

WORKSHOP

# COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING AND DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

7-8 JULY 2023



## **Legitimate Climate Action: Between Responsiveness and Responsibility**

Dominik Austrup  
(Universität Hamburg)

### **Abstract**

My argument consists of three steps. First, I argue that the realist legitimacy framework entails two broadly applicable heuristics for political actors: responsibility and responsiveness. These heuristics can come into tension if citizens are unwilling to accept policies aimed at preserving a nation's long-term stability. This is especially relevant considering the emerging climate crisis. Second, I criticize a recent eco-authoritarian proposal that treats climate change as a state of emergency and thus grants responsibility considerations absolute priority over responsiveness. As I will show, this strategy is ultimately self-defeating. Responsible climate action necessarily entails a sufficient level of responsiveness. Lastly, I sketch the implications of this finding for climate activists, political leaders, and democratic institutions.