

International Newsletter

◆ Vol. 1, No. 2 (September 2025)



Preface

This monthly Issue of the Sharif Policy Research Institute (SPRI) International Newsletter covers activities and achievements during September 2025, providing English highlights for global readers. This newsletter showcases our commitment to bridging academic research, policy development, and practical implementation across critical domains including demographic transitions, industrial policy, and strategic energy planning. The newsletter is published in collaboration with the Sharif Policy Research Institute and Khana House.

About Sharif Policy Research Institute (SPRI)

The Sharif Policy Research Institute is a research institution affiliated with Sharif University of Technology, dedicated to advancing policy studies and evidence-based decision-making. The institute operates through specialised think tanks focusing on critical domains including energy policy, water and environment, sustainable industrial development, and national branding. Our mission encompasses developing comprehensive policy frameworks, leveraging intellectual capital, and fostering strategic partnerships to advance science, technology, and innovation policies. We aim to create effective communication bridges between academic research, societal needs, and governance sectors, ensuring that evidence-based insights translate into practical policy solutions.

About This Issue

The second issue of this series of SPRI International Newsletter comprises two events: “Silver Economy: New Opportunities in the Age of Ageing” and “Enhancing Production in Iran.” The first is a continuation of the event featured in Vol. 1, No. 1, titled “Policy Responses to Population Aging.” It further explores economic and policy adaptation to demographic ageing with international experts, while the second focuses on global experiences in business management and strategic planning, emphasizing the advantages of small-scale enterprises for Iran.

The Publications Section of this issue surveys recent contributions from SPRI researchers and affiliated scholars. It features peer-reviewed articles on artificial intelligence in volatile economic environments, scenario-based energy planning to address Iran’s supply-demand imbalances by 2035, and Iranian public sentiment towards the Paris Agreement based on social media analytics. It also highlights the Persian translation of National Branding in America, which examines how states align brand architecture with institutional capacity, diplomatic positioning.

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Events

Silver Economy: New Opportunities in the Age of Ageing

SPRI POLICY EVENTS #137

Silver Economy:

Unlocking Opportunities in an Aging World

Wednesday, September 3rd, 2025

15:30 IRAN - 13:00 UK - 14:00 CEST



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Introduction

The second event in the International Series on Aging Policy was held under the theme “Silver Economy: New Opportunities in the Age of Ageing” on Wednesday, September 3, 2025 organized by the Sharif Policy Research Institute (SPRI) at Sharif University of Technology.

Participants from Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Qatar, Ghana, and Iran attended this virtual session, which explored new dimensions of economic and policy adaptation to demographic ageing.

Distinguished speakers included **Dr. Abena Dadze-Arthur**, Faculty Member at the School of Government Studies, University of Birmingham (UK); **Dr. Michael Amponsah**, Demographer and Senior Researcher at the NCCE Foundation (Ghana); and **Dr. Farideh Bahrami**, PhD in Technology Management from the University of Tehran, Postdoctoral Researcher at HEC Montréal, and Senior Consultant at EY Canada. The session was moderated by **Amir Shahraini**, Researcher in Innovation Policy at the Sharif Policy Research Institute.

The event examined a broad spectrum of key issues related to population ageing and the silver economy, a concept that addresses both the challenges and opportunities arising from demographic transformation. Globally, demographic shifts are occurring at varying speeds and scales, carrying profound economic, social, and political consequences. From this perspective, ageing is not merely a matter of healthcare or retirement but a strategic policy concern requiring long-term, cross-sectoral Collaboration.

Section One: Understanding the Silver Economy

The first speaker, Dr. Farideh Bahrami, began by defining the silver economy and discussing demographic ageing in Canada. Similar to global trends, Canada's elderly population is steadily increasing, exerting pressure on public resources, the labor market, and economic growth. However, this shift has also created significant opportunities in elder-related services; healthcare, home care, and wellness industries, which could become drivers of future economic expansion.

