

2006

# The ideology of free trade and the Cuba exception

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**THE IDEOLOGY OF FREE TRADE AND THE CUBA EXCEPTION**

**A Thesis**

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College**

**In partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts**

**in**

**The Department of Political Science**

**By**

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**B.A., Louisiana State University, 2004**

**December 2006**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines ideology and congressional roll call voting in the post-Cold War period (1991-2005) on free trade and trade policy with Cuba. While members with a more conservative ideology are found, as expected, to be supporters of free trade generally, there remains a curious disconnect between this general support for free trade and the opposition to liberalization of trade with Cuba. Yet despite this perceived inconsistency, ideology remains consistent on both, thus we seek to test this exception to conservative support for liberalization.

A combination of factors is at play to which make Cuba a special case in the post cold war era. For one thing the Castro regime, one of the last “true communists”, remains in power. This alone could explain some of the deviation from support of liberalized trade and the ideological opposition. With China ideology is not an issue, but with Cuba it is. Further complicating relations, the Cuban American National Foundation and its powerful PAC branch that exert political clout through donations and lobbying tactics.

The study of ideology is crucial to understanding the persistence of the elite commitment to open markets since the 1970s in the face of a powerful resurgence of protectionism. The continuing power of free trade politics stems from the consolidation of a widespread aversion to the protectionist policies.

## **I. Introduction**

As 1991 came to a close the Cold War had passed. Germany was reunited, the Soviet Union collapsed and the former Warsaw Pact nations sought to liberalize their economies as the Communist Bloc fell apart. Thirteen years later, the former Soviet Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania granted membership in the European Union, the United States granted permanent Most Favored Nation status to the People's Republic of China, and trade opened up to Vietnam. Yet, the US policy toward a tiny island nation ninety miles south of Miami remains deadlocked in a 1962 Cold War mindset. For the rest of the world, the conflict between communism and capitalism has long since been resolved, yet in the Straits of Florida, the Cold War remains in stalemate.

Congressional voting on Cuba trade policy has a multifaceted complexity stemming from ideology, party allegiances and individual preferences on issues. This problem is further complicated when comparing member's records on trade policy including free trade initiatives, tariffs and sanctions with voting on Cuba related issues. Further, when looking at trade initiatives focused on former and present communist nations such as Russia, China and Vietnam, Congress has held a much more favorable tone. One would speculate that outside the confines of ideology or some other constraint, members categorized as "free-traders" would be more likely to vote in favor of liberalizing trade relations with Cuba whereas those who vote against free trade would be more likely to oppose it.

Within the constraints of party we can hypothesize that Republicans more than Democrats would be more likely to oppose Cuba. This assumption is based on an ideological conflict put forward by the Republican Party toward what is left of the

international communist movement, currently embodied in that of Cuban Presidente Fidel Castro.

Democrats on the other hand, would be more open to liberalizing economic and political relations with Cuba. This in itself presents a complexity because Republicans as a group are more supportive of free trade, than their Democrat counterparts. The question then becomes why is Cuba “special”? Combinations of factors interact to make Cuba a special case in the post cold war era. For one thing Castro, a remnant from the Cold War, remains in power. Unlike other former/present communist nations, the leadership of Cuba has not changed. This factor may be important in determining policy towards Cuba. Such is consistent with relations currently with North Korea. Yet there is an inconsistency; in the case of Kadafi’s Libya, the US liberalized relations following Libya’s commitment to forfeit WMD production. The Cuba case is also special because within US domestic political infrastructure is the powerful Cuban American National Foundation and its PAC branch. This PAC exerts considerable political clout through donations and lobbying tactics.

Overall, the goal of this research is to try to find the source of congressional animosity towards Cuba. Ideology may be a factor, but when trade is opened up to existing communist regimes such as Vietnam and the People’s Republic of China, it would be fair to say that something other than ideology is constraining US – Cuba relations and deadlocking it into a Cold War mindset.

## **II. Literature Review**

For more than thirty years, Cuba was a focal point for the Cold War. Before the demise of the Soviet Union, Cuba's close ideological and military partnership with the communist superpower posed a challenge to US foreign policy, especially in the Third World (Dominguez, 1989, 127). Throughout the 1970's and 1980's the Cuban government, with Soviet backing was able to engage in international conflicts from every corner of the globe. From financing revolutionaries in El Salvador and Grenada, to actual ground troop support of African regimes in Angola and Ethiopia, Cuba presented itself as an active wing in the march for communist revolution (LeoGrande, 1998, 67).

With the end of the Cold War, Cuba retrenched, ending its aid programs for foreign revolutionaries and regimes. Without the Soviet Union's sponsorship, Cuba could no longer afford the luxury of a global foreign policy exporting revolution. Instead, its diplomats focused on reorienting Cuba's international economic relations towards Latin America and Europe, building friendly relations with former adversaries (LeoGrande, 1998, 67).

Ordinarily, such a massive shift in the international system would be expected to produce a significant change in US policy, as it did in the cases of Russia, Eastern Europe, China, Angola and Vietnam. But US policy toward Cuba has not changed little. (LeoGrande, 1998, 67) This constraint has if anything hurt economic liberalization of Cuba. In the post-Cold War period, Cuba has been forced to make hard decisions. These decisions were further complicated by the animosity the US put forth towards the Cuban government. During this period, Cuba has been forced to reconcile itself with the nations of the Caribbean. This process in itself was a challenge, because the nations of the

Caribbean are extremely dependent on the US and can be very vulnerable to US pressure tactics (Nunez, 1997, 82). This means that the US is the most important factor a Caribbean nation must consider when making the decision about whether or not to establish ties with Cuba.

The US pressure on Caribbean policy can be seen in US blockage of Cuba's entry into CARICOM. This was done by the US by offering to forgive the debts of several Caribbean nations if they voted against Cuba's entry into the economic pact. In the post Cold War period, continued US hostility towards Cuba is inconsistent with the international dynamics in which global markets are opening up not tightening. Further, through the pressure put on by the global economy, the Cuban government has all but abandoned the Marxist experiment (Gonzalez, 1997, 90).

The question then becomes: If continued hostility is not over communism, then what is the basis for its continuity?

