

International Experience in the Post-Event Utilization of Major Event Venues and the Limits of Its Local Transfer

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Abstract: *When Chinese scholarship on large sports venues introduces foreign experience, it commonly reduces the practices of other countries to a menu of selectable operating models. This treatment involves a twofold stripping: it strips away the institutional preconditions on which each model depends, and it strips away the record of failure those models have generated in their own settings. Once these are restored, a different picture emerges. The core of the American model is competitive subsidy bidding by local governments under a closed-league franchise structure, and its economic performance is judged negatively by economists in its home country. The success of the British anchor-tenant model turns on the bargaining power of the public party; in its flagship case, conversion costs overran substantially, the stadium company has sustained persistent operating losses, and the contract terms tilt in one direction only. The substance of the German model is not the organizational form of club operation but a self-organized social structure of some 86,000 membership-based sports clubs that carries the everyday running of public facilities. None of the three is a detachable technical solution. On this basis, four constraints on local transfer are identified: demand density, recipient operators, bargaining power, and the boundary of fiscal responsibility. The article argues that transfer should shift from wholesale transplantation of models to the selective borrowing of elements that do not depend on particular preconditions; that policy attention should shift from choosing a model to cultivating the conditions a model requires; and that venues should be differentiated according to the demand conditions they face.*

Keywords: Sports venues, Post-event utilization, International comparison, Operating models, Institutional preconditions, Limits of transfer.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Chinese research on the post-event utilization of large sports venues, the introduction of foreign experience is a settled convention of writing. Almost every article discussing venue operation devotes a section of its literature review to the practices of the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and other countries, and recommends in its policy section that these be drawn upon [1–3]. The convention is itself well founded: China's history of hosting large comprehensive sporting events is comparatively short, whereas European and North American countries have accumulated practice in venue operation over a longer period, so consulting their experience is a reasonable knowledge strategy.

The manner of introduction, however, warrants scrutiny. The customary treatment reduces the practices of each country to a set of operating models—government operation, operation by the professional team, operation by a specialist venue-management company, outsourcing of operating rights, club-based operation—then identifies the problems of venue operation in China, and finally recommends importing one or several of these models. Along this chain, a model is handled as a technical solution that can be detached, transported and installed, as though its efficacy were intrinsic to its organizational form.

This article argues that such a treatment involves a twofold stripping. The first is the stripping of institutional preconditions: every operating model is embedded in a particular structure of property rights, a particular system of event supply, a particular configuration of social organization and a particular set of fiscal relations. Detached from these preconditions, a model retains nothing but a hollow organizational shell. The second is the stripping of failure experience: Chinese literature largely presents foreign practices within a framework of successful experience, while the controversies, financial difficulties and policy reappraisals these models have provoked in their own settings are rarely addressed. The result is a selectively optimistic picture.

The consequences of this twofold stripping are practical. When a model is imported as a technical solution while its institutional preconditions are absent locally, the outcome is rarely as simple as the model failing to work. More commonly the shell of the model is retained while its core is hollowed out, producing an institutional transplant

that resembles the original in form but not in substance—a risk arguably greater than not transplanting at all.

The question carries particular urgency at present. The 15th National Games of China were staged with more than 90% of competition venues delivered through renovation and upgrading, and the full opening of these venues to the public afterwards was a settled arrangement [4]. A cohort of venues that have just completed high-standard renovation now face, simultaneously, decisions on the choice of operating entity and the design of the operating model. If foreign experience stripped of its preconditions continues to serve as the reference point, the cost will be borne by more than a decade of operating practice to come.

On this basis the article sets itself three tasks: to analyse how Chinese scholarship introduces international experience and the twofold stripping this involves; to restore the institutional preconditions of the American, British and German models and examine their actual performance in their own settings; and, on that basis, to identify the constraints on local transfer and discuss possible pathways for limited transfer. The article is a work of literature critique and comparative analysis. Its materials comprise published academic research, verifiable public financial and statistical information, and relevant policy texts.

2. HOW CHINESE SCHOLARSHIP INTRODUCES INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND ITS TWOFOLD STRIPPING

2.1 The Common Formulation of Three Models

A review of the relevant Chinese research shows that summaries of foreign venue-operation experience converge broadly on three models.

The American model is usually rendered as a threefold division of managing entity—government operation, operation by the professional team, and operation by a specialist venue-management company—often accompanied by remarks on such institutional advantages as tax exemption for public service facilities and access to policy concessions [1,3]. The British model is usually rendered as the outsourcing of operating rights: after hosting the 2012 Olympic Games, the government progressively transferred venue operating rights to commercial firms in order to raise operating efficiency [2]. The German model is rendered as government responsibility for construction and club responsibility for operation, with no further public funding provided during the operating period [3].

