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 Final Paper

### **Moral Obligations**

One of the greatest lessons I have learned from attending higher education so far is the importance of being intentional with my time, actions, words, and relationships. My realization of being intentional in all that I do mostly came about when reflecting on what career I wanted to pursue once I graduate from the University of Washington. The question, “What are you studying?” may seem like a simple question but after being asked so many times, I realized that there was a greater purpose to acquiring my degree. I know what I want to study, Political Science and Education, but what exactly was I going to do with my knowledge once I leave the university? So instead I asked myself, “What am I studying and why?” After deep consideration, I acknowledged that I want to pursue a career in government or education in order to make learning accessible and intriguing for those who do not have the opportunities to do so. Essentially, to contribute back to my community.

In one way or another, we all feel a moral influence to give back to the people in our lives. Whether that be through attending higher education to reach a certain career or simply lending a helping hand to a complete stranger, I believe that there is a moral obligation to pay attention to one another in order to truly support a free community or society.

However, what does it mean to have a free society? Why is there a moral obligation to pay attention to each other? What skills do people need to develop for a sustained free society? How can leaders facilitate that possibility? As I’ve learned throughout this quarter, there are many interpretations of what it means to live in and support a free society.

For this final essay, I will be reviewing three propositions that are necessary to sustain a free society: (1) Leadership always involves assumptions (tacit and acknowledged) about human nature, (2) Leadership involves at its base the creation of a persuaded audience; but beyond that, leadership involves creating and sustaining a more thoughtful public, a public capable of rising above itself, and (3) A more thoughtful public must not be only created and sustained, but, given that things fall apart, must be recovered and reconstituted.

While considering these propositions, I realized that behind each one there is the common concept behind all of them, and that is: the moral obligation to pay attention to others. Each proposition supports the idea that people have a moral obligation to pay attention to others and cultivate skills that form a thoughtful public and thus a free society. Throughout this essay, I will be supporting these 3 propositions by interpreting the significance each proposition holds in a free society and explaining how these proposals relate to a moral obligation to understand others.

Before explaining how these propositions are necessary to formulating a free society, it is important to first understand what it means to have the moral obligation to pay attention to others and the definition of a free society.

Paying attention to others means to recognize the situations and experiences people have lived through and to acknowledge when their struggles impact the values and stability of a free society. As Roger Soder mentions in *Sustaining a Free Society*, “paying attention over time is hard to do,” but if we do not make the effort to give attention to one another then we are bound to pay the cost of ignoring bigger problems within society. By not paying attention to one another, we miss the opportunity to address the problems that may prevent a larger group of

people from living in the free society. However, there is a core difference between paying attention to others and actively helping others. It can be argued that paying attention to others is simply to acknowledge the other person's situation, not necessarily to act on their behalf. I have always been one to believe that if we are in a position to support another, then by all means we should act if it is within our control. Though, I acknowledge that the extent to which we are obligated to support or serve others depends on the context. If we are to act every single time we notice someone is struggling, then that can lead to a feeling of being responsible for everyone else except ourselves. Because I recognize that each individual has a definite physical, mental, emotional, capacity to act for others, I believe the least we can do is be aware of the situations we face and pay attention. As social creatures, I believe that it is in our nature to care for others. Paying attention becomes a moral obligation because if we are to strive for a free society, then we must observe, recognize, and admit the problems that prevent the community from achieving the free society.

Now that the moral obligation to pay attention to others is clarified, we then have to define what it means to have a free society. In Soder's *Sustaining a Free Society*, he lists 16 necessary conditions that are required for a free society. For a society to be free, healthy, and sustaining it must have: (1) trust, (2) social capital, (3) respect for equal justice under law, justice, and due process, (4) freedom, (5) recognition of the necessary tension between freedom and order, (6) recognition of the need for *e pluribus unum*, (7) guarding of liberty, (8) knowledge of rights, (9) self interest well understood, (10) words and facts have to have stable meaning, (11) respect for civil discourse, (12) free and open inquiry, (13) recognition of the difference between a persuaded audience and more thoughtful public, (14) ecological understanding, (15) ability to counter threats to a free society, and (16) understanding that political process takes time. Now, each of these conditions can be argued, considered, and explained more in depth. For the sake of staying on topic, a free society needs to consist of qualities that promote open conversations, long-term perspective, consistent meaning and truth behind words, respect for institutions that protect our freedom, and strong relationships between communities.

