

REBRANDING FEMINISM TO THE RURAL AUDIENCE
HOW TO UTILIZE THE MESSAGE OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN
SOUTHERN RURAL COMMUNITIES

By

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*Research abiding to the CSW62 Theme: "Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender
Equality and The Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls"*

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Abstract

This research examines perceptions of women's feminist movements and its barriers in Southern rural communities. The work was inspired by the United Nations' CSW62 Theme: "Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and The Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls" (UN Women 2018) and was done in collaboration with the Non-Profit, Women NC. This project is a communication analysis on how to promote gender equality in rural communities. Several interviews were conducted with communication specialists, politicians, presidents of nonprofit organizations, and other leading individuals in the state of North Carolina to gain information on the subject of rural life, feminism, and women's movements. Each interviewee discussed how to promote women's rights in rural communities. The inquiry of this research was whether feminism needs to be rebranded, reintroduced, retooled, or revitalized for the Southern rural community. The outcome of this study is that the message of feminism needs to be retooled for the rural audience and relate its progressive attributes for the advancement and empowerment of rural women.

Introduction

Women's and feminist movements have fought for equality throughout history. There is no single organization expressing the ideals of gender equality associated with the women's movement or feminism more broadly. Rather, women's movements refer to a collective series of reforms and campaigns to advance women's rights (Burkett 2016). While feminist movements have taken hold in urban cities, it is dormant or lags in rural communities (Fallavollita 2000). The word "feminist" can be polarizing to the rural audience (Brandth 2002), with consequences leading to the absence of gender equality in these communities.

The question is, then, how should we promote the ideals of women's equality within these rural communities, knowing that the "feminism brand" is counterproductive with many people who live in rural North Carolina? How should the message of feminism be promoted to the Southern rural community? Does it need to be rebranded, reintroduced, retooled, revitalized? This research was inspired by the CSW62 Theme: "Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and The Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls" (UN Women 2018). This project is divided into a three parts: 1) Identify and discuss the causes for the problem stated above, 2) Describe potential solutions for the problems, and 3) Suggestions on how to implement solutions.

I. Identifying the Problem: Feminist Efforts Not Regionally Unified – Urban and Rural Disconnect

In the United States, initiatives for women's equality have been regionally divided since the early republic in 1776. Defining factors for its progression "depended upon where a woman lived and the social circumstances in her region of the country" (Women's Rights After the

American Revolution 2017). Actions for women's movements have been described as "waves" and have been regionally divided since the nineteenth century (Rampton 2015). The women's movement was first seen in the Northeast and then spread to Midwestern and Western urban areas while "Southern states were last to join the bandwagon" (Fallavollita 2000). Feminist women's movements have been "been left out of the narrative" (Southern Oral History Program) in the rural South, while other regions in the country utilized its progressive actions. Despite the women's movement spreading nationally, a majority of its support today comes solely from urban areas.

A. Urban Grasp of the Women's Movement

Urban communities have a history of supporting and cultivating women's rights. Not only politicians and activists fight for women's movements, but it is now seen as a brand or an "aesthetic, it's something that celebrities embrace, [and] it's something mainstream media uses as a hook to get people interested" (Vagianos 2016) in the fight for gender equality. Today's scholars and practitioners address the importance of feminist movements, such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her TEDx talk and essay "*Why We Should All Be Feminist.*" Adichie addresses the question of "why the word feminist?" in which she answers "feminism is, of course, part of human rights in general – but to choose to use the vague expression human rights is to deny the specific and particular problem of gender" and "it is only fair that the solution to the problem should acknowledge that" (Adichie 2015). Adichie's work stimulated other pop-culture icons to utilize the term feminist and encourage more to be involved in its advocacy (Vincent 2014). The movement's support grew in urban areas after the 2016 presidential election. Cities around the country not only hosted but were in alliance with women's marches (Harris 2017). Even women's issues are current hashtag trends "focused on changing how women are represented"

(McPherson 2014) in today's society. Lastly, head-turning t-shirts that state "The Future is Female" "This is what a feminist looks like" and "Nevertheless, She Persisted" (Cartner-Morley 2017) are further examples of not only the grasp but the distribution of the movement in today's urban culture. Bold hashtags, audacious t-shirts, powerful marches, and celebrity endorsements all contribute to the current brand of the women's feminist movement. Unfortunately, the trendiness of the women's movement is not as popular in Southern rural regions. In fact, rural communities have distasteful views of the movement and its intentions.

