

Unravelling the Tapestry of Copyright Protection of Indigenous Woven Art

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This Article focuses on technology-aided appropriation of copyright-protected weaving designs of Filipino Indigenous Peoples (IPs), in the context of relevant Philippine laws. It seeks to examine how technology has aided the commodification of IPs' cultural heritage, and how intellectual property laws, particularly copyright, may contribute to the preservation of the value of IPs' works.

The Article begins by providing a background on the art of weaving of the IPs, and the latter's rights over the former, in relation to their identity and culture. It then discusses relevant Philippine laws on the related rights of IPs, such as the 1987 Philippine Constitution and the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act. It then addresses the commodification and technologically-aided appropriation of indigenous woven fabrics, examines copyright protection and rights under the copyright law provisions of the Philippines, and studies the insufficiency of copyright protection to safeguard the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) over woven textiles and other indigenous knowledge. Lastly, it inquires whether other means of legal protection are more beneficial to preserve the IPs' cultural heritage.

Through this Article, the Author elaborates on the need to provide supplementary legislation to the existing framework in order to protect such cultural art and to prevent the deterioration of the history and identity of the ICCs.