview of the socio-economic context in which small businesses operate is necessary in order to properly understand business owners' perceptions. Detroit, known as the Motor City due to its association with the automobile industry, is the largest American city to ever file for bankruptcy. It has a violent crime rate almost five times the national average and was listed for the fourth straight year as the most dangerous city in the country (Dudar, 2013; Forbes, 2013). Increasing violent crime has taken its toll on the business community as many businesses have closed down due to safety and security issues. Business owners have also lamented the poor response times of police, and it is a concern that police are unable to effectively serve the needs of the community due to the lack of resources and personnel (Dudar, 2013).

There are few big-box retailers, department stores, or chain groceries in the city, and the retail industry is still underdeveloped and unable to support the needs of its population, in terms of commodities and also employment opportunities (Welch, 2012). The city has also experienced a population decline of approximately 63% since it peaked at almost 2 million residents in 1950 (Harris, 2013). After the subprime mortgage crisis in 2008, Detroit's actual jobless rate was close to 50%, and the weight of acute joblessness continues to rest heavily on the most vulnerable inner-city neighborhoods (Pepitone, 2009). It has therefore become the norm for small businesses to operate in disorderly neighborhoods characterized by abandoned buildings.

The truly disadvantaged in Detroit, similar to Chicago, Baltimore, and other large American cities (Wilson, 1987, 1996), are members of the Black community who now comprise more than 80% of the

residential population (Gold, 2010; Krysan, & Bader, 2007). Generational poverty has been fueled by the loss of jobs in the automotive sector and the unintended consequences of failed infrastructure and housing development programs that have exacerbated problems of racial distrust and class segregation (Darden, Hill, Thomas, & Thomas, 1987; Kurth, Wilkinson, & Aguilar, 2013; Pepitone, 2009). The flight of White residents to suburban communities, compounded by the gradual departure of the African American middle class have also adversely affected inner city neighborhoods (Darden et al., 1987; Kurth et al., 2013; Wilson, 1996).

Furthermore, a history of racial conflict and latent distrust has marred interactions between Middle Eastern small business owners and their predominantly Black customer base (Gold, 2010; Light & Gold, 2000). Prior studies on Detroit's immigrant business community have focused on the complex relationship between business owners and members of the residential community (Darden & Thomas, 2013; Gold, 2010). This relationship has often been defined by distrust, and this is evidenced in the belief that immigrant business owners avoid paying taxes and seek only to profit off of residents in low-income neighborhoods (Darden & Thomas, 2013). This is the bleak backdrop to small business activity in the city.

Some suggest that the small business community has done little to enhance the lives of Black residents in particular, which could be one of the main sources of the distrust and conflict (City Data, 2011; Krysan, & Bader, 2007). This conflict could also be rooted in the perception that many immigrants overtake US-born residents in the mobility race by quickly establishing their own businesses and retreating to their comfortable suburban homes, as they seem to benefit from the patronage of their customers while failing to reinvest their earnings in the surrounding communities (Darden & Thomas, 2013; Gold, 2010).

There are also some noteworthy characteristics of the Middle Eastern business owners highlighted in this study. As indicated earlier, Arab business owners in Detroit are predominantly Muslim Arabic speakers, originating from a range of Middle Eastern countries. The Detroit metropolitan area comprises over 400,000 Arabs, the largest concentration of Arab Americans in the United States (Arab American Institute, 2014). Chaldeans speak Aramaic and are a Chaldean Catholic minority group from a province in Northern Iraq. The Metro Detroit area comprises the largest Chaldean Catholic diaspora community in the world (Detroit Metropolitan Census, 2002). The large influx of Chaldeans during the 20th century was due mainly to their determination to flee the oppressive and discriminatory practices of the Saddam Hussein regime. Together, these groups are a significant part of the business community in the city, and the Metro Detroit area contains the largest community of Chaldeans outside of Iraq (Smith et al., 2012; Spurlock & Liedka, 2013). In many of Detroit's declining low-income neighborhoods one can invariably find stores or gas stations operated by these Middle Eastern immigrants, and it is important to understand their unique perspectives regarding the challenges of operating businesses in the city.

In the midst of these challenges, compliance issues have become very difficult to navigate for many business owners. Many have expressed that the requirements for receiving and maintaining a business license are harsh and that the process is fraught with bureaucratic challenges (Dalmia, 2013). Some merchants have suggested that many of the taxes and fees are not necessary and they do not see the money collected from business owners being put to good use. Others have indicated that they are not properly treated by inspectors from City Hall as well as the fire department (Smith et al., 2012). Such complaints were explored in participants' responses in the current study.

Regarding the fire code inspections in particular, there has been a backlog due to manpower. There are not enough fire prevention officers to conduct proper inspections; thus, there have been many buildings owned by businesses that have compliance issues to resolve. Businesses with serious violations have actually been forced to close down (Dahl, 2015). Some merchants believe that it is a double standard to focus aggressively on businesses and ignore the declining communities and the non-compliant structures that continue to surround their businesses. Some immigrant business owners may believe that they have been unfairly targeted (Crichlow & McGarrell, 2015; Gold, 2010). Furthermore, the authorities may believe that it is more lucrative to focus on businesses rather than residences, given that business owners are more likely to have the money to pay the fees and fines (Dudar, 2013; Smith et al., 2012). These issues could play a significant role when it comes to respondents' perceptions.

