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The institutionalisation of ministerial advisers in Westminster governments (1970–2019): a systematic review and thematic synthesis

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Abstract:

This study is the first systematic review and thematic synthesis of academic research on ministerial advisers across the Westminster model of government. Using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method, 1,185 articles from 1970-2019 were screened and a final synthesis of 51 relevant publications, covering five countries, were critically analysed. The review critically analyses how scholarly research has defined what is and who are ministerial advisers and, more importantly, empirically identified conditions leading to the institutionalisation of partisan political staff across countries of the Westminster system.

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1. Introduction

Ministerial Advisers are powerful actors in executive government across countries of the Westminster model.¹ Put simply, they are staff of all government ministers. But more than that, in senior roles they are an extension of the minister, the minister’s *alter ego*, and a key facilitator advancing the minister’s political agenda. Naturally, advisers are not a new entity. For centuries, rulers of past have sought advice from loyal aides and close confidantes.² Today, contemporary advisers have consolidated their position in the core executive by, among other things, influencing government policies and shifting traditional hierarchies of public administration. Their systematic deployment began as an experiment in the late 1960s to early 1970s³ when government ministers in countries of the Westminster system personally recruited senior advisers and began establishing executive policy units. This was a bold experiment in a traditional civil service culture that prides itself on political neutrality. Academic interest on ministerial advisers has also grown, particularly since 2000, with more than 20 publications in just the last five years. Despite an abundance of new research, critical debates exist among scholars about how advisers should be classified and defined⁴, and how ministerial advisers have become institutionalised.

Considering these debates, this study aims to answer the following question: **What evidence explains why ministerial advisers have become an institutional feature across**

¹ For simplicity, this paper adopts the phrase *Westminster model* as used by Rhodes, Wanna and Weller (2009) to refer to beliefs and practices of the Westminster public administration tradition, and the phrase *Westminster system* or *Westminster country* (used interchangeably) to refer to countries using the Westminster model. Features of the Westminster model are defined later in the paper.

² An infamous historical example from 16th century England is when King Henry VIII appointed Thomas More as Privy Councillor in 1518 then later as Lord High Chancellor of England in 1529. More had earlier penned the book *Utopia* in 1516, a mythical island with a ‘perfect polity’ free from the dystopia of absolute royal decree. However, More did not live long to see his ideal nation materialise. The King and More disagreed over a religious policy. In 1534 the King separated the Church of England from the Holy See and loyalty to the Pope. More, a devout Catholic, refused to recognise Henry as Supreme Head of the Church of England. The King had More convicted of treason and then beheaded. Almost 500 years later, the Catholic Church in 2000 declared More the patron saint of “Statesman and Politicians”.

³ This date range is when political advisers (Special Advisers in the UK) became more ‘regularised’ or ‘sufficiently formalised’ and is commonly cited by academics as a useful starting point in contemporary public administration (Blick, 2004; Maria Maley, 2000; Ng, 2018; Yong & Hazell, 2014). Blick (2004) says the Wilson Government in 1964 began the ‘experiment’ which formalised in the 1970s. The 1968 Fulton Report, a major review of the British civil service, endorsed minister’s desires for hiring personal experts and advisers (Klein & Lewis, 1977). Mallory (1967) notes Canadian Ministers in the 1960s employed, on average, around 11 “exempt” staff. Hanney (1993, pp. 13-16) provides a brief background on the use of advisers prior to 1970.

⁴ To clarify, this paper uses the *Ministerial Adviser* label to refer to senior advisers of government ministers. We acknowledge scholars use a variety of labels for advisers including, Special Adviser, Ministerial Adviser, Ministerial Staff, Political Adviser and more. In effect, our label encapsulates all other classifying names.

the Westminster model of government? This research question is divided into two topics. The paper aims to analyse how scholarly research has (1) defined political advisers and (2) empirically identified the institutionalisation of ministerial advisers across the Westminster model. The first topic will be synthesised through content analysis. For the second topic, we develop a thematic framework to identify what conditions explain the institutionalisation of ministerial advisers.

We answer these questions through a critical review of scholarly literature on ministerial advisers from 1970-2019. In contrast to the current literature reviews on the topic (Craft & Halligan, 2017; T. Hustedt, Kolltveit, & Salomonsen, 2017; R. Shaw & Eichbaum, 2015a), this study follows a strict systematic method. By systematic, we mean that a review of the literature has followed a robust and reproducible method of analysis, and that this method is clearly articulated in the publication. We use the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method which reduces author and publication bias, and can be verified through a 27-item checklist (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006).

The paper is structured as follows: The following section will provide a summary of key topics and debates in the literature. Then, a methods section will describe, in detail, the specific steps undertaken to complete the systematic approach. Following this, a findings and discussion chapter will be presented to illustrate trends and patterns in the literature. Evidence of institutionalisation will also be presented. Finally, concluding remarks will present an overall summary on the institutionalisation of ministerial advisers across the Westminster model, and also suggest a future research agenda.

2. The rise of advisers

Westminster governments in the late 1960s to early 1970s began to personally recruit partisan political advisers into their office (Blick, 2004; Maria Maley, 2000; Ng, 2018; Yong & Hazell, 2014). In the UK, the 1968 Fulton Report, a major review of the British civil service, endorsed minister's desires for hiring personal experts and advisers (Klein & Lewis, 1977). Scholars have examined this trend and found a variety of explanations. For example, some scholars argue that this recruitment was part of the newly elected governing party's pursuit for greater political control; that is, controlling the political agenda in an era of higher

adversarial politics (Klein & Lewis, 1977), desiring partisan influence over policy (Craft, 2017; M. Maley, 2000), and fulfilling the party's democratic mandate (Blick, 2004). Others have noted the importance of key events; such as a key election when the government, in opposition for an extended time, did not trust the civil service and wanted to seek an alternative source of policy advice (Connaughton, 2008). Other key events, such as scandals, have demonstrated a lack of accountability of advisers' work (Ng, 2016a; Tiernan, 2007). Minister 'overload' is another key observation. This relates to increased demands on a minister's work schedule over time (Eichbaum & Shaw, 2007; Klein & Lewis, 1977; Ng, 2014). Though this is not an exhaustive list, further conditions will be detailed later in the findings section.

With around 50 years since the deployment of contemporary advisers, their presence has become widespread across many Westminster jurisdictions. They exist at the national level in all Anglo-Westminster countries, most visibly in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, and also at the sub-national level in, for example, the Australian states, Canadian provinces, and across the United Kingdom's devolved governments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. However, the presence of political advisers in non-Anglo Westminster countries is less clear, and academic studies in South Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Islands are almost non-existent.

Where they operate, their widespread use varies in size and scope between jurisdictions. For example, Maley (2018, p. 321) notes that in 2017, Australia had 432 political staff in ministerial offices while the UK had 88 (locally called special advisers). As a guide, Figure 1 illustrates the differing size of the advisers system in Anglo-Westminster countries, with Australia and Canada adopting high numbers of advisers while the UK and New Zealand have relatively low numbers. However, it should be noted that this comparison does not consider the complex differences of how advisers are classified and defined in each country. For another perspective, Table 1 illustrates that advisers are a tiny fraction of the UK's public service. However, as they exist at the apex of the executive, the opportunity for influencing members of parliament and national policy are higher than most civil servants.