The differences between a free society and a non-free society lie under one foundational rule. Essentially, free societies allow the *possibility* of leaders to respect and implement the "fundamental rubric of community and cooperation and autonomy as the basis of their leadership behaviors," whereas non-free societies do not value autonomy or freedom. Supportive-free leaders are "alert to the demands of a free society" and act in ways to support the community whereas non-supportive leaders do not practice either quality.

Most of the 16 qualities will be addressed when considering the 3 propositions mentioned earlier. With a simple understanding of the requirements that constitute a free society, we will then move on to how the propositions uphold this understanding of a free society and refer back to the moral obligation of paying attention to others.

Leadership always involves assumptions (tacit and acknowledged) about human nature. I believe that this proposition supports a free society because in order to be a leader, one must understand the public they are serving. However, what becomes crucial about this proposition is that it is up to the leader to characterize the society because how leaders view the people is how they are going to act towards them.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky's chapter "The Grand Inquisitor," in the novel *The Brothers Karamazov* follows the story of Christ and The Grand Inquisitor told by Ivan to his brother Alyosha. In this monologue given by the Grand Inquisitor, the Inquisitor expresses his

resentment towards the burden of freedom that Christ places on the people. Mankind are “like sheep, grateful and obedient”, “simplicity and innate lawlessness”, and “forever incapable of being free, because they are feeble, depraved, nonentities and rebels,” as said by the Inquisitor. He continues to lash out his anger to Christ for his choices of preaching freedom. People need to be obedient and cannot, or rather are unable to, be faced with the options of choice that freedom might bring.

It is apparent in this story that the Grand Inquisitor, the leader, sees people as helpless “sheep” who cannot deal with the burden of choice. The Grand Inquisitor's fundamental argument is that people are not capable of being free, they are naturally weak and incapable because choice bears too heavily on them. In this situation, the Inquisitor prioritizes security and happiness over the freedom that Christ was advocating for. The Inquisitor sees human nature as one that seeks union and security above all else. Ideally for the inquisitor, people are guided through the society by “miracles, mystery and authority.” Through this system, men achieve happiness because they don't have to think about what to choose or believe. The removal of choice allows people to be secure in what they define as truth because that is all they know. This is how the Grand Inquisitor views the public so that is how he treats them. In this instance, the leadership acts in a way that aligns with their conception of human nature.

Personally, I don't believe that people are “sheep” or unable to handle freedom and the freedom of thought and choice. I think that ultimately people feel happiness when they have the freedom to understand, identify, and live up to the values and beliefs in their lives more than living mindlessly though physically secure. Humans are social creatures and conversing, communicating, and collaborating are the core values of what it means to have freedom. Though I do understand the arguments by the Inquisitor, I ultimately think that it is part of human nature for people to have freedom.

With this idea in mind that leaders serve in a way that aligns with how they view the public, it is important to consider what qualities leaders should adopt. Referring back to Soder's *Sustaining a Free Society* he provides four elements of a leader in a free society: (1) ethics of persuasion, (2) need for stable meanings of words and facts, (3) ecology of persuasion, and (4) trust and social capital. Even before I explain what each element entails, it is quite clear that each of these deal with some form of human nature. Through these qualities, leaders are involved in aspects of human nature like ways of talking, thinking, and behaving towards one another.

To explain each briefly, the ethic of persuasion is the necessity of leaders to have a purpose greater than simply persuading their audience but to engage and interact to sustain a more thoughtful public. Having stable meanings of words and facts is the need to speak in thoughtful, reflective ways and to have people think in a similar manner. This encourages rational discourse and respect for facts, thus not undermining what we have determined to be factual. The ecology of persuasion focuses on the effects, responsibilities, and consequences of using persuasion, “If you want people to be thoughtful and reflective, speak in a thoughtful and reflective way.” Lastly, the behavior of building trust and social capital within a community can help to develop and increase a sense of togetherness with all people involved, giving the potential to be more active in terms of policy making.

In a free society, the assumptions that leadership has about human nature is that people are capable of participating in conversations and formulating their own thoughts based on arguments presented to them. “A leader's choice of how to persuade says a great deal about the leader and what the leader thinks of the intended audience,” says Soder. Persuasion can be presented in multiple ways like appealing to logic or emotions and the mode in which persuasion

is given like through bribery, force, or discussion. But, a leader in a free society should consider the mode in which they persuade their audience with the assumption that the public is capable of thinking for themselves.

