Feminist Peace Research and Feminist Peace Movements in the United States:
Betty Reardon's Antimilitarist-Feminist Theory and the US Section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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Introduction

The year of 2020 marks several anniversaries of the achievements of worldwide women's movements. One landmark anniversary is the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), the first Security Council resolution which recognizes the greater impact of armed conflict on women as well as the significance of a gender perspective and women's participation in all levels of decision-making processes of peace and security.[1] This normative framework is an outcome of the work of feminist activists and scholars who have advocated that both gender equality and abolition of war are indispensable elements of peace and security.[2] In the midst of the global pandemic, many events and meetings have been planned and conducted to celebrate the resolution and to review implementation of the WPS agenda. Despite such efforts, women are still excluded from many parts of decision-making processes nationally and internationally. In addition, as shown by the record-breaking number of gun purchases in North America, the pandemic shows increasing militaristic values and militarization of society with use of militarized terms such as "waging a war against an invisible enemy" to refer to public health

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1 UN Security Council, S/RES/1325 (2000). It established the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda followed by 9 related thematic resolutions.
2 Cynthia Cockburn, *From Where We Stand: War, Women's Activism and Feminist Analysis* (London/New York: Zed Books, 2007), 138.

efforts, and more reliance on the military for protection or safety.[3] Feminist peace activists have been challenging militarized security systems by pointing out that the military does not secure people but rather contributes to the lack of money for people's basic needs even during the pandemic, as well as contributing to increased violence against women.[4]

Feminist peace research (FPR) is a key field in challenging such militarized security systems since it has led the attempt to redefine violence, peace and security from a gender perspective. Since the early 1980s, feminist peace scholars have pointed to "a continuum of violence which links the violence against women to the violence of war,"[5] as stated in the "Consultation on Women, Militarism and Disarmament" written by the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) in 1983. This article defines this kind of feminist approach of articulating the mutually constitutive nature of violence against women and militarism as "antimilitarist-feminism" and explores the conceptual work of the American feminist peace educator and pioneer of FPR, Betty Reardon; her work, I will argue, provides the crucial foundation of antimilitarist-feminist theory and practice. Reardon, as Ronni Alexander maintains, is a pioneer of feminist peace research who identifies "global violence and warfare as both the cause and consequence of the structural violence that denies the human rights of women"[6] and reveals the symbiosis of sexism and militarism. As a peace and human right activist, she has also actively engaged with civil society movements, including the movement to draft and lobby for the UNSCR 1325 on Women Peace and Security.

I begin with an overview of FPR background to FPR theorists' engagement with Reardon's antimilitarist-feminist theory. The article then explores distinctive characteristics of Reardon's antimilitarist-feminist theory, and also considers some critiques of her work. Lastly, I analyze relevant

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3　Ray Acheson, "COVID-19: Militarise or Organise?" Accessed October 2, 2020. https://www.wilpf.org/covid-19-militarise-or-organise/.

4　Ray Acheson, "COVID-19: Foreign Military Bases Spread Violence and Virus." Accessed October 2, 2020. https://www.wilpf.org/covid-19-foreign-military-bases-spread-violence-and-virus/.

5　Peace Education Commission, International Peace Research Association, "Consultation on Women, Militarism and Disarmament," *Security Dialogue* 15, no. 2 (1984): 155-156.

6　Ronni Alexander, "Gender, Structural Violence, and Peace" in *The Routledge Handbook of Gender and Security,* eds. Caron E. Gentry and others (London/New York: Routledge, 2019), 28.

actions against militarism undertaken by the US Section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF); WILPF is the oldest international feminist peace organization, and has called for the end of war and the realization of gender equality since its foundation in 1915. In the final section of this article, I explore the connections between these actions and anti-militarist feminist theory, since the relationship between theory and practice is a significant question for understanding Reardon's approach to antimilitarist-feminism.

I Evolution of Feminist Peace Research and Anti-militarist Feminist Theory

The following sections discuss the evolution of feminist peace research (FPR) and the emergence of anti-militarist feminist theory. FPR is a transdisciplinary field of research on peace and violence grounded in a feminist perspective, which "necessarily asks questions about unequal gender relations and power structures," according to a group of feminist peace scholars who recently defined the field.[7] Anti-militarist feminist theory, meanwhile, is a form of feminist peace research that focuses specifically on the symbiosis of militarism and sexism.

I first describe two key characteristics of FPR. First, it has challenged the limited approach of traditional peace research, which lacked a gender perspective, and argued that gender functions in every process of creating and perpetuating violence. Second, it has provided a more comprehensive view of violence, peace and security through a great deal of feminist work both inside and outside of peace research. Next, I trace how antimilitarist-feminist theory has developed since the 1980s. I then take up how Reardon, a key theorist of anti-militarist feminism, conceptualizes the structural connections between militarism and sexism. Lastly, I discuss the problems faced by FPR.

1. Feminist Peace Research and the Critique of Traditional Peace Studies

Peace studies, along with conflict studies, emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War for the prevention of interstate wars, including nuclear war.

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7   Annick T. R Wibben et al., "Collective Discussion: Piecing-Up Feminist Peace Research," *International Political Sociology* 13, no. 1 (2019): 86.

Although peace research is often treated as a sub-disciplinary field in international relations (IR), as Oliver Richmond argues, it also served to "question the domination of the discipline of IR by what many peace and conflict researchers saw as a self-fulfilling militaristic paradigm obsessed with power and violence, interest and status."[8] In 1950s and 1960s, peace research in the United States focused on the prevention of war, by seeking "measurable and objective causes of war."[9] However, peace researchers have since developed a wider understanding of peace and violence. One of the most notable contributions was made by Johan Galtung, who is considered to have laid the foundations for the field of peace research. In a 1969 article,[10] Galtung challenges the traditional paradigm in which peace is equated with the absence of war. He starts by identifying violence as an essential component in understanding peace, and explains that "violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations."[11] He then puts forward the concepts of "negative peace," the absence of direct/personal violence, and "positive peace," the absence of indirect/structural violence that has no visible agency, such as poverty and discrimination. His widely accepted articulation of violence and peace offers a framework within which all violence can be understood.[12]

　　Meanwhile, feminist peace scholars have argued that mainstream peace research, which has been almost exclusively male dominated, "do[es] not consider the ways citizenship, social institutions, and states themselves are masculinized nor do they address the ways that war and peace affect men and women differently."[13] As I will discuss below, a lack of gender perspective limits understandings of violence and peace because gendered power relations function in every process of creating and perpetuating violence, as well as in the analysis of peace.

