



GROWTH OF A LIMITED-TERM WORK STRUCTURE AT THE UNITED NATIONS: ORIGINS, POLITICS, AND CURRENT SITUATION

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Introduction

The project seeks to understand how work organization inside the United Nations have evolved from the dominance of continuous appointments, such as lifelong international civil servants, to a larger role played by limited-term contracts. It largely emphasizes the role of consultants and experts alongside the umbrella category of fixed-term staff. The goal of the project is to trace the evolution over time, grasp the politics involved, and capture the current situation.

Historical Overview



1964 - Beginning of evidence of the use of fixed-term appointments. Used fixed-term appointments to work toward equitable geographic distribution and support efficient operations.



1980s - Growing belief that limited-term appointments should grow to ensure more quality appointments.



1985 - World financial situations shifted, fix the "lapse factor" by using limited-term staff to fix inefficiencies, staff turnover, delays in recruitment, and fill vacancies.



1990s - Growth in the use of contract institutions including the "Big Five": Arthur Andersen, Arthur D. Little, Deloitte & Touche, PricewaterhouseCoopers, McKinsey & Co. but issues with Western European/ North American usage. Gave rise to the use of corporate consultancies.



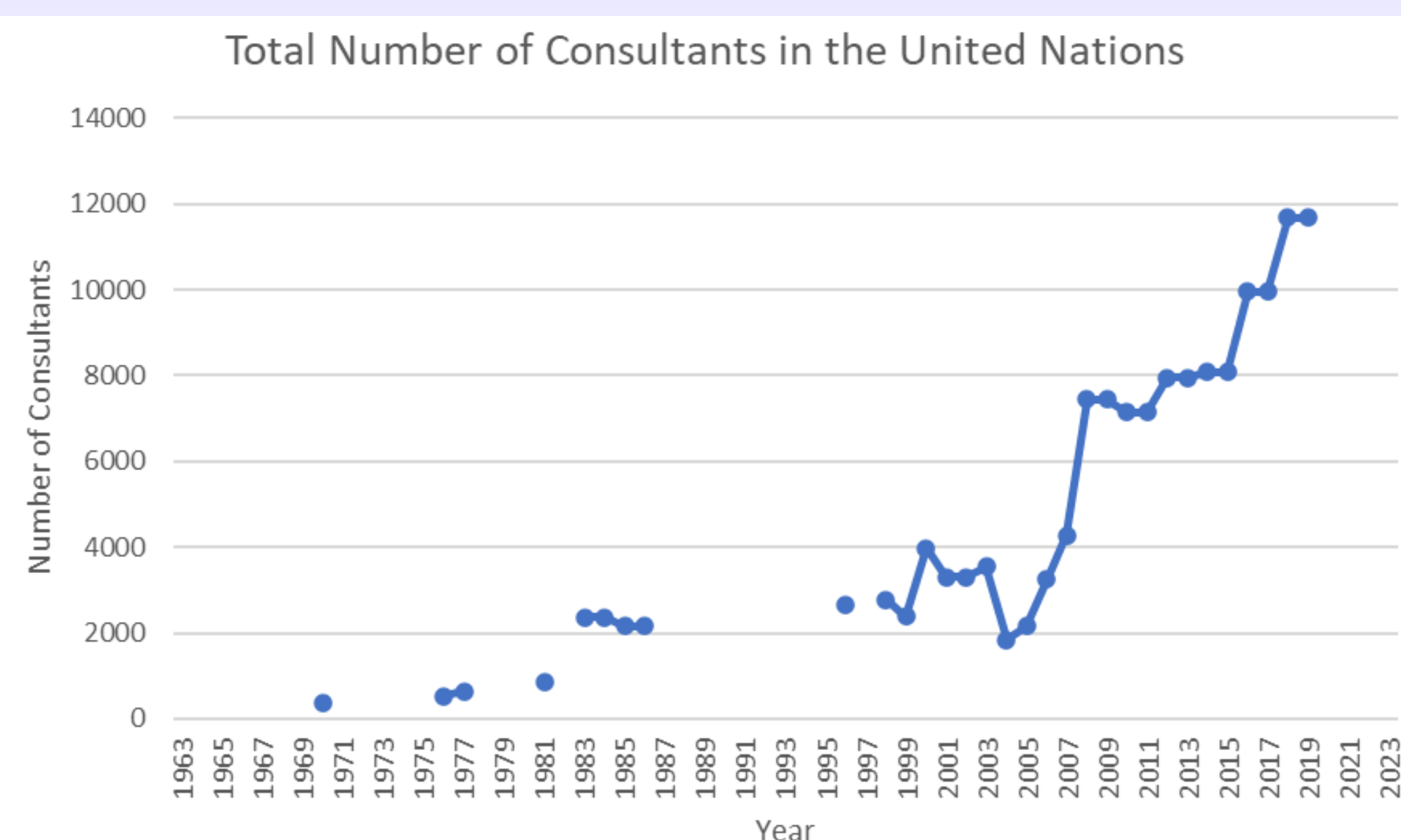
2009 - Shift from 100, 200, 300 series appointments to address contractual modalities and issues with *de facto* employment relationships. Relative decline of percentage of fixed-term staff may be attributed to the cyclical use of some staff.