There is always a need to maintain a stable meaning of words and facts for a free society. Soder describes this domino-effect: when there is a lack of respect for facts, this then leads to a threatened free society. If people do not have access to facts or information then “facts are defined by the ruling powers” because access to the truth is limited or completely unavailable. This then affects the ability for the meaning of words and what is shown to be “true” to lose value, thus preventing intentional and rational conversations. In a free society, leadership assumes that it is human nature to think logically and validate facts that are proven to be true.

Similar to the ethics of persuasion, the ecology of persuasion assumes that people are influenced by the choices made by other people. Soder identifies that “the choice of how one wishes to argue, then, is an ecological choice: the basis of one’s argument will not only affect your own immediate domain, it stands a good chance to affect the domain of others.” As I mentioned earlier, I believe that humans are social beings that learn and collaborate with one another in order to understand the world around them. So how a leader chooses to persuade influences the society around them. In a free society, a leader will be conscious of how people are influenced by choices and act in ways that align with the values of a free society like the condition of free and open inquiry.

Finally, a leader in a free society needs to build trust and social capital. Trust and social capital relate to building relationships in a community in order to work together to provide support for the society. If a leader assumes that it is in human nature for people to collaborate, cooperate, and contribute to the world, then the leader must provide that space for the public. In providing a capacity for individuals to build trust and social capital, the leader assumes that it is in human nature to facilitate a free society.

Though, the moral obligation to pay attention to others is still present. As discussed throughout these paragraphs, leadership involves observing and understanding human behavior and ways of thinking. This allows leaders to pay attention to the public because there is the moral obligation to assume the best in people. The moral obligation to generate a free society to best provide a space for human nature is embedded in leadership. Especially considering if leaders want to create a free society, then they are in positions of power to begin initiating the conditions to support the community. The moral obligation to follow up on their value of creating a free society remains visible.

As seen in the Grand Inquisitor and from the qualities of leader provided by Soder, it is evident that leadership involves assumptions about human nature. In regards to a free society, leadership involves making assumptions about human nature, ones that view people as capable of thinking for themselves, validating what is fact and why it is, understanding appropriate ways of persuading and interacting with one another, and building trust in relationships to increase collaboration and contribution. Thus the proposition that leadership always involves assumptions (tacit and acknowledged) about human nature is valid for a free society.

This supports the conditions: trust, social capital, words and facts have to have stable meaning, respect for civil discourse, free and open inquiry, and ecological understanding, that establish a free society. However, one of the most important factors that this proposition alludes to is the capability for an audience to not just be persuaded, but more thoughtful. Here, it has been explained that it is in human nature to converse and contribute to large conversations not to blindly follow along as “sheep”. So, how does a persuaded audience become one that is

thoughtful? How do leaders continue to facilitate this process once they acknowledge that it is in human nature for people to be thoughtful? What does it even mean to be thoughtful?

Leadership involves at its base the creation of a persuaded audience; but beyond that, leadership involves creating and sustaining a more thoughtful public, a public capable of rising above itself. I support this proposition because through the condition of having a more thoughtful public, other important qualities that sustain a free society fall under the ability to have a more thoughtful public. As discussed earlier, leadership is capable of providing ethical forms of persuasion to their audience. However, there is a significant difference between a persuaded audience and a more thoughtful public.

A persuaded audience attends a monologue: they are there to listen to what the leader has to say. Additionally, they do not participate in a dialogue or a conversation that engages the people with the leader or each other. The leader does not provide a space for the audience to speak but the leader recognizes that the people must be in agreement to continue serving as leader so the communication is limited to a monologue. Because of this restricted capacity for the audience to engage, the persuaded audience believes that politics starts and ends with leaders. They are in a position to blindly trust the leaders in power and look for information that supports the preconceived notions presented to them. In seeking information to support the arguments made by leaders, the persuaded audience then loses knowledge of their individual rights and the need to protect their freedom. It is clear that once a public begins to lose a space to engage with the leaders or each other, they begin to compromise critical thinking skills and healthy skepticism for the sake of supporting preconceived notions given by the leader.

