

How Time Horizons Shape Policy Selection in Conflict?

Rotem Dvir

Texas A&M University

Study Contribution

- Demonstrate how time horizons shape the decision making process in conflict
- How some policy options remain outside the evaluation process
- Research design captures multiple aspects of latent concept and operationalize a dual phase process with multiple measures

Introduction

- Leaders select policy in conflict from a fixed set of options
- Foreign Policy Substitution (Clark et al. 2008, Oakes 2012)
- Main gap: how choice set of options is constructed? How choice set impacts (observed) policy selection?

TIME HORIZONS

- The weight given to present versus future outcomes and willingness to sacrifice present utility for future gain (Krebs and Rapport 2012)
- Tradeoffs in policy implications

MAIN ARGUMENT:

- Time horizons shape choice set formation and policy selection by rejecting options that do not accommodate the decision maker's temporal view.
- As a result, variations in time horizon generate different composition of choice sets (both size and preferred options)
- The reduced choice sets affect the (observed) selection of policy.

Contact Information

- Web: <https://rotemdvir.wixsite.com/mysite>
- Email: rdvir@tamu.edu
- Twitter: @RotemDvir1

Theory

A Dual phase Decision Process (Beach 1990)

PRE-CHOICE SCREENING

- Policy evaluation focuses on limited number of options
- Screening: compatibility test (Ordonez et al. 1999)
- Time Horizons - a screening mechanism

H1: Short time horizon → Smaller Choice set

POLICY SELECTION

- Policy selected: net benefit within choice set
- Choice set and selection: preference reversal (Tsetsos et al. 2010)

H2: Changes in choice set composition triggers preference reversal

Research Design

- Two phase experiment (2x2 design): policies screening and selection
- Relevant context: military conflict
- Embedded experiment testing selection and preference reversal

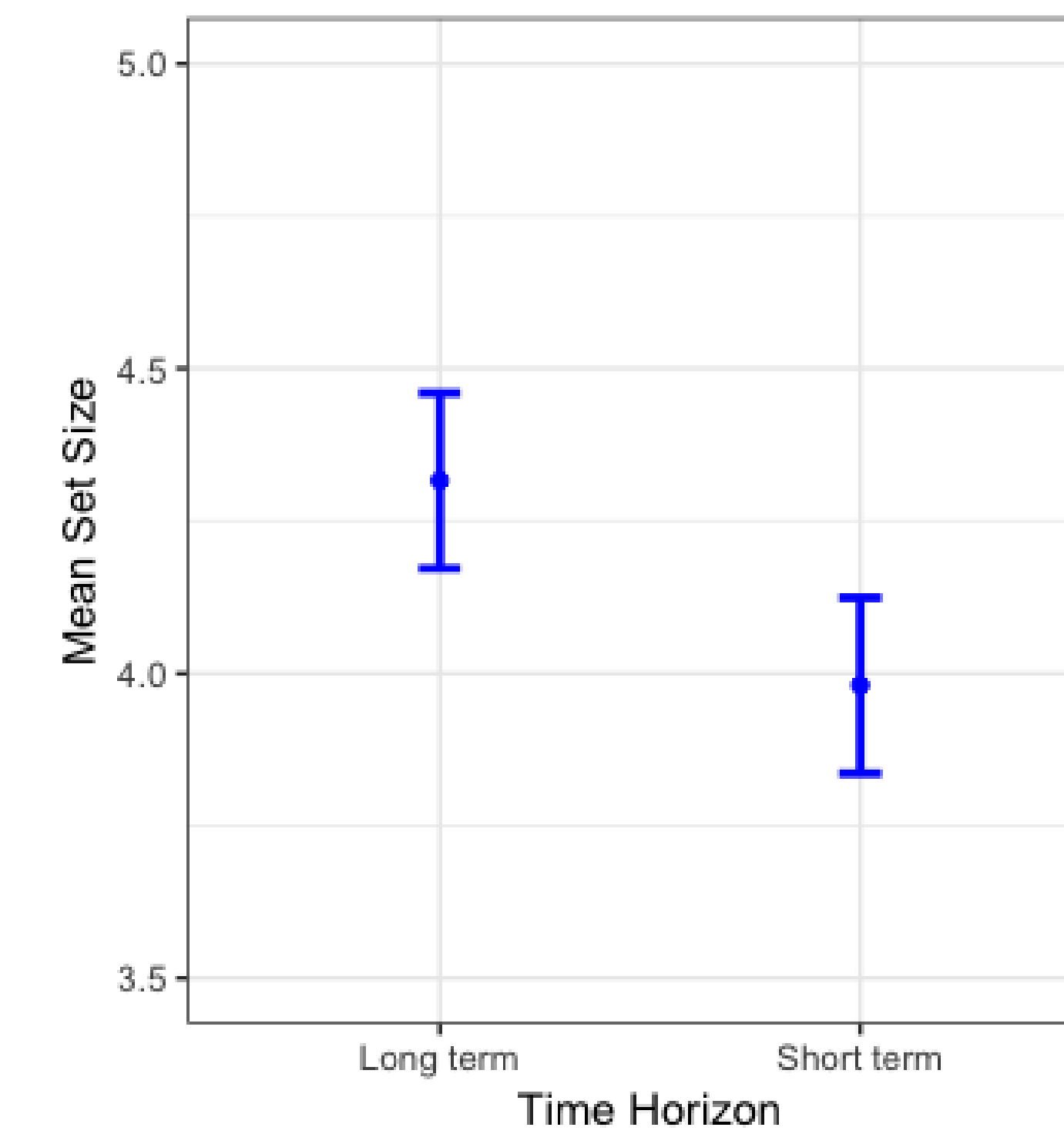
Bagram Air base - US military headquarters in Afghanistan has been under constant attacks over the last 6 months (resulting in both casualties and damages). The administration has to address this situation since a high ranking US government official (the vice president) is planning an official visit at the end of this month. Military decision makers need to implement a policy that will provide a secure environment for the visit as soon as possible. **Officials emphasize that immediate solution is critical and you should be less concerned about future prospects of the situation (i.e. continued insurgency in later time).**