These three formulations are remarkably stable across the Chinese literature and are typically presented in parallel, as a menu of selectable options. The accompanying judgment is that the problem with Chinese venues lies in insufficient operating vitality and a narrow range of commercial instruments under the public-institution system, and that the remedy is therefore to separate administration from operation, introduce market entities and expand diversified operation [5].

2.2 The First Stripping: Institutional Preconditions Omitted

These formulations are not inaccurate, but what they describe is the organizational form of a model rather than the conditions under which it operates.

Take the outsourcing of operating rights. This formulation answers the question of who operates the venue, but leaves two more consequential questions unaddressed: to whom the rights are outsourced, and on what basis the recipient can turn a profit. The former requires the existence of a market of venue-management firms with professional capability and a willingness to bear risk; the latter requires that the area in which the venue is located generate enough competition, entertainment and training demand to support commercial operation. In the United Kingdom both conditions rest on several decades of professional sport industry development; in most Chinese cities they may well be absent. Where the conditions are lacking, outsourcing may in practice degenerate into shifting losses from the government's books to those of a state-owned enterprise: the organizational form changes while the financial substance does not.

The same applies to club-based operation. What matters in the formulation of government construction and club operation is not the division of labour between government and club, but what kind of organization the club is, how large it is, and whether it can supply stable everyday use. Stripped of this layer, the model cannot be understood at all.

The problem with the introduction of the American model is more concealed. Dividing managing entities into government, professional team and specialist company is not in itself incorrect, but it places the analytical focus on who manages, thereby obscuring two more decisive questions: where the capital for venue construction comes from, and why franchises are able to obtain such generous terms of use. When these two questions are omitted, a pattern of public resource allocation shaped by league structure is reduced to a classification table of managing entities.

2.3 The Second Stripping: Failure Experience Filtered Out

The second stripping deserves closer attention. In introducing foreign models, Chinese literature generally adopts the narrative framework of successful experience, whereas in the settings from which those models come, the controversies surrounding them are often intense.

The contrast is itself instructive. Chinese scholarship is by no means unfamiliar with foreign venue failures: the Montreal debt, the dereliction at Athens, the predicament of the Cape Town Stadium [6], together with Cashman's reflections on the legacy of the Sydney Olympic Games [7], Searle's analysis of the uncertain prospects of Sydney's Olympic stadiums [8] and Alm and colleagues' discussion of taming white elephants [9], have all been introduced to some degree. Yet these failures are habitually interpreted within a framework of flawed construction decisions—attributed to venues being built too large, too specialized or too remote. That the operating model itself might be among the causes of failure is far less often brought into consideration.

A division of narrative labour thus emerges: failure cases serve to demonstrate the severity of the post-event utilization problem, while successful models serve to supply the solution, the two juxtaposed within the same text yet never interrogating one another. In fact, as the following sections will show, several of the models introduced as solutions are precisely the direct source of controversy and loss in their own settings.

This twofold stripping has real causes and does not necessarily reflect carelessness on the part of researchers. The first is a barrier of language and sources: the organizational form of a model is easy to summarize and restate, whereas the property arrangements, league rules, contract terms and fiscal relations that sustain its operation are dispersed across legal texts, audit reports and parliamentary inquiries, and the cost of obtaining and digesting them is far higher. The second is the chain effect of second-hand introduction: once a summary enters the Chinese literature it tends to be cited repeatedly by subsequent studies, and in the course of that transmission its qualifying conditions fall away layer by layer until it hardens into an unconditional assertion. The third lies in the incentives of writing structure: the literature review is required to support the policy section, and if foreign experience were presented as contested and of modest effect, the persuasiveness of the recommendations would be weakened. The success narrative therefore holds a structural attraction.

3. RESTORING THE INSTITUTIONAL PRECONDITIONS OF THE THREE MODELS

3.1 The United States: Subsidy Bidding under a Closed-League Structure

The threefold pattern of American venue management does exist, but its operating logic lies not in the choice of managing entity, but in the organizational structure of the professional sports leagues.