Methods

This study comprises the qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with business owners. The perceptions of Arabs and Chaldeans are compared with the perceptions of non-immigrant participants. A freelance contractor with strong ties to the Middle Eastern business community, who often served as a liaison between business owners and officials at City Hall, was used as an informant to provide access to potential participants. Many of the Middle Eastern

participants were not inclined to speak openly; however, the presence of the informant helped a great deal in building trust with the participants. Gaining access to non-immigrant business owners was less challenging. In addition, a snowball sampling approach was used that involved referrals from members of the community associated with NGOs and Chambers of Commerce. Figure 1 depicts the snowball sampling procedure used in the study.

Figure 1: Snowball Sampling Chart
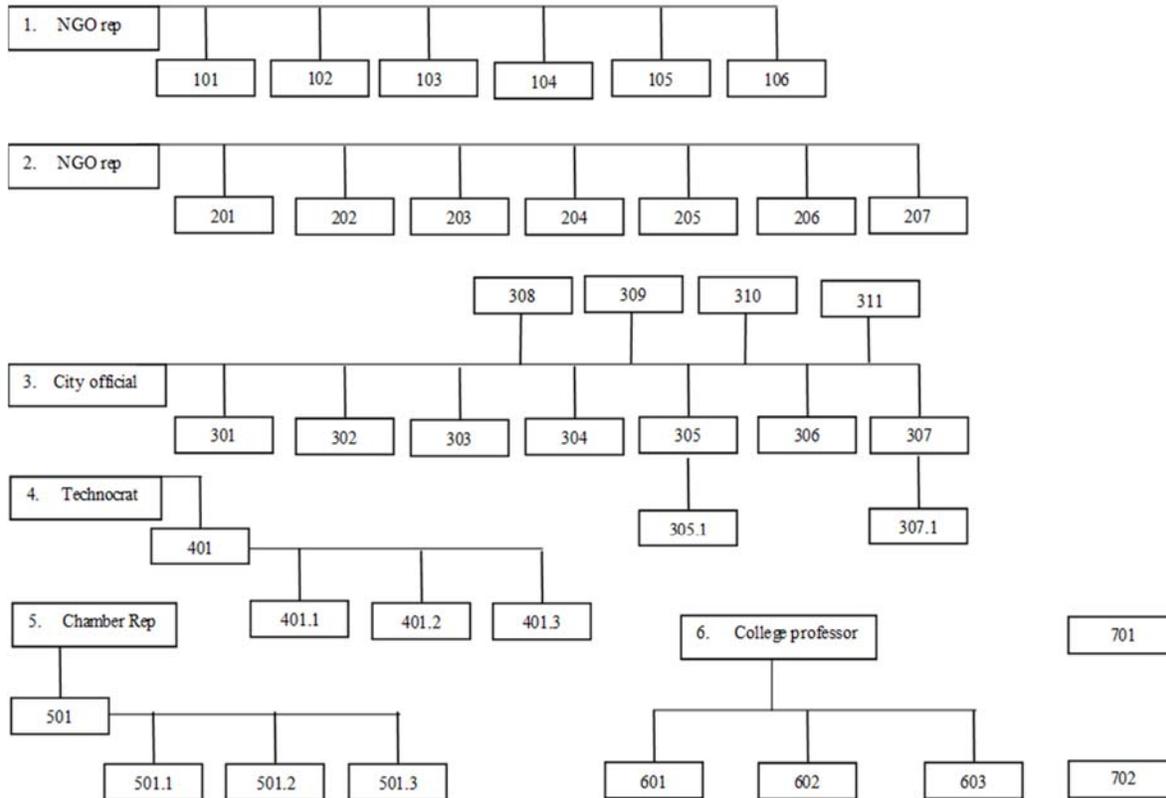
In all, a sample of 39 participants were recruited (see Table 1). This comprised 12 Arab, eight Chaldean, 12 African American, and seven White participants. Eight participants had operated a business in Detroit for less than five years, 17 had between five and 10 years' experience, and 14 had more than 10 years' experience. Only three of the participants operated more than one business, and most businesses comprised fewer than 20 employees (95%). There were six female business owners in the interview sample; however, none of them was Middle Eastern. Two were African American, and the rest were White. The interview process continued until saturation was achieved; it became clear that similar perspectives were being expressed across different respondents and the themes were firmly established.

Table 2 contains a description of the Arab and Chaldean participants, the main focus of this study, regarding regional location, type of business, number of employees, country of origin, and ethnicity. All possessed less than 15 years' experience operating a business in Detroit, and only three of the participants operated more than one business. Most participants owned gas stations or groceries. The eight gas stations were owned by Arabs, and the four grocery stores were owned by Chaldeans. The other types of businesses owned by Middle Eastern participants were liquor stores, auto repairs, a pizza store, electronics, and a movie theatre. The participants' businesses were located in different parts of the city: The North East region, the East Side, Midtown, Indian Village, and the West Side. The participants' countries of origin were Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and Jordan.

