

Fistfighting in National Legislatures
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THESIS STATEMENT

Fistfighting in legislatures is the result of political instability and weak parliamentary procedures. It may be caused by legitimacy crises, a culture of fistfighting or violence in the country's politics or a genuine policy disagreement. Genuine policy disagreements are the most difficult to separate from other causes because highly unpopular policies may result in undermining the ruling party's legitimacy, thereby creating legitimacy crises.

Fistfighting between legislators during parliamentary sessions is an under-researched topic. In this paper, I explore the role of fistfighting as a form of policy formation and its effect on policy outcomes. I analyze this role by examining fistfighting examples which have occurred in legislatures around the world by determining whether a given country experienced a crisis near the time of legislative fistfighting, by evaluating the significance of political history of that country, and by analyzing media reports of fistfighting in the legislature of that country.

CHAPTER 1:

I. INTRODUCTION

Legislative fistfighting is a rarely-studied topic requiring a unique approach. In this paper, fistfighting is examined by analyzing different incidents within the context of the political history of specific countries. The background of each country's incident is determined and incorporated into a broader study of the phenomenon of fistfighting as a whole. The data for this paper was assembled through research of news sources, academic journals, and international newspaper databases. The various causes and effects of legislative fistfighting are explored below.

A. DEFINITIONS

Heated political disagreements and clashes over policy occasionally result in physical violence in national legislatures. Fistfighting appears to be a departure from legislative norms, and an apparent loss of control by individual legislators who cannot resolve their disagreements peacefully. Physical violence, hand fighting, or brawls do not have an academic definition, and the causes of legislative fistfighting have not yet been comprehensively researched.

The scope of this thesis is limited to fistfighting occurring between legislators within the legislative body of a nation-state during a parliamentary session. Within this thesis, the terms "fistfighting" and "brawling" can be used interchangeably. This focus is essential to avoid broadening the scope of this paper to all acts of violence occurring in relation to political activity. Importantly, legislative fistfighting differs from previous studies of violence within political processes in several key ways.

First, legislative fistfighting is not a form of traditional violence normally associated with electoral violence. Most definitions of electoral violence focus on the electoral process itself, such as voter intimidation, blackmail, or assassination.¹ However, these forms of violence could be the stimulus for a legislative fistfight. For example, an appointment decision or a scandal could cause a physical confrontation, but just as often, a fistfight can be over a particular piece of legislation contested by two parties.

Second, legislative fistfighting by itself does not typically threaten state control in the same way organized violence does.² However, fistfighting may be a symptom of weakened state legitimacy.³ Fistfighting by legislative leaders is a form of violent political expression that emerges in a formal setting, unlike terrorism, street violence or assassinations. Since fighting takes place in the same location as political discourse, within the legislative building, it is unlike backroom politics and negotiations, which are decidedly less visible. However, fistfighting should not be mistaken with systematic violence that seeks to suppress or eliminate the opposition. If fighting politicians sought to conclusively eliminate their rivals through violence, they could engage in widespread

¹ See e.g. Fischer, J. *Electoral Conflict and Violence*, IFES. Washington, DC. (2002). “any random or organized lack that seeks to determine, delay or otherwise influence and electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced ‘protection,’ blackmail, destruction of property or assassination;” Igbuzor, *Electoral Violence in Nigeria*, Asaba, Action Aid Nigeria. (2010). ““any act of violence perpetuated in the course of political activities including pre, during and post election periods, and may include...use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting...use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral processes or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral processes;” Megan Reif (2010), cited in Majekodunni and Adejuwon, *Electoral Administration and the Consolidation of Democracy: An overview of 2011 general elections in Nigeria*. IJPSS 2(5) 1-26 (2012). “any spontaneous or organized act by candidates, party supporters, election authorities, voters, or any other actor that occurs during an electoral process aimed at influencing the electoral process or its outcome.”

² See Davis, Diane E., *Irregular Armed Forces, shifting patterns of commitment, and fragmented sovereignty in the developing world*, 39 *Theor. Soc.* 397-413, p398 (2010).

³ See e.g. Adesote, Adesola Samson, and John O. Abimbola. "Electoral Violence and the Survival of Democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A Historical Perspective." *Canadian Social Science* 10, no. 3: 140-48 (2014).

paramilitary electoral violence, as found in the Philippines,⁴ in proxy violence through gangs, as found in Jamaica,⁵ or in selective assassination⁶ and imprisonment⁷ of political opposition leaders, as found in the Russian Federation. By contrast, fistfighting is rarely lethal. It is, however, a highly visible form of political violence that differs greatly from the generally-accepted diplomatic format for policy negotiation.

⁴ Tanglao, Lezeel. "Suspect in Deadliest Election-Related Philippine Massacre Killed." VICE News RSS. June 23, 2014. Accessed May 14, 2015. <https://news.vice.com/article/suspect-in-deadliest-election-related-philippine-massacre-killed>.

⁵ Feiling, Tom. *The Candy Machine: How cocaine took over the world*. Penguin UK, 2009.p119.

⁶ Browder, William. "Boris Nemtsov Murder: Message to Vladimir Putin Enemies - CNN.com." CNN. March 04, 2015. Accessed May 8, 2015. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/03/opinion/boris-nemtsov-putin-message/>.

⁷ "Putin Critic Alexei Navalny Given 15-day Jail Sentence - BBC News." BBC News. February 20, 2015. Accessed May 1, 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31545047>.

CHAPTER 2

I. FISTFIGHTING CAUSES

To citizens of a developed democracy, legislative fistfighting may appear to be a fundamentally irrational act. Ideally, developed nations foster legislative change through informed discussion and debate, ultimately voting, rather than brawling. However, if legislators are not acting out of the best interest of the state itself, they must be acting out of a different set of interests which may actually be rational. From an academic perspective, fistfighting in political competition can have three bases as described by Carl Haub: resources, differences, and glory.⁸ Legislative fistfighting in a country can also occur in response to a legitimacy crisis in leadership, a policy crisis or an ongoing culture of political violence that glorifies brawling. Thus, violence is either a departure from the official legal regulations or a ritualized form of policy formation.

This paper addresses the tendency of politicians in countries outside the United States to engage in fistfighting. It includes legislative fistfighting episodes, the bases for these, the political climate, and the outcome.

A. Legitimacy Crises

Legitimacy crises are most common in countries facing rapid social change, as typified by a middle-income country⁹ having recently undergone a successful independence movement or a fundamental regime change. Legitimacy can be defined as public faith resulting in obedience to authorities, governmental regulations and laws.¹⁰

⁸ Haub, Carl. 2012. "Steven pinker, the better angels of our nature: Why violence has declined." *Population and Development Review* 38 (1): 168-9. P.3.

⁹ "Country and Lending Groups." Country and Lending Groups. Accessed April 12, 2015. <http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-and-lending-groups>.

¹⁰ Levi, Margaret, and Audrey Sacks. "Legitimizing beliefs: Sources and indicators." *Regulation & Governance* 3, no. 4 (2009): 311-333.

Legitimacy crises can arise in a systemic form where an entire governing institution is perceived as illegitimate, or it can manifest in a more specific form, where a specific party or politician is perceived as illegitimate. This section will identify the causes of violence aimed at removing or discrediting an opposing party, without a specific policy goal, as fistfighting provoked by an “institutional legitimacy crisis.”

Institutional legitimacy crises can be better understood by looking at the historical changes in the corruption perception index provided by Transparency International. Corruption is defined as “impairment of integrity, virtue, or moral principle.”¹¹ Corruption, or the public’s perception of a government as corrupt, can harm the legitimacy of the political process and of lawmaking.¹² The correlation between legitimacy and corruption is evident, because corruption lowers the performance of a government’s laws and regulations.¹³ This frequently occurs in developing countries, where perceptions of corruption are strong and public trust is low. The level of corruption in each country examined will be presented relatively, as a place in the overall ranking of Transparency International’s corruption report, from the least corrupt (1) to the most corrupt (174-180).¹⁴

The graph below shows national corruption perception levels in studied countries measured by Transparency International data. One sees that some countries in this study experience large changes in perceptions of corruption over time, whereas others remain stable.

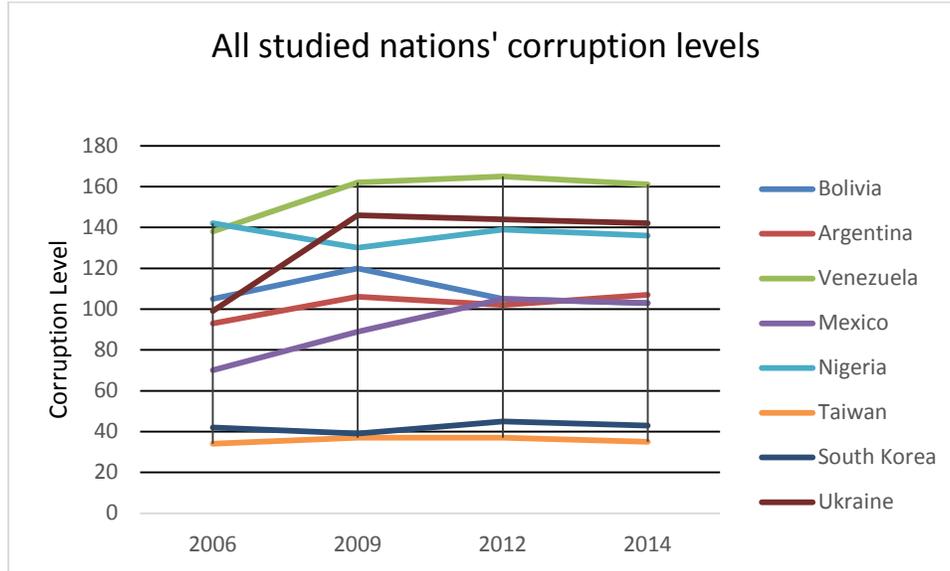
¹¹ "Definition of Corruption." Merriam-Webster. Accessed May 4, 2015. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/corruption>.

¹² Seligson, Mitchell A. "The impact of corruption on regime legitimacy: A comparative study of four Latin American countries." *The journal of Politics* 64, no. 02 (2002): 408-433.

¹³ Gilley, Bruce. "The determinants of state legitimacy: Results for 72 countries." *International Political Science Review* 27, no. 1 (2006): 47-71.

¹⁴ "Corruption Perceptions Index 2014." *Issuu*. Accessed May 14, 2015.

Figure 1



Source: Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index* 2014. <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>.¹⁵

Transparency International data is useful for this analysis, because it only measures perceptions of corruption through surveys given to people reporting on their own country's perceived corruption. Using in-country respondents can reduce misunderstandings arising from cultural differences. Focusing on perceptions of corruption is also useful, because it avoids any inconsistencies that may arise when objective indicators of corruption are successfully hidden from the population.

B. Policy Crises

Countries undergoing policy crises are also highly prone to fistfighting. Policy disputes between rival politicians or rival political factions occasionally reach a point where fistfighting is seen as a reasonable tool within the legislative arena. Domestic

¹⁵ See generally Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index results for the years 2006, 2009, 2012, and 2014.

policy crises may arise in recessions, natural disasters, epidemics, and civil disturbances. Foreign policy crises include wars, refugee flows, and trade disputes.

Policy crises and legitimacy crises are intertwined fundamentally. Policy failures can add to a growing level of dissatisfaction with a ruling administration and result in a kind of mixed crisis. It is possible that all crises resulting in fistfighting are mixed to some degree. Resourceful politicians may not forego an available way to advance their position. For the purposes of this thesis, it is not important whether there is only one cause of a fistfight or not. Identifying any of the causes of a fistfight is valuable in understanding how a fistfight can appear in a modern state.

C. Cultural Fistfighting

Some political cultures have a tradition of fistfighting that has become a part of normal political life. When fistfighting occurs without a specific crisis, the politicians involved can be using violence to achieve increased prestige with their constituencies or political parties. Alternatively, fistfighting among legislators could develop into a routine form of policy dispute. In becoming a customary practice, legislative fistfighting loses its *ad hoc* nature and does not emerge from or cause substantial political disruptions.

Regular fistfighting that happens several times per year may be due to a broader culture that embraces legislative fistfighting, rather than any particular policy disagreement. In examining fistfighting episodes, this study included multiple searches of news sites, international newspaper databases, and academic journals.

In the absence of state authority, many cultures develop concepts of honor and personal reputation which are cultivated with the periodic episodes of interpersonal

violence.¹⁶ Politicians engaging in public fistfighting could be tapping into the need to show their constituents that they are honorable and reputable in a highly expressive way. Violent politicians may be seeking popular appeal in the earliest stages of democratic state-building by appealing directly to the values in a culture that is undergoing transition. Thus, violent acts are a means of establishing personal credibility in societies with concepts of honor and personal reputation tied to interpersonal violence.

II. FUNCTIONS OF FISTFIGHTING

Fistfighting may serve two functions: temporary control of a legislative body and a signal to supporters. However, the impact of fistfighting in some countries has diminished due to audiences growing tired of the spectacle. Frequent occurrences of fistfights quickly erode their shock value and undermine their value as a rebellious act. It is interesting that in countries such as Ukraine, South Korea and Taiwan, such behavior is becoming a norm and some members of the parliament consider legislative fistfighting as an effective way to advance their political ideas. This routine nature has led to efforts to create rules and penalties for legislative fistfights, but such efforts have rarely been successful.

A. Fistfighting as Policymaking

Fistfighting can function as a way to advance a policy or defend a position, effectively providing a “prize” for the fight itself. Established democracies such as the United States and the United Kingdom did have episodes of political rivals attacking each other in order to pass a particularly controversial

¹⁶ Haub, Carl. 2012. “Steven pinker, the better angels of our nature: Why violence has declined.” *Population and Development Review* 38 (1): 168-9.

ial piece of legislation, or to ensure victory in an election.¹⁷ To be sure, this kind of focused, localized violence is not the exclusive type of violence used as a way of passing laws. Prior to the adoption of democracy and the establishment of formal and legitimate procedures of lawmaking, warlords, knights, and rival factions could simply attack each other to shape policy.

Fistfighting can influence policy formation that affects resource distribution and political power distribution. Fistfighting can enhance political power by creating physical disadvantages to opposing a minority party's position if it is defended with sufficient violence. Social scientists describe this phenomenon as the "credible commitment problem."¹⁸ In many situations, political conflict happens due to bargaining for the expansion of power which will benefit members of the parliament of a particular group, party and their constituents. Changes in society, upcoming elections, changes in demographic structure, or expansion of state programs might signal that a party will have broader responsibilities, enhanced powers, or a majority.¹⁹

Based on available media sources, it seems that fistfighting sometimes occurs in democratic political systems when a verbal conflict escalates into a physical confrontation. Fistfighting is more likely to occur during vote counts on issues when the result will be close.²⁰

¹⁷ Seymour, Charles, and Donald Paige Frary. *How the World Votes: The Story of Democratic Development in Elections*. Vol. 1. CA Nichols, 1918.

¹⁸ Beaulieu, Emily. "Huge Brawls in Legislatures, Explained." *Washington Post*. October 14, 2013. Accessed December 1, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/10/14/huge-brawls-in-legislatures-explained/>.

¹⁹ Gandrud, Christopher. "A Brief History of Parliamentary Brawls and Fistfights." *A Brief History of Parliamentary Brawls and Fistfights*. October 14, 2014. Accessed November 28, 2014. <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2009/07/22/756452/-A-Brief-History-of-Parliamentary-Brawls-and-Fistfights>.

²⁰ Ibid.

B. Fistfighting as Theater

Fistfighting may provide violent politicians with rewards from the fight itself; a public image of power and credibility. Fistfighting often reflects true policy differences, but it may not be necessary to physically attack other party members. In fact, fistfighting may restore a politician's lost credibility in the eyes of the electorate by showing his passion and dedication. It may also be a way to develop visibility and demonstrate loyalty within the party. Former Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura once said that politics is just like professional wrestling in that all the competition is staged, and that all the conflict is exaggerated.²¹

Members of parliament may try to gain more credibility in the eyes of their constituencies by showing dedication to the cause through violence. A Ukrainian political psychologist, Viktor Ribachenko, stated that "in case political powers are unable to offer their constituents an interesting program voters will be interested in, they offer an interesting picture."²² There can be disagreements whether such an image will be interesting for people, but it will definitely draw more attention to the fighting legislators, and the possible cause of the brawl.

III. HISTORICAL FISTFIGHTING EPISODES

Although televised fistfighting may be a new phenomenon, legislative fistfighting has a long history in developing and developed countries. For example, the British Parliament has seen a large number of e fights. As an early measure to reduce violence

²¹ Graham, David A. "Jesse Ventura on How Democrats and Republicans Are Like Crips and Bloods." *The Atlantic*. June 19, 2012. Accessed March 14, 2015. <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/06/jesse-ventura-on-how-democrats-and-republicans-are-like-crips-and-bloods/258652/>.

