The Identification of Weakness: A Psycho Historical Analysis of Tsar Nicholas II Using the NEO-Personality Inventory Revised Exam

By Keely Johnson

Senior Capstone History 489
Dr. Patricia Turner
Capstone Advisor

Dr. Paulis Lazda Cooperating Professor

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Abstract

Tsar Nicholas II of Russia was an unquestionable failure of a monarch. However, much of his demise was due to his lack of education and the accumulation of overpowering advisors that manipulated his weak mental and emotional characteristics. This paper identifies these characteristics through the analysis of Nicholas’ personal documents and compares them to the NEO-Personality Inventory Revised Exam in order to better understand why he failed miserably as Tsar. In a study conducted by Joyce E. Bono and Timothy A. Judge at the University of Iowa in 2000, it was found that evaluations of the Big Five personality characteristics correlated to leadership performance. This study was conducted using the NEO-Personality Inventory Revised exam, and was also applied to this research in order to better evaluate Nicholas II’s failed rule as Tsar of Russia. Through the analysis, it is clear that Nicholas’ possessed personality characteristics unsuitable for any leadership position. This research used interdisciplinary studies from the psychological sphere, thereby opening doors in the historical research field by using psycho historical analysis to highlight new viewpoints of previously researched material.
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I. Introduction

The last Tsar of Russia, Nicholas II, left behind a story of tragedy, misfortune, and failure. His family had retained the Russian crown for nearly 300 years, but by 1917, their influence had dwindled. Political unrest within the educated society and widespread poverty in the peasant class, fueled the tension for a revolution. Nicholas’ only understanding of political leadership came from the conservative legacy of his father, Alexander III, who struggled during his reign to suppress rebellion and modernization. In a period pleading for progressive reform, Nicholas failed to adapt to Russia’s needs for political restructuring. Such inadequacies only strengthened rebellion and eventually led to the bloody massacre of the entire Romanov family on the night of July 16, 1917.¹

Many historians have questioned why Nicholas II was such a poor leader. They have concluded that it was the absence of a decent political education combined with his overbearing family of advisors that brought the Tsar to his downfall. Others have argued that he was a passive man in charge of a country that was ready for reform regardless of any action he may have taken to prevent it.

However, research shows that Nicholas possessed traits that were not ideal in a leadership role even before his ascension to the throne in 1894. During his youth, Nicholas developed characteristics that made him mentally unsuitable to handle the stress of running the autocracy. Further complications during his reign, including two revolutions and multiple failed military campaigns, intensified these weak traits which exposed his flaws to others and left him vulnerable to manipulation. Through the

¹This date is according to the Old Style Julian Calendar date, thirteen days behind the European calendar. All dates in this paper are presented in Old Style.
analysis of his personal documents, it is possible to identify these character weaknesses and establish exactly what characteristics made Nicholas unsatisfactory for any leadership position.

One question remains: how is one supposed to evaluate what makes a good leader? The inspiration for this answer came from Timothy A. Judge and Joyce E. Bono’s study on the Big Five personality characteristics and their relation to successful leadership entitled *Five-Factor Model of Personality and Transformational Leadership.*\(^2\) The Five Factors, or personality behaviors, are Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Extraversion, and Openness to Experience. Judge and Bono hypothesized that the characteristics of Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Extraversion, and Openness to Experience positively influenced a person’s leadership skills while Neuroticism negatively affected leadership skills.\(^3\) Their research took persons in leadership positions and had them evaluated by their supervisors and subordinates. The persons being evaluated also performed a 240-item personality survey known as the NEO Personality Inventory-Revised. The end result of their research was Agreeableness, Extraversion, and Openness to Experience correlated to successful leadership, whereas Conscientiousness and Neuroticism did not show any significant relationships to leadership.\(^4\)

Judge and Bono’s study created a method which linked evidence of Nicholas’ personality traits to negative traits associated with unsuccessful leadership. Their study, in addition to the actual NEO-PI Revised Exam, provided the methodology for this


\(^3\) Bono and Judge, “Five-Factor Model,” 753-755.

\(^4\) Bono and Judge, “Five-Factor Model,” 758.
project. The results of this project provide more insights to the Five-Factor model as a measurement of leadership capacity. Although Judge and Bono’s study did not find a strong correlation between Neuroticism and Conscientiousness toward successful leadership, this analysis on Nicholas II makes a strong argument that they are, in fact, highly relevant to leadership skills.

**Literature Review**

Scholars have written biographies on Nicholas II from a variety of different viewpoints. He has been portrayed as a misunderstood monarch, a villain, a coward, a saint, an idiot, and many times over, a puppet. All of these opinions can be considered truthful in one way or another depending on the period of reference.

Shortly after the murder of the Romanov family and their four servants, many memoirs were published outside of Soviet Russia. These chronicles usually recounted the days in the Russian court or the ill-fated terms of the many Dumas. Many of the documents mentioned the frailties of Tsar Nicholas and undermined his authenticity as the leader of an autocracy and a primitive democracy. Scholars who referenced these documents can be regarded as insightful and well researched. It is to be noted that these sources are not without biases.

Many other writers who researched Nicholas’ reign analyzed sources that would have clear partiality and could skew their findings. For example, research conducted before the Soviet reforms in the 1980s by researchers outside of Russia may have come from unofficial and unreliable sources. After the reforms, the extensive Romanov

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5 The Duma is the elected legislative body that constituted the imperial Russian legislature in cooperation with the State Council. Members of the State Council were appointed by the Tsar and served as his advisors.
archive was finally available for viewing by scholars. Much of the previously released information is generally reviewed as romanticized, overdramatic, and disregarded as fiction.

Marc Ferro is a Russian historian who wrote *Nicholas II: Last of the Tsars* in 1990. His book analyzes Nicholas’ personal documents including his diary, telegrams, and letters to family and advisors. In addition, Ferro researched the opinions of Nicholas II by examining the memoirs of his closest advisors and associates. The biography is one of the best known and first of its kind which frequently cited in many other Nicholas II biographies. Ferro appears to sympathize with the Tsar and portrays him as a simple man forced to lead a life more complex than he would have wanted.\(^6\) Ferro provides some background for the major events during Nicholas’ life, but does not go into full detail. Overall, Ferro keeps his focus on Nicholas’ personal characteristics and his inability to comprehend the deteriorating situation around him.

Dominic Lieven’s *Nicholas II: Emperor of all the Russias*, analyzes Nicholas II as an emperor and a political leader and dissects his inefficiencies as a ruler. Lieven claims the issues with Nicholas’ rule began with the structure of his politics and collapsed on their own with the aid of the Revolution and the detrimental World War. He uses a comparative approach of other successful empires such as Imperial Germany and Japan, to analyze where Nicholas and his government were poorly suited for any drastic change in politics.\(^7\) Lieven is sympathetic to Nicholas but does not deny he was unqualified to take on the task of monarch. Here, Lieven’s viewpoint matches that of my own research.

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Lieven’s assessment of Nicholas’ political rule was insightful and different compared to previous biographies on the Tsar. Lieven is extremely well credited in the Russian history field; he has published five other books detailing the dramatic history of Russia’s politics. By focusing his research on the last Tsar, Lieven draws new insights to his downfalls as a political leader. Characterizing Nicholas II as a floundering emperor instead of the details about his personal life was incredibly helpful to this research.

Hélène Carrère d’Encausse summarizes the fate of Nicholas II as a dual catastrophe: politically and personally. She evaluates his ill fated reign by stating his education lacked any rehearsals for ruling an autocracy. Nicholas’ youth was confined to a superficial lifestyle of attending ballets, operas, and galas, which his father never approved of nor experienced for himself. Furthermore, Alexander III did little to bestow any faith in his son as a monarch and gave him little political advancement until his early twenties. This could only have reinforced Nicholas’ lack of confidence in himself as a monarch. When Nicholas came to power, he made decisions based on how he believed his father would have acted. This, as d’Encausse points out, was fate working its way into revolution. Nicholas struggled with all of the same political issues that monarchs before him had grappled with; the peasantry, updating the economy, expansion, and rebellion. Unfortunately for Nicholas, they came to a head during his reign. D’Encausse never believed Nicholas could have avoided tragedy because Russia itself was ready for a transition whether the autocracy was or not. Nicholas’ decisions were well intentioned but fell flat when it came to doing what would have been best for the nation. “[The] constant tension between what he believed and what he understood, the temptation not to

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9 d’Encausse, Nicholas II, 2000, ix-xiii.
change the existing order and the certainty that he had to do so, constituted a real internal drama for Nicholas II.”

D’Encausse narrates the rest of Nicholas’ life with similar criticism, frequently stating that he had the opportunity to make the correct decisions, but failed to do so.

D’Encausse’s narrative of the life of Nicholas II is extremely critical, yet insightful. She uses references to Nicholas’ diary in its entirety and other supportive documents such as letters and memoirs from other important characters. D’Encausse also observes valuable players within Nicholas’ social circle including his wife and his ministers, many of which were constantly critical of his decisions. In her conclusion, d’Encausse compares Nicholas to Louis XVI stating that they were both weak monarchs who lacked vision for their nations. 

D’Encausse’s image of Nicholas is haunting, portraying him as a hapless leader presiding over a nation ready for revolution.