Comparatively, the non-Middle Eastern participants owned a range of businesses. Among the African American participants, there were four barber shop owners, two fast food outlets, a marketing firm, a daycare, a funeral home, cleaning services, financial services, and a transportation company.

Table 1: Description of Interview Participants (*N* = 39)

Characteristics	*n*	%
Age:		
Less than 30	8	21%
30 – 40	23	59%
41 – 50	4	10%
Above 50	4	10%
Race:		
White	7	21%
Black	12	30%
Latino	0	0
Middle Eastern	20	49%
Immigrant?		
Yes	20	51%
No	19	49%
Years in business:		
Less than 5	8	21%
5 – 10	17	44%
11 – 20	8	21%
21 – 30	5	14%
More than 30	0	0
More than one business?		
Yes	3	8%
No	36	92%
Number of employees:		
Less than 10	34	87%
10 – 20	5	13%
More than 20	0	0

Among the White participants there were two bakeries, catering services, financial services, a bar, a landscaping business, a construction company, and a wholesale warehouse. These business owners were also located in different parts of the city, but it is noteworthy that the Middle Eastern-owned businesses were more likely to be located in violent and disorderly neighborhoods. Information on the social and physical disorder in these areas was obtained through the guidance of Detroit police officers, the use of crime data, and the researcher's unobtrusive direct observations in the community.

The interview protocol was divided into two sections. The first section included general questions about the participant's origin, the characteristics of the business, and the challenges of operating a business in Detroit. Perceptions of crime, policing, and the performance of city officials were explored. This section also addressed the experience of immigrants in Detroit, the challenges of running a business in the city, and crime prevention issues. The second section addressed legal cynicism, procedural fairness, the fear of crime, and legitimacy perceptions, including interactions with police and city officials and perceptions regarding their performance.

Table 2: Descriptions of Arab and Chaldean Participants –
Type of Business, City Region, Country of Origin, and Race (*n* = 20)

	Type	Number of Employees	Country of Origin	Race/ Ethnicity
1	**North East**			
	Movie Theatre	4	Iraq	Chaldean
	Grocery	9	Iraq	Chaldean
	Gas Station	5	Lebanon	Arab
	Gas Station	5	Lebanon	Arab
2	**East Side**			
	Gas Station	3	Lebanon	Arab
	Auto Repairs	4	Iraq	Arab
	Gas Station*	10	Lebanon	Arab
	Gas Station	4	Yemen	Arab
	Gas Station	3	Yemen	Arab
	Gas Station	5	Jordan	Arab
	Auto Repairs	2	Unknown	Arab
	Pizza Store	4	Iraq	Chaldean
	Liquor Store, Mini Mart & Cell Phone Store	13	Lebanon	Arab
	Electrical Services	3	Lebanon	Arab
3	**Midtown & Indian Village**			
	Grocery	9	Iraq	Chaldean
	Groceries**	11	Iraq	Chaldean
	Grocery	8	Iraq	Chaldean
4	**West Side & South West**			
	Liquor Store	2	Iraq	Chaldean
	Grocery	11	Iraq	Chaldean
	Gas Station	3	Lebanon	Arab

*   The participant owns 3 gas stations
** The participant owns 2 grocery stores

The interviews consisted of open-ended questions posed in a semi-structured manner, which allowed participants to speak freely. The questions regarding legal cynicism, legitimacy, and procedural justice perceptions reflected items developed by Tyler and Fagan (2008). Questions on legal cynicism pertained to the use of power and whether those in power use the law to try to control business owners or to protect the interests of business owners. Participants were also asked whether laws were made

to be broken, and whether it is okay to do anything you want as long as you do not hurt anyone (Kapsis, 1978; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998).

Questions on procedural justice perceptions focused on 'respect' and whether police and public officials were treating business owners with respect and fairness, and whether they were explaining the reasons for their decisions. Questions on the fear of victimization comprised the degree to which participants were afraid of someone breaking into their business while they were there. There were also questions on participants' fear of being robbed by someone with a gun or a knife or being assaulted in the area where their business is located. Regarding state legitimacy perceptions, the questions focused on whether business owners do what police and public officials tell them to do even when they do not understand the reasons for their decisions. There were also questions on the trustworthiness of city authorities and whether they make good decisions.

The coding and analysis was guided by Silverman (2010) as well as Miles and Huberman (1994). The data were hand coded for relevant emerging themes, and after the first stage of coding was completed, a coding protocol was created. Data from the transcripts were then grouped according to theme, and relevant labels were created under each conceptual heading. In order to establish reliability, an alternative coder with experience in qualitative research was asked to code a sample of eight cases using this coding tool. Inter-rater reliability was assessed based on the coding of two separate coders, and this produced a Cohen's Kappa statistic of .86. It is generally accepted that an agreement coefficient of .8 (80%) indicates acceptable reliability (Gwet, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Findings

Legal Cynicism and Legitimacy

The results were mixed regarding legal cynicism. Many participants agreed that those in power used the law to control business owners and that local government officials were not representing their interests. It is noteworthy that Arabs and Chaldeans were more likely to hold this unfavorable view about law and local government than their White counterparts. African American participants' views on this issue were usually somewhere in the middle. However, regarding the other dimensions of legal cynicism examined, the participants generally did not agree that laws were made to be broken, and this perspective was shared by participants across the sample, regardless of origin or ethnicity. The

following excerpt from a White non-immigrant contractor named Ted[1] provides an example of this:

> I obey the law and I don't believe in cutting corners. So, laws are not made to be broken, else we'd have a lawless city. But I don't think the folks who make the laws or enforce them care very much about business owners. They don't take pride in the city, they just want the power.