²² Tsiganenko, Igor. "Верховная Рада: ни дня без драки." Информационно-аналитический портал Inpress.ua. October 13, 2013. Accessed May 14, 2015. <http://inpress.ua/ru/politics/17435-verkhovnaya-rada-ni-dnya-bez-draki>.

during legislative sessions, two red lines were drawn in the carpet in the House of Commons in Westminster, with each party keeping its members on their side. The two lines are separated by the length of two swords, which was originally a practical measure to prevent sword fights from breaking out between armed groups during parliamentary sessions.²³ In the United States in 1798, a major fight broke out on the floor of the House of Representatives in Congress over removal of a legislator from the House.²⁴ Politicians in Europe, Asia and the Americas still choose to use fists in intense moments, although fistfighting has almost disappeared from the legislatures in developed nations.²⁵ International media routinely covers fistfighting episodes in the legislatures of South Korea, Taiwan, Mexico, Bolivia, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Nigeria.

In the fistfights researched in this work, a large number of legislators are involved in most cases. The participants are divided along party lines and the country is struggling with legitimacy crises. In Chapter 3, the paper discusses fistfighting within different countries' legislatures to determine the underlying issues that triggered the behavior. For each country examined, fistfighting will be analyzed in three parts. First, each country's recent political history will be examined. Second, media accounts of each country's most visible fistfighting episodes will be examined and analyzed to find a correlation with any legitimacy or policy crises. Third, the results of each fistfight will be analyzed and the

²³ Goodsell, Charles T. "The architecture of parliaments: legislative houses and political culture." *British Journal of Political Science* 18, no. 03 (1988): 287-302.

²⁴ "Historical Highlights Search | US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives." Historical Highlights. Accessed November 3, 2014. <http://history.house.gov/HistoricalHighlight/Search/>.

²⁵ An exception may be Italy, where one legislative fistfight occurred as a result of competition over pension reform. Fabio Ranieri, in 2011 was accused by Claudio Barbott in illegally assigning a high pension to Ranieri's wife.²⁵ These accusations forced Ranieri to defend the name of his wife. A fistfight broke out when Fabio Renieri grabbed Barbott's throat and started striking him. Minutes later both of the legislators were joined by their parliamentary allies who all participated in an active brawl.

underlying cause will be determined to identify why fistfighting occurred in the country in question.

CHAPTER 3: FISTFIGHTING BY COUNTRY

In this thesis, all accounts of fistfighting are physical fights occurring in countries with multiparty parliamentary systems during an active parliamentary session. For each country, the recent political history leading up to the current political system is presented, including a brief description of the most significant crises affecting recent political developments. Then, a series of media accounts of each major fistfight is presented, including the legislation or election at issue and an account of all active participants. Finally, the conclusion will be drawn based on the findings.

I. UKRAINE

Recently Ukraine's parliament has experienced a large number of parliamentary fistfights during its parliamentary session. For example, a 2010 argument over whether to extend the presence of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in the Crimea caused a massive fight.²⁶ In this incident, the opposition (Ukrainian Nationalist) party physically blocked the presidium, tribune, and parliamentary lounge.²⁷ They then pelted the pro-Russian members with eggs, resulting in a chaotic brawl. In the aftermath of the fight, several members of the parliament had to be escorted to the emergency room to treat broken bones and other injuries. This particular eruption of fistfighting was preceded by a period of prolonged political turmoil since Ukraine gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

²⁶ It was named one of the best fistfights in the world by the Guardian.

²⁷ Marusenko, Maxim. "Fighting Breaks out in Ukraine's Parliament." Theguardian.com. April 27, 2010. Accessed October 13, 2014.
www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2010/apr/27/ukraine.

A. Recent Ukrainian Political History

1. Pre-Euromaidan Political History

Similar to other countries in this study, Ukraine's legislative history began at its independence from an imperial power. Before then, Ukraine's history was dominated by foreign wars and invasions. Since the late 18th century, the territory of modern Ukraine was governed by rulers based in either Moscow or Saint Petersburg, Russia. Despite a brief period of independence after World War I, Ukraine was conquered by the Red Army in a short and bloody war before being incorporated into the Soviet Union.²⁸ During Soviet rule, the people of Ukraine were subject to regular pressure from the government in Moscow, including deportation schemes and state-engineered mass starvation (Holodomor).²⁹ Ukraine's borders were re-drawn within the Soviet Union by the political elites of Moscow in 1954, effectively awarding the region of Crimea to Ukraine.³⁰

Ukraine was one of the richest and most defiant Soviet Republics. It was a center of Soviet agriculture, industry, and mineral production, possibly one of the most prosperous regions of the USSR outside the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. Increasing ethnic tensions, radical separatism, and a stagnation of the state's repressive mechanisms allowed Ukraine to secede peacefully from the Soviet Union.³¹ Soon after, the rest of the Soviet Republics followed, including the Russian Federation.

Beginning with Leonid Kuchma, Ukraine's presidents often leave power on a wave of popular unrest. A high-ranking communist Leonid Kravchuk became Ukraine's

²⁸ Snyder, Timothy. *Bloodlands*. Politikens Forlag, 2011., p5-8

²⁹ Holodomor, *Ibid.*, 20-24.

³⁰ Roman Solchanyk, Ukraine and Russia: The Post-Soviet Transition." *Political Science Quarterly – New York* - 116, no. 3; SEAS AUT (2001): 165

³¹ Kuzio, Taras, and Andrew Wilson, eds. *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence*. CIUS Press, 1994., p191.

first president in December 1991, and remained in power until 1994. His successor, Leonid Kuchma took over and presided over a turbulent period in Ukraine's history until he was forced from power in 2004 after the "Ukraine without Kuchma," movement which organized after the highly criticized 1999 elections.³² Viktor Yanukovich took power in the 2004 elections in another highly criticized election. He was forced to resign in January 2005 by a vociferous opposition political movement called the "Orange Revolution."³³ President Yuschenko entered office in Yanukovich's place and ruled a politically-divided nation until an attempted assassination that left him physically scarred.³⁴ Yuschenko's divided bloc was unable to prevent Yanukovich from returning to power after the 2010 elections and assuming office.³⁵ Ukraine endured a continued period of turbulence and instability from November 2013 to late 2014.

2. Euromaidan

In the last eighteen months, Ukraine has suffered a visible and intense policy crisis. The crisis serves as a proxy for the ongoing political tensions in Ukraine. On one side, pro-Russian sentiment in Ukraine advocates for a stable, subservient, client-state relationship with Moscow. On the other side, pro-West politicians are pushing for greater integration with the West and greater distance from Russian policies. The series of demonstrations called Euromaidan resulted from these tensions between supporters of Moscow and the West, which represents a fundamental challenge for Ukraine

In 2013, Ukraine's then-president, Viktor Yanukovych, made a deeply unpopular political move that sparked a battle between Ukraine's pro-Russian population and its

³² Wolchik, Sharon L., and Jane Leftwich Curry, eds. *Central and East European Politics: From Communism to Democracy*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2014., p. 493

³³ Wilson, Andrew. *Ukraine's Orange Revolution*. Yale University Press, 2005, p. 1-6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 96-100.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

pro-Western population. The Yanukovich government rejected the European Union's Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), a key initial step in joining the EU. Immediately thereafter, on November 21, 2013, a series of protests broke out called the Maidan protests (also called Euromaidan) in honor of the Maidan square in the center of downtown Kiev. After the pro-Russian government of Ukraine under Viktor Yanukovich declined to sign the DCFTA with Europe, it exacerbated the Euromaidan protests by rapidly switching course to join the Russia's recently-formed competitor organization the Eurasian Union.³⁶ This change in course was despite opposition to the majority of the Rada (parliament) and the Ukrainian people.

Euromaidan's major goals were the signing of the DCFTA, restoration of the 2004 Ukrainian constitution, and forcing the resignation of the Pro-Russian government. The Euromaidan protest was initially peaceful, but its scale and persistence attracted the attention of people throughout Ukraine and outside its borders.³⁷ Euromaidan was able to declare victory after a violent crackdown was halted and president Yanukovich fled the country, thereby allowing pro-Western leaders to fill the power vacuum.

Russia reacted by using military and political power to invade its neighbor with the sudden annexation of the Crimean peninsula. In exile, Yanukovich acquired support in Russia from Putin's government.³⁸ Russia declared the actions of Ukraine's pro-West

³⁶ Saeed Ahmed, Greg Botelho, and Marie-Louise Gumuchian, "20 questions: What's behind Ukraine's political crisis?," *CNN.com*, February 20, 2014, accessed October 8, 2014 <http://www.cnn.com/2014/02/18/world/europe/ukraine-protests-explainer/>.

³⁷ Hanna Shelest, "Ukraine's Euromaidan: Questions from the (R)evolution," NATO, NDC Research Report, last modified February 21, 2014, accessed October 8, 2014, http://www.academia.edu/6154109/_Ukraines_Euromaidan_Questions_From_The_R_evolution.

³⁸ Walker, Sean. "Ousted Ukrainian Leader Viktor Yanukovich Reported to Be in Russia." *The Guardian*, February 27, 2014. Accessed October 27, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/27/viktor-yanukovich-russia-ukrainian-president-moscow>.

government unlawful and accused the West and the EU of helping Euromaidan.³⁹ Russia continued its aggressive military action in a new form by launching a so-called “hybrid war” in Eastern Ukraine using irregular formations of unmarked Russian troops and special forces, and by supplying Ukrainian militants with essential provisions and advanced military equipment.⁴⁰ The West and the US had a particular interest in trying to resolve the conflict diplomatically, but Russia would not negotiate and continued its hybrid warfare in Ukraine, thus creating strategic threat to the West.⁴¹

The policy and legitimacy crises presented by Russian aggression quickly took on an ethnic character. To justify its imperial ambitions, Russia expressed concern about suspected persecution of ethnic Russians living in Ukraine, using this as a pretext for taking further action.⁴² At least 17% of the people living in Ukraine consider themselves to be of Russian ethnicity.⁴³ More than one-third of Ukrainians speak Russian as their first language, but consider themselves to be ethnically Ukrainian.⁴⁴ No evidence of persecution was found, but this issue was contentious enough to allow the clashing pro-

³⁹ Rosenberg, Steve. "Ukraine Crisis: West Wants to 'seize Control' - Russia." BBC News. April 25, 2014. Accessed November 03, 2014. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-27153909>.

⁴⁰ Grove, Thomas. "Special Report: Where Ukraine's Separatists Get Their Weapons." Reuters. July 29, 2014. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/29/us-ukraine-crisis-arms-specialreport-idUSKBN0FY0UA20140729>. Accessed May 1, 2015.

⁴¹ George Friedman, "Ukraine and the 'Little Cold War,'" *Stratfor Global Intelligence*, October 4, 2014, accessed April 1, 2014, <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/ukraine-and-little-cold-war>.

⁴² Lally, Kathy. "Putin Says He Reserves Right to Protect Russians in Ukraine." *Washington Post*. March 4, 2014. Accessed October 8, 2014. http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/putin-reserves-the-right-to-use-force-in-ukraine/2014/03/04/92d4ca70-a389-11e3-a5fa-55f0c77bf39c_story.html.

⁴³ Kaplan, Rebecca. "A Look at Ukraine's Internal Divisions." *Cbsnews*. March 5, 2014. Accessed October 6, 2014. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/a-look-at-ukraines-internal-divisions/>.

⁴⁴ Shumlianskyi, Stanislav. 2010. "Conflicting abstractions: language groups in language politics in Ukraine." *International Journal of The Sociology Of Language* 2010, no. 201 (2010): 135, Accessed April 12, 201, <http://www.degruyter.com.proxy.lib.duke.edu/view/j/ijsl.2010.2010.issue-201/ijsl.2010.007/ijsl.2010.007.xml?format=INT>.

Western and pro-Russian sides to continue widespread violence, culminating in the Russian seizure of parts of Ukraine.⁴⁵

Shortly after Russian forces appeared in Crimea, Putin claimed that the Russian military units in Crimea were actually an autonomous Crimean self-defense force assembled by local residents, which were trying to protect the Russian population of the region.⁴⁶ This occupying force allowed Russia to stage a fake⁴⁷ popular referendum for the Crimea to secede from Ukraine and to join Russia as a new federal republic. The referendum was seen as a fraud by the international community. The annexation of Crimea has not been recognized by most UN member states.⁴⁸

In addition to annexing the Crimean peninsula, Russia has continued to sponsor, train and support separatists in eastern Ukraine, who have engaged in widespread violence and an armed insurrection against the pro-Western government. In response, the Ukrainian government that was elected in May 2014 and in October 2014 has launched and continued an anti-terrorist operation against the insurgents to this day.

B. Ukrainian Political Structure

Ukraine is a democratic republic with a mixed political system that combines a parliamentary-presidential government with separate branches; legislative, executive and

⁴⁵ Simon Shuster, "4 Reasons Putin Is Already Losing in Ukraine," *TIME*, March 03, 2014, accessed April 1, 2014, <http://time.com/11952/putin-ukraine-crimea-russia/>.

⁴⁶ "Putin Says No Russian Troops in East Ukraine." Aljazeera- Europe. April 17, 2014. Accessed October 8, 2014. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/04/putin-says-no-russian-troops-east-ukraine-2014417132436806530.html>.

⁴⁷ Troyanovski, Anton. "Ukraine Region Votes to Join Russia." *The Wall Street Journal*. March 16, 2014. Accessed December 03, 2014. <http://online.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304914904579441563920333966>.

⁴⁸ United Nations General Assembly, "General Assembly adopts resolution calling upon states not to recognize changes in status of Crimea region," *un.org*, last modified March 27, 2014, accessed April 3, 2014, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2014/ga11493.doc.htm>.

judicial. The parliament of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada, holds legislative power and has a multi-party system in which factions form and form a governing the majority

The executive power is vested in the highest body of the country, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, and is responsible to the President of Ukraine, but accountable to Verkhovna Rada. The highest law in the country is the Constitution of Ukraine, as amended in 2004. The 2004 amendments weakened the power of the President of Ukraine, removed his power to appoint a prime-minister, and stated that parliament will be formed by coalitions and not individuals. In 2010 the Constitutional Court controversially annulled the 2004 amendments to the Ukrainian constitution and thereby returned power to the president at the expense of coalitions in the Rada. In February 2014 during the Euromaidan, the constitutional amendments of 2004 were reinstated.

The legislative branch of Ukraine has 450 members elected to four-year terms by coalition groups. As of the 2014 parliamentary elections, the largest parties are Petro Poroshenko's Bloc, the People's Front, the Opposition Bloc, Self-Reliance, the Radical Party, and Fatherland.

Party Svoboda (Freedom) is a Ukrainian nationalist party founded in 1991 as the Social-National party of Ukraine. It is currently being led by Oleh Tyahnibok, who joined the party in 2004. Since 2010, the party is politically active after achieving electoral breakthroughs. Svoboda is perceived as a nationalistic, sometimes radical, anti-Communist party that considers Russia a national threat to Ukraine. The party's anti-Semitic and radical views in the aftermath of the Euroaidan ruined the party's popularity, only gaining 0.29% of the vote in 2014.

The Communist Party of Ukraine is a successor of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Ukraine and since 1993 has been led by Petro Symonenko. Until the Orange Revolution in 2004, it was one of the biggest parties in the Rada. The Communist Party's popularity suffered from its ideology favoring a soviet legacy, from its beliefs in Marxist concepts, from supporting a pro-Russian government, from sponsoring terrorism, and from supporting the annexation of the Crimea. The party was banned from the Rada in 2014.

Our Ukraine (Razom or Our Ukraine) used to be known as the People's Self-Defense Bloc of the former Ukrainian President Yushenko. The primary ideology of the party focuses on the Europeanization of Ukraine and on the implementation of reforms benefitting the country, which involve further distancing Ukraine from Russia.

The Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko is now known as the Batkivschina or Fatherland, which was formed in 2001. The major ideology of the party is Ukraine's solidarity with Europe.

The Party of Regions is the party of the former President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich. In current Ukrainian politics, the Party of Regions is being presented as part of the Opposition Bloc. The party was founded in 1997 but was reformed in 2000 to become an umbrella for several smaller parties. The party's ideology focuses on cooperation with Russia, and on the support of the Russian population in Ukraine.