Kent D. Price was a graduate student at the University of Montana who researched and published a dissertation in 1966 on the last months of Tsar Nicholas II’s life. He worked closely with the Tsar’s personal diary and analyzed his thoughts, feelings, and everyday activities which were recorded by the Tsar everyday for the last fifteen months of his life. The diary was held in the Red Archives (“Krasnyi Arkhiv”) and translated by Price’s fellow student, Arlo Furnis. In the preceding sixty pages of the publication, Price wrote A Character Sketch of Nicholas II, in which he dissects Nicholas’ personality traits and lifestyle. Price declares, “[t]his work is neither an apology for nor a condemnation of Nicholas II…” His purpose was to create historical

10 d’Encausse, Nicholas II, 2000, xi. 
12 Price, Kent D., A Character Sketch of Nicholas II. University of Montana: 1966, 1.
background on Nicholas for the purpose of further explaining the importance of the diary. Much of Price’s information was obtained through research of secondary sources which are now, somewhat, outdated. Price also analyzed primary sources that belonged to close affiliates of Nicholas II whose recollections of the Tsar pieced together more evidence of his weak stamina and unwillingness to rule. Through the extent of Price’s research, he appears to slightly sympathize with the Tsar. His purpose of translating and analyzing the diary shows empathy for the doomed Tsar’s sad last months as a Russian monarch.

Price organizes his background research into categories including: Nicholas’ relationships with his father, his mother, and his wife; his education; his personal charm; his religious beliefs; and his weakness of character. His rational for each profile stems from his primary and secondary research. He frequently quotes other authors who had previously written on the subject. In addition, Price analyzed personal accounts of the Tsar’s closest acquaintances including public accounts from the time period such as journals and newspapers.

**Methodology**

The research conducted for this paper crosses the subjects of history and psychology, known as psychohistory. The field of psychohistory became well-known in the 1960s and was criticized by many as a controversial approach to historical research.\(^{13}\) Psychohistory is not merely a subcategory of historical methodology, but a different approach to gathering information. Psychohistory refers to the use of psychoanalysis on

primary sources, historical figures, and documents. Many critics of psychohistory point out that there is no straightforward approach to analyzing history from a psychological perspective. However, psychoanalytic interpretations are by their nature individual and subjective, whether or not we label them scientific. This consequence does not mean that psychoanalysis and the methodology of psychohistory must be completely disregarded. It would be unlikely for two historians to analyze the same data and not encounter different interpretations; in the case of Nicholas II, this has occurred frequently. Psychoanalysis opens the doors to analysis on individuals and groups from the past that may not be completely understood through historical context. It can also help determine a rational reasoning behind irrational behaviors and help explain influential moments in history.

Five-Factor Model of Personality

The psychoanalysis of Nicholas II analyzes the “Big Five” personality characteristics that were researched and perfected by Ernest Tupes and Raymond Christal in 1961. These five characteristic are broad and generalized but can be broken down more specifically through the NEO-PI Exam, which was also used in this research. The Big Five are Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Neuroticism, or also labeled as Emotional Adjustment, is the tendency to be anxious, fearful, depressed and moody. A low evaluation of this characteristic is crucial to leading a life of satisfaction and free of depression and other

mental illness. Extraversion is the tendency to be outgoing, assertive, active, and excitement seeking. Openness to Experience, or sometimes called Intellectance, is the tendency to be creative, imaginative, perceptive, and thoughtful. This personality trait is the only trait in the Big Five which correlates to intelligence. Agreeableness is the tendency to be kind, gentle, trusting and trustworthy, and warm. Conscientiousness is determined by two facets: achievement and dependability. Conscientiousness, overall, relates to job performance.

Using these characteristics, an analysis on Nicholas II yields numerous insights into his personality and, more specifically, his capacity for leadership. His neurotic need for approval and his over-bearing dread of failure indicates a high level of neuroticism. His tendency to keep to himself and his family life clearly indicates a low level of Extraversion. Nicholas seriously lacked vision and perception when dealing with the issues of the revolution which exemplifies his low level of Openness to Experience. Nicholas was fondly remembered as a warm and caring man, always friendly, and sometimes overly trusting; even the officers during his imprisonment at Tsarskoe Selo found him appealing. This indicates a reasonable level of Agreeableness. Nicholas’ level of Conscientiousness is debatable; obviously his job performance was less than admirable to most people, and he achieved little in the eyes of his critics. However, research shows he was a man of rigorous work ethic and fairly dependable when it came to completing his daily tasks.

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18 Bono and Judge, “Five-Factor Model.” 752.
19 Tsarskoe Selo was the former residence of the imperial family until their imprisonment there in 1917. The palace is located 16 miles outside of St. Petersburg. Nicholas’ social interactions with his guards during their imprisonment there were closely recorded in his diary.
NEO-PI Revised Exam

In order to better understand the evaluation of the Big Five, it is necessary to understand the psychological evaluation that calculates these characteristics. This evaluation is called the NEO-Personality Inventory Revised exam and was created by Paul T. Costa and Robert R. McCrae in 1992. The exam is a 240 item questionnaire that evaluates each of the Big Five characteristics into six subcategories for more specific results. Neuroticism is broken down into anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability to stress. Extraversion is categorized into warmth, assertiveness, activity, gregariousness, excitement seeking, and positivity. Openness to Experience divides into fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas and values. Agreeableness is categorized by trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tender-mindedness. Conscientiousness breaks down into competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation.

In the exam, each of these subcategories is measured by eight statements which are then evaluated by the test taker on a scale of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. These subcategories and statements were used as guidelines for the analysis conducted on Nicholas II. After reading through Nicholas’ personal documents and secondary sources on his life, it was simple to identify examples of the Big Five and their subcategories. Without the aid of this insightful resource, educated psychoanalysis on Nicholas II could not have been conducted.
Primary Source Analysis

This research was conducted using psychoanalysis on Nicholas II’s personal documents, namely his diary, letters and telegrams. Multitudes of such documents have been translated and published in English in primary source collections and secondary sources. Edward J. Bing edited and published hundreds of letters written between Nicholas and his mother, Maria Feodorovna, in *The Secret Letters of the Last Tsar: Being the Confidential Correspondence between Nicholas II and His Mother, Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna*. This book of documents, published in 1938, covers a large span of time beginning in October 1879 to November 1917. Nicholas’ early letters revealed much of his apprehension about ruling Russia and many of his neurotic tendencies.  

Joseph T. Fuhrman’s *The Complete Wartime Correspondence of Tsar Nicholas II and the Empress Alexandra; April 1914-March 1917* contains over a thousand letters and telegrams exchanged between Nicholas and his wife during Russia’s involvement in the First World War. Nicholas and Alexandra conveniently wrote in English since it was their strongest common language. The documents revealed the increasing stress endured by the Tsar and his wife’s overbearing tendencies. These personal accounts hold strong evidence of Nicholas’ poor *conscientiousness* but positive examples of his *agreeableness* and *extraversion*.

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20 Bing, Edward J., Maria Feodorovna, and Nicholas II. *The Secret Letters of the Last Tsar: Being the Confidential Correspondence between Nicholas II and His Mother, Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938.
Overview of Paper

This paper analyzes Nicholas II’s documents in three sections; his ascension to the throne, the Revolution of 1905, and his experiences in the Great War. These sections were chosen based on the abundance of evidence focused around these areas. Within these sections, the evidence of Nicholas’ characteristics is organized and analyzed in detail. Although there are five main characteristics used to analyze Nicholas’ personality, strong evidence was not found during every time period. Therefore, not all sections have five sub-sections of evidence. The evidence was compiled through the use of many primary sources, multiple secondary sources, and biographies. The paper concludes with a summary of the evidence.

II. Nicholas’ Ascension to the Throne

Nicholas II was born on May 6, 1868. He was the second son of Tsar Alexander III, but became the “heir apparent” after the death of his older brother during infancy. During this time period, Russia was in the midst of a structural realignment; Alexander II, the “Tsar Liberator,” emancipated the surfs in 1855 and had since attempted to reform the judicial, military, and education systems. This era of Russia’s history held great potential to modernize the nation. Unfortunately, it ended in tragedy. In 1881, when Nicholas II was just thirteen years old, he witnessed a terrorist bomb violently end the life of his grandfather before his eyes. Nicholas’ father had suddenly become the next Tsar of Russia, and vowed to put an end to the reforms that he felt had undermined the Romanov autocracy. Nicholas, no doubt, was also affected by the images of his grandfather’s mutilated body before him and likely intended to carry on the repression his

21 d’Encausse, Nicholas II, 1-8.
father imposed upon the Russian people. The dream of Russia’s transformation had dissolved.

Nicholas II, born Nicholas Alexandrovich, was the eldest of five children, yet was isolated from any real companionship when he was a child. His closest brother, George, was a sickly child and lived Caucus Mountains in order to receive better treatment.22 This isolation carried over into Nicholas’ adult life where he limited his interaction with others to only his closest family. During his childhood, he developed a strong bond with his mother, Maria Feodorovna, Princess Dagmar of Denmark, who had a heavy influence on the activities at home. His father was a distant and rough man, but Nicholas strongly identified with him and loved him dearly.23 Nicholas inherited strong qualities from both of his parents: the taste for high society living from his mother, and reclusion and repressive action from his father.24

Nicholas’ father, Tsar Alexander III, was a large, strong man and embodied the lifestyle of a true Russian soldier. He wore a soldier’s uniform everyday and personified military lifestyle. Unlike his own father, Alexander II, he was not a reformist and detested progressive ideas.25 Unfortunately, this continuation of suppression only heightened the rebellion during Nicholas’ reign. He maintained a strict daily regimen, which Nicholas quickly adopted, consisting of daily exercise and military scheduling. Alexander III was a man of brute strength; during a train accident, he saved his entire family by holding the roof of the train car off the heads of the passengers.26

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22 Ibid., 29.
24 D’Encausse, Nicholas II, 29.
25 Ferro, Nicholas II, 12.
26 Ibid.
separated his work schedule from family time, and politics were never discussed at home. After the death of Nicholas’ older brother, Nicholas’ education should have better prepared him for ruling the autocracy. However, when Sergius Witte, Minister of Finance, suggested Nicholas become part of the committee for building the Trans-Siberian Railway, Alexander declined, stating that Nicholas was still a child with childish notions. Nicholas was twenty-four at the time of this suggestion.

