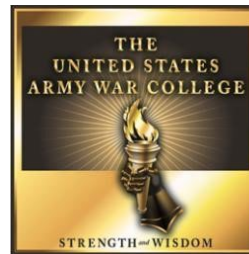


## Recruiting Success by Attracting Diversity for Army Special Operations Forces

by

Lieutenant Colonel Marcus T. Franzen

Under the Direction of:  
Colonel Matthew W. Lawrence



United States Army War College  
Class of 2022

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As US adversaries increasingly engage the Nation's interests under the threshold of combat, Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) grew as a competitive differentiator in 21st Century multi-domain operations. However, as ARSOF grew, the number of minority personnel in its ranks remained stagnant, and ARSOF no longer racially or ethnically represents the Army or the US population it serves. The current recruiting approach risks long-term manning needs as emerging trends, and generational attitudes present a situation where ARSOF may be less attractive as a career option to not just future minority soldiers, but to all soldiers. To maintain its required workforce in future years, the Special Operations Recruiting Battalion must recruit more minority active-duty soldiers, including women, for an ARSOF Assessment and Selection to increase ARSOF diversity. Through three case studies of recruiting diversity from the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Coca-Cola Corporation, and Google, the evaluations describe how the FBI failed, Coke struggled, and Google successfully recruited diversity. This paper outlines that increasing diversity in ARSOF will be a complex and imprecise operation. Emerging trends and generational attitudes present a situation where ARSOF needs leaders to champion this long-term effort for success. Failure would be for ARSOF to acknowledge the risk, but ignore preparing for the problem today and suffer the consequences years in the future.

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# Recruiting Success by Attracting Diversity for Army Special Operations Forces

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## Abstract

As US adversaries increasingly engage the Nation's interests under the threshold of combat, Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) grew as a competitive differentiator in 21st Century multi-domain operations. However, as ARSOF grew, the number of minority personnel in its ranks remained stagnant, and ARSOF no longer racially or ethnically represents the Army or the US population it serves. The current recruiting approach risks long-term manning needs as emerging trends, and generational attitudes present a situation where ARSOF may be less attractive as a career option to not just future minority soldiers, but to all soldiers. To maintain its required workforce in future years, the Special Operations Recruiting Battalion must recruit more minority active-duty soldiers, including women, for an ARSOF Assessment and Selection to increase ARSOF diversity. Through three case studies of recruiting diversity from the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Coca-Cola Corporation, and Google, the evaluations describe how the FBI failed, Coke struggled, and Google successfully recruited diversity. This paper outlines that increasing diversity in ARSOF will be a complex and imprecise operation. Emerging trends and generational attitudes present a situation where ARSOF needs leaders to champion this long-term effort for success. Failure would be for ARSOF to acknowledge the risk, but ignore preparing for the problem today and suffer the consequences years in the future.

## Recruiting Success by Attracting Diversity for Army Special Operations Forces

*"There is an express need for diversity in light of challenges facing our Nation. Our goal is to have every Soldier see themselves reflected at every level of leadership in the Army by recruiting, retaining, and promoting the best this diverse Nation has to offer."*  
— General Raymond T. Odierno<sup>1</sup>

As US adversaries increasingly engage the Nation's interests under the threshold of combat, Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) will be crucial to our future hybrid warfare successes. To better counter our adversaries in 21<sup>st</sup> Century multi-domain operations, ARSOF grew as a competitive differentiator. However, as the force grew, the number of minority personnel in its ranks remained stagnant, and ARSOF no longer racially or ethnically represents the Army or the US population it serves. The generalized approach to recruiting risks long-term manning needs as emerging trends and generational attitudes present a situation where ARSOF may be less attractive as a career option to not just future minority soldiers, but to all soldiers. To maintain ARSOF's required workforce in future years, the Special Operations Recruiting Battalion (SORB) must recruit more minority active-duty soldiers, including women, for an ARSOF Assessment and Selection (A&S) to increase ARSOF diversity.

### Significance of This Study

This study aims to aid the US Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) in achieving gains in minority ARSOF representation to "compete, deter, and win" in the strategic environment.<sup>2</sup> Only a few published research papers address the

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<sup>1</sup> J. D. Leipold. *Chief Asks for Mentorship Help from ROCKS*. April 3, 2012. <https://www.army.mil/article/77083/> (accessed January 13, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> James C. McConville, *40th Chief of Staff of the Army Initial Message to the Army Team*. James Mattis. *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the US of America*. (Washington, DC: Department of Defense,

underrepresentation of minorities and the challenges associated with ARSOF minority accessions.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, earlier studies did not consider how the generational attitudes of Generation Z (Gen Z) soldiers may affect these efforts.

Additionally, in Section 557 of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Congress directed the DoD to conduct a "Study on Reducing Barriers to Minority Participation in Elite Units in the Armed Services."<sup>4</sup> Two sections in the proposed 2022 NDAA directly affect USASOC and diversity. Section 569C states that the United States Special Operations Command must assess the needs of SOF, "including minorities and women," for mission readiness.<sup>5</sup> Section 578 also directs DoD to remove historical barriers to minorities that prevent equal treatment in the military.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, since 2011, the Army dedicated itself to being a practical warfighting service representing the population it serves.<sup>7</sup> Figure 1 depicts the Army made up 10.2% more minorities than the US population in 2020 (48.6% vs. 38.4%). However, USASOC's diversity trailed both the Army and the US at 32.7%. The ARSOF aggregate was even lower with only 20.8% minorities (CA: 30.9%, PO: 29.4%, SF: 16.9%); which shows that most of USASOC's minority representation is in non-ARSOF career fields.<sup>8</sup>

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2018). <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>. p 1.

<sup>3</sup> Martha L. Teplitzky. *Minority Representation in the Enlisted Special Forces*. Unclassified Research Report, Alexandria, VA: US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1992. Ann M. Herd and Martha L. Teplitzky, *Special Forces Recruiting: An Overview of Current Procedures and Issues*. Unclassified Research Report, Alexandria, VA: US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1992. Margaret C. Harrell, et al. *Barriers to Minority Participation in Special Operations Forces*. Unclassified Research Report, Santa Monica CA: Rand Corporation, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Congress.gov. "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021." October 18, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hr6395/BILLS-116hr6395enr.pdf> (accessed October 29, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Congress.gov. "H.R.4350-National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022." October 18, 2021. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/4350> (accessed January 29, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> Congress.gov. "H.R.4350-National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022."

<sup>7</sup> Michael G. Mullen, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The Pentagon, February 2011), 17. Tom Vanden Brook. "Army Commanders: White Men Lead a Diverse Force." September 11, 2014. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/09/11/army-officer-corps-dominated-by-white-men/14987977/> (accessed January 13, 2022).