On the other hand, a more thoughtful public begins with a dialogue: a conversation and dedicated time to engage with the leader and others to access information before reaching a conclusion. When engaging between one another, there is mutual respect and nonviolent civil discourse. The thoughtful public understands their rights and looks after their freedom so the need for civil discourse is a necessity. They understand that political change begins with the public, during diplomatic engagement and with the intent to uphold the free society. It is given that a thoughtful public has diverse forms of resources available in order to form a fair opinion about a subject. Through this widely accessible knowledge, the thoughtful public needs to utilize critical thinking skills and healthy skepticism. This means to analyze the information and arguments they are encountering and determine whether the individual supports it or not. There is not a blind trust established between the public and the leader, the thoughtful public is able to recognize when the leader acts in ways that interfere with the values of a free society. The thoughtful public also accepts the fact that a thoughtful public is not a goal to achieve once, but rather a value to continue to defend.

However, for a thoughtful public to understand the values of a free society and the need to continuously encourage an engaged community, the public and the leader must adopt a grounded identity and a long-term perspective.

Grounded identity consists of two types of identities: one's self identity and a social identity. Confidence in our own self-identities allows for us to be authentic in our opinions, thoughts, and relationship to others. Social identity is "attuned to others" especially when discussing politics and social issues. This means that a social identity considers how individuals present self identity, relate to, or differ from others in the society. Nevertheless, a grounded identity is understanding one's own values and beliefs. As Dr. Spencer Welch explained, effective individuals know who they are, are deeply connected to their core values, and know

how to apply their principles consistently through words and actions. A grounded identity is important for a free society because it assesses exactly what values the society wants to follow and prioritize. Without consistent values, the society virtually has no ambition or purpose to live in a free society.

Along with that, a thoughtful public acts consistently and intentionally in alignment with values for the sake of leaving behind a better society for future generations. “Thoughtfulness takes time,” says Soder in *Sustaining a Free Society*. If a thoughtful public is to only consider the short-term perspective and prioritize the immediate satisfaction, then the society risks producing a healthy, insightful, fully understanding public that takes the time to engage with one another. For example, Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* examines why there is a lack of satisfaction within people’s state of well-being, freedom, and property acquisition—happiness. He first explains that the longing for prosperity is “the first cause of this secret restlessness betrayed by actions of the Americans,” which is that the shortness of life creates too much ambition to attain every single good which results in a constant change in achieving the goal. This is not a sustainable way of creating a lasting free society because if all we focus on is the “now” then we lose track of the values that we prioritize most and want future generations to continue living up to. Thinking solely in just the short-term perspective creates a rushed time frame that can lead to poor judgment, evaluation, and action (or lack of). Through this, there is no sustained free society because the public does not intend to create a lasting society that accumulates value over time instead of producing results in the now.

To change this narrative, there are three possible sources of change from the short-term to the long-term, according to Soder: nonprofit organizations, schools, and ourselves. Nonprofit organizations influence culture. Culture plays a large part in building and influencing policy because it determines values and intellect. However, when considering certain issues that are time constrained (climate change) and social issues that are continuing to be prominent in everyday life (ex. systemic racism), I think that government and policy play a crucial role in influencing these concerns that a nonprofit organization might be able to do. Though I understand that institutional and cultural shifts take time, I also think that there are certain matters that simply cannot wait or are overdue for action. I think that government policy is a source of change for adopting the long-term perspective because it allows us to evaluate and implement policy that affects the short-term and the future as well.

When discussing the capability of a public to take the time to review their values and long-term goals, it is important to recognize what prevents individuals from participating in that currently. In order to move past the present moment and consider how current actions affect the sustainability of the society, I think that it might overshadow the realities that some people face. I think that in order to think long-term, one also has to be able to live for the long-term. By this I mean that a large number of people, mostly people of color, are forced to live their life and make decisions in the short-term because of affordability and accessibility to living a life that has a guaranteed future. I think that there is a privilege to being able to live up to a long-term perspective and act in a way that does not harm one’s short-term safety for long-term prosperity.

These two sources of change to transition from the short-term to the long-term acknowledge possible modes of shifting cultural values. Though I still believe they are important areas of creating change, government leaders are most likely to have longer lasting impacts when we create a sustainable life for everyone in order to create a free society in the future.

