



## Research on the mechanism and path of promoting the deep integration of sports, culture and tourism under the dimension of "space embedded" sports "three entries" policy

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**SUMMARY:** *The “Three Advances” sports event strategies of expanding into scenic spots, urban areas and commercial districts are important initiatives to integrate sports to draw visitors, activate cultural tourism space, and enhance the new momentum for consumption. It is the internal logic and inevitable process of fusing sports event with cultural tourism space. In “Physical” model, the activities of sports are embedded into special physical space, with the development of activities and exerting the activity effect, which is the “Spatial Embedding” model. This paper, by this model, creates a new theoretical analysis system for spatial embedding activities. Based on these two cases, we conduct cross-case analysis of the coupling between the events and spaces from the three perspectives including physical coupling, functional matching and cultural matching. It is found that “333” drive strategy has been realized by four paradigms such as publicity reception of event producers, cultural symbol value conversion, immersion scene consumption mode and industrial ecosystem coupling between different sectors, but there remain challenges such as ecological-commercial conflicts, governance dilemma, distortion of cultural symbol values, and unfair revenue distribution. To overcome these challenges, this article gives forth four suggestions, namely, the differential spatial adaptability strategy, deep narrative restoration of cultural symbols, big data-based accurate management, and diversified joint sustainable governance. It offers references for the high-quality development of “three entries” policy.*

**KEYWORDS:** *spatial embedding; sports "three entries" policy; sports-tourism-integrated culture; Scottish Premier League; dragon and lion competitions*

## 1 Introduction

In May 2024, the “Notice on the Initiation of the Sports Events in the Scenic Spots, Streets and Commercial Districts Action” has also raised the level of “Three Entries” policy and put it as a powerful vehicle driving the development of cultural-tourism fusion and consumption enhancement, aiming to move sports events outside gyms, sports arenas and promote them from a festive activity to an enduring commercial operation. But implementation often is by patchwork integration (merely patch work for the pre-existed one) instead of organic integration (each component develops organic integration). Firstly, the works concerning “Three Entries” literature are mostly restricted to general policy or superficial case study about events integration in space, which lacks any theoretical model as well. Secondly, inadequate alignment and cross-talk between activities and locations; sparse assessment and performance measurement focusing more on the outputs than on the outcomes; lack of

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visioned action plans; still difficulties in organizing inter-departmental teamwork and mobilizing the stakeholders' interest.

## 2 Literature review

The deep integration of sports, culture, and tourism under the framework of the "space embedded" sports "three entries" policy represents a multifaceted area of research that seeks to harness the synergies among these domains to promote sustainable development, regional revitalization, and cultural inheritance. .

A recurring theme across the literature is the importance of policy frameworks in fostering the integration of sports, culture, and tourism. Zeng et al. highlight the role of national strategies, such as the directives from the 20th CPC National Congress, which aim to enhance the modern cultural industry system and implement major cultural projects [1]. These policies serve as catalysts for industry development, providing the necessary institutional support to promote integrated tourism and cultural activities, including sports. Similarly, the "Belt and Road" initiative discussed by Jia et al. exemplifies how regional cooperation and industrial policies can stimulate sports tourism development across countries and regions, emphasizing the significance of open communication and industrial synergy [2].

Cultural embedding within sports and tourism is another critical mechanism identified in the literature. Yang explores the deep integration of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) through specific case studies like Xinjin Rope Weaving, demonstrating that systematic design of teaching content, balanced inheritance and innovation, and cross-regional cooperation are vital for sustainable cultural transmission [3]. This approach underscores the importance of embedding local cultural elements into sports and tourism activities to enhance authenticity and cultural continuity. Wen further emphasizes the role of spatial diffusion in disseminating ethnic sports culture, advocating for the creation of cultural landscapes that integrate national, sports, and tourism elements to promote social development [4].