<sup>8</sup> US Census Bureau. *Supplementary Tables on Race and Hispanic Origin: 2020 Census Redistricting Data (P.L. 94-171)*. August 12, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/dec/2020-redistricting-supplementary-tables.html>

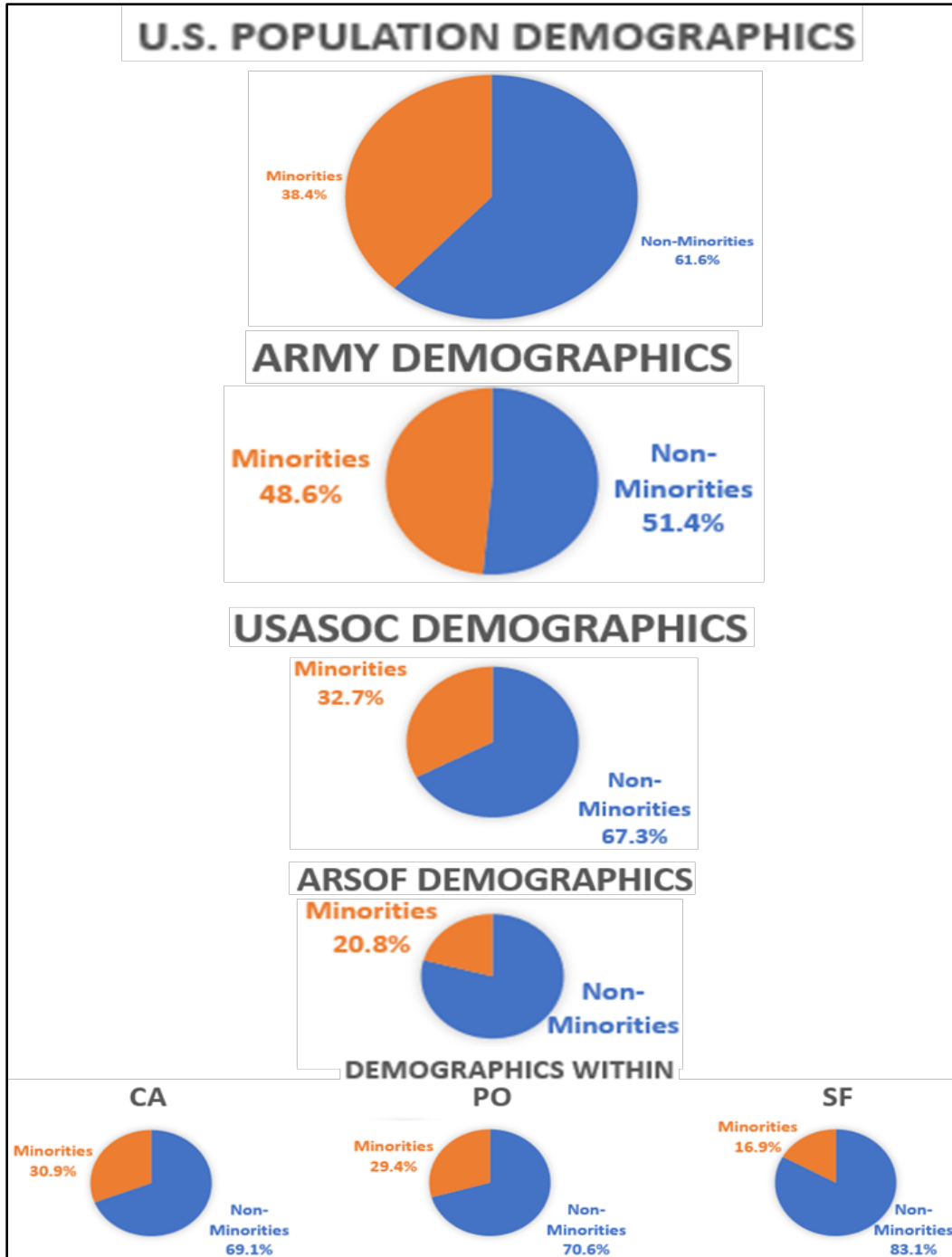


Figure 1: Demographic statuses of US, Army, USASOC, and ARSOF.<sup>9</sup>

(accessed September 5, 2021). Total Army Personnel Database (TAPDB), "Enterprise Demographics\_TAPDB\_ver2 - 20200601" (PDF, USASOC, Fort Bragg, NC, June 1, 2020); USASOC G5, Email message to the author, November 1, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> US Census Bureau. *Supplementary Tables on Race and Hispanic Origin: 2020 Census Redistricting Data (P.L. 94-171)*. Total Army Personnel Database (TAPDB), "Enterprise Demographics\_TAPDB\_ver2 - 20200601."

## Research Roadmap

This research will develop recommendations enabling minority recruiting best practices in five sections. Section 1 (Introduction) explains the problem, the significance of this study, and the research roadmap. Section 2 (Background) exposes the reader to the paper's definitions, scope, and assumptions, then transitions to describing the ARSOF recruiting operational environment. Section 3 (Discussion) evaluates three case studies of recruiting diversity from the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Coca-Cola Corporation, and Google. The case studies will describe how the FBI failed, Coke struggled, and Google succeeded in recruiting diversity. Section 4 (Analysis, Counterarguments, and Recommendations) analyzes the case studies for applications in ARSOF minority recruiting and synthesizes recommendations for improved ARSOF minority recruiting campaigns. Lastly, Section 5 (Conclusion) summarizes the findings and offers potential research areas for future study of minority recruiting.

## **SECTION 2: BACKGROUND**

### Definition, Scope, and Assumptions

The US Census Bureau's definition of minority is sufficient for this report. The term minority combines all races that are not the "white population" or ethnically distinct (Hispanic or Latino).<sup>10</sup> The term minority also does not segregate gender distinction or between Army ranks of active-duty soldiers.

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<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Jones, Rachel Marks, Roberto Ramirez, and Merarys Rios-Vargas. *2020 Census Illuminates Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Country*. August 12, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/improved-race-ethnicity-measures-reveal-united-states-population-much-more-multiracial.html> (accessed September 5, 2021). US Census Bureau. *Supplementary Tables on Race and Hispanic Origin: 2020 Census Redistricting Data (P.L. 94-171)*. August 12, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/dec/2020-redistricting-supplementary-tables.html> (accessed September 5, 2021).

Gen Z refers to youth born between 1997 and 2012.<sup>11</sup> As the third-largest US population cohort, Gen Z is the most diverse generation in the US.<sup>12</sup> Gen Z soldiers are the current primary target demographic for ARSOF recruiting.<sup>13</sup>

ARSOF recruiting is a joint effort between the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) and its Special Operations Recruiting Battalion (SORB). USASOC's US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) supports the SORB as the ARSOF doctrinal proponent of Special Forces (SF), Civil Affairs (CA), and Psychological Operations (PO).<sup>14</sup>

To scope the research, the author focuses only on the three active-duty ARSOF components and collectively refers to them as ARSOF. Through these definitions and scope, there is an assumption that the recommendations create two concerns that SORB needs to address. SORB must change its recruiting methods towards minorities to increase diversity in ARSOF and change recruiter development to achieve minority recruiting success with Gen Z soldiers (the desired target market).

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Dimock. *Defining generations: Where Millennials End and Generation Z begins*. January 19, 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/> (accessed January 7, 2022).

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Meola. *Generation Z News: Latest characteristics, research, and facts*. January 5, 2022. <https://www.insiderintelligence.com/insights/generation-z-facts/> (accessed January 6, 2022). Richard Fry and Kim Parker. *Early Benchmarks Show 'Post-Millennials' on Track to Be Most Diverse, Best-Educated Generation Yet*. November 15, 2018. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2018/11/15/early-benchmarks-show-post-millennials-on-track-to-be-most-diverse-best-educated-generation-yet/> (accessed January 26, 2022). Bruce Tulgan and RainmakerThinking, Inc. "Meet Generation Z: The second generation within the giant "Millennial" cohort." <https://grupespsichoterapija.lt/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Gen-Z-Whitepaper.pdf> (accessed January 30, 2022). Kim Parker and Ruth Igielnik. *On the Cusp of Adulthood and Facing an Uncertain Future: What We Know About Gen Z So Far*. May 14, 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/05/14/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far-2/> (accessed January 30, 2022).