### **1. United States Trade Policy with Cuba**

Economic sanctions were imposed on trade with Cuba in 1960 after the rise of Fidel Castro and the socialist revolution, and shortly thereafter, the expropriation of US property in Cuba. Since initial economic sanctions were imposed, the embargo has been widened over the years to include restrictions on most commercial and financial transactions with Cuba. The state of US trade with Cuba is most affected by the following major statutes: the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA), the Cuban Assets Control Regulations of 1963 (CACR), the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 (CDA) and, most recently, the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996 (Helms-Burton Act). Additionally, in 2000 the Clinton Administration approved the Trade Sanctions Reform



and Export Enhancement Act that allowed for expanded sales of essential goods and services to nations under economic sanctions, including food, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment (LeoGrande, 2002, 326.).

The initial imposition of restrictions began under Eisenhower and continued during the Kennedy Administration. The FAA of 1961 denied Cuba foreign assistance from the US and suspended Cuba's most-favored-nation (MFN) status (USITC, 2001, 337-341). With the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the US imposed further shipping restrictions, and in 1963, under the CACR Act the Department of the Treasury among other things: 1. prohibited all unlicensed commercial transaction with Cubans; 2. prohibited the direct or indirect (via third country) export and import of goods and services with Cuba; 3. and instituted a freeze on Cuban Government and private assets that essentially prohibited transfers of any kind without Treasury authorization (Symington, 2003, 4).

During the 1970s both nations took important steps toward normalization of relations. In 1973, the US and Cuba signed an anti-hijacking agreement, followed by the allowance of subsidiaries of US companies in third nations to trade with Cuba, a relaxation of travel-spending allowances for US citizens traveling to Cuba, and in 1977 an accord on fishing rights between the two nations. This economic relaxation was halted by renewed political disagreements when Cuba sent military forces to Africa in the late 1970s, and the Reagan Administration renewed spending-limitations for Americans traveling to Cuba, which in effect banned all travel to Cuba.

## **2. Helms-Burton Act**

On February 24, 1996, Cuban MiGs over the Straits of Florida shot down two civilian aircraft belonging to the Cuban exile group *Brothers to the Rescue*. For nearly a year the Cuban government had complained to Washington about this group's repeated violation of Cuban national airspace. When the group flew aircraft over downtown Havana and dropped anti-Castro leaflets, the Cuban government's patience ran out (LeoGrande, 1998, 80).

The immediate effect of Cuban action against Brothers to the Rescue was Congress passing the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, also known as the Helms Burton Act. This legislation incorporated existing US sanctions against Cuba and codified them into law. Prior to Helms Burton, the status of Cuban economic sanctions was the prerogative of the president. The president had the ability to tighten or relax sanctions as he saw fit. Under the Ford and Carter Administrations, the sanctions were relaxed and lower level diplomatic relations were established. President Reagan ended this relaxation as he pursued his anti communist agenda. In the eyes of the Reagan Administration, Cuba was a mere puppet of Moscow and this Soviet intrusion in the Western Hemisphere would not be accepted. With the passage of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, the sanctions became law, and thus much harder to remove until the day the Castro regime is gone and "democratic change" is brought to the island. Interestingly, under provisions of the bill the US has the right to determine what sort of "democratic" system will be acceptable in a post-Castro Cuba (Dominguez, 1997, 57).

Jorge Dominguez argues in his essay *From the Cold War to the Colder War* (Dominguez, 1997, 49-75) that the passage of the Helms Burton Act may have dire

consequences for future US foreign policy. Before Helms Burton, the US could engage a policy of rewarding or punishing Cuba economically to gain favorable results. The language of the bill sets US policy in stone and leaves the US with few options should future relations become further complicated by a second shoot down (Dominguez, 1997, 55). If such were to occur, the US may be left with no other option outside direct military intervention. Such action would be very costly and yield only limited gains. Considering Cuba's military still retains much of its Cold War - Soviet Era arms and many of its soldiers are veterans of conflict in Africa. Further, US military intervention on the island would further strain diplomatic relationships with traditional allies who up to this point have only condemned the sanctions in the United Nations (Dominguez, 1997, 62).

This latest round of policy affecting the now post-Soviet Cuba reinstated most restrictions on commerce between the two nations, and perhaps more significantly, instituted limitations on trade between the US and nations with "ties to Cuban interests" by prohibiting these nations from loading or unloading in US ports (USITC, 2001, 2-4). Among other things, the CDA again prohibited subsidiaries of US firms abroad from trading with Cuba; prohibited any vessel that enters a Cuban port from unloading in the US within 180 days (effectively limiting other nations' capacity to trade with Cuba so long as they are also trading with the US); provided additional power to the President to prohibit aid and assistance, and to limit the transfer of remittances to Cuba by US citizens; and instituted civil penalties for violators of these sanctions. The Helms Burton Act of 1996 most notably required US members of international financial institutions to oppose Cuban membership in those institutions; made the removal of sanctions dependent upon the return of expropriated US land in Cuba; and allowed for US nationals

whose land has been confiscated to bring suit against parties who profit from the use of that land (Symington, 2003, 6).

### **3. Economic Impact on the United States**

The impact of restricted trade on the US economy suggests that economic sanctions against Cuba have had limited historical or current impact on the US (USITC, 2001, 12). The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) produced a report in 1999 that concluded that, “to date, sanctions on foreign commerce have had only a small combined impact on the national economy.” (CBO, 1999, 12). That report found that the costs to the US economy that occurred were a result of foregone gains from the trade that economic theory of comparative advantage suggests would otherwise mutually benefit two nations engaging in free trade.

The 1999 CBO report suggests that costs to the US are difficult to quantify, because “hard data rarely exists...and many costs appear only years later in the form of lost sales opportunity” (CBO, 1999, 12). However, studies show that quantifiable costs include the loss from reduced US exports, imports, and investment. Further, the US has had to bear the costs of establishing and enforcing sanctions policies. Less quantifiable costs have been shown to include costs for the private sector from reduced trade opportunities; reduced “competitiveness of US businesses if sanctions prohibit the provision of US government trade credits, guarantees, grants, and loans;” (USITC, 2001, 14) costs associated with delays in receiving export licenses; lower supplies and higher prices for US consumers for certain goods and services, especially where substitutes are not readily available; and finally an externality effect from reduced trade with other nations due to fears that the US might be an unreliable trade partner (USITC, 2001, 14).