Another notable finding was that Arab and Chaldean owners' perceptions toward city officials were less favorable than the perceptions of other participants. They were frustrated by the bureaucracy involved in the day-to-day operations of business in Detroit. Arabs and Chaldeans as a group appeared to possess stronger negative views of city authorities in general and, in some cases, perceived local government to be illegitimate. They found city officials to be unwilling and largely incapable of addressing safety and security issues in the city. They seemed to view the state and the agents who exercise state power as incompetent and often vindictive. Although some of the White business owners shared these views, it was clear that the African American participants were more inclined to highlight mitigating factors such as the lack of resources in the city and its impact on the performance of city officials. Reggie, a black business owner in the Midtown area expressed this view:

> I know it's difficult for public officials. But they've been strategic about certain locations. There's really been an explosion of businesses over in midtown. And there's some shops over there. There's some beauty shops and barber salons that have been able to flourish over there because of their location. In that situation[,] yes[,] they can be helpful to any kind of small business you can open up over there.

Bureaucracy and legal cynicism. Participants were also concerned about the bureaucracy involved in applying for business permits and licenses. Some made frequent trips to City Hall and paid thousands of dollars in taxes and fees and complained that there was little to show for it. Overall, Middle Eastern and non-Middle Eastern participants believed that public officials were not doing enough to support small businesses and complained that, in some ways, they were stifling business activity and discouraging new entrepreneurs. In the following excerpt, Khalil, an Arab gas station owner, talked about his experiences with public officials:

The city of Detroit is like a bureaucracy. If you want something done, it reminds me of stories my dad used to tell me about the old country. If you want your ID you had to go down to the ID place about seven times to get your ID, and that's how it is with the city of Detroit. I go down there and they don't care who I am. I am here for this license and this license, okay, call this number, call this number, and call this number. You call all these numbers and nobody answers. I swear to God, there's some licenses that are not necessary, it's just a way of drawing in more revenue. And all you're doing in the end is killing these small business owners, and with time I guarantee you you'll see some of them exit the market.

Some business owners also offered creative solutions that could potentially help to revitalize local communities. Some of these ideas were expressed at meetings with the zoning board; however, participants felt as if their concerns were falling on deaf ears. This was more of a concern for Middle Eastern participants who believed that attitudes of racial prejudice possessed by some African American officials was part of the reason for the resistance to small business development in the Arab and Chaldean communities. Furthermore, some business owners in the most dilapidated areas talked about their efforts to grow their businesses and incorporate community-oriented strategies and indicated that despite these efforts, public officials were rejecting their ideas. In the following excerpt, Aziz, an Arab business owner, referred to his proposal for expanding his gas station and convenience store:

For two years in the city of Detroit you go down there and they talk to you like a piece of crap. Every time we do something they shoot it down. One official at the zoning board said it's too overwhelming. Overwhelming? How overwhelming? Are we overwhelmed by all the abandoned houses? And there's a middle school right behind us and children get out of school and they have to walk by ten abandoned homes. Wouldn't they rather walk by a fresh produce market they can come in to with their family? [I want to create] a complete stop in this whole entire area. We wanted to open up an urban gas station to have all fresh vegetables and so on, for people to come… like a destination neighborhood, and to pull the whole neighborhood together. Overwhelming? How? And you spend so much money on planning and they keep shooting it down.

There was great concern about inspections and the challenging compliance requirements imposed by the city, and the Arab gas station owners seemed to be most affected by these issues. They lamented the many 'hoops they had to jump through' in order to get approvals. Most believed there were too many inspections and complained about unreasonably high property taxes. They were frustrated about having to pay taxes on property going back at least ten years before they even purchased it. Some participants indicated that they would not have bought their businesses had they known about the years of accumulated unpaid property taxes that would automatically pass on to them. Participants also indicated that they were not treated with respect by public officials and did not believe that technocrats were making quality decisions. In the following excerpt, Mohammed discussed the disrespectful treatment by inspectors from the fire department:

You should see the fire department guys when they come in here, how they talk to us. They take $50,000 a year for a one time visit, and they talk to us like we're pieces of crap. They didn't even show up for the last three years, and they send us bills for the last three years.… Just because they pushed some numbers and they say, "Hey you owe us $30,086." No, you didn't forget to bill me. You never showed up.

Disillusionment with legal authority. Participants' frustrations with city officials seemed to reflect a broader disillusionment with authority figures in the city ranging from police officers to elected officials. Unfavorable perceptions toward politicians and bureaucrats were frequently expressed, and business owners felt constrained to comply with a litany of rules and regulations. The White participants echoed the sentiments of their Middle Eastern counterparts in this regard. There was an overall sense that the city had been mismanaged for years and that if more power were given to private business interests, the city would be better off.