The major American leagues operate a closed franchise system in which the number of league places is restricted and there is no promotion or relegation. Franchises are therefore an artificially scarce resource. A franchise holds the threat of relocation as a bargaining chip and can use the prospect of departure to press local government for more generous terms on venue construction and operation. A bidding pattern arises among local governments, and public subsidy becomes the standard instrument for competing for and retaining franchises. What is described as operation of a venue by the professional team typically presupposes that public funds have borne the greater part of the construction cost.

The force of this bargaining chip derives from structure rather than strategy. Because the number of league places is controlled by the league itself, the number of cities seeking a franchise has long exceeded the number of franchises available to relocate, and the balance of supply and demand structurally favours the franchise side. In negotiation, a local government faces not a counterparty that can be replaced but the sole holder of a scarce resource; once a franchise departs, no substitute is likely to be obtained locally within any foreseeable period. This

asymmetry makes public concession the norm, and concession takes forms well beyond direct appropriation: free or below-market land, tax relief, tax-exempt bond financing, and the assignment of naming-rights and concession revenues, among other arrangements, whose true magnitude is often dispersed across budget lines and difficult to account for in full.

Assessments of the model's performance within the United States are far from favourable. Bradbury, Coates and Humphreys, in a systematic survey of more than 130 studies spanning over three decades, show that the measurable impact of professional franchises and venues on local economies is very limited; even when non-pecuniary social benefits such as civic image and civic pride are taken into account, the welfare gain remains markedly below the level of public investment [10]. This conclusion is not a recent discovery: earlier analysis by Coates and Humphreys across a large number of metropolitan statistical areas failed to identify any positive effect of venues and franchises on per capita income [11], and the survey by Siegfried and Zimbalist reached a comparable judgment [12]. At the level of professional consensus, the survey reported by Coates and Humphreys found that the great majority of economists surveyed held that local governments should eliminate subsidies to professional sport [13].

In other words, the core of the American model is not an operating technique available for emulation but a pattern of public resource allocation shaped by league monopoly; and its economic assessment in its home setting runs almost directly counter to the terms in which Chinese literature introduces it.

3.2 The United Kingdom: The Anchor-Tenant Model and the Evidence from the London Stadium

British experience is commonly summarized in the Chinese literature as the outsourcing of operating rights and market-oriented operation. Focusing on the main stadium of the 2012 Olympic Games, the most representative case, allows the model to be seen in its full operating form.

The basic arrangement is to bring in a professional football club as anchor tenant, so that a stable supply of fixtures underwrites the venue's everyday running. West Ham United obtained long-term use of the stadium in 2013 under a 99-year lease, contributing a one-off payment of £15 million towards conversion costs and paying rent annually. Seating capacity was reduced from 80,000 to between 54,000 and 60,000, with retractable stands to accommodate both athletics and football configurations [14]. At the design stage this arrangement was widely regarded as an effective response to the risk of post-event idleness.

Actual outcomes have diverged markedly from expectations. Conversion costs rose from about £272 million to about £323 million, with the overrun borne principally by public funds [15]. In 2018 the chief executive of the body that owns the stadium stated publicly that the rent paid by the club did not even cover the cost of staging matches, and that, constrained by high operating costs and insufficient commercialization, the stadium would continue to make losses over the remaining decades of the lease [16]. More recent public information indicates that the stadium operating company posts an annual operating loss of about £19 million; the lease contains a relegation clause under which the club's annual rent, following relegation to the second tier, falls from £4.6 million to less than half that figure, while the public party enjoys no equivalent break right under this 99-year agreement — prompting the Mayor of London to criticize publicly the agreement's failure to secure better terms for taxpayers [17].

The divergence is also evident in particular components. The retractable seating installed to accommodate both athletics and football use imposes a continuing operating burden through the cost of each reconfiguration, and public information from the same period indicates that, although this expenditure had been reduced, it still ran to millions of pounds. Efforts to secure a naming-rights sponsor likewise failed, with related expenditure of some £450,000 yielding no agreement [16]. What these components share is that measures regarded at the design stage as enhancing flexibility and commercial potential became, in actual operation, additional cost items.

The lesson of this case is not that the anchor-tenant model is itself mistaken, but that it reveals an implicit condition of the model's viability: the public party must possess bargaining power commensurate with that of the professional club. Where the venue has already been built, where the public party is anxious to avoid idleness, and where there is only one potential anchor tenant, the bargaining structure is inherently unbalanced, and a long-term contract will systematically leave the risk on the public side. Chinese introductions of this model have almost never addressed this question of bargaining structure.