It is important to understand the impact Alexander had on his son. Throughout his own rule, Nicholas constantly made his decisions based on what he believed his father would do. In addition, Nicholas came into power under the influence of many of his father’s old ministers who continued Alexander’s ideas by pressuring Nicholas to follow in his father’s footsteps. Because of Nicholas’ poor political education and his constant anxiety, it is simple to understand why he would work so hard to continue his father’s legacy. He knew no other way to do his job and it was easier than adopting new government policies.

Nicholas was raised with a traditional high society education; he learned multiple languages, sports, dancing, rode horses, went hunting, and frequented balls, ballets, and the theater. Nicholas learned virtually nothing of politics and was given very little experience before his ascension to the throne. The tutors who had educated Nicholas’ father were reappointed to Nicholas. This is considered a serious inadequacy in Nicholas’ education. His primary tutor, Constantine Pobedonostev, was the Procurator-General of the Holy Synod, a high religious figure. Pobedonostev was appointed for his

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27 Ferro, Nicholas II, 25.
28 Ibid.
purist conservative ideals and strong devotion to the autocracy.\(^{29}\) He reinforced the belief that Nicholas was chosen by God to uphold the monarchy and that Nicholas’ word was law. Nicholas’ only real guidance for running a monarchy came from his studies of Russian history provided by his tutor. Of these, Nicholas chose to model himself after Tsar Alexei the Pious, father of Peter the Great.\(^{30}\) He even threw a costume ball in Tsar Alexei’s memory and named his only son after him.

Even with little education in politics, Nicholas was remembered as conscientious but uninterested in his future.\(^{31}\) He was greatly interested in the military, just like his father, and was appointed the rank of major in an elite regiment of the Tsar’s personal guard.\(^{32}\) Later he was promoted to colonel.\(^{33}\) At age eighteen, he was appointed as a mere associate of the State Council and felt discouraged to partake in any real decision making. The only serious time he devoted to the Council was when he was on the committee to aid the starving after a famine struck the country in 1881.\(^{34}\) This shows Nicholas’ deep concern and love for his people but insufficient conscientiousness for any serious political activity.

In an insightful change of events, Nicholas and his brother, George, were sent on a trip to India, China, and Japan in 1890. The idea was apparently Tsar Alexander III’s, who hoped to enlighten his oldest sons on the ways of international politics.\(^{35}\) This adventure had a lot of potential to open Nicholas’ eyes to the world around him, however,

\(^{29}\) D’Encausse, *Nicholas II*, 30.
\(^{30}\) Ferro, *Nicholas II*, 35-36. Tsar Alexei (1645-1676) was a gentle and kind man who was taken advantage of by his advisors. The Russian people defended the Tsar by rising up and eliminating the manipulative advisors and saved the Tsar from further misfortune.
\(^{32}\) Ferro, *Nicholas II*, 16.
\(^{34}\) Ibid., 31.
\(^{35}\) Ferro, *Nicholas II*, 20.
it failed miserably. Nicholas showed no enthusiasm for their travels according to entries in his diary. He complained that India was “unbearable” and overpopulated with British presence.\textsuperscript{36} George was sent back to Russia in Bombay due to illness, and Nicholas had to endure the rest of the trip alone. While in Japan, Nicholas was attacked by a fanatical Japanese man and struck on the head. The incident appeared to have no serious consequences except for Nicholas developing a hatred and distrust in all Japanese affairs from that point on.\textsuperscript{37}

Nicholas was also known as a hopeless romantic when it came to his wife, the German Duchess Alexandra of Hesse, or “Alix,” as he fondly called her. Nicholas and Alexandra met and quickly fell in love, becoming engaged in 1894 shortly before the death of Tsar Alexander III. Their wedding occurred immediately after the grand funeral of the late Tsar in November of the same year. After the wedding, Alexandra quickly replaced his mother as the most influential woman in Nicholas’ life. Maria quietly resented Alexandra’s power over her son for many years. The people of Russia were not excited about their new Tsarista either; Alexandra was German, a nationality disliked by the Russians, and her heritage was a source of conflict throughout Nicholas’ rule.

The death of Alexander III in 1894 brought an overwhelming amount of stress to Nicholas’ life. The end of the former Tsar’s reign of repression gave Nicholas the opportunity to reunite Russia’s previous reform efforts. However, because of Nicholas’ limited political understanding and strong conservative influences, the concept for political reorganization was virtually eliminated.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{36} d’Encausse, \textit{Nicholas II}, 34.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 36.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 38.
Nicholas’ coronation took place on May 6, 1896. The event should have begun the forward motion of a new era of leadership in Russia, but instead, ended in tragedy. After Nicholas’ ceremonial procession from the church, thousands of citizens gathered at the Khodynka Fields awaiting gifts traditionally given out to the public in honor of the new Tsar. The crowd was overwhelmingly large for such a small venue and not enough officers were on hand to secure their safety. When the gifts were beginning to be passed out, a surge of people rushed forward from the back, crushing and suffocating hundreds of people at the front. In the end, over one thousand people were killed and thousands more were injured. Nicholas sent his condolences to the public, but the rumors of Nicholas’ doom as Tsar were already spreading throughout Russia.

The beginning of Nicholas’ rule was closely documented by Nicholas’ letters to his mother. Nicholas wrote to her frequently, sometimes multiple times a day, and shared with her his innermost feelings. Nicholas found consolation in his mother’s words of encouragement in which she reminded him of his father’s legacy on many occasions. Maria also had suggestions of her own, which she frequently shared with Nicholas. The Tsar clearly felt comfortable revealing his emotions to his mother which he rarely revealed anywhere else, including in his own diary. It is for this reason that evidence of his early personality can be collected from these letters. By analyzing these sources, it is evident that Nicholas’ issues with anxiety and his lack of openness existed long before his coronation as Tsar in May of 1896.

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39 Ferro, Nicholas II, 37.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid., 38.
Evidence of Neuroticism

Neuroticism, as defined by Ernest Tupes and Raymond Christal is the tendency to be anxious, fearful, depressed, and moody.\(^{42}\) It is evaluated in the NEO-PI Revised Exam by factoring levels of anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability to stress.\(^{43}\) In the following analysis, Nicholas expresses many examples of each and thus would be considered neurotic.

The correspondences analyzed begin June 27, 1894. Nicholas immediately began this letter by apologizing to his mother for his lack of communication. This constant apologizing is a notable characteristic of Nicholas’. It shows his constant need to please others and a fear of disappointing anyone which feeds into his anxiety. He wrote about his experience visiting Alexandra’s family in England; “The Cousins rather enjoyed…teasing me… but I tried to keep away as much as I could, and not to talk.”\(^{44}\) This comment emphasizes Nicholas’ nervousness around unfamiliar groups, especially because English is not his native language. Making a social blunder in front of his new extended family would undoubtedly cause self-consciousness.\(^{45}\)

In August 1895, Nicholas showed his vulnerability when he mentioned his severe anxiety before performing a routine military inspection. “I was very nervous and felt acute pains in my stomach, which almost prevented me from saluting.”\(^{46}\) Nicholas alluded to these frequent nervous fits again in a letter in August. In October of 1896, he recorded having yet another of his “little ‘fit of nerves’” before meeting the President of

\(^{42}\) Bono and Judge, “Five-Factor Model,” 752.
\(^{43}\) Costa and McCrae, NEO-PI Revised, Neuroticism
\(^{44}\) Nicholas II, The Secret Letters of the Last Tsar: Being the Confidential Correspondence between Nicholas II and his Mother, Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna, ed. Edward J. Bing (New York: Longmans, Green and Co, 1938), 72-73.
\(^{45}\) Costa and McCrae, NEO-PI Revised, Neuroticism.
This constant nervousness before important events exemplifies Nicholas’ neuroticism; in many situations he allowed his self-consciousness to overcome him and mentally collapsed. This was one of the largest weaknesses in Nicholas’ traits which placed him at a severe disadvantage as a leader.

On October 4, 1895, nearly one year had passed since the death of Nicholas’ father. With his coronation quickly approaching, he was feeling rather lonely; “Those fateful days a year ago stand out only too vividly and painfully in one’s memory…tears suddenly rose to my eyes and I could do nothing to hold them back.” The context of this situation could indicate symptoms of depression. Nicholas was understandably feeling lonely and missed his father dearly, but he also felt very anxious and apprehensive about the role he was about to take on. It would be easy to understand Nicholas’ stressful situation; he was assuming the role of Tsar, leading a country he hardly knew anything about, still grieving over the death of his beloved father, and juggling a new marriage all at one time. It would be more than any normal person could bear, let alone an unwilling monarch.

Evidence of Extraversion

Extraversion is defined as the tendency to be outgoing, assertive, active, and seek excitement. The NEO-PI Revised exam evaluates these characteristics in the categories of warmth, assertiveness, activity, gregariousness, excitement seeking, and positivity. Nicholas’ documents illustrate a few of these characteristics in the evidence before his

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47 Ibid., 112.
48 Ibid., 98-99.
49 Costa and McCrae, NEO-PI Revised, Extraversion.
ascension to the throne. As time passed, these examples significantly decrease in frequency.

In Nicholas’ first letter in the correspondence with his mother in June 1894, Nicholas shows many positive emotions, warmth, and excitement which correspond to his *extraversion*. In the letter, he stated he had trouble sitting still because he constantly must get up to embrace his new fiancée, Alexandra. Nicholas also used many exclamation points to emphasize his excitement. This is an important factor in Nicholas’ personality. It is crucial to understand that the few things that he recorded as pleasurable always revolved around his family or partaking in military affairs. It is rare to find any evidence of excitement when he is discussing politics or meetings. In addition, *extraversion* corresponds to assertiveness, or confidence, and gregariousness, the fondness for the company of others. Nicholas was never a person to enjoy a lot of attention or gather in crowds. This likely stems from his experiences as a child with limited companions.