Some African American participants were skeptical about handing over the city to private interests due to the concern that the Black business community would be marginalized. However, they acknowledged that the mismanagement of resources in the city was hurting all small businesses, regardless of the ethnicity of the owners. It is also noteworthy that the willingness of business owners to

comply with regulations did not appear to flow from a sense of duty or trust in the law; rather, they were afraid of the potential consequences of non-compliance. They did not want to lose their businesses, and in the case of Arabs and Chaldeans, their businesses were often an important part of their families' legacies.

Crime and Victimization

Unresponsive police and the risk of victimization. An emerging theme in responses to questions about police performance was that of police response-time to calls for service. Participants were generally not satisfied with police response-times, and some expressed that this issue affected their confidence in the police department. These views were expressed by all participants. They described violent crimes and disorderly behavior at or near their businesses and the apparent futility of calling the police: "The police will not come, even if you have their cell number. They don't give a shit," said one Chaldean grocery store owner. Participants who were frustrated by police response times were inclined to believe that police did not care enough about serving the community, and some business owners lost confidence in the police as a result. In particular, for the businesses that experienced a high volume of interactions with the public, there were serious concerns about reporting crimes to the police. Tariq described his experience during a night shift:

> I'm behind the counter, and the guy says "I'm not leaving here until I get my mother f-ing money." I was scheduled to leave at twelve [midnight] it was like 11:50 and there's no way I'm walking out of here safely until that guy leaves. So we call the cops and with all due respect to the Detroit Police department, they still didn't show up. [The dispatcher] when she responded, said we'll send a car over there. They didn't come. It's like, what's the point of me calling if you're not gonna show up? Then when a situation happens, where a clerk pulls out a gun or something gets escalated to another level, then it's automatically come charge the gas station guy, come charge the gas station clerk. You understand what I'm saying? It's like I'm the one that needs you. There's people terrorizing my place of business. Should I call these folks [the police]? Every time, I'm the problem, I'm the problem.

Perceptions regarding police response-times seemed to affect levels of confidence and satisfaction. Participants may respect the institution of policing; however, they had little respect for police and did not trust the police mainly because of a perceived lack of responsiveness. Regina is an African American female owner of a transportation business in the Midtown area. She indicated that after a non-fatal shooting incident involving one of her drivers and the passengers of one of her vehicles, it was assumed that the police would not come quickly:

> It actually took them [the police] quite some time to arrive at the hospital. I don't know how long they took to arrive at the crime scene because we left pretty quickly. But the assumption is that they took a long time. And the shooter was not ever apprehended. And in such a large crowd it should not have been so difficult to find the shooter. And then at the hospital, it's almost as though they are making out the victims to be the bad people. "What were you doing there?" And basically, "Why has this happened to you?"

Clearly, passionate views about policing must be understood within a neighborhood context in which the risk and fear of victimization is a daily reality. All of the participants indicated that there was a crime problem in the areas where their businesses are located. Five participants indicated that they had been robbed recently and most of these crimes had occurred at their places of business. Richie, the owner of a barber school, described an experience of a robbery while he was at his business:

> I got robbed one morning when I was opening up. I opened the safe and he tell me come on let's go. He takes me and he puts me [in] the basement. Now I'm thinking I'm gonna get shot. He takes me to the basement and going into the basement there's a big steel beam that we put on the door at night, so if somebody comes into the basement from the outside, they couldn't get upstairs. And I'm saying, shit I'm gonna get killed.

It is noteworthy that very few of the participants live in the city of Detroit, and some had to commute a relatively long distance from home to come to their stores. This in itself reflects a general indictment on the quality of life in the city and concerns about safety. All participants indicated that they were concerned or afraid that they would be a victim of crime in the future. Although some business owners had experienced violent crimes while operating their businesses, the majority had experienced theft and

other property crimes. Moreover, the gas station owners were regularly dealing with shoplifting, vandalism, and threats of violence from customers. Disorderly and disrespectful customers appeared to be an even larger issue than crime, per se, for some participants. The following excerpt comprises an argument between Mohammed and a customer over gas prices:

> He goes, "No, you're not supposed to f-ing charge me for debit price." He ended up pulling a weapon on me. Thank God I was behind the safety… and he got out his car. The car was parked right in front of the cashier's clerk window, and I'm looking at him and he's brandishing a weapon. All over five bucks in gas. And everything was displayed. It wasn't like I didn't have that displayed. Like this is my cash or credit price. But it was right there and a couple customers tried to explain to him, look it's right on the board. [Still] he brandished a weapon.

During this incident, Mohammed was fearful for his life. In retrospect, he did not think it was worth risking one's life over the price of gas, and that was the day he decided that he would eventually look for a way to sell his business and move to another city. He had to think seriously about the wellbeing of his young family and wondered who would take care of them if he was murdered while at the store:

> I have kids at home. I can't risk my life for a quarter and a dollar. I'm willing to trade everything if it came down to the point where my life was at risk and someone had a gun pointed at my head. I would tell him go ahead take the whole store and leave me for my kids. Because that is the objective as you grow older, you know. You don't care about yourself, you care about the future of your kids. [The police chief needs to] come down to the city, come down. Talk to these gas station owners. They'll tell you about the crime, they'll tell you about these dope houses.

