Through the lens of transnational feminist theory, this study examines the UN Women HeForShe campaign as a global solidarity movement for gender equality. Using a transnational feminist framework and critical discourses analysis methodology, the study analyzed the official campaign website homepage and more than 100 tweets on the day of and month following the public launch of the campaign on September 20, 2014. This study explored the campaign’s launch to its online audience, particularly on social media. In particular, it examined the HeForShe campaign discourse with attention to three primary areas: systemic problems of hegemonic masculinity, universal values and Western perceptions about gender politics.

The study found that the campaign challenged hegemonic masculinity through constructions of solidarity. However, the campaign largely reproduced male dominance through depictions of stereotypical male characteristics and the traditional man vs. woman gender binary system. As an effort on behalf of the United Nations, the campaign also employed a universal human rights framework to legitimize its gender equality goals, which in turn reinforced a westernized message despite the global nature of the campaign. As a result, this thesis is useful for scholarship on social media, particularly in social justice activist settings, and the role of discourse in shaping audience perceptions about issues of inequality.