

# Politics and Intersectionality

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Reading the comments to [Jennifer Fang's take on Gloria Steinem's Op-Ed](#), I was stuck by the amount of people who asked for someone who "doesn't trivialize sexism."

What?

Sexism is being trivialized when we are specifically discussing how pitting race against gender creates conflicts and division within multiple communities?

Sexism is still a large issue in society. We all knew it was going to factor into this election. And, as soon as supporter of John McCain posed the question "[How do we beat the bitch?](#)" we knew the fight was on.

We've seen accusations of playing the gender card, [both founded](#) and [unfounded](#). We've seen how other prominent women have cheerfully played upon stereotypes that [women in power are dominating ball busters](#). Some women wonder aloud if [a woman should be president at all](#). Some political pundits have used the Clinton campaign to unleash [all their pent-up issues with women in general](#). [Hillary is taking hits for perceived shows of emotion and perceived PMS](#).

These things are sexist.

These things are bullshit.

The mainstream feminist blogs have sexism covered. But racial issues that are arising in this election? There may be a few posts [here](#) or [there](#), but generally, feminists are not covering that beat.

They also aren't really speaking about the conflicts occurring within women of color, particularly the tangled feelings of loyalty to all of the different social and cultural pieces that make up who we are.

*(Please note - this piece is going to focus on the [intersectionality](#) of race and gender. Obviously, there are other issues that can arise as well in reference to religious identity, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, trans-identity, and anything else I have forgotten here. These issues are also important but will not be covered in this post. Also, this post specifically deals with political fallout - a general post on intersectionality will be available on Monday or Tuesday.)*

Playing oppression olympics is a waste of time. [It is a non-winnable subject for debate](#), there will never be a consensus on who had/has it worse, and it creates further animosity. Most of the time, [the attacks will come in the form of a double punch anyway](#).

But, let's shift the shoe to the other foot for a moment. Ask yourselves: How does it feel to be a woman of color (feminist, womanist, non-affiliated) and to care about women's issues. How does it feel to hear people who are supposedly advocating for you to say that your "special" issues don't matter right now? (And they do tell us this, through silence or through trying to refocus the debate, or through misguided op-eds.) How does it feel to have a major part of your identity brushed aside, carelessly, often accompanied by the quote "well, gender affects more people than race does?"

"Either." "Or." Not "both." Never "and."

Here I am again. Stuck. Not supporting Hillary apparently makes you a traitor to the cause. Not voting for Obama would apparently make me a traitor to the cause. In all of this, [no one is supporting Carol Moseley Braun](#), who is now contemplating running on the Green Party ticket. I'm waiting to be called a traitor to that cause.

I know I am tired of feeling like I have to choose.

Other people in the bloglands feel me.

[Shark-Fu knocks it out the park](#). Yeah, Steinem may not have intended to play oppression olympics, but like SF says "this article is soaked in the fluid of competition."

Another choice gem:

What worries me is that this is kind of article that makes some black women wary of feminism...wary of the sisterhood...because eventually, just give it time, it will all come down to black and white or women and men with black women vanished from the equation.

[Tami](#) has been saying a lot. She's discussed the [race/gender boogie](#), [the Clintons and the pursuit of blackness](#), [responded to Gloria Steinem twice](#).

[Donna Darko](#) wonders [what year we are in, if the same racist/sexist crap keeps surfacing again and again](#).

[Aaminah Hernandez](#) also responds [twice](#) to the Gloria Steinem op-ed piece. She also makes an interesting argument regarding [black/brown politics](#).

Brownfemipower breaks down for Allies [how "gender trumps race" plays out in the real world](#). That post needs to be a must read for anyone who has ever let that thought cross their mind. BFP also weighs in on the [black/brown debate](#).

Nojojojo writing for the [Angry Black Woman](#) kills it in one line: [Which came first, my uterus or my skin?](#)

Jack and Jill Politics also does a great job in transcribing the most important parts of the [exchange between Gloria Stienem and Melissa Harris-Lacewell on Democracy Now](#). If you click on no other link, click on this one.

And I am sure there are dozens more responses I haven't seen that are as interesting and as impassioned as the ones referenced above.

As I am composing another long post on Intersectionality, I will end this here, with one last thought:

As the Democratic candidates were announced for the 2008 elections, I was filled with hope. We got three candidates? Three candidates with vision and purpose and I can actually choose? I was excited. I would have been happy with either Obama, Clinton, or Edwards, to be quite frank. While I have my preferences, I believe they have all presented a commitment to moving our country forward.

Now, watching all of this unfold, I'm not so sure.

[Edit this post.](#)