A study by the United States International Trade Commission (USITC) quantified much of these factors. In the absence of sanctions, US-Cuban bilateral trade would have been between \$658 million and \$1 billion annually (USITC, 2001, 16). Estimated imports from Cuba would total between \$69 million and \$146 million (USITC, 2001, 14).. The study concluded that because such foregone gains represent less than 0.01 percent of US GDP, the impact on the US economy is negligible (USITC, 2001, 17). The CBO report found that sanctions have resulted in minimal economic costs to the US because Cuba's small economy "accounted for only a small share of total US trade and foreign investment" (USITC, 2001, 22). In addition, minimal impact of sanctions results because Cuba's economy has historically produced only low-value goods that are easily replaced.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the US applies sanctions, "where the least harm can come to well-organized domestic interests. Thus, the US government often uses sanctions in cases where there is little trade to disrupt in the first place" (CBO, 1999, 49).

Even if sanctions were lifted, because of Cuba's socialist economic behavior, Cuba will likely limit the emergence of free trade with the US and other nations. Cuba maintains a restrictive investment regime that is both unappealing to foreign investment, and tightly controlled by the government based on political considerations (Symington, 2003, 16). Further, trade and investment partners are often selected based on political considerations and not economic factors. A part of the deliberate political motives is a diversification of trading partners, which suggests Cuba might choose to build economic relations with less competitive nations rather than enhance trade with the US, even in the absence of sanctions (Messina, 2001, 23).

#### **4. Domestic Pressures**

Scholars traditionally linked legislative voting behavior to campaign contributions received in the election cycle preceding the congressional vote (Mueller, 1989, 57). Such analysis implicitly assumes that the contract between the Political Action Committee (PAC) and the candidate specifies that the PAC first contributes to the election campaign, and the candidate, if elected, will vote in the next Congress in the interest of the contributor (Stratmann, 1995, 128). Two types of strategies are used by PACs to obtain results from their contributions. One emphasizes contributing to gain access to members of Congress who are positioned to be most helpful in advancing the policy interest of the PAC. The other focuses on electing people to Congress who will be more helpful to the PAC (Cigler and Loomis, 1991, 207) In the case of Cuba and the Cuban Embargo, the Cuban exile PAC, CANF, is principal.

There have been many studies that have examined whether campaign contributions affect election outcomes and legislator policy positions. Two studies that attempt to judge whether campaign contributions are given because of an electoral motive or an influence motive are by Stephen Bronars and John Lott (1997) test whether campaign contributions affect how congress members vote by examining their voting patterns in their last congressional cycle before retirement. If PAC contributions are pulling politicians away from voting in their preferred manner, they should move back to their preferred policy position after announcing their upcoming retirement because reelection is no longer a goal. Despite a large decline in campaign contributions received during their last election cycle, retiring legislators do not change their voting patterns in any significant manner. Bronars and Lott interpret this evidence to mean that PAC

money does not influence how legislators vote, but rather that PACs are successful at sorting into office candidates who support their positions.

Bender and Lott (1996) conclude that politicians vote in their constituent interests in “the vast majority of cases.” They argue that when campaign contributions do affect legislators’ voting behavior, the deviation between the representatives’ actions and constituency interests is not large. Morton and Cameron (1992) suggest that campaign money is more likely to affect legislators’ behavior when the economic effects of the bills under consideration are concentrated on particular interest groups and when the issues are less publicly visible.

Following the Cuban Revolution, thousands of Cubans fled to south Florida, mainly Miami, in which they set up a base of hostility towards the Castro regime. This group of Cuban exiles later established one of the most powerful lobbying groups, the Cuban American National Foundation PAC. This organization has funneled literally millions into various campaign funds across both political parties with the key goal of retaining the economic embargo and achieving the eventual collapse of the Castro regime.

The rise of the Cuban American lobby established a key domestic pressure within the US- Cuba relationship. CANF is the principal group working on the Cuba issue, with the goal of maintaining the anti-Castro embargo at its centerpiece (LeoGrande, 1998, 75). Without an organized counter movement supporting removal of the sanctions, CANF quickly came to dominate the scene. When the political costs of an international agreement fall disproportionately on a domestic group that is cohesive and politically mobilized, and the benefits of the agreement are diffusely distributed, the mobilized

group often has the power to block ratification (LeoGrande, 1998, 75). Feeling little but animosity toward Fidel Castro, the man who in their eyes caused them to be exiles from their own country, the majority of Cuban-Americans have been loyal supporters of policies that could potentially harm or weaken his government (Center for Responsible Politics, 2001, 4). Many of the first families to flee Cuba were wealthy and successful capitalists who began building new business empires in south Florida. Over the past 40 years, these families have provided much of the financial support to press their case, and that of other Cubans who arrived in the wake of Castro's revolution. Their money and enterprise, along with the traditional anti-communist policies of successive American administrations, have given the community considerable political clout in Washington (Center for Responsible Politics, 2001, 4). When the reality of their largely monolithic voting bloc in south Florida is also taken into account, there can be no doubt that this community exerts significant influence on the outcome of any and all Cuba-related legislation in Congress (Center for Responsible Politics, 2001, 4).

CANF is one of the key factors in continuing animosity between the US and Cuba. CANF often calls for harsher sanctions and strongly lobbies against any relaxation of the provisions of Helms-Burton. The fact is, without any real push on the other side, such as any business effort to remove the embargo, the strength of this PAC may be enough to keep the embargo in place (Brenner, 2004, 73). The prospect of opening Cuba up to American tourism and selling Cuban cigars in American markets has yet to attain such a high demand that it would be worth the possible clash with this powerful PAC. The case of normalized relations with Vietnam could be considered a similar case without the PAC interference. Without an organized, mobilized anti-Hanoi Vietnamese



PAC, trade relations with Vietnam were able to be normalized with no domestic resistance (Brenner, 2004, 73).

Interestingly, there has been a slow easing of the embargo. Representative Jeff Flake of Arizona, who is considered a critic of the Castro administration, has stated that he believes the embargo will not dislodge the Castro administration; but the best way to dislodge Castro and promote freedom in Cuba, in his opinion would be to swarm the island with American tourists (Marquis, 2002, NYT). Representative Flake is author of the Flake Amendments to Helms Burton. These amendments remove some of the travel and financial restrictions put on Americans who seek travel to Cuba.