　　Galtung's work also has become a subject of such critique. His famed

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8　Richmond Oliver, *Peace in International Relations* (London/New York: Routledge, 2008), 98-99.

9　Alexander, "Gender, Structural Violence," 28.

10　Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167-191.

11　Ibid., 185.

12　Catia C. Confortini, "Galtung, Violence, and Gender: The Case for a Peace Studies/Feminism Alliance," *Peace & Change* 31 (2006): 333-367.

13　Alexander, "Gender, Structural Violence," 28.

quote in which he describes the presence and absence of a clear subject-object relation as an indicator of "structural violence" represents a lack of gender perspectives: "when one husband beats his wife there is a clear case of personal violence, but when one million husbands keep one million wives in ignorance there is structural violence."[14] What his concept can express at best would be the existence of unequal relations between men and women as a static form of structural violence; this understanding of violence, however, takes for granted the existence of binary relations between men and women,[15] and stops short of examining the process of how unequal relations between men and women are constructed. It also lacks consideration of how socially assigned gender roles legitimate male violence at the individual and global levels.[16]

The early feminist criticisms of traditional peace research came from diverse fields. For example, sociologist Elise Boulding (1976) reveals male domination of females in most societies and the invisibility of women's role in history.[17] In regards to the world of mainstream peace scholarship composed of mostly men, Betty Reardon (1975) points out that male dominated scholarship tends to be abstract in its analysis of peace and its attempts to enact social changes, and lacks attention to concrete human experiences and behavior.[18] Reardon further argues that the exclusion of women and women's perspectives from this analysis reflects the sexism that underlies the peace studies establishment.[19] In her critique of male-dominated and state-centered international politics, Cynthia Enloe (1990) shows the linkages between the process of militarization and unequal gender relations in global politics and the economy, through her unique approach of looking at the everyday lives and experiences of women.[20] Another international political scientist, J. Ann Tickner (1992), argues that the male-dominated discipline of international relations is

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14 Galtung, "Violence," 171.

15 Alexander, "Gender, Structural Violence," 31.

16 Confortini, "Galtung," 333-367.

17 Elise Boulding, *The Underside of History: A View of Women through Time* (NY: Halsted, 1976).

18 Betty A. Reardon, "Women's Movements" (1975) in Reardon and Snauwaert, *Key Texts*, 8.

19 Betty A. Reardon, *Sexism and the War System* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 71-82.

20 Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1990).

obsessed with power for states' competition over military force, and that their militaristic notion of national security perpetuates gendered relations of domination and subordination.[21]

2. Antimilitarist-Feminist Theory: Articulating the Mutually Constitutive Nature of Violence against Women and Militarism

Other feminist scholars have also contributed to deepening the concept of violence, peace and security by identifying the interconnection of violence against women and war/militarism. I categorize this as antimilitarist-feminist theory.

The earliest conceptualization of rape as "an exercise of power"[22] was provided by feminist journalist Susan Brownmiller (1975), who finds rape to be an intentional device of intimidation used in war to "keep all women in a state of fear."[23] Feminist political scientist V. Spike Peterson (1992) challenges the logic of militaristic state security that presumes the relations of "protector-protected," arguing that it produces a hierarchical obedience-subordination relationship, through which sovereign states legitimate their dominant use of force by positioning it as a form of protection from external threats to its people, especially women, and by simultaneously constructing their need for defense and protection. She points out that the protector-protected dichotomy is embedded in constructions of masculine autonomy and feminine dependency, which create a threat to those whose security is promised.[24]

Engaging with feminist activism against militarism, some feminist scholars inquire into the function of the military and question militarized security. Margo Okazawa-Rey and Gwyn Kirk (2003) explain that militarized security always divides people and maintains inequality because it "involves domination and subordination, control and power over the environment, 'other' people, and nations. It manifests itself in locks, gates, fences, prisons, and borders – keeping some people in and others out. It relies on weapons, from an individual's use of

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21 Ann J. Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1992).

22 Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (NY: Ballantine Books, 1993), 256.

23 Ibid., 15.

24 Spike V. Peterson, ed., *Gendered States: Feminist (Re) Visions of International Relations Theory* (Boulder& London: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 1992), 50-54.

mace or guns to a nation's stockpiling of arms, high military budgets, and the international arms trade."[25] Similarly, through the analysis of "military violence against women" as theorized by the feminist peace movement, feminist peace researcher/activist Kozue Akibayashi (2004) demonstrates that misogynistic values are embedded in the military and that violence against women is structural violence caused by militarism. She makes a clear connection between critiques of militarized security springing from feminist activism and similar critiques in feminist scholarship which point out the contradictions in the masculine militaristic notions of national security that in fact become the source of insecurity.[26]

Furthermore, through the analysis of women's antiwar/antimilitarism movements, feminist researcher Cynthia Cockburn (2010) articulates how patriarchal gender relations are among the root causes of militarism and war. She explains that "war deepens already deep sexual division, emphasizing the male as perpetrator of violence, women as victim,"[27] enabling mass rape of women to be committed.

This accumulation of antimilitarist-feminist work reveals the mutually constitutive nature of violence against women and militarism through their analysis that forms of state security that rely on masculine military force actually make people, especially women or those who are feminized, more insecure by reinforcing their submissive position, and that such systems and ideas further strengthen militarism and unequal gender relations.