In general, a thoughtful public must acknowledge and follow a long-term perspective before completely adjusting our current ways of living. As we've discussed, in order to properly evaluate the wide range of information and sources to form a well-rounded opinion in alignment with our values, then there needs to be a lot of time devoted to doing just that. Change and understanding do not come overnight, and it is important for a thoughtful public to adopt a long-term perspective, that results will not come quickly. A long-term perspective supports the notion that our current actions must be ethical not just for ourselves but to have the possibility of a free society later on. By having the mentality that our impact has to be left for the future, then we are likely to consider how we are consistently and intentionally abiding by our values.

Through a grounded identity and adaptation of a long term perspective, a thoughtful public has the ability to understand the values of a free society and initiate deliberate conversations and actions to sustain the principles of the public. Additionally, leadership is involved in the creation of providing a space for engagement and the capacity for a persuaded audience to become a thoughtful public.

Once again, the need for a thoughtful public is a moral obligation of paying attention to others because a thoughtful public is one that pays attention to the values of ourselves and the community. As mentioned throughout this analysis of the proposition, we are morally obliged to create an accessible and equal environment when the public can engage with one another. Identifying values, adopting a long term perspective, and the extent to which the public holds a free society depends not only on leaders but the community that participates as well. Therefore, if we depend on each other to sustain a free society (through a thoughtful public) then we must first pay attention to others and understand our experiences to create universal values for the free society.

Now with a firm understanding of why a thoughtful public is a necessity to a free society, one must consider how to continue sustaining thoughtfulness and inclusivity. While sustaining this community is important, arguably more crucial is the ability for the public to build back up, if and when things fall apart. Soder emphasizes this in *The Language of Leadership*, "my knowing to reconstitute the sauce was of much greater importance to me than knowing how to make it perfectly," because the reality is that things go wrong in all settings. Whether those settings are large societies or between individual relationships, it can all go downhill very quickly with good intentions or not. So how does a thoughtful public continue when they first must reconstruct?

A more thoughtful public must not be only created and sustained, but, given that things fall apart, must be recovered and reconstituted. I support this proposition because it incorporates a long-term perspective and the need to have the skills to recover a free society. Both leadership and the public itself must possess qualities that make reconstitution an available option and the willingness to value and appreciate a free society.

In this scenario, the thoughtful public must understand how to recover and reconstitute the elements of free society when qualities begin to fade or if the society collapses as a whole. Whatever the extent of falling apart may be, what does it mean to recover and reconstitute? Does this look different from a thoughtful public for a free society?

To understand how to effectively respond when things fall apart, it is important to recognize what the usual responses are and how they can be ineffective. In *The Language of Leadership*, Soder lists 7 typical ways of responding to a situation when things collapse: (1) do nothing (partly because we do not know the situation), (2) ignore the situation (implies that we

know a little about the circumstances but actively choose to do nothing), (3) justify or excuse the breakdowns between people, (4) remove the people who cause the difficulties, (5) use revenge (when we think we are threatened or wronged), (6) acknowledge the bad situation but keep the lid on through force, threats of force, or cheerfulness, and (7) run from the bad situation.

These can be ineffective responses to a specific situation because they do not address the problem or work to an ethical solution. Most of these responses bring short-term results but again, do not work towards solving the deeper issues that are causing the elements of a free society to disappear.

In order to implement effective reconciliation and reconstitution efforts, it will not happen with just superficial change but within deep structures. The 6 suggestions that Soder provides to successful restoration are dependent on other contingencies, the circumstances and context of a situation. Nonetheless, they still serve a large part in knowing how to build back up when things fall down. The six suggestions for action are: (1) see the world large, not small. (2) Cannot lie to ourselves and others. (3) Insist on seeking the truth about what has happened, and we can develop a process that will engage all parties in honest and public deliberation. (4) Make time and resource commitments necessary to an authentic process of reconciliation and reconstitutions. (5) Recognize the relationship between reconciliation and reconstitution and a free democratic society. (6) Recognize the elements of reconciliation: trust, openness, give and take, honesty, public deliberation, and critical inquiry into the past. The six suggestions are intended to “engage in a process of reconciliation and reconstitution not to recover the past but to make a better future.”