The comments by Representative Flake reveal a split among Republicans in their attitudes towards Cuba with a sizable minority favoring more liberal trade with the island nation. For Republicans like Representative Flake, the Cuba issue is more a free trade issue than an ideological issue and it is in the liberalizing of trade that this conflict will be resolved.

Republicans are confident that the worldwide trade agenda is full of promise. If some nations choose to opt out, they will see how other countries accepting economic freedom will advance on their own. This is a vision of private initiative encouraged, not stifled, by governments (*GOP, 2000, 9*).

Looking at the above statements, one could conclude that Republicans would support free trade with Cuba as a means to advance economic freedom. Yet the 2004 GOP Platform stated the following: As Republicans, we support President Bush's principled position that the current embargo on trade with, and restrictions on travel to, Cuba must remain in

place. Republicans understand that the Castro regime will not change by its own choice (GOP, 2004, 27).

On the issue of free trade, the Democratic Party Platform of 2004 states that: We will effectively enforce our trade laws protecting against dumping, illegal subsidies, and import surges that threaten American jobs. New trade agreements must protect internationally recognized workers' rights and environmental standards and Human Rights as vigorously as they now protect commercial concerns (*DNC, 2004, 20-21*).

Democrats, though not endorsing the Castro regime or lifting the embargo, take an approach much softer than Republicans. We support effective and peaceful strategies to end the Castro regime as soon as possible and enable the Cuban people to take their rightful place in the democratic Community of the Americas. Within this framework the Democratic Party supports a policy of principled travel to Cuba that promotes family unity and people-to-people contacts through educational and cultural exchanges (*DNC, 2000, 11*).

Despite stated platforms, political parties no longer clearly align on trade and foreign policy issues. Party voting is most contentious when the legislation under consideration is controversial and means major changes (Mundo, 1999, 91).

By the 1990s it was more difficult to break down support and opposition to free trade by simple party identification. Unions, traditional allies of the Democrats, were at the forefront of the opposition to NAFTA. Business, traditional allies of the Republicans, tended to support free trade, but there were many fissions in the economic dividing lines. Businesses hard hit by global trade, such as the shoe industry and agriculture, favored protection. Environmentalists, also traditional allies of the Democrats, were even more

badly split (Uslaner, 9, 1994). Trade opponents on both the left and the right worried about both child labor practices and civil liberties more generally in countries that would benefit from trade accords (Uslaner, 9, 1994). With this said, ideology is a more important determining factor on voting patterns for both free trade and Cuba trade policy.

### **III. Theory and Hypotheses**

In the view of most scholars, the politics of trade policy is dominated by interests, outlooks, and strategies directly related to the impact of trade patterns on American society and to the evolution of the trading system as a whole (Cohen, 2001, 92). Domestic and international groups mobilize to support or oppose policy choices according to the likely impact of these choices on their interests, politicians make calculations of the immediate and long-term costs and benefits of different policy positions and institutions intervene to shape and constrain the options open to policymakers and political actors (Cohen, 2001, 93). Ideology modifies this picture of this process, since ideological commitments work to limit or redirect perceptions that political actors have of their interests and priorities (Cohen, 2001, p 93).

Votes on trade, sanctions, and tariffs have expanded effects well beyond a House member's district. Such votes can have profound effects on a Congress member's electability as such votes will likely be controversial within that member's own party and even within that member's traditional base. An example can be seen in 2005; Senator David Vitter voted against CAFTA due to heavy lobbying by the sugar industry of Louisiana. On this same issue, international freight companies lobbied hard for the newly elected senator to support the bill as a sign that Louisiana was willing to embrace free trade. For this vote, Senator Vitter had to weigh the costs of supporting or opposing the bill. Supporting the bill could mean loss of support of Louisiana sugar, opposing the bill would not only split Vitter with a large chunk of his base, but also would show that Louisiana was not willing to accept this proposal despite the fact that it could have profound positive effects for that state's future.

Expanded free trade will have profound national impact that can be felt from the local market to the stock market. Jobs will be gained and lost depending on that industry's ability to adapt to the global market. Even if such a vote does not have direct implications for the given House member's district, inter-congressional lobbying and pork barrel project negotiations could be affected by how a House member votes. The fact that these votes are part of public record requires the House member to stand behind their vote and be able to defend that choice in the future.

Considering the weight votes on trade, sanctions, and tariffs have, I would argue that House members make rational choices and are rational actors in deciding to vote yes or no on a trade related bill. House members realize that however they vote will be recorded by allies, opponents, lobbyists, human rights NGOs and even other House members (Goldstein, 1993). House members must choose a vote they can stand behind and support in the future especially if they wish to succeed in Washington. Members must seek the greatest gain with the least amount of cost.

In the case noted above, it could be assumed that Senator Vitter understood that the votes were on the table and CAFTA was going to pass whether or not he supported it. By opposing it, he assured future support of Louisiana sugar farmers. Despite his opposition, the bill will still have profound effects for the Port of New Orleans as it becomes a major hub for trade with Central and South America. The bill passed whether or not Vitter supported it, but he still gained the benefits of the bill passing. By opposing CAFTA, he gained possible future benefits of being able to call back on that vote as a sign of his support for the Louisiana sugar industry. I would argue, had the vote been a

lot closer, Senator Vitter would have been reeled in by the party leadership and his support of CAFTA would have been demanded.

Ideology is a central factor in US policy choices. The most important contribution in this area has been made by Judith Goldstein, who argues that the analysis of interests, power structures, and institutions is not enough to explain the patterns of change and continuity in American trade policy and politics (Goldstein, 1993, 67). The turn toward global free trade in the 1940s can be fully grasped only in the light of the consolidation of an ideological commitment to the benefits of a liberal trading order, as well as an intellectual critique of the dangers of protectionism (Goldstein, 1993, 71). This view holds that the study of ideology is crucial to understanding the persistence of the elite commitment to open markets since the 1970s in the face of a powerful resurgence of protectionism. The continuing power of free trade politics stems from the consolidation of a widespread aversion to the protectionist policies that had been central to American political economy before the 1940s (Goldstein, 1993, 94).

