



## **Socialist candidate Ocasio-Cortez once saw herself as Smithian capitalist, viewed feminism as 'relic'**

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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the socialist congressional candidate from New York who touts honesty and authenticity as her greatest strengths, used to describe herself as a follower of Adam Smith, the so-called father of capitalism -- and said that terms like “feminism” and “empowerment” were “relics from the past.”

Since then, Ocasio-Cortez has come out as an unapologetic democratic socialist, wishing to see greater taxation and expansion and creation of wide-ranging social programs such as a single-payer health care system, free education, and housing as a right.

“I think my strength is I’m honest and authentic,” she told “The Daily Show” host Trevor Noah last week. Those qualities helped her in June to beat top Democrat Joe Crowley, whose name was floated as the next speaker of the U.S. House.

But not that long ago, 28-year-old Ocasio-Cortez harbored a lot milder if not radically different views. During her time at Boston University, where she studied economics and international relations and graduated in 2011 with cum laude honors, she described herself as a believer in Adam Smith’s analyses and wrote a number of blog posts hinting at her views, according to posts reviewed by Fox News.

“Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez believes in Mahatma Ghandi’s methods, Adam Smith’s analyses, and Pablo Neruda’s love. Her experiences growing up in a Puerto Rican household, from the boroughs to beyond, has afforded her a uniquely American experience with all the tragedy and hilarity it accompanies,” she described herself in a student-run publication called BU Culture Shock, which she co-founded.

In a 2009 blog post, Ocasio-Cortez called feminism into question, writing that “the terms ‘feminism’ and ‘empowerment’ don’t seem to capture the priorities of our generation, and the words themselves sound like relics from the past, frumpy and outdated.”

“We no longer live in the same fight for equality of prior generations, we have moved to the widely accepted reality that marginalizing 50% of a given population doesn’t make much sense, mathematically or socially,” she wrote.

The New York Democrat could also learn a few things from herself, having written in a 2009 post that while health care in the U.S. is “at its most critical crossroads” in recent history, the debate about it is moving slowly for a “good reason.”

That reason being that “health care is largely an intersection of money and people, which means health care discussions often involve the prioritizing of people according to available funds. How can one possibly measure the needs of children, the elderly, the sick, and the healthy against one another?”

Most blog posts written during Ocasio-Cortez's reign at the publication, which include articles on issues like Donald Trump's 2012 run for president and Israel-Palestine conflict, aren't available and only a select few were reviewed by Fox News.

Boston University's Howard Thurman Center, which sponsored the publication, said the archives couldn't be located as the staff at the center changed and new staffers lacked access to the old posts.

Yet Ocasio-Cortez's claim of being a follower of a pro-capitalist economist will surely raise questions about her authenticity, as Smith, the 18th century Scottish economist, advocated free-market capitalism and opposed government regulations – contrary to what Ocasio-Cortez, a card-carrying Democratic Socialist of America member, now pitches on the campaign trail.

“There's just no doubt about it,” Howard Husock, a Manhattan Institute senior fellow, told Fox News about Smith being a polar opposite of the New York socialist. “First of all, Adam Smith believed so strongly in price signals, which are telling us what's desired, what's being offered, it allows people who are selling things to adjust their prices to meet demand – they're just central to how the whole economy works.”

“So as soon as you have Medicare for all, you essentially are abolishing price signals when it comes to health care. Because the government is not just a one more competitor or one more choice. It kills the whole playing field,” Husock added.

Jeffrey Miron, a director of economic studies at the Cato Institute and director of undergraduate studies in the Department of Economics at Harvard University, seconded that there are problems in reconciling one's views of a follower of Smith's analyses and being a democratic socialist.

“I do fully agree that there are tensions between being a Smithian and espousing the views that the social democrats espouse. In order to do massively more redistribution, you have to raise massively more taxes,” Miron said, noting that that would have a negative impact on the economy. “Smith would certainly never endorse that.”

“If Ocasio-Cortez were to say today that she's a Smithian, but yet advocate for things she advocates, she's trying to have a cake and eat it too,” he added.

But as Ocasio-Cortez was embracing her pro-capitalist views during her university years, signs of moving to the left became apparent as well. In an article about her getting malaria while studying abroad in Niger, she celebrated the cheap cost of malaria medication in the African country, suggesting Niger's health care was superior to that of the U.S.

“In all, the blood test for malaria cost me USD\$3 and the 10-day treatment was less than \$10. Imagine that in a time where healthcare in the United States is at such a critical crossroads,” she wrote.

She also questioned the definition of poverty and suggested people are happy in Niger thanks to having no material belongings. “It is neither a result of resignation to poverty nor an acceptance of such as a fact of life,” she wrote, explaining why people in Niger appeared “happy” to her.

“On the contrary, it may be due to having little material distractions that communities here are better able to focus on true sources of contentment – such as each other’s presence. The warmth and familiarity of exchange among complete strangers is valued here,” she added, asking “Where is the line between having less and choosing less?”

The campaign for Ocasio-Cortez didn’t respond to Fox News’ questions on whether she still subscribes to the analyses of Adam Smith and if she would call herself a feminist.