<sup>13</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. *Demographics of the US Military*. July 13, 2020. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/demographics-us-military#chapter-title-0-4> (accessed January 29, 2022).

<sup>14</sup> Congressional Research Service. "RS21048: US Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service*. May 6, 2021. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/> (accessed November 2, 2021).

## Operational Environment

Two limited USAREC surveys published in 2021 are the only current market intelligence available on the SORB's operational environment that partially address diversity and Gen Z. USAREC designed the surveys for SORB to understand (1) the propensity of soldiers to apply to ARSOF, (2) awareness of ARSOF through marketing and social media, (3) the importance of soldiers' influencers in making decisions about future endeavors, and (4) the motivators and barriers to applying to an ARSOF A&S. The first survey elicited 10,050 responses. The second focused on those selected to one of the three ARSOF A&Ss and had only 108 respondents.<sup>15</sup> Due to the limitations of the surveys, coupling the survey data with open-source research helps better evaluate the SORB's market.

### ***ARSOF Recruiting Mission***

The Army tasks USAREC to find over 5,500 ARSOF volunteers annually. Accepting this challenging mission, USAREC recruits ARSOF volunteers in two ways. The first is through traditional USAREC battalions, which recruit approximately 2,000 new civilians as ARSOF candidates. The second is the SORB, which recruits over 3,600 active-duty soldiers as ARSOF candidates.

Looking at Figure 2, the SORB recruited slightly fewer minorities than in their available qualified market in 2020. The disparity becomes more prevalent, however, in the A&S process. Most of the minority candidates came from non-operational units, who

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<sup>15</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." (PDF, USAREC, Fort Knox, KY, July 2021); SORB CDR, Email message to the author, November 10, 2021. USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing." (PDF, USAREC, Fort Knox, KY, December 2021); Division Chief, Special Operations Recruiting Support Division, Email message to the author, December 21, 2021.

faced added challenges of tactical inexperience in succeeding through the grueling selection process. As a result, the ARSOF A&S selection rate for minorities trails the average. The most common reasons for non-selection were involuntary withdrawal or physical fitness assessment failures. Based on a 3-year average of the overall selection rates for the three ARSOF A&Ss, ARSOF holistically selects approximately 34% of its candidates (SF=31%, CA=40%, PO=37%). Recruiting and selection data show that USASOC is not increasing minorities in ARSOF with SORB's current methods.<sup>16</sup>

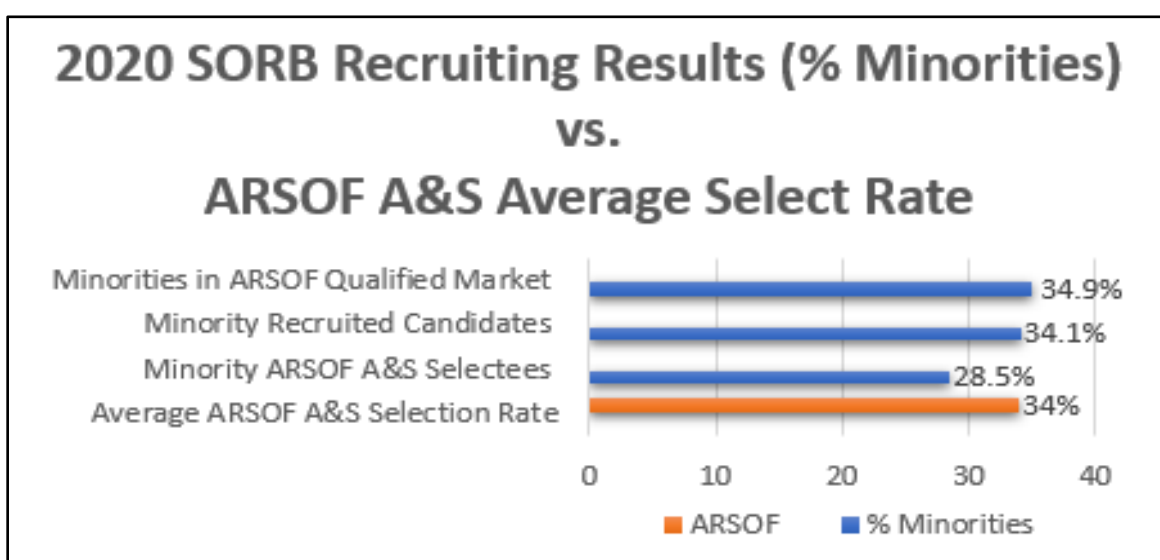


Figure 2: 2020 SORB recruiting compared to ARSOF A&S selection rates.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Demographics of the Recruiting Market***

Soldiers from Gen Z are the SORB's target market. While not to overemphasize generational differences and attitudes, Gen Z has notable characteristics that are already

<sup>16</sup> USASOC, "SORB Demographic Analysis JAN 2020" (Excel, USASOC, Fort Bragg, NC, January 2020); USASOC G5, Email message to the author, November 1, 2021. USAJFKSWCS, "Army War College paper concerning recruiting diversity" (Email, USASOC, Fort Bragg, NC, November 2021); ARSOF Proponency, Email message to the author, November 18, 2021. Jody Daigle, "SORB Monthly Update: JAN 2022" (Email, SORB, Fort Bragg, NC, January 2022); SORB CDR, Email message to the author, January 12, 2022.

<sup>17</sup> USASOC, "SORB Demographic Analysis JAN 2020." USAJFKSWCS, "Army War College paper concerning recruiting diversity." Jody Daigle, "SORB Monthly Update: JAN 2022."

changing the US corporate recruiting and hiring environment. The SORB can expect a variance of this change within its market. Gen Z favors clear and constant communication through digital interaction and direct communications during recruitment. They also respond more positively to an equity approach than equality of time spent. Gen Z recruits, especially minorities, expect to engage in conversations outlining potential career paths and benefits of hiring before applying.<sup>18</sup>

Most importantly, Gen Z is the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in history and expects employers to support and promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). DEI endorses commitments between employees and employers. A diverse environment creates equality in employee advancement and fair opportunities for professional growth (reskilling, upskilling, and learning). Giving minorities more decision-making power sets up a path for better hiring and welcomed retention.<sup>19</sup> In a 2021 Tallo Data Insights survey, most Gen Z respondents said workplace DEI is important.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ashley Stahl, "How Generation-Z will Revolutionize the Workplace," Forbes, September 10, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashleystahl/2019/09/10/how-generation-z-will-revolutionize-the-workplace/?sh=138eab1c4f53> (accessed September 5, 2021). Bharat Chillakuri. "Understanding Generation Z expectations for effective onboarding." *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 33, no. 7 (2020): 1277-1296. Andrea Bencsik, Gabriella Horváth-Csikós, and Tímea Juhász. "Y and Z Generations at Workplaces Journal of Competitiveness." *Journal of Competitiveness* 8, no. 3 (2016): 90-106. Bharat Chillakuri and Rajendra Mahanandia. "Generation Z Entering the Workforce: The Need for Sustainable Strategies in Maximizing Their Talent." *Human Resource Management International* 26, no. 4 (2018): 34-38. Aon India (PeopleMatters). *What Gen Z expects from the workplace*. November 14, 2019. <https://www.peoplematters.in/article/life-at-work/what-gen-z-expects-from-the-workplace-23751> (accessed January 30, 2022). K. C. Reid, "How the Network Generation is Changing the Millennial Military," War on the Rocks (blog), March 20, 2018. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/03/how-the-network-generation-is-changing-the-millennial-military/> (accessed September 5, 2021). Robert Half and Enactus. *Get Ready for Generation Z* (RH-0715). Research, Toronto: Robert Half, 2015. Robert Half. *Get Ready for Gen Z*. May 20, 2016. <https://www.roberthalf.ca/en/blog/the-future-of-work/get-ready-for-gen-z> (accessed January 30, 2022).