**Openness to Experience**

Bono and Judge define Openness to Experience as the tendency to be creative, perceptive, and thoughtful. It is subcategorized into fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, and values. Nicholas does not exhibit many examples of these characteristics before his ascension to the throne, but many more negative examples are present after the Revolution of 1905.

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51 Bono and Judge, “Five-Factor Model,” 752.
52 Costa and McCrae, NEO-PI Revised, Openness to Experience.
Nicholas’ adventure in India, China, and Japan in 1890 indicated his disinterest in anything outside of the Russian world. He described India as “unbearable” and Japan as a “strange and hostile world.” Obviously these depictions are associated with the misfortunes he experienced while traveling. Nicholas failed to see the potential and excitement in his experience which indicates low level of his openness to experience. He did not enjoy the aesthetics of the scenery and generally gained negative opinions about the places he visited. These limited foreign impressions occurred again in Nicholas’ travels to Russia’s allied nations during his rule as Tsar.

Nicholas displayed positive feelings when he discussed his interactions with the army. In his letter from August 1895, Nicholas tenderly wrote about his first experience inspecting a military camp and visiting his troops. The experience nearly made him cry which is an example of feelings and openness. This example also draws a strong connection to Nicholas’ father who was an enthusiastic military man.

Agreeableness

The Big Five characteristic of Agreeableness is defined as the tendency to be kind, gentle, trusting, and friendly. It is broken down into the subcategories of trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tender-mindedness. In Nicholas’ youth and much of his adult life, he was commonly remembered as a kind and modest individual. However, the evidence shows that he may have exhibited too many of these characteristics, making him a complete pushover and rarely straightforward. In

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addition, his orders of violent repression against the uprising gained him the disagreeable nickname “Nicholas the Bloody.”

In Nicholas’ letter to his mother in June 1894, Nicholas assured her that he attended to her requests from her previous letter, which was not published. This is an example of Nicholas’ easy compliance with orders which is an agreeable characteristic of his personality. Unfortunately, Nicholas was considered overly compliant to other people’s suggestions. Therefore, this is not actually a strength of his personality, but a weakness.

On March 17, 1896, Nicholas wrote to his mother out of fear. He felt incredibly guilty at appointing Tolia Bariatinsky as a Wing A.D.C., a position in the Tsar’s military suite, against his mother’s wishes. He argued that Bariatinsky was necessary to make an even number of A.D.C.s, especially with the coronation approaching in May. In addition, Bariatinsky had previously presented the Tsar with a holy icon and Nicholas felt it would be appropriate to promote him. Here, Nicholas was over-working himself in order to please others, which indicates that being too agreeable was a weakness he possessed. This trait allowed others to control him and threatened his authority as Tsar. Although this example also indicates Nicholas’ anxiety over upsetting his mother and his competent reasoning behind choosing Bariatinsky, it is his over agreeableness that is most alarming.

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55 Ferro, Nicholas II, 34.
Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness is defined as personal achievement, dependability, work ethic, and job performance. It is broken down in the NEO-PI Revised Exam into competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation.\footnote{Costa and McCrae, \textit{NEO-PI Revised}, Conscientiousness.} Nicholas displayed manic behaviors as a competent leader, sometimes making good decisions, but frequently not. He showed great self-discipline in getting his daily tasks done, but overall appeared uninterested in many of his other duties as Tsar. These characteristics are continuous throughout his personal documents.

In 1892, Nicholas had just been appointed an associate on the State Council. He recorded his disinterest in his diary on February 25:

“Two days ago, I was appointed to membership on the Committee of Finance. A good deal of honor, but little pleasure. Before the meeting of the Committee of Ministers… I confess that I had never suspected that it existed. We sat for a very long time: until three fifteen and, because of that, I was late and unable to go to the exposition at the Academy.”\footnote{D’Encausse, \textit{Nicholas II}, 32.} Nicholas exposed for the first time his feelings about political work. He was completely bored and disinterested. He even mentioned his dissatisfaction with running late in his meeting so as to have missed an engagement at the military academy, one of his more favored activities. Nicholas unquestionably was not looking forward to his future in politics.

This feeling of disinterest in ministerial work occurred again in October 1895; Nicholas wrote, “I try to keep them in check and not let them pester me with trifles.”\footnote{Ibid.} It is clear Nicholas did not always appreciate interacting with his ministers, even though
they heavily influence his decision making. In this case, Nicholas would rather reduce his duties and focus his attention on anything else, which at this time, was the awaited birth of his first child. This comment has a negative impact on his conscientiousness. Nicholas was doing his best to control what he can in lieu of becoming overworked.

Nicholas wrote to his mother about “rather unpleasant things” in his letter on August 1895. Maria had previously written to him about a request she received from Princess Lopoukhin-Demidoff requesting Nicholas’ consent to the cancellation of her debt and an additional loan, of one million rubles for her troubles. After some deliberations, Nicholas denied her request for a loan but canceled her debt. He felt a little annoyed toward the princess for not asking him directly and alluded to the idea that had his father still been alive, she would not have bothered asking at all. He also acknowledged that if he were to give away one million rubles while his Minister of Finance was on holiday, he would have looked completely incompetent. He concluded this portion of his letter by apologizing to his mother for boring her with uninteresting business details. Although he clearly didn’t enjoy these tedious tasks, he understood it was his duty to attend to them.

Nicholas wrote another example of his over-thinking and dutifulness after the death of Queen Victoria. Nicholas struggled with his morality attempting to decide if he should go to a military ball or stay home to mourn. Traditionally, it would have

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61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 Queen Victoria of England was Alexandra’s grandmother.
been unacceptable for a member of the royal family to be seen in public after a death in
the family. But Nicholas desperately wanted to show his support for his beloved army
and wrote to his mother about his difficult decision. “In the end I decided not to go,” he
stated, although this decision was made the moment after he dressed himself to leave.66
This evidence may appear frivolous, but it is a clear example of Nicholas’ inability to
make simple decisions, even when the correct answer is staring him in the face. This
negatively affects Nicholas’ conscientiousness because he over deliberates in simple
situations which also caused him more stress and increased his anxiety.

Shortly after Nicholas’ coronation, he travelled to France to strengthen the
Franco-Russian alliance. Although he would have much rather spent his time at home, he
wrote to his mother his reflections on the countless ceremonies he was made to attend.
At one point, Nicholas appeared annoyed, and stated that the French occupied him and
Alexandra with so many formalities that they didn’t get to eat until dinner time.67 He
also mentioned a discussion he had in the French court with Lord Salisbury stating, “It’s
good at least for him to learn from the source what the opinions and views of Russia
are.”68 Here Nicholas embraced his status as Tsar and claimed his thoughts were those of
all Russian people, however misguided this opinion really have been. Yet, Nicholas’
dutifulness to the French clearly paid off. After the French President Félix Faure’s visit
to Russia was a complete success, it solidified the Franco-Russian alliance. Nicholas, for
once, showed confidence in himself as a ruler. This could possibly stem from his
mother’s early influence forcing him to attend balls and royal ceremonies at a young age.

66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., 112.
68 Ibid.
One of the largest documents in the collection is a pair of letters between the Tsar and his mother arguing over the appointment of the new Governor General of Finland. Maria’s letter claimed that General Bobrikoff was a liar and had deceived Nicholas on many occasions. She stated that she knew someone else had had to have appointed him because Nicholas never would have made such a terrible decision. Here, Maria is identifying one of Nicholas’ weaknesses; she knows how easily he can be influenced by others. She tells Nicholas she is very disappointed in him, but if she doesn’t tell him the truth, who will? Understandably, this could provoke serious mental consequences in Nicholas, having just let down his mother. However, Nicholas’ reaction is odd and unexpected.

Nicholas began his reply the following day, lamenting the death of his dog, Iman, and told his mother of his deep grief and despair. This is a sign that Nicholas is seeking sympathy from his mother instead of disappointment. After his rant, Nicholas told her that he immediately contacted General Bobrikoff regarding all the insecurities Maria had mentioned in her previous letter. Nicholas assured Maria that it was all a misunderstanding and essentially there was no real issue but admitted that he could not tell if the General was lying or not. This is a huge disadvantage to Nicholas which only reinforced his mother’s worry that he could be so easily manipulated. In the end of this short reply, Nicholas asserted his authority over the situation by saying,

“In the sight of my Maker I have to carry the burden of a terrible responsibility…I must always keep firmly to my convictions and follow

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69 Ibid., 158.
70 Ibid., 156-157.
71 Ibid., 160.
72 Ibid., 161.
the dictates of my conscience. I do not say I am infallible-everybody is apt to err-but my reason tells me I am doing right.”

Here, Nicholas evoked his authority over his mother’s opinions, and solidified his competence.

In the same letter, Nicholas quickly changed the subject to one closer to home. Grand Duke Paul, brother to Alexander III, had run off and married a common woman without the permission of the Tsar. This was illegal in the royal family and a punishable offense. In addition, Grand Duke Paul had withdrawn three million rubles from his estate without consulting anyone. Nicholas was clearly bewildered by what to do and asked his mother for guidance. He informed her that he intended to cut his uncle off from the estate and leave the rest to his children for safe keeping. In the event of the marriage, Nicholas had no choice but to consider it void so as not to draw more negative attention toward the royal family. It may appear that in this awkward situation, the Grand Duke assumed that Nicholas would be too passive to do anything about his unlawful marriage. However, in this situation, Nicholas stepped up and voiced his concerns, albeit not without the approval of his mother. Nicholas exemplifies conscientiousness but still lacks the dominance to be taken seriously as a leader.