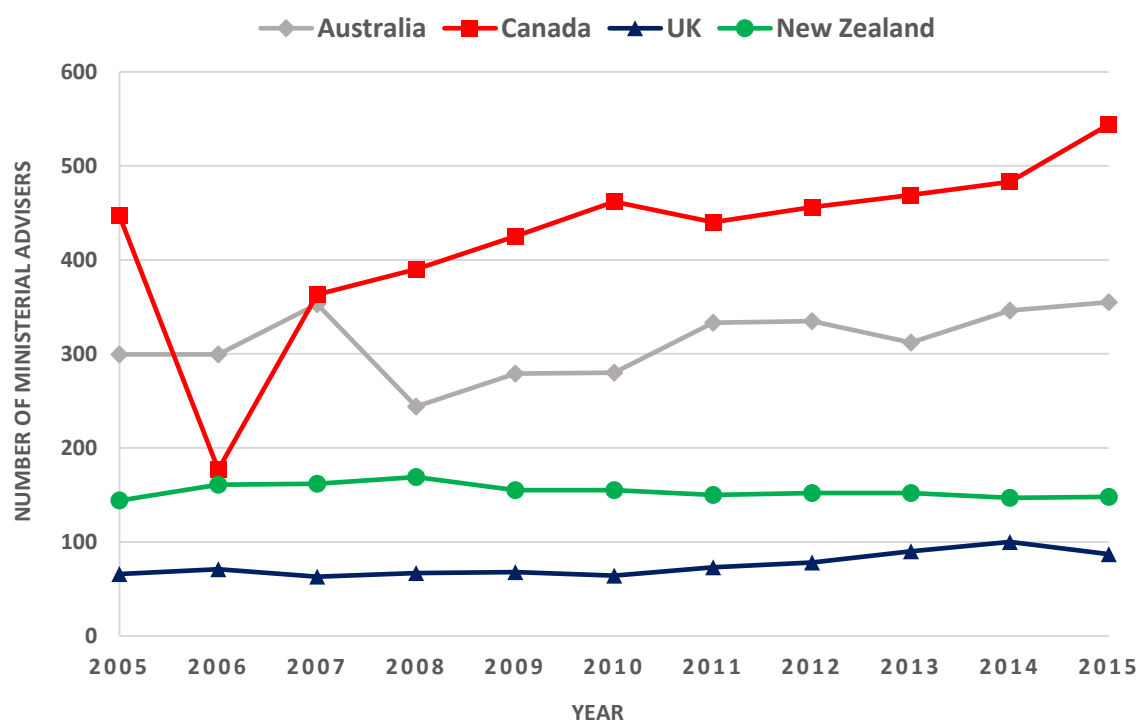


Figure 1. Number of ministerial advisers in the Westminster system 2005-2015. Showing the size of ministerial advisers in Australia (grey line, diamond marker), Canada (red line, square marker), UK (blue line, triangle marker) and New Zealand (green line, circle marker). Source: Adapted from Ng, Y-F. (2018). *The Rise of Political Advisors in the Westminster System*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Table 1. Size of ministerial adviser system in relation to parliamentarians and civil service, 2015

Country	Australia	Canada	UK	New Zealand
MPs (both houses)	226	443	1,425	121
Ministerial Advisers	355	544	87	148
Civil Service	152,430	257,034	418,343	47,159

Source: MP data collected from national parliamentary websites: www.aph.gov.au; www.parl.ca; www.parliament.uk; www.parliament.nz. Adviser data adapted from Ng (2018). Civil service data collected from agencies: www.abs.gov.au; www.canada.ca; www.ons.gov.uk; www.ssc.govt.nz.

As advisers began as part of an *ad hoc* ministerial experiment, their classification has slowly evolved. This has caused some confusion for public administration practitioners and scholars. In the 1970s when the UK experiment was emerging, Hansard (the official parliamentary report) cited multiple descriptions including ministerial advisers, special advisers, policy advisers and political advisers (Klein & Lewis, 1977). Today, many jurisdictions have codified advisers in ministerial handbooks or acts of parliament governing

civil servants or ministerial staff. For example, Canada’s *Public Service Employment Act* 2005 refers to “Ministerial Staff”. This has clarified the adviser’s role and position, and limited or expanded their powers, but also, in effect, formalised their position in government.

Likewise, scholars also use multiple terms and a variety of definitions which can depend on a specific jurisdiction or the specific function of the adviser’s role. For instance, Craft (2015a, p. see footnote 1) prefers the term “partisan advisers” to denote the political nature of the position rather than an administrative role. For comparative purposes, Hustedt et al (2017, p. 300) define a ministerial adviser, their preferred label, as a “person appointed to serve an individual minister, recruited on political criteria, in a position that is temporary”.⁵ Likewise, Shaw and Eichbaum (2018, pp. 2-3) attempt a similar definition, and also prefer the ministerial adviser label. More broadly, Tiernan (2007, p. 35) describes their basic advisory function, which applied universally, is “premised on the convention that ministerial staff are an extension of their minister”. However, advisers generally do not have authority over senior civil servants. Yet, some scholars have observed instances of ministerial advisers exercising executive power with approval from their minister (Ng, 2017b; Plasse, 1981). Irrespective of an agreeable definition, the characteristics of an adviser are common across jurisdictions. Advisers are not strictly neutral civil servants nor elected officials, are mostly personally appointed by a minister on a temporary basis, mostly (but not always) recruited through political party networks, and sit in a ‘grey zone’ of public administration, aiming to advance the minister’s political agenda through the complex machinery of government.

3. Research method

3.1 Systematic Literature Review

This study is a systematic review using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method. This method was chosen as it helps to synthesise academic literature in an accurate, reliable, and robust methodological manner (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). The strict rules underpinning PRISMA means this study can also be replicated (and verified). A 27-item checklist was followed and a four-phase PRISMA flow diagram illustrate adherence to the method and attempts to minimise bias. The research

⁵ The OECD (2011) also explain the challenge of defining “political advisers” for comparative purposes.

question was formulated using the Setting Perspective Interest Comparison Evaluation (SPICE) framework, which has been specially designed for qualitative evidence reviews in the social sciences (Booth, 2006). The PRISMA method for systematic reviews is commonly used in health science research to identify particular benefits or harms of medical related interventions by analysing a collection of studies. The approach is used less frequently in the social and political sciences, not for lack of applicability, but more (and we speculate here) for a lack of awareness. However, PRISMA's popularity in political science is increasing (Cooper, 2017; Dacombe, 2017; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006).⁶ The method dovetails with political science research when equally relevant evaluations can be identified (Booth, 2006). We offer this approach as it adds a unique lens to this study, and is a test for future researchers whom may want to employ the method.

3.2 Databases and Search terms

Publications were collected from four online journal databases: Web of Science (Core Collection), Scopus, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. The former two are leading databases in the social sciences and the latter two helped ensure a broader scope of literature was gathered. Other databases could have been added, but we concluded that the four selected would sufficiently capture the majority of publications.

One of the perennial problems within the field is that academics use a variety of terminology to label ministerial advisers. This can depend on an academic's personal preference or a local term used for a particular jurisdiction. Plus, in English the noun for adviser with an 'e' can also be spelled advisor with an 'o'. Both are correct and have no strict material difference in meaning or use between British or American English. By reviewing several key articles and books, and seeking guidance from leading academics in the field, we arrived at the following key word search:

"special adviser" OR "special advisor" OR "special advisers" OR "special advisors" OR "ministerial adviser" OR "ministerial advisor" OR "ministerial advisers" OR "ministerial advisors" OR "political adviser" OR "political advisor" OR "political advisers" OR "political

⁶ For examples of reviews in public administration which have followed the PRISMA method, see (Bawole, Mensah, & Amegavi, 2018; Kim, Li, Holzer, & Zhang, 2018).

advisors" OR "partisan adviser" OR "partisan advisers" OR "political staff" OR "political staffs" OR “ministerial staff” OR "political aide"

In the four databases, we entered these search terms in the *titles, abstracts, and key words* of the search function. Additional terms, such as “Partisan Appointee” were tested.

However, we found this and other terms added no value to search results.

Truncations and wildcards were not used. These are symbols that can assist database searches when root words have different endings or words have different spelling but mean the same thing. For example, adding a question mark in *advis?r* automatically retrieves both the *adviser* and *advisor* spelling. While this could have assisted, their use can be risky as some databases can use differing methods for special keys. Also, the subject area – ministerial advisers – is already quite narrow, which means commonly used key words are already known and using special keys offers little value to the search.