3.3 Germany: The Membership Club System as the Basis for Assuming Operation

The German model receives the most concise formulation in the Chinese literature and is also the most easily misread. Taken on its own, the summary of government construction, club operation and no further funding during the operating period comes close to describing a government that invests once and then abdicates entirely—an arrangement difficult to sustain in fiscal terms. Its viability depends on a precondition omitted altogether from the Chinese formulation: Germany possesses a large and highly organized system of membership-based sports clubs.

According to statistics from the German Olympic Sports Confederation, as of the beginning of 2025 there were approximately 86,000 sports clubs across Germany with roughly 29.3 million memberships, the highest figure since the survey began in 1954 [18]. Allowing for the fact that one person may hold multiple memberships, the figure still indicates that organized club sport reaches a substantial share of the population.

The significance of this system is that it supplies venues with stable, predictable everyday demand that does not depend on events. As the entity assuming operation, the club is both operator and user; its motivation derives not from commercial return but from the needs of its own members. The cost of maintaining a venue is shared through membership fees, voluntary labour and local subsidy rather than borne by ticketing and commercial letting. The substance of the German model, in other words, is not the organizational arrangement of club operation but a social structure in which self-organized society carries the everyday running of public facilities.

The mechanism of cost-sharing differs accordingly. Under a commercial operating logic, a venue must cover its costs through tickets, letting and advertising, and fluctuations in revenue translate directly into operating risk. Under the club system, maintenance costs are shared principally among membership fees, voluntary labour and targeted local government subsidy, with voluntary labour absorbing a considerable proportion of personnel costs in non-monetary form. This also explains why the arrangement of withdrawing funding during the operating period is workable in Germany: public finance does not in fact withdraw, but changes its mode of input from directly subsidizing venues to supporting them indirectly through the system of sports organizations.

It should be added that the system is itself under strain. Statistics indicate that the number of clubs has recently stabilized or even declined slightly while membership has continued to grow, so that pressure on grassroots organizations and sports facilities has increased, with some clubs obliged to suspend admission of new members for want of qualified instructors [18]. This suggests that the German model is no permanent solution: its sustainability likewise depends on continued investment in the capability of grassroots organizations.

This precondition imposes a fundamental limit on transfer. In the absence of a comparably dense system of membership organizations, applying the framework of government construction and social-organization operation encounters the basic obstacle that no recipient operator exists—not because social organizations are unwilling to assume operation, but because organizations of the requisite scale and capability have yet to develop.

4. FOUR CONSTRAINTS ON LOCAL TRANSFER

Taken together, the foregoing restoration yields four constraints on the local transfer of international experience. They are not value judgments but functional preconditions for whether a model can work at all.

Table 1: Institutional preconditions, home-setting difficulties and transfer constraints of the three models.

Model	Common formulation	Institutional precondition omitted	Difficulty in the home setting	Principal transfer constraint
United States	Threefold division: government operation, franchise operation, professional venue-management operation	Closed-league franchise system; franchises artificially scarce; the relocation threat drives competitive subsidy bidding among local governments	Empirical research broadly finds that subsidies far exceed measurable economic benefit	Boundary of fiscal responsibility
United Kingdom	Government outsources venue operating rights to commercial firms	A mature professional league system and a market of venue-management firms; the public party must hold commensurate bargaining power	Cost overruns on the flagship case, persistent operating losses, contract terms tilted in one direction	Bargaining power
Germany	Government builds, clubs operate, no further funding during the operating period	A self-organized social system of some 86,000 membership-based sports clubs supplying everyday use	Heavy reliance on voluntary input and on the capability of grassroots organizations	Recipient operator

Note: All three models presuppose sufficient and stable demand for use in the area where the venue is located; the demand-density constraint is therefore not listed separately in the table.

4.1 The Demand-Density Constraint

Although the three models follow different paths, each presupposes sufficient and stable demand for use in the area where the venue is located: the American model depends on a high frequency of professional fixtures, the British model on professional league football plus an entertainment market, the German model on the everyday use generated by membership clubs. The form of demand differs; the requirement of density is common to all.

The distribution of large venues in China does not match this requirement. The siting of venues for comprehensive sporting events typically balances regional equity against urban development objectives, and some venues are located in areas where the supply of professional competition is thin, the entertainment market limited in capacity and sports social organizations underdeveloped. In such areas any model with commercial operation at its core lacks a demand foundation, and the choice of model is not itself the crux of the problem.