III. 1905 and the Revolution

1905 did not begin as a very good year for Tsar Nicholas II. He was losing a war with Japan and fighting disagreements with his ally, Great Britain. In addition, remorse over the war and hostility over ignored reforms were swelling needs for rebellion

73 Ibid., 162-163.
74 Ibid., 163-166.
75 Ibid.
amongst the people. The final call for reorganization was heard on Bloody Sunday, an event that changed everything. Nicholas signed the October Manifesto but continued to restrain the privileges of the newly assembled Duma, or parliament. Chaos and instability reigned in Russia for over a year with Nicholas frequently feeling powerless to stop it.

Alexander III was always very concerned with extending his empire to new frontiers in the east.\textsuperscript{76} Therefore, it only makes sense that Nicholas II attempted to follow his father’s vision, however poorly managed. Before 1905, at the encouragement of the Minister of Finance, Sergius Witte and the Foreign Minister Lamsdorff, Nicholas sent troops to occupy Manchuria during the building of the Trans-Siberian Railway. Nicholas sent troops to the Yalu River in Korea to investigate a timber production enterprise. Nicholas’ idea for a timber market shows his need for achievement and could have been an admirable concept had he the military power to back up any conflicts. However, shortly after their occupation, Japan demanded that Russia remove their troops from the Yalu River. Nicholas agreed but did not act quickly enough. On the night of January 27, 1904, Nicholas forwarded a telegraph to his mother sent to him from the Minister of War, General Kuropatkin, informing him of the attack on Port Arthur in Korea the previous evening. “So the war has begun. May God be with us.”\textsuperscript{77}

The Japanese took Port Arthur in January 1904 and pursued Russian troops all the way to Manchuria, where they captured the Russian establishment at Mukden, forcing the remaining troops to retreat.\textsuperscript{78} A greater disaster occurred when a Russian fleet

\textsuperscript{77} Nicholas II, \textit{Secret Letters of the Last Tsar}, 172.
\textsuperscript{78} d’Encausse, \textit{Nicholas II}, 67-68.
accidentally fired and sank a number of British fishing vessels in the North Sea in October. This accident seriously wounded the British-Russian alliance. Unfortunately, when Russia and Japan finally signed a peace agreement in September 1905, Nicholas was in the midst of losing two wars: one in the east and one at home.

The Russo-Japanese war exemplified Russia’s incapability of withstanding any sort of advanced military conflict and also Nicholas’ inaptitude for creating a stronger nation. His attempt at expansion fell through, leading others to question his competence as the leader of the autocracy. Furthermore, these inadequacies became obvious to the people of Russia, which fueled the need for a revolution.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the growing need for reforms expanding individual and religious freedoms and the rights of minorities had become overbearing. Naturally, Nicholas was not about to conform to the ideas of the people and allow the power of the autocracy to be reduced. Demonstrations and protests continued and the government outlawed meetings that would “disturb public order.”

On Sunday, January 9, 1905, a mass of protesters marched toward the Tsarskoe Selo in St. Petersburg with a petition for Nicholas. Fearing for the Tsar’s safety, officers shot at the crowd and mass hysteria ensued. Hundreds of civilians were shot and trampled.

The image of the loving Tsar was in shambles and the Revolution had now begun.

While the Tsar was ordering the repression of even more riots and strikes, his ministers were quickly scrambling to find a solution. In February 1905, the government and Tsar released a manifesto, proclaiming a call to order and reestablishing the Tsar as

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80 d’Encausse, Nicholas II, 89.
81 Ibid., 92.
authority. The government also released a rescript stating reforms were to be made and the Tsar would allow elected citizens to participate in legislation. Last, they issued a ukase which stated that the Tsar was open to suggestions for a new regime. None of these documents were actually written by the Tsar nor were they his idea, but Nicholas finally appeared ready to turn his back on his father’s outdated ideas in value of a new vision for Russia.

Organizing a new parliament was not as easy as the people had originally thought it to be. The State Duma had many complications throughout its numerous formulations from 1906-1912. Sergius Witte, the creator of the first Duma, had many troubles recruiting ministers according to one of Nicholas’ letters in October, 1905. While Nicholas had originally regarded Witte with respect, he grew less fond of his ideas as time progressed. Before the first Duma even opened, the Tsar dismissed Witte and replaced him with Prime Minister Goremykin, a long time advisor. The first State Duma finally opened on April 27, 1906, but was still not without its troubles. Due to many discrepancies between the Tsar and the Duma, it was dissolved by Nicholas that summer of the same year. At the opening of the second Duma in early 1907, representatives from multiple revolutionary groups alienated the conservative representatives, causing much drama and criticism. “It will soon be evident how far the Duma intends to get down to serious work,” Nicholas wrote in a letter to his mother March 1, 1907. Obviously

82 Ibid., 96-97.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid., 182-186.
87 d’Encausse, Nicholas II, 122.
Nicholas decided their work was not serious enough. The second Duma was dissolved in the summer of 1907.\textsuperscript{88}

**Neuroticism**

Nicholas’ neurotic tendencies intensified after the Revolution of 1905. Understandably so, Nicholas had just lost a portion of political control that had belonged to his family for three hundred years. This would cause anyone to feel like a failure and fall into distress. Nicholas exhibited five of the six drivers of neuroticism in the following analysis; anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, and vulnerability.

On October 17, 1905, Nicholas was in dismay; “We have been through such grave and unprecedented events that I feel as if the last time I wrote to you was a year ago.”\textsuperscript{89} Nicholas then began to summarize the abysmal conditions of the nation. “It makes me sick to read the news! Nothing but new strikes in schools and factories, murdered policemen, Cossacks and soldiers, riots, disorder, mutinies.”\textsuperscript{90} Nicholas’ letter seems sad and defeated. Because he had just legalized the new Provisional Government, it is logical that he felt like he has disobeyed his father’s beliefs and felt traitorous. In addition, he likely felt like a failure as the Tsar who was forced to concede to demands for reform. Throughout the next several months, he seemed to fall into a depression because he was constantly overcome with grief and embarrassment over the condition of his country.

In Nicholas’ letter to his mother ten days later, he seemed slightly hostile towards the sudden swell of support from everyone for the monarchy.

\textsuperscript{88} d’Encausse, *Nicholas II*, 123.
\textsuperscript{89} Nicholas II, *The Secret Letters of the Last Tsar*, 182.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 183.
“I am receiving telegrams from everywhere with touching gratitude for the liberties conceded, but also many indicating that they want [the] autocracy to be preserved. Why were they silent before, the good people?”

This exemplifies hostility because it responds to the questions of bitterness and resentment, and touchy or temperamental behaviors as outlined in the NEO-PI Revised Exam.

Nicholas also had the unpleasant task of relieving many old ministers of their positions and giving them to new ones, a task assigned to him by Witte. One of these ministers was his closest friend Trepoff, a minister who shared Nicholas’ conservative values. Naturally this left the Tsar feeling very alone and vulnerable in his new regime. Nicholas has a few criticisms for Witte as well, sharing his distaste for Witte’s meetings with the officials of a few of the rebel groups. Finally, Nicholas admitted that the riots had spread to Finland causing more troubles for the ministers. Nicholas wrote as if his spirit was slowly deteriorating, but the worst was yet to come.

On November 17, 1905, Nicholas had given his mother more depressing news. Naval mutinies had been occurring, sending pains to Nicholas’ heart. “How it hurts, and how ashamed one is of it all.” Nicholas, because of his devotion to the military, took these events extremely personally. This statement is an indication of Nicholas’ self-consciousness which had been disintegrating since the revolution, causing him to experience neurotic side effects.

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91 Ibid., 188.
94 Ibid., 192-193.
In December, Nicholas wrote “I am not going through an easy time, but God is my strength and gives me peace of mind.” He begged his mother not to travel over the holidays because the railways were not safe or working and there were not enough troops to spare for her escort. Nicholas finally seemed to be acknowledging how dire the situation really was: “the abscess was growing gradually, causing much pain and suffering, and now it has burst.” The “abscess” he referred to were the revolutionaries. He continued lamenting about the exhaustion of the army. Again, Nicholas mentioned his humiliation at being accountable for such a mess of a nation; “I am really ashamed that poor Russia has to go through a crisis like this before the eyes of the whole world.”

**Extraversion**

Nicholas did not experience many instances of extraversion during this time other than speaking about his family and the military. However, in the following evidence, he did show feelings of assertiveness, which is a subcategory of extraversion. Here, in his letter to his mother from October 1905, Nicholas revisited his decision to sign the manifesto; “We discussed it for two days, and in the end, invoking God’s help, I signed.” This is an important piece of information. Nicholas would not have signed the document had he not felt it was God’s will for him to do so. Nicholas was a true monarch, although not the greatest and he believed that his will was God’s will and no one else’s. “My only consolation is that such is the will of God, and this grave decision will lead my dear Russia out of the intolerable chaos she has been in for nearly a year.”

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95 Ibid., 198.
96 Ibid., 201.
97 Ibid., 202.
98 Ibid., 185.
Nicholas used his faith to confirm his actions, this example shows one of his few moments of assertiveness.

**Openness to Experience**

After the events of 1905, Nicholas closed off nearly all his opportunities for openness to experiences. His pride was wounded by the rebel students, workers, ministers, peasant class that had dissolved part of his divine authority, and he was taking any attempt to refuse them to gain more power. His main ideas, actions, and values, three indicators of openness to experience, were all repressive and angry. His feelings, another indicator, were hurt by the mutinies and backstabbing advisors.

