

# Fixed-Term Parliaments and the Challenges for Governments and the Civil Service: A Comparative Perspective

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## Abstract

The Fixed-term Parliaments Act significantly reduces the powers of the Prime Minister to manage the risk of government termination and to time elections to his or her party's advantage. In this paper we ask how the Act is likely to change the way in which governments terminate, their durability and opportunities for planning in government and departments. In answering these questions we draw on quantitative comparative evidence from other European countries that operate with fixed-term parliaments. Our analysis suggests that fixing the parliamentary term can be expected to convert some opportunistically called elections into regular elections and to stabilise governments toward the end of the parliamentary term. But the Act is also likely to have unanticipated consequences in increasing governments' vulnerability to failure before they reach the final sessions of Parliament. We explore these unanticipated consequences and outline their implications for governing style and Civil Service planning.

**Keywords:** constitution, fixed-term parliaments, government termination, governmental planning, opportunistic elections, parliamentary dissolution

The Government believes that fixed-term Parliaments will have a positive impact on our country's political system; providing stability, discouraging short-termism, and preventing the manipulation of election dates for political advantage. (Government response to the report of the House of Lords Constitution Committee on the Fixed-term Parliaments Bill, 2011, Introduction)

## Introduction

WHEN THE Fixed-term Parliaments Act became law on 15 September 2011, it marked a major constitutional change. The Act provides for regular parliamentary elections every five years (the next election date being 7 May 2015), and constrains the conditions under which early elections can be called. Parliament can be dissolved only if there is a vote of no confidence in the government and no new government can be formed within fourteen days, or if at least two thirds of all MPs vote for an early election. These constraints are intended to make early elections available mainly as a solution for government failure

and crises. The Act thus represents a significant reduction in the powers of the Prime Minister who, up to 2011, was free to recommend the dissolution of Parliament to the Crown as and when he or she saw fit.

How can the Act be expected to change politics in the UK? How is it likely to change patterns of government termination, Cabinet duration and opportunities for planning in government and departments? In this article we bring quantitative comparative evidence from other European countries to bear on these questions. In the debate about the Act, the experience of other countries with fixed-term parliaments has been considered mainly through case studies and anecdotal examples. So far, systematic quantitative evidence has been entirely lacking from the debate. Yet the effects of fixed-term parliaments on government termination, survival, and planning are not uncharted territory—a range of other European countries have operated with fixed-term parliaments for many years and useful insights can be gained from considering their experience.

In the UK, the debate about the likely implications of the Act has been animated. Its supporters anticipate significant benefits: the Act is expected to discourage the opportunistic timing of early elections by Prime Ministers, increase electoral fairness, enhance government stability and enable better and more long-term planning in government, departments and Parliament. Dissenters have noted that the Act reduces flexibility. For instance, a prime minister who comes to power through a leadership change cannot easily seek a new mandate under the new rules. Others doubt that the Act will have much effect, since a government desperate to hold an early election could engineer its own defeat in a vote of no confidence. As the first fixed-term parliament enters its final phase, these are live concerns. Over the next year or so precedents will be set in using this new law and managing its implications. In this context, a better understanding of the Act can be of direct value to politicians and officials. We bring comparative evidence from other European countries to bear in exploring its implications.

### **The comparative data and caveats**

Our comparative dataset covers 26 eastern and western European countries since 1945 or democratisation in the case of countries that became democratic after World War II. In that sample, thirteen countries operate with fixed-term parliaments: Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland (after 1991), Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and the UK (since 2011). In examining how fixing the term of a parliament may affect UK politics in the future, we compare cabinet termination and duration in those countries to that in states in which the Prime Minister can dissolve the assembly discretionarily: the UK (up to 2011), Spain, Sweden (1970–4), Ireland and Denmark.

Several caveats are in order before we extrapolate from these comparisons to the UK. Other European countries that operate with fixed-term parliaments have party systems, electoral systems and constitutional frameworks that differ from the UK's. Many are also new democracies. While their experience is instructive, it should be applied to the

UK with caution. For example, the UK's electoral system and electoral cleavages give rise to a comparatively low effective number of parties (currently 2.6), as opposed to 4.6 for other European countries with fixed-term parliaments. Relatedly, the UK has typically worked with single-party governments, while other fixed-term countries usually work with coalitions. The UK is also the only country that combines a fixed-term parliament with an uncodified constitution. This gives future UK governments the option of changing or repealing the Act with a simple legislative majority. This option is not available to their European peers. With these caveats in mind, we outline the comparative evidence and sketch its implications for understanding how the Act may affect government terminations, government durability, governing style and the planning of departmental business.