To harness these opportunities, policymakers must adopt multi-dimensional strategies, such as:

- » **Reducing corporate taxes to stimulate investment and productivity,**
- » **Accelerating the integration of skilled immigrants,**
- » **Encouraging elderly participation in the workforce through tax relief and reskilling, and**
- » **Expanding markets in the silver economy, particularly in home services, digital technology**

Dr. Bahrami emphasized that the silver economy is now a critical global policy agenda, as societies face unprecedented demographic ageing. This is not a simple demographic shift—it profoundly affects economic structures, social cohesion, and political stability. When the proportion of elderly citizens rises, pension systems, healthcare networks, and public finances come under heavy strain, potentially jeopardizing fiscal balance and welfare sustainability if left unaddressed. Yet viewing ageing merely as a crisis is incomplete. Elderly populations themselves represent a powerful source of economic potential. They are not only major consumers of health and welfare services but also drive demand for innovative industries, assistive technologies, health tourism, lifelong learning, and financial services.

The global silver economy is projected to reach several trillion dollars in market value over the next decade, offering competitive advantage to countries that invest early in this domain. Thus, attention to the silver economy represents an intelligent strategic response to one of the most profound demographic shifts of our time. It extends far beyond health or pension policy, encompassing labor markets, education, technology, urban design, and financial systems. Neglecting it would lead to severe socio-economic crises, while effective management can transform ageing into a platform for sustainable and inclusive growth. Dr. Bahrami also underlined the social dimension; many older adults remain active, transfer knowledge to younger generations, and participate in civic or voluntary activities. The principle of active ageing affirms that elderly participation contributes not only to economic productivity but also to social cohesion and cultural continuity.

Section Two: Governance and Public Policy in the Age of Ageing

In the next presentation, Dr. Abena Dadze-Arthur delivered a talk titled “Grey Is the New Gold.” Her focus was on public governance in the era of ageing and the silver economy, arguing that ageing should be viewed not as a burden but as a new form of societal capital. From a public administration perspective, the growing elderly population requires governments to rethink traditional policy approaches. She proposed that governments must view older adults not merely as recipients of care and support but as active citizens with economic and social value. This transformation necessitates

institutional reform; from pension systems to labor and education policy, lifelong learning, healthcare. She explained that the concept of “Grey Gold” refers to the collective wealth of experience, knowledge, social capital, and purchasing power among older generations. Governments, therefore, should not only ensure adequate social protection but also create opportunities for elderly engagement—through flexible employment, senior entrepreneurship, mentoring, consultancy, and volunteer networks. Dr. Dadze-Arthur concluded that societies capable of recognizing and managing this “grey gold” will not only mitigate the fiscal and social pressures of ageing but also convert it into a new engine for innovation and sustainable growth.

Section Three: The African Perspective

Next, Dr. Michael Amponsah discussed the status of ageing and the silver economy in Africa, with a special focus on Ghana. He highlighted that addressing ageing in Africa requires special attention to pension reform, healthcare systems, and fiscal policy, as the continent faces a dual demographic challenge; still youthful population alongside a growing elderly segment. Many African countries lack comprehensive pension coverage, with schemes often limited to public sector or formal employees, leaving the informal workforce unprotected. Hence, current reforms aim to establish inclusive pension models, individual contribution plans, and mandatory or incentivized savings schemes—though these efforts remain in early stages across Sub-Saharan Africa.

In healthcare, ageing is expected to increase pressure on already resource-limited systems that face shortages of personnel, infrastructure, and medicines. Reforms in this area often focus on universal health insurance, targeted subsidies for vulnerable groups, and regional cooperation in pharmaceutical supply chains. Countries like Rwanda and Ghana have made progress in expanding universal health coverage, yet financial sustainability remains a key challenge. Regarding fiscal systems, Dr. Amponsah noted that many African economies have narrow tax bases, largely due to the dominance of the informal sector, which constrains revenue collection for welfare programs. Reforms such as expanding VAT coverage and broadening small-scale taxation are being implemented to mobilize resources for ageing-related expenditures. He concluded that while Africa is still at the early stage of developing a silver economy, proactive reforms could transform demographic ageing into an opportunity for social cohesion and sustainable growth, provided timely institutional adaptation occurs.

Conclusion

The event concluded by emphasizing that inclusive and sustainable growth models in ageing societies must transform ageing from a challenge into an opportunity. Economically, this means fostering new industries in healthcare, caregiving, assistive technologies, and financial services. Socially, it requires policies that promote active ageing and intergenerational participation. Institutionally, comprehensive reform of pension, insurance, and tax systems is essential to ensure intergenerational equity and fiscal sustainability. Furthermore, technological innovation through smart cities, digital care systems, and age-friendly technologies can significantly enhance quality of life. Ultimately, success in this domain depends on strengthening intergenerational solidarity

Enhancing Production in Iran: The Social Responsibility of Elites



Introduction

“Enhancing Production in Iran: The Social Responsibility of Elites” Event was held on Thursday, September 4, 2025, in Tehran. The session focused on successful international experiences particularly from the United States, Europe, and China in business management and strategic planning, emphasizing the advantages of small-scale enterprises over large-scale models.

