



Analysis of Hate Crimes, 2020 and Five-Year Comparison

Executive Summary

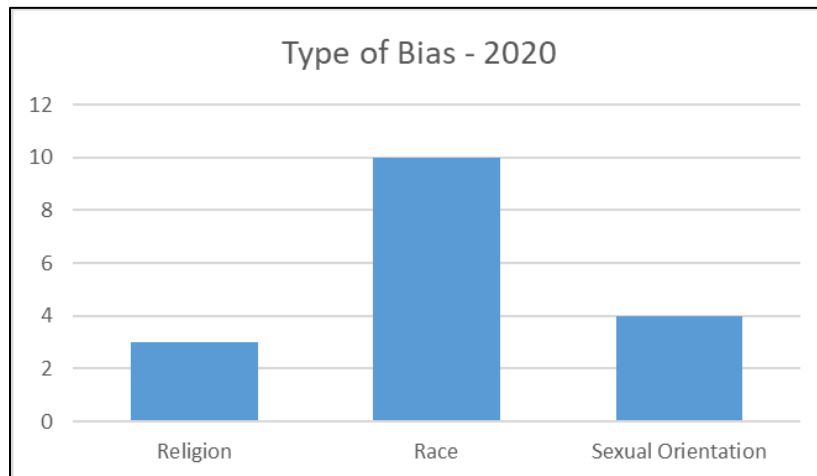
There were 15 hate crimes reported in Cambridge in 2020, involving 17 types of bias. This total is 17% below the 18 hate crimes reported in 2019 and 7% (one incident) above the 10-year average of 14. Race, sexual orientation, and religion, in that order, were the most prevalent bias types in Cambridge in 2020, which is typical of recent years as well. Biases were seen most frequently in malicious destruction of property incidents this year, followed by threats and harassment offenses. The most prevalent premise type for a hate crime, both this year and in previous years, is out on the street or sidewalk. Victims and suspects of hate crimes typically do not know each other in the majority of incidents, but in 2020, victims knew their offenders in approximately half of the incidents. And, generally speaking, there is little in the way of temporal or seasonal trends in the commission of hate crimes when looking at a cumulative number of years, but each year can see fluctuations. In 2020, the third quarter (July through September) saw the most activity with seven incidents.

History

The Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 was enacted on April 23rd, 1990, requiring the Attorney General to collect data on crimes exhibiting racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual prejudice. "Hate Crime" is the common term for federal and state Civil Rights Violations. Hate crimes include any crimes principally motivated by hatred of or bias against another because of that person's membership in a protected group (e.g., race, age, religion, nationality/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability). According to www.mass.gov, "the Attorney General's Office enforces the Massachusetts Civil Rights Act and protects against hate crimes, including threats, harassment, violence, and other bias-motivated conduct."

2020 Analysis

There were 15 hate crime incidents reported in Cambridge in 2020. The bar graph below features the breakdown of each hate crime in 2020 by bias type. The graph actually features 17 types of bias because two incidents this year involved graffiti with both racial and religious connotations, so both categories were counted. The 15 incidents (with 17 bias types) in 2020 break down into the following categories: religiously motivated (18%), racially motivated (59%), and four incidents (24%) based on sexual orientation. No incidents motivated by nationality, gender, or disability were reported in 2020.