Technological innovation, particularly digitalization, emerges as a significant enabler of integration pathways. Tan discusses the power mechanism of digital economy-driven integration, employing evaluation models to analyze the coupling between tourism and cultural industries [5]. The study suggests that digital platforms and data-driven strategies can enhance resource sharing, optimize industry coordination, and facilitate innovative cultural tourism models. Liu also emphasizes the role of big data in rural sports culture and tourism development, illustrating how technological tools can support policy implementation and industry revitalization, especially within rural revitalization strategies [6].

Resource sharing and collaborative mechanisms are central to the integration process. Chi et al. analyze the dynamics of cultural and tourism industries through system dynamics, revealing that promoting resource sharing, system linkage, and value chain extension are crucial for industry agglomeration [7]. Similarly, Ren et al. identify the internal and external factors—such as policy support, technological progress, and market demand—that drive the formation of a "cultural and tourism integration industry" [8]. They argue that resource coupling and system synergy are fundamental to achieving deep integration, which can lead to sustainable industry growth.

Regional cooperation and the development of local industry clusters are also emphasized as pathways for deep integration. Zeng et al. [1] and Hong et al. [9] advocate for constructing regional narrative networks and infrastructure improvements to foster high-quality integration. These strategies aim to create cohesive cultural landscapes that attract tourism, promote cultural inheritance, and stimulate economic growth. Pan et al. exemplify this through the

case of Rongchang District, where the integration of intangible cultural heritage with rural tourism demonstrates how local industry advantages can be leveraged for sustainable development [10].

The role of cultural and social values in promoting industry integration is underscored by Edwards, who examines sport's capacity to build community and social capital [11]. Although focused on community capacity building, the insights suggest that fostering collective action, democratic values, and inclusion through sports can serve as a model for broader cultural and tourism integration efforts. Similarly, Spaaij et al. [12] and Ravizza [13] explore social dimensions such as refugee integration and youth violence prevention through sport, indicating that sports can serve as platforms for social cohesion, which indirectly supports the cultural and tourism sectors by fostering inclusive community environments.

Furthermore, the literature recognizes the importance of balancing inheritance and innovation in cultural integration. Yang advocates for systematic teacher training, diversified evaluation mechanisms, and cross-regional cooperation to ensure the sustainable transmission of intangible cultural heritage [3]. This balance is essential for maintaining cultural authenticity while adapting to contemporary tourism demands.

In conclusion, the mechanisms and pathways for promoting the deep integration of sports, culture, and tourism under the "space embedded" policy framework are multifaceted. They encompass robust policy support, cultural embedding, technological innovation, resource sharing, regional cooperation, and social value promotion. The integration process is driven by strategic planning that emphasizes sustainability, cultural inheritance, and industry synergy. As the literature suggests, successful implementation requires coordinated efforts across government, industry, and community levels, leveraging policy, technology, and cultural assets to create a cohesive and sustainable industry ecosystem. These insights provide a comprehensive understanding of how the "space embedded" sports "three entries" policy can effectively facilitate the deep integration of sports, culture, and tourism, ultimately contributing to regional development and cultural preservation.

### **3 Conceptual development" analytical ft of the "spatially embedderamework**

The idea of "spatial embedding", developed first in economic sociology, considers that economic practices are strongly informed by their spatial organization and their networks of social relationships. In this paper, we introduced the concept of "spatial embedding" into a three dimensions theoretical framework to discuss Chinas "Three Advance" policy in sport (as depicted in Figure 1), which determines 3 necessary features to make a good integration in sport event: physical embedding, function embedding, and culture embedding of sports venue. The "spatially embedded" three-dimensional theoretical framework of sports events is shown in Figure 1 as follows.

