Affective polarization: Are we driven by hate or fealty?

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1. Affective polarization
   a. What it is
   b. Updated trends
2. Is it all negative partisanship (I’m skeptical)?
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Percent Displeased with the Prospect of their Child Marrying Someone from the other Party

Iyengar, Lelkes, & Sood 2012
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"FEELING" THERMOMETER

100°  VERY WARM OR FAVORABLE FEELING

85°   QUITE WARM OR FAVORABLE FEELING

70°   FAIRLY WARM OR FAVORABLE FEELING

60°   A BIT MORE WARM OR FAVORABLE THAN COLD FEELING

50°   NO FEELING AT ALL

40°   A BIT MORE COLD OR UNFAVORABLE FEELING

30°   FAIRLY COLD OR UNFAVORABLE FEELING

15°   QUITE COLD OR UNFAVORABLE FEELING

0°    VERY COLD OR UNFAVORABLE FEELING
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2. Is it all negative partisanship (I’m skeptical)?
Is “negative partisanship” (hatred of the other side more than love of your own side) driving all this?

What is corroding American politics is, specifically, negative partisanship: Although most liberals feel conflicted about the Democratic Party, they really hate the Republican Party. And even though most conservatives feel conflicted about the Republican Party, they really hate the Democratic Party.

Yascha Mounk, The Atlantic
However, social psych has longed claimed that ingroup attachment is more important than outgroup hate

- “In order for the members of an in-group to be able to hate or dislike an out-group, or to discriminate against it, they must first have acquired a sense of belonging to a group which is clearly distinct from the one they hate, dislike or discriminate against” (Tajfel and Turner 1974)
Sometimes we define our identities in terms of the groups we belong to and other times by the groups that we do not belong to. When it comes to political parties, would you say your party affiliation is based more on belonging to your own party or NOT belonging to the other party?

- Strongly based on identifying with my own party
- Moderately based on identifying with my own party
- Slightly based on identifying with my own party
- Equally based on identifying with my own party and not identifying with the other party
- Slightly based on not identifying with the other party
- Moderately based on not identifying with the other party; and Strongly based on not identifying with the other party.

Sample was 2016 CCES (N=1000).

Lee, Lelkes, Hawkins, and Theodoridis (Under Review)
Panel A: Distribution of Negational-to-Affirmational Party Identity

- Strongly based on not identifying with the other party
- Equally based on identifying with my own party and not identifying with the other party
- Strongly based on identifying with my own party

The bar chart shows the distribution of responses across these categories.
Do you think of yourself as a strong partisan, weak partisan, or do you only lean towards one side?

Rescaled variable to -2 (negational) to 2 (affirmational)
Do you think of yourself as a strong partisan, weak partisan, or do you only lean towards one side?

Rescaled variable to -2 (negational) to 2 (affirmational)
Negative partisanship: 100-Feelings towards your own side - Feelings towards the other side
Negative partisanship: 100-Feelings towards your own side - Feelings towards the other side
Headline: Police Use Tear Gas on Peaceful Young [Republican/Democratic] Protest

Full text: Riot police broke up a group of Young [Republican/Democratic] protesting a tuition increase at a college north of New York yesterday, using what appeared to be tear gas.

Students had been told earlier that “all necessary force” would be used to ensure the protests did not interfere with the administration, in line with a recent court injunction requested and received by 53 of the school’s students.

Witnesses reported that 30 police officers deployed to confront the 80 peaceful protesters. After some jostling and use of what appeared to be tear gas by police, the crowd blocking the doors broke and moved away.

Alan Krenshaw, a spokesperson for the Young [Republican/Democratic], complained that “The brutality was absolutely designed to chill the movement and literally try to beat and terrorize our right to criticize, to think critically and to act on that criticism.”

How much should these protestors be fined? Lelkes and Westwood, 2018
Affective polarization predicts leniency for your side, not heightened punishment for the other side.
In sum:

Affective polarization has increased in the past 4 years, although not 2012-2016.

Hatred of the other side has increased.

But ingroup favoritism is still dominant.