C. Ukrainian Fistfighting Episodes

Ukraine has endured a large number of fights during its parliamentary sessions, often provoked by legitimacy crises. In May of 1997, a massive brawl broke out in the Rada involving almost one hundred members of the parliament from the far right and far

left. That day, by the request of the Communist Party, a statement was read by a parliamentary member named Symonenko, who blamed a clash in L'viv between War World II veterans and police officers on the government and requested that the Minister of the Interior and the Attorney General give a summary of the events in L'viv. An independent member of the parliament from L'viv, Stepan Khmara, physically dragged Symonenko off the stage and started to attack him. Khmara and Symonenko were soon joined by their political allies and proceeded to fight their way across the legislative floor.

In another example of fighting provoked by illegitimacy, on December 16, 2010, legislators from the BYT-Batkivshina (Fatherland) Party and the Party of Regions started a fight over a criminal case that was initiated against the leader of the Batkivshina Party, Yulia Timoshenko. Timoshenko was subjected to an apparently politically-motivated investigation for abuse of her official power when she tried to resolve one of Ukraine's many gas disputes with Russia.⁴⁹ Members of Timoshenko's party blocked the presidium and stated that they would stay in the Rada overnight.⁵⁰ A fight quickly broke out which resulted in five hospitalized lawmakers.⁵¹ The fighting solved nothing, and the BYT-Batkivshina Party and the Party of Regions remain rivals for power in the Ukrainian Parliament.⁵²

⁴⁹ "Драки в украинском парламенте." ИноСМИ. Accessed October 27, 2014. http://inosmi.ru/photo/20101218/165013572_1.html.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ 2013, 20 Mar. "Ukrainian MPs in Mass Brawl after Russian Is Spoken in Parliament." *The Telegraph*. August 01, 2013. Accessed October 03, 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/9942004/Ukrainian-MPs-in-mass-brawl-after-Russian-is-spoken-in-Parliament.html>.

⁵² The reasoning behind the criminal case against Timoshenko which caused the 2010 brawl in the Rada appeared to be political in nature, especially when the investigation was launched by Timoshenko's political rival in a deeply divided country. Ukrainian politicians routinely accused Russia of interfering in internal Ukrainian politics, such as bringing a pro-Russian president to power in the 2010 presidential elections. Russia-Ukraine ties in the energy sector and Russia's gas price manipulations weakened the pro-Western government enough to allow a new pro-Russian government to step in, led by Viktor Yanukovich,

Ukrainian legislators have fought over issues that mix legitimacy and policy crises. In 2005, a fight broke out between legislators from the Svoboda Party and the Communist Party. This altercation was sparked by two political developments: the proposed changes to the salaries of the executive leaders of rural and city governments, and the changes to the taxation system for types of grain for export. The Communist Party members physically surrounded the tribune as well as the seats of the Speaker, Vladimir Litvin, and the Vice-Speakers. Despite a physical struggle, the Svoboda Party successfully passed the law. However, the Speaker of the Rada had to leave the hall afterwards due to a broken chair and a broken microphone.

Fistfights break out in the Ukrainian Rada during moments of extreme policy and legitimacy crisis. At the end of July 2013 another brawl happened in the Ukrainian Parliament which involved the Communist Party and the Svoboda party. The Communist Party's leader, Petro Symonenko, stated that thousands of Ukrainians that are being killed in anti-terrorist operations in eastern Ukraine and are having their organs harvested for sale. This statement caused a legislator from the party Svoboda, Aleksey Kaida, to call for removing the leader of the Communist Party from the meeting hall, which Turchinov declined for procedural reasons.⁵³ Symonenko's continued presence caused major brawl between legislative members of the rival parties. The next day, the parliament took

who won by a 3.5 percent margin. Although Yanukovich became president, he won with less than 50% of the popular vote, which kept the country deeply divided.

⁵³ "Turchynov Seeks Ban of The Communist Party for Support of Separatists." KyivPost. Accessed November 13, 2014. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/turchynov-seeks-ban-of-communist-party-for-support-of-separatists-348398.html>.

historic action by officially dissolving the Communist Party of Ukraine and expelling its members from the Rada.⁵⁴

Fistfighting is not the only means of resolving political disputes, because Ukrainian politicians can simply imprison their rivals. One of the first things Yanukovich did after becoming president was to imprison his political rival, Yulia Timoshenko.⁵⁵ She was convicted of misuse of her official power when she signed a natural gas contract with Russia to end the 2009 gas conflict.⁵⁶ Vladimir Putin and Timoshenko, then the Ukrainian Prime Minister, signed a ten year agreement for gas supply and transit in 2009 to end the dispute.⁵⁷ The contract at issue included an important passage in which the “necessity for uninterrupted transit of gas across Ukraine on a long term basis was recognized.”⁵⁸ However, many members of the Ukrainian Parliament criticized this contract and later expressed a desire to renegotiate.⁵⁹

Ukraine’s culture of fistfighting can be seen with violence provoked by insults in the Rada. In May 2013, the fight between Svoboda and Yanukovich’s Party of Regions happened because members of Svoboda stated that “Regions” has to be more Ukrainian and speak the state language, Ukrainian.⁶⁰ In reply, Svoboda was called a neo-Nazi party, which abruptly provoked a massive fistfight. Some Rada members fought ferociously, including one episode where one legislator walked across the top of several

⁵⁴ "В Верховной Раде избили Петра Симоненко (видео)." Новости Луганска и Луганской области. Луганские новости сегодня. Accessed October 27, 2014. <http://www.citynews.net.ua/ukrainenews/35348-v-verhovnoy-rade-izbili-petra-simonenko-video.html>.

⁵⁵ Riabchuk, Mykola. "Тимосенко: Wake– up call for the EU." *Eurozine* (2011).

⁵⁶ Pirani, Simon, Jonathan P. Stern, and Katja Yafimava. *The Russo-Ukrainian gas dispute of January 2009: a comprehensive assessment*. Oxford: Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, 2009.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Taras Kuzio, "Populism in Ukraine in a comparative European context," *Problems of Post-Communism* 57, no. 6 (2010): 15.

⁶⁰ National Review. "Ukraine's Parliament Fight." YouTube. March 19, 2013. Accessed October 27, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tYXr_VsQKY.

desks to reach the epicenter of the fight. Alexander Ribak, who was the Speaker of the Rada, had to leave because he could not bring order to the body.⁶¹

Ukraine's culture of legislative fistfighting might be self-protecting, in that politicians will violently defend their right to fight. A brawl broke out in the Ukrainian Rada right after the leaders of the legislature decided that there will be no more fistfights in the Rada. The confrontation began during the speech by the leader of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Petro Symonenko.⁶² He criticized the Ukrainian government which was formed due to an economic, political and social crisis in Ukraine.⁶³ In reply members of Svoboda came to the tribune and tried to force Symonenko off the stage. At the same time, Symonenko's allies came to protect him. Fists began to fly, and about 15 members of the parliament got involved in the fight.⁶⁴ It is interesting to note that during the fight Speaker Alexander Turchinov remained calm, and only intervened by briefly asking members of the parliament to calm down in an effort to preserve the dignity of Rada.

D. Ukrainian Fistfighting Rationale

Ukrainian fistfights have occurred due to policy crises, legitimacy crises, and due to a vibrant culture of political fistfighting. As indicated by the Transparency International data, the Ukrainian people regularly perceive their government as one of the

⁶¹ Carol Kuruvilla. "Ukrainian Parliament Erupts in Fistfight over Russian Language Use." NY Daily News. March 19, 2013. Accessed October 17, 2014. <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/ukrainian-parliament-erupts-fistfight-russian-language-article-1.1293170>.

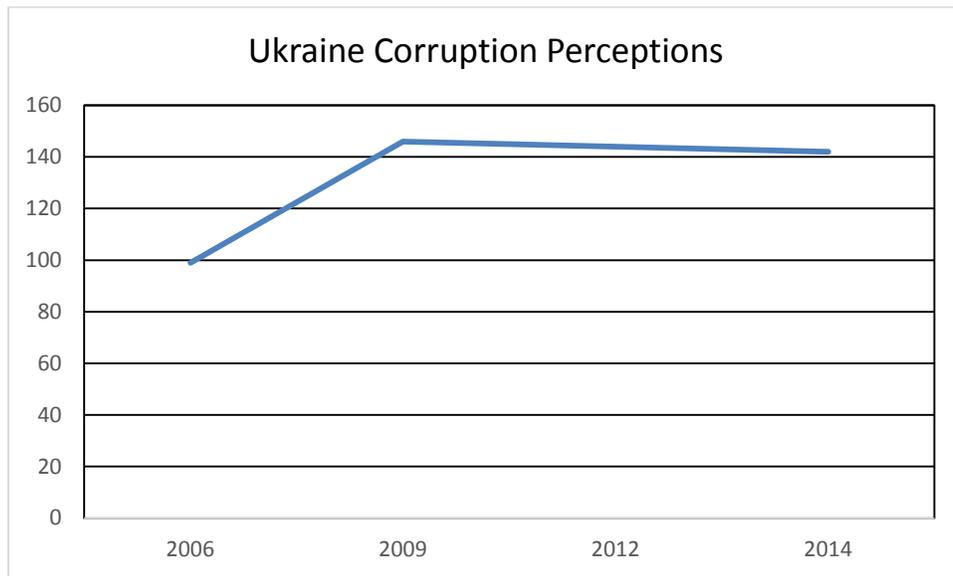
⁶² "Ukrainian MPs Brawl in Parliament." *The Guardian*. April 8, 2014. Accessed October 17, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2014/apr/08/ukrainian-mps-brawl-parliament-video>.

⁶³ Symonenko stated: "I want to confess and apologize to you: I was constantly stating that nationalists are conducting pro-American and pro-western politics... however, I was mistaken because based on who started to take over administration buildings and based on who was taking over arsenals and weapons, today, thousands of artillery pieces are in the hands of those who formed gangs. Have not you given an example of this scenario: but it seems like you were not conducting American scenario, it was Russian scenario to destroy independent Ukraine, to divide it."⁶³

⁶⁴ "Kiev, Ukraine, 23.7.2014: The Communist Party Leader Petro Symonenko Attacked at Last Day in Parliament." YouTube. Accessed December 03, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ku-yJx9kdIY>.

most corrupt in the world, comfortably within the bottom third of all countries, as shown in the figure below.⁶⁵ Entrenched cynicism inherited from the Soviet era has not changed after twenty-five years of independence. Corruption perceptions have skyrocketed since the end of the Yushchenko administration, moving Ukraine from about 100 to above 140 in the world corruption rankings.

Figure 2



Source: Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index*

2014. <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>.⁶⁶

Ukrainian crises blending legitimacy and policy issues have increasingly resulted in fistfights in the Rada. The 2005 fight over increased compensation for politicians and changing grain tariffs combined both a protest against the existing government and a protest against economic hardships created by increased taxation. In a more extreme example, the Euromaidan crisis began as a policy crisis and later developed into a legitimacy crisis. A botched trade policy quickly undermined the legitimacy of the

⁶⁵ "How Corrupt Is Your Country?" *2014 Corruption Perceptions Index*, Accessed 10 Aug. 2015.

⁶⁶ See generally Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index results for the years 2006, 2009, 2012, and 2014.

government in power such that it had to resort to violence outside the legislature to protect itself. The parallel violence within the legislature may have resulted in an important change in government. Unlike the Orange Revolution and the “Ukraine without Kuchma” movement, the Euromaidan was not an election protest, and it was not focused on any particular political opponent.

Brawls preceding the Euromaidan violence further indicate that Ukraine’s legitimacy crises can provoke legislative violence. In 1997, a political disagreement over responsibility for a highly unpopular act was the source of the fistfight, a chance to discredit one side of an ongoing political contest. Under Yanukovich, brawling routinely involved attacks on his political opponents, or their resistance to his apparently illegitimate actions. At the end it was a collapse of legitimacy in Euromaidan that led to violence, the flight of Yanukovich and the takeover by pro-Western politicians. If he had resolved the policy conflicts without social turmoil, there might not have been any legitimacy crisis.

Post-Euromaidan fistfighting also appears to be part of a legitimacy crisis. Although deaths caused by the ongoing anti-terrorist operation are serious policy crises themselves, the prevailing sentiment was that the opposition only wanted to discredit the party in power by raising such an issue. The fistfight did not break out due to a difference of opinion on whether deaths were occurring or how to best handle preventing deaths. Instead, brawling occurred based on a perception that one side was attempting to advance itself at the expense of the other party, resulting in a fight over legitimacy.

Importantly, the incidence of legitimacy-related fistfighting appears to track the increase in corruption perceptions. The two most famous episodes of legitimacy crises

resulting in a brawl occurred in 2010 and 2013, after the rise of the Yanukovich regime and the plunge of Ukraine in the global corruption perceptions ratings. Notably, Ukraine's corruption perceptions suddenly worsened after Yushenko was poisoned and remained low as long as pro-Russian politicians remained in power. With Ukraine's political history at a turning point with the Euromaidan conflict, it remains to be seen whether the country will continue to be plagued with legitimacy crises that provoke further fistfights. Physical violence in these contexts is a clear manifestation of the frustrations of parliament members over the instability and turmoil their government is experiencing. Unable to resolve their differences through discourse, politicians make their positions clear by pummeling their opponents in a public forum, thereby attempting to gain some small amount of authority. In the case of the Ukraine, we see fistfighting increase with perceptions of corruption and with disintegrating legitimacy of government. In chaotic circumstances, participants perceive themselves and their constituents as cheated by the system, and therefore choose to bypass the formalities of that system by fighting.

Ukraine's recent history of political violence and repression speak to the strength of its culture of fistfighting. As shown with the imprisonment of Tymoshenko and the street violence after Euromaidan, Ukrainian politicians such as Yanukovich can achieve their ends without resorting to fistfighting. But, fistfighting persists as a form of political struggle within durable legislative institutions and can survive regulation. Politicians could fight over the right to continue to engage in fistfights. It is not surprising that in this context, an insult such as "Neo-Nazi" can provoke a brawl.

II. TAIWAN

Fights in Taiwan's parliament are almost a tradition, sometimes occurring more than twice a month over the past several decades.⁶⁷ During these regular fights, members of the parliament use media to directly address the nation and to show dedication to the principles and to the ideology of their party. The largest and most famous fight happened in 2007, when the opposition party decided to block the tribune before the upcoming elections to prevent the Speaker of the parliament from addressing the body.⁶⁸

A. Recent Taiwanese Political History

Taiwan's political history in the twentieth century has been turbulent and subject to power politics. In the 19th century, Taiwan was part of China. After gaining initial independence in 1912, China's disintegrated statehood gave rise to warlords and political chaos until control was briefly consolidated under the nationalist party, the Kuomintang. Kuomintang rule was conclusively interrupted by the Japanese with the invasion that began the Sino-Japanese War. This costly and devastating conflict left the surviving nationalist government unable to resist growing communist power in the postwar years. The Soviet-supported communist forces' guerilla and terror tactics gradually eroded nationalist power until a complete seizure was achieved. As a result, Kuomintang forces were effectively routed and expelled from China, being forced into exile on the island once known as the Chinese province of Formosa.

Nationalist Chinese forces in exile established a government on the island of Formosa within China's borders in 1949. The Kuomintang established the "Taiwan Provincial Government" in Taiwan that ruled under an officially-declared state of

⁶⁷ NocomentTV. "Taiwanese Legislature Fight." YouTube. January 20, 2007. Accessed December 03, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jo-TajmBr1s>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

emergency that was renewed regularly until the late 1980s. Taiwan's status as the official government of China was a major international issue until the United Nations and the United States officially recognized the People's Republic of China as the rightful successor to China's place in the United Nations. After the threat of communist infiltration into Taiwan subsided and after Taiwan gained a level of highly advanced economic development, the Taiwanese government began to democratize. Restrictive ethnic and social policies were eased, and a presidential election was allowed in 1996.

Taiwan's young democracy saw a relatively peaceful transfer of power away from the Kuomintang in 2000 with the election of Chen Shui-bian. President Chen's administration was interrupted by an assassination attempt in 2004 that allowed him to declare a new state of emergency. After winning a second term, President Chen's administration has been plagued by accusations of corruption. As soon as Chen's second term ended, he was arrested along with several of his government's high-ranking officials on corruption charges. The Kuomintang regained power with Ma Ying-Jeou's victory in 2008 and his reelection in 2012. Nonetheless, reunification with the mainland and allegedly undemocratic governance has produced increasing discontent within the electorate, culminating in 2014 student protests.