<sup>19</sup> WP BrandStudio. *Going deeper with diversity and inclusion*. January 5, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/brand-studio/wp/2021/01/05/feature/going-deeper-with-diversity-and-inclusion/> (accessed January 26, 2022). Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton, and Sara Prince. *Why diversity matters*. January 1, 2015. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/why-diversity-matters> (accessed January 26, 2022). <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/02/18/millennial-gen-z-workplace-diversity-equity-inclusion/> (accessed January 26, 2022).

<sup>20</sup> Tallo Data Insights. *What Companies Need to Know About Gen Z's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Expectations*. July 12, 2021. <https://tallo.com/blog/gen-z-workplace-diversity-equity-inclusion/> (accessed January 22, 2022).

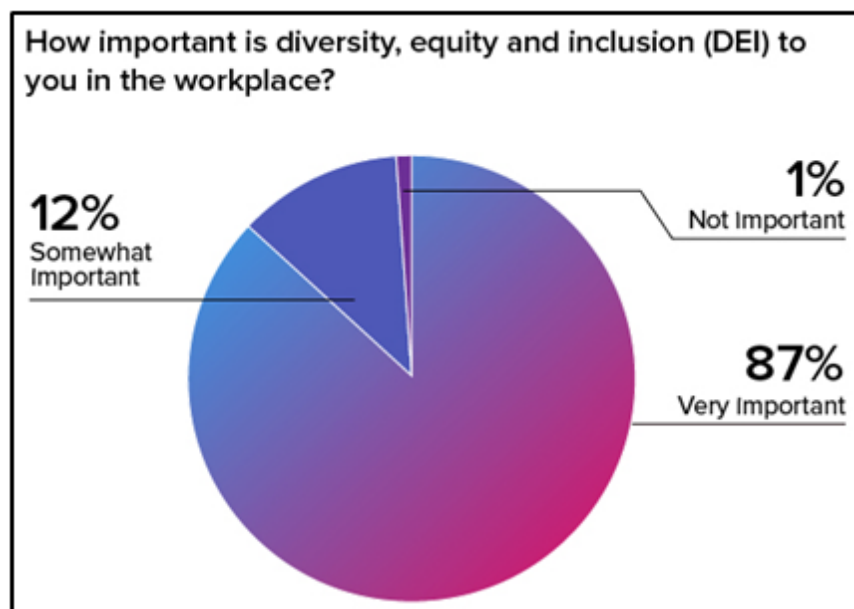


Figure 3: Importance of workplace DEI to Gen Z.<sup>21</sup>

In another survey (Figure 4), over 5,000 Gen Z high school and college students responded with their propensity to apply to an organization based on perceived diversity. The survey revealed that 69% of respondents would "absolutely" apply to an organization when recruiting materials reflected a diverse workplace. Conversely, 32% said they decided not to apply for a job because of the belief in unfair workplace treatment based on diversity.<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, and supporting the above data point, multiple news agencies reported in 2021 that Gen Z professionals purposefully avoid elite opportunities because of a lack of a diverse workforce, a clear promotion path, and a commitment to oppose counterproductive behaviors.<sup>23</sup> In short, the data shows that organizational diversity

<sup>21</sup> Tallo Data Insights. *What Companies Need to Know About Gen Z's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Expectations*.

<sup>22</sup> Tallo Data Insights. *The Survey is in: Gen Z Demands Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*. October 21, 2020. <https://tallo.com/blog/genz-demands-diversity-inclusion-strategy/> (accessed January 24, 2022).

<sup>23</sup> Jennifer Miller. *For younger job seekers, diversity and inclusion in the workplace aren't a preference. They're a*

matters and will affect organizations' future ability to recruit talent if they do not take DEI seriously. Concerning ARSOF, the important thing is to realize that this generational shift in attitudes concerning diversity does not just apply to the organization's appeal to minority candidates. White candidates will also be less interested in joining if ARSOF does not reflect their values and expectations.

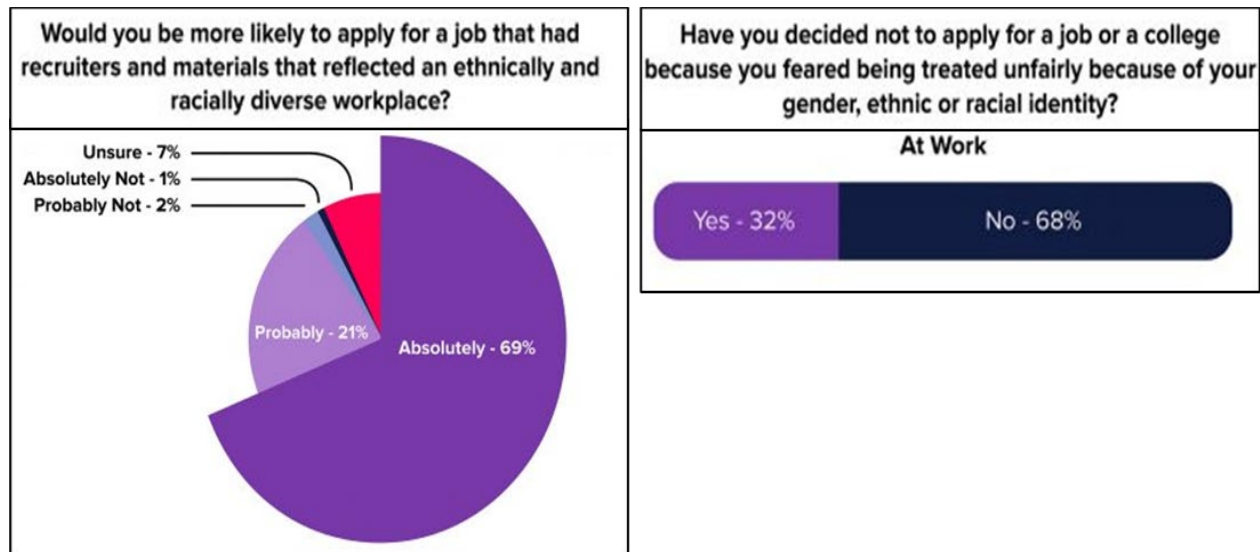


Figure 4: Propensity to Join a country based on outward DEI posture.<sup>24</sup>

### **Marketing and social media**

Since 2009, minority soldiers reported preferences for jobs offering skill sets that quickly transfer to civilian employment.<sup>25</sup> Since ARSOF is a multifaceted organization giving soldiers more tools and opportunities to succeed, marketing to diversity should be

requirement. February 18, 2021. <https://www.seattletimes.com/business/for-younger-job-seekers-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-workplace-arent-a-preference-theyre-a-requirement/> (accessed January 26, 2022).