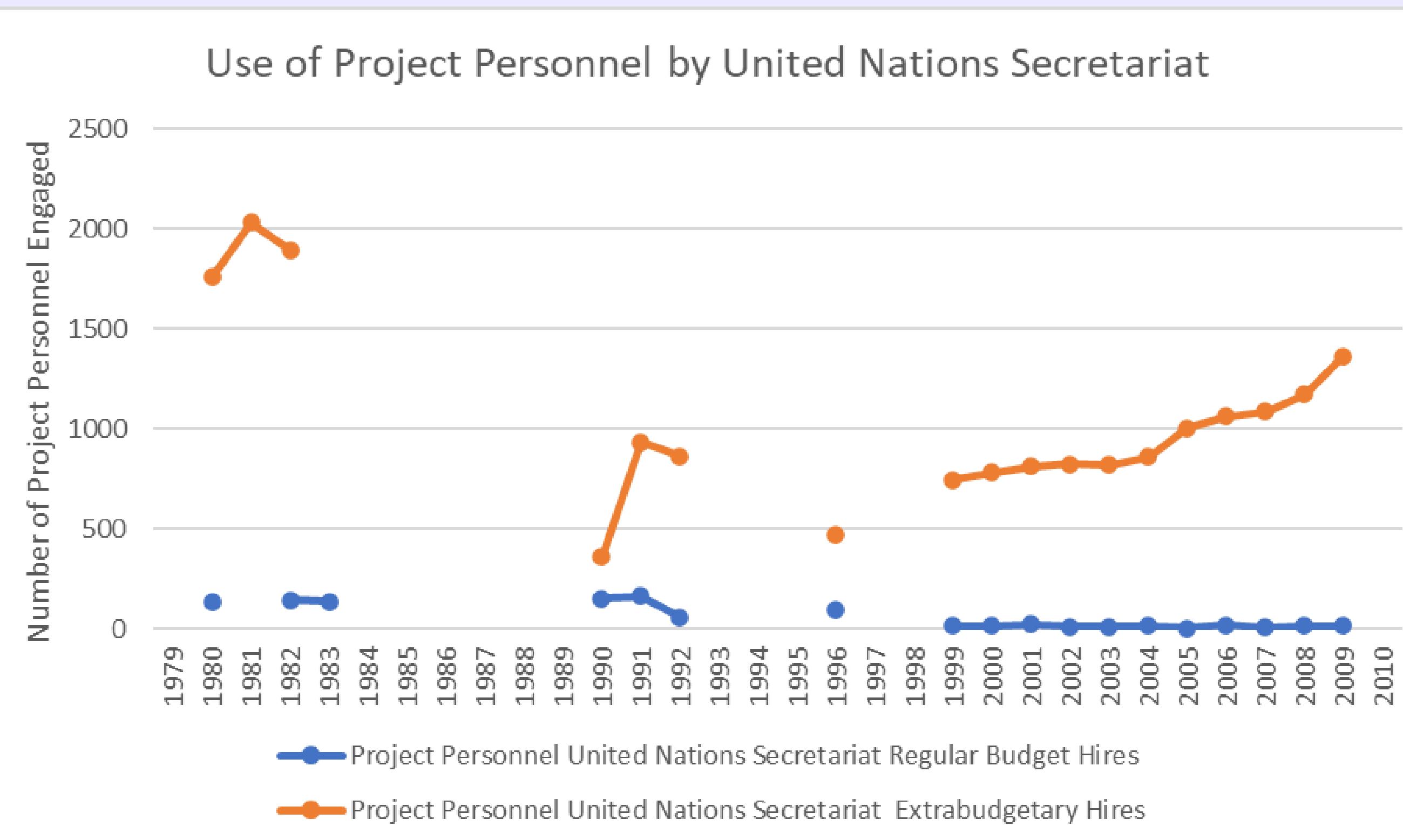
2013 - Introduction of *Inspira* module with consultants and individual contractors, various positions outlined online.



2017 - Noted concern over the 120 days for recruitments. Standard posting reduced from 60 to 45 days to quicken turnover speed.



