<u>'"The War of the Three Kingdoms" is a more accurate description of the turmoil in the mid seventeenth century than the "English Civil War".' Discuss.</u>

The War of Three Kingdoms is a more accurate description of the turmoil of the mid-seventeenth century than the English Civil War. The revisionist interpretations accurately attribute the causes of the turmoil to religion and the structure of the Stuart multiple monarchy. However, the evidence from Ireland and Scotland suggests that prioritising the structure of the Stuart monarchy over religion would make the interpretation more accurate. The English Civil War, referring to two factions drawing support from England and fighting to control England, ended in 1649 with the execution of Charles I.

Pocock claims that the historiography of Scotland during the 17th century has been influenced by English discourse on the subject, and as a result events which have occurred in Scotland have been viewed in a larger British context.[1] This British context, therefore, is not one where Scotland's autonomy takes priority. Instead, Pocock claims that the English discourse has tended to view Britain as an expansion of England. There is no 'British history' in the sense of a continuous polity or culture. Pocock argues that the description 'civil war' only has meaning in an English context, as there was no genuine civil war in Scotland, and Ireland was not integrated enough for civil war to have genuine meaning.[2] Instead, British history must refer to a multiplicity of histories of the three kingdoms. Pocock supports the description War of the Three Kingdoms because it was composed of three wars that differentiated in political character and began independently, even if their causes were related.

Russell's revisionism argues for the necessity of examining religion and the structure of the multiple monarchy when studying the turmoil of the mid-seventeenth century.[3] In practice, the dynamic of the multiple monarchy means that any group within the kingdoms that faced trouble could reach out to sympathisers in the others. Russell claims that this model of multiple monarchy contributed to the polarisation of politics in the British Isles and helped perpetuate conflict. Combined with the religious grievances, this resulted in Charles I's attempts at imposing religious uniformity, starting a chain of events in Scotland and later in Ireland. Another idea that Russell proposes is viewing the turmoil as a series of resistance to

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[1] Pocock, *Two Kingdoms*, pp.295.
[2] Pocock, 'Plea', pp. 600.
[3] Russell, 'British', pp. 408.

the personal rule of Charles I.[4] From Russell's perspective, it is therefore reductive no leave out the religious divisions across the three kingdoms and the structure of the multiple monarchy perpetuating conflicts.

Examining how the religious causes of the turmoil materialised in Ireland and Scotland leads to the argument that, within the suggested causes of Russell, the structure of the multiple monarchy determined the nature of the conflict over religious grievances. In addition, the status of Ireland and Scotland in relation to England led to the wars fought being uncharacteristic of an English Civil War.

In terms of Ireland, the structure of the Stuart multiple monarchy determined how the religious grievance would be expressed. The Catholic risings in Ireland in 1641 were targeted against the English Protestant rule in Dublin. Eamon Darcy mentions that Sir Phelim O'Neill, the leader of the Ulster rebels, was motivated by religious concerns and the reversal of the plantations.[5] The majority of those from the lower social orders who joined the rebellion were motivated by anti-Protestant and anti-English sentiment.[6] It seems that, as most of the Irish rebels and some of the Irish leaders saw their efforts as one against English religious, political and economic domination, the turmoil in Ireland was an attempt to remove English political rule in Ireland rather than change its nature. Unlike in Scotland, where the Edinburgh Parliament was independent of England, there was not a centre of governance that was independent of English and Stuart rule.[7] Therefore, the conflict in Ireland can be interpreted as a rising against English subjugation of Ireland, a result of the Stuart multiple monarchy. In addition, the war in Ireland involved the Irish Confederacy aiming to depose English rule, as opposed to the Parliament in England who wished to change English politics.[8] This supports Pocock's interpretation that Ireland was not yet integrated enough for Ireland to meaningfully take part in the English civil war and have its politics divided cleanly across Royalist and Parliamentarian lines.[9] However, Ethan Shagan argues that Ireland was integrated enough for the Irish Rising to have an impact on English politics, with the rebellion deepening the division between Charles I and Parliament.[10] Therefore, as the way in which religion in

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[4] Ibid.
[5] Darcy, *Introduction, pp. 6.*
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Pocock, *Two Kingdoms*, pp.295.
[10] Shagan, 'Discord', pp. 5.