3. Betty Reardon's Concept of "Militarist Sexist Symbiosis"

As a key example of antimilitarist-feminist theory, I further take up Reardon's core concept of "militarist-sexist symbiosis," which was first introduced in her *Sexism and the War System* (1985). This concept arose from her gender analysis of war as a "system" rather than an event, and the

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25 Margo Okazawa-Rey and Kirk Gwyn, "Maximum Security," *Social Justice* 27, no. 3 (2000): 120-132.

26 Kozue Akibayashi, "Anzenhosho to gender ni kansuru kousatsu: 'Kichi-guntai wo yurusanai koudousuru onnatachi no kai" [A Gender Perspective on Security: Okinawa Women Act Against Military Violence], *Journal of Gender Studies: Ochanomizu University* 7, (2004): 73-85.

27 Cynthia Cockburn, "Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization and War: A FEMINIST STANDPOINT," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12, no. 2 (2010): 144.

relationship between this system and the larger continuum of violence. This analysis emphasizes how direct and indirect/structural violence are connected both at the individual and global level, rather than seeing violence as an incident occurring out of context or seeing "war as separable from the politics (and violence) of everyday life."[28]

Reardon recognizes that peace research has paid limited attention to sexism as a significant obstacle to the achievement of peace, while she also points out that North American mainstream feminist research/movements have paid insufficient attention to characteristics which construct the overall violent system and tended to separate oppression of women from other political and social problems.[29] In order to overcome such inadequacies of both peace and feminist research in their separate attempts to abolish respectively sexism and war, Reardon calls for the need for an integration of feminist scholarship with peace research.[30]

The distinctiveness of Reardon's systemic perspective on the symbiosis between militarism and sexism lies in its attention to "the structures and processes of gender discrimination and oppression as they were affected by and affected armed conflict and the institution of war."[31] Her systemic analysis of war as an institution shows significant characteristics through which the war system is constructed: inequality among human beings and the legitimation of coercive force as a tool to maintain the order of inequality. Based on this analysis, she defines the war system as a "competitive social order, which is based on authoritarian principles, assumes unequal value among and between human beings, and is held in place by coercive force."[32] In the war system, she points out that militarism (the use of coercive force to maintain control and dominance) and sexism (discrimination and subordination of women or feminine values over men or masculine values), are mutually supportive and interdependent. The recognition of the mutual functioning of gender and violence makes possible a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity or relationality of violence, which goes beyond Galtung's more

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28　Laura Sjoberg, *Gender, War & Conflict* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 143.

29　Ibid., 64-82.

30　Ibid., 1.

31　Reardon and Snauwaert, *Key Texts*, xxvii.

32　Reardon, *Sexism*, 10.

limited framework of structural violence.

In addition to the structural interplay of militarism and sexism, Reardon found their common emotional roots in misogyny. Accordingly, she emphasizes that militarism and sexism are not separate issues but twin manifestations of a structural and value-based system of domination, which is patriarchy.[33] Along with Reardon's systemic perspective, her emphasis on the learning process is another distinctive characteristic. By stressing on the importance of learning, she refuses an essentialist view on human nature. She argues that both militarism and sexism are the result of our learning and that these learned behaviors are subject to change through further learning and choices.[34]

4. Challenges Faced by Feminist Peace Research

Although there is now a great deal of work that incorporates critical gender analysis of violence, peace and security, FPR faces several challenges. First, their emphasis on deep-rooted structural relations of militarism and sexism has yet to be sufficiently understood by mainstream researchers or policy makers on peace and security. Even during the United Nations' 20 years of effort to incorporate gender perspectives into the process of peace and security or into the efforts to end sexual violence against women, there is still a tendency to see sexual violence as divorced from gendered power relations. For instance, feminist researchers point out that in the UN Security Council Resolutions which specifically address sexual violence against women in armed conflict,[35] a narrow gender perspective reproduces fixed understandings of women as victims in need of protection or women as inherent peacemakers, reproducing gender roles and strengthening masculinized militaristic notions of security without addressing the role played by sexism and patriarchy.[36]

33　Ibid., 2, 5, 57. On patriarchy, see 15, 37-38.

34　Ibid., 1, 5-6.

35　The UNSC resolutions on WPS which focus on sexual violence against women in armed conflict are follows: UNSCR1820 (2008) recognizes sexual violence as "a tactic of war" and significant issue of international peace and security; UNSCR1888 (2009) calls for efforts of all stakeholders to end conflict-related sexual violence as well as establishment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General; UNSCR1889 (2009) encourages Member States to implement 1325 with indicators to measure its implementation, and stresses the need to empower women as actor of peacebuilding in addition to protection of women.

36　Laura J. Shepherd, *Gender, Violence & Security* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2008).

Furthermore, the focus on "sexual violence in armed conflict" shifts attention away from military violence that takes place in situations other than armed conflict "such as military occupation, colonial domination, military political control, and even UN military forces' peacekeeping activities."[37]

A second challenge is FPR's long debates over the relations between women/feminism and peace as well as the question of differences among women/feminisms, which discouraged feminist scholars from developing collective strategies to change the social system. In FPR, arguments relating women to peace are problematized and labeled as essentialist; this critique is sometimes applied to antimilitarist-feminist work such as Betty Reardon's. The concern of homogenizing all women as peaceful regardless of their different situations and experiences led many feminist scholars to "not only track the positioning and repositioning of diverse women and men but also show how the power of gender operates in the context to maintain interlocking inequalities based on gender, race, class, sexuality, and nationality."[38] On the other hand, as feminist peace scholar Catia Confortini argues, the critique of the association of women and peace has made feminist scholars reluctant to engage in theoretical questions of peace and gender, which ironically left both peace and women devalued.[39] This means that while critiques of essentialism lead feminist peace researchers to pay attention to the complexity of violence and gender relations through which people experience violence and peace differently, the fear of being labeled essentialist may also inhibit feminist scholars from developing structural understanding of such complexities, making it more difficult to change the current security system that is dominated by militaristic values.