Politics of Transformation



Although limited-term employees have undoubtedly contributed to the functions of the United Nations, there have been many points of contention. These include:

Lacking Accountability for Qualifications and Task Management

- Misuse of non-staff personnel: Consultants were being hired for reasons other than expertise or performing tasks that should be done by assigned posts, against established hiring rules
- Improper classification of non-staff personnel and inconsistent practises in utilizing limited-term services

Financial Mismanagement and Budget Circumvention

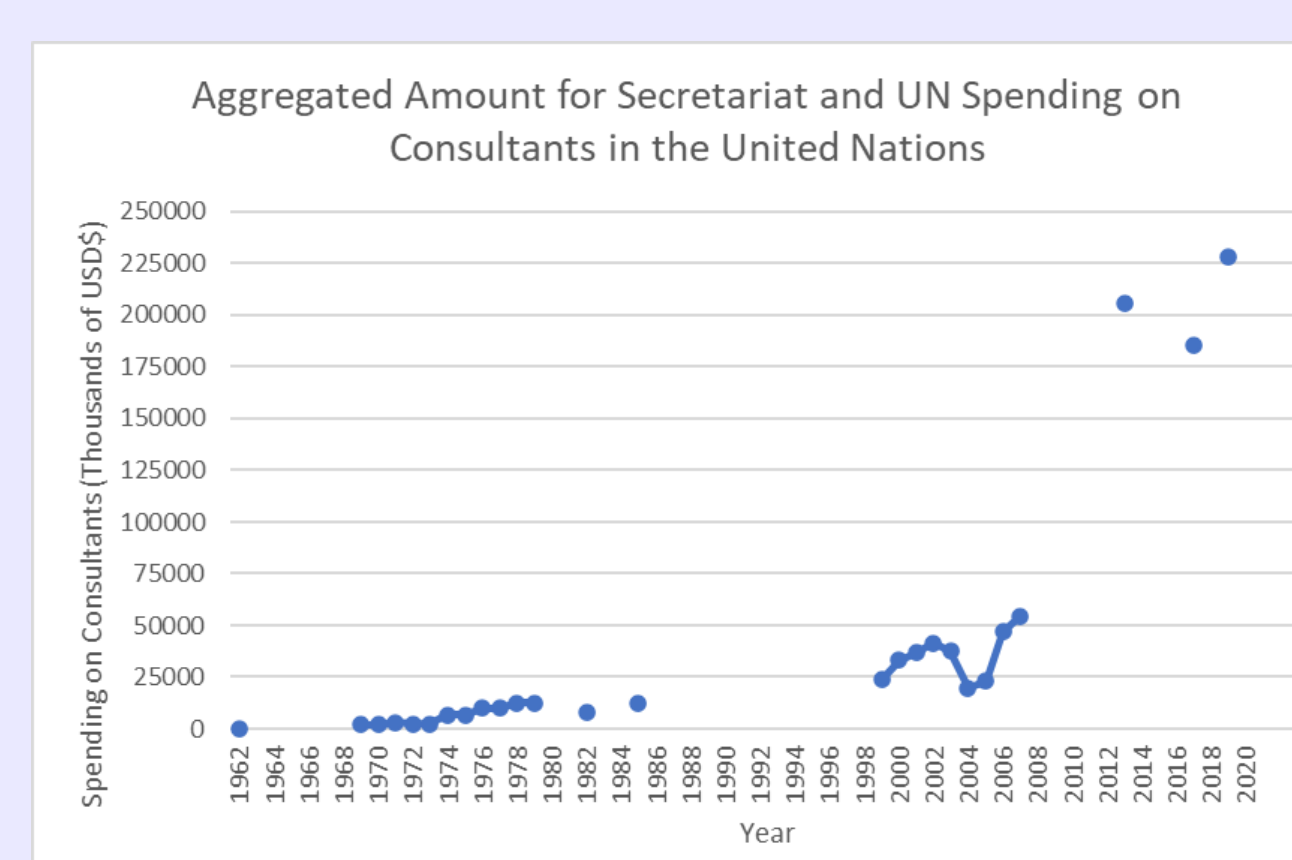
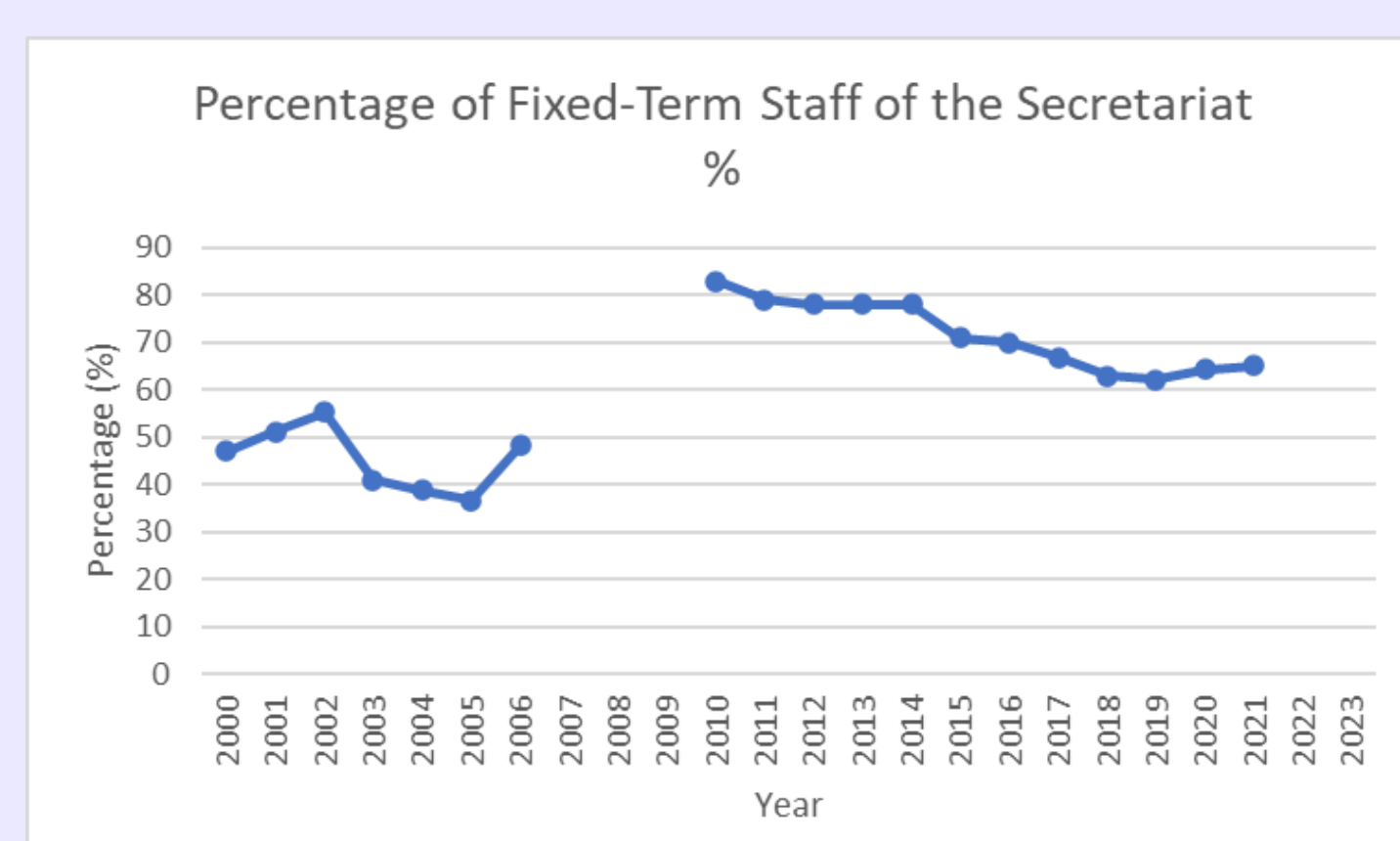
- Using consultants to circumvent the demands and increase total staff resources beyond the limits of the general assembly
- Overuse of special funds and extrabudgetary resources, using the United Nations to receive training, increasing their influence fiscally