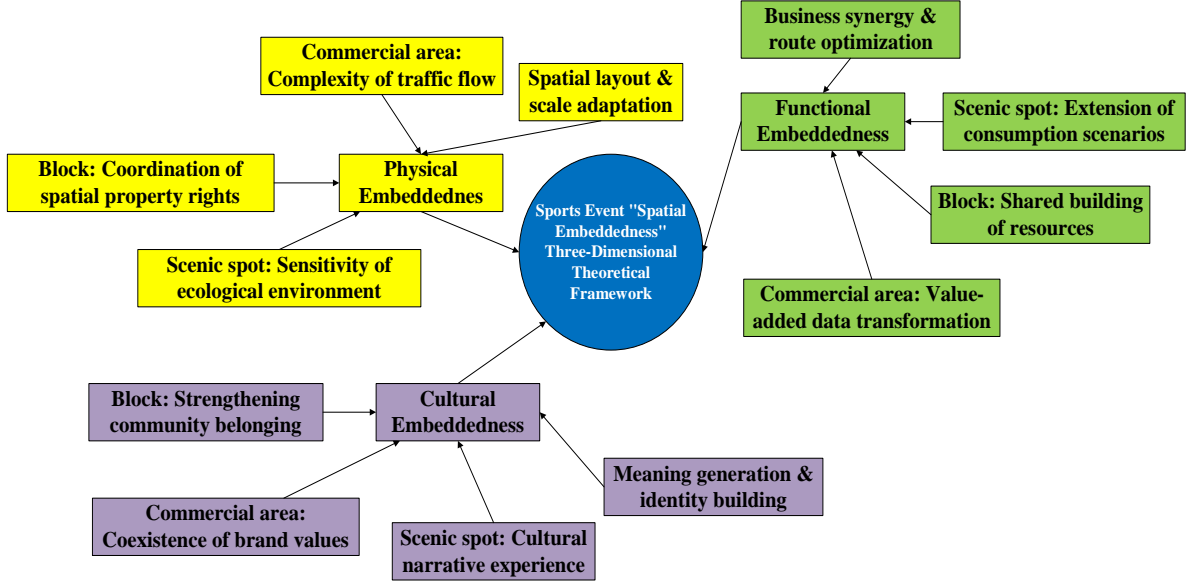


Figure 1: The "Spatially Embedded" Three-Dimensional Theoretical Framework of Sports Events

### 3.1 Physical embedding: spatial layout and scale adaptation

Contests must be held in concrete special physical environments whose physical characteristics conform to its own features of the site: in terms of scenic district, ecological protection, environmental load capacity and the consistency of landscape; and in terms of urban area, spatial property right, pedestrian traffic, access to transportation, flow of business block, open space, business atmosphere.

$$C_D(i) = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^n x_{ij}}{n-1}$$

Here,  $C_D(i)$  denotes the degree centrality of node  $i$  (e.g., a newly added sports park after a 'three-way' expansion),  $x_{ij}$  indicates whether node  $i$  is connected to node  $j$  (e.g., a neighboring ancient village or scenic spot) (1 or 0), and  $n$  represents the total number of network nodes. The changes in centrality before and after policy implementation are used to measure how sports nodes alter the spatial network structure.

### 3.2 Function embedding: business format linkage and flow optimization

The combination of original commercial, tourism and social functions in the competition areas and space zones plays an interactive role where "1+1>2". On the one hand, the scenic area links spectator activities, viewing, and cultural consumption, extending consumer flows; On the other, the commercial area taps into merchant consortia, and takes full advantage of joint resources APPs, achieving effectiveness of businesses, residents and competitors. Based on the business district to do the crowd flow analysis and sales statistics, and by using the cloud computing for scientific control over crowds' movement; enriched business coupling, which is accompanied with promotion policies become as a complementary advantage.

### 3.3 Cultural embedding: meaning generation and identity construction

Competitive events can create relationships with local cultures and historical traditions and social values to restore new cultural meanings into venues. Tourist destinations must

creatively intertwine events’ narratives with cultural narratives of natural environments and human landscapes. Neighborhoods must rejuvenate urban cultures through community ties. Commercial streets need to align commercial event IPs with local brands well, and establish unique commercial cultural symbols with people’s connotation.

