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Counterfeiting, Made in China  
The World of Shanzhai

From Luii Veidon handbags and Caiwen Klain underwear to HiPhones and Rolaix watches, Chinese-made counterfeits have gained considerable notoriety - and a thriving market - both at home and abroad. Popularly known as ‘shanzhai’, counterfeit mobile phones and other products, already seem, from a 2020 vantage point, like a last-century story in China. By contrast, shanzhai can still be seen widely across the global south. Precisely because of this perhaps, shanzhai is often portrayed as little more than lower-end globalisation, as the straightforward manufacture and circulation of counterfeit goods.

However, as Dr. Xiang argues, there may be more to the shanzhai phenomenon than meets the economist's eye. Exploring shanzhai not only as a form and product of globalisation, but also as a mode of life- and world-making, he questions boundaries between high- and low-end, decent and indecent, different and indifferent. What is 'real' and what is 'fake', who decides and how?

ONLINE on Wednesday, May 27, 18.15  
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