Lacking Geographic Representation

- Uneven geographic representation, sourcing from a small number of countries for sources of expertise - a narrow geographic base

Labour Laws and Hiring Issues

- Widespread practise of considering only one candidate for selections, variations in remuneration levels
- The system of hiring is unregulating and inconsistent with international good labour practises as many are employed for extended periods with a *de facto* employment relationship



The Situation Today

The UN is currently looking toward management reform and an accountability framework. The rise of use of consultants especially can be seen in statements of low-value acquisition and overhauls on consultant fees. Parallel to developments in hiring changes are practises of using non-regular staff to perform key jobs. These include:

- United Nations Security Sanctions Regime
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: Special Procedures, the mandate of Independent Expert on protection against violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity (IE SOGI), Human Rights Committee on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by its States parties, Human Rights Treaty Bodies
- United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
- International Labour Organization Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations

Research Methods

This project mainly involved collecting primary source data from the United Nations Official Documents System. Qualitative and quantitative information was mainly gathered through resolutions by the General Assembly, reports by the Secretary-General, reports by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), reports by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), and reports by the Board of Auditors. Titles for the information and the information collected are inconsistent at times due to the evolving nature of the work structure. The aggregated information was used to create several graphs tracking trends related to the growth of a limited-term work structure. This project was also informed by scholarly publications and Professor Pouliot's research.

To determine the situation today, press releases, news updates, and resolutions by the United Nations Security Council were used. Sources for this research can be seen in the final published work, which has yet to be released.

Acknowledgements

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