Participants complained about delinquency and neighborhood disorder affecting business owners who operated their businesses in often deplorable environments. An Arab business owner named Sharif gave another example of this. Here, he expresses concern about the impact of prostitution on his business and that the police have refused to do anything about it:

> Prostitution comes. It's [here] all the time. The police know about it, the police see them all the time. The police station is right there, literally. The reason we want this to be taken care of is because this cost me so much business. These women out there, it doesn't help my business it's disgusting. All year long. It is absolutely disgusting. So what do you do? The police don't take care of it. Nobody does. I went and I complained. The commander who was in place, he told me explicitly, "Don't bother me with this anymore. Deal with the homeless community like everybody else." That's exactly what he said. He said, "Stop bothering me with it." The reason they're here [is] because there's a lot of drugs and heroin that's here. So who takes care of this problem? That is a police issue, if you can't pick up prostitution you have to go the other way around and that is in cleaning up from the other side.

The impact of problematic neighborhoods on businesses. The participants were also frustrated that the police viewed several types of delinquency and disorder as issues for business owners to deal with on their own. Several participants talked about the problem of loitering and the sale of illegal drugs outside their businesses and the fact that the city authorities deem it as a business issue rather than a law enforcement issue. Most participants were concerned about the lack of quick and meaningful consequences for drug selling in their communities and felt labeled by the city as "bad businesses." Business owners had become cynical about law enforcement in general and believed that all agents of the law were untrustworthy. It was perceived that the power of the law was being used to accomplish an agenda that was not in the best interest of small business owners. Such views were highlighted by the Arab gas station owners. This group of respondents possessed the most unfavorable views. They also suggested that there is a lawless mindset that exists in some communities in Detroit that has not been properly addressed by the authorities. Instead of addressing these issues head-on, there was a perception that Middle Eastern business owners were being scapegoated and unfairly treated.

Furthermore, Chaldean business owners in the Osborn neighborhood talked about the security of their parking lots. The Osborn neighborhood is a community in the northeastern part of the city that has developed a reputation as a very troubled area. One Chaldean participant had to hire a full-time security guard to protect his patrons' vehicles

because so many catalytic converters were being stolen. His employees were also victims of robberies on their way to and from work, which was another theme that emerged during the interviews. It seemed that the risk of robberies perpetrated against employees during their commute or while waiting at bus stops was a concern.

Another Chaldean participant who operated an auto repair shop on the East Side was also concerned about the risk of victimization. A fellow business owner, one of his closest friends, was shot and killed while taking a bag of credit card receipts to the bank. The perpetrator thought it was a bag of money: "He was killed for nothing. People get killed for shit like that." Since then, whenever he goes to the bank he changes cars as a precautionary measure. Yet another business owner indicated that he used to own seven businesses in Detroit but was forced to sell three of them because of the difficulty in getting employees to stay. Potential employees were afraid because the businesses had been robbed about fifteen times. He was frustrated about constantly being targeted. He carried a gun in his belt for protection which was visibly displayed as a deterrent. When asked about a solution to the problem of victimization he suggested that all law-abiding citizens should be carrying guns. He indicated that the citizens of Detroit also needed to be educated about right and wrong and showed a better way to live.

Participants were also concerned about having to be constantly on the alert for con-artists and shoplifters. Some business owners experienced violence and the threat of violence from their own customers. These experiences did not appear to be directly related to legal cynicism or legitimacy perceptions. However, it is important to discuss these experiences for two reasons. First, it is clear that Arab and Chaldeans experienced more frequent victimizations and threats from the residential community. Second, concerns about the risk of victimization and the fear of crime could play a role in perceptions of how the city is managed. Business owners who function under the threat of victimization from customers felt particularly vulnerable and in need of special assistance from city authorities and police.

The gas station owners in particular discussed the retaliation they experienced when they stopped selling *loosies* (Loose cigarettes). Some customers expressed their disapproval by destroying property, particularly the vehicles in the parking lot. One participant indicated that during a night shift a customer came in and broke everything inside the store. After some time had passed, the business owner came from behind the counter to start cleaning up. However, the perpetrator came back and seized

the business owner's shotgun and tried to shoot him as they wrestled on the floor. Eventually, the business owner escaped, and the perpetrator left with the weapon. Subsequently, a close relative advised him not to put his life at risk like that again and that he should stay behind the counter even if they break everything. Vandalism, theft, and the hiding of illegal drugs on store shelves were frequent incidents reported by gas station owners. Tariq described such an incident:

> I just remodeled my store four or five days ago, I spent $80,000. I changed my islands, we bought nicer pumps gave it a fresh paint job, gave it a nicer look. Not considering my neighborhood behind me is half gone. And I woke up this morning I just spent a half hour, someone spray painted my pump, spray painted the new cement slab we just put in ... spray painted all the pumps, I just spent a half hour washing the spray paint off. I got discouraged. Like here I am trying to better this place so people feel safe, feel welcome and hopefully attract a nicer crowd, and you gotta wake up to that stuff.