B. Rural Views on Feminism

One of the main disconnects between the Southern rural community and women's movements is how rural women view feminism. While the women's movement is laboring for women's rights in urban counterparts, its actions are delayed in rural communities. Rural women have not joined the alliance because of unfavorable views of feminist women's movements (Brandth 2002).

Berit Brandth addresses the role of feminism in rural communities, and states "feminism has very much been a silent issue in agricultural institutions, and at times there has been open resistance on the part of rural women towards equality principles" (2002). The absence of the feminist movement "may partly be found in the way in which popular conceptions of feminists have been regarded as destabilizing and as a threat to many of the social relationships that are valued in rural life." He states that "rural women have perceived feminists as being hostile towards men and critical of traditional nuclear family relationships" (Brandth 2002). Brandth further addresses that "the label 'feminist' relates to issues of identity" and "that a feminist identity is more problematic for rural women than it is for urban women." He then states how "feminism is largely associated with urban women, [and] it might represent potential ideological

divisions and conflicts between urban feminists and rural [women]” (Brandth 2002). As the author cited above argues, feminism is considered a threat to traditional values and social mores in rural communities – which points to the need to consider rebranding the concept to continue pushing for the idea of gender equality within rural audiences.

C. Problems for Rural Women

Southern rural communities are faced with inequalities that could be spotlighted and solved by engagement of women’s movements. However, the push for gender equality in Southern rural areas is neither as prevalent nor as persistent as other places in the country, and “when it comes to the overall status of women in the South, the results are discouraging” (Institute for Women's Policy Research 2017). The Institute for Women’s Policy Research reveals “that working women in the South suffer some of the harshest inequalities in the U.S” (2017). The research shared that “to compare the status of women across the nation, the report grades each state based on six categories: political participation, employment and earnings, work and family, poverty and opportunity, reproductive rights, and health and well-being. Not a single Southern state was given an overall grade higher than a C-. In fact, 10 out of the 14 Southern states received some form of a D grade” (Institute for Women's Policy Research 2017). Gender disparities across America are blatantly apparent, and the problems for women in rural Southern communities are not being solved by the very movement that was designed to address women’s issues (Burkett 2016). Rural women are faced with the some of the same gender inequalities as their urban counterparts, but with amplification due to the lack of resources to help (Quinlan 2013). Other methods are needed to combat and overcome gender challenges against rural women, because “for every promising sign for women in the South, there are far too many concerning ones” (Institute for Women's Policy Research 2017).

The feminist movement has a negative stereotype in rural societies and its actions are not always welcomed or utilized (Brandt 2002). With the inactivity of the movement, critical problems for Southern rural women don't get addressed by the resources, organizations, and advocates that embodies the women's cause. One way to change this is to rebrand and reshape the conversation of the women's movement for rural communities.

II. Potential Solutions: Utilize Branding Mechanisms for The Women's Movement

Branding and rebranding are tactics used to communicate a message skillfully to the public. It is a tactic that can be utilized by the women's movement for the Southern rural audience. When there is a lack of direction or reception of a message, "the creation and management of a brand [are] possible means of improving communications" (Robichaud, Richelieu, Kozak 2012) and its methods can be used to connect the movement to the rural South. The women's movement can use the "brand-as-dialogue approach" to strengthen its communications and to "bring local groups and initiatives together" (Vuorinen, Vos 2013). This branding strategy can invite more into the conversation, create a new and united way to promote the movement, and show the relevance to the rural South. Branding has also evolved from the marketplace to other realms of communication (Singer 2002) and its tactics are even seen in promoting social movements.