The keynote speaker was **Seyed Amirhossein Kamali Taghavi**, a prominent entrepreneurship consultant with extensive experience advising major Iranian firms and collaborating internationally. He is also a core member of the “Zist Shahr” Think Tank and an active figure in the fields of business and knowledge-based economics. Participants included a diverse group of entrepreneurs, professionals, and enthusiasts who attended to gain practical insights and inspiration from global models. A dynamic Q&A session followed, fostering lively discussion among attendees.

At the outset, Kamali highlighted the global economic shifts triggered by recent geopolitical tensions. He noted that the world is undergoing a transition from large-scale industrial production toward localized, small-scale enterprises a transformation driven not only by greater flexibility but also by the need to reduce dependence on global supply chains and enhance economic resilience. Drawing on recent data, he presented case studies from leading economies and discussed how these approaches could benefit Iran’s economy, which faces challenges such as sanctions and currency volatility.

Section One: Global Experiences in Small-Scale Business Management

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Report (2024), small businesses account for approximately 43.5% of the nation's GDP, fluctuating between 43.5% and 50.7% since the 1990s. This demonstrates their central role in innovation and job creation. Nearly half of U.S. economic output originates from this sector, encompassing both tech startups in Silicon Valley and local businesses in rural regions. Kamali noted that supportive policies such as low-interest SBA loans and tax incentives have strengthened this model offering a valuable template for Iran's future entrepreneurship funds.

China, With several million small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as of 2022, China hosts the world's largest small-business ecosystem. The government has implemented extensive supportive policies, such as allocating local spaces for home-based enterprises and digitalization programs like Taobao. These initiatives, centered on community-scale industries, generate over 60% of urban employment. Kamali emphasized that China's integration of high technology into small industries has turned it into a global export leader—a model Iran can adapt to strengthen its own economy.

Across Europe, small-scale industrialization has been pursued with a focus on sustainability and innovation. As reported by the European Commission (2025), SMEs comprise over 99% of all firms and account for 85% of total employment. Initiatives such as Horizon Europe, designed to boost local production and reduce import dependency (particularly from China), have reinforced this trend. In countries like Germany and the Netherlands, the rise of microfactories small, modular facilities for customized manufacturing—has contributed to lower carbon emissions and increased resilience amid challenges such as Brexit and the Ukraine war. Kamali observed that SME flexibility has helped Europe mitigate the shocks of supply disruptions.

Section Two: Advantages and Emerging Trends in Small-Scale Businesses

Kamali elaborated on the key advantages of small-scale enterprises, calling them “the cornerstone of Iran's economic survival.” He outlined several major benefits. Unlike large corporations burdened with bureaucracy, small businesses can swiftly adapt to market shifts and tailor products to local demand. With reduced overhead, they can effectively compete in niche markets where large firms rarely enter. SMEs also offer fertile ground for disruptive ideas, such as the use of 3D printing for customized production, and their direct access to management enhances customer loyalty through individualized services. Furthermore, localized production shortens supply chains and reduces environmental impact, aligned with the green policies of the U.S. and Europe. In terms of local employment generation, small enterprises accounted for 55% of net job creation in the United States between 2013 and 2023.

In discussing emerging trends, Kamali cited the example of Arrival, a British–Luxembourgish electric vehicle startup that pioneered the microfactory model. Founded in 2015, Arrival designed local, small-scale production sites for UPS vans, Uber vehicles, and urban buses, replacing traditional assembly lines with modular robotics and 3D printing. This approach reduced costs by up to 50% and brought manufacturing closer to end-users. Kamali suggested that such an approach could be particularly effective for Iran's automotive and electronics sectors, where resources are limited but technical talent is abundant.

