Alireza Mohammadi Sepahvand

Curriculum Vitae November 2026

School of Economics, University of Edinburgh | Edinburgh, United Kingdom
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Academic Appointments and Visits

University of Edinburgh, School of Economics April 2025–Present
Postdoctoral Researcher in Economic Theory and Theoretical Industrial Organization

University of Cambridge, Faculty of Economics 2024
Visiting PhD Student in Economics

Education

PhD in Economics, Monash University 2021–2025
MSc in Economics, Sharif University of Technology 2016–2019
BSc in Mathematics, Sharif University of Technology 2011–2015

Research Fields

Microeconomic theory, political economy, network economics, and public economics.

Submitted Papers

Plundering Coalitions

With Weijia Li

Job market paper.

We develop a model of coalitions that extract resources from outsiders. Players are endowed with power and resources. The ruling coalition distributes the resources it extracts among its members and protects their own resources. We study the resilience of the equilibrium ruling coalition to exogenous shocks to the power and resources of insiders and outsiders and to the intensity of plundering. Arranging members into a hierarchy weakly increases resilience to shocks to outsiders' power and resources. Members within each rank have equal power and resources, and higher ranks have weakly more of both, with at least one strict inequality. The gain is strict when a relevant insider subcoalition is locally decisive. A sufficiently low uniform upper bound on the marginal return to power guarantees local decisiveness. When the marginal return to power is uniformly high, external resilience depends only on the ruling coalition's aggregate power and resources. We interpret low and high marginal returns to power as reflecting weak and strong property rights protection, respectively. We also identify a condition under which internal and external resilience trade off.

Timing and Targeting in Network Games

With Arthur Campbell and Yves Zenou

We study how the timing of intervention affects optimal targeting in network games with strategic complementarities and incomplete information. Individuals differ in their number of connections and choose effort before knowing who their neighbours will be. A social planner allocates a fixed enforcement budget across degree classes to minimise total surviving activity. When enforcement and effort are chosen simultaneously, the unique equilibrium targets the most connected individuals and equalises effort across targeted classes, without fully eliminating any class. A planner who commits before individuals choose effort also anticipates how intervention lowers effort through network spillovers. These indirect effects, captured by a measure of network amplification, can make it optimal to concentrate enforcement on highly connected individuals. When the weight of a degree class in individuals' beliefs about their neighbours, relative to its population share, weakly increases with degree, network amplification is stronger for more connected individuals. Under this condition, if simultaneous intervention targets at least two classes, shifting enforcement towards the more connected class strictly reduces total surviving activity. We identify the exact budget threshold above which commitment strictly improves on simultaneous intervention.

Submitted Papers (continued)

A Centered Index of Spatial Concentration: Expected Influence Approach and Application to Population and Capital Cities
With Filipe R. Campante and Quoc-Anh Do

We develop an axiomatic approach to measuring spatial concentration around a centre of interest. Drawing on expected utility theory, we show that an independence axiom capturing subgroup consistency yields an expected-influence representation of the concentration ordering. Two additional axioms, monotonicity and rank invariance, imply that the influence function is decreasing and isoelastic in distance from the centre. We use the resulting index to measure population concentration around capital cities, compare it with alternative measures, and examine how it relates to country size and the quality of governance.

Correlates of Democratic-Leaning Polling Error in U.S. Presidential Elections (2004–2024)
With Ehsan Habibpour

We examine how signed polling errors vary across states and polling organisations in U.S. presidential elections from 2004 to 2024, with particular attention to the overstatement of Democratic margins from 2016 onwards. We combine a state-by-election panel of election-eve polling averages with an analysis of individual polls whose fieldwork ended in the last two weeks of the 2016, 2020 and 2024 campaigns. Within states, increases in the share of White residents are associated with smaller Democratic-leaning errors. Other demographic associations are less consistent. We test a prediction of the social desirability hypothesis that polls would underestimate Republican support more in states that lean Democratic and find little evidence for it. In the poll-level analysis, signed errors vary with survey mode, pollster ideology and university or media affiliation, with differences across election cycles. A shift towards Democratic-leaning error from 2016 remains after accounting for state demographics and partisanship. The findings identify state composition and features of polling organisations associated with directional error and motivate further work on differences in survey nonresponse and weighting across demographic groups.

Working Papers

Targeting and Evaluating Interventions in Networks

Enforcement and Concealment in Networks

Optimal Subsidies for Qualifying Submissions

Family Work and Labor-Market Adjustment: Evidence from Afghan Migration to Iran
With GholamReza Keshavarz Haddad

Leave or Reclaim? Protests and Migration Search in Iran

Teaching Experience

Lecturer
Microeconomics I (MSc), Principles of Economics, Game Theory.

Teaching Assistant
Microeconomics I, Intermediate Microeconomics, Advanced Mathematical Economics, Financial Econometrics, International Economics, Game Theory, Principles of Economics, Statistics, Linear Algebra, Discrete Mathematics, Graph Theory, Topology, Calculus II.

Awards and Scholarships

Enhanced International Research Experience Grant Scheme 2024
Monash Business School

Monash Department-Funded Graduate Research Scholarship 2021–2024
Fees and stipend

Student Excellence Award for Academic Performance 2021
Monash University

Bronze Medal, National Scientific Olympiad in Economics 2016
21st national competition, Iran

Academic Service

Co-organiser, Applied Young Economist Webinar 2022–2025
Monash–Warwick Alliance

Founder, Student Scientific Association of the Faculty of Economics 2017
Sharif University of Technology

Professional Experience

Industrial Economist, Navim Pouya Company September 2016–Present
Part-time, remote

Analysed market structure, pricing and competition and assessed the effects of economic policy on firm costs and competitiveness. Developed forecasts and scenarios for investment, sourcing and risk assessment. Prepared reports and briefings for the CEO, board and senior managers.

Academic Referees

Arthur Campbell
Professor of Economics, Monash University
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Yves Zenou
Professor of Economics, Monash University
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Kaveh Majlesi
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