A. Branding in Social Movements

Greg Satell from the Harvard Business Review discusses branding as a tool for social movements. First, communicating "successful movements start by attacking perceptions" (Satell 2015) and clearing ambiguity that may be destabilizing the movement. Eliminating misperceptions, such as the movement undermines rural life, will allow the movement to be perceived as a tool to address and solve problems for rural women.

Second, “successful movements build connections through personal contact, rather than trying to burst on the scene all at once” which can be incorporated in the delivery of a brand (Satell 2015). This can be a method to communicate the movement steadily to the rural community. Feminism also needs to adapt to the overarching goal that “successful brands, like successful social movements, are about aspirations and aspirations are always about a better future. They seek to include, not exclude” (Satell 2015). It is fundamental to expand those involved in the movement in order to cultivate equality and women’s empowerment in the rural South.

Third, an “essential attribute of successful movements [is to] connect to the mainstream” because “too often, brands strive to be ‘edgy’ in order to differentiate themselves, but end up alienating far more than they inspire.” It is understood “that may fire up the loyal base, but it limits the potential for growth” (Satell 2015). The women’s movement needs to appropriately connect to the rural audience and show how it’s not just a hashtag for urban women; but, that it is a movement designed to solve issues such as economic inequity, immobility to healthcare, and ultimately to promote rights for all women. This will help the movement connect to rural life and show how it is a tool to improve the status for Southern rural women.

B. Branding to Connect

Branding strategies aim to connect with all members of a community. Rebranding the goals of the women’s movement must not “alienate, stigmatize, or ignore the women who don’t agree” because that would be “undermining the very opportunities [it’s] fighting to achieve” (Chivée, Coleman, Emerson 2017). In order to bridge the divide, communities must acknowledge how “women on the left and right can disagree vehemently with one another, but it’s important that we listen to, validate, and respect our counterparts across the aisle” (Chivée,

Coleman, Emerson 2017). Most importantly the movement should “encourage women’s activism no matter what form it takes, and recognize it as [a] valuable” approach towards ending poverty, lack of political representation, and sexual harassment of rural women. Expanding participation in the movement “will contribute to [the] collective goal of empowering women to speak out, stand up, and engage in the political process” (Chivée, Coleman, Emerson 2017). Rebranding the movement must portray inclusive measures and “the mainstream movement should invite diverse perspectives in — not shut them out” (Chivée, Coleman, Emerson 2017).” Uniting people will help eradicate inequities obstructing women and create a virtuous future for all.

But once again, in order for the ideals of feminism to be considered within rural communities, and for women and men to embrace its goals, an entirely new approach to communicating the messages related to gender equality must be considered.

III. Implementing Solutions: Advice from Professionals on Rebranding Feminism

Rebranding the women’s movement for promoting rural women’s rights involved initiating outside conversations to investigate methods to achieve these goals. Interviews were conducted with communication specialists, politicians, presidents of nonprofit organizations, and other leading individuals who were able to give their expertise on the subject of rural life, communication strategies, and the women’s movement.

The professionals interviewed were:

- Deborah Ross, former candidate for U.S. Senate and former North Carolina state representative.

- Ken Eudy, senior advisor to Governor Cooper, former CEO of public relations firm CapStrat, and former director of the North Carolina Democratic Party.
- Vivian Howard, PBS television host, chef, and New York Times Best Selling author.
- Patrick Woodie, the president of the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center.
- Dr. Jo Allen, the president of Meredith College, a women's college in Raleigh, North Carolina.
- Carolyn Justice, former Pender county commissioner and former North Carolina state representative.
- Ronda Jones, Stokes county commissioner and small business owner.

A. Findings: Recommendations for Rebranding the Women's Movement

The top recommendations and statements on rebranding the women's movement for the rural South are divided in themes below.