A finite number of variables are inherent in trade policy decisions. There are a number of basic guidelines and, to use a phrase of Max Weber's, "general laws and events" that can be used to identify recurring patterns of US trade policy-making behavior. Policymakers must be responsive to, among other things, the political needs of the president and senior advisors, the foreign policy objectives of a global superpower, public opinion and the forcefully articulated demands of interest groups (Cohen, 1996, 123).

**Ideology appears to be the central focus in determining a representative's stance on Cuba; therefore if a member has a conservative ideology then he or she is**

**are more likely to oppose trade with Cuba despite the tendency for conservative members to be steadfast supporters of free trade.** Liberalized trade with Cuba thus becomes one of those inconsistencies mentioned by Dr. Cohen: The dominant economic ideology of US foreign trade policy since the late 1930s is easy to identify: It has been liberal trade – the pursuit of reduced barriers to the flow of international commerce. However, a single decision making model placing primary emphasis on this belief system is not plausible in view of the number of exceptions to a market orientated trade policy that consistently appear in the decision-making process (Cohen, 1996, 123).

Thus there are critical questions: Why have these deviations to the guiding philosophy been made? Equally fundamental, which domestic and international economic or political consideration will dominate in a particular policy-making situation? What is on the minds of policy-makers that cause the interests of one constituency to triumph over others? The answer to each question is imprecise: It depends on the combination of personalities and the circumstances at hand (Cohen, 1996, 123). With so many of these combinations possible in a decision-making exercise, the relative importance of any given variable is in a constant state of flux. So, too, is the US government's policy-making apparatus, which is somewhere between haphazard and ultra-flexible in nature (Cohen, 1996, 123). The key to understanding the functioning of the trade policymaking system is to recognize that varying circumstances associated with any given decision dictate that different actors will be in charge, different behavioral patterns will dominate, and different constituencies and perceptions will be given priority treatment (Cohen, 1996, 123). The process that has evolved to reconcile the conflicting interests associated with trade decision lacks the precision, single-mindedness, and conformity to repeatedly

use identical criteria and a fixed set of procedures to calculate which needs and objectives get priority attention (Cohen, 1996, p123).

Voting on other issues such as free trade, sanctions and free trade with other communist nations will also be determined by ideology. Ideology will be the most important factor in determining a member of congress's position on the issues of supporting free trade and the Cuban embargo.



## **IV Design**

### **1. Members of Congress**

This research began by first collecting a list of all members of congress who served in the 102-109<sup>th</sup> Congresses. For this analysis, I examine members who served any number of terms as long as they cast votes on the key votes listed in the 1992-2006 period. This would explore the full scope of post Cold War era votes on free trade and Cuba.

Lists were first divided into their respective Congresses with each member lined up with their respective voting record. Key votes were then isolated in each congress and numbered based on chronological casting. From this point the sets were combined. I began by stacking them with 102 on the top and 109 on the bottom. The votes were numbered relative to each other and thus for example under the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, votes for the 102 through 108<sup>th</sup> were blank as that part of the dataset only looked at the 109<sup>th</sup>.

Once this set was compiled, the data was sorted first by name then state then congress. In the cases in which members served more than one term, their vote data was combined to show a record for that members voting. When this was completed it resulted in 926 cases.

The unit of analysis is the individual member. This work contrasts member voting patterns with ideology scores as well as using demographic characteristics as a control to get a better picture of this phenomenon

### **2. Roll Call Votes**

The Rosenthal-Poole dataset categorizing roll call votes for this period was used to gain results for which member of congress voted in what manner, it being Yes, No or

Abstain. The votes collected were coded in a negative one, zero, one scale. In general, one is equitable to a Yes vote and negative one is a No vote. To remain consistent though, this is reversed when rather than liberalizing trade the Yes vote is a vote to constrain it. The code of zero represents a congressman's unwillingness to take a position on the given issue. This would include both abstaining from voting and not being present for the particular roll call vote.

When these data are collected, five scales are created. These scales were then divided by the total number of votes per category, thus giving a percentage in favor or against. The closer the number is to positive one, the more the congress member voted in favor of that issue. The closer the number is to negative one, the more the congress member is against that issue. This also balanced out the effect of measuring a one term congressman with one who served several terms.

The five areas looked at are: Cuba, sanctions, tariffs, former/present communist nations other than Cuba and free trade initiatives.

Cuba votes looked at everything dealing directly or indirectly to Cuba. Everything from Helm-Burton and its amendments to agricultural sales to the island nation were looked at. This list included 13 votes. This measure is used as the dependent variable for this analysis.

Sanctions votes looked at the implementation of sanctions. Although the Cuban Embargo is a type of sanction it is considered separate from this category as to see a member of congress's attitude towards the use of sanctions. In this analysis sanctions towards Iran, Burma and the Sudan are included. All of these nations have little to nothing in common with Cuba. This measure will show if a congress member's attitude

towards sanctions is consistent with their attitude towards the Cuban embargo. This included 5 votes.

The push for free trade has declined the use of tariffs, though tariffs are still an important part of international trade. Their implementation presents hostility towards the idea of free trade and signals a more protectionist stance in that they impose a limit on an import to protect a domestic competitor. The most relevant tariff vote in recent history was the steel tariff vote meant to protect the domestic steel industry from the global market. This included three votes.

Most of the communist votes look at the relationship the United States had towards China and the renewal of MFN status to permanent MFN status for the PRC. This also included trade dealing with the former Warsaw Pact, Russia and CIS nations and South East Asia. This included 15 votes. Separating “communist votes” out of free trade votes was done to see what effect of a nation being communist had on a member of congress’s willingness to trade with that nation. Communism is one of the issues that imposed the embargo, but it may not necessarily be the reason for continued implementation.

Free trade votes looked at all other aspects of trade not covered by the above four. This would include NAFTA, CAFTA, WTO and bilateral trade arrangements. This included 37 votes. The free trade issue is one of the main areas of analysis. The object of this research is to determine what factors cause some congress members hold a schizophrenic stance of supporting free trade while opposing liberalized trade with Cuba. On the other end, there are also examples of members of congress opposing free trade, but supporting liberalized trade with Cuba.

However, some votes did not particularly deal with the trade issue, for example *102-423 Promote Democracy in Cuba*. Votes such as this one were included because it will also help shape the opinion on the issue. Votes such as this one and the disapproval for the Olympics in China show hostility towards that nation. Although such votes would not have a direct consequence for trade, such votes show a deeper opinion on the given nation. A full list of votes used in this analysis can be found in Appendix 1.