Spatial variation in demand density is frequently masked by averages. Sports consumption levels or rates of regular participation calculated at provincial level cannot reflect actual demand within the service radius of an individual venue—yet it is precisely the latter that venue operation confronts. A sports centre located in a new district of a prefecture-level city, where the surrounding resident population has yet to be brought in, and a comparable venue located in a mature district of a core city cannot possibly sustain the same operating model. To hold both to a uniform market orientation is in substance to convert a difference in locational conditions into a question of the operator's competence.

4.2 The Recipient-Operator Constraint

A model requires a recipient with both the capability and the willingness to assume operation. In the United States the recipient is a well-capitalized professional franchise; in the United Kingdom, a professional club together with specialist venue-management firms; in Germany, a membership club. What these have in common is that the recipient existed before the model was introduced and possesses an independent logic of survival.

This is precisely what is most easily overlooked in local transfer. Chinese discussion of separating administration from operation, and of delegated operation, commonly assumes that market entities will appear of their own accord once government lets go. But the formation of specialist venue-management firms requires long accumulation of projects and personnel, and the development of sports social organizations requires institutional space and time still more. Advancing delegated operation before recipient operators have matured may in practice mean delegating to affiliated enterprises that lack operating capability, producing a transfer of responsibility rather than a gain in efficiency.

The absence of a recipient operator can also manifest in another way: a recipient exists in form but lacks independence in substance. Where the contracted operator is linked to the contracting authority by property rights or personnel, the contract cannot function as a constraint—failure to meet performance targets will not lead to termination, and losses will ultimately be absorbed by public finance. Such an arrangement completes the separation of administration from operation in organizational form while leaving the incentive structure exactly as it was before separation; no improvement in efficiency can therefore occur.

4.3 The Bargaining-Power Constraint

The London Stadium case reveals a dimension almost wholly absent from Chinese discussion: the bargaining position of the public party in long-term contract negotiation.

Event venues occupy a distinctive negotiating disadvantage after the event: the asset already exists, the cost of idleness is high and politically sensitive, and the number of potential recipients is limited. This one-to-few structure necessarily tilts terms towards the recipient, and where the contract term is long and exit mechanisms are absent, the public party will bear risk over the long run. The 99-year term in the London case, the relegation rent-reduction clause and the absence of any equivalent break right for the public party are all products of this structure.

The constraint carries a clear implication: in advancing operation by social forces, contract design matters no less than the choice of model. Delegated operation that lacks performance review, exit mechanisms and risk-sharing provisions may replay the London predicament however advanced the model may be.

4.4 The Fiscal-Responsibility-Boundary Constraint

The final constraint concerns the positioning of public fiscal responsibility. American experience shows that public subsidy may expand continuously, and to limited benefit, within an unconstrained bidding pattern [10]; German experience shows that the precondition for government withdrawal from operating-period investment is that social organizations bear part of the cost that would otherwise fall to public finance. Both point to the same question: what, and how much, should public finance bear across the whole life cycle of a venue? A clear boundary is required.

Current Chinese support policy has defined this in part. The scope of subsidy expenditure is confined to public-benefit sporting events, public-benefit training, routine maintenance, energy costs, equipment renewal and information services, and expressly excludes capital construction and major repair or renovation [19]. The boundary is clearly drawn, but it also means that venues must bear the principal cost of maintaining function after renovation. Where market-oriented operation is introduced under conditions of insufficient demand density and weak recipient operators, and where the fiscal boundary is drawn in these terms, the constraints facing the operating entity will be severe indeed.

Clarity of boundary and reasonableness of boundary are two different questions. Excluding major repair and renovation from the scope of subsidy was intended to prevent the conflation of construction and operating funds, which is logically sound; but for event venues that have just completed high-standard renovation, the facilities so created will inevitably enter a cycle of periodic renewal after some years, and this expenditure belongs neither to routine maintenance nor to the subsidized categories, leaving its source of funding institutionally suspended. The definition of fiscal responsibility should therefore not stop at enumerating permissible expenditures; it must also answer where the costs of each stage of a venue's life cycle belong.

5. POSSIBLE PATHWAYS FOR LIMITED TRANSFER

5.1 From Wholesale Transplantation to Selective Borrowing of Elements

These constraints do not lead to the conclusion that international experience should be rejected. They suggest rather that transfer should change its unit: not the wholesale transplantation of models, but the disaggregation and selective borrowing of those elements that do not depend on particular institutional preconditions.

