

# Declaration of Dependence: Rebecca Keel

Culture is dependent on the rules we have to express it. These rules, called policies, *create and govern* the ways in which we can or cannot move freely in our environments. Take for instance a bustling old city park filled with tall trees and flower beds surrounding the entrance. There's a big fountain with coins collected in the bottom and people sitting along the tables and benches that border it. Every weekday a drum circle forms in the late afternoon after food vendors have worked the lunchtime rush. Small children play after school on the jungle gym dome while their parents sit and watch, conversing with one another. The older kids erupt in cheers after the skins win the basketball tournament.

This is culture, and this culture is dependent on a set of policies that allow it to merely exist as well as govern the ways in which people can engage in a park. The culture is dependent on the policies and rules that manufacture the ordinances, permits, and infrastructure of the park.

How? A group of people known as policy writers wrote the rules that govern this park culture.

And what shapes the policy writer? Culture does. We are all shaped in a multitude of ways by what surrounds us; the natural environment, the people, rituals, and the infrastructure we create. In a large way, our vision for our cultures also are dependent on the support that our cultures receive. So, when our policy writers come from a well-supported culture, our policies then reflect the support of culture.

Culture is dependent on policy. Policy is dependent on culture. This relationship is important to understand for anyone interested in change and sustainability.

