

Consumers on a Mission to Force a Change in Public Policy: A Qualitative Study of the Ongoing Canadian Seafood Boycott¹

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ABSTRACT

Netnography (i.e., the online equivalent of ethnography) was used to analyze consumer boycott pledges submitted to an online boycott petition that was designed to recruit consumer participation in the contentious Canadian Seafood Boycott. The purpose was to investigate what motivates consumers to pledge boycott participation as well as to provide a preliminary understanding of boycott pledgees' psychographic makeup. The findings show that petition signatories are generally very angry about the Canadian Seal Hunt, pledge to boycott for a variety of objectives (instrumental, expressive, and punitive), abhor cruelty against animals, do not believe that it is acceptable to kill an animal for its fur, and worry about the environment in general. Many are very religious and quite a number believe that traditions that embrace animal cruelty need to be abolished. The findings further indicate that concern for animal welfare/rights has been moved into the mainstream.