1. Show the Relevance

A theme throughout the interviews was to show the relevance of women's movements when rebranding and communicating its message. The movement must connect and cater its motives to rural life and expand the message of gender equality to relate to rural audiences.

Deborah Ross, former candidate for U.S. Senate and former North Carolina state representative, emphasized that for the women's movement to be successful in rural areas, it needs to "make [the women's movement] about them" and develop the conversation to show "the rights they are going to lose." Ross further states "it's important to tell people what's at stake and how it affects them personally" but doing so must be done in a "two-way conversation and it has

to be a respectful conversation.” This aligns with the branding tactic of connecting and communicating to your audience, which the feminist movement can do when redirecting its approach.

Ken Eudy, senior advisor to Governor Cooper, former CEO of public relations firm CapStrat, and former director of the North Carolina Democratic Party, emphasized how the women’s movement needs to show “the relevance” and make people think “how does it affect me.” Eudy states “relate to your audience and make them say ‘mhh if that happened – how would I be affected’ – that’s crucial – most important.” Showing the relevance also links to the branding strategy of connecting and establishing a presence with your audience and this will help clear any ambiguity of the movement and uplift its actions.

2. Discover Core Objectives

Promoting women's rights needs to be approached in a method designed for Southern rural communities. Improving the movement through branding mechanisms, and redefining its core objectives, will help the movement improve its communication for the rural audience.

Ken Eudy discussed how branding is seen in public relations and it can help establish core objectives. He shares that one “strategy is a series of questions you ask yourself, and that if you answer them in the right way, they get you to the places where you want to end up.” That will be a method to help rebrand and promote the women’s movement in rural communities. Eudy also elaborated by saying “what you said, feminism is a synonym for equality or equal pay for equal work, equal standing for equal achievements, qualifications, characteristics. So where you want to end up with feminism is where feminism drives towards equality” for rural communities, and focus on communicating that in the brand and core objectives of the movement.

Patrick Woodie, president of the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, discussed strategies for rebranding the movement in rural South. Woodie discussed how the women's movement must "focus on core objectives and how that resonates best in the audience [it] wants to reach" as well as "how do we reflect that in the branding of [the] movement?" He suggests applying those questions toward creating a strategy for the women's movement in rural areas. Woodie also discussed how national topics unite people in conversation, and how movements can use the dialogue approach to promote core objectives. Woodie stated "the national dialogue of sexual harassment, and power dynamic around sexual abuse cases, are very relatable for a lot of women that have experienced those things. Just the very fact that it's happening may provide some unique opportunities for the women's movement to gain traction in rural communities – an issue the whole country is dealing with." This suggestion not only applies to the mechanism of relating the brand, but also, how to create unison and support towards the fight for women. Both methods can be incorporated in the core objectives of the movement.

When asked about how to communicate the movement, Deborah Ross stated how one must "define the things that will be achieved by feminism" and "identify what that would mean in [rural] people's lives." Ross further suggested to "make a list of the top ten things: equal pay, equal access to health care, etc. and show how it's relevant to the mass majority, women, and their daughters." In doing this, Ross states "it's the best way to communicate with the greatest number of people" and "it must be done in a way that they feel most comfortable." Ross then emphasized the need to "communicate with [diverse communities] about our shared values" and "there must be common ground – or else we aren't going anywhere." All suggestions apply to branding mechanisms of expanding your following base, clearing intentions of the movement,

and showing how it will build a brighter future. Each can be incorporated in its the core objects for rural communities.

3. Adapt to Customs in Rural Areas

The women's movement needs to adapt to rural communities during the process of rebranding. The movement can benefit by incorporating rural values in its message, reconfiguring communication, and connecting to those who may be against the cause. These branding tactics will best serve and adapt the women's movement to rural communities.