In October 1905, Nicholas’ attitude was very negative; “The ministers, instead of acting with quick decision, only assemble in council like a lot of frightened hens and cackle about providing united ministerial action.”99 Again, Nicholas was showing his narrow mindedness which has a negative impact on his openness. He called for immediate action, but clearly didn’t care to understand against whom he was fighting. Nicholas added that since Bloody Sunday he had been meeting with Witte almost daily, and they discussed all the options together, eventually deciding to sign the manifesto which Witte and numerous other ministers defended.100 Although his progressive action would indicate positive actions, values, and ideas, his overall attitude negatively impacts his openness. It was during these violent times when the Tsar was dubbed “Nicholas the Bloody.” The Tsar preferred acting immediately with force, over debating how to appropriately act. Nicholas never attempted to understand why his people were rebelling

99 Ibid., 183.
100 Ibid., 184-185.
which was one of his major downfalls during both revolutions. In a letter to Maria on December 29, 1905, Nicholas decided he had had enough with all rebel behavior. Although he cited that during the holiday week things seemed quieter, Nicholas still commanded his soldiers to hunt down any rebels. “Many seditious bands have been dispersed, their homes and property burnt. Terror must be met by terror.”\textsuperscript{101} It was these words that reinforced Nicholas’ image as a bloodthirsty monarch, who enjoyed the suppression of his people. On the contrary, Nicholas was simply ignorant of any other ways handle the situation. He lacked the leadership qualities that would have allowed him to embrace the changes or view reform as anything other than negative.

After the holidays, the situation seemed to improve. Nicholas had endorsed the idea to send troops into each train station on the Trans-Siberian railway, reorganizing towns and punishing agitators with “exemplary severity.”\textsuperscript{102} Unfortunately, Nicholas’ narrow-mindedness blamed all the uprisings in Siberia on the Poles and Jews, only strengthening his reputation as a tyrannical Tsar.

During the first Duma meetings, Nicholas did not appreciate the time consuming discussions a representative assembly required; “They talk a lot but do little,” he wrote to his mother.\textsuperscript{103} While the Duma was still forming, Nicholas quickly rejected demands for universal suffrage, and stated, “God alone knows how far people will go with their fantastic ideas!”\textsuperscript{104} In addition, he and the council created the New Fundamental Laws which stated that the Duma could formulate ideas but the Tsar still held supreme and

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 206.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 210.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 191.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 199.
This action is clear evidence of Nicholas’ dislike for new ideas and is a weakness in his character. Nicholas’ interactions with the Duma exemplify his poor vision for new opportunities and only impaired his openness to change.

**Conscientiousness**

Throughout 1905, it is apparent that Nicholas was not an individual who methodically contemplated options but rather one who preferred to act impulsively. This is a weakness because it shows his lack of conscientiousness. Conscientiousness requires a lot of valuable deliberation, dutifulness, competence, self-discipline, order, and achievement. After the Revolution of 1905, it was clear Nicholas did not have many of these strong characteristics.

At the beginning of 1905, Russia was still at war with Japan. Nicholas felt very guilty at not being needed or not even wanted at the war front; “My conscience is often very troubled by my staying here…to stay behind in times like these is very upsetting to me.”106 This was because his military officers regard him as more of a ceremonial cheerleader than a useful military officer. After the accidental sinking of British fishing ships by the Russian navy, Nicholas regarded the incident as “awkward” but did not apologize to England. “Our own calmness will soon calm them,” he theorized. This could be an example of Nicholas’ assertiveness as a leader; however, his tactics left a bitter feeling in his ally’s hearts. His lack of concern justified anger and threats of violence from England which Russia had received after the incident.

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105 Ferro, Nicholas II, 106-108.
106 Nicholas II, Secret Letters of the Last Tsar, 173.
IV. The War

The outbreak of the First World War began with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a Serbian terrorist group on June 28, 1914 in Sarajevo in Austria-Hungary territory. This led to a declaration of war on Serbia by Austria-Hungary in July. Russia closely identified with the large Slavic population in Serbia and was looked to for assistance in the event of war. This put Russia in a very difficult position. Russia’s previous attempt at war ended in the Revolution of 1905 and several Duma members were opposed to do it again. In addition, if Russia entered into war with Austria-Hungary, an exponential increase of war declarations would likely follow due to the complicated structure of alliances. But Russia had guarded its influence in the Balkans for centuries; giving up on Serbia now would have been considered another embarrassing defeat. Nicholas sent telegrams to his cousin, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, asking him not to take offense and to restrain Austria’s actions. Nicholas II was eventually persuaded to fully mobilize by his military advisors in order to flaunt Russia’s military stamina. This performance, unfortunately, resulted in Germany’s declaration of war on Russia on August 1st, 1914. In accordance with the Triple Entente Alliance, Britain and France also declared war on Germany and Austria-Hungary. The First World War had commenced.

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107 Date in European calendar, not Russian Old Style. The Archduke was the heir apparent to the Austrian empire.  
110 Lieven, Nicholas II, 202.  
111 Ibid.
Every nation began their entry into war with optimism and enthusiasm. They all also shared the false belief that the war was going to be short.\textsuperscript{112}

Russia’s first nine months of combat in east Prussia were limited in their successes over the Austrians. In March of 1915 the circumstances severely decreased. Russia faced a serious deficit of ammunition and rifles for troops.\textsuperscript{113} Their slow industrial development had not prepared the military for such a long endeavor. France attempted to supply Russia the best they could, but Russia’s harsh winter climate and isolated region made it difficult to deliver goods. Germany launched an offensive attack and gained, what are now, Poland, Lithuania, and part of the Ukraine from Russia.\textsuperscript{114} In August 1915, Tsar Nicholas II dismissed Grand Duke Nikolaievich as the Commander-in-Chief and replaced him with himself at the encouragement of his wife.\textsuperscript{115} Nicholas experienced some success while commanding the army. In the summer of 1916, Russia broke through Austria’s front and took many prisoners.\textsuperscript{116} But the third winter of war had drained much of the rations and led to starvation of many troops. Many of the workers and farmers had been drafted and were now at the front, leaving a shortage of skilled labor back home.\textsuperscript{117}

At the home front, arguments between the State Council and the Duma created much political unrest.\textsuperscript{118} Several ministers and two-thirds of the Duma created a group called the “Progressive Bloc” which aimed to reform certain public rights and local government organization. Many conservatives saw the “Bloc” as a conspiracy to remove

\textsuperscript{112} Howard, “Europe on the Eve of the First World War,” 23.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 208.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 212.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 218.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 209.
more power from the Tsar and place it in the hands of the Duma. While away at war, Nicholas II still rejected all the ideas of the “Bloc” believing that they interfered with his divine right as Tsar. More problems occurred with the over-printing of money, which led to inflation, and skyrocketed prices of bread and daily goods. The shortage of food and workers put a lot of pressure on the urban population and the government to solve such problems. Many of the people’s needs were ignored and this led to riots in the streets at the beginning of 1917.

Between April 1914 and March 1917, Nicholas and his wife wrote telegrams and sent letters updating each other on the action of the battlefront and the activities at the home front which were published in *The Complete Wartime Correspondence of Tsar Nicholas II and the Empress Alexandra* in 1999. It is evident through Nicholas and Alexandra’s letters that they had a strong, almost obsessive, love for each other. Nicholas constantly telegrammed about the weather conditions and his limited activities at the warfront: inspecting troops, meeting with generals, and visiting hospitals. Alexandra exhibited most of her overbearing tendencies in her long letters where she lamented over the Duma’s activities, criticized ministers, and worried over the health of her children. She frequently made decisions on her husbands’ behalf, hiding her behavior by over apologizing for interfering and assuring him that their decisions would be the same. She also manipulated Nicholas’ passive-aggressive personality by stating that all of her ideas were done to lighten his workload and were approved by their “Dear Friend” Rasputin. In retrospect, these actions only undermined the Tsar’s credibility and reinforced his increasingly neurotic behaviors. It also reinforced the need for radical

120 Lieven, 218.
reform, i.e. a revolution, and strengthened the people’s growing conviction that life without the monarchy would improve Russia’s current situation.

**Neuroticism**

Nicholas exhibited more evidence of neuroticism during the Great War than any other of the Big Five characteristics. No doubt the unimaginable stress of lost battles, the shortness of rations, and the depleting attitude at the home front would have weakened the strongest of character. But in this situation, Nicholas’ personality had already been damaged by the 1905 Revolution and the constant badgering of the Duma to gain more authority. In the following examples, Nicholas showed evidence of his anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability; the six key drivers of neurotic behavior.¹²¹

In September 1914, Nicholas revealed his discomfort when traveling by train. “I slept badly the first night because the engines pushed the vulgarly at each station.”¹²²

Nicholas had written to his mother years before about his insecurities traveling by train; “the train shook horribly, I could not sleep and kept thinking there would be an accident.”¹²³ Here, Nicholas was apprehensive about train travel because of the horrible accident from his childhood that nearly killed his entire family. In both documents, Nicholas was traveling alone (without his family or close companions) which elevated his anxiety about travelling and made him feel more vulnerable and worrisome.

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¹²¹ Costa and McCrae, NEO-PI Revised, Neuroticism.
During the war, many military defeats in east Prussia deflated the spirit of the military and also the Tsar. Nicholas wrote to Alexandra from the warfront in Stavka, “the one great serious difficulty for our armies is this—we are running short of our artillery ammunition…our troops have to be careful and economical…the losses have at once become enormous.” ¹²⁴ Half the reinforcements that arrived had no weapons. Nicholas further mentioned the Commander-in-Chief, Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich (Nikolasha) had been looking somber and stressed. These unfortunate circumstances played into the Tsar’s worrisome disposition and accelerated his anxiety, as they would with any military leader accepting multiple defeats. However, it is important to remember Nicholas’ showed strong tendencies for anxious behavior before he even ascended to the throne decades earlier.