### **Implications for the mode of government termination**

In the past, many Prime Ministers have gambled on calling early general elections to try and maximise their party's advantage at a general election and gain a further term in office. . . . Fixed-term Parliaments are one way in which the Government is addressing the public's desire for political reform. (Government response to the report of the House of Lords Constitution Committee on the Fixed-term Parliaments Bill, 2011, paragraph 4)

If the Bill is enacted, our expectation is that future Parliaments would run for their full fixed term, and this will become an unremarkable aspect of our modern democracy. ('Fixed-term Parliaments Bill', Second Report of Session 2010–11, House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee, 2010, Summary)

The Fixed-term Parliaments Act aims to change the pattern of government terminations in the UK. Its objective is to forestall opportunistically called early elections. As the House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee notes, '[t]he principle behind the Fixed-term Parliaments Bill is that it is wrong that a Prime Minister should be able to time a general election to his own advantage'.<sup>1</sup> The removal of the Prime Minister's power to time elections discretionarily is a major change. Strategically called elections have been the modal type of govern-

ment termination in modern UK politics. The central question that arises, then, is how governments can be expected to terminate in future.<sup>2</sup> A widespread expectation is that opportunistic early elections will be replaced by regular ones at five-yearly intervals, as the quotes above indicate. The comparative evidence suggests that fixing the term of Parliament may make patterns of government termination more complex than that.

Government terminations are varied events. As Lupia and Strom note, '[s]ome politicians are forced from their cabinet offices in a daze, never knowing what hit them. Others choose their date of departure and leave with smirks on their faces. Some . . . go down in fiery spectacles of backroom infighting and betrayal, whereas others take their struggles "to the country" and leave the judgment to the voters'.<sup>3</sup>

These varied events can be categorised into four different modes of government termination:

- (a) Regular elections, which must be called when the parliament reaches its full term;
- (b) Opportunistic elections, which popular Prime Ministers call with the aim of maximising their chances of winning a new term in office;
- (c) Failure elections, which are triggered by some form of government failure—for instance policy failure, conflicts within the government, a loss of parliamentary support, or scandal;
- (d) Failure replacements, which are triggered by the same type of events as failure elections, but lead to changes of Prime Minister or governing parties without intervening elections.

To illustrate these categories: Brown's government terminated in regular elections in 2010, when Parliament reached its full term, while Blair's first and second governments ended in early, opportunistically timed elections in 2001 and 2005, following decisions by the Prime Minister to capitalise on the government's popularity and the economy's performance in bids to win a second and third consecutive term. In contrast, 1979 is an example of a failure election, which was triggered by Callaghan's fall after a vote of no confidence. Finally, Thatcher's replacement by Major after her removal by her party in 1990 falls under the category of failure replacements.

How governments terminate matters. It affects the governing parties' chances of re-election, the time available to the opposition to prepare for elections, opportunities for the Civil Service to ensure a smooth transition and to support the process of government formation and levels of political and economic uncertainty more broadly. So, how can fixing the term of Parliament be expected to change the mode of government termination?

Table 1 contrasts the frequency of different termination types under constitutions that fix the term of the assembly with constitutions that give the Prime Minister discretion to call early elections. Following the convention in the broader literature on government terminations, we count a new government with every general election, change in the governing party/ies or change of Prime Minister.<sup>4</sup>

As anticipated, Cabinets under fixed-term parliaments end more often in regular elections. When dissolution is constrained fully 32.5 per cent of all governments terminate in regular elections, and only 1.5 per cent end in opportunistic early elections.<sup>5</sup> This contrasts,

**Table 1. Termination modes by constitutional rule<sup>†</sup>**

	Constitutions with Fixed-term Parliaments	Constitutions with PM discretion to dissolve	UK (1945–2011)
Regular elections	32.5%	13.5%	21.7%
Opportunistic early elections	1.5%	36.5%	43.5%
Failure elections & replacements	58%	36.5%	22%
Total number of cases	206	96	23