Considering these two challenges—the lack of structural understanding of gender and violence in research and policy making of peace and security, and the labeling of essentialism that could isolate feminism/women from peace—I argue that Reardon's "systemic perspective" that highlights interconnectedness of the causes and processes of various forms of violence has not been fully

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37　Suzuyo Takazato, "Report from Okinawa: Long-Term U.S. Military Presence and Violence Against Women," *Canadian Woman Studies* 19, no. 4 (2000): 42.

38　Anne S. Runyan and Peterson V. Spike, *Global Gender Issues in the New Millennium* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2014), 2.

39　Confortini, *Intelligent Compassion*, 7-8.

considered by either mainstream peace research or feminist research. This perspective deserves deeper understanding in FPR. This observation led me to reexamine the debates on and critiques of Reardon's argument, starting from the following questions: what is antimilitarist-feminist theory which does not homogenize differences among women, and what is the relation of such a theory with practice? In order to deepen our understanding of such antimilitarist-feminist theory which does not homogenize differences among women, the next section examines how Reardon's arguments have been interpreted and critiqued in FPR. Then to further explore the relations between theory and practice in Reardon's antimilitarist-feminist theory, the third section analyzes women's attempts to challenge militarism, focusing on the US section of WILPF.

II Debates within Feminist Peace Research and Responses to Betty Reardon's Anti-militarist Feminist Theory

1. Feminist Peace Research Debates on Essentialism

Before entering an examination of the critiques of Reardon's argument which depict it as essentialist, this section explores debates in feminist peace research over the relations between women/femininity and peace, and critiques of this kind of association as based in essentialism. While many authors have pointed towards women's role in creating peace, attributing this either to nature or to socially constructed gender roles, such positions have also been criticized as essentialist arguments that legitimate unequal gender roles, and ignore the different experiences of women.

The notion of women's peacefulness has long been used by feminist scholars and activists. Sociologist Jodi York explains that the claims of women's peacefulness have motivated many feminist activists and scholars to challenge war and militarism.[40] There are two strong but controversial logics which explain women's role in the creation of peace: a claim based on motherhood and a claim based on femininity. The first claim is that women as mothers who give birth and care children are inherently opposed to war which causes death and destruction, and thus women should work together for peace. This logic

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40   Jodi York, "The Truth(s) about Women and Peace," *Peace Review* 8, no. 3 (1996): 323.

helped to organize the most influential women's peace organizations against war in the United States during 1960s, such as Women Strike for Peace. The logic, however, was still problematic for many women because it accepts women's subordinate role and "merely cooperates with patriarchy by ameliorating its worst aspects, making patriarchal and militaristic oppression more bearable."[41]

The second logic is that women who have developed feminine traits of caring and cooperation are superior to and more peaceful than those who have developed masculine traits of dominance and individualism, and thus peace will be achieved by revaluing these "feminine" traits.[42] The logic of connecting femininity and peace has also been criticized by other feminist peace researchers. The first point of criticism is that the association of femininity and peace legitimates or reinforces dualistic gender roles. For instance, Ann Tickner points out that "the association of femininity with peace lends support to an idealized masculinity that depends on constructing women as passive victims in need of protection. It also contributes to the claim that women are naïve in matters relating to international politics."[43] Furthermore, the discourse of women's role of caretaking as a model of virtue is critically analyzed by Laura Kaplan who problematizes "patriarchal militarism." She points out the two problems with this kind of discourse: 1) it adopts a strict dualism between feminine and masculine development and thus "may reinforce rather than overcome the patriarchal dualism that constitutes the self by devaluing other;"[44] 2) it "may obscure the role of caretakers often play in supporting war and warriors"[45] and discourage examination of their role in maintaining and reproducing a militarized society. With regard to the inclusion of women in decision-making processes, Salla Michael maintains that it is not sufficient to simply add women as the direct or primary instruments for a more peaceful society.[46] She further calls for a more transformative approach of challenging

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41　Ibid., 324.

42　Ibid., 323.

43　Tickner, *Gender in International Relations*, 59.

44　Laura D. Kaplan, "Woman as Caretaker: An Archetype that Supports Patriarchal Militarism," *Hypatia* 9, no. 2 (1994): 123.

45　Ibid.

46　Salla Michael, "Women & War, Men & Pacifism," in *Gender, Peace & Conflict,* eds. Inger Skielsbæk and Dan Smith (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), 69, 75.

"the power networks that support the organized use of force in solving domestic and international problems."[47]

The second point of critique highlights different historical experiences of women and the intersectionality of inequalities. Noting the interlocking nature of inequalities that arise from class, ethnicity/race, sexuality, and other differences, Runyan and Peterson argue that an essentialist understanding of gender that positions men as war makers and women as peace makers fails to see inequalities and conflicting interests among both women and men.[48] Additionally, based on an analysis of feminist perspectives on security studies, Annick Wibben explains that the association between women and peace discourages attention to women's engagement in violence and thus "women who are violent are treated as outcasts, labeled crazy, and their actions are depoliticized."[49] Meanwhile, she also argues that this criticism should not obscure the fact that much of the time women are heavily impacted by war and militarized societies, and that militaries everywhere rely on male privilege and female subordination to function.[50]

The need to pay attention to the lived experience of differently located women has also been pointed out by postcolonial feminists who criticize the universalization of gender oppression. For example, Chandra Mohanty argues in her conceptualization of feminist solidarity that "diversity and difference are central values here – to be acknowledged and respected, not erased in the building of alliances."[51] The problem of universalization has been acknowledged by many other feminist peace researchers who argue that normative ideas for ending patriarchy and violence are not monolithic and thus those who have more powerful voices among feminists are able to dominate hegemonic discourse.[52]

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47 Ibid., 69.

48 Runyan and Peterson, *Global Gender Issue*, 13, 15-17.

49 Annick T. R. Wibben, *Feminist Security Studies: A Narrative Approach* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), 22-23.