Section Three: Applications for Iran's Economy

Kamali proposed practical measures tailored for Iran's context:

- » **Establishing entrepreneurship funds similar to the SBA in the U.S.**
- » **Developing digital platforms inspired by Chinese SME ecosystems.**
- » **Promoting green manufacturing aligned with European sustainability models.**

He cautioned that without such structural transformation, Iran's economy would remain vulnerable to global shocks. During the Q&A session, participants raised concerns about legal frameworks and access to finance, to which Kamali responded by underscoring the importance of network-building and digital literacy training for entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

The Event underscored that small-scale enterprises are not merely a global trend but a strategic necessity for developing economies like Iran. Drawing lessons from the United States (43.5% of GDP), China (SME-driven employment), and Europe (sustainability-focused models), Iran can stimulate innovation and resilience through targeted support policies. In closing, Kamali reaffirmed the pivotal role of entrepreneurial consultants in guiding startups and announced that Sustainable Ecosystem Development Company will continue to organize training programs for Iranian entrepreneurs aimed at fostering a new generation of small-scale innovators.



Publication

— journal articles —

Transforming energy landscape: A scenario based robust planning strategy for addressing imbalance in Iran by 2035

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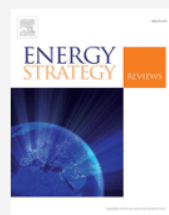
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Transforming energy landscape: A scenario-based robust planning strategy for addressing energy imbalance in Iran by 2035

ABSTRACT

Iran's energy sector is characterized by its significant reserves, market dynamics, economic challenges, and political and global impacts. This paper employs an integrated, scenario-based robust planning approach to address Iran's energy imbalance, which manifests as excess demand or insufficient supply of natural gas in winter, electricity in summer, and gasoline year-round. By examining key uncertainties, constructing four scenarios, and testing various strategies against these scenarios, the robust strategies were developed for both supply and demand in the oil, gas, and electricity sectors. Common strategies, such as price adjustments, were also discussed. The analysis underscores the urgent need for infrastructure investment, technology adoption, diversification of energy sources (including renewables), and pricing reforms.

KEYWORDS

Energy imbalance, Iran, Robust strategies, Scenario planning

Abstract

Iran's energy sector is characterized by its significant reserves, market dynamics, economic challenges, and political and global impacts. This paper employs an integrated, scenario-based robust planning approach to address Iran's energy imbalance, which manifests as excess demand or insufficient supply of natural gas in winter, electricity in summer, and gasoline year-round. By examining key uncertainties, constructing four scenarios, and testing various strategies against these scenarios, the robust strategies were developed for both supply and demand in the oil, gas, and electricity sectors. Common strategies, such as price adjustments, were also discussed. The analysis underscores the urgent need for infrastructure investment, technology adoption, diversification of energy sources (including renewables), and pricing reforms.

Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Strategic Decision-Making in Volatile Economic Environment

Article Information

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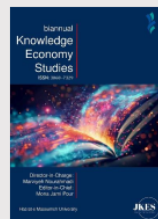
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Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Strategic Decision-Making in Volatile Economic Environments

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing strategic decision-making within volatile economic environments, focusing on the knowledge economy. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research integrates a systematic literature review (SLR) with secondary data analysis from 300 organizations across finance, manufacturing, retail, and healthcare sectors. Qualitative insights from the SLR identify three core themes: AI-enhanced organizational agility (75% of studies), ethical and implementation challenges (65% of studies), and knowledge economy integration (70% of studies). Quantitative findings confirm these themes, revealing that organizations with advanced AI adoption achieve an average 25% improvement in decision accuracy and a 30% increase in operational resilience. However, ethical concerns such as algorithmic bias and privacy issues lead to a 12-18% reduction in perceived trustworthiness, reported by 20% of analyzed organizations. The study extends dynamic capabilities and resource-based view theories by proposing a unified framework that integrates agility, ethical governance, and knowledge-driven alignment. Practically, it offers managerial guidance on AI deployment and ethical protocols, while advising policymakers on regulations to ensure equitable AI access, particularly for SMEs. The research positions AI as a critical strategic asset for navigating volatility while emphasizing risk mitigation.