Source: Original dataset compiled by the authors.

as expected, with the termination patterns of governments that operate under prime ministerial discretion to dissolve: only 13.5 per cent end in regular elections and fully 36.5 per cent in opportunistic early elections. But two features of the comparative evidence are surprising, given the expectations about the Fixed-term Parliaments Act. First, even under fixed-term parliaments only a minority of governments (around a third) terminate in regular elections, and there seems to be no straightforward conversion of opportunistic early elections into regular elections: while fixing the parliamentary term appears to reduce opportunistically called elections, it does not increase regular elections by a corresponding share. Second, as row three of the table makes clear, Cabinets that operate under fixed-term parliaments end far more frequently in failure terminations (58 per cent) than those that work under constitutions which give Prime Ministers discretion to dissolve (36.5 per cent). This suggests that fixing the parliamentary term can be expected to curb opportunistic early elections, converting some of these terminations into regular elections and others into early failures.

Can these patterns be expected to have relevance to the UK? Historically, failure terminations have not been common in the UK because the constitution, combined with the prevalence of single-party governments, systematically lowered the failure risk (see Table 1, column 3). Since 1945, government failures have only triggered 22 per cent of the Cabinet terminations in the UK, including two early elections (Heath 1974 and Callaghan 1979) and three replacements (Macmillan 1963, Thatcher 1990 and Blair 2007).

However, two mechanisms which generally apply under constitutions that fix the parliamentary term may in future make failure terminations more common in the UK. First, under a fixed-term parliament, the Prime Minister loses a powerful tool to manage the government's termination—the option to time a planned early election to opportune circumstances. Second, one of the consequences of having a fixed-term parliament is that the Prime Minister loses a source of power over his or her colleagues. As Robert Hazell puts it:

[t]he power to determine the date of the election enables him to bring into line his

ministers and backbenchers. If they threaten to rebel he can in turn threaten them with an early election. John Major as Prime Minister was able to threaten the Maastricht rebels with an early election if they did not fall into line. With fixed-term parliaments a Prime Minister could no longer threaten a snap election in this way.<sup>6</sup>

For the same reason, the Act reduces the ability of the Prime Minister to discipline recalcitrant coalition partners. This reduction in the Prime Minister's powers is likely to change the bargaining strategies of backbenchers and coalition partners, who can be expected to become more assertive in future. The ensuing conflicts are likely to be channelled into failure elections and replacements because these are the only modes of early termination allowed under the Act. It is therefore possible that the Act will increase the share of governments that suffer failure terminations. While the reduction in the power of the executive was widely noted and welcomed in the debate about the Bill, its potential consequences for government terminations have, to date, received little attention.

In principle, a rise in government failures can seriously disrupt governmental and parliamentary planning and generate political and economic uncertainty. The disruption is greatest when government failure results in early elections or a replacement that leads to a change of governing parties; it is significantly less severe when only the Prime Minister is replaced and the governing party remains in power. The predominance of single-party governments in the UK makes a change of Prime Minister in response to government failure more likely than all-out changes of governing parties or early elections. From the point of view of containing uncertainty and disruption, these failures are easier to manage because the new government will carry forward many of the previous Prime Minister's policies.

In sum, the comparative evidence suggests that fixing the term of Parliament may make patterns of government termination more complex than is generally anticipated: while the Act can be expected to reduce the share of governments that end in opportunistic elections and to convert some of those terminations into regular elections, it may also have

the unanticipated consequence of making failure terminations more common in the UK. The predominance of single-party governments in the UK can be expected to buffer the potentially disruptive effects of such a change; nonetheless it is likely to have consequences for the durability of governments, which we examine next.

## Implications for government durability

Turning to the durability of governments, there is a strong expectation in the policy community that the Act will enhance government stability and discourage short-termism. Indeed, the House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee notes that in the evidence it received about the impact of the Act on government, '[t]he most commonly cited advantages of fixed terms were:

- the potential to reduce uncertainty and instability;
- a clear timetable for the next general election;
- more effective forecasting;
- ability to prioritise more effectively;
- ability to allocate key staff in accordance with the policy priorities;
- a sense of direction from the outset;
- greater consistency and clarity of strategy.<sup>17</sup>

Again, the comparative evidence suggests a more complex picture. While fixed terms make governments very durable in the final stretch of a parliament, they also appear to reduce durability by enhancing the risk of failure before governments cross that threshold. On average fixed terms are associated with reduced government durations.