50 Ibid.

51 Chandra T. Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2003), 7.

52 Wibben et al., "Collective Discussion," 91.

2. Critiques of Reardon's Arguments

As a basis for examining Reardon's antimilitarist-feminist theory, the following sections show how feminist scholars have critiqued her argument. The critiques are categorized into two themes: the association of women and peace; and the reduction of all violence to sexism.

i. Association of Women and Peace

On the first theme of the association between women and peace, feminist international law scholar Hilary Charlesworth points out that Reardon's monograph *Sexism and the War System* presents an account of women as anti-militaristic and innately peaceful, and ignores that in reality women are also involved in violence.[53] She explains that such an account arises from Reardon's attempt "to identify positive values held in common by women and men that promote non-violent relations between individuals, nations and social groups; for example, merging masculine objective rationality with feminine intuitive rationality."[54]

Regarding such a reading of Reardon's argument as assuming that women are innately peaceful or anti-militaristic, one of the earliest criticisms was made by a feminist political scientist, Christine Sylvester (1987), who devotes an article to pointing out the danger of merging certain feminine values and peace regardless of differences among women in their relationship with violence. Sylvester presents two problems with this approach: it generalizes women's peacefulness and excludes those women who join the military or adopt militarized values to survive, and it presumes a single/coherent value of peace.[55]

Sylvester argues that in Reardon's framework of positive and negative values, peace-oriented values are linked to part of being an authentic woman, which suggests that "a self-evident feminine nature exists and can be valorized

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53 Hilary Charlesworth, "Are Women Peaceful? Reflections on the Role of Women in Peace-Building," *Feminist Legal Studies* 16, no. 3 (2008): 349.

54 Ibid.

55 Christine Sylvester, "Some Dangers in Merging Feminist and Peace Projects," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 12, no. 4 (1987) Revised in Christine Sylvester, *Feminist International Relations: An Unfinished Journey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 207-223.

as positive force for change."[56] Consequently, negative values are subordinated to the positive attributes that are truly human. Sylvester contends that within such a dualistic framework of positive and negative values, Reardon's attempt to merge feminism and peace research can ironically lead to a positivist hegemonic discourse of objective truth, because this precludes or invalidates various experiences of women who exhibit different values from ones deemed authentic.[57] Against the dualistic framework of positive and negative values, Sylvester's concern regards the possibility of "erasing, benignly tolerating, or ignoring different modalities of being and knowing in integrating seemingly like-minded subjects, movements and theories."[58]

ii. Reduction of all Violence to Sexism

The second point of the critique of Reardon's argument is that defining all violence as sexist can leave various aspects and causes of violence and oppression unexamined. For instance, Cynthia Cockburn asserts that feminist analysis of violence requires consideration of multiple sources of power, such as economic power, ethnic and national power, and patriarchal gender power that always work as causes of militarization and war at both macro and individual levels.[59] Through her empirical research on women's antiwar organizations, Cockburn reports that the gender order alone is not the basis of the reality of violence that women's antiwar movements have faced and challenged. She argues that Reardon's framework of the war system reduces social order to nothing other than a gender order. Although there is no further explanation of how she finds Reardon's framework to be reductive, Cockburn illustrates Reardon's explanation of patriarchy as an example of such a reduction: "patriarchy… invented and maintains war to hold in place the social order it spawned."[60]

Similarly, feminist political scientist Laura Sjoberg maintains that seeing all violence as sexist can limit the understanding of how wars are differently experienced. She explains that while Reardon's concept of the war system

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56 Ibid., 209.

57 Ibid., 209-216.

58 Ibid., 208.

59 Cockburn, "Gender Relations," 150.

60 Ibid., 147.

helps to articulate how violence actually works in the world, it may not be enough to understand "about how wars are made, fought, and felt, including, but not limited to, questions of variation in the causes, practices, and experiences of war(s)."[61]

The point of critique which both Cockburn and Sjoberg share is that Reardon's conceptualization of war and violence should be more attentive to complex causes of violence, which would include but not be limited to gender.

III. Antimilitarist-Feminism:
Theory and Practice to Challenge Militarized Security

1. Examination of the Critiques of Betty Reardon's Antimilitarist-Feminist Theory

The criticisms of Reardon's arguments presented above have two common threads. They read Reardon's arguments as 1) a deterministic account of differences between women and men which may reinforce the patriarchal dualism of femininity and masculinity, and 2) a theorization which reduces violence to sexism, and which may occlude women's different relations with violence based on the intersections of gender, race, sexuality and class, and others. This section examines Reardon's argument while taking these concerns into account.

First, Reardon's argument regarding feminine and masculine values seems to in fact be the antithesis of an essentialist view of gender. As she has noted in a number of works, her core assertion that is based on peace education is that our social structures and human values are "learned" through our experiences, not inherent.[62] In her monograph from 1980, Reardon clearly distinguishes what she calls "masculine/feminine values" from "male/female values," explaining that the former refers to what society has determined to be appropriate male/female characteristics for men and women to aspire to and value.[63] It should be added that she denies the existence of fixed 'male' values

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61　Laura Sjoberg, *Gendering Global Conflict: Toward a Feminist Theory of War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 274.