<sup>24</sup> Tallo Data Insights. *The Survey is in: Gen Z Demands Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*.

<sup>25</sup> Hise Gibson and Daniel White. *The Strategic Problem the Army Doesn't Seem to Care About: African Americans Aren't Branching Combat Arms*. July 14, 2020. <https://mwi.usma.edu/strategic-problem-army-doesnt-seem-care-african-americans-arent-branching-combat-arms/> (accessed January 24, 2022). US Army Demographics Office. *Blacks in the US Army—Then and Now*. Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2009. 16-17. Randolph C. White, Jr. *Wasting Time: Black Participation in the Combat Arms Branches*. Strategy Research Project, Carlisle, PA: United States Army War College, 2009. 19.

easy. ARSOF promotes teamwork, military and civilian credentialing, and enhanced skills for the Army and beyond.<sup>26</sup> However, Gen Z minorities lack knowledge of ARSOF. The USAREC ARSOF surveys showed a correlation between a soldier's understanding of ARSOF and the propensity to apply to ARSOF A&Ss (Figure 5).<sup>27</sup>

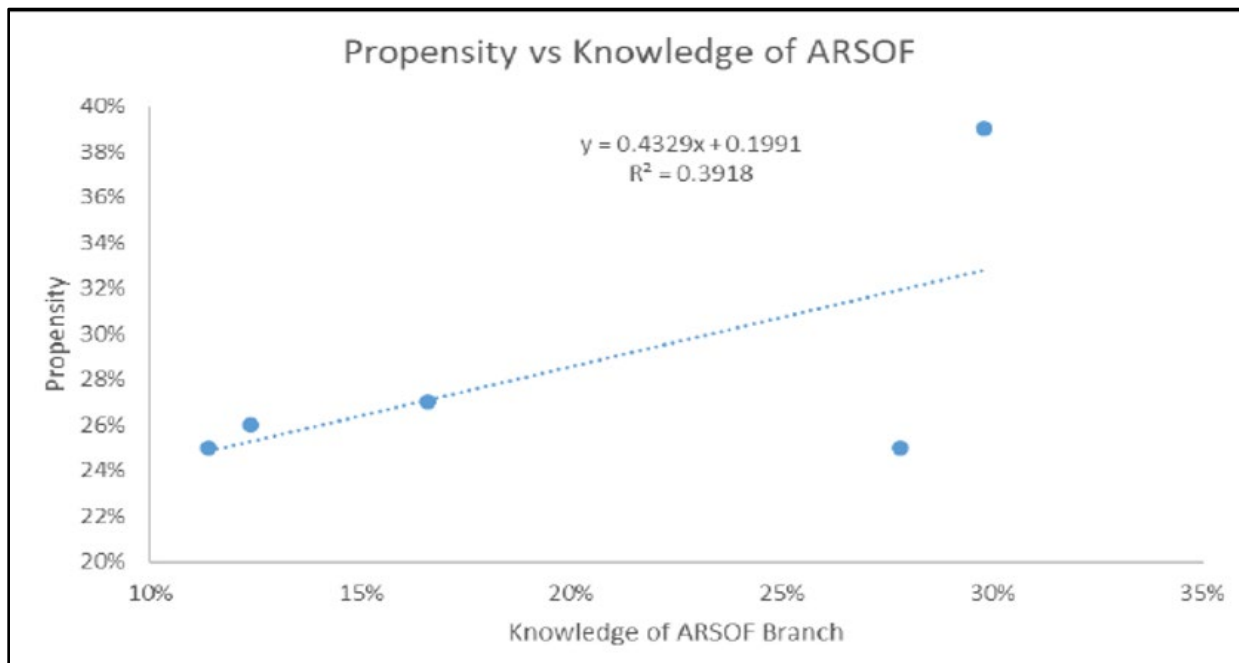


Figure 5: Direct relationship of propensity and knowledge of ARSOF.<sup>28</sup>

As Figure 6 depicts below, soldiers receive the most exposure to ARSOF on base with out-of-home (OOH) advertising and social media. OOH advertising, also called outdoor advertising or outdoor media, is popular on Army bases because soldiers are

<sup>26</sup> Alison Reynolds and David Lewis. *Teams Solve Problems Faster When They're More Cognitively Diverse*. March 30, 2017. <https://hbr.org/2017/03/teams-solve-problems-faster-when-theyre-more-cognitively-diverse> (accessed December 17, 2021). USAJFKSWCS Education Director. Voluntary Education Office. January 1, 2022. <https://www.soc.mil/SWCS/DOTDP/voluntaryEd.html> (accessed January 26, 2022). Vernā Myers interview with Jonathan Capehart. *Equity is about more than just hiring diverse employees*. August 3, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/podcasts/cape-up/equity-is-about-more-than-just-hiring-diverse-employees/> (accessed January 26, 2022).

<sup>27</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing." Merriam-Webster.com *Dictionary*, s.v. Propensity. 2021. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/propensity> (accessed October 3, 2021).

<sup>28</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey."

easily exposed to these ads in frequent common locations such as gyms, commissaries, and base exchanges. However, it is essential to note that the Gen Z target demographic is more apt to see advertising on social media vice a sign or a pamphlet on a static display. Survey responses show that ARSOF's marketing efforts need to increase its interactive digital footprint on social media. Additionally, local marketing should use OOH advertising that directs individuals to social media and interactive websites because this type of marketing is most likely to elicit queries and responses from Gen Z respondents.<sup>29</sup>



Figure 6: Media effectiveness of exposure to ARSOF.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing."

<sup>30</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing."

Specifically looking at social media, neither ARSOF survey segregated the data into generational cohorts or diversity. As Figure 7 shows, the SORB's target demographic prefers communication via YouTube and Instagram over Twitter and Facebook.<sup>31</sup> Platforms like Instagram are more appealing to Gen Z because they create an interactive community where users are more likely to engage with influencers and follow appealing brands. However, many recruiters use social media platforms to "push" information instead of using it to its potential as an opportunity to engage with their audience.<sup>32</sup>