Take British experience. The anchor-tenant arrangement as a whole cannot be implemented in a city without a professional club, yet its contractual technology has general value—the quantified specification of performance standards, mechanisms linking performance to rent, and the design of exit and renegotiation provisions. These elements have nothing to do with whether a locality possesses a professional club, yet they directly determine the success or failure of delegated operation. Likewise, what is genuinely transferable in German experience is not the form of club operation but the principle of making users participants in operation, which can be realized locally through a range of vehicles: fitness groups, single-sport associations, community organizations.

The value of American experience is chiefly inverse: it provides a complete specimen of how public subsidy can run out of control within unconstrained competition, and its cautionary significance exceeds its exemplary significance.

5.2 From Choosing a Model to Building the Conditions

The more fundamental adjustment is to shift policy attention from which model to choose to cultivating the conditions a model requires.

On the demand side, the priority is to raise the density of event and activity supply in the area where a venue is located, including guiding professional and amateur competitions towards lower-tier cities, developing non-sporting functions such as entertainment and exhibitions, and supporting the growth of sports social organizations around venues. Raising demand density is not something an operator can accomplish alone; it requires coordination at the regional level.

On the supply side, the priority is to cultivate recipient operators with professional capability. This includes supporting venue-management firms in building capability through accumulated projects, and providing sports

social organizations with stable institutional space and reliable access to facilities. Cultivating recipient operators is a process measured in years and cannot be accomplished through a single round of competitive tendering.

On the contractual side, the priority is to strengthen the contracting capability of the public party. At the national level, a model contract (reference text) for the delegated operation of public sports venues by social forces was issued in 2021. Its thirty-two articles cover the scope of delegated services, venue handover and facility maintenance, venue operation, venue return, settlement and payment, performance bonds, liability for breach and dispute resolution [20]. Two of these—venue return and performance bonds—already touch on exit mechanisms and risk-sharing, the two critical links, and the direction of this institutional provision is correct. But the text is a non-mandatory reference document whose provisions are drafted for general applicability; more binding content such as ceilings on contract duration, performance assessment standards and triggers for renegotiation still depends on local elaboration in the light of particular venues if the London-style long-term imbalance is to be avoided.

At the heart of contracting capability lie information and professional judgment. The disadvantage of the public party in negotiation is structural, but it also reflects the absence of any independent capacity to assess venue operating cost structures, market conditions and contractual risk. Feasible measures include commissioning independent cost and revenue estimates before decisions on delegated operation, so as to avoid complete reliance on schemes supplied by potential recipients; setting a ceiling on contract duration and building in staged renegotiation points, so as to avoid locking in an excessively long term at a single stroke; and establishing a mechanism for sharing information on delegated-operation cases, so that later negotiators can refer to precedent terms rather than bargaining from nothing.

5.3 Judging Where Transfer Applies

Finally, transfer should not be universal. For venues located in core cities, with relatively high demand density and an existing base of operating entities nearby, the conditions for transferring a market-oriented operating model are present. For venues located in areas of thin demand, a more realistic positioning may be to return to the basic character of a public service facility, with public finance guaranteeing basic operation and opening, rather than measuring success or failure by a commercial standard. To bring venues facing radically different demand conditions under a single set of operating evaluation criteria is itself a misapplication of international experience.

Differentiated positioning presupposes differentiated evaluation criteria. At present, venue operating performance is assessed by broadly the same set of indicators regardless of location and demand conditions; yet in areas of thin demand, indicators such as the cost-recovery ratio or the share of commercial revenue are not attainable in the first place, and assessing venues against them merely induces operators to compress public-benefit services in order to improve the books. A more reasonable approach is to stratify venues by demand conditions, emphasizing operating efficiency and service quality where market conditions exist, and emphasizing levels of opening and service accessibility where they do not, with corresponding differentiation in fiscal support.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The basic judgment of this article is that international experience fails repeatedly in local transfer chiefly not because the experience itself is poor, but because the process of introduction strips away two things: the institutional preconditions on which a model rests, and the record of failure the model has generated in its own setting. Once both are restored, it becomes apparent that the core of the American model is subsidy bidding under a structure of league monopoly, an arrangement assessed negatively by economists in its home country; that the success of the British anchor-tenant model turns on the bargaining power of the public party, its flagship case sustaining persistent losses; and that the substance of the German model is self-organized society carrying the running of public facilities, on the precondition of a vast membership club system. None of the three is a detachable technical solution.

At a moment when a cohort of renovated venues from the 15th National Games are entering the operating decision stage together, what matters more than choosing a model is first judging whether the local conditions for that model to work are present. Where they are not, rather than transplanting a shell that will be hollowed out, it is better to begin with building the conditions. This may be the most practical contribution that comparative international research can offer.

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