#### 4 Practical Models and Underlying Mechanisms of the Sports Three Advances Policy: A Cross-Case Study of Suzhou Super League and Dragon & Lion Competitions

Based on the above framework, although the Super League of Jiangsu and Zhejiang Long Lions have different projects, they both show the successful paradigm of "space-embedded" development, and their core characteristics and driving mechanisms are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Successful examples of "space-embedded" development

Compare dimensions	Core Paradigm	Suzhou Super League (amateur football league paradigm)	Zhejiang Longshen Competition (Traditional Ethnic Sports Paradigm)
Event Subject	From elite sport to mass empathy	"Amateur subject + professional embellishment"	The folk team is the main body
		Teachers, delivery men and other ordinary players have triggered a broad sense of identity	Highlight regional and folk characteristics, and the participation of inheritors and enthusiasts
culture symbol	From historical heritage to consumer money	The regional culture of "Sangjiangsu" has been distilled into a viral internet meme.	The cultural symbols of dragon and lion are integrated with local intangible cultural heritage, such as Ningbos Zhu Jin lacquer wood carving.
		Intangible cultural heritage products (Yunjin brocade and Huishan clay figurines) have been transformed into best-selling cultural and creative products.	Develop cultural and creative products and immersive cultural experiences
Consumption scenarios	From single point observation to full immersion	Ticket-based economy connects scenic spots, hotels, and night markets	The event is linked with scenic spot tours, street temple fairs, and commercial district promotions.
		Build a closed loop of participation, viewing, consumption, and social interaction through online and offline channels	Create a continuous consumption scenario of "one section, multiple seasons"

As we can see from Table 1, the two events both follow a "spatial embedding" trend, which they become more modern in four dimensions (event entities, cultural values,

consumption forms and the boundaries of industry), and simultaneously become an open venue from closed professional field, scenic area from cultural and tourism zone, and business district from commercial place, respectively. These four dimensions use competitions as a carrier to converge and collectively transform into a regional general event centering on these four dimensions. But, as is well known, the SPL extends its boundaries through social media like Weibo or new business partnerships to achieve mass popularity, reducing local characteristics into ‘trending memes’ in the shape of a more expanding effect. The Zhejiang Dragon & Lion Dance Festival, focusing on historical tradition conservation and featuring regional folk activities, strives for active immersion for audiences. It indicates that there is no panacea method for the building up of spatial embedding. The essence is to integrate the special features of sports and the local conditions, cultural advantages and technological strength in a complement rather than substitution manner to realize fusion. Both of the two examples indicate that the “three entries” policy is the intrinsic driving force for comprehensive development.

## **5 The paradox: A revisit via the “space embedded” scheme**

Though a very great success, the precise execution of the “three entries” policy is still encountered with many difficult problems, which can be summarized from the spatial embedding perspective as the following three aspects:

### **5.1 Physical embedding misalignment: Tensions between ecology, life and business**

Event development conflicts with protection red line of the scenic area. Event track planning is segregated [14, 15]. Temporary event occupying residential areas arouses contradictions with living spaces, commercial operation and so on, leading to large governance cost. Event public safety pressure in event cluster area and commercial districts increases due to crowd inflow and commercial routes congested in short term.

### **5.2 Functional blockage: imbalance between governance system and benefit distribution**

Multi-agency governance is inefficient. All the authorities involved (culture/tourism, sports, commerce and urban management) cause the so-called “approving marathon” and “regulatory empty space.” The income sharing mechanism is institutionalized as clubs/organizer must reap what they sow and core IP enjoys the intrinsic value of the event while most of the rents in derivative sectors (for instance, restaurants and hotel business) are shared, thus there emerges an “expensive and revenueless” predicament. This is the case of e.g. the Suzhou Super League in neighbouring competition regions.

The revenue of restaurants is about 3.2 times that of tickets, while the club only gets about 18% [16].