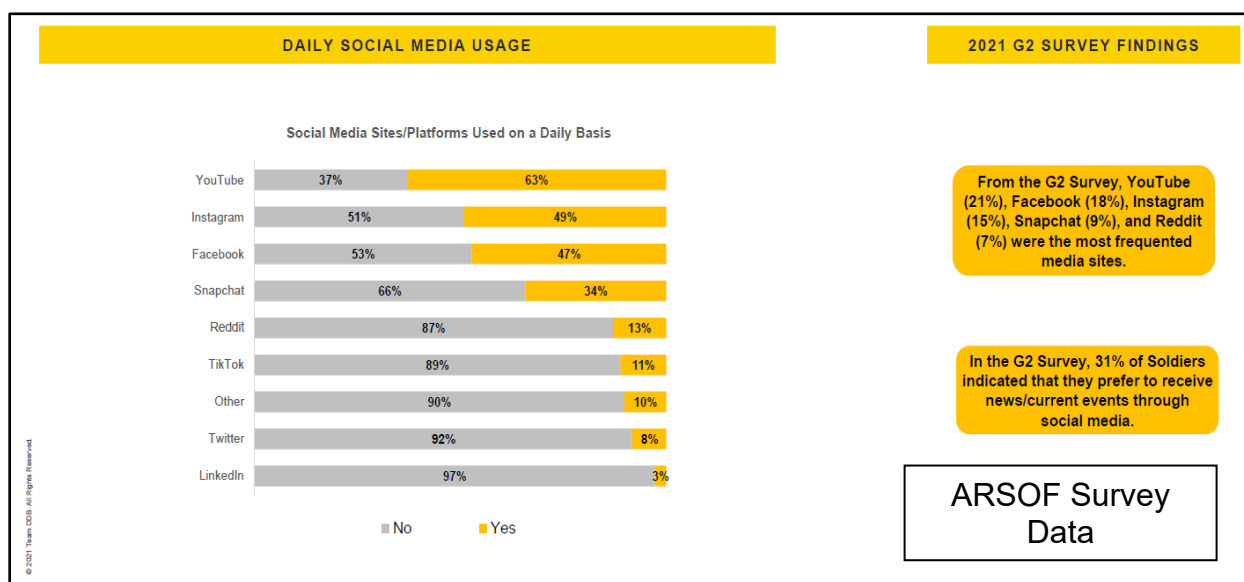


Figure 7: Most used Social Media Platforms.<sup>33</sup>

Supporting the ARSOF surveys, a YPulse survey confirmed the findings of social media platforms (Figure 8). Both data sets were similar, except the YPulse survey showed increased use of TikTok.<sup>34</sup> After the Army banned TikTok on government phones and

<sup>31</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing."

<sup>32</sup> Caroline Forsey. *Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram? Which Platform(s) You Should Be On*. July 26, 2021. <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/twitter-vs-facebook> (accessed January 28, 2022).

<sup>33</sup> USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing."

<sup>34</sup> YPulse. *This is How Gen Z & Millennials' Social Media Use Has Changed in 2021*. December 21, 2021.

recommended against it for personal use, most soldiers said they do not use the platform.<sup>35</sup>

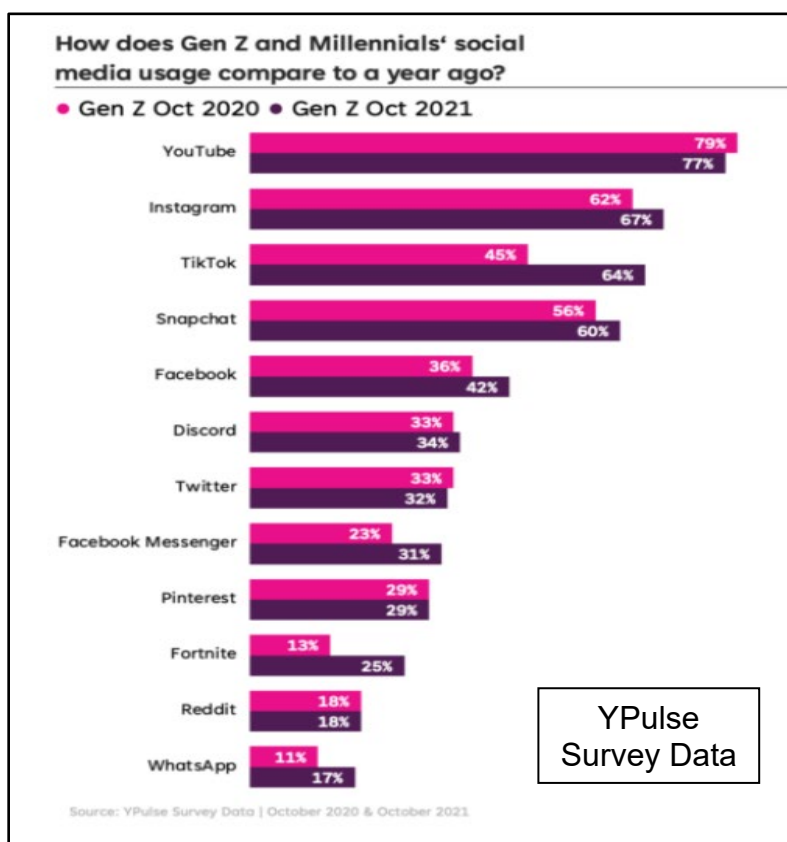


Figure 8: Most used Social Media Platforms (YPulse survey).<sup>36</sup>

Approximately 95% of Gen Z can access a smartphone, and 97% routinely use at least one of seven major online platforms.<sup>37</sup> Open-source research implies that minority populations are more apt to use social media platforms optimized for mobile use because

<https://www.ypulse.com/article/2021/12/21/this-is-how-gen-z-millennials-social-media-use-has-changed-in-2021/> (accessed January 28, 2022).

<sup>35</sup> Matthew Cox. *Army Follows Pentagon Guidance, Bans Chinese-Owned TikTok App*. December 30, 2019. <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/12/30/army-follows-pentagon-guidance-bans-chinese-owned-tiktok-app.html> (accessed November 28, 2021).

<sup>36</sup> YPulse. *This is How Gen Z & Millennials' Social Media Use Has Changed in 2021*.

<sup>37</sup> Monica Anderson and Jingjing Jiang. *Teens, social media, and Technology 2018*. April 7, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

of video chatting and live streaming videos.<sup>38</sup> However, the ARSOF surveys indicated that its marketing is insignificant to soldiers' decision to apply because interactive SORB material was nonexistent or difficult to access.<sup>39</sup>

After evaluating the ARSOF websites, they all incorporate assorted designs with different information for each respective ARSOF branch (CA, PO, and SF). USAREC's three sites aimed at new ARSOF soldier accessions have a higher quality layout to relay information and virtually interact with a recruiter. The three SORB sites targeting the internal market highlighted ARSOF careers and benefits, featured a motivational video, and had no options to interact with a recruiter. All six sites also had limited depictions of diversity.<sup>40</sup> Other websites exist for potential Army Reserve CA and PO candidates or Army National Guard SF candidates. The National Guard site is the best of all the websites for the consumer by encompassing the transfer of information, videos, and interactive access to a recruiter.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ashleigh Wade. "When Social Media Yields More than "Likes": Black Girls' Digital Kinship Formations." *Women, Gender, and Families of Color* (University of Illinois Press) 7, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 80-97. AP-NORC. "December 2016 Study of American Teens." *Associated Press-National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago*. August 27, 2017. <https://apnorc.org/projects/instagram-and-snapchat-are-most-popular-social-networks-for-teens-black-teens-are-most-active-on-social-media-messaging-apps/> (accessed November 11, 2021). Katherine Schaeffer. *7 facts about Americans and Instagram*. October 7, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/10/07/7-facts-about-americans-and-instagram/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

<sup>39</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing."

<sup>40</sup> SORB. *Civil Affairs: Become a Warrior Diplomat*. <https://goarmysof.com/CivilAffairs/CArecruiting.html> (accessed October 29, 2021). SORB. *Psychological Operations: Unconventional Minds for Unconventional Warfare*. <https://goarmysof.com/PsyOp/PsyOprecruiting.html> (accessed October 29, 2021). SORB. *Special Forces: Liberate the Oppressed*. <https://goarmysof.com/specialforces/sfrecruiting.html> (accessed October 29, 2021). SORB. *US Army Special Operations Careers: Choose Your Path to Excellence*. <https://www.goarmysof.com/index.html> (accessed October 29, 2021). USAREC. *Civil Affairs*. <https://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/specialty-careers/special-ops/civil-affairs.html> (accessed October 29, 2021). USAREC. *Psychological Operations*. <https://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/specialty-careers/special-ops/psychological-operations.html> (accessed October 29, 2021). USAREC. *Special Forces*. <https://www.goarmy.com/careers-and-jobs/specialty-careers/special-ops/special-forces.html> (accessed October 29, 2021).