Below are 7 potential policy options to address the situation. For each option, experts estimated the chances of success in the short term, as well as what are the projected outcomes over the long run. Lastly, military officials provided an estimate to the expected number of casualties of these policy options (relatively low). Based on the scenario and the information below we ask that you choose which of the options should be accepted for further consideration by senior decision makers and which to reject. **Only accept the options that you consider to be worthy for further deliberation.**

	Success in Short term	Long term outcomes	Expected Casualties	Mark one option		How strongly do you feel about your choices? (1: Not Very Strong; 7: Very Strong)								
				Accept	Reject	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Policy 1	85%	Bad	10-15	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Policy 2	80%	Good	10-15	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Policy 3	75%	Good	10-15	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Policy 4	70%	Bad	10-15	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Results: Screening Phase

TIME HORIZON AND CHOICE SET SIZE



- Decision makers are sensitive to temporal tradeoff - prefer positive outcomes over time
- Long term view more powerful in screening options in conflict

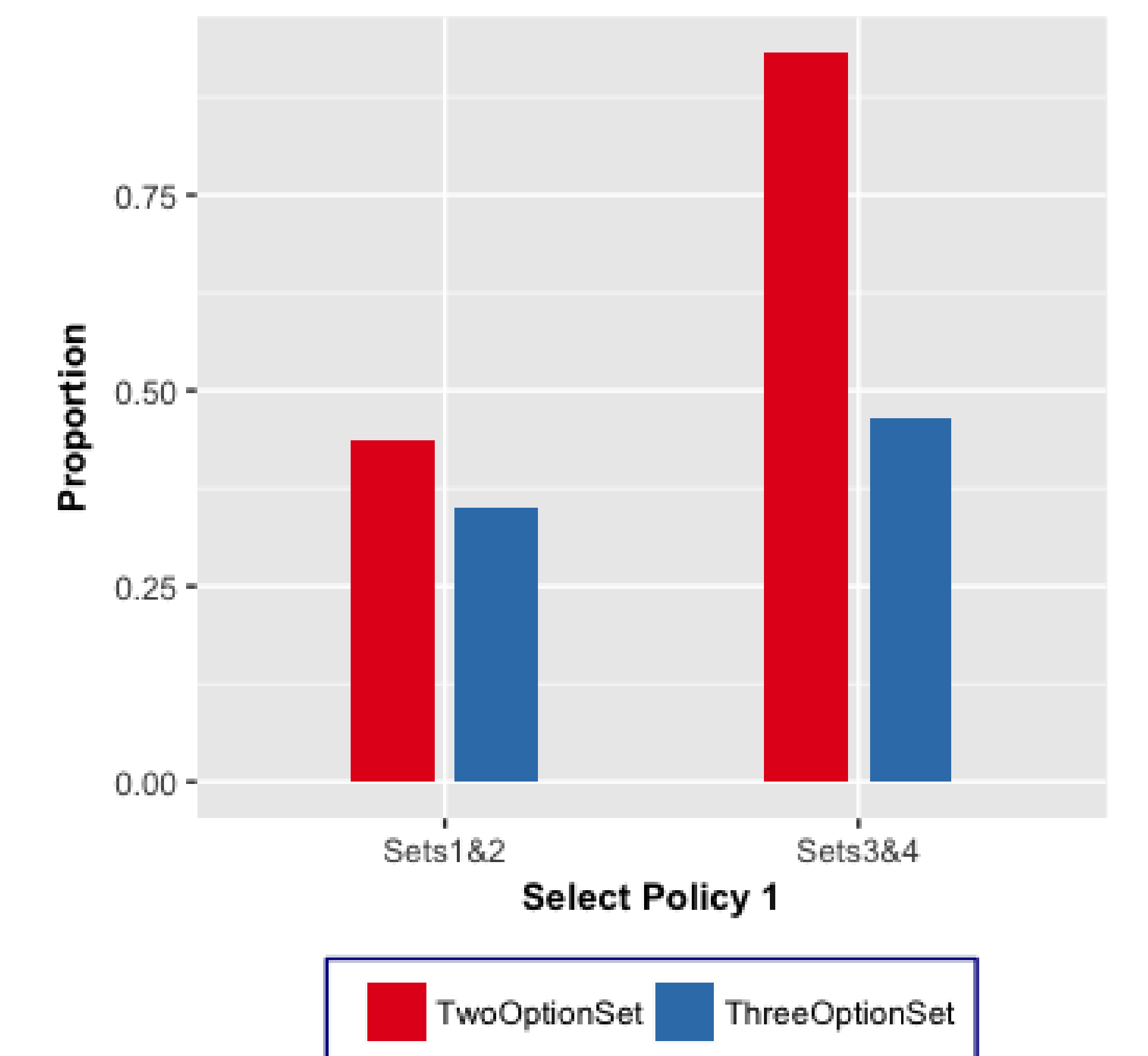
Results: Policy Selection Phase

Policy Selection: Multinomial Logit Model

	Policy Selected		
	Policy 2	Policy 3	Policy 4
Time Horizon	-0.482*** (0.202)	-0.882** (0.414)	-0.972* (0.562)
Reciprocal Outcomes	3.696*** (0.217)	2.73*** (0.400)	1.176** (0.542)
Casualties	-0.801*** (0.197)	-0.568 (0.377)	-0.104 (0.486)
Set Size	0.218*** (0.075)	0.609*** (0.142)	0.478*** (0.172)
Age	-0.024*** (0.008)	-0.091*** (0.026)	-0.013 (0.022)
Gender	0.205 (0.206)	-0.432 (0.433)	-0.381 (0.547)
Partisanship	-0.012 (0.050)	0.100 (0.105)	0.068 (0.135)
Education	0.203* (0.124)	0.120 (0.280)	-0.126 (0.328)
FP knowledge	0.194 (0.129)	0.398 (0.260)	0.045 (0.334)
Constant	-5.591*** (0.755)	-6.027*** (1.457)	-5.304*** (1.665)

Notes: N = 1,020; Pseudo R² = 0.342; Base category is select Policy 1
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01; Standard errors in parenthesis

CHOICE SETS AND PREFERENCE REVERSAL



Conclusions

- Time horizons - a screening mechanism of policy options
- Long term view - a larger choice set
- Changes in choice set composition (size and alternatives) influence selection