As Table 2 shows, the average duration of governments under fixed-term parliaments is lower than under constitutions that give the Prime Minister discretion to dissolve. Govern-

ments that work under fixed-term parliaments last on average only 37 per cent of the parliamentary term.<sup>8</sup> A much higher average duration of 55 per cent is achieved by governments when the Prime Minister has discretionary power to dissolve the assembly. The UK (up to 2011) approximated that number very closely, with an average duration of 56 per cent of the parliamentary term.<sup>9</sup>

It is not the case, though, that fixing the parliamentary term simply lowers the durability of governments across the board. Rather, governments become more stable once they approach the end of the parliamentary term and less stable before they reach this watershed.

Table 3 focuses on governments in the final year of the parliamentary term. Of those governments which enter the last year of a fixed-term parliament, the overwhelming majority (70.5 per cent) terminate by regular elections, while the majority (55.3 per cent) of those operating under prime ministerial discretion end in opportunistically timed elections. The increased stability of governments under constrained dissolution toward the end of the parliamentary term is no accident. Constitutions that fix parliamentary terms constrain opportunistic election-calling by the Prime Minister. As a result, popular Prime Ministers and governments, who would otherwise exploit their popularity by calling a snap election, tend to run to full term.

A comment is in order about the very small number of governments (1.1 per cent) that terminate in opportunistic elections in the final year of fixed-term parliaments, in seeming contravention of the constitutional rules. Constitutions that 'fix' the parliamentary term do not always rule out opportunistic election-calling completely. Several of these constitutional rules—including the UK's—are open to the manipulation of a no-confidence vote by

**Table 2: Average government durations by constitutional rule**

	Average government duration as a percentage of the parliamentary term (all governments)
Constitutions with fixed-term parliaments	37%
Constitutions with PM discretion to dissolve	55%
United Kingdom (up to 2011)	56%

**Table 3: Termination modes by constitutional rule in the final year of the parliamentary term<sup>†</sup>**

Termination mode	Constitutions with fixed-term Parliaments	Constitutions with PM discretion to dissolve
Regular elections	70.5%	31.6%
Opportunistic early elections	1.1%	55.3%
Failure elections & replacements	26.1%	10.5%
Total number of cases	85	38

<sup>†</sup> Note that columns do not add up to 100% because we omit from this table cabinets that end for technical or non-political reasons such as the death of a Prime Minister.

the government in order to achieve opportunistic early elections. However, all of these constitutions reduce a government's ability to precipitate an election directly and make it less likely that such an election would yield a partisan advantage. To clear the way for an election, a government would have to instruct its backbenchers to defeat their own Cabinet. However, under most of these constitutional rules (including the Fixed-term Parliaments Act), a defeat is not sufficient to trigger an election. Often the constitution imposes the requirement that the formation of a replacement government should be explored before early elections can be called. In addition, European experience suggests that the manipulated use of government self-defeats to trigger elections can be open to judicial challenge. The German Chancellors Kohl (1983) and Schröder (2005) both sought to trigger early elections by instructing their governing parties to abstain in a vote of confidence. These self-defeats were challenged in the Federal Constitution Court. In both of these ways, constitutions that constrain dissolution reduce a government's ability to trigger elections directly. In addition, these rules reduce the probability that a government will benefit from early election-calling: the obvious manipulation and subversion of the constitution's intent that is required is likely to incur an electoral penalty, reducing any advantage that might have been gained from early elections. This makes manipulation less appealing—hence the very low frequency of opportunistic elections under fixed-term rules.<sup>10</sup> Despite the option of manipulation, therefore, the Fixed-term Parliaments Act is likely to enhance govern-

ment stability and predictability once governments enter the final stretch of Parliament.

