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Book Offers International Perspective on Family Violence

ORONO, Maine -- A new book edited by University of Maine family studies instructor Renate Klein crosses disciplinary and national boundaries by presenting the works of scholars from 10 different countries, examining conflict and violence from a variety of geographical, cultural and historical backgrounds. Perspectives range from anthropological frameworks and sociological explanations to legal philosophy and conflict-management strategies.

"Multi-disciplinary Perspectives on Family Violence" presents case studies and research from Denmark, France, Germany, Britain, Greece, Poland, Romania, Spain, the United States and the Netherlands. Topics include child abuse, family aggression, social representations of conflict and abuse, gender stereotypes, the role of extended family, violence in dating relationships and violence against women.

Klein, a social psychologist, teaches family conflict and domestic violence at UMaine. She is founder and coordinator of the European Research Network on Family Conflict and Domestic Violence.

Family conflict and domestic violence are complex social phenomena which need an integrative approach, but are often studied in isolation, according to Klein. The book, published by Routledge, testifies to the diversity of research approaches in the field, as well as to common themes across disciplines and complementary findings.

In her introduction, Klein notes that the book takes readers on a trek that allows them to visit nuclear families, hear from the extended family and look at the wider community in which families and relationships exist. On this journey, "We witness struggles for power, safety and integrity, and the never-ending quest of explaining why those we love do sometimes hurt us," she writes.

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