These 6 suggestions for recovery and reconstitution highlight ways of communicating and moving forward. I think these relate to some past ideas: need of respect for truth and facts and need for grounded identity. Suggestion (3) and (4) incorporate elements of the perspective of the long-term and in the past. They also include the necessity to include people and prioritize certain resources in order to reconstitute. Overall, these elements of reconstitution require that a public has a grounded identity and connection to values, validates what is truth and fact, open and free inquiry, and adaptation of a long term perspective, thus making the thoughtful public capable of reconstituting.

However, one thing that I must address in terms of comparing this to our current world. It can be argued that our world is “falling apart” to a certain extent, or at least that the issues that have been ignored for decades are resurfacing. I think in order to implement some of these suggestions on a large scale, we have to implement them before things fall apart completely and that may prevent something from going down or simply just make the process more accessible when the time comes. I mostly refer to suggestion (3), consider what has happened in the past and develop a new one that is more inclusive. I think it is hard to say that when we fall apart we will create a process that is inclusive considering that the reason we fall apart to begin with is because of unequal treatment.

When considering the past and the current state, I feel that the process to reconstitution has not been equal. Not everything falls apart to the same extent, there are still power hierarchies in place that make implementing the suggestions of inclusivity, the long term frame, and ethical actions far more difficult for certain groups. However, within organizations, rather than society as a whole, I definitely think it’s more feasible. Obviously working with a smaller group makes it easier to build strong relationships and identify what values the organization wants to prioritize. In an organization, the people are there willingly and want to actively participate in that community when things go down.



However, these issues arise because it can be argued that we currently do not have a completely free society that abides by the proposed conditions at the beginning of the essay. I think that our current society is still in the process of developing a more thoughtful public and ethical leadership. For a free society, issues of excluding people from conversations due to equity issues would be resolved or else the society would not be free.

Returning back to reconstitution and recovery, a thoughtful public and leadership would implement the 6 suggestions in order to begin building back a free society. Each suggestion relates back to the thoughtful public having a strong grounded identity and a long-term perspective. If the thoughtful public understands their values and what qualities to reinstate in the society, then they can practice the reconciliation efforts of: (1) seeing the world large, not small, (5) Recognize the relationship between reconciliation and reconstitution and a free democratic society, (6) Recognize the elements of reconciliation: trust, openness, give and take, honesty, public deliberation, and critical inquiry into the past, and (4) Make time and resource commitments necessary to an authentic process of reconciliation and reconstitutions. It is clear here that the thoughtful public needs a firm stance on their values and priorities to recover a free society. They are able to recognize what steps are needed to accomplish the goals (1), understand how their actions align with the society they are trying to reestablish (5), and continue to uphold the necessary conditions for a free society (6). However, the public must also understand that this process takes time as suggestion (4) entails. This is why the thoughtful public must already possess a long-term perspective.

The long-term perspective is the core component of the remaining components: (2) cannot lie to ourselves and others, (3) insist on seeking the truth about what has happened, and we can develop a process that will engage all parties in honest and public deliberation, and again, (4) make time and resource commitments necessary to an authentic process of reconciliation and reconstitutions. In order to make proper steps to recover, the public must take the time to reflect on what has happened. They must also recognize that in order to build back stronger, time to reflect, converse, and develop a process is absolutely necessary. Since a thoughtful public holds a long-term perspective, then they are able to understand that reconstitution cannot be rushed. There needs to be time for reflection and realization that the actions that are taken now affect the future stability of the free society the most. If a public does not consider the long-term, then it is not a thoughtful public that has the intention of reestablish a worthwhile free society,

A thoughtful public must have a grounded identity and long-term perspective in order to contribute to recovery and reconstitution of a free society. In order to “pick up the pieces” leaders also have to apply reconciliation and reconstruction efforts. A leader should possess the ability to reconcile and reconstitute. When things inevitably fall apart, a leader must know how to put things back together through patience, negotiation, and listening. In the same way one would persuade, in order to recover a leader “must have high expectations of those they would lead.” Ultimately, in order to reconcile a leader has to persuade the people that it is worth rejoining a community and “leaders have to expect more, expect the best” to achieve the desired goals of rebuilding a free society. As we discussed, reconciliation and reconstitution takes a lot of time and consideration of many factors. One idea that is important to me when leaders are in the process of recovering, is that leaders must acknowledge that not everything falls apart to the same extent. Some groups of people will have harder times recovering than others, it might even be that some people profit off things falling apart. Whatever the case, it is important for leaders to speak and act accordingly and ethically considering that every situation is different and requires certain resources.