3.3 Inclusion criteria

By following the systematic review process, publications were collected and deductively filtered according to the following inclusion criteria:

Table 2. PRISMA inclusion criteria

Field	Ministerial Adviser (or similar terminology), as core unit of analysis, must be mentioned in title, abstract or key words of a publication
Location	The publication must examine a country using the Westminster model or be theorising political advisers in relation to a Westminster country
Study design	Only publications from peer-review academic journals, academic books, book chapters and PhD dissertations are accepted
Topic	Publications need to provide empirical evidence to support the research question (with preference for articles providing evidence to explain the institutionalisation of ministerial advisers)
Language	Priority given to English language publications. French language articles that examine the Canadian province of Quebec are also accepted.
Date	Publications from 1970-2019

3.4 Study selection

In all, 1,185 publications were retrieved from the four databases. 209 duplicates were removed and four publications were identified from other sources, leaving 980 publications. All abstracts were then screened and 807 publications were removed for lack of relevance. The full inclusion criteria was applied to the remaining 173 publications. Finally, the number of publications included in the review was 51 (see Appendix A). The PRISMA flow diagram outlining this process can be found below. The study selection criteria requires some brief clarifications as some caveats were needed.

Field: This paper uses ministerial advisers as the core unit of analysis. They are not to be confused with other key actors that also influence the executive and also sit within what could be labelled a ‘grey’ area of public administration; that is, holding senior roles of authority or influence but are not strictly within the civil service proper, nor democratically elected officials. Examples of other actors can include so-called “Policy Tsars” used in the UK (M. J. Smith, 2011), or external “expert advisers” from consultancies, think-tanks, or universities (Jones, 2019). Only ministerial advisers (or similar terminology) are accepted. This ensures the full gamut of literature is collected. A study was also accepted if it identified job titles like *Chief-of-Staff*, *Senior Policy Adviser*, and *Director of Communications*, which are, or what we would consider to be, ministerial adviser roles.

Location: Publications examining any Westminster country were accepted. However, a challenge facing comparative scholars is how to define a Westminster country. There is no singular Westminster model. From its 17th century origins in Whitehall, the UK’s centre of government administration, the Westminster model of government was exported across the British Empire and has undergone continual evolution in each jurisdiction that continues its traditions (including in the UK). As a starting point, we begin with including governments across six continents in the 53 member states of the Commonwealth of Nations (formally known as the British Commonwealth). From this position, we then include any of these countries that govern using traditional beliefs about the structure and conventions of the Westminster core executive. Rhodes, Wanna, and Weller (2009) suggest five key features:

1. Head of state and head of government are separate roles
2. Majority party control of the executive also described as the fusion of the legislature and the executive – with ministers drawn only from the parliament

3. Concentration of executive power in the prime minister and cabinet
4. Individual ministerial and collective cabinet accountability to parliament
5. Partnership between ministers and non-partisan officials in which ministers have the last word

The function of the core executive is defined by Rhodes, Wanna and Weller (2009, p. 9) as “the *central political actors* (cabinets, ministers, senior bureaucrats)”. In the core executive, advisers fall within the minister’s responsibility. So, we included any Commonwealth country that uses the Westminster beliefs or traditions related to ministerial responsibility. The Republic of Ireland was also included as it is a former Commonwealth country with a political system modelled in part on the Westminster model.

Another key comparative debate relates to what makes Westminster parliamentary democracies different from other parliamentary democracies. For example, there is a strong case for including publications on ministerial advisers across Scandinavia. Naturally, there are specific institutional differences between Westminster countries and countries in Scandinavia, but there are also many institutional differences among Westminster countries. Plus, if we are focusing on the central political actors of the core executive, then ministerial advisers are, arguably, functionally comparative across the UK and Norway. While we recognise this valid debate, for brevity we do not explore this issue any further. Hence, the literature collected is exclusively Westminster. However, we also acknowledge the rich body of literature across continental Europe in France (Eymeri-Douzans, Bioy, & Mouton, 2015; Rouban, 2012), Italy (Di Mascio & Natalini, 2013), Portugal (Silva, 2017), Greece (A. Gouglas, 2015), Belgium (Brans, Pelgrims, & Hoet, 2006; De Visscher, Hondeghem, Montuelle, & Van Dorpe, 2011), Germany (Thurid Hustedt, 2018), Central and Eastern Europe (Connaughton, Sootla, & Peters, 2008; Sedláčko & Staroňová, 2018), Russia (Pshizova, 2015), Scandinavia (Askim, Karlsen, & Kolltveit, 2017; T. Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2017), and the European Commission (A. Gouglas, Brans, & Jaspers, 2017; Rogacheva, 2019). The political appointee (also known as *spoils*) system in the United States is also excluded. Interestingly however, the literature does identify similar concerns and debates that have been observed in the Westminster system, particularly with a focus on politicisation, accountability, and policy efficacy (Cohen, 1998; Gallo & Lewis, 2012; Hecló,

1977; Hollibaugh, Horton, & Lewis, 2014; Lewis, 2010). We also exclude the limited discussions from Asian states (Hodder, 2014; Neary, 2000).

Study design: Empirical studies in journals and books are priority publications as they have gone through the peer-review process, providing a high standard. There was no consideration about ordering publications in a hierarchy of *better* or *worse* quality as this adds publication bias. However, the process is not foolproof. The search across four databases failed to retrieve some publications despite key words within the title, abstract, or key words section (for example, Snargovsky and Kerby 2018). Interestingly, the four databases did not find Andrew Blick's (2004) book, *People Who Live in the Dark: The History of the Special Adviser in British Politics*, which is a key text in the field, and also has "special adviser" in the title. It did retrieve Blick's (2002) PhD dissertation though. His book was added manually to complement the dissertation. James Walter's (1986) *The Ministers' Minders: Personal Advisers in National Government*, an historical text in the field, from Australia, was also not retrieved as, which we later learned, he used what could be classified as more generic terms: "personal advisers", "minister's minders", and also just "advisors".

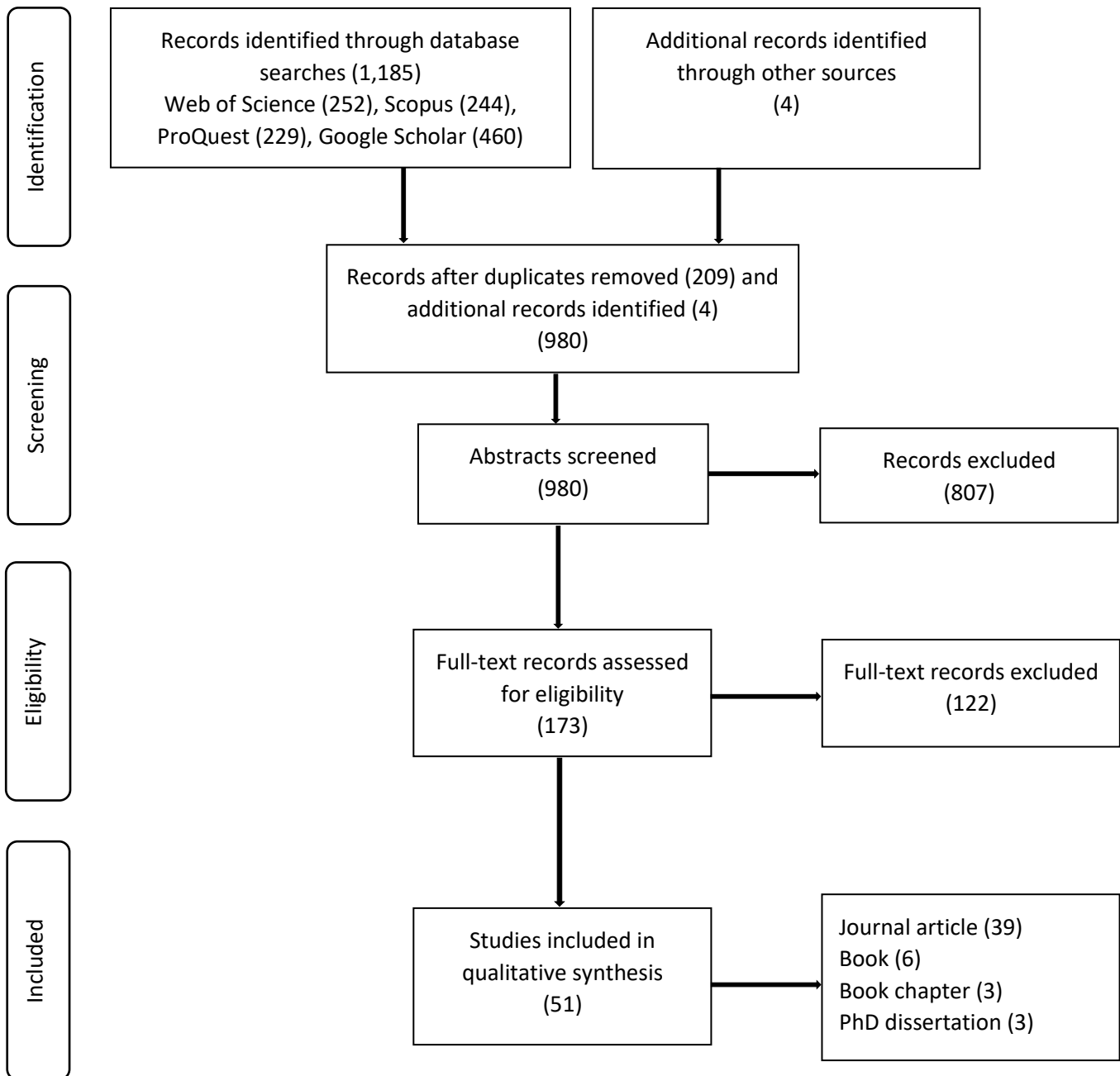
Further excluded content include book reviews, commentary notes, editorials, and other similar non-empirical publications. Grey literature was also excluded despite some publications from the OECD (2007, 2011) and UK House of Commons (Gay & Fawcett, 2005) producing interesting work. It is assumed that peer-review publications would be comprehensive enough to supersede any grey literature. Conference papers are also excluded; though we acknowledge ongoing work in, for example, papers presented at the *2017 International Conference on Public Policy* in Singapore (Athanasios Gouglas & Brans, 2017; Maria Maley, 2017; Ng, 2017a; Richard Shaw & Eichbaum, 2017).