Before governments reach that threshold, however, constitutions that fix the term of Parliament raise the risk that governments will terminate through failure elections or replacements, precisely because fixed terms reduce a Prime Minister's control over his or her colleagues and increase the bargaining power of backbenchers and coalition partners. In that context, governments fail not only more frequently, but also earlier in the parliamentary term. Under fixed-term parliaments, governments that end in failure have on average completed only 32 per cent of their maximum duration (the full parliamentary term), which contrasts with 47 per cent under constitutions which give a prime minister the power to dissolve.<sup>11</sup>

Fixing the term of a parliament, in other words, can have the unanticipated effect of replacing one source of political instability with another: while it rules out opportunistic election timing during the final phase of parliament, it may make governments more vulnerable to failures earlier in the term by rendering tensions within governing parties and coalitions more politically consequential. Again, the UK's party system is likely to buffer the effect of these changes. However, the dynamics of governing, planning and legislating should be expected to change, as we explain below.

## Implications for planning in government and departments

... it is clear that the greater certainty about the date of the next general election that the Act provides facilitates better strategic, financial and, above all, legislative planning by Departments. ('The role and powers of the Prime Minister: The impact of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 on Government', Fourth Report of Session 2013–14, House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee, 2013, p. 11)

The introduction of the Act and experience with it so far has engendered a strong expectation that it will improve opportunities for planning across government and Civil Service departments. In its evidence to the House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee, the Ministry of Justice, for instance, stated that it responded to the Act by introducing 2011–15 business plans, which had supported its strategic vision, and assisted forward-looking delivery plans.<sup>12</sup> Many other departments, though, see more limited benefits for planning. For instance, the Departments for Transport, Education, Health, the Home Office and the Cabinet Office anticipate that they will be better able to plan into a fourth and fifth parliamentary session and to prepare for election briefings within a more predictable timeframe. This latter, more cautious expectation is more appropriate and more realistic in our view than the anticipation that the Act will deliver opportunities to plan for a full parliamentary term. The enhanced stability of governments toward the end of the parliamentary term clearly creates new and valuable opportunities for planning. Generally unanticipated, however, is the raised risk of Cabinet failure before governments cross that threshold, which generates new challenges for planning the work of government and departments.

Fixing the parliamentary term dramatically reduces the risk that opportunistically timed early elections are called as a parliament approaches its full term. This opens up new opportunities to plan once a government enters the final stretch of a parliament. It will now be possible to ensure that legislation is processed effectively, that financial forward planning occurs and that there is an orderly management of a transfer of power. These

opportunities are widely anticipated and to make use of them, procedures could be introduced to ensure the orderly processing of the government's legislative agenda in the final year of the parliament to avoid a 'wash-up' (i.e. the rushing or loss of legislation in the final months of Parliament). The Spending Review process could be adjusted to make financial forward planning easier in that final stretch and new conventions could be developed for opposition briefings in the final year to ensure a smooth transition to the next government. In sum, the Act will powerfully reduce the short-termism that dominated the final years of previous legislatures, in which government, opposition and Parliament operated in the constant expectation that an early election might be called at very short notice.

However, the Act also raises the failure risk for governments before they enter the final stretch of Parliament. More assertive backbenchers and coalition partners will probably make it more difficult to reach agreement within government and can raise the risk of government defeats. It is important to recognise this change and to manage it appropriately. The reduction of the Prime Minister's powers under the Act was welcomed by many because it implies greater responsibility of the executive to Parliament; yet much depends on how these reduced powers are used. Prime Ministers are likely to be more successful when they recognise these new limitations, instigate a more inclusive policy-making process, plan to take account of fallback options and manage expectations carefully. More inclusive policy processes could be achieved in a range of different ways. For instance, governing parties might develop mechanisms that allow the party leadership to consult the wider party quickly and effectively. Coalition governments should find ways to channel the backbench views of all coalition partners into their policy discussions. Effective backbench committees could be developed and involved in the policy-making process.<sup>13</sup>

Failure to recognise the new limitations may simply supplant one form of short-termism (generated by the threat of opportunistically called elections) by another: Prime Ministers who do not recognise the new limitations may find that they cannot secure backbench or coalition partner support for the

policies they announce, resulting in embarrassing policy reversals or, at the extreme, even government failure.

For the Civil Service this new context will also generate new challenges in brokering ongoing negotiations between coalition partners or the leadership of a governing party and its backbenchers. Departmental business plans that are predicated on the assumption that governmental and parliamentary terms will in future be synchronised may be ill suited to this task. Officials may need to track alternative policy proposals more closely and be more prepared to work with fall-back options and to adjust legislation as the legislative process unfolds.

