



Explaining Northern Ireland

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Blackwell, Oxford, 1996, pp. 533

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Critical examination of both Nationalist and Unionist accounts of the causes of the conflict. Authors distinguish broadly between explanations that focus on external factors – the policies of British and Irish governments – and those that identify the internal factors of religion, culture and ethnicity in Northern Irish society. They reject the proposition that the conflict is fundamentally a religious one, and are sceptical not only of the various Marxist accounts – Orange, Green and 'Red' – but of the essentially materialist accounts by many liberal commentators. While acknowledging the multiplicity of causal factors, they view the conflict as essentially one between groups which identify themselves along different national, ethnic and religious lines, though they hold out the hope of an accommodation between them to produce an 'agreed', though not necessarily a united, Ireland.

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