B. Taiwan's Political Structure

Taiwan is a democratic republic. It is represented by the Head of State that publicly represents the Republic and the President (or Premier of the Executive Yuan). The government of Taiwan is divided into five branches called Yuan – the Executive Yuan, the Legislative Yuan, the Examination Yuan, the Judicial Yuan and the Control Yuan. The legislative Yuan (Parliament) is a multi-party body that has lawmaking

powers vested in it. After the 2008 Constitutional Amendments, it has 113 members, much less than the previous 225, each serving a 4 year term. As of November 2014, the dominant parties are the Kuomintang, the Democratic Progressive Party, the Taiwan Solidarity Union, the Peoples First Party, and the Minkuotang. Most commonly involved in the fistfights parties are Kuomintang and Democratic Progressive Party.

The Kuomintang of China (KMT) is the successor party to the Revolutionary Alliance which promoted creation of the Chinese Republic. The KMT was founded in 1911. Currently, it is chaired by the Ma Ying-jeou. Although the KMT supports unification and cooperation with mainland China, in 2008 a policy of “three no” was adopted by the party – no reunification with China, no complete independence, and no use of force.

The DPP (Democratic Progressive Party) is a liberal party in Taiwan that was founded in 1986 and was the first opposition party to the KMT. Its ideology emphasizes Taiwanese independence, human rights, democracy, and social welfare. It is currently led by the Tsai Ing-wen.

C. Taiwanese Fistfighting Episodes

Taiwan’s legislators frequently fight during parliamentary sessions. The current Parliament of the Republic of China (Taiwan) is sharply divided, which causes fierce and passionate battles over proposed legislation or during vote counts. Unfortunately, Taiwanese fistfighting has become so common that the national parliament has a reputation for its regular brawls.⁶⁹ Taiwanese legislators are very resourceful in their

⁶⁹ "Taiwanese MPs Hold a Food Fight." BBC News. October 26, 2004. Accessed May 14, 2015. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3954847.stm>

choice of weapons, occasionally resorting to food fights.⁷⁰ In 2004, one politician said that violence-prone legislators should be checked with a breathalyzer before attending parliamentary sessions.⁷¹

Taiwanese legislators fight over legitimacy issues, such as the aftermath of the 2004 presidential election. This was just after President Chen narrowly escaped assassination.⁷² Chen's narrow victory margin of 0.2% of the vote prompted opposition politicians, including the Kuomintang, to demand a recount. Chen's opponents further claimed that he staged the assassination attempt in a bid to win sympathy. Chen responded by proposing a bill that would require recounts for victory margins of less than 1%, but only after fights broke out in both the legislature and in committee meetings.

Taiwanese legislators have fought over policy issues, such as the July 8, 2010 brawl over a trade deal with China. This was right before their November elections.⁷³ Legislators used garbage bins, tea cups, books and other improvised weapons to attack each other. The minority party DPP refused to agree with the KMT to finalize a trade deal with China that included tax incentives for almost a thousand goods from China which would be imported to Taiwan.⁷⁴ KMT members who were loyal to the China deal were pushing for the faster ratification while DPP members were saying that Chinese goods would flood into Taiwan and hurt local small businesses. This deal represented the strongest economic partnership between China and Taiwan to that point.

⁷⁰ "Taiwanese MPs Hold a Food Fight." BBC News. October 26, 2004. Accessed May 14, 2015. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3954847.stm>

⁷¹ "Taiwanese MPs in Parliament Brawl." BBC News. August 05, 2007. Accessed November 29, 2014. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6636237.stm>.

⁷² "Taiwan Leader Denies Vote-rigging." BBC News. March 23, 2004. Accessed May 14, 2015. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3559687.stm>.

⁷³ Li, Lianjiang. "Rights consciousness and rules consciousness in contemporary China." *The China Journal* (2010): 47-68.

⁷⁴ Gary Hamilton. "Fight Breaks Out in Taiwan's Parliament." CBSNews. July 8, 2010. Accessed November 29, 2014. <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/fight-breaks-out-in-taiwans-parliament/>.

The fight was intense and ended with a couple of legislators being sent to the hospital for emergency treatment. The original trade agreement was signed in June by the president of Taiwan, but it had to be ratified by the parliament. Surprisingly, both parties agreed to ratify the agreement but fundamentally disagreed over how fast to ratify it.⁷⁵ The key to this disagreement was Taiwan's economic isolation from other countries at the time, which had a direct impact on the lifestyle of Taiwanese citizens.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, there was a long history of animosity between China and Taiwan, creating a fear in the DPP that quick ratification would bring Taiwan under unacceptably strong influence from the mainland.

Political tensions in Taiwan before this fight were exacerbated by upcoming municipal elections, thus incentivizing legislators to fight as a way of increasing their media exposure.⁷⁷ This political tension added credibility to legislators' positions of supporting or opposing the trade pact with China, because the elections would serve as a barometer for 2012 presidential elections.⁷⁸

Taiwanese legislators can fight over issues that combine policy issues and legitimacy issues. On May 8, 2007 a brawl erupted in Taiwan's Parliament over a budget bill and an electoral bill. The minority party at that time, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), accused the Speaker of the parliament and member of the Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT), of delaying the budget for 2007 because he wanted to pass the electoral bill first. When the Speaker of the Parliament stood to give a speech, members

⁷⁵ Euronews. "Taiwan Parliament Brawl - No Comment." YouTube. July 8, 2010. Accessed November 19, 2014. <http://youtu.be/COPa3cca08k>.

⁷⁶ "Taiwans Big Brawl." Asia Society. July 9, 2010. Accessed November 19, 2014. <http://asiasociety.org/blog/asia/taiwans-big-brawl>.

⁷⁷ "2010 Elections: Taiwanese Ready for Pivotal Polls - Taipei Times." 2010 Elections: Taiwanese Ready for Pivotal Polls - Taipei Times. November 26, 2010. Accessed November 19, 2014. <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2010/11/26/2003489471>.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

of the DPP tried to push him off the podium.⁷⁹ Legislators from the KMT Party rushed to protect the Speaker and a sprawling fight broke out. Members of both parties used their fists and pens to strike, while employing other methods such as throwing paper stacks, spraying water, and climbing one on top of another.⁸⁰ The fight ended with several parliamentarians taken to hospital.⁸¹

Both bills proposed at the session were important and controversial. The electoral bill had caused a five-month filibuster in a previous legislative session. It proposed to change the make-up of Taiwan's electoral commission, to reflect partisan representation in the parliament. At that time, members of the electoral commission in the Republic of China were nominated by the government and approved by the president. That bill did not pass.⁸²

D. Taiwanese Fistfighting Rationale

Taiwan's legislative fistfighting often occurs due to legitimacy crises, policy crises, and a culture of fistfighting. Taiwan is consistently perceived as a country with a low levels of corruption, despite its relatively violent political past. Although there have been recent fluctuations in Taiwan's corruption levels, as seen in the Graph 3, it has remained stable at the 34-37 out of 180, well within the top 25% of low-corruption countries. However, after the 2012 brawl the corruption level dropped. Considering Taiwan's lower levels of perceived corruption and its political power structure, one might

⁷⁹ Reuters. "Taiwanese Legislature Fight 3." YouTube. May 12, 2007. Accessed November 29, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g10PAsvZFoQ>.

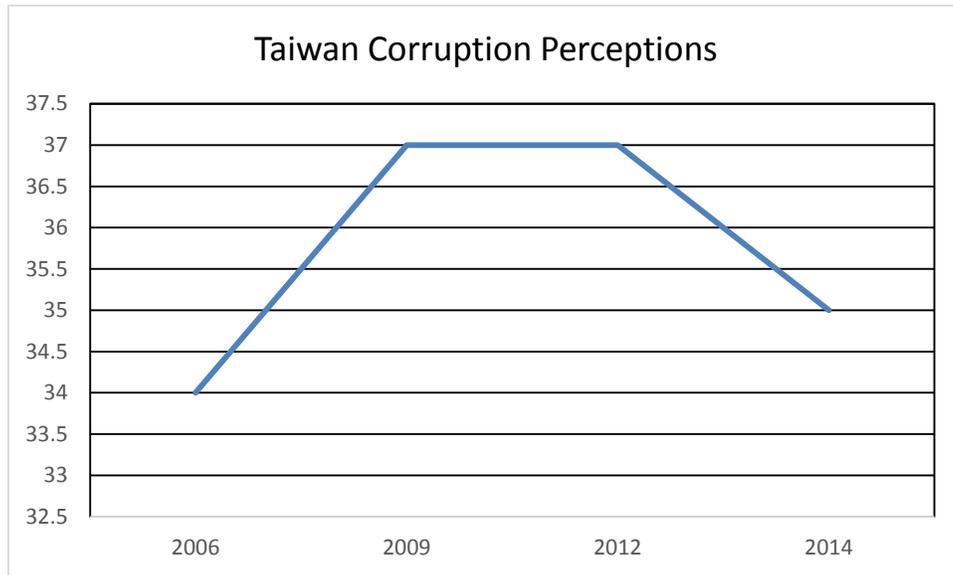
⁸⁰ "Fight in Taiwanese Parliament." Theguardian.com. May 8, 2007. Accessed November 11, 2014. www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2007/may/08/taiwan.

⁸¹ "Lawmakers Brawl in Parliament, Again." Reuters. May 08, 2007. Accessed November 29, 2014. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/05/08/us-taiwan-parliament-idU5TP21135920070508>.

⁸² Shih Hsiu-chuan. "Wang, Su Seek Results on Stalled Budget - Taipei Times." Wang, Su Seek Results on Stalled Budget - Taipei Times. May 8, 2007. Accessed November 19, 2014. <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2007/05/08/2003359981>.

conclude that legitimacy crises can arise as a result of individual political parties and their leadership.

Figure 3



Source: Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index*

2014. <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>.⁸³

Taiwan's fistfighting also correlates with important changes of power between the two ruling parties. Taiwan's democracy is fairly young at twenty years old. There have been two parties which held power in that time, the Kuomintang, and President Chen's opposition party, the Democratic People's Party. Emergency measures have been declared on multiple occasions. After President Chen's reelection victory in 2004, a fight broke out regarding the legitimacy of his victory and whether a recount should occur. Legitimacy struggles resulted in 2007 over an electoral bill. After this fight, the Democratic People's Party and President Chen were thrown from power.

⁸³ See generally Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index results for the years 2006, 2009, 2012, and 2014.

Taiwan's fistfighting episodes correlate with acute policy disagreements that cause existing political tensions to boil over. As noted above, some policy disagreements resulting in fistfighting are largely unaffected by the fistfight itself, whereas others are affected by a violent and active opposition.

Because of the mixed record of fistfighting and the perception among Taiwanese political elites that fistfighting is expected on many issues, Taiwan's legislators will likely continue to fight as a part of regular political discourse. The series of fights that erupted over the 2010 trade deal with China show that fistfights are part of ongoing political discourse in Taiwan. The two most prominent parties, the KMT and the DPP, fought vigorously over the trade deal, and then agreed to ratify it.⁸⁴ In this case, a fistfight may not have actually cowed one party into agreeing with the other, but it could have served as an important stage to allow politicians to show their popular appeal before upcoming municipal elections and the 2012 presidential elections.⁸⁵ This further underscores a culture of political violence in that there was no underlying legitimacy crisis, as with the 2007 fight over passing a budget bill and electoral bill in tandem. Thus, even in a wealthy country enjoying low levels of corruption, a unique culture may emerge that values public displays of legislative fistfighting.

III. SOUTH KOREA

South Korean parliamentary proceedings are synonymous with fistfighting. The tendency to engage in a fistfight has increased in recent years. According to the LA Times, fights among legislators in South Korea rose from five in 2006 to 47 in 2008, and

⁸⁴ Euronews. "Taiwan Parliament Brawl - No Comment." YouTube. July 8, 2010. Accessed November 19, 2014. <http://youtu.be/COPa3cca08k>.

⁸⁵ "2010 ELECTIONS: Taiwanese Ready for Pivotal Polls - Taipei Times." 2010 ELECTIONS: Taiwanese Ready for Pivotal Polls - Taipei Times. November 26, 2010. Accessed November 19, 2014. <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2010/11/26/2003489471>.

the number keeps growing.⁸⁶ During one particularly intense fight, "politicians dived into the crowd like fans in a mosh pit, one was carried out on a stretcher," says the Guardian.⁸⁷ Occasionally, weapons are used, such as when a debate over press ownership rules prompted some Korean politicians to use fire extinguishers and an ax instead of their fists.⁸⁸ However, such use of weapons in a fistfights rarely cause serious injury.

A. South Korean Political History

Korea as a nation was created by superpower interests at the end of World War II, divided between the United States and the Soviet Union. In its early years, Korea's low-level democracy was challenged by multiple coups, military interventions, and social unrest. This kind of high-level political violence eventually stabilized into a more routine Western-style democracy, but legislative fistfighting remained. Perhaps it was South Korea's history that created this culture, for Korea's historic experience is unique itself.

The history of the Korean people is long and nuanced, but the history of the country of South Korea is short and often unstable. Korea as an independent nation was established only after World War II, declared independent from Japanese-occupied China, and before that a province of the empires of China and Mongolia. Korean independence came at a terrible price after a devastating civil war that left the country physically and economically broken.

⁸⁶ Glionna, John. "South Korea Lawmakers: Reaching across the Aisle with a Sledgehammer." Los Angeles Times. July 28, 2009. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-korea-fight28-2009jan28-story.html#page=1>.

⁸⁷ Ramnarayan, Abhinav. "When Parliament Attacks: The World's Greatest Legislative Brawls." Theguardian.com. July 22, 2009. Accessed November 11, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/Fnews/Fsouth-korea-brawl-parliament>.

⁸⁸ Emily Beaulieu. "A Brief History of Parliamentary Brawls and Fistfights." A Brief History of Parliamentary Brawls and Fistfights. October 14, 2014. Accessed November 28, 2014. <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2009/07/22/756452/-A-Brief-History-of-Parliamentary-Brawls-and-Fistfights>.

Meaningful political discourse in pre-1980 South Korea was routinely contained by the military state. The various regimes used the National Security Law and the Korean Central Intelligence Agency to stay in power.⁸⁹ The National Security Law was strictly applied to any anti-government organization, communist or not. Some offences carried the death penalty.⁹⁰ The Korean Central Intelligence Agency engaged in active monitoring and censorship of the media.⁹¹

After generations of military coups, near-despotism, and three decades of state-led economic growth,⁹² the social unrest of the 1980s culminated in democratization by 1987.⁹³ South Korea's untested democracy went through multiple crises in its first thirty years, which often resulted in violence in its legislature. In 1997, South Korea endured a shattering financial deflationary crisis, which preceded the first peaceful transfer of power between political parties in its history with the 1998 inauguration of President Kim Dae-Jung.⁹⁴ President Kim Dae-Jung's election started a positive trend of peaceful power transitions in South Korea, including the landslide election victory of Roh Moo-Hyun in 2003⁹⁵ and the victory of Lee Myung-Bak in 2008.

B. Political Structure of South Korea

The Republic of Korea is led by the Chief of the State (currently President Park Geun-hye) and the Head of the Government. The government is divided into the

⁸⁹ Park, Mi. *Democracy and social change: a history of South Korean student movements, 1980-2000*. Peter Lang, 2008.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁹² Chang, Ha-Joon, and Jim Bond. *Bad Samaritans*. Brilliance Audio, 2007. P. 5-9. South Korea's average annual income increased by fourteen times in forty years creating a developed economy, accompanied by state-led industries and near-prohibitions on foreign investment and foreign currency exchanges *Bad Samaritans* 5-9 (2008).

⁹³ Peter Lang, *Democracy and Social Change: A History of South Korean Student Movements* 7 (2008).

⁹⁴ Connor, Mary E., ed. *The Koreas*. ABC-CLIO, 2009, p.83.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Executive branch, the Legislative branch, and the Judicial branch. The legislative body or National Assembly (Kuk Koe) has vested lawmaking power. Members of the National Assembly are elected for a term of five years by majority vote in single member constituencies and through closed-list proportional representation. Currently, the most popular parties are the Justice Party (Cheon Ho-Sun), the Liberty Forward Party or LFP that recently merged with the New Frontier Party (NFP), and the Saenuri Party. Important for this research parties are the MDP, the GNP and the Uri Party.

The Yeollin Uri Party or Uri Party was active from 2004-2007 and led by the Chung Sye Kyun before merging with the New Democratic Party in 2007. The Uri Party supports social services spending at the expense of economic growth, to give limited support to North Korea, and to impeach then-president Roh

The Saenuri Party (formerly Grand National Party - GNP) is also called the Democratic Party (DP). The DP is a center-right conservative political party that was founded in 1997. In 2000 it regrouped and won more seats.⁹⁶ It supports free trade, privatization, reduction in government spending, and the promotion of human rights. The current president of Korea is Park Geun-Huy, a former chair of the Saenuri party.