In sum, while Parliament's term has become more predictable, the term of governments is likely to become more unpredictable until a government enters the final stretch of a parliament's term. The reduction in the Prime Minister's powers can put governments under increased strain and raise the risk of failure, which calls for adjustments both of governing style and in the work of the Civil Service.

## Conclusions

The Fixed-term Parliaments Act marks a major constitutional change in the UK. By constraining a Prime Minister's discretion to trigger parliamentary dissolutions, the Act has removed a tool from the Prime Minister's political arsenal that up to 2011 played a central role in the management of backbenchers and governing parties more broadly, as well as in electoral politics. In this article, we have drawn on the evidence from other European countries in exploring its likely implications. The wider comparative picture highlights a series of patterns that have so far gone unnoticed in the UK debate about the Act. Three main conclusions emerge from the comparison.

First, although fixing the parliamentary term can be expected to curb early elections, converting some of these terminations into regular elections, it is also likely to raise the frequency of government failures. Second, any increase in failures will impact on the duration of governments. On average, fixed-term parliaments are associated with lower government durations than constitutions that

give the Prime Minister discretion to dissolve. This is because fixing the parliamentary term tends to increase government stability only toward the end of the parliamentary term. Before governments cross this watershed, fixed terms raise the vulnerability of Cabinets to failure. Third, the Act can be expected to improve the opportunities for governments and departments to plan their work in the fourth and fifth parliamentary session. However, it also calls for adjustments to governing style and Civil Service planning before that threshold is crossed, to accommodate more assertive bargaining behaviour from backbenchers and coalition partners and to manage the resulting increased failure risk.

While the connotations of terms such as 'raised failure risk' and 'reduced duration' may appear inherently negative, we want to be clear that we do not see these changes as necessarily detrimental. As we have noted throughout this paper, the UK's party system is likely to buffer any disruption, and in that context, we believe that the constitutional change could yield significant benefits. More inclusive patterns of governance could mark a positive change from a governance mode that has in the past enabled the Cabinet leadership to exercise dominance over government backbenchers and the legislature. The inclusion of a greater number of actors in the policy process and broader and more nuanced representation can be viewed as significant and meaningful gains. Whether those gains materialise, however, or whether the constitutional change simply substitutes one type of instability for another, depends on the choices of key actors. The Prime Minister, government ministers, backbenchers, coalition partners and departments all have important roles to play in managing the implications of fixed-term parliaments effectively so as to realise some of the benefits anticipated in the policy community.

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## Notes

- 1 'Fixed-term Parliaments Bill', Second Report of Session 2010–11, House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee, 2010, Summary.
- 2 Comparative work on government terminations suggests that constitutional rules are a key factor in determining the patterns of cabinet termination. See for instance P. Schleiter and E. Morgan-Jones, 'Constitutional power and competing risks: monarchs, presidents, prime ministers, and the termination of east and west European cabinets', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 103, no. 3, 2009, 496–512.
- 3 A. Lupia and K. Strøm, 'Coalition termination and the strategic timing of parliamentary elections', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 89, no. 3, 1995, p. 648.
- 4 W. C. Müller and K. Strøm, 'Coalition governance in western Europe: an introduction', in W. C. Müller and K. Strøm, eds., *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 12.
- 5 If the younger east European democracies are removed from the sample, the figures remain substantively very similar: 34.2 per cent regular elections, 4 per cent opportunistic elections.
- 6 R. Hazell, *Fixed Term Parliaments*, The Constitution Unit, UCL, 2010, p. 10.
- 7 'The role and powers of the Prime Minister: The impact of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 on Government', Fourth Report of Session 2013–14, House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee, 2013, p. 4.
- 8 Average duration is slightly higher (44 per cent) if we focus only on the older democracies in this group.
- 9 No doubt differences in party systems affect these outcomes, but in addition the constitutional rules play a role.
- 10 As many scholars have noted, though, the Act can be amended or repealed by the government because it is not entrenched.
- 11 If we consider only the older democracies, that figure rises a little (35 per cent).
- 12 'The role and powers of the Prime Minister: The impact of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 on Government', Fourth Report of Session 2013–14, House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee, 2013, p. 5.
- 13 See R. Hazell and B. Yong, *The Politics of Coalition: How the Conservative-Lib Dem Government Works*, Oxford, Hart, 2012, for similar arguments applied to the effective operation of coalition governments.