

Culturally Appropriate Institutions: Commercial Codes on Native American Reservations*

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Abstract

Harmonized commercial laws are an essential ingredient to commerce and trade. The *uniform commercial code* adopted by all U.S. states in the early 1950s has been called the backbone of American commerce. In recent years, Native American tribal governments have moved to adopt commercial codes to increase economic development on their reservations, but many have modified these codes to address challenges to tribal culture and sovereignty that are inherent in UCC. This paper compares reservations that adopted such *modified tribal secure transaction acts* to reservations that adopted standard UCC, and investigates the tradeoffs that tribes face in fostering economic development while safeguarding their sovereignty and cultural integrity.

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