The Democratic United Party or Minju T'onghap Dang (MDP), or Millennium Democratic Party (MDP), or the United Democratic Party (DP) was founded in 1995 by Kim Dae Jung. The party stands for the support of human rights and the improvement of the relations with North Korea. It was a rival to the GNP until the Uri Party won a majority of seats in the Parliament and then merged with GNP in an effort to impeach the President.

⁹⁶ Saenuri Party | political party, South Korea (Encyclopedia Britannica Online)
<http://www.britannica.com/topic/Saenuri-Party>.

C. South Korean Fistfighting Episodes

Brawls are common in the National Assembly of South Korea where legislators regularly turn to violence to get their way. Violence in South Korea can appear both as a challenge to perceived illegitimate acts, and as a way to defend from accusations of illegitimacy. In March, 2004 during an effort to impeach the president of South Korea, Roh Moo-Hyun, the president's supporters resorted to violence in order to stop the impeachment vote from being finalized.⁹⁷ Although the president was ultimately dismissed from his position and was replaced by then prime-minister Goh Kun as acting head of the state, the replacement was controversial because it was executed right before the April 15 general elections. Soon after Roh Moo-Hyun was impeached, a public protest quickly developed in support of the dismissed president. Roh Moo-Hyun was later reinstated by the decision of the South Korean Supreme Court.⁹⁸

The Millennium Democratic Party (MDP), which was in charge of the impeachment process in cooperation with the majority party Grand National Party (GNP), was seeking a two-thirds vote to impeach president Roh Moo-Hyun, who was accused of taking illegal election funds through his aides and family members. Uri Party legislators supported the president and tried to stop the announcement of votes by pushing the Speaker of the Parliament off his seat and by breaking into the ballot box. The MDP and GNP rushed to save the box and the Speaker, causing a major brawl among lawmakers.

⁹⁷ "South Korean President Impeached." BBC News. December 03, 2004. Accessed November 19, 2014. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3504026.stm>.

⁹⁸ "S. Korean Impeached President Reinstated." S. Korean Impeached President Reinstated. May 14, 2004. Accessed November 17, 2014. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-05/14/content_330768.htm.

In South Korea, policy clashes can provoke legislative fistfighting, such as the massive 2008 brawl over the ratification of a Free Trade Agreement between South Korea and the United States.⁹⁹ Members of South Korea's GNP built a barrier to prevent entrance to the foreign affairs committee hall, the only place where the bill could be introduced, and where legislators were intending to vote to ratify the agreement. The GNP created an improvised obstacle by using furniture to block the opposing Democratic Party members.

The GNP supported the free trade deal with the United States. However, Democratic Party members who opposed the free trade deal broke into the conference room using sledgehammers, crowbars, and a chainsaw to destroy their opponents' obstacles. Despite using such dangerous tools, the brawl only resulted in one person suffering a head injury while others suffered some minor injuries.¹⁰⁰

The defending GNP prevailed, and the deal was signed by representatives from South Korea and United States, but it could not be fully implemented until ratified by the National Assembly.¹⁰¹ The free trade deal became one of several that have served as a cornerstone of South Korean economic policy under both President Lee Myung-bak and his predecessor Roh Moo-Hyun, who both used international trade agreements as a means of altering the high levels of taxation in South Korea.¹⁰² Democratic Party members opposed some of these measures and tried to prevent voting on them by seizing control of the National Assembly's floor. The opposition reasoned that decreasing trade

⁹⁹ "South Korean Parliament Free Trade Brawl." *YouTube*. YouTube, 19 Dec. 2008. Web. 15 Nov. 2014.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*.

¹⁰¹ "U.S. - Korea Free Trade Agreement." Office of the United States Trade Representative. Accessed November 16, 2014. <http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/korus-fta>.

¹⁰² "S. Korean Politicians Brawl over U.S. Trade Pact." *Msnbc.com*. December 18, 2008. Accessed November 13, 2014. http://www.nbcnews.com/id/28295945/ns/world_news-asia_pacific/t/s-korean-politicians-brawl-over-us-trade-pact/#.VHuR1zHF-VA.

barriers could hurt vulnerable Korean farmers, hurt the nation's economic independence, and cause an uncontrollable loss of jobs. The ruling party wanted to ratify the agreement by the end of the year and stated that it would improve South Korean competitiveness and ties with the United States. Advocates of the agreement further reasoned that the trade agreement with the United States would improve South Korea's standing among world economies, would increase South Korea's GDP, and would spur further foreign investments in South Korea. Along with an ongoing series of legislative fistfights, massive protests rolled across the country in opposition to ratification.

The 2008 free trade deal was finally ratified by the National Assembly in 2011. Nonetheless, the trade pact's ratification continued to provoke violence between the same warring groups of legislators for surprising reasons. The opposition party introduced the original free trade deal in 2008, but the party then violently opposed the 2011 version. The opposition argued that subsequent changes allowed U.S. car manufacturers to enter the South Korean market.¹⁰³ The ruling GNP party wanted to vote without support of the opposition and pass the free trade deal anyway. One lawmaker from the Democratic Labor Party used improvised riot control techniques by throwing a canister with tear gas at the Speaker of the National Assembly in an attempt to block the voting.¹⁰⁴ The resulting gas cloud forced many lawmakers to leave the National Assembly, however the deal was ratified.

¹⁰³ Kim, Jack. "South Korea Ratifies Landmark U.S. Trade Deal." Reuters. November 22, 2011. Accessed November 18, 2014. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/22/us-korea-usa-trade-idUSTRE7AL0IN20111122>.

¹⁰⁴ Cho, Joohee. "South Korea Tearfully Ratifies Free-Trade Pact With the U.S." ABC News. November 22, 2011. Accessed November 16, 2014. <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2011/11/south-korea-tearfully-ratifies-free-trade-pact-with-the-u-s/>.

Another policy contest erupted in a fistfight in July 2009 over a contentious law to ease restrictions on media ownership.¹⁰⁵ To prevent their political opponents from voting, the opposition party created a furniture barricade to prevent the majority party from entering the main hall. The ruling Grand National Party was able to force its way into the voting room where the brawl continued in an effort to block the Speaker's seat.¹⁰⁶ The opposition Democratic Party considered this bill to be another means for enrichment and expansion for large newspaper monopolies which would then provide much more favorable media coverage of President Lee Myung-bak.¹⁰⁷ By creating a legislative brawl during parliamentary session members of rival parties may have attempted to draw media attention in order to keep the opposition party from dominating the media.

On December 8, 2010 a legislative brawl erupted over a bill covering a seemingly innocuous topic – providing free lunches to school children. The ruling party, the GNP, opposed the bill, reasoning that free lunches should be provided only to fifty percent of students using the taxpayer's money. However, the MDP wanted to provide lunches to all the elementary and middle school students.¹⁰⁸ This issue caused a fight, where

¹⁰⁵ Our Foreign Staff and Agencies in Seoul. "Brawl Breaks out in South Korean Parliament." The Telegraph. July 22, 2009. Accessed November 29, 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/southkorea/5886733/Brawl-breaks-out-in-South-Korean-parliament.html>.

¹⁰⁶ Richard Grigonis. "Brawling Lawmakers: 8 Images of Physical Fights on the Floor." Newsmax. April 9, 2014. Accessed November 18, 2014. <http://www.newsmax.com/TheWire/brawling-lawmakers-fight-images/2014/04/09/id/564706/>.

¹⁰⁷ Sabloff, Nicholas. "Brawl Breaks Out In South Korean Parliament." The Huffington Post. July 22, 2009. Accessed November 18, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/07/22/brawl-breaks-out-in-south_n_242533.html.

¹⁰⁸ "Fight Erupts in South Korean Parliament over Free School Meals." The Telegraph. October 31, 0035. Accessed November 16, 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/howaboutthat/8175512/Fight-erupts-in-South-Korean-parliament-over-free-school-meals.html>.

legislators were punching each other, shoving, pushing and shouting abuse at their political enemies.¹⁰⁹

The mayor of Seoul also opposed the school lunch bill. He reasoned that funds required for free lunches at schools were excessive. He threatened to resign if the referendum was passed. The GNP proposal would need 370 million dollars a year to feed the children, but an alternative program to feed half of Seoul's children would only require 280 million dollars annually.¹¹⁰ Many of those who opposed the bill were not sure if the Korean government would be able to handle the costs of the program, still sensitive to the 1997 Korean financial crisis that was prompted by reckless spending on welfare programs.¹¹¹ Korea had to get a loan from the International Monetary Fund to stabilize the South Korean currency in 1997. Since then, the government spending by the fourth largest Asian economy has been closely watched by all parties in the National Assembly. This issue arose a year before parliamentary elections, in which the welfare system in South Korea was expected to be a key topic.¹¹²

During a plenary meeting of the South Korean parliament on December 8, 2010 another brawl happened over disputes in spending one billion dollars for river and water resources clean-up.¹¹³ Many members of the opposition party MDP and their allies

¹⁰⁹ NTDTV. "Brawl Erupts at Seoul Council over Free Lunch Bill." YouTube. December 3, 2010. Accessed November 15, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTSNCHUnQno>.

¹¹⁰ Satran, Joe. "Seoul Mayor Oh Se-Hoon Vows To Quit If Free School Lunch Referendum Get Passed." The Huffington Post. August 23, 2011. Accessed November 15, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/23/seoul-mayor-free-school-lunch_n_933911.html.

¹¹¹ Yang, Jae-jin. "The Rise of the Korean Welfare State amid Economic Crisis, 1997-99: Implications for the Globalisation Debate." *Development Policy Review* 18, no. 3 (2000): 235-256.

¹¹² Lynn Curwin. "South Korean Parliament Brawls over School Meals." South Korean Parliament Brawls over School Meals. December 3, 2010. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/300981>.

¹¹³ Han Sang-Gyun. "When Legislators Attack: South Korean Edition - Photo Essays." Time. December 8, 2010. Accessed November 16, 2014. http://content.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,2036026_2217313,00.html.

engaged in a fight with members of the ruling GNP opposing the bill. One GNP member was taken to hospital after being hit on the head with a gavel during the brawl.¹¹⁴

This bill had difficulties passing for the same reasons as the school lunches bill. The so-called Four Major Rivers project is a multipurpose project proposed by the president of South Korea, Lee Myung-Bak, to rehabilitate rivers and the infrastructure around them to prevent flooding in several regions of South Korea, including the less-developed northern region of Cholla.¹¹⁵ Some of the President's opponents argued that this allocation was intended to increase the number of votes for his party less than a year before parliamentary elections.¹¹⁶ The president's opponents further charged that the President and his party used this project is to enrich the President himself, as he used to be in charge of the largest construction company in the region which had passed to his family and allies.¹¹⁷ Despite the fighting, the bill did pass the National Assembly.

D. South Korean Fistfighting Rationale

South Korea has a long history of political fights in its legislature, which has developed into a culture of legislative political violence. Many fistfights stem from policy or legitimacy crisis, as well as from the everyday political dealing that goes with budget allocations and trade. The nature of fistfighting in South Korea's National Assembly is indicative of this culture. In extreme cases, South Korean legislators are even prepared to do battle with weaponry, such as tear gas, chainsaws, crowbars, fire

¹¹⁴ Won Seok Erik Cha. "The Hopless Korean Politicians Do It Again." YouTube. December 8, 2010. Accessed November 15, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFpaGH7tqe8>.

¹¹⁵ Cha, Yoon Jung, Myung-Pil Shim, and Seung Kyum Kim. "The four major rivers restoration project." In *UN-Water Int. Conf.: Water in the Green Economy in Practice: Towards Rio20*, pp. 1-10. New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), 2011.

¹¹⁶ World, Water. "South Korea's Four Rivers Restoration." WaterWorld.com. Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://www.waterworld.com/articles/wwi/print/volume-27/issue-6/regional-spotlight-asia-pacific/south-korea-s-four-rivers-restoration.html>.

¹¹⁷ Cholla Province. "Many Rivers to Cross." *The Economist*. November 28, 2009. Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://www.economist.com/node/14969100>.

extinguishers, and axes. The routine nature of fistfighting and the growing trend of legislative brawls underscores this conclusion. Importantly, legislative fistfighting rarely spills out into the streets as was the case with Ukraine. Although the 2008 US-Korea free trade agreement resulted in mass protests, most fistfighting stayed confined within the walls of the National Assembly, keeping the average citizen safe from their brawling leaders.

South Korea has developed a culture of legislative violence. By the early 1980s, South Korea had developed into a fully-fledged middle-income country, on par with Ecuador and Costa Rica.¹¹⁸ South Korea has undergone a consistent series of peaceful power transfers since 1998. South Korea's culture of legislative violence was most visible during the evolving 2008 free trade political clash. At an earlier stage, an apparent policy disagreement led to an armed conflict between legislators, but then both parties essentially switched sides.¹¹⁹ By switching their positions and continuing to fight, the legislators demonstrated that the fighting itself was a continuation of a political disagreement or a form of negotiation that endured beyond their original policy positions. Importantly, this fight retained its political character by falling along changing party lines, not along the individual preferences of given politicians at the beginning of the political disagreement in 2008.

The media ownership brawl of 2009 had strong overtones of a culture of fistfighting. The fighting opposition wanted to protect their own positions in the face of potentially harmful media coverage. This is a strong departure from a pure policy

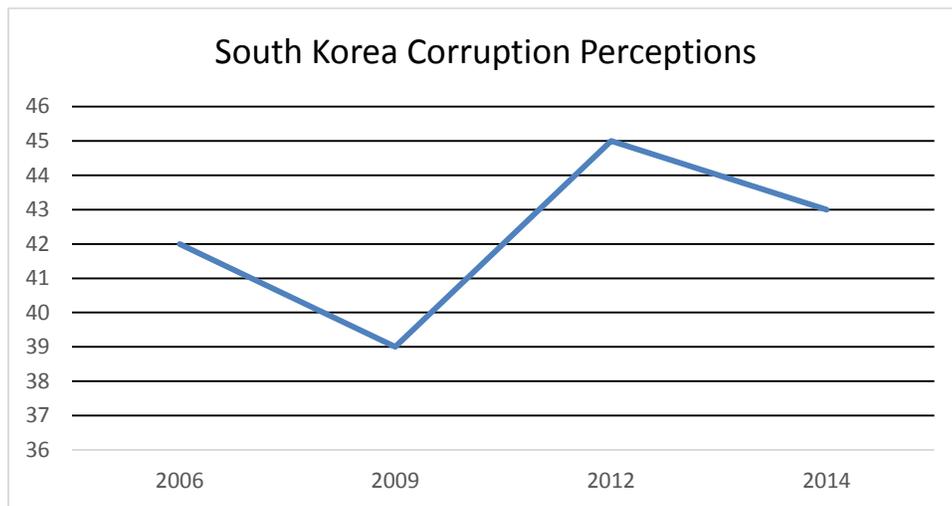
¹¹⁸ Ha Joon Chang, *Bad Samaritans* 5-9 (2008).

¹¹⁹ Woo Jung-yeop, "April 2012 South Korean Parliamentary Elections: Surprise Results and Implications." Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed October 1, 2014. <http://www.cfr.org/south-korea/april-2012-south-korean-parliamentary-elections-surprise-results-implications/p28145>.

disagreement or a pure legitimacy agreement, because the politicians initiating the fistfight are looking primarily to their own public image. They are essentially creating a public image of violent opposition to preempt any negative publicity that would be created by a potentially hostile media outlet. Thus, they appear to have been appealing directly to a culture of violence, unafraid that their brawl would undermine their own legitimacy more than unfavorable media coverage.

Despite a series of personalized political scandals that ended administrations, the system as a whole has remained durable. As shown by Transparency International data in Figure 4, South Korea retains relatively low levels of corruption compared to other countries in this study. South Korea's ranking remains stable within the 39-45 out of 180 level, putting it comfortably within the top 25% of countries enjoying low levels of corruption.

Figure 4



Source: Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index*

2014. <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ See generally Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index results for the years 2006, 2009, 2012, and 2014.

South Korean fistfighting is provoked by the policy disagreements, such as spending issues raised during the US-Korea trade agreement fights of 2008. Even though this fight demonstrates a strong culture of fistfighting, the politicians involved switched sides as policy preferences changed. Overall, long years of Korean economic growth and prosperity appear to have done little to curb the growing trend of fistfighting. Thus, it seems that fistfighting may have acquired its own value in South Korea's political culture.