62　See for example, Reardon, *Sexism*, 9.

63　Betty A. Reardon, "Debating the Future," *Network* 8, no. 3 (1980) in Reardon and Snauwaert, *Key Texts*, 30-31.

and 'female' values that are inherent to men and women.[64] With this understanding of masculine and feminine values as a consequence of learning and experience, Reardon deliberately uses the terms to question patriarchal dichotomies which lead to unequal social structures and value systems which have divided human beings.[65] Reardon's intentional use of the concept of "feminine" and "masculine" values to make existing differences visible is strategically important in challenging patriarchal dichotomies because, as Joey Sprague argues, "saying that categories such as gender or race or sexuality are merely constructions flies in the face of the experience of those whose options are constrained by their social placement into those categories."[66]

Second, with regard to the different experiences among women, Reardon's structural/systemic understanding of violence certainly takes various components of oppression into consideration. In *Sexism and the War System*, Reardon contends:

> Indeed, to assert "that our oppression is by men and not by opposing nationalities" not only ignores the structures that enforce sexist oppression and contemporary economic paternalism, but also attributes to nation-states a degree of autonomy they simply do not have. This reinforces the myth of sovereignty, which is another significant support of the war system. The assertion also fails to challenge the nation-state itself and all related international structures as essentially patriarchal. … It [feminism] is not only a struggle against domestic confinement in the home and other forms of purdah, but also and foremost a struggle against the oppressive economic structures of imperialism, particularly capitalist imperialism.[67]

Reardon's antimilitarist-feminist theory necessitates inquiry into the "differing conditions and circumstances of oppression and discrimination against women"[68] in order to understand those structural connections. She

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64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 Joy Sprague, *Feminist Methodologies for Critical Researchers: Bridging Difference* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 42.

67 Reardon, *Sexism*, 67.

68 Ibid., 20.

further emphasizes the need for attention to the characteristics of "the overall system," because the lack of systemic analysis fragments various feminist and women's works on peace and limits the capacity of feminist scholarship and activism to analyze the fundamental causes of social problems.[69]

Let us return to Sylvester's critiques of Reardon, saying that "killing is such a pervasive part of lived reality for many women of the world that we must bend over backward to avoid treating their situations as 'other,' where no useful labor takes place and no contribution is made to our thinking on peace and feminism."[70] Sylvester seems to interpret Reardon's positive and negative values as a dichotomy between "peaceful women" and "non-peaceful women" in Sylvester's terms. However, what Reardon questions is not people or situations but a system of denying and distorting human potentials, which imposes negative impacts especially on women and other marginalized people. Reardon problematizes such a negative structure and value system, for which we are all responsible to a greater or lesser extent, because they are results of our choices and learning. Enloe similarly insists on the significance of paying serious attention to the lived experience and feelings of diverse women in order to "understand functions" of the world. According to Enloe, the motivation to be curious about women's lives and experiences derives from "a determination to discover exactly how this world works... a desire to reveal the ideas, relationships, and policies those (usually unequal) gendered workings rely upon."[71]

Regarding the complex realities of gender, violence and peace, Runyan and Peterson point out the dilemma in addressing global problems: on the one hand, many feminists are skeptical of resorting to "global" solutions because of differing "local" forms of violence as well as the need for context-specific and context-sensitive solutions; on the other hand, lack of attention to global processes that produce similar problems across different localities can lead to overlooking these kinds of interconnections, thereby leaving them largely intact or simply shifting them to "other" places.[72] Reardon's systemic perspective encourages understanding of how global structures function in the

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69　Ibid., 66.
70　Sylvester, "Some Dangers," 220.
71　Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, 6.
72　Runyan and Peterson, *Global Gender Issues*, 16-17.

various lived experiences of women, in which all women's experiences—including the women warriors taken up by Sylvester—are taken seriously.

In *Sexism and the War System*, Reardon further identifies that dichotomous and competitive structures and value systems have classified some people into otherness based on "negatively exaggerated and manipulated differences," which also strengthens the war system:

> I do not advocate merger into a homogenous culture or uniform human dignity, but rather, a transcendence of the abstract, dichotomous thinking that impedes the flourishing of the myriad ways of being human… It is this dichotomous, competitive, polarizing thinking that has negatively exaggerated and manipulated the differences between men and women and kept us playing the war game for most of human history.
> This lethal game has enabled us to make sharp, often spurious distinctions between good and evil and led us to make our own kind, if not ourselves, the personification of virtue and symbols of the highest human attainment, ascribing to the other image of corruption and lesser accomplishments. It has also exaggerated the differences of otherness, making it the precondition to becoming the enemy.[73]

Taking Reardon's systemic perspective into account, her concept of positive and negative values is useful for strategizing concrete actions to transform violent social structures into potential alternatives, which are based on structural and comprehensive analysis of the interconnectedness of the different forms of violence as a total system. The following passage clarifies Reardon's use of the term "positive" as related to the possibility of actualizing preferred futures, which are life enhancing:

> The 'masses' would not be moved in one direction or another by crushing deviations and dissensions; rather, public policy would seek to identify and develop positive trends and attitudes. This criteria for making public decisions would be those which enhanced the quality of human life. None of these processes are new to human experiences, but for the most part

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73 Reardon, *Sexism*, 93.

they have been neglected to the private rather than the public sector of human affairs.[74]

According to Reardon's explanation, positive and negative values – one which respects human dignity and the other which denies human dignity – would not assume one exclusive category of "superior" human beings nor judge people of various experiences by dividing them into the categories of positive and negative, contrary to Sylvester's characterization of Reardon's thesis.

2. Feminist Peace Movement in the US: The US Section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

In order to deepen our understanding of Reardon's antimilitarist-feminist theory, it is necessary to explore how the theory and practice of feminist peace movements are related, because her theory of antimilitarist-feminism derived from her own commitment to feminist peace movements, especially from the perspective of peace education. For this reason, this section analyzes the activities of feminist peace movement in the US in the 1980s. This is a period during which the United States withdrew from direct involvement in armed conflicts such as the Vietnam War, and saw the rise of feminist movements centered around the UN Decade for Women, yet was still faced with the serious threat of human annihilation by the escalation of nuclear arms race. It was also a moment when there were arguments over the exclusion of women from military draft registration, and women's rights activists including some belonging to the National Organization for Women (NOW) situated women's right to fight as a means for achieving gender equality.

Feminist activist-historian Harriet Alonso, who analyzes the history of the women's peace movement in the United States, observes that while there have been many women activists addressing various women's issues that do not necessarily include peace, there is a theme consistent in feminist peace movements: the clear connection "between institutionalized violence and violence against women, whether the institution be slavery, the military, or

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74　Reardon, "Women's Movements," 13.

governmental oppression."[75] Cockburn also identifies a commonality in women's antiwar/antimilitarist movements around characterizing violence as a continuum.[76] Based on their arguments, the term "feminist peace movement" in this article refers to antimilitarist-feminist movements organized by feminist activists who address both gender equality and disarmament/demilitarization as a means to achieve peace.