When asked about communication strategies geared toward a traditional rural audience, Vivian Howard, PBS television host, chef, and New York Times Best Selling author, gave insight on how "there is a way to honor tradition while living in modern sensibility" and that can be used in adapting the movement while remaining its core objects of women's equality. When asked if there is a way combine the modern movement with traditional values, she states, "nostalgia is not productive, but tradition can be a cool thing as well. It's very easy to carry on with some traditions, but others such a sexism that shouldn't be honored. Pick the traditions that honor our modern-day society the best." This statement shows how there is a possible mechanism for applying the women's movement while abiding by rural customs, which reinforces the branding mechanisms of tailoring a message to one's audience. The movement can use this strategy to promote the rights of rural women and do so in a method that will be supported by the rural community.

Patrick Woodie gave insight on rebranding the movement to adapt in rural communities and how to communicate with those who have unyielding view points. Woodie suggested to "push people to be tolerant, understand that your perspective is your perspective, not everyone's, and be willing to tolerate people who are not going to agree with you" when discussing the

women's movement. Woodie also stressed how one needs to influence people to get on board with the movement, even when it may be difficult. The rebranding process must communicate to those against the women's movement and adapt its motives to rural life.

4. Mindful of Language

In the process of rebranding the women's feminist movement, advocates need to be mindful of polarizing language. Branding mechanisms suggest don't burst in the scene when promoting a movement, and instead, skillfully adapt and relate the cause (Satell 2015). That is one reason the movement has not been successful in rural communities (Brandt 2002). When rebranding the dialogue for the rural audience, language must be tailored to what is receivable in Southern rural areas.

Carolyn Justice, former Pender county commissioner and former North Carolina state representative, explained in rural North Carolina the word "feminism doesn't sit well with Republican women" and how rebranding the movement must be mindful of that. Justice stated how "the whole feminist thing was just too much to swallow" and that "the movement defeated the purpose of what they're trying to do." Justice then explained consequences of polarizing feminist language and stated "I turned against it, they not only didn't get me on their side, but they also turned me in the other direction. Now they don't have someone who just disagrees with them; they now have an enemy." Carolyn Justice's perspective shows the power of language and how it can prevent the success of a movement. When rebranding the women's feminist movement, motives must focus on what builds, not undermines, the support from a community.

Ken Eudy commented on the language of the movement and stated "the idea of feminism is not a necessity but a nicety, a nice social thing." Eudy also discussed how focus groups of women in rural demographics were presented with information that aligns with what feminist

movements fight for and explained how “women weren’t interested – they wanted to know what are you going to do to put more money in my pocket.” This shows how actions are more relevant for women in rural communities and language in rebranding the movement needs to speak on those endeavors.

Rhonda Jones, Stokes county commissioner and small business owner, gave her rural perception on feminist language and shared “while I’m grateful for some of the women blazing the trail, they have made it harder for us in a lot of respects too.” Jones further explained how the conversation and language of feminism has led her to say “I don’t consider myself a feminist – at all. I consider myself a person that is trying to make it in this world like everyone else. I just want a fair opportunity and fair shake.” This statement supports how feminism semantics are not necessarily needed as long as specific rights get achieved for women, and this can be a significant attribute in the process of rebranding the women’s movement.

Dr. Jo Allen, the president of Meredith College, a women’s college in Raleigh, North Carolina, shared how language has an influx on the actions of a movement, and focus needs to be on phrases that promote unison such as “gender pay equity” and explains that is “an attempt to get away from the feminist word.” Words feminist and feminism may be too polarizing to achieve a place in rural communities, and must not be forced into the dialogue for the rural South, even if they are successful in urban areas. Allen then shared her insight on what happened in regards to women’s feminist movements. She stated, “one of the things that I think happened was that pretty early in the movement people talked about radical feminist – defined them as man-hating – almost violent – and somehow we lost the term radical feminism, and it turned to define all of feminism.” She then explained how feminism, or for any social movement to have an impact, it “has to have a significant voice from whatever group is suppressing it.” Allen

portrayed how the movement is “too loud, too old” and how people “need to understand that it’s a political, social, and economic movement” which many do not perceive because of the polarizing semantics. When rebranding, efforts must focus on sustainable language that promotes the message and creates unison towards women’s equality.