Nicholas frequently visited makeshift hospitals on the warfront in hopes of inspiring his fallen soldiers. In a telegram from November 1914, Nicholas was coming to terms with the dark side of the war. Nicholas had seen two young officers he recognized from one of his inspections injured in the hospitals, which slightly broke his spirit. “In two days saw over [a] thousand wounded.” ¹²⁵ In this telegram, Nicholas was coming to terms with the gravity of how ill prepared his army truly was for a war of such a magnitude. ¹²⁶

Two years later the warfront had not improved. The army was on the defensive and occupying territories in the southwest; “In Rumania it is not going well. We have sent & are sending more & more troops, but they have to march long distances (three

¹²⁴ Ibid., 45.
¹²⁵ Ibid., 57.
¹²⁶ Ibid.
weeks) owing to the atrocious condition of their railway lines.” Nicholas was distraught over the continuously poor condition of his army. He signed his telegram “your poor little huzy with no will,” implying that as the situation decreased, so did Nicholas’ attitude. Nicholas signed his name like this on two other occasions. The first in a telegram on December 15, 1916; “Ever your very own poor huzy with a tiny will,” and again on the 16th; “Tenderest love & kisses from your poor little huzy with a bit of will.” On the 16th, Nicholas responded to a previous letter written by Alexandra regarding the appointment of a new Minister of Interior. He assured her that he was not angered by her meddling practices, which in this case were influenced by Rasputin. “I understand so well your motive in trying to help me.” Nicholas was not only defending his wife’s power-hungry decision making, but openly allowed her to continue with it because he was so overburdened with stress. Nicholas was at a very vulnerable point in his rule, which Alexandra and Rasputin were both taking advantage of. Both of their behaviors only reinforced Nicholas’ anxious characteristics instead of working to decrease them.

When Nicholas returned home from Stavka, he remained with his family for two months before returning to the warfront in February. Upon his return to Stavka, Nicholas expressed grief at having to leave his wife and family again even to spend time with his treasured military. Again, Nicholas was traveling alone and feeling vulnerable; “In thoughts [I am with all [of you]. [Feel] lonely and sad.” The following day Nicholas

127 Ibid., 677.
128 Ibid. Here the word “huzy” appears to mean husband.
129 Ibid., 680.
130 Ibid., 683.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid., 688.
sent a similar telegram; “Feel strong but very lonely. Thoughts always together. Miss [you] awfully.”\textsuperscript{133} Although Nicholas frequently mentioned his deep love for his wife, it was unusual that he was so open with his feelings of loneliness. In a longer letter sent on February 23\textsuperscript{rd}, Nicholas missed the excitement of being at home and clearly took no pleasure in being in Stavka anymore. “It is so quiet in this house, no rumbling about, no excited shouts! [T]his silence around me is rather depressing-of course there is no work for me.”\textsuperscript{134} On the 24\textsuperscript{th}, Nicholas occupied himself worrying about the children, who were at home sick with the measles. Although Nicholas deeply cared for his children, his sudden interest in their home care was interesting. Those decisions were usually left for Alexandra. This is either an indication of his boredom or loneliness. In consolation to his seclusion, Nicholas wrote, “My brain feels rested here-no minister & no fidgety questions to think over-I think it does me good, but only the brain. My heart suffers from begin separated…”\textsuperscript{135} In the same letter, but continued the next day, Nicholas suffered anxiously over the fate of his troops on the southwestern front whom were destitute due to snowstorms blocking the railways. “If the trains cannot begin moving at once-in 3 or 4 days real famine will break out among the troops. Quite horribly anguishing!”\textsuperscript{136} Here Nicholas was worried and feeling guilty over the poor conditions of his troops which only made him feel worse and added to his neuroticism.

On February 26\textsuperscript{th} Nicholas’ anxiety showed physical side effects while he was attending church. “This morning during service I felt an excruciating pain in the middle of my chest, wh[ich] lasted for a quarter of an hour. I could hardly stand & my forehead

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 689.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 691.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 692.
was covered with beads of sweat." Nicholas’ loneliness and anxiety was causing him extreme physical side effects, similar to his “nervous fits.” Coincidentally, this happened the same day as the initial outbreak of the revolution that eventually crumpled the monarchy and forced the Tsar to abdicate in a matter of days. Nicholas was informed of these riots that evening and left for Moscow on the February 28th to attend to the situation at home. While traveling by train, he decided to make cessions to the Duma and signed a written ukase that relayed all responsibility to the Duma; however, it was too late. On March 3rd, Nicholas was stopped in Pskov and informed by General Rouszky that the Duma had decided to ask the Tsar to abdicate. Nicholas, showing no emotion, signed and agreed.

**Conscientiousness**

Nicholas’ conscientiousness during the First World War showed more evidence of achievement striving and order than in previous eras of his rule due to his position as Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army. Commanding an army takes great self-discipline and dutifulness which Nicholas was capable of demonstrating. However, Nicholas’ political actions and overall attitude did not reflect a high degree of competence or deliberation.

When Russia went to war with Germany and Austria in 1914, Nicholas started out as a confident leader who believed in his heart that Russia would not disappoint on the warfront. Nicholas immediately placed himself at the warfront in Stavka in hopes of inspiring the troops to victory. He informed Alexandra that upon arriving he insisted that

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137 Ibid., 696.
he not receive special treatment and the troops’ daily regimen was not to be altered.\textsuperscript{138} Unfortunately, Nicholas’ uncle, Nikolasha, the Commander-in-Chief, wouldn’t allow him anywhere near an active battlefield. “Alas! Nikolasha, as I was afraid, will not let me go to Osovets, which is insupportable, as now I won’t see any troops which have recently fought!”\textsuperscript{139} Clearly, Nicholas was upset at not being able to interact with the soldiers. Instead, he visited different hospitals and rewarded courageous troops with medals. This was a ceremonial job and showed no indication of Nicholas’ real competence as a military leader at the warfront. Obviously his role in Stavka was not overly important and left him out of the real action. “It is difficult to believe a great war is raging not so far away, everything looks so peaceful & calm.”\textsuperscript{140}

At the beginning of the war, when Russia made only a handful of small military gains, Nicholas was in a visibly happier mood, even going so far as making a joke about the poor work ethic of captured German horses.\textsuperscript{141} However, fortune soon ran out and Russia suffered through a string of extensive losses to the Germans. Still, Nicholas attempted to keep up the spirits of the soldiers and those around him; “I find it absolutely necessary to bring peace and calm among the whole population of our country.”\textsuperscript{142} This is a rare example of Nicholas’ need for achievement. Rarely does he set a clear goal on anything and work for it besides repressing the rebellion. Here, Nicholas has a goal and wants to accomplish it in order to restore confidence in himself and stability to Russia.

During the First World War, Nicholas’ authority was greatly compromised by the relationship between Alexandra and Rasputin who frequently meddled in State Council
affairs while Nicholas was away. Alexandra frequently criticized ministers of the

counsel and listened to Rasputin’s advice on whom to trust. Rasputin was notorious for
accepting bribes and favors in order to gain control over advisors and ministers within the
State Council. While Nicholas was away, chaos reigned in St. Petersburg and backlash
against the Tsar resulted from Alexandra’s behavior. However dutiful Nicholas was at
the front, his presence at home would have been more beneficial to his image. While
Alexandra called the shots in St. Petersburg, Nicholas’ reputation as a feeble and
indecisive Tsar increased, causing serious damage to the autocracy.

The greatest evidence of these interf erences is found in the correspondences
between Nicholas and Alexandra. The best example revolves around the replacement of
the Minister of Interior in 1916. That summer, the contracts for many of the ministers
had expired and Alexander Protopopov was being considered for the new Minister of
Finance position.143 Alexandra, with Rasputin’s help, urged Nicholas to appoint him as
the Minister of the Interior, although he had no previous experience in such a position.
Nicholas, however, was apprehensive about the entire situation:

“I must think that question over as it takes me quite unexpectedly. Our Friend’s
ideas about men are sometimes queer, as you know—so one must be careful
especially in nominations of high people…All these changes exhaust the
head. I find they happen much too often.”144

Nicholas was trying his best to resist his wife and advisor’s ideas, although his complaint
of headaches only increased Alexandra’s reasoning to interfere. The Tsar was clearly
suspicious of Rasputin’s suggestions but was manipulated by his wife’s dependence on
the Healer for their son’s treatment for hemophilia. As expected, Nicholas eventually

143 Fuhrmann, Wartime Correspondence, 677.
144 Nicholas II, Wartime Correspondence, 5.
gave in; “I also find it good to affirm him minister.” 145 This is only one example of a continuous game of “ministerial leapfrog” that changed the positions of numerous State Council positions that year.

In addition to making suggestions for positions on her husband’s behalf, Alexandra turned Nicholas against Governor-General Trepov, Nicholas’ oldest friend and ally in his council. Trepov had the notoriety for being disliked within the Duma because he closely favored repressive tactics used by Alexander III. In addition, one of the ministers who disliked him was Protopopov. Since the Tsarista was running things in court, Trepov ‘s position was in jeopardy. Nicholas first responded to her claims to relieve Trepov in December 1916; “I intend being firm, cutting, & disagreeable,” he claimed. 146 This behavior reinforced Nicholas’ reputation for being too passive since he had to assure his wife that he would be firm when dealing with his personal advisor. A few days later, Nicholas responded to a heated letter from Alexandra regarding Trepov’s dismissal.

“Loving thanks for your strong reprimanding letter. I read it with a smile because you speak like to a child. It is rotten business to have a man whom one dislikes & distrusts like Trep[ov]. But first of all one must chose a new successor & then kick him out…Let all the responsibility & difficulty fall on his shoulders & not those of the new comer. I send you two lists of candidates.” 147

Here, Nicholas was admittedly allowing Alexandra to make his ministerial appointments for him which is proof of his incompetence as a ruler. Furthermore, Nicholas openly accepted his inadequacies by thanking his wife for her overbearing letters and her habit of speaking to him like he was a child. The only form of control Nicholas showed was his

145 Ibid., 683.
146 Ibid., 665-666.
147 Ibid., 676-677.

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advice for not letting Trepov go immediately and getting a replacement in order first. However, this minor suggestion was lost within Alexandra’s demands and Nicholas’ powerlessness to deny them.