Topic: The topic of publications is the most subjective and bias prone selection criterion. Publications were selected based upon whether they provided relevant explanations for why ministerial advisers have become an institutional feature across the Westminster system. This, we acknowledge, is fundamentally a subjective interpretation. The reasons or conditions, however, are essential as they directly answer the research question.

Language: English language publications were primary selected for three reasons. Firstly, English is the default language of the four selected databases. Secondly, English is the native tongue of the principal author. Thirdly, English is the principal language of Westminster countries (or at least is commonly used for government business in non-Anglo Westminster countries such as South Africa, India or Papua New Guinea). In addition, French language publications that examine the French speaking sub-national Canadian province of Quebec were accepted. Still, only English language key words were used in the database search. However, the key political science and public administration journals from Canada provide both a French and equivalent English abstract on articles from Quebec, which helped capture publications with English language key words. However, Plasse's (1981) article on ministerial "chefs de cabinet" was not initially found as it used the terms "political aide" and "ministerial aide". This article was added after the initial database search.

Date: Through existing knowledge of the topic and conversations with academics, it was decided that studies from 1970-2019 would be included. The 1970 benchmark is considered a key time when ministers began to introduce advisers in a more concerted effort.

3.5 PRISMA flowchart



3.6 Data extraction and thematic synthesis

The full list of publications 1,185 were exported to Endnote (a reference management software package). Duplicates were removed through a function in the software. All abstracts were then screened manually by the principal researcher. The final synthesis of 51 publications was then exported into a purpose made Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with identifying labels including, but not limited to: author, year, title, abstract, country, research focus, method, single or comparative, and more. Then, observations from the publications were synthesised into key conditions. Firstly, by using content analysis, key conditions or reasons for why advisers have institutionalised were identified and coded into the Excel spreadsheet. Most of the raw data was collected in the 'findings' or 'results' sections of publications. This technique summarises what primary studies said, and does not attempt to establish new conclusions (Hannes & Lockwood, 2012). Once all content was collected, the key findings were then categorised into an overarching descriptive thematic framework, which was developed by interpreting the meaning and content of results in each publication. The purpose of this is to help find key themes which justify or explain why advisers have become an institutional feature of the Westminster model.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1 Number and type of publications

In total, 51 publications were systematically reviewed across five Westminster countries. Table 3 shows a summary of study characteristics. These publications included 39 journal articles, six books, three book chapters, and three PhD dissertations. Of these, 39 studies, or three-quarters (76%), were single country case studies of the ministerial advisory system in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. To be precise, 36 articles examined ministerial advisers at the national level, while six studies were at the sub-national level (Australia: NSW; UK: Northern Ireland; Canada: two in Quebec, and Craft (2016) studied the federal government and case studies from both British Columbia and New Brunswick). Special Advisers in the UK's devolved governments in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland are also used to support regional executives. In addition, five studies (10%) were strictly comparative in nature. Australia was compared in all five studies, and Canada and the UK were also compared in four studies. Another five studies (10%) were either

dedicated to developing theory or were a review of the literature. Lastly, two articles mixed theory development applied alongside a country case study. Three-quarters (76%) of publications were qualitative studies, primarily employing document analysis combined with either interviews or a survey or a combination of the two. Interviews were primarily conducted with ministerial advisers, ministers, and senior civil servants. Three studies employed quantitative methods (Dahlstrom, 2011; Goplerud, 2015; Robson, 2015).

Table 3. Summary of study characteristics		
	# studies	Percentage (%)
	51	100%
Type of publication		
Journal article	39	76%
Book	6	12%
Book chapter	3	6%
PhD dissertation	3	6%
Total	51	100%
Type of study		
Single country (and sub-national)	39	76%
Comparative	5	10%
Theoretical/Review	5	10%
Mix theory and country case	2	4%
Total	51	100%
Method of study		
Qualitative	39	76%
Theoretical	4	8%
Review	3	6%
Quantitative	3	6%
Multi-method	1	2%
Case study	1	2%
Total	51	100%

4.2 Timeline of publications

Research on ministerial advisers has grown significantly since the turn of the century. As Figure 2 illustrates, there were four publications in the 30-year period prior to the year 2000, while the subsequent 20 years from 2000-2019 produced the remaining 47

publications.⁷ Interestingly, the last five years has seen rapid growth with 20 publications published from 2015-2019. The pre-2000 studies were from the UK (Hanney, 1993; Klein & Lewis, 1977), Canada (Plasse, 1981), and Australia (R. Smith, 1977). Since then, research has broadened to include other Westminster countries including Ireland and New Zealand. Growth in the field can be attributed, in part, to the formulation of the “Ministerial Adviser Research Group”, which is a group of scholars, mainly in Anglo-Westminster countries and continental Europe, whom aim to further examine advisers’ impact on public administration and policy making (R. Shaw & Eichbaum, 2018, p. 199).⁸ As a result, we envisage the field will continue to grow, and with a stronger focus on comparative studies. In saying that, however, scholars in the late 1990s also called for more comparative studies of executives (Weller, Bakvis, & Rhodes, 1997, p. 7), yet little comparative work has been undertaken since.