Deborah Ross stated how the language of feminism has been vilified – turning into “femi-nazis” and states how “it is always better to talk about equality and to talk about having everyone achieve their highest and best selves.” Ross elaborated with explaining “there is an attempt to reclaim the word feminist, which I think is fantastic, but I think if we all believe in the same thing, then we shouldn’t divide ourselves over what language we use. It should be based on our actions and intentions.” Lastly, Ross stated “we should be trying to make it easier for people to get the justice they deserve” and how the rights for women shouldn’t be distracted by “semantic battles.” Advocates involved in rebranding the movement must be mindful that different language will be used throughout regions but similar goals can be achieved for promoting women's rights.

5. Focus on Leadership Initiatives

The success from women's leadership must be accentuated when communicating and rebranding the movement in the rural South.

Dr. Jo Allen suggested that “women need more opportunities given to them along with proper training geared for women to succeed.” She emphasized how rebranding the movement needs to empower rural “women in office,” show the benefits of “jobs where women are making the same salaries as men,” and to demonstrate how that will help rural communities as a whole. Allen also emphasized the power of women leadership in urban communities and advised to look at the success of those areas and ask “how can we echo those elements” in the women’s

movement for rural communities? This is a rebranding method of learning the success of others and incorporating it in the promotion of the brand.

Patrick Woodie explained that leadership initiatives must be emphasized in the process of rebranding the movement. He states there needs to be “more involvement and leadership development at the local level and there needs to be refinements solely for women.” Woodie explained, “when you see volunteer sectors, women tend to dominate in the fields, and we need to nurture and encourage that.” He also stated that “more bipartisan efforts need to help. Emily’s List and Lillian’s List have only been helping the progressive side, and there need to be more efforts to help both sides.” Lastly, Woodie shares “more women in state politics will bring more change regardless of the party affiliation,” and rebranding the movement needs to communicate that rural communities. This aligns with branding mechanisms of connecting the movement to a larger base, validating and promoting people on both sides of the spectrum, and highlighting its attributes for a brighter future.

6. Retool Education Tactics

There can be additional education initiatives to promote women in rural communities, and it can be incorporated in remodeling and rebranding the movement. One method can be to teach the history of the women’s movement. Another can be to discuss current problems hindering gender equality in rural communities. There can also be projects geared towards building confidence and allocating additional mentoring for women and girls. Each relates to clearing communication and building aid of the women’s movement; both that can be incorporated in the process of rebranding.

When asked what needs to be communicated in rural communities, Ronda Jones suggested how rural communities need to promote skills for women and show “that they don’t

lack what it takes to make it in this world.” She suggested that teaching these values can be done through education and exercises in schools, summer camps, and other outreach programs that promote gender equality. Each suggestion will help in the rebranding process by attacking false perceptions of the movement and create additional aid to uplift rural women.

Carolyn Justice elaborated on reforming education tactics when rebranding the movement. She emphasized the need on educating the youth in rural communities. Justice suggests “schools could do more to help [and] have more classes” supporting women. However, she clarifies “not on feminism because of it being polarizing, but more on promoting the self.” Justice explained that schools can restore their intentions, “so girls can gain healthier emotional skills.” Lastly, she shares how revamping the message of the women’s movement, and applying it in schools, “will contribute toward promoting gender equality in rural communities.” Justice’s advice aligns with branding methods of eliminating negative ideals, teaching the intentions, and relating the mission of the movement.

Dr. Jo Allen also stated how education tactics could be retooled when rebranding the movement. She suggested merely talking “about the history of the women’s movement” because many people, including rural communities, “don’t understand the word and [its] history.” Rebranding education tactics needs to emphasize how the movement has helped women in areas of law, employment, health, and how it continues to help women today. This can be way to debunk falsehoods and ambiguous perceptions of the movement. These motives that align with branding mechanisms of improving communications will circulate discussion on the women’s movement and show how it can benefit rural communities.