<sup>41</sup> U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne). *USACAPOC(A) Recruiting Resources*. <https://www.usar.army.mil/Commands/Functional/USACAPOC/USACAPOC-Resources/> (accessed October 29, 2021). Army National Guard. *Special Forces*. <https://www.nationalguard.com/special-forces> (accessed October 29, 2021).

Supporting digital advertising, the SORB should employ more local market advertising supported by increased personal recruiter contact. In a Tallo Data Insights survey, 85% of over 6,000 Gen Z respondents preferred personal communication in successful recruiting operations (Figure 9). The personal contact created feelings of genuine relationships, especially when leaders aided in recruiting.<sup>42</sup>

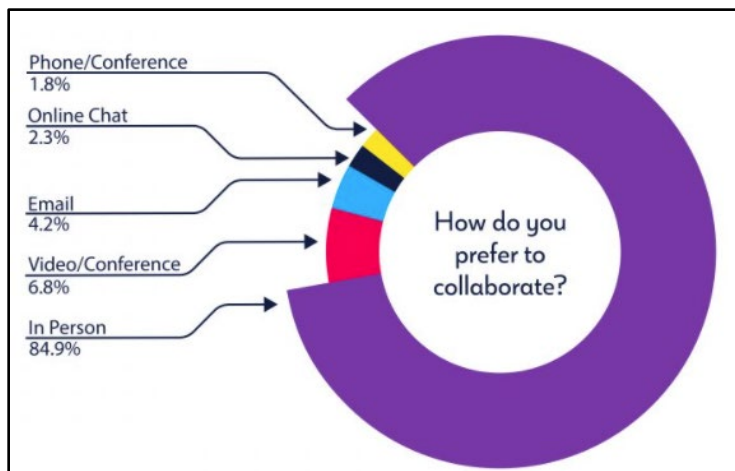


Figure 9: Preferred personal communications of Gen Z.<sup>43</sup>

Coupling the previously mentioned data with the ARSOF surveys, a soldier's lack of familiarity with ARSOF equates to a lower propensity to apply. Also, statistically, minority demographics show that SORB needs a robust social media awareness campaign to overcome a general lack of understanding, address critical barriers, and counter negative influencers that diminish ARSOF applications.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, more interactive social media activities will better support in-person communications from

<sup>42</sup> Tallo Data Insights. *Gen Z In the Workplace: Connections, Diversity, and Ethics*. August 25, 2020. <https://tallo.com/blog/gen-z-in-the-workplace-connections-diversity-ethics/> (accessed January 29, 2022).

<sup>43</sup> Tallo Data Insights. *Gen Z In the Workplace: Connections, Diversity, and Ethics*.

<sup>44</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing." Hise Gibson and Daniel White. *The Strategic Problem the Army Doesn't Seem to Care About: African Americans Aren't Branching Combat Arms*. US Army Demographics Office. *Blacks in the US Army—Then and Now*. Randolph C. White, Jr. *Wasting Time: Black Participation in The Combat Arms Branches*.

available ARSOF NCOs to motivate, influence, dispel myths, and help Gen Z minorities overcome barriers applying to ARSOF.<sup>45</sup>

### ***Influencers, Motivators, and Barriers to Accessions.***

The two surveys indicated that 68% and 72% of a respondent's spouse or significant other was the most prominent influence in considering joining ARSOF (Figure 10).<sup>46</sup> The surveys also showed that current and former ARSOF members could influence indecisive individuals to apply. Respondents annotated that they were more motivated to join when ARSOF NCOs removed the stigma of the A&S process and spoke personally about ARSOF opportunities.<sup>47</sup>

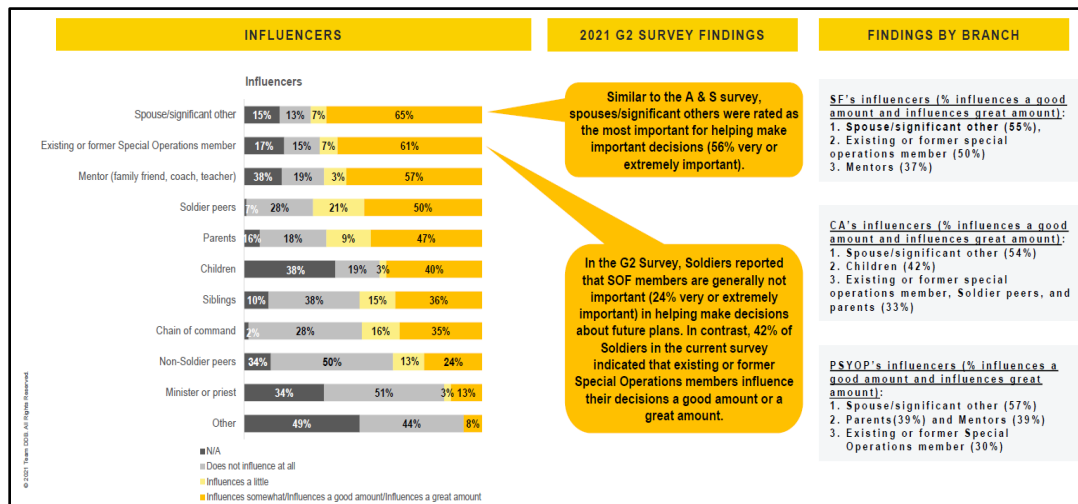


Figure 10: Most influential person(s) for important decisions.<sup>48</sup>

As Figure 11 depicts, the top motivators and barriers for ARSOF A&S applications revolved around respondents' beliefs about ARSOF. Both surveys revealed that the top

<sup>45</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey."

<sup>46</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing."

<sup>47</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing." USAJFKSWCS, "Army War College paper concerning recruiting diversity."

<sup>48</sup> USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing."

motivators were opportunities for professional growth and the benefits of a purposeful career. Conversely, the perceived barriers focused on assumptions of personal and professional difficulties endured with an ARSOF life.