KEYWORDS

Artificial Intelligence Strategic Decision-Making Knowledge Economy Organizational Agility Ethical AI

Abstract

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Exploring Iranian sentiments on the Paris Agreement: Insights from Twitter

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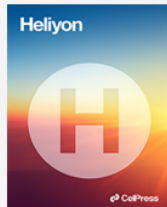
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Exploring Iranian sentiments on the Paris Agreement: Insights from Twitter

ABSTRACT

Iran remains one of the few nations not fully committed to the Paris Agreement and public opinion regarding implementation of policies serves a significant role. This study examines the general sentiment of Iranian Twitter users towards the Paris Agreement. A total of 25,386 tweets were collected and analyzed, revealing that discussions around the Paris Agreement predominantly centered on terms such as 'electricity', 'shameful', 'government', and 'America'. The majority of these tweets coincided with the power outages in January, June, and July 2021, as well as the period following Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in June 2017. To gain deeper insights into the level of support for the Paris Agreement in Iran, a thematic analysis was conducted on a random sample of 500 tweets, selected based on the theoretical saturation of themes and sub-themes. The analysis revealed that 8 % of users expressed a positive orientation, 60 % a negative orientation, and 32 % a neutral orientation towards the Paris Agreement. The thematic analysis suggests that the negative sentiment is primarily due to frequent power outages, perceived inefficiency and lack of trust in government decisions, lack of transparency, and the perceived colonial nature of the agreement for developing countries. The findings underscore the importance of garnering public support in developing countries for international environmental agreements.

KEYWORDS

Paris agreement, Iran, Public opinion, Twitter, Developing countries

Abstract

Iran remains one of the few nations not fully committed to the Paris Agreement and public opinion regarding implementation of policies serves a significant role. This study examines the general sentiment of Iranian Twitter users towards the Paris Agreement. A total of 25,386 tweets were collected and analyzed, revealing that discussions around the Paris Agreement predominantly centered on terms such as 'electricity', 'shameful', 'government', and 'America'. The majority of these tweets coincided with the power outages in January, June, and July 2021, as well as the period following Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in June 2017. To gain deeper insights into the level of support for the Paris Agreement in Iran, a thematic analysis was conducted on a random sample of 500 tweets, selected based on the theoretical saturation of themes and sub-themes. The analysis revealed that 8 % of users expressed a positive orientation, 60 % a negative orientation, and 32 % a neutral orientation towards the Paris Agreement. The thematic analysis suggests that the negative sentiment is primarily due to frequent power outages, perceived inefficiency and lack of trust in government decisions, lack of transparency, and the perceived colonial nature of the agreement for developing countries. The findings underscore the importance of garnering public support in developing countries for international environmental agreements.

Book Publications

National Branding in America

Authors: Yves Sohn, César Jiménez-Martínez, Pablo Mino

Translators: Hojjatollah Niki Maleki, Masoud Bahramizadeh

First edition, 2025

Scope

This book surveys national branding strategies across the Americas, examining how states curate identity, credibility, and economic positioning in competitive global markets. It treats branding as an institutional process rather than a marketing afterthought, exploring the interplay between domestic narratives, foreign policy, and investment attraction.

Chapters are organised around comparative case studies that trace the evolution of brand architectures, governance arrangements, and stakeholder coalitions. The analysis integrates policy instruments—diplomacy, trade promotion, cultural initiatives with measurement frameworks that connect narrative outputs to perceptual and material outcomes.



Contribution

The book advances a pragmatic framework that links brand promise to state capabilities and performance. By distinguishing signalling from delivery, it offers criteria for credible positioning and for avoiding reputational volatility. It also highlights the role of cities, diasporas, and private partners as co-producers of brand equity.

Policy Implications

For policymakers, the key message is that branding must be embedded within whole-of-government strategies with clear accountability, data-driven monitoring, and crisis-response protocols. Investments in institutional quality, service reliability, and innovation ecosystems are prerequisites for sustained brand value. The hyperlink above provides access to additional details and examples.

This monthly report demonstrates SPRI's continued commitment to producing high-quality policy research, facilitating meaningful stakeholder engagement, and contributing to Iran's policy development processes. Through our diverse portfolio Of events, publications, and research initiatives, we strive to address critical challenges facing Iranian society and provide evidence-based recommendations for policy improvement. We remain committed to maintaining the highest standards of academic excellence while ensuring that our research outputs remain relevant and actionable for policy practitioners. Looking ahead, we will continue to expand our research portfolio, strengthen our partnerships. and enhance our contribution to Iran's policy development ecosystem. We thank all our collaborators, participants, and supporters who make these achievements possible.



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