A Rhetorical Strategy for 2020 Democrats

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President Donald Trump, amplified by the media's thirst to create drama, has rhetorically framed the upcoming 2020 Democratic primary as an either/or choice between "progressive" and more "moderate" candidates — and the general election as a binary choice between those advocating "socialism" (whatever that means) and those for whom "socialism" is a devil term. It would be a mistake if we accept this all-or-nothing narrative.

The real issue confronting Democrats is not whether to choose between two arguably exaggerated and artificial extreme options. Rather, it is how they publicly debate their differences — which are fewer than their shared beliefs and values — and what they do to construct a unified message. If, as I have warned many times, they decide to eat their own, Democrats will be playing into the president's hands, allowing him rhetorically to set the agenda and perhaps leading to four more years of Trump.

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