### **3. D-Nominate Ideology Scores**

Partisanship can be a good indicator of whether a member of congress will be open to free trade and liberalized relations with Cuba. Partisanship cannot, however, determine the degree of that support. Considering the polarization of the two parties and the realignment following the Reagan era, the variable of ideology will be used to determine how the politician is aligned in the left-right continuum. This value will show the effect being a conservative, moderate or leftist will have on how a congress member votes on the issues of free trade and Cuba policy. By looking at the ideological differences within the party it can be seen why CANF lobbies both Democrats and Republicans. Both issues are affected by more than just party labels. Ideology may lead a representative to one party or another, but ideology is not the only factor within that representative's decision making process.

For an ideology measurement, I used the Rosenthal-Poole D-Nominate dataset compiled by Dr. Howard Rosenthal and Dr. Keith Poole. A short description of how it was compiled is as follows: For each house of Congress, all recorded roll call decisions in the first 99 Congresses formed the basis of the simultaneous estimation of the spatial (ideological) positions of all members of Congress serving from 1789 to 1985. These

estimations became the foundation of their book *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting* (Poole and Rosenthal, 1997). This work is devoted to showing that important episodes in American political and economic history can be better understood by supplementing and/or reinterpreting more traditional analyses with the basic space theory of ideology as measured by the D-NOMINATE scores. This data is compiled and updated by these two professors and is available publicly on their website:

[www.pooleandrosenthal.com/](http://www.pooleandrosenthal.com/)

#### **4. Other Constraints**

Other variables looked at were: Hispanic Population, Is the member from Florida or New Jersey, Is the member Hispanic, Does the member receive support from CANF?

The Hispanic population was determined using the 2000 census data and is given as a percentage of the total population of the given congressional district. The data accounts for Hispanics as a whole rather than breaking that demographic into sub groups that would more accurately reflect this demographic. This limitation of census data will lead to limited results if the Cuba issue is not seen in the Hispanic community as a Hispanic issue and only seen as one affecting the subset of Cuban Americans. The question this variable proposes is does the size of a district's Hispanic population have an impact on a congress member's position on Cuba? The significance of this variable will determine if promoting the embargo is seen as a "pan-Hispanic" issue.

Because a high concentration of the Cuban-American population resides in Florida and New Jersey, a dummy variable is used to account for geography to see if being from either of these states influences a representative's stance on Cuba. This

control would determine if CANF concentrates its efforts on regional strongholds where CANF can have the most direct impact on election outcomes.

Another dummy variable used was whether the member is Hispanic or not. The theory behind this question is that with a racial connection to the Cuban people, Hispanic members would more likely side with the plight of the Cuban people.

Last, I included a variable for members who had received some form of support from one of CANF's PACS. Scholars traditionally linked legislative voting behavior to campaign contributions received in the election cycle preceding the congressional vote (Mueller, 1989, 57). Such analysis implicitly assumes that the contract between the Political Action Committee (PAC) and the candidate specifies that the PAC first contributes to the election campaign, and the candidate, if elected, will vote in the next Congress in the interest of the contributor (Stratmann, 1995, 128). There can be no doubt that CANF exerts significant influence on the outcome of any and all Cuba-related legislation in Congress (CRP, 2001, 4).

This data was collected using the data published on [opensecrets.com](http://opensecrets.com) which is a website that analyzes FEC contributions. No scale is given as to represent how much is given, just that support passed from this group to the member.

## **5. Regression**

For this analysis, a linear regression model is run using SPSS. Regression is used because a members Cuba score is a function of the other variables. Regression will help determine this relationship. For this model, the Cuba score assigned to the congress member is the dependent variable with communist, free trade, tariff, sanction, and

ideology<sup>1</sup> scores as independents. The variables Florida-New Jersey, Hispanic population, Member Hispanic are used as control variables and are based off demographic characteristics. This model seeks to find the underlying reasoning for support or opposition to liberalized relations with Cuba. Result charts are located in Appendix 2.

The model appears to suggest the following:

1. As support for free trade increases, that member is also more likely to support liberalized relations with Cuba. The effect of supporting free trade has a strong positive relation with supporting Cuba trade. As a Representative becomes more willing to accept free trade he/she also becomes more open to trade with Cuba. With this it can be determined that those who strongly support free trade are likely to be in support of lifting the embargo. The Representatives who only slightly supports free trade or those who have a percentage score approaching zero will most likely oppose trade with Cuba. The vast bulk of Representatives looked at scored within this range and explains why a free trade policy is pursued slowly with Cuba.

2. Ideology<sup>2</sup> has a strong negative relation with support of Cuba. This would mean as a Representative moves further to the Right on the political spectrum they would be less willing to support increased trade with Cuba. Those on the Left would be more open to trade with Cuba. For moderates, it would depend on whether their stances were center-left or center right and their stance would help determine where they lie on this issue.

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<sup>1</sup> For this analysis, Ideology is used rather than Party because ideology gives a more precise measure. Using both in the analysis causes data errors as the two are highly correlated.

<sup>2</sup> To focus more on Ideology and to marginalize the effect of trade voting, a separate analysis was performed using Cuba – Free Trade as dependent with ideology, Communist, Florida-New Jersey, Hispanic population, Member Hispanic, Tariffs, Sanctions, CANF\$ as independent. There was little difference in the results. Only Ideology became more significant. No change elsewhere.

3<sup>3</sup>. Support for sanctions has a positive correlation with support for Cuba. I assume this result is spurious because not enough sanction votes were used in this analysis to determine a good measure for support/opposition to sanctions. I would assume that if a larger number of votes were available, members who are opposed to liberalized trade with Cuba would be in support of sanctions because the embargo on Cuba is a form of a sanction.

4. Support for tariffs does not present a significant relationship.

5. Support for increasing trade with other communist countries yields significant results. This shows that communism is not the most important factor in determining a member's stance on Cuba. This may, in part, show the effect of the Castro regime itself. Unlike other former/present communist nations, the leadership of Cuba has not changed. This factor may be important in determining policy towards Cuba. This is consistent with relations currently with North Korea. Although North Korea and the Kim Jong-Il factor cannot be tested, I would argue that a similar relationship exists because the policies of Kim Jong-Il have been a continuation of the late Kim Il-Sung. Thus in the case of Cuba, a shift from Fidel to Raul Castro would not constitute a change in relations. These results may also show the results of other nations shifting policy in the post Cold War Period. All other present and former communist countries besides Cuba and North Korea have made significant efforts to liberalize their economic policies and marginalize if not all together eliminate Marxist revolutionary rhetoric.