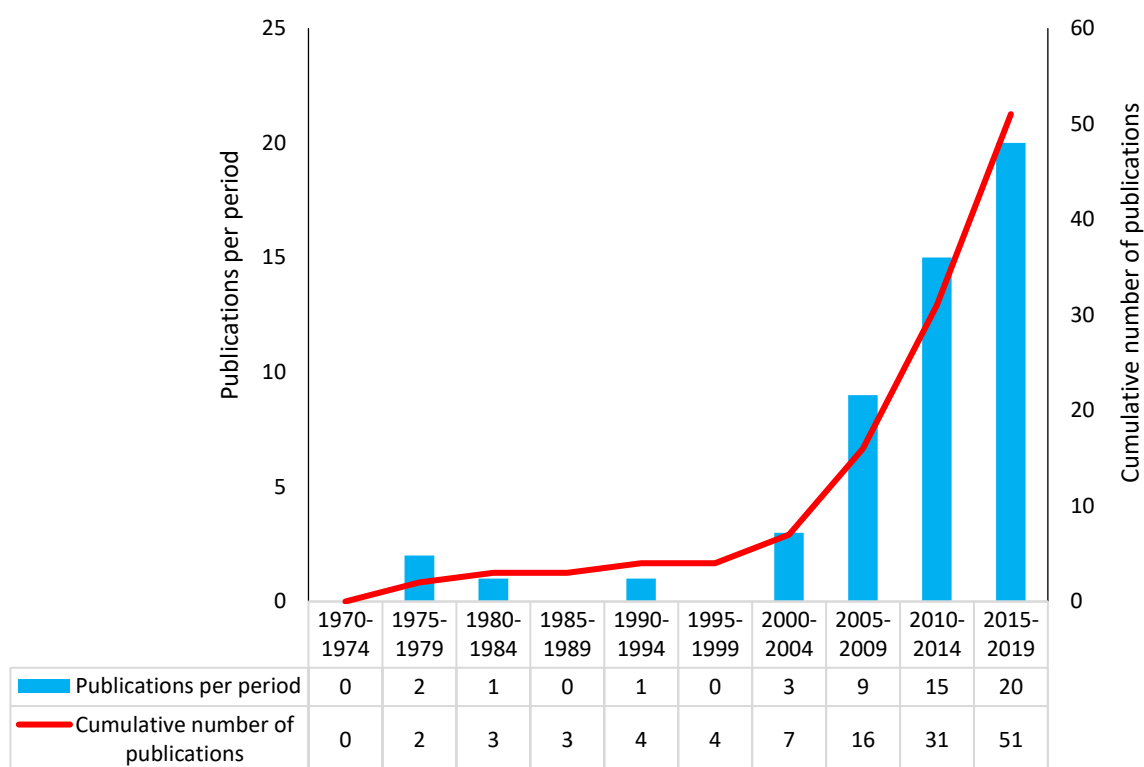







Figure 2. Timeline of publications on ministerial advisers from 1970-2019. Showing the growth of academic research output on ministerial advisers over time.

⁷ Although not in the final list of publications, the Peters, Rhodes and Wright book (2000) is one of the earlier publications to examine leadership of the executive in 12 individual country cases.

⁸ The three authors of this paper are also members of the Ministerial Adviser Research Group.

4.3 Location of publications

As mentioned earlier, the database search was designed to capture studies from any Westminster country. Interestingly, however, only studies from the Anglo-Westminster family were found. Table 4 shows that this includes Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Australia has been studied the most, with 10 publications, which may reflect the large size of advisers at the federal and sub-national level. Likewise the UK and New Zealand have seven studies each. It is not clear why studies from non-Anglo Westminster countries could not be located. Following the database search, we contacted academic colleagues in South Africa to ask if they were familiar with studies on ministerial advisers (locally called Special Advisers). We were told the appointment of Special Advisers has been “controversial” and led to multiple government documents, including the *Public Service Act 1994* and the *Ministerial Handbook 2007*, which govern the appointment and use of advisers. Despite obvious government oversight of special advisers, we could not locate any academic studies from South Africa.

Table 4. Publications by location			
Country	National	Sub-national*	Comparative
 Australia	10	1	5
 Canada	7	4	4
 Ireland	5	n/a	1
 New Zealand	7	n/a	3
 United Kingdom	7	1	4
Other countries	0	0	0
Total	36	6	n/a
* At the sub-national level, there were studies from the Australian state of New South Wales, and UK devolved government in Northern Ireland, two from the Canadian provinces in Quebec, and on each from British Columbia and New Brunswick.			

4.4 Publications by academic discipline and research focus

Journal articles were primarily published in journals with a public administration or political science focus. Twenty three articles were published in international peer-review journals including the *International Journal of Public Administration* (5), *Parliamentary Affairs* (4), and *Public Administration* (3). There were 16 articles in local journals (e.g. an Australian study published in an Australian political science journal), including, for example, the *Australian Journal of Political Science* (5), the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* (2)/*Public*

Administration(2), *Irish Political Studies* (2), and *New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences* (1). These journals are the logical home for studies on political advisers as the research focus is primarily dedicated to examining the key actors and functions of executive government.

Beyond the empirical articles, the two articles with a strong focus on theoretical development were published in the *International Journal of Public Administration* (Craft, 2015b; R. Shaw & Eichbaum, 2015b). In addition, the comparative study by Esselment, Lees-Marshment, & Marland (2014) was published in *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*.

The 51 publications were synthesised into six research themes. These themes are based upon our interpretation of the core findings or main topic(s) of each publication. Some publications examined multiple themes. Hence, we find the six themes are observed 70 times. Table 4 illustrates that most studies were dedicated to or concerned with the **policy influence** of political advisers. That is, as an extension of the minister, scholars examined how advisers affect the policy making process. The second most observable theme was the advisers' effect on the **institution** or fit within the Westminster model of government generally or core executive function specifically. Next, the adviser's **role, identity, or typology** was observed. This relates to who advisers are and what they do (Eichbaum & Shaw, 2011; Goplerud, 2015; Klein & Lewis, 1977; M. Maley, 2011; Plasse, 1981; Snagovsky & Kerby, 2018; Yong & Hazell, 2014). **Adviser relations** were also observed; this includes analysis at the horizontal level (relations between advisers) or vertical (relations between ministers-advisers-senior civil servants) (Eichbaum & Shaw, 2007; LSE GV314 Group, 2012; M. Maley, 2011). The Northern Ireland case was notable for examining adviser relations in a proportionally elected coalition power-sharing legislative assembly, which is uncommon in most majoritarian Westminster systems (Rice, Somerville, & Wilson, 2015). **Theory building** was limited to only a few studies and was not actively discussed in the majority of empirical publications. The articles examining **legal and accountability affairs** discuss whether ministerial staff can be called to give evidence to parliamentary committees or are special 'exempt' cases, a lack of clarity of how advisers relate to ministerial responsibility, and advisers exercising executive power or influence over public servants (Abbott & Cohen, 2014; Connaughton, 2006; Ng, 2016a, 2017b; Tiernan, 2007).

Table 5. Research focus of publications

Themes	Frequency
Policy influence	18
Institutional fit/effect	16
Adviser role/identity	12
Adviser relations (vertical and horizontal)	10
Theory building	9
Legal and accountability affairs	5
Total themes from 51 publications	70
Note: multiple themes were identified in some publications	

4.5 Classifying advisers

Classifying term: Scholars noted that research lacks a definitive term to classify the core unit of analysis: the ministerial adviser (T. Hustedt et al., 2017; R. Shaw & Eichbaum, 2018, p. chapter 1). The issue is most problematic when attempting comparative work. Of the 51 publications examined, we counted the ministerial adviser term in every title, abstract, and key words. We found 19 different classifying terms used a total of 90 times. As Table 5 illustrates, ministerial adviser was the preferred term cited in 26 publications, followed by political advisers (15), political staff(s) (14), and special advisers (SpAds) (11).

We speculate that using multiple terms could be a search engine optimising strategy used by authors to increase website traffic to their article. Another possibility is that multiple terms are used by authors to translate across jurisdictions. For example, special adviser is mostly used in the UK and Ireland, but some authors would also list ministerial adviser, which is commonly used outside of the British Isles, and therefore fit for an international audience. There were small differences in language. Adviser was spelled with both an e and an o, with the former preferred.

Some studies examine all forms of political staff (including electorate office staff), while some studies only examine senior advisers (e.g. Chief-of-Staff and Director of Policy roles). Political staff could be classified as the overarching term to capture *all* staff personally appointed by *all* members or senators of parliament; not just advisers to ministers. Within this category, some studies focus on a narrower sub group of staff, such as staff whose primary job is a senior political or strategic role. When this was the case, most scholars

would use ministerial adviser, special adviser, or political adviser. Within the body of publications, scholars often articulated a job title to illustrate the adviser’s specific role.