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) was founded in 1915 during the First World War by women suffragists from both belligerent and neutral countries who gathered at the Hague to end the war and achieve peace.[77] The US Section of WILPF (WILPF US) has been working actively since its foundation. Among many feminist movements addressing women's rights, WILPF has assumed a leading role nationally and internationally in connecting the achievement of women's rights and the achievement of peace by clearly condemning militarism and violence against women. For instance, in 1975, WILPF sponsored a women's disarmament seminar at the UN and worked to include disarmament perspectives in the first UN International Women's Conference in Mexico. Meanwhile, WILPF US launched the "Feed the Cities Not the Pentagon" campaign which called for cutting the US military budget to fund human needs.[78] In order to elaborate antimilitarist-feminist theorizing from the perspective of activism, I will highlight some of the notable activities of WILPF US, and the way they theorized antimilitarism in the 1980s. My analysis of their activities is primarily based on the research on the history of women's peace movements in the US by Harriet Alonso and the materials published by WILPF US for its 90th anniversary.

After an ebb and flow of membership during the Second World War and due to anti-communist sentiment during the Cold War, WILPF US had approximately 15,000 members in 1982.[79] The style of their activism at that

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75 Harriet Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 8.

76 Cynthia Cockburn, *antiMilitarism: Political and Gender Dynamics of Peace Movements* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Publisher, 2012), 254, 261-262.

77 WILPF, *WILPF Manifesto 2015* (2015)

78 WILPF U.S. Section. *Generations of Courage* (2004), 10.

79 Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue*, 223.

time was mainly based on organizing meetings, petition campaigns, marches, and coalitions with other movements.[80] According to Alonso, through arguments over the conditions of peace and political solutions, WILPF US came to recognize the interconnectedness of political and social-economic issues with militarism and sexism, when many other women at that time preferred to address more immediate concerns.[81] Their focus was on the global implications of the nuclear arms race, and they advocated for reallocating military spending to better use to fulfill people's basic needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, education and employment.[82] One of the highest impact and the largest demonstrations for disarmament organized by WILPF US was an antinuclear campaign called "Stop the Arms Race" (STAR) in 1982 which collected petitions from 10,000 women and presented NATO with the demand to cancel deployment of Pershing missiles. The STAR campaign resulted in large-scale marches in New York attracting over 750,000 participants, as well as civil disobedience actions at the embassies of the nuclear powers such as the US, the Soviet Union, China and France.[83]

WILPF US in cooperation with WIPF International brought its efforts on global issues to help build an international networks of women peace activists. This network included the famed "Peace Tent" at the 1985 UN Women's Decade Conference in Nairobi sponsored by WILPF, which provided a space for dialogue among women from different states who were in hostile relations, such as Israel and Palestine.[84]　Having recognized that "a war mentality often led to violence against women, whether on or off the battlefield," WILPF US adopted a two-year program to challenge the myth of militarized security and redefine national security.[85] The program addressed issues such as war, the US's intervention abroad, racism and the reallocation of national budget to meet the basic needs of women and children.[86] Accordingly, they conducted a study on the US government's official budget which prioritized military

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80　Ibid., 229.

81　Ibid., 227-229.

82　Ibid., 228-229.

83　Ibid., 230.

84　WILPF U.S. Section. *Generations of Courage*. (2004), 11.

85　Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue*, 256-258.

86　Ibid.

expenses, followed by their own publication of *The Women's Budget* "illustrating how military dollars could better be spent on societal needs."[87] According to Alonso, *The Women's Budget*, "reflected WILPF's … growth in understanding differences among economic classes, in directing attention to racism and global interconnectedness, and in committing itself anew to working for a world peace that would reflect not only the end of war but a just world for all people."[88]

WILPF US's consistent focus on disarmament from the perspective of women was unique and global in scope. Nevertheless, their activities would not always respond to the concerns of all its members; in particular, it was not always successful in responding to racism, which reflects their leadership by white, middle-class and middle-aged women. As Alonso explains, although WILPF US worked against racism, the members addressed racism with an abstract concept or did not reflect it as their own issue; it was not until 1988, when its membership voted on "Racial Justice" as one of the priority issues, that WILPF US faced racism as an internal organizational issue.[89] Such self-reflective analysis made them able to tackle racism both on the individual and institutional level. Confortini also observes in her analysis of policies around disarmament and decolonialization developed by WILPF as international organization, that it underwent several changes "from belief in liberalism grounded in masculinist notions of autonomy, freedom, and rationality toward more radical critiques of the gender-biased Western international system."[90] As she maintains, such changes were made through the practice of self-reflection "about its ideas and practices to identify and remedy potential and actual forms of oppression and exclusion in society and as well as in their practice."[91]

3. The Relations between Theory and Practice in Antimilitarist-Feminism

The activities of WILPF US shows three significant points regarding the relations between theory and practice in antimilitarist-feminism. First, antimilitarist-feminism is not only an outcome of feminist academic work but

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87   Ibid., 257.

88   Ibid.

89   Ibid., 267-268.

90   Confortini, *Intelligent compassion*, 54.

91   Ibid., 110.

grows out feminist peace movements through their empirical analyses and actions to challenge militarism and gender inequality. Second, feminist peace movement itself is a growing process of recognizing its limitations and broadening its views on the cause of violence and the oppression in various contexts crossing class, gender and race. Third, inclusive and critical feminist peace movements require practices based on systemic and self-reflective analysis to confront these issues not only in society but also within the movements.