6. Both Hispanic population and member Hispanic yielded insignificant results. The effect of the Hispanic population within a representative's district as well as the

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<sup>3</sup> When the analysis was run with this variable was removed, significance for Communist and ideology slightly increases. There is no difference in the overall outcome.



representative themselves being Hispanic has little to no effect on voting patterns on Cuba. This may be because the Cuba issue is not a Pan-Hispanic issue, but one that only affects the Cuban Americans. Further, the CANF garnishes its power from the wealth of its supporters. A large bulk of the Cubans who left Cuba following the Castro Revolution were fairly well off in Cuba and were able to establish themselves and through their capital base, able to promote CANF. This differs dramatically from much of the Hispanic population which comes to the US as poor, unskilled labor. Although the Cubans may make up a small percentage of the overall Hispanic population, what they lack in numbers they make up for with money. Further research will need to be done to isolate Cuban enclaves within the US as well as determine which Representatives receive donations and support from CANF. What is proved from this is that the issue of toppling the Castro regime is only important to Cuban Americans, and not Hispanics as a whole.

7. The effect of a representative being from Florida or New Jersey also yielded insignificant results. Despite CANF's strong position in both states, this would show that their position focuses more on individual members rather than just members that are from there strongholds. This also shows that the Cuba issue is not bound to a specific geographic location.

8. Members receiving support from CANF yielded the most significant results found. This variable was even more significant than ideology. It is undetermined whether CANF uses the support to sway a congress member's position or that the congress member already held this position and would have voted that way with or without direct support from CANF. While this may be undetermined, it is obvious that CANF donates only to members who vote consistently against Cuba.

## **V. Discussion**

Congressional voting on US trade policy toward Cuba has a multifaceted complexity stemming from ideological stance, party allegiances and individual preferences on issues. This problem is further complicated when comparing voting on Cuba with members voting records on trade policy including free trade initiatives, tariffs and sanctions. Further, when looking at trade initiatives focused on former and present communist nations such as Russia, China and Vietnam, Congress has held a much more favorable tone. One could speculate that outside the confines of ideology or some other constraint, members categorized, as “free-traders” would be more likely to vote in favor of liberalizing relations with Cuba whereas those who vote against free trade would be more likely to oppose it.

I hypothesized that Republicans more than Democrats would be more likely to oppose Cuba; however, Republicans generally are more supportive of free trade, than their Democrat counterparts. Findings showed that the issue of Cuba was split along ideological lines with those to the further right opposing trade with Cuba, while moving further left a Representative would be more likely to support it.

The dominant economic ideology of US foreign trade policy since the late 1930s has been liberal trade – the pursuit of reduced barriers to the flow of international commerce. However, a single decision making model placing primary emphasis on this belief system is not plausible in view of the number of exceptions to a market orientated trade policy that consistently appear in the decision-making process (Cohen, 1996, 123).

This model looking at contemporary Cuba policy emphasizes one of these exceptions Dr. Cohen speaks about. The Cuba model does not fit in with other models of

free trade politics because other factors such as CANF influence the actions of policymakers. Further, policymakers own views of Cuba and the Castro regime could overshadow that policymaker's general tendency to support liberal trade.

Looking at voting patterns on sanctions and tariffs, there were not enough votes available to truly target the effect of supporting or opposing either.

Interestingly, comparing voting on Cuba to voting on other communist nations yields significant results. This shows that communism is not the most important factor in determining a member's stance on Cuba. These results do show one major point: the argument that maintaining the embargo is rooted in an ideological clash with communism is a falsehood. Congress has consistently voted to liberalize trade with former and present communist nations, especially China. This result of insignificance shows that members are not opposed to Cuba necessarily because of its communist nature alone. This may, in part, show the effect of the Castro regime itself. Unlike other former/present communist nations, the leadership of Cuba has not changed. This divergence in policy may be because policymakers seek regime change in Cuba to seriously consider policy change. Regime change may alter a state's utilities in such a way that policies and alliance structure would change too. All regime changes are not the same and thus they type of regime change also determines policy change. (Siverson, 1994, 148) If this theory is true; to see any real change in US-Cuba policy, regime change would mean more than replacing Fidel with Raul Castro.

Further, with the case of Cuba exists the Cuban American National Foundation. Domestic and international groups mobilize to support or oppose policy choices according to the likely impact of these choices on their interests, politicians make

calculations of the immediate and long-term costs and benefits of different policy positions and institutions intervene to shape and constrain the options open to policymakers and political actors (Cohen, 2001, 93).

Many studies have examined whether campaign contributions affect election outcomes and legislator policy positions. The study conducted by Stephen Bronars and John Lott (1997) test whether campaign contributions affect how congress members vote by examining their voting patterns in their last congressional cycle before retirement. They concluded that despite a large decline in campaign contributions received during their last election cycle, retiring legislators do not change their voting patterns in any significant manner. Bronars and Lott interpret this evidence to mean that PAC money does not influence how legislators vote, but rather that PACs are successful at sorting into office candidates who support their positions.

Another study conducted by Bender and Lott (1996) conclude that politicians vote in their constituent interests in “the vast majority of cases.” They argue that when campaign contributions do affect legislators’ voting behavior, the deviation between the representatives’ actions and constituency interests is not large.

From the results of studies on PAC contributions, we can hypothesize that the actions of PACs is rational. A result of this rationality is that PACs will contribute to representatives who *already* support the PAC’s position. PACs will also put pressure on policymakers opposed to their position by contributing to opponents during a re-election campaign. In a contested district where the PAC is highly motivated and organized, the PAC can have a direct effect on the election outcome not only by contributing money and volunteers but also in contributing votes.

While it is difficult methodologically to attribute legislative outcomes to the work of any particular lobbyist, members of Congress on both sides of the Cuba issue agreed that CANF's efforts were by far the most extensive, expensive and sophisticated. (LeoGrande, 1998, 40) CANF uses its voting bloc and money influence policy by supporting (or opposing) policymakers that hold divergent views on the Cuba issue. The results from this research show that the most important factor in determining a policymaker's stance on trade with Cuba was not how much they had supported free trade in the past or their political affiliation, but it was whether or not they had received support from CANF.