Table 6. Classifying ministerial advisers in 51 publications	
Classifying terms	Frequency
Ministerial advisers	26
Political advisers	15
Political staff(s)	14
Special advisers (SpAds)	11
Ministerial staff	6
Appointed partisan advisers	4
Partisan advisers	2
Ministerial aides	1
Politically appointed advisers	1
Staffer(s)	1
Political elites	1
Temporary civil servants	1
Temporary partisans	1
Partisan political staff	1
Minders	1
Partisan staff	1
Policy advisers	1
partisan ministerial advisers	1
Ministerial aides	1
Total terms used	90
Number of classifying terms used	19

4.6 Defining advisers

Given the ambiguity of a ministerial adviser’s label, or classifying name, we assumed that most publications would articulate a definition for a ministerial adviser. Yet, this was not often the case. We noted five observations as to how scholars identified and defined advisers. Firstly, academics did not provide a clear definition. This was observed in the 40 per cent of publications. Secondly, academics provided a clear definition in 31 per cent of publications. Thirdly, 29 per cent of publications provided a partial definition on where advisers are positioned in the institution and what type of role they perform. Some publications seemed to state the ministerial adviser label, or similar, then provide no explanation to who or what they are, assuming the reader knows. Fourthly, some academics

used a definition previously articulated by other academics. And finally, some authors like Yong and Hazell (2014) used the term and definition provided by official government legislation or documentation. The fourth and fifth strategies fall within the clear definition category. Table 6 summaries the level of detail of definitions noted by scholars in all 51 publications. For simplicity, they are categorised into three categories. We accept that definitions can be subjective, particularly with determining partial definitions. So, as a guide, examples definitions from high and partial categories are listed in Appendix B.

Table 7. Clarity of ministerial adviser definition	
Category	# of definitions (%)
High	16 (31%)
Partial	15 (29%)
No	20 (40%)
Total	51 (100%)

Of the high (clear) definitions provided, most features were similar across various jurisdictions. For example, ministerial advisers are employed as staff in a minister’s office (the portfolio office, not the electorate office). Tenure is temporary. Remuneration comes from public funds like a traditional civil servant. Appointment is directly approved by a government or shadow minister (but not a backbencher). Applicants are often sourced through political party networks. As such, they enjoy close proximity and access to the minister. They generally work in roles that can be classified as administrative-technical or political-strategic, or often, at times, both. Their specific job titles can include, but are not limited to: Chief-of-Staff, Director of Policy, and Director of Communications. They do not have executive power or functions, or authority over civil servants; though examples of advisers directing civil servants have been observed. Unlike civil servants, advisers can offer political advice in areas of policy and communications.

4.7 Evidence of institutional change

This section is a first attempt to classify literature in relation to the core research question. Put simply, what conditions have caused the institutionalisation of ministerial advisers? Table 8 illustrates efforts to deduce the literature into specific conditions. These conditions

were developed by identifying key themes from the literature which can be attributed to internal or external phenomena. Before this, however, we allocate findings into three levels of analysis: micro (individual or local level), meso (organisational level), and macro (national or global level). Naturally, as institutional theory relates to the slow incremental process of developing or transforming rules and norms in some form of human designed political structure, the meso level is most relevant to the hierarchical structure of public sector institutions. There are, however, some findings related to the micro level which, should also come as no surprise given that ministers are personally responsible for the recruitment of their advisers. There are no obvious conditions at the macro level. In short, five observable conditions were deduced: four into the meso level, and one into the micro level.

The micro level condition, which we simply call **ministerial discretion**, allows a minister to hire or fire, use or not use, advisers as he or she desires. This is the authority they hold. They are not bound by law to use advisers; though it would be rare for minister's to reject any resource within their remit. Authors noted that particular leaders supported recruiting higher numbers of ministerial advisers, which, we argue, demonstrates institutionalisation and other leaders reduced the system, demonstrating de-institutionalisation. For example, Blick says (2002, pp. 349-350) former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was sceptical as to the value of Special Advisers, partly because they were a Labour Party innovation. Eventually, Thatcher saw their value, especially the internal Policy Unit. The continual and expanded presence of advisers could lead ministers into a position of dependency, though this point was not discussed in the literature. In any case, dependency might not be a bad state of affairs if smart advisers aide an unimpressive minister.

The other four conditions at the meso level are more complex to extrapolate. We suggest these classifications: key event; ministerial overload; professionalisation; political control.

Ministerial overload is an observation about the increasing demands of a minister's daily responsibilities. Scholars argue that government business has become busier and more intricate (Eichbaum & Shaw, 2007; Klein & Lewis, 1977; Ng, 2014). They highlight the increased pressures of the 24/7 media cycle, the increase in government legislation produced annually, and the increase in technical complexity of public policy. As a result of these additional pressures, ministers have sought to recruit advisers as extra levels of both administrative and political support.

Political control is an observation about achieving policy outcomes to the minister's will either in government or in preparation for government. In government, scholars noted several key themes in this condition which relate to minister's wanting a more responsive civil service which, at times, has been criticised for being slow and cumbersome. Scholars also noted the problem in Westminster countries when newly elected governments can struggle to fulfil their political mandate in an apolitical civil service culture. This then led minister's to hire advisers as an alternative source of policy advice and to keep motivating or pressuring the civil service to fulfil the government's political agenda (Craft, 2017; M. Maley, 2000; Plasse, 1981). In preparation for government, when campaigning for elections, advisers are seen as a useful campaign tool for developing the election strategy and manifesto (M. Maley, 2000).

Professionalisation is an observation about improvements in how ministers behave and undertake government business over time. For example, the tradecraft of a politician in contemporary democracies requires a variety of demanding skills in media, policy, strategy, and, of course, relations with community. For example, the era of the minister's 'mini kingdom' has been replaced with cross-departmental collaboration. Advisers are seen as key actors facilitating policy vertically (from minister to advisers to senior departmental heads) and horizontally (across multiple departments) (Eichbaum & Shaw, 2006). Externally, advisers can also meet with politically sensitive interest groups that traditional civil servants cannot (such as unions, corporations, lobbyists). With minister's having the confidence of their advisers, minister's can delegate some responsibilities to their advisers. In addition, recruiting advisers is seen by ministers as an apprenticeship for a political career as former special advisers turned MPs are promoted faster than MPs that were not previously special advisers (Goplerud, 2015). This suggests prior professional experience in adviser positions is viewed favourably. Interestingly, however, one finding in Plasse's (1981) study on Quebec found that less than 10% of ministerial advisers intended to run for provincial office. This could be explained through a variety of reasons including historical perceptions of advisers, and differences in sub-national and national elections.

Key event is an observation about critical junctures or path dependency: a historical process of specific events leading to the presence of advisers. Scholars have noted that advisers have become more institutionalised following key elections, major civil service reforms, and

even scandals. In Australia, for example, the newly elected Whitlam government (1972-75) expanded ministerial staffing arrangements due to a lack of confidence in the civil service following 23 years in opposition (Tiernan, 2007, pp. 39-40). With respect to reforms, a major review of the British Civil Service in 1968 (known as the Fulton Report) endorsed minister’s desires for hiring personal experts and advisers (Klein & Lewis, 1977). Prior to this, special advisers were seldom seen. Since the report, special advisers have expanded from 31 in 1974 to 99 in 2018.⁹ Interestingly, the UK experiment could have inspired other Westminster jurisdictions. Following the publication of the Fulton report, ministers in other Anglo-Westminster countries began recruiting advisers in higher numbers as Conservative and Labour parties across the Anglo-Westminster system often share party and political strategies. However, there is little evidence in the literature to suggest this is the case. Lastly, scandals involving ministers and their advisers have exposed accountability problems (Ng, 2016a; Tiernan, 2007). However, what often follows scandals is efforts to reign in advisers’ roles and responsibilities in a codified manner through legislative instruments or non-binding ministerial handbooks (Abbott & Cohen, 2014).

Table 8. Conditions leading to the institutionalisation of ministerial advisers

Level of analysis = Meso (organisational)	Examples of themes from the literature
1. Key event	<p>Implementation of a major reform package (reform to civil service, Act of parliament governing staff of MPs, ministerial handbooks, codes of conduct),</p> <p>Key elections lead to an increase or decrease in the number of advisers</p> <p>Scandals involving advisers lead to the creation of or update to regulatory frameworks (formalisation of adviser behaviour and roles)</p>
2. Ministerial overload	<p>An increase in legislative output over time requires additional ministerial support</p> <p>The development of the 24/7 media cycle requires a highly responsive ministerial office</p>

⁹ Number of Special Advisers from 1974 cited in Blick (2004) and 2018 figure is from Cabinet Office (2018).

