

The Social Value of Counterfeit Goods: Purchasing Counterfeits to Make the World Fair

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Abstract

This paper suggests that consumption of counterfeit goods can be driven by a desire to cope with inequality. Drawing on work that suggests socioeconomic inequality motivates concerns about fairness, we show that consumers find counterfeit (vs. legitimate) goods more attractive when income inequality is perceived higher. Manipulating perceptions of inequality across three pre-registered studies, we find that the value of counterfeits lies in the belief that they make the world fairer (Study 1-2) and this value motivates consumption above utilitarian, hedonistic, economic, or status value (Study 1-3). Moreover, we find that Social Dominance Orientation moderates these effects (Study 2); and counterfeits help make the world ostensibly fairer by duping those at the top (egalitarian spite) rather than bringing up those at the bottom (egalitarian benevolence: Study 3). Our results show how counterfeit consumption address social justice, concerns brought about by growing social inequality.

Keywords: *Counterfeit Goods; Inequality; Fairness*

Track: Consumer Behaviour