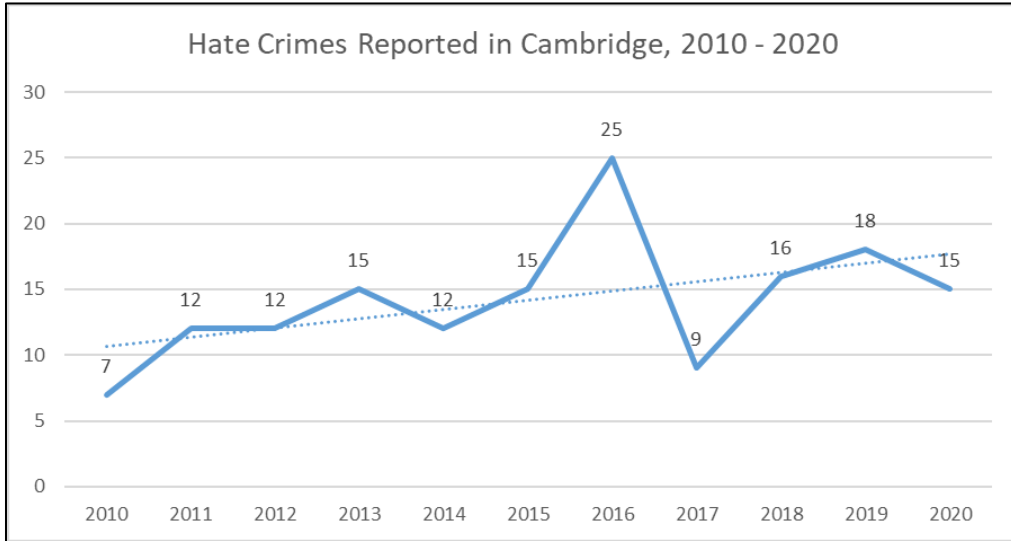
Cambridge Police Department

January 2021

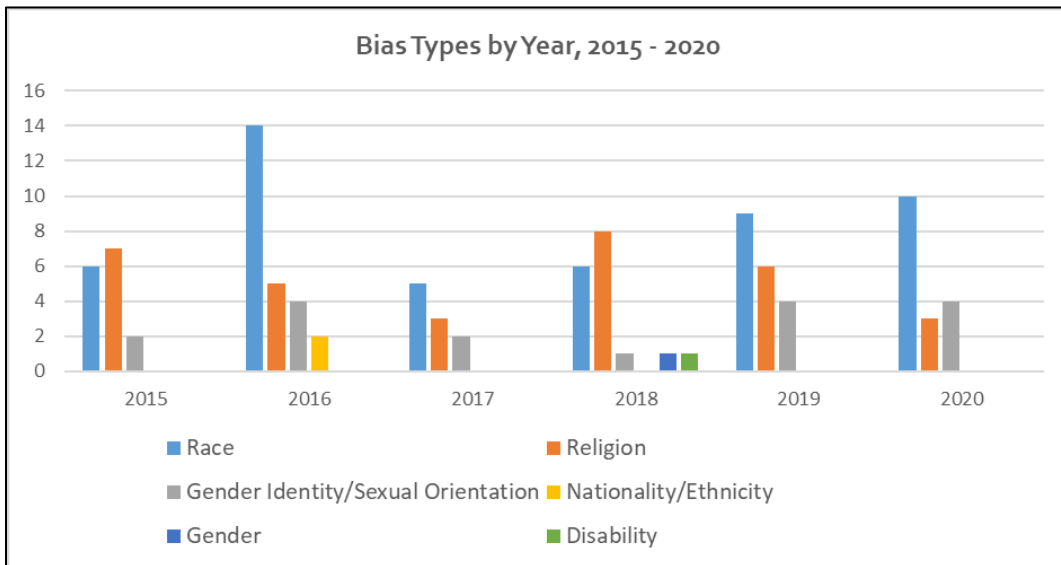
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Comparison to Past Years

The total of 15 hate crime incidents reported in 2020 is 17% below the 18 reported in 2019 and 7% above the 10-year average of 14 (from 2010 – 2019). Cambridge tends to fall in the low to mid-teens when it comes to yearly hate crime numbers, with occasional fluctuations above or below the average. In recent years, hate crimes have ranged from a low of seven in 2010 to a high of 25 in 2016.



The next chart provides a breakdown of bias type by year for 2020 and the five years prior. Race, religion, and sexual orientation/gender identity (not necessarily in that order) are consistently the bias types that tend to be most prevalent in Cambridge.



