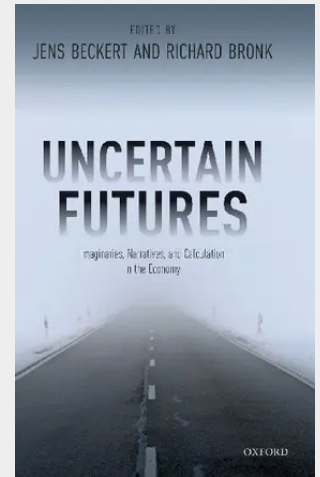


Uncertain Futures

Imaginaries, Narratives, and Calculation in the Economy

Uncertain Futures considers how economic actors visualize the future and decide how to act in conditions of radical uncertainty. It starts from the premise that dynamic capitalist economies are characterized by relentless innovation and novelty and hence exhibit an indeterminacy that cannot be reduced to measurable risk. The organizing question then becomes how economic actors form expectations and make decisions despite the uncertainty they face. This edited volume lays the foundations for a new model of economic reasoning by showing how, in conditions of uncertainty, economic actors combine calculation with imaginaries and narratives to form fictional expectations that coordinate action and provide the confidence to act. It draws on groundbreaking research in economic sociology, economics, anthropology, and psychology to present theoretically grounded empirical case studies. These demonstrate how grand narratives, central bank forward guidance, economic forecasts, finance models, business plans, visions of technological futures, and new era stories influence behaviour and become instruments of power in markets and societies. The market impact of shared calculative devices, social narratives, and contingent imaginaries underlines the rationale for a new form of narrative economics.

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