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## **Appendix 1: Roll Call Votes**

### **Trade Votes:**

For trade votes dealing with all aspects of liberalizing trade relations

The votes looked at were as follows:

1. 102-354 Intl Coop Act
2. 103-575 NAFTA
3. 103-573 NAFTA
4. 103-247 Fast Track
5. 103-031 Export Authorizations act
6. 103-477 Export Admin Act
7. 105-627 Delay Exit Entry Control
8. 105-570 Caribbean & Cent American Trade
9. 105-534 Exportation of Supercomputers
10. 105-466 Fast Track
11. 105-047 Trade, Sub-Saharan Africa
12. 106-307 African/Central American trade
13. 106-145 Caribbean trade
14. 106-310 WTO Establishment
15. 106-145A Africa trade bill
16. 107-481 Fast Track
17. 107-370 trade act of 2002
18. 108-436 Chile Free Trade
19. 108-435 Chile Free trade
20. 108-434 Chile free trade
21. 108-432 Singapore free trade
22. 108-431 Singapore free trade
23. 108-430 Singapore free trade
24. 108-416 US Chile Free trade
25. 108-415 US Chile Free trade
26. 108-414 US Chile Free trade
27. 108-413 US Chile Free trade
28. 108-413 US- Morocco Free Trade
29. 108-375 Australia Free Trade
30. 109-616 US- Bahrain Free Trade
31. 109-442 CAFTA
32. 109-443 CAFTA
33. 109-437 Trade Rights enforcement
34. 109-436 Trade Rights enforcement
35. 109-433 Trade Rights enforcement
36. 109-432 Trade Rights enforcement
37. *109-239 Anti- WTO*

*\*Italics indicates Yes vote coded as -1*

### **Communist Trade Votes:**

Votes dealing with all aspects of liberalizing trade relations with present and former communist nations.

1. 102-436 MFN China
2. 102-412 Czechoslovakia
3. *102-285 Disapprove MFN for China*
4. 102-043 MFN China
5. *103-366 Oppose Olympics in China*
6. *103-347 Disapprove MFN for China*
7. 103-381 MFN China
8. *104-537 Disapproval MFN China*
9. 105-038 Hong Kong Trade
10. 104-285 China MFN Renewal
11. 105-492 Export/import in China
12. 105-231 China Trading resolution
13. *105-356 Disapproval for waiver on Vietnam*
14. *105-317 Disapproval, normal relation w/ China*
15. 106-365 Vietnam trade
16. 106-338 Normal trade relations status China
17. 106-409 Russia CIS trade
18. 106-228 Permanent trade relations China
19. 107-255 China trade

*\*Italics indicates Yes vote coded as -1*

### **Sanctions Votes:**

Votes dealing with imposing sanctions and thus restricting trade with nations are as follows:

1. 104-250 Iran-Libya Sanctions
2. 105-211 Iran missile sanctions
3. 107-160 Sudan sanctions
4. 107-276 Iran/Libya sanctions
5. 108-232 Burma import sanctions

### **Tariff Votes:**

Votes that constrict trade, but do not restrict it are as follows:

1. 102-121 shipbuilding tariff
2. 102-120 shipbuilding tariff
3. 106-056 restrictions on steel imports

## **Cuba Votes:**

All votes dealing with Cuba are as follows:

1. *102-423 Promote Democracy in Cuba*
2. *104-683 Helms-Burton*
3. *104-047 Helms-Burton*
4. 104-046 Medicine to Cuba
5. 106-469 Ease sanctions
6. 106-362 Ease travel restrictions
7. 106-480 increase spending limit
8. 106-428 Embargo, treasury allotment
9. 107-330 Gross amendment to H-B
10. 107-105 Ag sales
11. 107-333 Rangel Amendment to H-B
12. 107-332 Flake travel Amendment 1
13. 107-331 Flake Travel 2

*\*Italics indicates Yes vote coded as -1*

## Appendix 2: Regression Table

### Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error
.486(a)	.236	.229	.172878

### Regression table for the factors in determining Congressional Roll Call Voting Support for Cuba 1991-2006

	B	t	Sig
<b>Ideology</b>	<b>-.030</b>	<b>-2.062</b>	<b>.040**</b>
<b>Communist</b>	<b>.096</b>	<b>2.096</b>	<b>.036**</b>
<b>Tariff</b>	<b>.028</b>	<b>1.463</b>	<b>.144</b>
<b>Sanctions</b>	<b>.136</b>	<b>7.599</b>	<b>.000***</b>
<b>Free Trade</b>	<b>.071</b>	<b>3.106</b>	<b>.002***</b>
<b>Hispanic Population 2000</b>	<b>.037</b>	<b>.847</b>	<b>.397</b>
<b>Florida-New Jersey</b>	<b>.005</b>	<b>.230</b>	<b>.818</b>
<b>Representative Hispanic</b>	<b>-.024</b>	<b>-.714</b>	<b>.475</b>
<b>CANF \$</b>	<b>-.291</b>	<b>-12.147</b>	<b>.000***</b>
<b>(Constant)</b>	<b>.029</b>	<b>2.968</b>	<b>.003***</b>

**N = 926**

## **Vita**

Michael was born in Attleboro, Massachusetts, on September 19, 1982. After completing high school at Sacred Heart High School in Kingston, Massachusetts, he moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he attended Louisiana State University and A & M College. While an undergraduate at Louisiana State University, he participated in Army ROTC and served two terms as the Treasurer for the College Republicans at LSU. Michael graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in general studies in December of 2004.

In the spring of 2005, Michael entered into graduate school at Louisiana State University and A & M College where he pursued study focused on United States foreign policy towards former and present communist countries. During the summer of 2005, Michael was accepted as an ESL Teacher at the Liu Shin Middle School in Shaoxing, China, where he received ESL certification.

In the spring of 2006, Michael was invited to be an intern at the Department of State in Washington, D.C., in the Bureau of International Organizations, Department of Human Rights, Social and Humanitarian Affairs.

Michael will receive a Master of Arts in political science in December 2006.