### **5.3 Cultural Immersion Alienation: Symbolic Superficiality and Value Loss**

The commodification of cultural imageries dilutes cyber-viruses and converts serious regional cultures into commercialist imitation brands of their identities that hasten the deterioration of these cultures. If the logic of commerce ruins the authenticity of a culture excessively, it can also eliminate the vital cultural roots, the sporting spirit and the competitiveness of sports events and thus, what remains is nothing but mere commerce driven traffic products. Local

sports competitions have long-term underdevelopment problems, which include serious homogenization and single operational models. Blindly imitating county and city formats (such as Guangdong Super League imitating Scotland Super League) has formed easy replication models leading to the establishment of the “one size fits all” competition pattern. Lack of administrative supports and transient traffic monetary incomes causes bottom-line marketization and operation optimization so that such events are exposed to “Administrative downfall” and “Traffic crisis”.

## **6 Optimization Path: Promoting the in-depth development of the "three entries" policy**

To address the aforementioned dilemma, this paper presents the following spatially embedded optimization approach:

### **6.1 Implement differentiated implementation paths for space adaptation**

The visiting destinations need to construct an ecological carrying capacity assessment system in advance, introduce an eco-protective activity model of the low carbon activities characterized by “smaller, higher quality, and booking” and learn from the Fanjingshan Marathons of Guizhou Province’s “minimal ecological footprint strategy”, the households need to choose a spatiotemporal folding micro-updating strategy, use the original alleys as much as possible to form a sports corner. Design an interaction mechanism for the community residents, merchant and the organizer, and introduce the concept of “resource contribution point” to reward the participation of the community residents. The commercial street should explore the data-oriented agile operation model and adopt the digital twin technology for preliminary simulation. This will constitute a complete big data analysis system, covering the whole “footfall-consumption interaction” process, and have an efficient marketing resource allocation and utilization.

### **6.2 Deepen the narrative and value reconstruction of cultural symbols**

Beyond the “hot memes” expression, we will initiate cultural decoding activities. Jointly with cultural institutions, we will create in-depth stories for those special events own cultural story. Through AR scanning code, immersive stage mode to unveil the true form of entertainments brand—endow cultural story substantial contents. The balancing system, based on competitive spirit, cultural symbol and commercial interest, will be built. To keep and expand the spirit of competition, columns on the sport events stories will be released. Meanwhile, we can not pursue commercial interests to go beyond commercial ethics and firmly protect the fundamental cultural value of the event.

### **6.3 Innovative governance tools for data empowerment and revenue distribution**

Establish a cross-industry positive externalities compensation mechanism. The catering and accommodation industry, which has a large positive externality in sports events, is established according to the income of the industry “Cultural-Sports-Tourism Synergy Development Fund” to compensate the event operation and youth training system. Use blockchain for ticket management (anti-scalping), smart contract based profit sharing and IP protection applications to create a healthy, balanced and transparent value chain in terms of benefits distribution.

## 6.4 Building a sustainable governance system with multiple synergies

The new transformation orientation changes “administrative dominance” to “multi-stakeholder governance under the rule of law”. The Local regulations like Regional League Development Regulations are established, which involve resource sharing, joint guarantees, so as to remove worries of human factors. Three-Entry “Inter-departmental Coordination Committee for competitions is established to mobilize the broader social forces, while perfecting the standardized procedures for the whole process from the planing to approval, supervision, and inspection.

## 7 Conclusion

Based on the “spatial embedding” logic of the “Three Advances” plan to facilitate deep integration of sports-culture-tourism, we make the case sampling of the British SPL and ZheJiang DragonLions and extract the mechanisms, pattern and application challenges of “Three Advances” plan on integrating Sports-Culture-Tourism from these cases. All of these results reveal how the optimal insertion of an event in the receiving area is neither to simply transfer an event from a source region to the receiver region but to actually deeply integrate its migration (events physically arriving, functionally implanting, culturally rooting) toward high-value event matching and amalgamation. There should also be a transition, from policy orientation to innovation orientation of “Three Advances” development by optimizing its institutional system and capacity building with more specific spatial planning, larger cultural stories, more extensive data empowerment and adaptive governance system in order to better improve the quality and effectiveness of “Three Advances” development. The theoretical framework and optimization methodologies proposed in this paper can offer new insights to future scholars research and offer them references when they are in practice; it can offer some suggestions to local government departments, and event organizers in order to implement “Three Advances” operation.

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