IV. BOLIVIA

A. Bolivian Political History

Bolivian political history has been marked by instability, inequality, and violence. Bolivia declared its independence from Peru in 1821, and achieved full autonomy in 1825.¹²¹ From independence until 2005, Bolivia was controlled by a string of presidents who were themselves controlled by a ruling class of landowners in a semi-feudal governmental structure. A series of early military defeats in its early history caused Bolivia to lose massive amounts of territory. These troubled times set off a string of remarkably corrupt and violent rulers that lasted until 1879.¹²²

Bolivian society and political elites united in the face of a military threat from Chile in 1879. In the aftermath, an uninterrupted series of military and business elites ruled Bolivia until 1932, offering a period of uncharacteristically stable political conditions and economic growth.¹²³ During this period of relative stability, universal voting rights were not yet adopted, allowing the political leadership to continue in power by appealing to a limited group of Spanish-speaking, literate elites. The vast majority of

¹²¹ Morales, Waltraud Q. *A brief history of Bolivia*. Infobase Publishing, 2010, p. 47.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

Bolivians were forbidden from voting – indigenous people without any functional knowledge of Spanish. Conservative rule ended with the 1899 Federal Revolution, violently placing a more liberal government in power which still did not respect indigenous rights.¹²⁴ The liberal government was then deposed in 1920 in an uncharacteristically bloodless revolution.

From 1920 to 1943, a series of short-lived, increasingly radical administrations ruled in Bolivia. After losing the Chaco War in 1935,¹²⁵ radical governments continuously displaced each other until the Bolivian Revolution in 1952, which finally granted universal suffrage to Bolivian citizens. The revolution lasted eleven years, until 1964, and was considered “unfinished” in many regards. From 1964 to 1982 another series of small-scale, temporary military governments came and went, always failing to garner true popular support before being overthrown by the next junta. From 1981 to 1982, four governmental usurpations in fourteen months culminated in a more stable government that ended the cycle of short-lived regimes.¹²⁶ However, highly unstable economic conditions coupled with increasingly illegitimate regimes associated with drug production or old regimes’ violence¹²⁷ did not ensure a return to prosperity. Presidents with connections to drug dealers and political violence did little to prevent increasing social unrest.

Indigenous Bolivians’ widespread unrest resulting from the Bechtel-led water privatization scheme and the costly Gas War of 2003¹²⁸ led to a watershed election in 2005. After a highly disputed result, the 2005 elections resulted in the election of the first

¹²⁴ Morales, Waltraud Q. *A brief history of Bolivia*. Infobase Publishing, 2010, p. 47.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

¹²⁶ Klein, Herbert S. *A concise history of Bolivia*. Cambridge University Press, 2011, p.237-38.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.240-42.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.262-63.

indigenous Bolivian president since independence, Evo Morales. President Morales' leadership has led to nearly ten years of relative political stability.

B. Political Structure of Bolivia

The Plurinational State of Bolivia is a presidential democratic republic, represented by the President, who is the head of state and of the government. The Bolivian government is divided into four branches – the executive, legislative, judicial and electoral. The legislative branch is represented by the bicameral Congreso Nacional, which is divided into a Chamber of Senators (27 senators elected for a term of five years) and the Chamber of Deputies (130 members are elected for five years). The Congreso Nacional's most popular parties are the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement, the Nationalist Democratic Action Party, and the Revolutionary Left Movement. This paper will examine brawls between the Revolutionary Nationalistic Movement, the Nationalist Democratic Action Party, and the Revolutionary Left Movement.

The Revolutionary Nationalistic Movement was founded in 1942 and is currently chaired by the Guillermo Bedregal Gutierrez. This party promotes social democratic values, nationalism, and populism. The Nationalist Democratic Action Party (formerly the Social Democratic Power Party) was founded in 1979 and is currently chaired by Guillermo Fortun. The NDAP is a right-wing party with an ideology aligning with national conservatism and neoliberalism. The Revolutionary Left Movement, also called the New Majority or the MIR (*Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria*), is a social-democratic left-wing party founded in 1971.

C. Bolivian Fistfighting Episodes

Brawls in the Bolivian Plurinational Legislative Assembly (Bolivian Parliament) are famous for their massive scale, where almost the entire legislative body becomes involved in a given fight. As with other countries in this paper, legitimacy crises often provoke fistfights in the Bolivian Parliament. One such fight erupted in August of 2007 between congressmen over the issue of putting four judges on trial for corruption charges.¹²⁹ Congressmen were arguing that the trial was politically staged. Several parliamentarians disagreed with the politics of Evo Morales, who stepped into the post of President in 2006, and with the president's allies in the parliament and attempted to fight corruption by creating the Ministry of Institutional Transparency and Fight against Corruption.¹³⁰

The government of Evo Morales often criticized the Bolivian judiciary system and accused judges of misconduct. The Bolivian Parliament is the primary investigative body tasked with investigating accusations against the judiciary, during which the Bolivian Senate must decide whether to convict based on the charges leveled against accused judges. During the fight, legislators shouted at each other, used tables, and their fists and elbows to resolve political disagreements. The assembly was calmed after police were called to the floor. Another underlying reason for the fight was an effort to control the judicial branch of one of Bolivia's provinces.¹³¹ The opposition to Evo Morales' party attempted to seize the dais to prevent legislators from bringing charges

¹²⁹ Trott, Russell. "Fights in Bolivian Parliament." BBC News. October 28, 2008. Accessed October 11, 2014. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7695263.stm>.

¹³⁰ Farthing, Linda C.; Kohl, Benjamin H. (2014). *Evo's Bolivia: Continuity and Change*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

¹³¹ "Fists Fly as Politicians Fight Dirty." Metro Fists Fly as Politicians Fightdirty Comments. August 23, 2007. Accessed October 30, 2014. <http://metro.co.uk/2007/08/23/fists-fly-as-politicians-fight-dirty-70663/>.

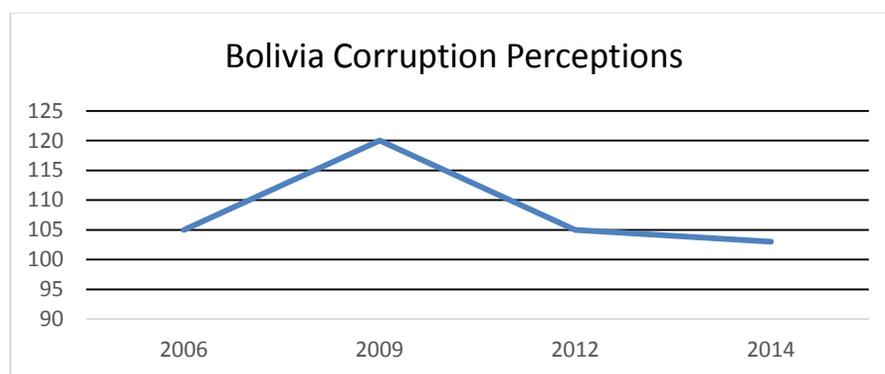
against several judges of Bolivia's highest court, the Constitutional Tribunal.¹³² The charges were later upheld, and the judges were suspended for misconduct.

D. Bolivian Fistfighting Rationale

Bolivian fistfights can erupt due to legitimacy crises, and due to a culture of fistfighting. Bolivia has been plagued by an extended history of illegitimate rule, where violent overthrow has been the norm rather than the exception. Until the 1980s, power changed through juntas, not through peaceful elections. The majority of the population has been mostly excluded from political participation. The election of the first indigenous-born Bolivian president in history led to the massive brawl described above.

Bolivia's history of corruption affected its perceived legitimacy. As seen specifically in Figure 5, corruption perceptions in the country spiked until 2009, at which point it declined again. In this sense, perhaps president Morales' reforms achieved their anti-corruption purpose. Nonetheless, Bolivia remains squarely in the bottom half of corrupt countries worldwide, and has remained so for nearly ten years.

Figure 5



Source: Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index*

2014. <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>.¹³³

¹³² "Bolivian Parliament." Parliamentfights. August 23, 2007. Accessed November 30, 2014. <http://parliamentfights.wordpress.com/2007/08/28/bolivian-parliament/>.

When the Bolivian parliament erupted in a massive fistfight, political legitimacy was squarely at the center of the brawl. The newly-elected party wanted to investigate the previous party's appointees for corruption. This was immediately opposed with violence. Thus, both sides were fighting in direct reaction to a specific challenge to legitimacy.

V. VENEZUELA

A. Venezuelan Political History

Like many Latin American countries, Venezuela achieved independence in the early 19th century, but has nonetheless been plagued by waves of governmental instability and popular unrest. After the Venezuelan declaration of independence from Gran Colombia,¹³⁴ a series of national strongmen competed for and occasionally wielded national power.¹³⁵ A typical example came in 1908 when President Cipriano Castro was ousted by his second-in-command, Juan Vicente Gomez.¹³⁶ Gomez's minister of war, Lopez Contreras, succeeded him in 1935.¹³⁷ Contreras was succeeded by Medina Angarita. Angarita legalized political competition but was removed in a coup in 1945.¹³⁸

Democratic elections in 1945 were destroyed in a 1948 military coup. In the aftermath, Venezuela's military government survived as a ten-year dictatorship led by a military triumvirate.¹³⁹ In 1958, Venezuela's period of dictatorship came to an end with the Punto Fijo agreement among the ruling elite to allow elections. The first such

¹³³ See generally Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index results for the years 2006, 2009, 2012, and 2014.

¹³⁴ Nichols, Elizabeth Gackstetter, and Kimberly J. Morse. 2010. *Venezuela*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO., p. 36.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ McBeth, Brian Stuart. *Juan Vicente Gómez and the oil companies in Venezuela, 1908-1935*. Vol. 43. Cambridge University Press, 2002. P. 3.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 91.

¹³⁸ Tinker-Salas, Miguel. *Venezuela: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 10.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 86-90.

election resulted in the victory of Romulo Betancourt as president, who had to defend his new administration from a communist insurrection.¹⁴⁰ In 1969, Rafael Caldera became the first opposition Venezuelan president to succeed an incumbent party without violence. Importantly, the efforts of the Caldera administration to calm radical movements led to an historic low point in radical movements trying to violently overthrow the government of Venezuela.¹⁴¹

The successor of President Perez, former president Caldera, had his second term marred by a devastating banking crisis that began in 1994.¹⁴² Caldera famously pardoned Hugo Chavez as a participant in a 1992 coup attempt. Chavez won the 1998 election and set Venezuela on a new anti-American course, reversing privatization efforts and re-nationalizing important industries. After surviving a coup attempt in 2002, Chavez ruled by decree until his death in 2013.¹⁴³ Shortly afterwards his chosen successor, Nicolas Maduro assumed power.¹⁴⁴

B. Political Structure of Venezuela

Venezuela's official name is the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. It is a federal presidential republic led by the Chief Executive who is the Head of the State and the Government. The Venezuelan government is divided into five bodies – the Executive, the Legislative, the Judicial, the Citizens Branch, and the Electoral Council. The legislative body is represented by the Unicameral National Assembly that has 165 members, each being elected for a five-year term by popular vote. Venezuela's most

¹⁴⁰ Tinker-Salas, Miguel. *Venezuela: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 95.

¹⁴¹ Ewell, Judith. *Venezuela: a century of change*. Stanford University Press, 1984, p. 166.

¹⁴² Tinker-Salas, Miguel. *Ibid*, p.128.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 10.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 208.

important parties are the United Socialist Party, the Communist Party, A New Era Party, Democratic Action, and Justice First.

The parties that were involved in the fistfighting episodes described below include the Social Christian Party, the Fifth Republic Party, and the Democratic Unity Alliance.

The Social Christian Party or Copei, is a democratic party affiliated with the Coalition for Democratic Unity. The Copei proclaims Christian Democracy as its ideology, and was founded in 1946 by Rafael Caldera. It is currently being led by Enrique Mendoza.

The Fifth Republic Party is currently called the United Socialist Party of Venezuela. It was founded in 2007 by Hugo Chavez and is currently led by Nicolas Maduro. It is a left-wing socialist party focusing on the promotion of internationalism, patriotism, and neo-Marxism.

The Democratic Unity Alliance (*Mesa de la Unidad Democratica* - MUD) was formed in 2008 to be an umbrella for a number of smaller parties in opposition to Hugo Chavez. The main parties that are part of the MUD are Copei, Democratic Action, and A New Era. Due to the unification of smaller parties with different ideologies, the Democratic Unity Alliance has difficulty outlining its ideology.

C. Venezuelan Fistfighting Episodes

Since 2000, Venezuela's national parliament has occasionally been disrupted with violent outbursts, often provoked by legitimacy and policy crises. A particular policy crisis in 2003 led to Cesar Perez from the opposition Social Christian Party claiming that he was attacked by Iris Varela from the Fifth Republic Movement Party during a

marathon 17-hour session.¹⁴⁵ The parties were disputing a controversial reform package when Varela apparently struck Perez across the face, giving him bruises and scratch marks. In Varela's defense, she claimed that Perez had kicked her the day before in a previous fistfight inside parliament. From a political perspective, Varela wanted to prevent the opposition politician from disrupting an ongoing debate that might have resulted in passage of the reforms.

Venezuelan politicians also fight as part of a culture of fistfighting. In 2011, a pro-Chavez Socialist Party member, Henry Ventura tried to remove an anti-Chavez speaker, Alfonso Maquina, from the podium.¹⁴⁶ Ventura's approach quickly devolved into a brawl near the speaker's podium, leaving few legislators hurt. Although the parliamentary session was broadcasted live as per usual Venezuelan practice, the feed was abruptly cut off once the violence began. This sudden reappearance of legislative fistfighting after a long period of peace might have been due to Chavez allowing opposition politicians to reenter the legislative arena to create an image of the democracy in a dictatorship.

Venezuelan legislators also engage in fistfighting during legitimacy crises, such as the 2013 fight over Chavez's successor. Nicolas Maduro, heir apparent to Hugo Chavez, was elected by a controversial two-percent margin.¹⁴⁷ Not all members of the

¹⁴⁵ "Punch-up Halts Venezuela Parliament." BBC News. September 24, 2003. Accessed March 13, 2015. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3136698.stm>.

¹⁴⁶ "Major Brawl in Venezuelan Congress between Pro and Anti Chavez Lawmakers." MercoPress. February 11, 2011. Accessed May 14, 2015. <http://en.mercopress.com/2011/02/11/major-brawl-in-venezuelan-congress-between-pro-and-anti-chavez-lawmakers>.

¹⁴⁷ Neuman, William. "Political Chaos Grips Venezuela After Legislative Brawl and Rival Marches." The New York Times. May 01, 2013. Accessed October 30, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/02/world/americas/rival-marches-after-legislative-brawl-in-venezuela.html>.

parliament were ready to accept Maduro as a president, and accused his party of stealing the victory.¹⁴⁸

The opposition party, the MUD, made gains in the elections. The MUD was especially successful in urban areas under the leadership of Henrique Capriles, who would not accept defeat in the presidential election. Capriles offered to conduct an audit of the electronic voting tallies and handwritten precinct logs showing who voted. He alleged that would provide evidence to back up his claim.¹⁴⁹ In a partial concession, the National Electoral Council agreed to conduct only a limited review of records. However, this was not enough to prevent a fight from erupting after the assembly passed a measure denying the opposition the right to speak in the chamber until Maduro was recognized as president. According to CNN, cameras operated by government media networks in the National Assembly were pointed toward the ceiling during the fight, while news cameras owned by Globovision were able to record the entire fight. Because the beginning of this fight was not recorded by major media networks, it is unclear which party started the fight. Members of the opposition and ruling parties tried to blame each other.

D. Venezuelan Fistfighting Rationale

Legitimacy crises cause legislative fistfighting in Venezuela. In two of the three primary fistfighting accounts, political control was at the heart of the fight. Anti-Chavez legislators would oppose political actions and appointments made by pro-Chavez legislators. The 2003 fight was a direct response to the changes in procedures for

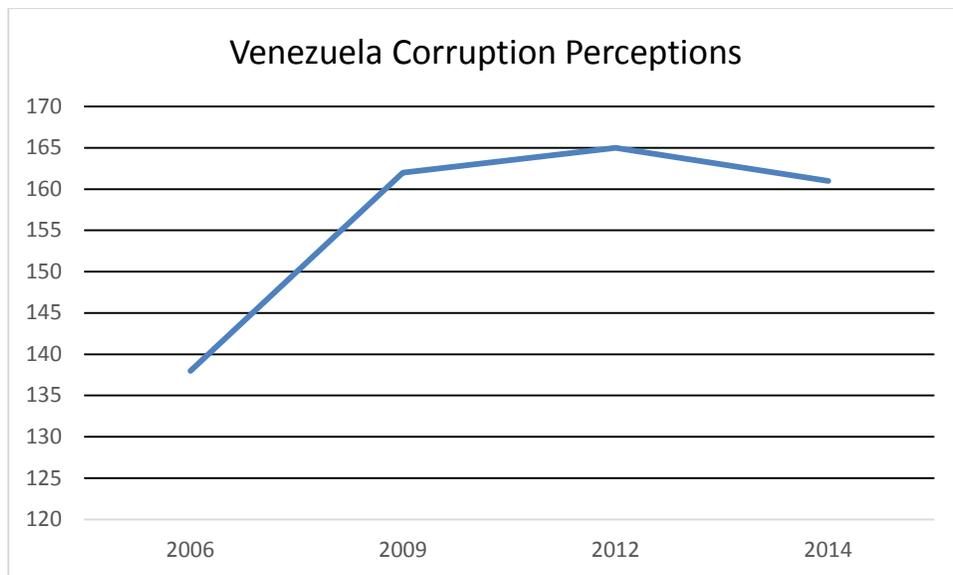
¹⁴⁸ Shoichet, Catherine E. "Lawmakers Report Brawl in Venezuelan National Assembly." CNN. January 01, 1970. Accessed November 30, 2014. <http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/30/world/americas/venezuela-lawmakers-violence/index.html>.

