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Metro

At Occupy, disparate group finds harmony in protest

By **Matt Rocheleau and Patrick D. Rosso** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS NOVEMBER 25, 2011

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YOON S. BYUN/GLOBE STAFF

Terranova Kallemeyn tended to a women's tent at Occupy Boston's site.

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The average Occupy Boston protester is 34 years old and more likely to be a man than a woman. There is a 50-50 chance the protester has a job. Chances are he or she sleeps overnight at the encampment on Dewey Square, where many of them have lived for at least a month.

A survey of some 60 protesters at the Occupy Boston site, conducted by the Globe on Monday, sketches a portrait of a resilient, dedicated group drawn from surprisingly varied walks of life.

Half of the Occupy Boston protesters surveyed said they are unemployed, and two-thirds of the jobless said they have not had work for more than one year. Several said they were underemployed, or working several jobs.

One general theme united them: what they see as economic inequality in their lives and throughout the country.

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“My goal is really a social and political revolution,” said Jason E. Iarossi, 45, of Methuen, a father of two who said he works three part-time jobs.

Similarly, Terranova Kallemeyn, a 35-year-old librarian from Allston, said: “I don’t agree with corporations getting tax breaks when they are funded by people who aren’t rich.”

Three out of every four surveyed were men. Slightly more than half of those surveyed said they were from outside of Boston. While half of the protesters said they are younger than 30, the age range of people interviewed Monday varied from 18 to 81.

“I think being here is the point. What these people are doing is amazing,” said Michael Lyons, 47, who is chairman of the Board of Selectmen in Norwood.

“I’ve wanted to have this conversation my whole adult life,” Lyons said. He said he was “trying to make the world a better place.”

Three out of every four protesters questioned said that they usually sleep at the camp overnight. About two-thirds of the protesters questioned have been involved with the Boston movement for more than a month. Several said they had been with the protest since its beginning, and helped to plan it.

The Boston camp, one of more than 100 around the country, formed along part of the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway on the final day of September. An estimated 200 people live inside a closely packed group of around 100 tents.

Five Globe reporters visited the camp Monday, asking dozens of protesters eight questions about their background and the reasons they were there. Not everyone would answer the questions, and some protesters encouraged others not to answer. Sixty agreed to be interviewed.

Arthur Shepherd, 55, a former social worker for the Veterans Administration now living on Supplemental Security Income, said he was protesting the “gradual encroachment and violation of our civil liberties.”

Shepherd's reasons for protest ranged from complaints with the Bush administration policy against showing coffins of soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan to the parking policies in Boston and Cambridge.

Economic inequality came up over and over again.

"Children should be able to go to school without parents going broke," said Coreen Fortunato, 38, who said she has been homeless for years and lives in a shelter.

The Globe survey asked protesters if they would risk possible arrest or obey police orders if they were told to move out of Dewey Square. Forty-two percent said they would leave, 35 percent said they would stay and risk arrest, and 23 percent said they were not sure or would not answer.

"We have every right to resist, whether we choose to exercise that right or not," Shepherd said. "We deplore the use of the police against the people when they are protesting peacefully."

John Murphy, a 24-year-old student, said he would peacefully resist arrest if police attempt to move the protesters out of the camp.

"You should never back down. Rosa Parks didn't back down and she changed history," Murphy said. "As long as you are peaceful you should never back down."

Yesterday, Boston police estimated overtime costs related to the Occupy Boston movement to be \$600,000. As costs mount in many cities, so too does pressure to move protesters out of the public parks where they have camped.

Hundreds were arrested on Nov. 15 at New York's Zuccotti Park as the Occupy Wall Street camp was cleared; protesters were later allowed to return there, but without overnight gear.

In Boston two days later, a Suffolk Superior Court judge issued a restraining order against the city barring police from removing the protesters from their encampment at least until a Dec. 1 hearing, unless there is a fire, medical emergency, or "outbreak of violence."


While the board of the nonprofit Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway Conservancy that manages Dewey Square Park has formally asked the city to remove the Occupy Boston demonstrators from the area, citing public safety concerns and other issues, the city has not announced any date or other plans to evict the protesters.

On Oct. 11, Boston Police arrested 141 protesters on trespassing charges when the group's campground expanded to, and refused to leave from, a newly renovated section of the Greenway that authorities had specifically asked the activists to avoid.

A small number of criminal complaints, including some vandalism accusations, have been reported since the movement began. Arrests have been made on charges of disorderly conduct, larceny, drug possession, and assault.

Globe correspondents Jeremy C. Fox, Johanna Kaiser, Meena Ramakrishnan, and Matt Byrne contributed to this report.

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Man hospitalized after arm is caught in cement mixer

A man was taken to the hospital today after his arm got caught in a portable cement mixer in Westwood, police said. The incident happened around 8:20 a.m. while the 60-year-old was working at the Fox Meadow development, said Westwood Police Detective Paul Toland. He was transported to Norwood Hospital. “He was conscious and in a lot of pain,” Toland said. OSHA has been notified

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Person struck, killed inside Tip O’Neill Tunnel

The man had stepped out of his broken-down car and was standing in the travel lane when he was struck and killed, police said.

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Menino decries redistricting plan

Mayor Thomas M. Menino yesterday panned a plan that would divide Chinatown and remove precincts from District Two, calling some features of the proposal “gerrymandering at its best.”

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Massachusetts charities are focused on finding creative new ways to collect donations while grappling with a still-steady stream of families who suddenly need help.

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Going the extra mile

Sometimes, the best police work does not involve crime. Just ask Mireille Harnois, who found herself in Boston by accident, and then found kindness in the most unusual places.

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Paper-making, for generations the lifeblood of Millinocket and East Millinocket, is back, and a closely related new industry knocks on the door.

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Their first Christmas without mom

The aunt of two children wrote to Globe Santa on their behalf as they prepare for their first Christmas without their mother.

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Woman killed in Freetown car accident

A 22-year-old Fall River woman died in a fatal crash on Route 24 north in Freetown early this morning, State Police said.

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GOP says Tierney vulnerable in 2012

Republicans say they like their election chances against US Representative John Tierney because of a

redrawn congressional district and legal troubles facing family members.

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Former acting fire chief faces charges

A district court has found probable cause for filing criminal charges against former Holyoke acting fire chief William Moran for making a hoax call to his own department.

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Power back for nearly all of state's homes

Power has been restored to virtually all of the Maine homes and businesses that lost service in the storm that dumped close to a foot of snow in parts of the state Wednesday.

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