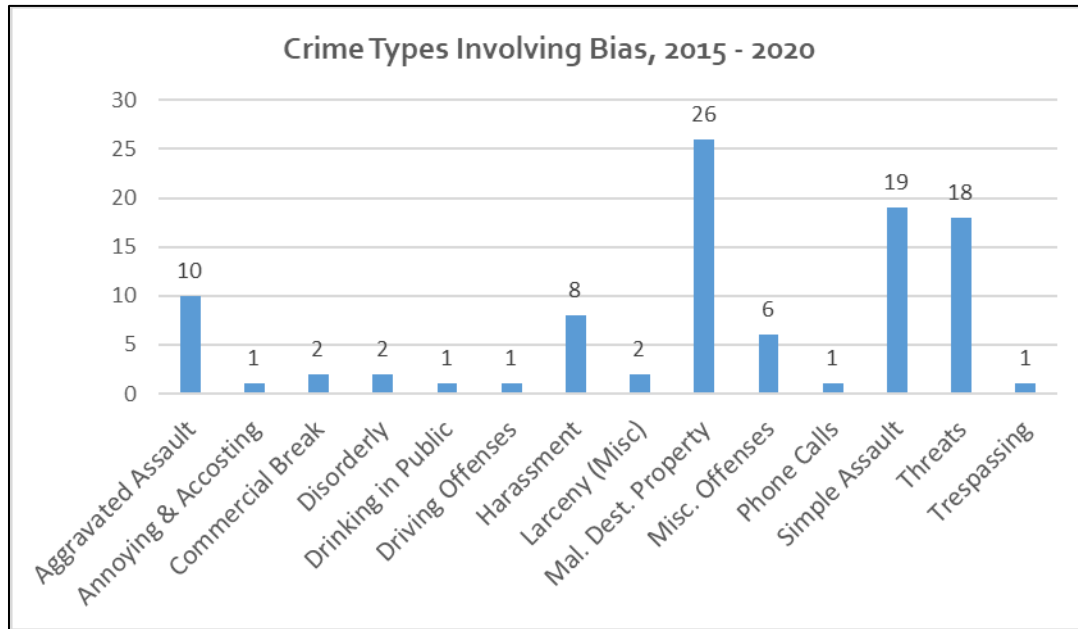


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What types of crime are typically involved when hate crimes are reported? During 2020 and the previous five years, as many as 14 different crime types were reported to involve a bias of some sort. But there are some crimes that lend themselves much more to motivated biases. Those crimes include assaults (both aggravated and simple), malicious destruction of property, threats, and harassment. Of the 98 hate crimes reported since 2015, 81 (or 83%) involved one of these five crime types. And 2020 was no different. The main crime types involving bias this year were malicious destruction of property (7), harassment (2), and threats (2). Somewhat unusual was that assaults involving biases were much less frequent this year, with only one aggravated assault and one simple assault reported in 2020.



Sometimes the question arises as to whether hate crimes are more likely to occur in certain locations. As far as premise types go, by far the most common place for hate crimes to be reported is generally on the street/sidewalk. Of the 98 hate crimes reported since 2015, 36 were reported on this premise type. Another common location is at victims' residences, either inside or somewhere on the property's curtilage/yard, accounting for 14 incidents over the past six years. Schools and universities across the city see their share (11 since 2015), as do restaurants, cafes, bars, and social club type establishments (seven since 2015). There have been four hate crimes reported at churches over the past six years, as well as six each reported at shelters and miscellaneous commercial properties. Other locations include grocery stores, hospitals, parks/recreational areas, a hotel, and a research facility. In 2020 specifically, the most prevalent locations were on the street or sidewalk (seven incidents), followed by incidents at four separate residences, a bank, a construction site, a halfway house, and a liquor store. No hate crimes were reported at any religious institutions in 2020.

Despite repeat premise types, very few specific addresses have recorded more than one hate crime since 2015. Only Cambridge Rindge & Latin High School on Broadway, the Islamic Society of Boston mosque on Prospect Street, the CHA Cambridge Hospital on Cambridge Street, the Cambridge Common near Harvard Square, and a liquor store in the 600 block of Massachusetts Avenue have seen two or more incidents over the past six years.



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Other characteristics analyzed in relation to hate crimes:

Victims and suspects are typically not known to each other in hate crimes. The suspects in most bias crimes (77 of the 98 since 2015) are strangers or have otherwise unknown relationships with the victims. When suspects and victims do know each other, they tend to be neighbors or landlords/tenants, acquaintances, coworkers/employees, clients/patrons, or occasionally schoolmates or relatives. Somewhat unusual this year was that suspects were actually known to their victims in roughly half of the cases, including three between neighbors and two between acquaintances and roommates.

Nine incidents over the past six years (one in 2020) resulted in arrests at the time of the incident, and possible suspects were developed in another 31 incidents (seven of which were in 2020).

There does not appear to be a temporal trend to the occurrences of hate crimes in Cambridge, at least not in recent years. For incidents in which the general time of occurrence is known, the day shift and the afternoon/early evening shift have seen almost exactly the same amount of activity over the past six years (38 incidents during the day shift, 39 during the afternoon/early evening shift), while the overnight shift has seen less than a quarter of the activity that the other two shifts have experienced (only seven incidents recorded during the overnight shift over the past six years). But this lack of activity during the overnight shift is also true for crime in general, so this is not really a new phenomenon.

Time of year does not seem to vastly affect the reporting of hate crimes either, though this may depend on the year and/or major events that have taken place. There is a negligible difference between the quarters/seasons themselves when looking back at the last six years, with the quarter breakdown as follows: January-March (23), April-June (26), July-Sept (24), and October-December (25). In 2020 specifically, the third quarter (July – September) saw the most hate crime activity with seven incidents.