¹⁴⁹ "Maduro's Hollow Victory." The Economist. December 14, 2013. Accessed October 30, 2014. <http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21591575-new-president-has-strengthened-his-grip-power-undermined-both-democracy-and>.

appointing Venezuela's judiciary. The 2013 fight was in direct opposition to the results of an election, with no other visible reason coming to light.

Venezuela's corruption levels have increased noticeably since 2006 as seen in Figure 6. Venezuela's corruption ranking increased from 138 to 162 out of 180.¹⁵⁰ This sharp increase in corruption correlates with the banning of opposition politics in Venezuela.

Figure 6



Source: Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index*

2014. <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>.¹⁵¹

Legislative fistfighting in Venezuela could be caused by a culture of fistfighting that the central government wants to conceal. Although it is more common for politicians in Venezuela than in other countries to attack each other during active

¹⁵⁰ "Corruption Perceptions Index 2014." Issuu. Accessed May 14, 2015. http://issuu.com/transparencyinternational/docs/cpi_2012_report?e=2496456%2F2010281%3B. See generally Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index results for the years 2006, 2009, 2012, and 2014.

¹⁵¹ See generally Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index results for the years 2006, 2009, 2012, and 2014.

sessions, there is no immediate way to publicize the brawl or find out details. In the 2011 and 2013 fighting episodes, direct TV coverage was cut off during the fight. This kind of concealment during an otherwise public session may show the government's unwillingness to allow fistfighting politicians a national stage. This act also shows that the central government is not willing to use legislative violence as a means to discredit the opposition, as may be the case in other countries. Furthermore, a five year absence of opposition legislative activity could have provoked strong opposition tendencies that may find a legislative fight appealing, a way to figuratively fight back against an oppressive opponent.

VI. MEXICO

A. Mexican Political History

Mexico has been an independent nation since 1807, allowing its political culture to gradually develop over time and giving observers an abundance of data with which to work. Although Mexico had periodic conflicts with the United States¹⁵² and although Mexico was briefly controlled by a French puppet monarch,¹⁵³ the political history of Mexico has mostly been written by Mexican elites. Mexican democratization began in earnest after the overthrow of the de facto dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz in 1910, a response to a blatantly rigged election result. Subsequent democratic regimes were unstable and subject to violent opposition by rebels until the rise of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in 1929.¹⁵⁴

The PRI turned Mexico into a de facto one-party state, not losing a presidential election until Vicente Fox's National Action Party claimed victory in the 2000

¹⁵² Kirkwood, J. Burton. *The history of Mexico*. ABC-CLIO, 2009. P. 106.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.,p xvii.

presidential race.¹⁵⁵ Under the PRI, key Mexican industries were nationalized,¹⁵⁶ and Mexico experienced a 40-year period of prosperity. However, the Mexican economic miracle irreversibly ended in 1970, leading to the formation of opposition political movements.¹⁵⁷ PRI leadership suffered additional crises as economic troubles grew¹⁵⁸ and lasted until 2000 alongside a growing separatist movement in Chiapas which threatened the state's government control.¹⁵⁹ After the victory of Vicente Fox and his National Action Party, securing both the presidency and both houses of Congress, the PRI's monopoly on power was successfully broken for the first time in over seventy years.¹⁶⁰

The 2006 election was one of the most hotly contested in Mexico's history, where the victorious Felipe Calderon of the National Action Party had his election results contested by the runners-up from the Party of the Democratic Revolution.¹⁶¹ The PRI saw its influence shrink even further.¹⁶²

B. Political Structure of Mexico

Mexico is a presidentially-dominated federal republic led by the President of the United Mexican States who is the head of the government and the state. Legislative power is vested in the bicameral multi-party Congress of the Union which is composed of

¹⁵⁵ Domínguez, Jorge I., and Chappell H. Lawson, eds. *Mexico's pivotal democratic election: candidates, voters, and the presidential campaign of 2000*. Stanford University Press, 2004, p1.

¹⁵⁶ Stacy, Lee, ed. *Mexico and the United States*. Marshall Cavendish, 2002, p. 618.

¹⁵⁷ Russell, Philip. *The history of Mexico: from pre-conquest to present*. Routledge, 2011, p. 478-79.

¹⁵⁸ Arner, Douglas W. *Financial stability, economic growth, and the role of law*. Cambridge University Press, 2007., p. 25

¹⁵⁹ Ambrosi, Ana Paula, Silvia D. Zárate, and Alex M. Saragoza, eds. *Mexico Today: An Encyclopedia of Life in the Republic [2 volumes]*. ABC-CLIO, 2012, p. 243-244.

¹⁶⁰ Burton Kirkwood, *The History of Mexico: Second Edition*, 2009. P9, pxii

¹⁶¹ Ambrosi, *Ibid.*, p. 107-108.

¹⁶² Padgett, Tim. "How Enrique Peña Nieto Won Himself and His Party the Mexican Presidency | TIME.com." World How Enrique Peña Nieto Won Himself and His Party the Mexican Presidency Comments. July 12, 2012. Accessed May 14, 2015. <http://world.time.com/2012/07/02/mexico-election-how-enrique-pena-nieto-won-himself-and-his-party-the-presidency/>.

the Chamber of the Deputies (500 deputies) and the Senate of the Republic (128 senators). Members of the Congress are elected by popular vote. The most popular parties in the Mexican Parliament are the National Action Party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party, the Party of Democratic Revolution, and the Labor Party.

Legislative fights examined in this paper involve the National Action Party, the Party of Democratic Revolution, and the Institutional Revolutionary Party. The National Action Party (PAN) was founded in 1939 and is currently chaired by Gutavo Munoz. The PAN is the second most popular party in Mexico. It is a conservative party that focuses on the immediate problems facing the country and thus does not affiliate itself with the left or right wing or with Christian ideology. The Party of Democratic Revolution (PRD) was established in 1989 and is currently led by Carlos Ruiz. It is a social democratic party that branched out from PRI.

The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) was founded in 1929 and has long been the most popular party in Mexico. It is currently chaired by the Cesar Quiroz. The PRI promotes institutionalism as the solution to the multiple problems facing Mexico, and it also focuses on social democracy and corporatism.

C. Mexican Fistfighting Episodes

Mexican legislators are prepared to fight each other during legitimacy crises. The controversy behind the victory of Felipe Calderon sparked waves of disagreement in the public and in the parliament. Calderon's victory by a very small margin in the 2006 Mexican presidential election produced an immediate legitimacy crisis.¹⁶³ Despite early predictions of a different candidate winning the 2006 election, Calderon's victory

¹⁶³ Béjar, Alejandro Alvarez. "Mexico after the Elections: The Crisis of Legitimacy & the Exhaustion of Predatory Neoliberalism." *Monthly Review – New York*- 59, no. 3 (2007): 12, p.12-14.

resulted in a shocking change of fate for Mexico's traditional ruling party, the PRI, amid waves of accounts of election-influencing, shady finances from Calderon's family members, and access to privileged information.¹⁶⁴ Although an estimated 60% of precincts made "arithmetic errors" in vote counting in the 2006 election, only 0.02% of precincts performed recounts.¹⁶⁵

In November of 2006, a brawl broke out in the Mexican parliament when legislators started fighting for physical control of the Speaker's platform.¹⁶⁶ According to the *Washington Post*, "Lawmakers wrestled, slapped each other and tumbled across the floor."¹⁶⁷ Felipe Calderon was the first president from the National Action Party who won control of Mexico's national government after the prolonged rule of the Institutional Revolutionary Party.¹⁶⁸ His campaign was based on providing additional jobs and fighting gangs, which led to a victory with 56% of the popular votes. Calderon's unsuccessful challenger, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, accused Calderon of fraud during the election, but these charges were not verified after a recount.¹⁶⁹ With an unchallenged popular mandate, Felipe Calderon was supposed to be inaugurated on the

¹⁶⁴ Béjar, Alejandro Alvarez. "Mexico after the Elections: The Crisis of Legitimacy & the Exhaustion of Predatory Neoliberalism." *Monthly Review – New York*- 59, no. 3 (2007): 12, p.12-14.

¹⁶⁵ Lao-Tze Smith, We Don't Count! Rousseau's General Will as a Tool to Judge the Legitimacy of the Judicial Decisions Relating to the Presidential Elections in Mexico and the United States. 15 *Law and Business Review of the Americas* 2, 339-351, p345-46 (2009).

¹⁶⁶ Torres, Omar. "Mexican Lawmakers Brawl in Congress before Felipe Calderon Takes Oath of Office - USATODAY.com." Mexican Lawmakers Brawl in Congress before Felipe Calderon Takes Oath of Office - USATODAY.com. December 01, 2006. Accessed November 13, 2014. http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2006-12-01-mexico-lawmakers_x.htm.

¹⁶⁷ Stevenson, Mark. "Brawl, Standoff in Mexican Congress." *Washington Post*. November 29, 2006. Accessed October 1, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/29/AR2006112900319.html>.

¹⁶⁸ "LiveLeak.com - Mexican Congress Brawl." LiveLeak.com - Mexican Congress Brawl. November 28, 2006. Accessed October 30, 2014. <http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=dc84c35295>.

¹⁶⁹ "MGR - the Mexico Gulf Reporter." : Calderón Criticizes Mexican Judges for Abuse of Amparo. September 6, 2011. Accessed October 11, 2014. <http://www.mexicogulfreporter.com/2011/09/calderon-criticizes-mexican-judges.html>.

podium in the Legislative Palace.¹⁷⁰ However, reports about planned sabotage by the left wing Democratic Revolution Party to disrupt the ceremony were intercepted. In a preventive measure, Calderon's allies tried to seize the podium in Mexico's parliament, which spilled over into a massive fight involving most of the nation's lawmakers.¹⁷¹ Ultimately, president Calderon took the Oath, but the ceremony was very modest and quite fast.

In 2006, a second major fistfight occurred after the presidential elections, when members of the same party as the newly elected president decided that the losing presidential candidate should not be allowed to speak in parliament. The subsequent fight resulted in serious injuries to several legislative members, including one who was thrown off the stage and another whose leg was broken.¹⁷²

D. Mexican Fistfighting Rationale

Legitimacy crises provoke fistfighting among Mexican lawmakers. Mexico is a middle income country suffering legitimacy crises throughout multiple presidential administrations. As shown in this study, the most widely publicized brawling in recent Mexican history took place when one party challenged the inauguration of then-president Calderon in 2006. Clearly, one party questioned the legitimacy of the other and that of the newly-elected president. The legitimacy challenge goes deeper than in other countries, because it was the incumbent party that started the fistfight, not the opposition

¹⁷⁰ "MPs Fight in Parliament as Anarchy Rocks Mexico." Mail Online. November 29, 2006. Accessed November 18, 2014. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-419449/MPs-fight-parliament-anarchy-rocks-Mexico.html>.

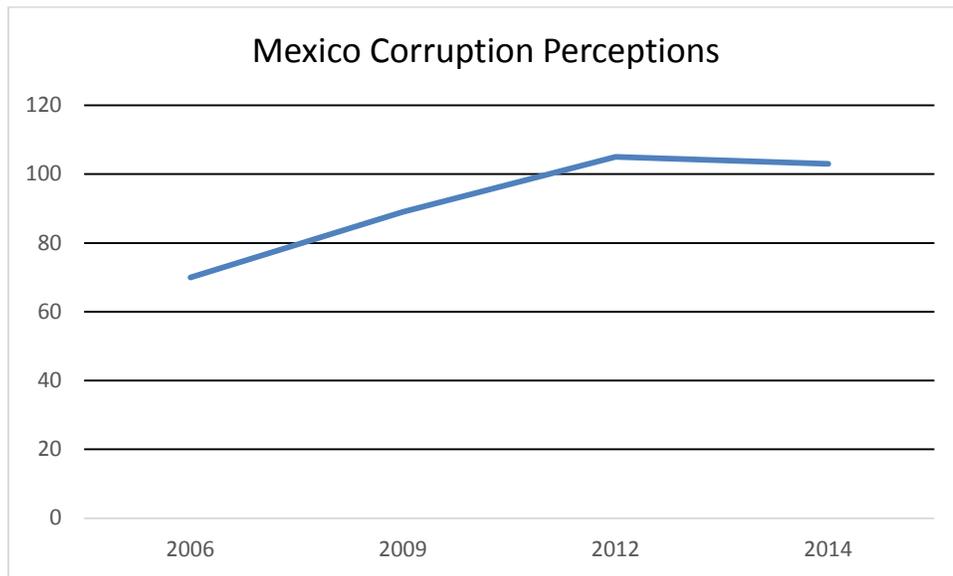
¹⁷¹ Miller, Kathleen. "Brawl, Standoff in Mexican Congress." Washington Post. November 29, 2006. Accessed November 11, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/29/AR2006112900319.html>.

¹⁷² "Mexican Lawmakers Brawl in Congress before Felipe Calderon Takes Oath of Office - usatoday.com." Mexican Lawmakers Brawl in Congress before Felipe Calderon Takes Oath of Office - usatoday.com. December 01, 2006. Accessed December 01, 2014. http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2006-12-01-mexico-lawmakers_x.htm.

party. Similar to the KMT in Taiwan, Mexico's entrenched political elites from the PRI were fighting to protect their privileges, seeing their successful challenger as illegitimate.

As seen in Figure 7 Mexico's corruption levels have steadily increased in the years since the Calderon inauguration, going from arguably in the top third of non-corrupt nations, to being in the bottom 50% of corrupt nations.

Figure 7



Source: Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index*

2014. <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>.¹⁷³

Mexico's recent political struggles and security issues probably contributed to this increase in corruption, with harmful influences appearing during the war on drugs and chronic economic hardships. Nonetheless, Mexican fistfighting only appeared so far in response to watershed moments in legitimacy struggles, but not from any identifiable policy crises or from a culture of fistfighting for its own sake.

¹⁷³ See generally Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index results for the years 2006, 2009, 2012, and 2014.

VII. NIGERIA

A. Nigerian Political History

Nigeria broke free from British domination in 1960,¹⁷⁴ ending colonial rule stemming from the post-Napoleonic international order which placed West Africa clearly into Britain's sphere of influence. Free Nigeria faced a tremendous task in consolidating rule¹⁷⁵ with as many as 250 distinct ethnic groups.¹⁷⁶ In fact, Nigeria's piecemeal conquest by the British left some regions de facto autonomous since 1919.¹⁷⁷ Despite British control, Nigeria was ruled with a mostly hands-off approach, where the British allowed local African officials to perform essential functions, leaving as few as nine British administrators controlling a population of over 10 million.¹⁷⁸

Nigeria's post-independence history has been wracked with waves of corruption, political violence, and instability. However, Nigeria's experience of widely discredited elections and democratic instability is a regrettable characteristic of African governance.¹⁷⁹ "Historically, the use of violence (pre and post) in elections is not peculiar to recent and emerging democracies in [the] developing world in general and Africa in particular."¹⁸⁰ From independence, Nigeria has been plagued by electoral violence, which led to cycles of legitimacy crises for each subsequent administration since the 1951 pre-independence constitution was created. Each successive election cycle was characterized by worse violence than the previous one, culminating in a civil

¹⁷⁴ Meredith, Martin. "The fate of Africa: A history of 50 years of independence" *New York: Public Affairs* (2005), p.77.

¹⁷⁵ Meredith, Martin. *Diamonds, gold, and war: the British, the Boers, and the making of South Africa*. Public Affairs, 2008.

¹⁷⁶ Meredith, Ibid, p. 77

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, p.5.