This captures the ongoing frustration and the helplessness that these business owners often feel. Their concerns are not only with crime and disorder but also with the behavior of their customers. They are concerned about the retaliation of angry customers who may call them 'snitches' for calling the police. Aziz criticized the unfair focus of some police officers regarding raids on gas stations and the fear of retaliation from customers:

> They're going around [The police] raiding gas stations as they show on the news. And they blame the gas station owners, 'You're the one who let him sit here. You're the one who let him sit in your store, sell weed, hide his product in your shelves,' and do this and that. And I know this for a fact, because I have a cousin down the street, about a month ago he got raided, and the guy's a real nice guy. He's not [that] type of person you know. He'll come at you nicely, nicely. And most of us fear calling the cops. And here's another reason why we fear calling the cops, [it's for] fear of retaliation from the consumers.

Aziz also referred to the conundrum of having to ask loiterers to stop selling marijuana so close to his business. The police believe these incidents are a business problem; however, when business owners

try to handle them, they are often not effective. What makes the situation more difficult is that the young men who hang around their businesses are often defiant:

> We used to have a site on the East Side over and over again [we talked to them] and nobody listens. You speak to their parents it's like speaking to a wall. You speak to their grandparents, they don't want to listen to you. What do you do with them? You call the police, the police can't do anything. I mean seriously what can the police do? We used to have this one site, the police station closed down, so when the fifth precinct closed down, we closed down our business.

In response to this conflict, most of the participants called for dialogue between small businesses owners and the residential community, as well as a meeting between the business community and city officials. These misconceptions needed to be cleared up so that all could work together for the overall wellbeing of the city. However, due to the distrust and unfavorable perceptions, added to the pressures of a struggling economy and high crime rates, the city was becoming "a pressure cooker that would soon explode," according to one Lebanese gas station owner. Still, aside from all the criticisms and the frustrations expressed by the respondents who were interviewed, many of them indicated that they still love the city and hope that one day soon things start to turn around. This was one of the main reasons why many of them choose to stay in Detroit.

The owner of several successful businesses on the East Side, including a liquor store and a cell phone store, described an experience with a customer who paid for items with a fake hundred dollar bill. Given the rule that business owners are not permitted to return counterfeit bills, he chose to hold on to it. However, the customer retaliated by pointing a gun at him, and then proceeded to destroy the store. The business owner called the police at 8:00 P.M., but they did not arrive until 12:00 midnight. He indicated that the customer had threatened to come back and kill him when he got off work and asked the police for protection, but they refused. Instead, they suggested that he park his car out front. He asked the police if they would take him to his car that night, but unfortunately, the answer was "no."

He therefore concluded that if the guy came again, he would give him back the fake hundred dollar bill because obeying the rules could cost him his life. Apparently, the counterfeit money was quite important to the perpetrator because he would eventually find a proprietor who would take it.

Participants believed that these problems clearly reflect the failure of the police and the city authorities in general for allowing neighborhoods to deteriorate and crime rates to escalate. This is the challenging reality that many of the participants face daily.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study contributes to research on business communities in disorderly areas, particularly within America's large urban centers. The findings indicate that there were nuanced perspectives when it comes to legal cynicism. While business owners were generally dissatisfied with the performance of those who exercise the power of the law, most agreed that laws should be obeyed. It was also noteworthy that Arab and Chaldean merchants voiced the strongest disfavor toward city authorities. Most believed that those who exercise legal power are more concerned about controlling business owners than developing business activity in the city.

Arab and Chaldean participants also believed that the legal power exercised by the authorities has been misappropriated and harshly administered. They indicated that public officials have an agenda that does not reflect the best interest of the most vulnerable businesses in the city. They were concerned that businesses that need the most assistance and protection are not properly served by city authorities. Although this was not a representative sample, the findings do suggest that Arabs and Chaldeans in Detroit are more cynical than their counterparts.

Attitudes toward the police were also complex, as most business owners had respect for the institution of policing, but very few had confidence in police performance, and most did not perceive the police to be protecting the interests of the business community. Most agreed that the performance of police officers and their response-times to calls for service needed to be urgently addressed. These frustrations were compounded by the fear of crime and the ongoing risk of victimization. Both the immigrant and non-immigrant business owners were concerned about violent crime, illegal drugs, and property crimes in the areas where their businesses were located. While the Arab gas station owners were particularly concerned about the risk of being victims of violent crime, they were more concerned about their interactions with a small minority of abrasive and unruly customers. Furthermore, gas station owners throughout the city seemed to share common issues pertaining to crime, policing, interaction with customers, and general issues facing the city. They were also frustrated with issues regarding business regulations and compliance, and skeptical that the

money collected in taxes was producing any tangible benefit for the city.

