

SPS

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**‘We are all in this together’:
Climate Change and the Politics of Collective Responsibility**

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From austerity to the recent pandemic, the refrain ‘We are all in this together’ has been increasingly deployed by political leaders to frame and govern crises. This paper explores a largely neglected phenomenon: how this rhetoric of collective responsibility has also been embraced by corporate actors, specifically by the oil industry in relation to climate change. These campaigns of ‘collective responsibility’ mark a significant departure from the two main strategies adopted by the oil industry to deflect its personal responsibilities for climate change, namely, agnotogenesis (manufacturing of ignorance and doubt) and greenwashing (making appear environmentally sustainable what is not). How is it possible to explain the progressive shift of the oil industry from the agnotological denial of responsibility to the greenwashed acceptance of responsibility, to the collectivization of responsibility? Can collective climate responsibilities be abused? Can the rhetoric of ‘We are all in this together’ be used by corporate actors (such as the oil industry) to deflect their responsibilities and suggest that we are all equally responsible for the climate crisis? Is this a further and largely unacknowledged threat to the fight against climate change?