	The growing technical complexity in public policy requires expert policy advice alongside political expertise
3. Professionalisation	<p>Unresponsive civil service or minister’s lack of trust in civil service</p> <p>Advisers’ facilitating relations horizontally across departments and vertically from minister to department heads</p> <p>Advisers’ ability to meet with sensitive stakeholders that politically neutral public servants can not</p> <p>Increased accountability or extra public scrutiny on MPs work</p>
4. Political control	<p>Minister’s wanting to fulfil their democratic mandate following an election</p> <p>Minister’s wanting alternative source of advice beyond civil service</p> <p>Minister’s believing advisers can facilitate partisan policies in department</p>
Level of analysis = Micro (individual)	Examples of themes from the literature
1. Ministerial discretion	<p>Recruitment of advisers dependent on personal needs of each minister</p> <p>Some minister’s wanting emotional support (beyond obvious administrative, technical or political strategy support)</p>
Level of analysis = other (unclassified)	Examples of themes from the literature
1. Location	Presence on advisers dependent on location (e.g. A UK minister’s office is in the departments = low number of advisers, while an Australian minister’s office is in Parliament = high number of advisers)

A final observation relates to the importance of location. We have included location as a potential condition in this instance; however there is limited evidence in the literature and we leave the condition unclassified. To illustrate the point, some scholars noted an increase in the number of advisers depending on the location of the minister's office. The large number of Australian advisers could be attributed, in part, to the large purpose-built Parliament. Tiernan (2007, p. 35) observes that the number of ministerial advisers increased soon after the opening of the new Parliament in 1988 as additional capacity provided space for staff to base themselves in the ministerial wing rather than in their relevant department.

5. Concluding remarks

The aim of this study was to critically analyse scholarly research from 1970-2019 that identified who and what are ministerial advisers, and what evidence can explain their institutionalisation across the Westminster model of government. This study goes beyond traditional reviews. Not only was it the first systematic review in its field, it also employed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method, in which 1,185 articles were screened and a final synthesis of 51 relevant publications were critically analysed.

The PRISMA method was helpful for our purposes. It was simple to follow, it identified the key texts and also a few publications rarely cited by contemporary academics (Folino, 2010; Plasse, 1981), and has added a robust aspect to the review. There were sufficient publications to support the method. However, one should be cautious about adopting the approach when studies are lacking.

Findings were diverse; though the number of countries examined was not. Of the 51 papers, we only found studies on five Anglo-Westminster countries – Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. There is an opportunity for future research on other eligible Westminster countries. In addition, further thought should be given as to whether ministerial advisers in the Westminster system can be comparatively studied alongside other parliamentary democracies using functionally similar core executive principals (Norway was suggested earlier as a possible example).

As the literature suggests, defining a ministerial adviser remains contentious. Many classifying labels and definitions exist. Despite new research, particularly since 2000, scholars have struggled to articulate an agreeable definition of a ministerial adviser. To be fair, this partly depends on whether a study is specific to a single jurisdiction or is comparative, and whether it analyses ministerial advisers specifically or a broader category of political staff. For the purpose of a comparative study, a definition is an essential requirement and several scholars offer definitions (T. Hustedt et al., 2017; R. Shaw & Eichbaum, 2018). While important, one should be cautious about over investing efforts into what could be an analytical dead end.

Most studies have a public administration or political science focus. This is logical given the function and location of advisers. However, there is an opportunity for further interdisciplinary research, particularly with historians, political philosophers, legal academics, and in media studies. For example, Australian academic Yee-Fui Ng (2016b) merges legal and public administration concepts, and Andrew Blick's (2004) work links history and politics.

Scholars identify a variety of conditions to explain the institutionalisation of ministerial advisers across the Westminster system. Our initial attempts to classify these conditions into five categories, split mostly among a meso level of analysis, requires further conceptualisation. One can quite easily argue that both the ministerial overload and professionalisation conditions share too many similar hallmarks to be considered independent conditions. For example, it might be that the presence of ministerial overload leads to the hiring of specialist advisers to professionalise day-to-day operations of the minister's office. Additional study is needed to explain these and any other conditions yet to be identified.

Theoretical concepts need further clarity, such as the material difference between institutionalisation and formalisation. The former might be viewed as an ongoing process of interpreting formal and informal norms, while the latter might be viewed as an institutional fact (formal evidence of change). It might be more prudent or accurate to conceptually think of *institutional change* rather than *institutionalisation* as arguments can be made that evidence of formalisation is both an example of institutionalisation and de-institutionalisation. For example, the codification of advisers in regulatory frameworks (such

as ministerial handbooks) formalise their presence in the core executive but also constrain their behaviour and power which can have a de-institutionalisation effect.

Lastly, if advisers can be considered an institutional feature (albeit without a clear theoretical definition), further research could assess whether Westminster ministerial offices act as *de facto* internal cabinet systems as seen in France. Yong and Hazell (2014) briefly mention this, and Klein and Lewis (1977) supported this concept back in the 1970s. This might be more applicable in the more established or larger ministerial advisory systems across Australia and Canada.

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Appendix A

Full list of 51 synthesised publications

#	YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	LOCATION OR THEORETICAL PUBLICATION	TITLE	PUBLISHER
#1	2014	Abbott, M.; Cohen, B.	Australia	The accountability of ministerial staff in Australia	Australian Journal of Political Science
#2	2004	Blick, A.	UK	People who Live in the Dark: The History of the Special Adviser in British Politics	BOOK - Politico's Publishing
#3	2010	Connaughton, B.	Ireland	'Glorified Gofers, Policy Experts or Good Generalists': A Classification of the Roles of the Irish Ministerial Adviser	Irish Political Studies
#4	2015	Connaughton, B.	Ireland	Navigating the Borderlines of Politics and Administration: Reflections on the Role of Ministerial Advisers	International Journal of Public Administration
#5	2017	Connaughton, B.	Ireland	Political-administrative relations: The role of political advisers	Administration
#6	2006	Connaughton, B.	Ireland	Reform of Politico-administrative Relations in the Irish System: Clarifying or Complicating the Doctrine of Ministerial Responsibility?	Irish Political Studies
#7	2008	Connaughton, B.	Ireland	Changing relationship at the summit? Analysing the role and institutionalisation of special advisors in Ireland	BOOK SECTION – NISPAcee in Politico-Administrative Relations at the Centre
#8	2013	Craft, J.	Canada (British Columbia)	Appointed political staffs and the diversification of policy advisory sources: Theory and evidence from Canada	Policy and Society

#9	2015	Craft, J.	Canada	Revisiting the Gospel: Appointed Political Staffs and Core Executive Policy Coordination	International Journal of Public Administration
#10	2017	Craft, J.	Canada	Partisan advisers and political policy failure avoidance	Public Administration
#11	2016	Craft, J.	Canada (federal; British Columbia; and New Brunswick)	Backrooms and beyond: Partisan advisers and the politics of policy work in Canada	BOOK - University of Toronto Press
#12	2015	Craft, J.	Canada	Conceptualizing the policy work of partisan advisers	Policy Sciences
#13	2017	Craft, J. and Halligan, J.	Canada; UK; Australia; New Zealand	Assessing 30 years of Westminster policy advisory system experience	Policy Sciences
#14	2011	Dahlstrom, C.	Australia; Canada; Ireland; New Zealand; UK; and others (total 18 OECD countries)	Who takes the hit? Ministerial advisers and the distribution of welfare state cuts	Journal of European Public Policy
#15	2018	Eichbaum, C. and Shaw, R.	Australia; Canada; Ireland; New Zealand; UK	Ministers, Minders and Mandarins: An International Study of Relationships at the Executive Summit of Parliamentary Democracies	BOOK - Edward Elgar Publishing
#16	2007	Eichbaum, C. and Shaw, R.	New Zealand	Ministerial advisers and the politics of policy-making: Bureaucratic permanence and popular control	Australian Journal of Public Administration
#17	2007	Eichbaum, C. and Shaw, R.	New Zealand	Ministerial advisers, politicization and the retreat from Westminster: The case of New Zealand	Journal of Public Administration
#18	2010	Eichbaum, C. and Shaw, R.	Review and country cases; UK; Canada; Australia; New Zealand; Ireland	Partisan appointees and public servants: An international analysis of the role of the political adviser	BOOK - Edward Elgar
#19	2011	Eichbaum, C. and Shaw, R.	New Zealand	Political Staff in Executive Government: Conceptualising and Mapping Roles within the Core Executive	Australian Journal of Political Science
#20	2007	Eichbaum, C. and Shaw, R.	New Zealand	Minding the Minister? Ministerial Advisers in New Zealand Government	New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences

#21	2006	Eichbaum, C. and Shaw, R.	New Zealand	Enemy or ally? Senior officials' perceptions of ministerial advisers before and after MMP	Political Science (New Zealand)
#22	2008	Eichbaum, C. and Shaw, R.	New Zealand	Revisiting politicization: Political advisers and public servants in Westminster systems	Governance
#23	2014	Esselment, A. L., Lees-Marshment, J. and Marland, A.	Australia; Canada, New Zealand; UK	The nature of political advising to prime ministers in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK	Commonwealth and Comparative Politics
#24	2010	Folino, B.	Australia (NSW)	A Government of Advisers: The Role, Influence and Accountability of Ministerial Advisers in the New South Wales Political System	PhD Dissertation - UNSW
#25	2011	Gains, F. and Stoker, G.	UK	Special advisers and the transmission of ideas from the policy primeval soup	Policy and Politics
#26	2015	Goplerud, M.	UK	The first time is (mostly) the charm: Special advisers as parliamentary candidates and members of parliament	Parliamentary Affairs
#27	2012	LSE GV314 Group.	UK	New life at the top: Special advisers in British government	Parliamentary Affairs
#28	1993	Hanney, S.	UK	Special advisers: Their place in British government	PhD Dissertation - Brunel University
#29	2017	Hustedt, T., Kolltveit, K. and Salomonsen, H. H.	Theoretical	Ministerial advisers in executive government: Out from the dark and into the limelight	Public Administration
#30	1977	Klein, R. and Lewis, J.	UK	Advice and dissent in British Government: the case of the special advisers	Journal of Policy and Politics
#31	2015	Maley, M.	Australia	The Policy Work of Australian Political Staff	International Journal of Public Administration
#32	2017	Maley, M.	Australia; Canada	Temporary partisans, tagged officers or impartial professionals: Moving between ministerial offices and departments	Public Administration
#33	2012	Maley, M.	Australia	Politicisation and the executive	BOOK SECTION - Cambridge University Press in Contemporary Politics in Australia

#34	2000	Maley, M.	Australia	Conceptualising advisers' policy work: The distinctive policy roles of ministerial advisers in the Keating government, 1991-96	Australian Journal of Political Science
#35	2018	Maley, M.	Australia; UK	Understanding the divergent development of the ministerial office in Australia and the UK	Australian Journal of Public Administration
#36	2011	Maley, M.	Australia	Strategic Links in a Cut-Throat World: Rethinking the Role and Relationships of Australian Ministerial Staff	Public Administration
#37	2002	Maley, M.	Australia	Partisans at the Centre of Government: the role of ministerial advisers in the Keating government 1991-96	PhD Dissertation - ANU
#38	2007	Maltais, D. and Harvey, M. E.	Canada (Quebec)	Shade ministers: Ministers of the Quebec governmental cabinets	Canadian Public Administration
#39	2014	Ng, YF.	Australia	Ministerial Advisers: Democracy and Accountability	BOOK SECTION - ANU Press in Law and Democracy: Contemporary Questions
#40	2016	Ng, YF.	Australia	Dispelling myths about conventions: ministerial advisers and parliamentary committees	Australian Journal of Political Science
#41	1981	Plasse, M.	Canada (Quebec)	The Ministerial "chefs de cabinet" in Quebec: The Transition from the Liberal to the PQ Government (1976-1977)	Canadian Journal of Political Science
#42	2015	Rice, C., Somerville, I. and Wilson, J.	UK (Northern Ireland)	Democratic Communication and the Role of Special Advisers in Northern Ireland's Consociational Government	International Journal of Public Administration
#43	2015	Robson, J.	Canada	Spending on Political Staffers and the Revealed Preferences of Cabinet: Examining a New Data Source on Federal Political Staff in Canada	Canadian Journal of Political Science
#44	2017	Shaw, R. and Eichbaum, C.	Theoretical	Politicians, political advisers and the vocabulary of public service bargains: Speaking in tongues?	Journal of Public Administration
#45	2015	Shaw, R. and Eichbaum, C.	Theoretical	Following the Yellow Brick Road: Theorizing the Third Element in Executive Government	International Journal of Public Administration

#46	2012	Shaw, R. and Eichbaum, C.	New Zealand	Ministers, minders and the core executive: Why ministers appoint political advisers in Westminster contexts	Parliamentary Affairs
#47	1977	Smith, R.	Australia	Ministerial advisers: The experience of the Whitlam Government	Australian Journal of Political Science
#48	2018	Snagovsky, F. and Kerby, M.	Canada	Political Staff and the Gendered Division of Political Labour in Canada	Parliamentary Affairs
#49	2005	Tiernan, A.	Australia	Power Without Responsibility: Ministerial Staffers in Australian Governments from Whitlam to Howard	BOOK - UNSW Press
#50	2016	Wilson, R.	Canada	Trust but verify: Ministerial policy advisors and public servants in the Government of Canada	Canadian Public Administration
#51	2014	Yong, B. and Hazell, R.	UK	Special Advisers: Who they are, what they do and why they matter	BOOK - Hart Publishing

Appendix B

Sample of ministerial adviser definitions by scholars

Clarity of definition	Definition
High	... for comparative purposes, a common definition of ‘advisers’ is necessary. We suggest defining a ‘ministerial adviser’ as a ‘person appointed to serve an individual minister, recruited on political criteria, in a position that is temporary’. (T. Hustedt et al., 2017)
High	... on the matter of nomenclature, our preference, ... is for ‘ministerial adviser’. ... for us the adjective ‘ministerial’ speaks to the defining feature of the type of adviser with which this book is chiefly concerned: those who operate in close proximity to executive ministers at the confluence of the political and administrative tides ... For us, then, a ministerial adviser is a temporary public servant appointed to provide partisan advice to a member of the political executive and who is exempt from the political impartiality requirements that apply to the standing bureaucracy. (R. Shaw & Eichbaum, 2018)
High	The term Partisan advisers is used to define remunerated political appointees employed by a minister of the Crown at the federal or provincial level with an officially acknowledged policy role. It excludes all other types of "exempt" staff (i.e. clerical staff, communications staff). The term also excludes political staff employed in non-ministerial offices such as the Senate (save those who work for a senator appointed to Cabinet), for backbench members of legislatures, or in the constituency offices of elected officials. (Craft, 2016)

High	We need a definition of special advisers. Technically, they are temporary civil servants, usually paid for out of public funds. But they are also personal appointments of government ministers and leave when the minister leaves, when there is an election or of their own volition. They may be asked to carry out ‘political’ tasks that career civil servants cannot. They have a particular contract and are subject to a specially drawn-up ‘Code of Conduct for Special Advisers’. We have taken a simple approach to identifying who is a special adviser. If a government has named an individual as a special adviser, then we regard them as one. We have presumed that those named as special advisers by the government also have the characteristics we noted above. (Yong & Hazell, 2014)
Partial	This study uses the terms ‘political advisor’ and ‘political staff’ interchangeably. While there may be a difference in how these terms are used in other jurisdictions, they are functionally identical in the Canadian context. (Snagovsky & Kerby, 2018)
Partial	The number of special advisers, as we shall call them for simplicity's sake, ignoring the various other labels under which they are often discussed, remains small, and disproportionate to the attention and controversy they have attracted. (Klein & Lewis, 1977)