Ireland caused conflict was determined by the structure of Stuart rule in Ireland, it could be argued that Russell's revisionism is more accurate when prioritising the multiple monarchy.

Scotland's actions during the turmoil are more accurately described as an independent kingdom following an Anglo-oriented policy rather than being part of a wider English Civil War. Religious grievance in Scotland against Charles I's uniformity policies resulted in the National Covenant raising its own army and invading England during the Bishops' Wars.[11] Contrasting this with how the religious grievances led to war in Ireland points to the primacy of the structure of the Stuart multiple monarchy. The internal divisions within England, between the English Parliament and the King, led to Ireland and Scotland being able to ally themselves with whichever they believed would further their interests. The English Parliament's decision to impeach Lord Deputy of Ireland Stafford led to the belief that the greatest threat to Ireland's autonomy and freedom came from the English Parliament and not the King.[12] This contrasted with the Covenant, who had fought the Bishops' Wars in opposition to Charles I's religious imposition on the Scottish Kirk, and at this point had closer relations to Parliament.[13] Although religion may have played a role in causing the conflicts in Ireland and Scotland, the structure of the multiple monarchy determined the nature of the conflict in both.

The Scottish Covenant's invasion of England in 1639 and 1643 is an instance of a Scottish army, led by a Scottish faction, invading England with the expressed intention of securing religious security and in opposition to Charles I's absolutism.[14] The breakdown of Stuart rule in Scotland with the first Bishops' War arguably begins an interregnum of full Scottish independence from England, and as such the Bishops' Wars can be more accurately described as Anglo-Scottish wars rather than civil wars. The Solemn League and Covenant signed between the Convent and Parliament in 1643 exemplifies the Anglo-oriented policy of an independent Scotland. Here, Scotland joins the war on the side of Parliament to counter the perceived threat of Catholicism after the Irish Cessation.[15] Hamilton argues that the Covenant recognised that security for Scottish religion depended on the political situation in England.[16]

[11] Mason, *Covenanters,* pp. 165.
[12] Russell, 'British', pp. 408.
[13] Mason, *Covenanters,* pp. 165.
[14] Worden, *Civil War*, pp.29.
[15] Morrill, 'Religious', pp. 175.
[16] Hamilton, 'Civil War', pp. 124-5.

This was also the primary motivation behind the signing of the Engagement with Charles I in 1646.[17] Therefore, it could be argued that Scotland throughout the turmoil of the mid-seventeenth century followed an Anglo-oriented policy while remaining independent from Stuart rule. The actions of Scotland were not determined by England alone, and the division lines of the civil war in England did not cut through Scotland. Therefore, religion as an abstract cause of the turmoil as suggested by Russell is secondary to the structure of the multiple monarchy in how the turmoil was shaped and why it is better described as The War of the Three Kingdoms.

The Stuart multiple monarchy meant different things for Ireland and Scotland. Ireland did not have the level of independence that Scotland had, and therefore descended into a civil war within Ireland over keeping or removing Stuart rule. Scotland, on the other hand, regained effective independence following the rise of the National Covenant and thus could resist Stuart rule in England while avoiding domestic civil war.[18] Both these cases show that the fighting in Ireland and Scotland should not be interpreted as extensions of the civil war in England. As Scotland and Ireland are tied to the conflict in England, they cannot be excluded from the turmoil of the mid-seventeenth century. This ties into Russell's case for the turmoil of the mid-seventeenth century being better understood as a series of resistance to Charles, starting in Scotland, Ireland and then in England.[19] The English Civil War is thus not a unique or all-encompassing event, but one part of a wider War of the Three Kingdoms.

