**Part 1 Causation To what extent was Charles I’s personal flaws the main reason for the descent into Civil War in the period 1625-42?**

**Factors to consider :** Personal flaws of Charles, Royal finances, Religious divisions and problems of controlling multiple kingdoms, and a determined Parliamentary opposition.

**Introduction**. Charles I certainly made a significant contribution to descent into civil war, along with it being the product of deeper rooted structural problems of the British monarchy and the emergence of an aristocratic coup mounted by a determined opposition. It is argued that whilst the interaction of these factors were responsible for the descent into civil war, the emergence of a determined opposition was the most significant factor. **NOTE:** this essay could have been organised in three chronological chunks with each factor being addressed in each 1625-39, 1629-40, 1640-42.

**Part 1** **Charles I’s personal flaws** certainly made a significant contribution to the descent into civil war during the period 1625-1642. Charles had a range of personal flaws which undermined his ability to rule the Kingdom including his desire for uniformity and his tendency to see any opposition as a personal rejection of his policies and his control. This made it extremely difficult for him to seek compromise when issues of the structural problems of ruling multiple kingdoms or of Royal finance emerged from those who opposed his policies in the period. Personal Actions during the period 1625-29 which support this include his decision to marry Henrietta Maria a French Catholic princess and his support for Catholic sympathisers or indeed Arminians within the Anglican Church and his Court. This had the consequence of antagonising Puritan sympathisers within the Anglican Church in England and also the Presbyterian Scots in his kingdom, along with those who felt that parliament had important constitutional powers over issues of royal finance and taxation. Furthermore his Personal Actions during the period of personal rule 1629-40 also contributed to increasing divisions. In particular his close association with Arminians and promotion of Laud to Archbishop in 1633 in order to impose religious uniformity throughout the kingdom in the 1630’s provoked opposition in Scotland to the Laudian reforms of 1636 which found sympathy amongst English puritans closely associated with emerging Parliamentary opposition to Charles after he recalled Parliament in 1640 to grant him finances to fight the Scots.This was further exacerbated by his personal commitment and failure to compromise over his policies towards royal finances and his perceived abuse of reviving feudal payments, selling monopoly licences and the establishment of an annual levy of ship money. Advised by Wentworth to recall Parliament to grant him funds to fight the Scots in 1640, Charles took the decision to dissolve the Short Parliament of April 1640 and consequently was defeated by the Scots and forced to sign the Treaty of Ripon in October 1640. Finally his Personal Actions 1640-42 in failure to compromise with the Long Parliament convened in November 1640 despite some Parliamentarians who wished a settlement with the King, saw Charles try to arrest Opposition MPs in January 1642 in the aftermath of their issuing of the Grand Remonstrance of November 1641. The King's failure resulted in his decision to abandon London with his court to York and his rejection of the Nineteen Propositions of June 1642 witnessed both Parliament and the King raising forces to protect their interests and the declaration of war after the King raised his standard in Nottingham in August 1642. However his personal flaws were not sufficient to cause the descent into civil war without wider structural problems of the monarchy and the kingdom and the emergence of a determined opposition. Its overall contribution was to provide an important stimulus by antagonising difficult constitutional arrangements within the kingdom through lack of foresight or compromise.

**Part 2** Deeper rooted structural problems of the British monarchy and the emergence of an aristocratic coup mounted by a determined opposition also made a significant contribution to the descent into civil war by 1642.

i) **Deeper rooted structural problems** of the British monarchy also contributed to the descent into civil war in terms of both finance and the difficulty of managing multiple kingdoms.

Firstly there were the problems of Royal finance and the constitutional issues that this raised. In this respect it was generally recognised that the King's power was not unlimited and that the highest form of law was statute law which was made by the King in parliament which took precedence over prerogative actions in terms of finances. In succeeding to the throne Charles found an empty treasury and dwindling credit. In 1625 Parliament refused to grant Charles the right to collect an excise tax, Tonnage and Poundage for life. Emerging wars with both Spain and France in the late 1620’s led to Charles revising Parliament's Petition of Right in 1628 and adjourning their right to discuss it further resulting in a period of Personal Rule from 1629-40. Charles embarked on reorganising Royal finances adding new impositions on collecting Tonnage and Poundage, reviving feudal payments, selling monopoly licences and an annual levy of Ship Money which provided greatest controversy since it could lead to the completely undermining the need for the King to call Parliaments which directly contributed to the emergence of organised opposition in the late 30’s and early 40’s. Problems of Royal finance were further exacerbated by the emergence of conflict with Presbyterian Scotland rejection of Laudian reform to the Scottish Kirk in 1639 and Charles need to raise revenue. faced with this the gentry were unhappy with the idea of funding a war with the Scots and engaged in a taxpayer's strike 1639-40 and Charles subsequent defeat by the Scots and the assembly of the Long parliament in late 1640. In June 1641 Parliament pushed for the abolition of the King's Prerogative Courts and Ship Money further undermining the stability of Royal Finance in order to fund Charles policies and accentuating the division between Monarchy and Parliament.