As time passed, Nicholas grew ever wearier in his role as Tsar. With Alexandra handling everything in St. Petersburg and the warfront not actually requiring his attendance, Nicholas grew frustrated and distanced himself from his duties. When Nicholas returned to Stavka in February after a two month holiday 1917, he dearly missed his family and complained about being away from them constantly. He wrote and telegraphed his wife more frequently than usual, likely owing to all his idle time. On the 23rd, Nicholas simply wrote, “What a bore,” in a short telegraph.\textsuperscript{148} That same afternoon he wrote his wife a long letter about nothing in particular and concluded it with his decision to take up dominoes to pass time.\textsuperscript{149} Furthermore, Nicholas mentioned that while away, he felt more rested because he did not have to deal with the minister’s questions every day. He also reassured the Tsarista that he would be home soon; “I won’t be long away-only to put all things as much as possible to rights here & then my duty will be done.”\textsuperscript{150}

Perhaps the final and most compelling evidence of Nicholas’ \textit{conscientiousness} appears in Nicholas’ final hours of being Tsar. Upon hearing the revolution had broken out in St. Petersburg, Nicholas sent in the cavalry in hopes of quelling the riots until he arrived home.\textsuperscript{151} However, in perspective of the events at home and their cause, Nicholas finally decided to give in to the rebels in hope of ending the revolution, which included

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 689.  
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 697.
granting sole authority to the Duma over the State Counsel. However, this was not the idea his ministers and advisors had in mind. After being presented with the idea by one of his generals in the train on his way back to St. Petersburg, Nicholas decided on March 3rd, 1917, to abdicate in favor of his brother Michael. Although Nicholas’ abdication did not end the revolution, he finally had made the right decision.

V. Conclusion

Tsar Nicholas II was by most standards an inefficient monarch and a poor political leader. Yet, all of Nicholas’ inadequacies existed long before he ever became Tsar. He lacked an effective political education and was surrounded with narrow-minded advisors he had inherited from his father’s rule. Where Nicholas should have embraced progress, he repressed it, eliminating any opportunities for personal growth as a leader and also for his country as well. This characteristic was also inherited from his father, an overly oppressive monarch. He was consistently misguided by his ministers and overbearing wife, which ultimately took a toll on his ability to make decisions on his own. He was too pleasing, worrisome in character, incompetent in politics, and lacked any vision for his country. All of these characteristics are measurable by the NEO-Personality Inventory Revised exam and the findings provide concrete psychological evidence for Nicholas’ reputations as a poor leader.

Nicholas II’s evaluation of agreeableness is inconsistent. He was overly trusting but conscientious when people had betrayed him. He was never a straightforward man and usually very passive about asserting his ideas. He cared deeply

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152 Fuhrmann, Wartime Correspondence, 697.
153 Agreeableness is evaluated based on trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tender-mindedness.
for the welfare of his loyal followers, but mostly seemed out of touch with the reality of what the general population was going through. Nicholas was a very compliant man and always did what he was told. However, this was a flawed characteristic in his personality because it led to him be easily influenced by others and also very passive. He was a modest man who enjoyed a leisurely lifestyle of long walks and socializing with his family and close friends. In his youth he enjoyed attending parties and balls, but eventually retreated to a quieter life with his family in Tsarskoe Selo or in the Crimea. Although Nicholas II was considered a failure at political leadership, he was a master of family matters. He deeply loved his wife and adored his children and was never too busy to show his tender-mindedness and adoration toward them. Nicholas was an agreeable man but too agreeable to be a persuasive leader.\textsuperscript{154}

Nicholas is not commonly remembered as an extraverted person.\textsuperscript{155} In his youth he enjoyed parties, but never possessed strong social skills. He was not gregarious and stayed away from large groups of people. Especially in his later years, he only enjoyed socializing with his family and small groups of trusted friends. He was a fairly active man; he enjoyed outings and military specials but did not care to move through life at a fast pace. He rarely sought real excitement except when visiting the battle front during the First World War, but that mostly correlated to his sense of dutifulness and pride in his military. He was emotionally reclusive and did not share many of his thoughts and feelings. However, it was well known that he loved his wife and family and they brought him great joy. He lacked confidence and assertiveness which was consistent throughout all his life. To those that knew him closely, he was a warm and friendly man. However,\textsuperscript{154,155}

\textsuperscript{154} Bono and Judge, “Five-Factor Model,” 757-756.

\textsuperscript{155} Extraversion is evaluated base on warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement seeking, and positive emotions.
by the end of 1905, his repressive behavior toward Russian rebels earned him the name “Nicholas the Bloody,” a cold and uninviting nickname. Overall, Nicholas was never an extraverted person and individuals who are, are more likely to be positive leaders.\textsuperscript{156}

Nicholas’ Openness to Experience is extremely limited.\textsuperscript{157} His entire reign revolved around the repression of revolutionary ideas and limited progress in governmental reforms. He did not embrace new ideas for the autocracy and was especially conservative due to his religious beliefs. His faith generated strong moral values but narrowed his understanding of anything outside of them. His repressive actions against his people spoke negatively about his openness towards unfamiliar ideas. Nicholas never openly shared his feelings, but many around him saw his moods and attitudes deteriorate as his rule progressed. In his youth, he enjoyed the aesthetics of the ballet and opera, but those outings dwindled after his ascension to the throne in 1894. He did not show signs of an active fantasy life but did encourage his children at games and performing plays while under house arrest after 1917. Mostly Nicholas’ poor Openness to Experience signified his discomfort with the changes around him and showed his feeble attempt to retain authority in Russia.

Nicholas’ Conscientiousness mostly exhibits his over-deliberating personality which directly translated into his incompetence as a leader.\textsuperscript{158} Nicholas always showed his sense of dutifulness when completing his daily tasks and filling requests asked of him. He also felt an extreme sense of duty to the military which stemmed from his military style upbringing by his father. Nicholas rarely missed an opportunity to show his support

\textsuperscript{156} Bono and Judge, “Five-Factor Model,” 757-756.
\textsuperscript{157} Openness to Experience is evaluated by fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, and values.
\textsuperscript{158} Conscientiousness is evaluated by competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation.
for his troops and took much pleasure in observing them. His fondness for the military also showed his great appreciation for order. He followed a rigid daily schedule and was a stickler for cleanliness. Following a military lifestyle also develops a strong sense of self-discipline. Nicholas was not remembered as a man who ignored his political tasks even when they disinterested him. He did, however, try not to associate with Duma members when it was avoidable. Despite Nicholas’ sense of deliberation, he usually preferred to act first instead of talk over ideas. He frequently complained of the Duma’s long meetings that he claimed led to nothing. He was never able to make any decisions on his own and was easily persuaded by others. He claimed to keep himself informed of the goings on in his country but frequently was remembered as out of touch with the true needs of his people. He was especially vulnerable to those who understood his ineptitude who could easily manipulate him, such as Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. Although Nicholas was an extremely hard working man, he was devoid of charisma and political common sense that would have driven him to be a more successful leader.

Nicholas’ neurotic behavior is the most memorable of all his characterizes and the one that dominates his legacy.¹⁵⁹ Before his reign as Tsar, Nicholas exhibited anxious behaviors and extreme self-consciousness. He frequently worried about disappointing his mother and father. He never felt comfortable in the public scene and preferred to seclude himself and his family away from all activity. He was not an impulsive man and rarely acted out of the ordinary. He did not usually show any hostile behavior although could sometimes be extremely stubborn in his resistance toward new ideas. Nicholas was never known to be diagnosed with depression, but during the Revolution of 1905 and the First

¹⁵⁹ Neuroticism is evaluated based on anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability.
World War, he experienced bouts with loneliness, worthlessness, guilt, discouraged, and sadness which are all symptoms of depression. He additionally felt as though his future was predetermined by God and, felt hopeless in some situations. In those moments, Nicholas felt vulnerable and was open to manipulation and misguided ideas from others. Although neuroticism is not strongly correlated with weak leadership, there is no doubt that in Nicholas’ case his neurotic behavior accentuated his weak leadership skills and accelerated his demise.

Nicholas was an unwilling leader condemned to a life in the autocratic spotlight. He was never interested in politics in his youth, but his predetermined occupation launched him into a position he was not mentally or emotionally capable of handling. His weaknesses may not have been the original cause of the fall of the Russian monarchy, but they certainly added to its progression. In the end, Nicholas is a historical figure that can be easily understood. His weaknesses of character were overexposed through revolutions and wars that he was unable to control, and left him vulnerable to manipulation. Ultimately, his spirit collapsed under the pressure of too many suggestions and not enough good decisions, leading to his abdication in early 1917. With the help of in-depth psycho historical analysis, it can now be determined that Nicholas II was not a weak Tsar who ruined the Russian monarchy forever, but a man whose personality was simply never destined for leadership greatness.
Appendix

I. Big Five Personality Traits and their Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neuroticism</th>
<th>The tendency to be anxious, fearful, depressed and moody</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>The tendency to be outgoing, assertive, active, and excitement seeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to Experience</td>
<td>The tendency to be creative, imaginative, perceptive, and thoughtful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>The tendency to be kind, gentle, trusting and trustworthy, and warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Determined by achievement and dependability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Big Five Traits and their Sub-Categories in the NEO-PI Revised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neuroticism</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Angry Hostility</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Self-Consciousness</th>
<th>Impulsiveness</th>
<th>Vulnerability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to Experience</td>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Order</td>
<td>Dutifulness</td>
<td>Achievement-Striving</td>
<td>Self-discipline</td>
<td>Deliberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>Gregariousness</td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Excitement-Seeking</td>
<td>Positive Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Straightforwardness</td>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>Modesty</td>
<td>Tender-mindedness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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161 Bono and Judge, “Five-Factor Model,” 752.
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