¹⁷⁹ Adesote, Adesola Samson, and John O. Abimbola. "Electoral Violence and the Survival of Democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A Historical Perspective." *Canadian Social Science* 10, no. 3 (2014). p. 143.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 146.

war to destroy the first republic and starting a long-term trend of plummeting legitimacy perceptions and wanton violence.¹⁸¹ Each of Nigeria's four republics seemed to usher in discrediting election violence worse than its predecessor. In 1999, the last in a series of Nigerian dictatorships gave way to Nigeria's Fourth Republic, a new government promising to incorporate the public into the governance process through free and fair elections.¹⁸²

Even as a nominally democratic country, Nigeria's 2007 election was characterized by an "unprecedented spate of violence and bloody clashes between political parties" that showed "a festering culture of violence and anarchy."¹⁸³ Nigerian society had descended into such a state of ethnic violence and weak social cohesion in 2007 that it was described as "a classic manifestation of a failed state."¹⁸⁴ Nigeria's 2011 elections could be seen as more legitimate than the elections of 2003 or 2007, but they were still plagued by voting irregularities.¹⁸⁵ Currently, Nigeria's police force is so thoroughly mistrusted by the general population and so immersed in its own acts of criminal violence that the police force is no longer attributed any legitimacy from the population. Instead, the Nigerian police in general are considered "ineffective, corrupt, insensitive, and callous."¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Adesote, Adesola Samson, and John O. Abimbola. "Electoral Violence and the Survival of Democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A Historical Perspective." *Canadian Social Science* 10, no. 3 (2014). p. 143.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Anegbode, John E., and Monday Lewis Igbafen. "Ethnic Militia Violence in Nigeria: The Case of the O'odua Peoples' Congress (OPC)." *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies* 32, no. 2 (2007): 131.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 150.

¹⁸⁵ Adesote, p. 142-43.

¹⁸⁶ Ogaga Ayemo Obaro, *The Nigeria Police Force and the Crisis of Legitimacy: Re-Defining the Structure and Function of the Nigeria Police*, 10 *European Scientific Journal* 8, 421-436, p430-31 (2014).

B. Political Structure of Nigeria

Nigeria is a federal constitutional republic with the official title of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.¹⁸⁷ Nigeria is represented by the President who is in charge of the executive branch and who is the Head of State. Legislative power is vested in the National Assembly, which is a bicameral institution composed of the House of Representatives (360 members) and the Senate (109 senators). Nigeria has a multi-party system. The most popular parties are the People's Democratic Party of Nigeria, the All Nigeria People's Party, the All Progressive Congress, and the Alliance for Democracy.

The fistfights analyzed in this paper include the People's Democratic Party, and the All Progressive Congress. The People's Democratic Party (PDP) was founded in 1998 and serves as an umbrella for several parties. Its ideology lies within principles of the free market, reduced government spending, and radical reforms in the economic sector. The All Progressive Congress (APC) was established in 2013 through a three-way merger of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), and the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP). It is currently chaired by the John Oyegun. The party focuses on market controlling regulation, state-driven economic policies, and other types of government regulation.

C. Nigerian Fistfighting Episodes

Nigeria is an important example of legislative fistfighting where the visible elite-based fighting parallels actual, widespread electoral violence.¹⁸⁸ Similar to Ukrainian

¹⁸⁷ Charles Mwalimu. *The Nigerian Legal System: Public Law*. Peter Lang, 2005. p. 6

¹⁸⁸ Adesote, Adesola Samson, and John O. Abimbola. "Electoral Violence and the Survival of Democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A Historical Perspective." *Canadian Social Science* 10, no. 3 (2014): 140-148, p. 143.

politicians, Nigerian lawmakers are willing to engage in escalating waves of electoral violence since the beginning of the 21st century.¹⁸⁹

Legislative fistfighting in Nigeria often centers on legitimacy crises, such as a 2000 a legislative brawl over a bribery scandal. The scandal started after the president, Olusegun Obasanjo who is affiliated with PDP party, was accused of spending 40 thousand dollars to bribe legislators to replace the Speaker of the Parliament, Gali Na Aba. Money designated for this purpose was allegedly placed on desks in the parliament's waiting area. The fight was initiated by legislators loyal to the president who tried to prove their president's innocence. The brawl was accompanied by paper currency flying all over the legislative hall, which was filled with flying fists, and broken bones.

In 2010, another legitimacy crisis erupted in a fistfight called the "Free for All Fight."¹⁹⁰ During the recess of the Congress, a group of politicians from the "Progressive" party notified the Speaker of the House that he would be impeached unless he resigned.¹⁹¹ When the congressional session resumed, these politicians were told that they were to be suspended. Then, the Speaker's allies tried to move the Progressives from their seats by force. Clothes were torn, tear gas was sprayed, and many lawmakers were injured. After the fight several legislators were removed from their duties for an indefinite period of time for alleged breach of the Legislative House Act, which regulates legislative procedure in the parliament of Nigeria.

¹⁸⁹ Adesote, Adesola Samson, and John O. Abimbola. "Electoral Violence and the Survival of Democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A Historical Perspective." *Canadian Social Science* 10, no. 3 (2014): 140-148, p. 143.

¹⁹⁰ "Brawl in the Nigerian House of Representatives." YouTube. July 7, 2010. Accessed November 8, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1x8e_47hWI.

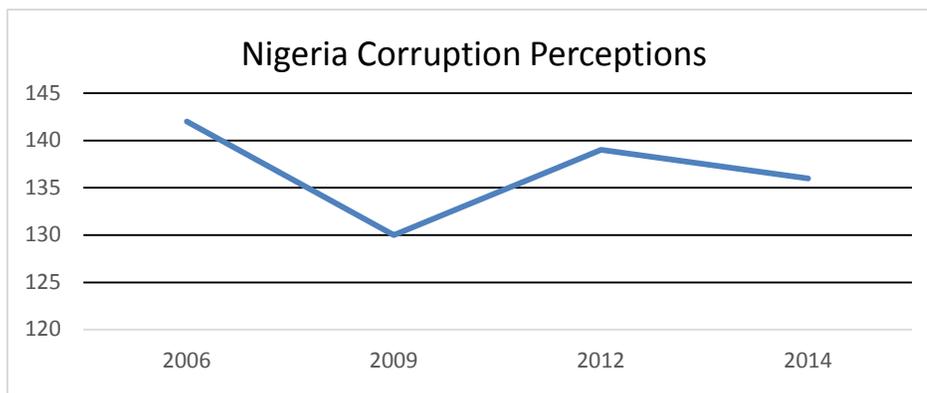
¹⁹¹ Shemang, Ben. "Fight Breaks out in Nigeria's Parliament." RFI. June 23, 2010. Accessed November 30, 2014. <http://www.english.rfi.fr/africa/20100623-fight-breaks-out-nigerian-parliament>.

The Bankole scandals involved more than one fistfight. In 2010, before threatening to impeach Speaker Bankole, a group of eleven legislators calling themselves “the Progressives” officially accused Bankole of corruption, which led to a brawl. Only one member was injured, but all eleven accusers were suspended for “embarrassing” the legislative body. The charges included accusations that Bankole personally embezzled almost ninety percent of the federal budget of one agency.

D. Nigerian Fistfighting Rationale

Nigerian fistfighting appears to come from legitimacy crises. This correlates closely with Nigeria’s corruption perceptions rate being one of the worst in the world as seen in Figure 8. From 2006 to 2014, Nigeria has been in the bottom third of corrupt nations. These changes in corruption track with the changes in regimes. There was a significant drop in corruption after one of the most violent elections in Nigeria’s history in 2007, but even peaceful elections were followed by increases in corruption. Thus, changes to the corruption level appear to be not significantly affected by election results.

Figure 8



Source: Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index* 2014. <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>.¹⁹²

¹⁹² See generally Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index results for the years 2006, 2009, 2012, and 2014.

Nigeria's fistfighting is directly tied to different legitimacy crises within the parliament itself. A notorious spate of brawls preceded the impeachment of Bankole, apparently tied directly to political challenges to the then-Speaker. Not only have legitimacy crises led to fistfights as a breakdown of order, but even an accusation of corruption led to an immediate fight from the party of the accused. In fact, the largest fistfight in Nigerian history occurred when one legislator tried to bribe other legislators in a waiting area, resulting in every active legislative member taking part in the brawl. This is not a recent trend. Nigeria's brawls dating from 2000 also involve accusations of bribery among legislators.

Similar to other nations in this study, accusations of illegitimacy can cause the majority party to defend itself violently. In the 2000 fight provoked by accusations against then-President Obasanjo, the President's party initiated the violence. In this context, it was not the aggrieved opposition party, but the party in power that sought to defeat any challenges to its legitimacy.

Nigeria's politically violent past and its repeated legitimacy crises have contributed to a modern culture of legislative violence. It is difficult to pin down exactly whether Nigerian fistfights occur due to their own momentum or due to the uninterrupted string of legitimacy crises. Unlike Taiwanese and South Korean legislators, Nigerian legislators do not necessarily have a reputation for fighting about small provocations. Unlike Ukrainian politicians, Nigerian politicians are not notorious for avenging insults violently. Instead, political parties appear to be rationally advancing and protecting their interests in an environment of constant legitimacy crises.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS

I. GLOBAL FISTFIGHTING CAUSES

Most countries' fistfighting correlates with legitimacy crises, especially those occurring close in time to elections or a political succession event. Fistfights routinely break out in the Ukrainian Rada over legitimacy issues, culminating in the recent string of brawls that resulted in Yanukovich fleeing to Russia. In Taiwan, fistfighting accompanied the fall of President Chen's administration due to a corruption scandal. In South Korea, a 2004 impeachment crisis led to a fistfight. This was similar to the 2010 Nigerian fistfighting outbreak which accompanied the ongoing corruption accusations and impeachment attempts against Speaker Bankole. Corruption accusations also lie at the heart of Bolivian fistfighting.

Worsening levels of legitimacy provoke fistfighting among legislators. For each country analyzed in this study, some clear patterns emerge related to corruption. According to Transparency International's data, each country analyzed in this study falls within the bottom half of all nations surveyed for corruption except for Taiwan and South Korea. Although corruption levels for these countries have fluctuated during the period in question, 2000-2015, overall levels appear to have worsened.

Some countries fight during a change in political power from one party to another, even without corruption charges. In the case of Ukraine, fistfights erupted after an opposition politician blamed the government for a fiasco that caused a violent clash between World War II veterans and the police. In Venezuelan and Bolivian legislative fistfighting, a controversial appointment decision or succession attempt led to a brawl. In Taiwan and South Korea, changes to election laws or controversial election results also

resulted in fistfights. Despite some countries' cultures of legislative fistfighting, acute legitimacy crises can trigger the most memorable and visible brawls.

Some countries have a culture of legislative fistfighting. In South Korea, Taiwan, Ukraine, and possibly Venezuela, legislators have a reputation for fighting. In some cases, the fistfighting is as routine as a filibuster or any other legislative activity. The scope of this paper is not broad enough to determine why some countries have developed cultures of legislative fistfighting, but there is enough information to conclude that such cultures exist. Cultures of legislative fistfighting are characterized by politicians using the act of fistfighting for political gain. The fight itself becomes valuable in a way that is independent of any underlying policy debate or legitimacy crisis that might provoke a brawl.

II. GLOBAL FISTFIGHTING PURPOSES

Some countries' lawmakers use legislative fistfighting to advance their own interests, and ultimately to gain power. In countries such as South Korea and Taiwan, common fistfights might affect the final outcome of a policy disagreement. However, Taiwanese and South Korean legislators are so willing to fight that it may have become just another fact of political life, another means of negotiation. In Mexico, fistfighting is so rare that it seems unlikely a resourceful politician would look to brawling as a means to gain support. In countries more used to fistfighting, such as Ukraine, a fistfight can accompany a change in government.

A large number of fistfights occur shortly before or after elections as a means of protecting or seizing political power. Brawls occurring before elections have been related to passing election bills, or to achieving a specific policy goal that would increase

political power. In South Korea and Taiwan, election bills have met violent resistance. In Venezuela and Mexico, contested election results or controversial appointments have prompted sudden brawling among legislators. In South Korea, Taiwan, and Nigeria, impeachment proceedings have been at the center of fistfighting.

For countries with a culture of fistfighting, such as Ukraine and South Korea, fistfighting appears to be a kind of inter-elite political competition for credibility among members. In the case of Venezuela, fistfighting was censored and thus not a part of regular broadcast media coverage. This prevents individual politicians from gaining popular support from a public display of violence. Although Venezuelan politicians failed to show their fighting prowess through broadcast media, the government was sensitive enough to the image of fistfighting to hide it from the public. For countries where legislative brawling is associated with misconduct, such as drunkenness among Taiwanese legislators, fistfighting can show that mechanisms for peaceful elite policymaking have broken down.

III. AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This analysis of legislative fistfighting is only a first step in an emerging topic of academic interest. Fistfighting practices among legislators could be incorporated into a broader study, including India, Turkey, Kenya, Nepal and Georgia. For each country examined in this study, more focused studies dedicated entirely each individual country's political history and fistfighting practices would be of value.

IV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF LEGISLATIVE VIOLENCE: THE ILLEGITIMACY TRAP

A. Fistfighting as Ritualized Illegitimacy

Legitimacy crises and policy crises are easy to understand as provocations for fistfighting. Countries can develop a tradition of fistfighting in a relatively short period of time. As indicated by brawling episodes in Taiwan and South Korea, legislative violence can become a part of a legislature's regular political practice.

Without being perceived as legitimate, governments cannot effectively reform themselves to then climb out of the illegitimacy trap.¹⁹³ For example, pervasive political violence in Mexico cannot be reduced without an effective police force. An illegitimate police force and an illegitimate government prevent any meaningful reform of the police, and threaten to worsen violence in Mexico. Therefore, illegitimate governments must somehow become capable of meaningful reform or become more legitimate to reduce political violence. Legitimacy is at the heart of fistfighting, because the state elites engaging in fistfighting are by definition undermining the legitimacy of their profession. Attacking individual policymakers directly further undermines the legitimacy of the state, because policymaking and civil society become centered on individuals and their caprices, rather than institutions and their functions.

Fistfighting as policymaking erodes state legitimacy. By its nature, fistfighting in a legislature is a use of illegal violence to influence an otherwise legal process. Assault and battery are illegal in most countries around the world.

¹⁹³ Ochoa, Jerjes Aguirre, and Zoe Infante Jiménez. "Police Force Crisis and State Legitimacy in México." *Asian Social Science* 8, no. 15 (2012): p86. *See e.g.* ("...if the administration of justice, law and order presents numerous faults, one can only expect that its actions will be questioned. The police forces cannot improve without a substantial change in the majority of judicial proceedings in Mexico...[t]he structural response can only take place with the improvement of legitimacy of the government.")

Repeated instances of legislative fistfighting result in a culture of fistfighting. Some countries may have achieved a level of stability even with a culture of fistfighting. Neither South Korea nor Taiwan have experienced a violent change of power in the last fifteen years, but in these countries, fistfighting is on the rise. At the same time, levels of corruption vary wildly between different test cases, potentially allowing for fistfighting to exist as a ritualized theater in an otherwise developed and stable country. In such countries fistfighting does not present serious implications. However, in societies where institutions are weak and bypassed via fistfighting, a threat to state legitimacy emerges.

B. Self-Perpetuating Violence

Fistfighting can produce political violence outside the legislature itself. Every government that comes into power through violence can be dispatched by it. If violence is an effective means to influence politics, it is possible that not only honest-minded politicians will use it. As seen with the turbulent histories of Venezuela, Ukraine, Nigeria and Bolivia, legislative violence may correlate with a broader legitimacy crisis which threatens political order. It is still unknown whether legislative fistfighting contributes to broader political violence, such as assassinations, election-based violence, or civil wars. However, legislative fistfighting could be a symptom of deeper social differences that cannot yet be reconciled peacefully.

Violence among legislative members is different from violence among average citizens because legislative fistfighting occurs between and among elected members of the parliament. Similar to the historical practice of dueling, legislators engage in violence among themselves to resolve personal or political differences. This might be a remnant of the old practices of violence among elites and the violent tendencies that

allowed many individuals to gain elite status in ancient societies.¹⁹⁴ Politicians frustrated with their inability to advance their agenda may just be seeking their own form of justice.

Legislative fistfighting comes from a broad array of causes and brings about implications, as diverse and intricate as the collection of nations where fistfighting occurs. Although fistfighting highlights numerous complexities, this phenomenon could have causal relationship with legitimacy crises.

¹⁹⁴ *Pinker, Steven. The better angels of our nature: Why violence has declined. Vol. 75. New York: Viking, 2011.*

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