According to Reardon, most women's peace actions are very specific responses to particular situations, and are less likely to consider the relevance of these responses to other situations, and therefore "a good deal of the international networking is more for purposes of solidarity than for global strategizing."[92] She thus calls for a systemic perspective to understand interconnectedness among different issues in our social system as a whole, as well as processes that attempt "system change." In developing strategies for system change from a gender perspective, her approach advocates inquiry and learning rather than exposition and debate of positions because the latter would be "best considered in the light of goals first clarified through inquiry."[93] Furthermore, the role of analysts is "to interpret various and specific actions in context of some generalized patterns so that they are useful to the larger movement for demilitarization," and thus analysis and action "is integral to the other in the formulation and pursuit of the feminist challenge."[94]

Conclusion

This article has explored Reardon's antimilitarist-feminism and the relations of the theory and practice, and I identified three distinctive characteristics of Reardon's antimilitarist-feminism which should be understood as antithetical to an essentialist view and can be widely incorporated into feminist efforts to transform the militarized security system.

First, Reardon's antimilitarist-feminism reveals that patriarchy is the

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92 Reardon, "Gender and Global Security," 47.

93 Reardon and Snauwaert, *Key Texts*, 63.

94 Ibid.

system of domination and "a hierarchical value order among human beings,"[95] and that patriarchy combined with the war system produces a dichotomous and competitive social structure that pervades our ways of thinking/behaving. Second, her systemic perspective promotes understanding of the interconnection of various forms of violence within a whole system which has objectified and devalued people based on differences such as race, class and gender. This systemic inquiry is motivated by the intention to challenge the system itself.[96] This leads to the third point that her emphasis on "system change" encourages strategizing around concrete visions and actions to change the patriarchal war system.

In light of the questions of differences among women/feminism raised by FPR, which have discouraged feminist scholars from developing collective strategies, the significance and relevance of Reardon's antimilitarist-feminism lie in her conceptualization of structural interrelationships between militarism and sexism. This conceptualization enables us to not only make sense of how each individual and groups of individuals are engaged in the interplay of the War system and patriarchy in society, but also to see the connections between discrete attempts to challenge them. Reardon appreciates different and conflicting views within a feminist group based on the principle of equity, in developing strategies to challenge the overall social system:

> The one common goal, which transcends our differences and makes possible a collaboration which will not gloss over nor erode the extent of these differences, is equity for women in all cultural, social and ideological contexts. ...without such equity demilitarization to any significant degree is highly unlikely. Thus, we seek to illuminate the links between militarism and sexist repression and to inquire into parallel links between demilitarization and women's equality which can contribute to a successful strategy to reverse the present trends which, [*sic*] are equally damaging both men and women.[97]

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95 Ibid., 111.

96 Ibid., 110.

97 Betty A. Reardon, "A Gender Analysis of Militarism and Sexist Repression: A Suggested Research Agenda," Reardon and Snauwaert, *Key Texts*, 39-40 previously published in *International Peace Research Newsletter* 21, no. 2 (1983).

Systemic change does not assume only one correct solution, because doing so would undermine the specificity of the issues and neglect the importance of developing diverse strategies. Rather, Reardon emphasizes a continuous process of systemic inquiry and self-reflective practice (learning) toward the actualization of respect for the dignity and equity of people in all cultural, social and ideological contexts. Antimilitarist-feminism is inseparable from systemic analysis and practices, which can help to develop "global strategy," the continuous process of systemic inquiry into the complexity and continuity of violence and self-reflective practice/learning to transform violence. Global strategy differs from sisterhood or solidarity for temporal or partial collaboration, and opens the possibility of FPR to develop collective strategies to change the system of domination and militarized security system.

ABSTRACT

Feminist Peace Research and Feminist Peace Movements in the United States:
Betty Reardon's Antimilitarist-Feminist Theory and the US Section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Yuuka Kageyama

Feminist peace research (FPR) is a key field that attempts to redefine violence, peace and security from a gender perspective, to challenge understandings of security that are dominated by militaristic values. This article defines feminist theory and activism that articulates the mutually constitutive nature of violence against women and militarism as "antimilitarist-feminism," and considers in depth the arguments developed by the American feminist peace educator and pioneer of FPR, Betty Reardon, which provide a crucial foundation for antimilitarist-feminist theory and practice. To further elucidate the relations between theory and practice in Reardon's antimilitarist-feminism, the article analyzes relevant activities against militarism by the US Section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), an international feminist peace organization.

In so doing, the article reviews the criticisms within FPR which position antimilitarist-feminist theory as an essentialist argument that associates women/femininity and peace, undermining differences among women in relations with various forms of violence. Critics further argue that Reardon's antimilitarist-feminist theory is 1) a deterministic account of femininity and masculinity that reinforces patriarchal dualism, and 2) a theorization which reduces violence to sexism that fails to grapple with other aspects of violence such as race, sexuality and class.

However, the article identifies three distinctive characteristics of Reardon's antimilitarist-feminist theory that should be understood as antithetical to an essentialist view and that can be widely incorporated into efforts to challenge the militarized security system: First, Reardon's antimilitarist-feminist theory

reveals that patriarchy is a system of domination and a hierarchical value order among human beings, and that patriarchy in combination with the war system produces a dichotomous and competitive social structure that pervades our ways of thinking/behaving. Second, her systemic perspective promotes understanding of the interconnection of various forms of violence within a whole system which has objectified and devalued people based on differences such as race, class and gender. This systemic inquiry is motivated by the intention to challenge the system itself. Third, Reardon's emphasis on "system change" to actualize preferred futures encourages strategizing around concrete visions and actions to change the patriarchal war system.

By examining the activities of WILPF US, the article demonstrates that American feminist peace movements are in a process of recognizing their own limitations and broadening their views on the causes of violence in various contexts crossing class, gender and race through self-reflective analyses. Accordingly, as Reardon maintains, theory and practice in antimilitarist-feminism are integral to each other to challenge the system of domination and militarized security system. The article concludes that Reardon's antimilitarist-feminist theory shows a potential for "global strategy," the continuous process of systemic inquiry into the complexity and continuity of violence, and self-reflective practice/learning that help FPR to develop collective strategies to change the system of domination and militarized security system.