A case could be made in favour of describing the turmoil of the mid-seventeenth century as the English Civil War if the Royalists and Parliament remained the dominant rivalry throughout the period and were recognisably 'English' factions. However, the turmoil in England changed character from the start of the conflict in 1642 until the Cromwell's invasion of Scotland and Ireland in 1650. The civil war in England began between factions that drew most of their support from within England, and later became a conflict between England, controlled by Parliament, and Scotland and Ireland who allied themselves with Royalists.[20] As the Covenant and the Confederation had more control over Scotland and

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[17] Stevenson, *Charles I,* pp. 47.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Russell, 'British', pp. 408.
[20] Siochrú, 'Atrocity', pp. 71.

Ireland than the Royalist faction did, the Royalists should not be considered as an English faction after 1649.[21]

Mark Stoyle argues that within England, Parliament was a potent symbol of English nationhood as it was exclusive to England, whereas Charles I, claiming to be king of all three, was unable to attract as much support with an appeal to Englishness.[22] This meant that the Royalists were more successful in attracting support from Wales and Cornwall in England. Therefore, as the Royalists drew more support from non-English communities than Parliament, it could be argued that the civil war in England is partly fought not exclusively among two English factions drawing support from English communities. Instead, the Royalists drew support from English, Welsh, and Cornish communities whereas Parliament consistently drew the most support from English communities. The fact that the Scottish were aligned with Parliament following the Bishops War and with the signing of the Solemn League does not weaken this argument, as the alliance between the Covenant and Parliament was one of convenience with mutual distrust persisting until the creation of the New Model Army.[23] The invasion of the Engagers from Scotland could still be considered part of the English Civil War, as Royalist supporters in parts of England rose up in rebellion against Parliament.[24] Here, Charles I was still able to receive support from England, although the composition of the armies in support of Charles included a higher proportion of Scots than during the first civil war in England.[25] This change in the composition of support arguably allows the 'Second English Civil War' to be accurately described as both an English Civil War and a Scottish invasion. Robert Ashton proposes the definition 'royalist counter-revolution' in England to describe the Royalist risings in support of Charles I in the Engagers invasion.[26]

After the execution of Charles I, the nature of the turmoil can most accurately be described as England, with Parliament in control, invading Scotland and Ireland to reimpose order and English domination over the British Isles.[27] Charles II's presence in Scotland was not a restoration of Stuart rule over Scotland but the Covenant allying with the Royalist faction

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[21] Ibid.
[22] Stoyle, 'Celtic' pp. 1113.
[23] Mason, *Covenanters,* pp. 165.
[24] Hamilton, 'Scotland', pp. 124.
[25] Neufeld, 'Peacemaking', pp.1173.
[26] Ashton, *Counter-Revolution*, pp.1.
[27] Ibid.

against the perceived threat from Parliament.[28] The description of 'English Civil War' refers to a single, uninterrupted conflict, whereas pauses between wars and the changing nature of the turmoil from a civil war to wars between independent kingdoms renders the description of English Civil War insufficient. Therefore, it could be argued that the English Civil War ended with the execution of Charles I, as afterwards Parliament was virtually unchallenged in England. As the English Civil war does not cover the entirety of the turmoil of the mid-seventeenth century, and as the Cromwellian invasions of Scotland and Ireland are better interpreted as wars between sovereign countries, the description Wars of the Three Kingdoms is more accurate.

Overall, the turmoil of the mid-seventeenth century is more accurately described as The War of the Three Kingdoms, rather than the English Civil War. The interaction between religion and the structure of the multiple monarchy in Ireland and Scotland resulted in two distinct rejections of Stuart rule, neither of which were an extension of the Royalist versus Parliament division of England. As the chain of events in all three kingdoms was interdependent, Ireland and Scotland need to be included in the turmoil of the mid-seventeenth century. As the turmoil span the entirety of the British Isles and lasted longer than the civil war in England, the turmoil of the mid-seventeenth century is best described as The War of the Three Kingdoms.

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[28] Hamilton, 'Scotland', pp. 124.

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