Secondly there was the difficulty in managing multiple kingdoms across the period 1625-42 which witnessed the emergence of the Scottish and Irish rebellions. The religious and political divisions within the kingdom stem from the reformation, elizabethan settlement and the emerging difficulties with this prior to Charles reign. Clearly by 1625 the English monarch had the precarious difficulty of managing a divided anglican Church in England along with a largely Presbyterian Scotland and catholic Ireland. In Scotland Charles control was antagonised by the issuing of the Book of Canons in 1636 and the English Prayer Book in in 1637 resulted in the Scottish clergy and nobility drawing up a National Covenant to defend their Presbyterian Church and religious rights in 1638. Charles failed to defeat this determined Scottish opposition in the Second Bishops war of 1640 and created sympathy of those opposed to personal rule in England expressed through a tax payers strike of 1639-40 and the emergence of opposition in the recalled English Short and Long Parliaments of 1640 who had their own religious and financial grievances with Charles uncompromising policies of imposing religious uniformity in the Kingdom. Furthermore growing rumours of a rising amongst Irish catholics and attacks on protestant settlers along with the landing of an Irish army in North west England in 1641 induced panic amongst the population and the Parliament in London alike and provide the backdrop to the demands of the English Parliament through the Grand Remonstrance and the Militia Bill to provide an army under the control of Parliament to tackle the Irish Rebellion. Even at this stage though it only passed the English parliament by 11 votes and outraged moderates flocked to Charles’ side by january of 1642.

However the difficulty of managing Royal finances and Multiple Kingdoms was not sufficient to cause the descent into civil war without Charles I personal flaws and the emergence of a determined opposition. Its overall contribution was to provide an important stimulus by to civil war because of Charles inability to compromise but increasingly because of the emergence of a more determined opposition to the King's prerogative powers in the absence of scrutiny by parliament

ii) Thus **the emergence of a determined aristocratic opposition** was the most significant cause of the descent into civil war during the period 1625-42, and opposition increasingly aware of Charles deep personal flaws and uncompromising policies in the face of managing the perplexing problems of managing Royal finances and the difficulties of controlling multiple kingdoms. The emergence of a more determined opposition began with the repression which followed the dissolution of Parliament in 1629. discontent and rumbling was further increased by issues surrounding Royal finances and the Laudian Reforms in the 1630’s. The first attempts at organised resistance came in 1636 through a group of Puritan gentry active since before 1629 using the privately organised shipping Company, Providence Island Company to maintain contact. The leaders were John Pym and their contacts included East Anglican gentry and  a Buckinghamshire gentlemen John Hampden. Hampden refused to pay Ship Money in 1636 and although narrowly defeated in the subsequent trial by 1638, the reaction of the gentry around the country was generally hostile resulting in part with a taxpayers strike of 1639-40. Opposition of Puritans writers to Laudian reforms including William prynne resulted in sympathy after the King's star Chamber sentenced him to having his ears cut off, his cheeks branded before being imprisoned at the King's pleasure. After the King recalled parliament in 1640 to raise funds to fight the Scots there was a flood of petitions against personal rule and by the time the Long parliament assembled, Pym and his allies were ready to seize the the opportunity for which they had waited for so long. The group that led parliamentary opposition were known as Pym’s Junto and they immediately embarked on impeaching Laud and Strafford, limiting Charles ability to raise money outside parliament and ensuring the future security of parliament in the control of the Kingdom. In February 1641 the Triennial Act laid down an obligation for Charles to summon Parliament every three years, the Act of Attainder resulted in the beheading of Strafford in May, in June Pym pushed for the abolition of the King's prerogative Courts and Ship Money And the formation of the Ten propositions which included significant extensions of Parliamentary power in approving the Kings Ministers and financial controls. In the aftermath of defeat against the Scots and the emergence of the Irish Rebellion in 1641 Pym sent the King the Grand Remonstrance in November 1641. The King's attempt to arrest leaders of the opposition by ordering his soldiers into the Commons failed and he abandoned London and eventually moved his Court to York. In june 1642 Pym issued the Nineteen Propositions as the basis for a negotiated settlement but were in effect a step to both the King and Pyms parliamentary allies to raise forces to protect their interests. The King raised his standard in Nottingham in August 1642 as an open declaration of civil war against the authority of Parliament to restrict his Monarchical powers. However this determined opposition was not sufficient to cause descent into civil war without the structural problems of the Stuart monarchy and Charles personal flaws. Its overall contribution was to transform a constitutional crises into an open declaration of Civil War.

**Conclusion** That Charles had personal flaws with managing the structural and religious divisions which the legacy of the Elizabethan settlement and his fathers reign had bestowed upon him is well documented. The striving for a confessional state and religious uniformity was always going to involve traversing a precarious path made more complex by his inability to compromise and personal commitment to his Laudian reforms and the emergence of conflict with the Scots in 1640. However even he could not have anticipated the emergence of an increasingly determined opposition born out of the struggle and discontentment with personal rule in the 1630’s and which hardened during the conflict with the Scots in 1640 and with the intransigence of his parliamentary opposition during the Long Parliament. By the time he raised his standard at Nottingham in August 1642 Charles could even seek some comfort that he retained much support amongst his subjects and that the Long Parliament itself had been divided. However what he possibly he could not have anticipated was the determination with which Pyms Junto even after the desertions from Parliament after the Militia Act of 1641, would push through the Nineteen Propositions and engage in preparations to pursue a protracted civil war in the period from 1642-49.