The proposition, a more thoughtful public must not be only created and sustained, but, given that things fall apart, must be recovered and reconstituted, is necessary for a free society. As I've mentioned, the public must continue to act in alignment with their values and with the long-term perspective in order to participate in reconciliation efforts like seeking the truth in what caused things to fall apart but still provide a space for honest and civil discourse. Additionally, leaders must also take responsibility in facilitating reconciliation efforts. Leaders must use ethical persuasion to motivate the public and understand the larger picture. They play a great role in providing the public a space to discuss how to reconstitute and be available to listen, negotiate, and have patience. These qualities and reconstitution efforts support the idea that it is possible for a thoughtful public to not only be sustained, but reconstituted for a free society.

When things fall apart, why do we want to reconstitute a free society again? Why should we be inclined to do so as a thoughtful public? That is because of the moral obligation to pay attention to others. When we are in positions where we have to start over as a whole society, then we have a moral obligation to recognize how the public can reconstitute a free society that addresses the situations of different groups. Similar to the responsibility of a leader, individuals must recognize that not everything falls apart to the same extent but still give attention to others to speak on behalf of their experiences. A thoughtful public must engage with one another to seek truth in the information and provide a space of public deliberation where everyone can contribute to rebuild the society. Through this, we value the need to pay attention to others to create inclusive conversations from multiple perspectives for the recovery and reconstitution of a thoughtful public and free society.

Throughout this essay, I have explained why these 3 propositions, (1) Leadership always involves assumptions (tacit and acknowledged) about human nature, (2) Leadership involves at its base the creation of a persuaded audience; but beyond that, leadership involves creating and sustaining a more thoughtful public, a public capable of rising above itself, and (3) A more thoughtful public must not be only created and sustained, but, given that things fall apart, must be recovered and reconstituted, are necessary to sustain a free society. In one way or another, each proposition requires that the public and leadership aligns with the conditions necessary for a free society.

For a free society, leadership must make assumptions about human nature. Assumptions that see people as capable of contributing to society and having the skills to engage in meaningful conversations. Leadership thus has to involve the creation of a thoughtful public, not just a persuaded audience. Again, a thoughtful public is one that engages in conversation by involving itself with the leader and other individuals. A thoughtful public recognizes that leadership must provide a space for meaningful contributions from the community. Once a thoughtful public is created through leadership, then the public must have the skills to reconstitute when things fall apart. This is possible because a thoughtful public has the skills of a grounded identity and long-term perspective to participate in reconciliation efforts to rebuild and sustain itself and the free society.

Not only that, but we can see the moral obligation to pay attention to others through these propositions that sustain a free society. The basis of what it means to have a free society is to have the freedoms to engage with one another and live in a society where we are ultimately free. It is one that is inclusive and encourages everyone in the thoughtful public to use critical thinking skills to understand if our way of living aligns with our values and ideals for a free society. We pay attention to others to better understand our positionality and power to contribute to society.

After reflecting on these 3 prepositions, 16 conditions for a free society, and engaging in conversations with my peers all throughout the quarter, I realize that I must be intentional as I continue my education and further in my career. I understand that leadership plays an important role in developing a free society but even as someone who is in the public, I can still be thoughtful in ways of thinking, talking, and forming opinions.

I feel that I will find my way to working in a non-profit organization or a government committee/agency. These propositions remain especially important when I am in a position of leadership, I must assume the best of the people I am serving. I must also seek engagement from the community to cultivate a thoughtful public, a group of people who have the willingness, purpose, and intention to engage with each other and something greater than themselves. This purpose then influences our values and creates the moral obligation to pay attention to others. It will be a space where I have to cooperate and engage with other coworkers, students, parents, and community members. In order to serve others best, I have to pay attention to others to understand and acknowledge their experience and what I, as a leader, can do knowing that information.

However, I think that these principles can apply to just about everyone. For a free society, we must be willing to pay attention to the world around us. What is going well in this society that supports each individual? What is missing? That acknowledgment and attention is the first step to creating a more thoughtful public. We then expect that leaders and other individuals will engage in conversation and critical thinking to address problems. We have to create spaces for each individual to contribute to a thoughtful public for a sustained a free society for all. If and when thing begin falling apart, the least we can do is pay attention to others and begin rebuilding our relationships to understand the values we want in a free society.