The findings suggest that differential perspectives regarding public officials, police, and the fear of crime may have more to do with type of business and location than ethnicity. The Arab participants in particular appeared to be the most at-risk group. However, this may have more to do with the fact that they operate more vulnerable businesses such as liquor stores, gas stations, and convenience stores in the most disorderly parts of the city. The type of business could be influential in shaping overall perceptions, and this is something worth exploring in future research. Some business owners expressed thoughts of leaving the city, and others who were critical of elected officials indicated that they could do a much better job with fewer resources. Regarding procedural fairness perceptions, business owners also expressed that they were seldom treated with respect by city officials and police. This is similar to the findings from the Crichlow and McGarrell (2015) study which focused on business owners' unfavorable procedural fairness perceptions toward police. The current study comprised a broader framework of perceptions that includes public officials in Detroit. It is noteworthy that participants felt more disrespected by city officials than police, and there was a belief among Middle Eastern business owners that the local authorities really do not care.

As indicated earlier, due to the size and non-representativeness of the sample, there are limitations to the generalizability of these findings. The possibility of selection bias due to the use of informants to gain access to participants is a weakness in this study; however, this challenge is not unusual for qualitative field research. Furthermore, this study presents a case that small businesses in some of the most disorderly areas of Detroit are in need of support, and unfavorable perceptions toward local authorities should be addressed.

Broader Implications

These findings have implications for police practice in urban communities. Small businesses in urban neighborhoods are often the targets of crime and many of the merchants are first and second generation immigrants. Understanding their dynamic standpoints is important for building meaningful police-community partnerships. Police officers will not be able to do their jobs effectively, particularly when it comes to crimes affecting businesses, if they do not have the trust, confidence, and cooperation of business owners. Purposeful interactions between police and small business owners are crucial to the survival of business activity and the development of urban neighborhoods. If small business owners of all ethnic groups have a stake in their communities and believe that police officers are making quality decisions, this bodes well for the efficacy of future crime prevention plans. City officials will also not be able to do their jobs effectively if a large portion of the business sector views them as illegitimate and possesses a high level of legal cynicism.

The ability of the city council to implement and enforce law may be seriously curtailed if business owners and community members alike only obey legal rules when coerced to do so. It is clear that there is a need for public agencies to reach out to the at-risk members of the business community and seek to form partnerships that could highlight some common areas of concern with the hope of taking on the pervasive challenges. The police have recently partnered with a selection of gas station owners to take on the problem of carjackings in the city, and this has yielded some positive results (Williams, 2014). Establishing more initiatives such as this could help a great deal in reducing disorder.

It may also be in the best interest of Arab and Chaldean business owners to seek a united voice in the city rather than only relying on their respective Chambers of Commerce. The Chambers may have helped to sustain ethnic niches; however, more can be done to promote the formation of partnerships between immigrant business communities and the city. With such a united voice they might more effectively express their concerns to public officials with the hope of properly addressing their concerns. It is in the city's best interest, furthermore, that crime plans elicit partners from the business community who have their eyes on the street and are also strategically located to make a difference in the city. Business owners will also feel much safer to conduct their businesses if they believe the local police, as well as city officials, are engaged with the community and concerned about business safety.

City officials can also organize community meetings with Chaldean business owners, and other groups, to hear their concerns and build trust and confidence in law enforcement agencies. The possibility of inviting Arab and Chaldean police recruits could be worth exploring, and it would be helpful if local officials are transparent about the availability of resources for implementing programs to support business activity and creating incentives to new entrepreneurs. The police can also be encouraged to be transparent about the limited police resources and their lack of effectiveness in preventing crime in the past. Perhaps a willingness to be transparent and to have a frank and open dialogue with the business community could go a long way in creating future partnerships for the benefit of the city.

This research also has the potential to inform policymakers regarding the transformation of community spaces and increasing support for small business in depressed urban settings. Where local government fails to properly manage urban spaces, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) could offer a viable solution as suggested in Mallett (1994). With the introduction of BIDs, local governments can eventually turn over important functions to the private sector, and this may serve to empower small businesses in disorderly areas (Davies, 1997). BIDs could also lead to enhanced cooperation between politicians and private entities that could lead to greater accountability and clearly defined measures for the joint management of urban spaces (Rose, 1996; Ward, 2006).

This approach could empower business owners to play a more influential role in reducing crime and maintaining public safety (Cook & MacDonald, 2011; MacDonald et. al., 2010). Managing the built environment can also lead to the reduction of street crimes (Anderson, MacDonald, Bluthenthal, & Ashwood, 2013), and such a concerted initiative could take some of the burden off of the local police department that may already be stretched to capacity. Empowering the business community can ultimately lead to the amelioration of legal cynicism and unfavorable attitudes toward city officials and law enforcement. Achieving this level of public-private cooperation may be critical for Detroit, given that small businesses play a role in the survival and success of urban communities. They provide goods and services, employment, public spaces for commercial activity, and daily social interactions that are typical of many thriving communities (Brodwin, 2012). With the necessary support from local government and law enforcement agencies, small business owners of all ethnic backgrounds can help to address the problem of urban decline (Dymski, 1996; Greenbaum & Tita, 2004), and this would be a welcome sign for the future of the Motor City.

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Endnotes

[1] Pseudonyms were used for all participants in the study.

[2] At the time this article was researched, this news article was available on the website of the *Detroit News* at this link: http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20131004/METRO01/310040001/Six-decades-Detroit-How-abandonment-racial-tensions-financial-missteps-bankrupted-city. The feature story has been removed from the newspaper's website and is no longer available.