

# “Business as Usual? Exploring the Microfoundation of Nationalist Consumer Boycotts”

- Jiyoung Ko (Bates College)

Nationalist consumer boycotts are one of the common public reactions to diplomatic frictions between countries. What shapes citizens' attitude toward such boycotts? This question has not been fully explored in international relations, even though nationalist boycotts have frequently taken place and had great impacts on interactions between states. In this paper, building upon studies on firm behavior and political psychology, we explore how a strategic interaction between firms and consumers influences the latter's willingness to participate in nationalist boycotts. We argue that when nationalist boycotts occur, targeted firms actively employ counter-boycott strategies and these strategies significantly weaken consumers' nationalistic preferences. We experimentally test this argument in the context of South Korea's boycotts against Japanese products since 2019. The experimental results show that price discounts substantially decrease respondents' willingness to participate in nationalist boycotts. Our findings provide the micro-foundations of nationalist boycotts and show that the interaction between private actors is key to understanding how nationalist consumer boycotts influence international trade and diplomatic relations.

**Registration:** <https://pipcoss-1-21.eventbrite.com>

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## PIPC Online Speaker Series

January 21, 5pm PST

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