7. Expand the Movement

Interviewees suggested the women's movement needs to focus on helping rural communities at large and to include more people in its supportive initiatives. This aligns to branding mechanisms of expanding the audience and those involved in a movement.

Ken Eudy gave propositions on expanding the women's movement in rural communities and shared "feminism has applied to mostly how it benefits women - what if we had a feminism that benefited men as well as benefit women." He explained how broadening the reach will increase the success of the movement. A tactic he suggested is asking members of the rural community about the women who "have influenced them" and ask "who is the woman that you respect most and what is it that you respect about them?" This is a chance to connect the movement directly to people and teach how it can help rural women and the community to succeed. With rebranding the movement to expand those who will be helped, or simply connecting its motives to real people, will support the movement and help it gain a presence in rural communities.

Carolyn Justice stated how in rebranding the movement "emphasis needs to be on how it helps families" not just women. Justice also explained how "you're going to go in with gentle persuasion and try to help them understand" how the movement can benefit rural communities. This aligns with the branding mechanism of steadily communicating to one's audience. She also states how "examples are needed" on the successes of the women's movement and how these successes can correlate to other achievements in rural communities. Both methods can be used in the process of rebranding the movement.

Ronda Jones suggested when rebranding the women's movement, it will require "a group of people that earn the respect of the community." She also shares how rebranding and clearing

communications must “present possible solutions” for the advancement of rural women. Jones then stated how rebranding the women’s movement needs “more men involved” and how “we need their view on things to promote a well-balanced community” to uplift gender equality. When rebranding the movement by increasing the audience, gaining trust, and having members present possible solutions, the women’s movement will gain grit within rural communities.

Jo Allen discussed that feminism needs more inclusive measures when rebranding the movement successfully in rural communities. She states, “for women to have gender equality, a vote, voice at the table, men have to be a part of that movement” and it must “not be rebranded as man-hating.” She adds, “I think that’s what happened with the brand.” Allen advised that the message needs to be women being strong without detriment to others because “we all want to be stronger.” Lastly, Allen shared that when rebranding the women’s movement, it must reason “what would it take for us to be even stronger” and how to resonate that with rural communities. This aligns to the branding mechanism of creating a stronger future and broadening the message to reach a larger audience. This will help reduce negative perceptions of the women’s movement and expand its support within the rural community.

Reflection and Continuation

The interviews gave resourceful insight towards advancing the status of women in rural communities; specifically, ways that will be receptive and achievable in the rural South. Rebranding initiatives can be used to promote tools such as Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, known as CEDAW, which would address actions to be taken regarding political, economic, social, and cultural aspects for rural women (History of CEDAW Convention 2009). Also, other nonprofits and organizations can adhere to these suggestions by modifying their work for rural women and communities. By promoting CEDAW

and other tools/organizations through the suggested themes, its actions could encourage progressive steps for the advancement of women, as well as give the women's movement a broader approach in rural communities.

Limitations and Improvements

The purpose of this research was to stimulate the conversation regarding the negative perceptions of women's feminist movements in rural communities, and how it hinders the success of advancing the status of rural women. Themes from the findings were an overarching approach to promote the movement; however, limitations occurred with not applying the solutions to the various factors and profiles that exist in rural areas. Though, it can be implemented in future studies to address the diverse audience of rural women and communities.

Conclusion

Rebranding the women's feminist movement for rural communities will end the polarization of the movement and promote rural women. With the CSW62 theme of addressing "challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls," (UN Women 2018) advocates must take into account their actions and tailor methods for the rural audience. When "feminism" is not viewed as a threat to traditional rural values and viewed as a device for improvement, then the methods of women's movements, and all organizations, treaties, actions within, will be utilized. Urban and rural areas may have different manners and language for communicating causes; however, that must not deter efforts and promotion of rights that are deserved for all women. Once efforts of the women's movement are tailored for the rural community, then its motives can help rural women and communities gain the rights they rightfully deserve.

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