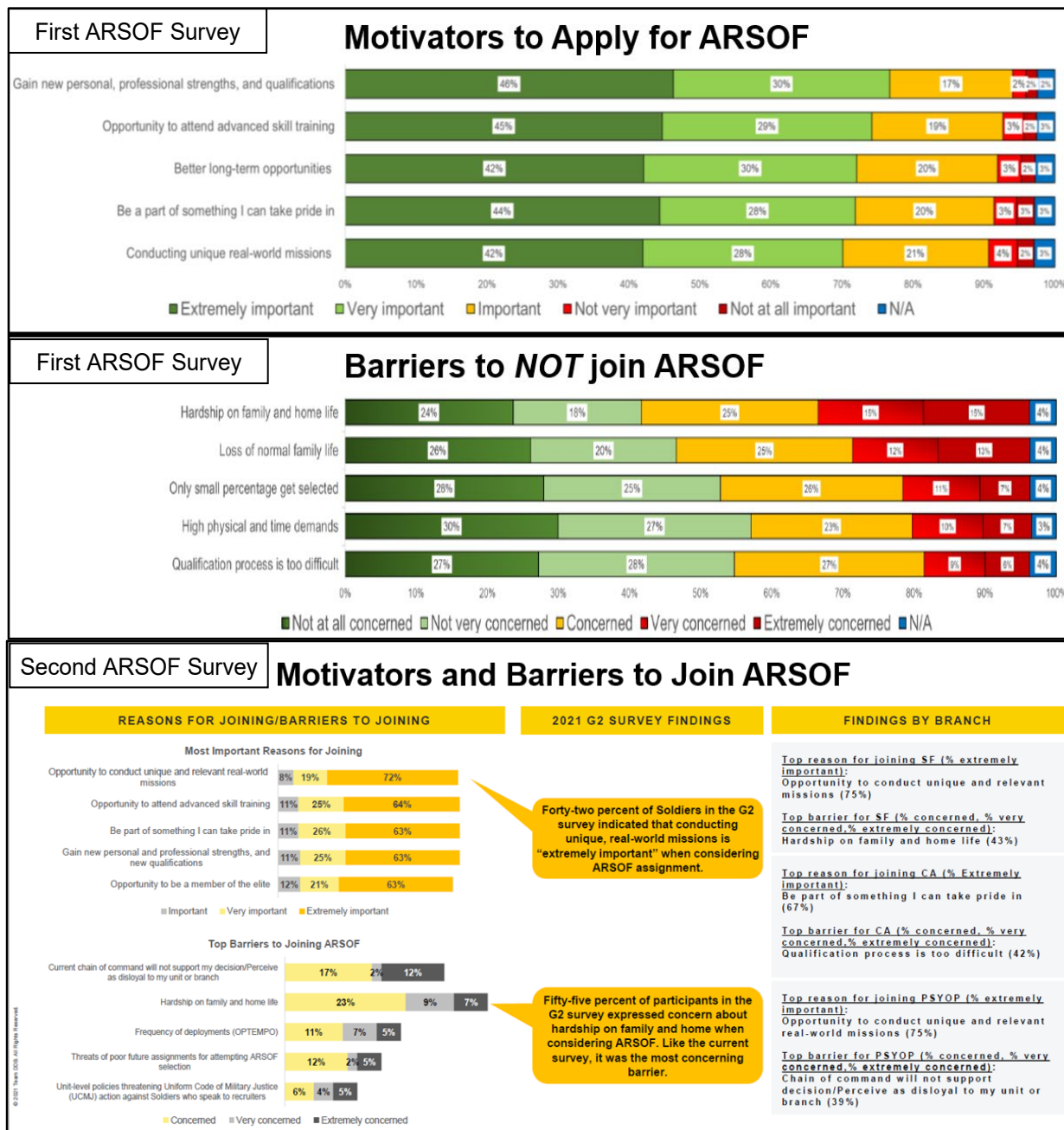


Figure 11: Top five Motivators and Barriers to joining ARSOF.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing."

Two other critiques that conceptually lower minority applications came from respondents offering feedback concerning the presence of ARSOF NCOs and the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) General Technical (GT) score requirement. First, respondents highlighted that when ARSOF NCOs led ARSOF A&S preparatory training, their active presence garnered more support from conventional forces command teams. The increased contact time also allowed ARSOF NCOs to highlight the motivators of an ARSOF life, dispel myths that may detract a soldier from joining ARSOF, and improve a candidate's ARSOF A&S performance when using the A&S preparation guide during physical training.<sup>50</sup>

Second, when SWCS instituted a pilot program to see if candidates would be successful with a lower GT score, the ASVAB GT score requirement shifted from 110 (SF) and 107 (CA and PO) to 100 for all three. Lowering the GT score increased SORB's eligible market by 26% (approximately 97k soldiers).<sup>51</sup> Lowering the GT score to 90 can potentially triple the SORB's market and is most beneficial for increasing minority representation because a "higher percentage of minorities have a GT score below 100."<sup>52</sup>

However, a sample population of ARSOF candidates with GT scores under 100 had lower selection rates at ARSOF A&S. They had difficulties managing the academic rigors of the ARSOF qualification courses. The primary statistical reason for

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<sup>50</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing." Herd and Teplitzky, "Special Forces Recruiting: An Overview of Current Procedures and Issues." 25. Jody Daigle, "War College Prospectus" (Email, SORB, Fort Bragg, NC, November 2021); SORB CDR, Email message to the author, November 10, 2021. USAJFKSWCS. *Special Forces Assessment and Selection Physical Training Handbook*. April 2, 2020. <http://goarmysof.com/documents/sf/SFAS-PT-handbook.pdf> (accessed November 10, 2021).

<sup>51</sup> USAREC. "USAREC Message: 22-022." Scott G. Nates-Njaa, "Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Analysis: ARSOF Force Generation." (PowerPoint, USASOC, Fort Bragg, NC, 21 October 2021); Equal Opportunity Senior Enlisted Advisor and NCOIC of the USASOC Diversity and Inclusion Operational Planning Team / D&I Cell, Email message to the author, November 4, 2021.

<sup>52</sup> Scott G. Nates-Njaa, "Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Analysis: ARSOF Force Generation." Total Army Personnel Database (TAPDB), "Enterprise Demographics\_TAPDB\_ver2 - 20200601." USAJFKSWCS, "100 GT" (Email, USASOC, Fort Bragg, NC, March 2022); ARSOF Proponency, Email message to the author, March 24, 2022.

underperformance was negotiating the complex problem-solving and abstract reasoning dilemmas presented in fast-paced unfamiliar environments.<sup>53</sup> Since ARSOF uses no other indicator of success than the GT score, ARSOF practitioners recommend that potential applicants raise low scores by using Army programs such as the Basic Skills Education Program (BSEP) or the Online Academic Skills Course (OASC).<sup>54</sup>

### SECTION 3: DISCUSSION

Three case studies offer perspectives and lessons on recruiting diversity and maintaining diverse demographics. The first involves the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which significantly failed to improve its diversity representation over fifteen years. The second examines how the Coca-Cola Corporation (Coke) struggled to improve its diversity representation over twenty years. The third shows how Google focused on recruiting and improved its diversity representation since 2014.

The size and scope of these organizations offer valuable insights applicable to increasing diversity in ARSOF. The FBI has approximately 35,000 employees (over 13,000 special agents), Coke has 79,000 employees (about 9,400 within the US), and Google has more than 156,500 workers (over 100,000 domestically).<sup>55</sup> Similarly, USASOC has more than 33,000 employees, with over 8,800 in ARSOF.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> USAJFKSWCS, "100 GT." USAJFKSWCS, "90 GT Score" (Email, USASOC, Fort Bragg, NC, March 2022); Command Psychologist, Email message to the author, March 30, 2022.

<sup>54</sup> USAJFKSWCS, "100 GT." ACCESS. *Army Credentialing and Continuing Education Services for Soldiers* (ACCESS). April 4, 2022. <https://armyuniversity.edu/access/SoldierDevelopment> (accessed April 7, 2022).

<sup>55</sup> FBI. *How many people work for the FBI?* December 1, 2021. <https://www.fbi.gov/about/faqs/how-many-people-work-for-the-fbi> (accessed December 23, 2021). FBI. *About us—Quick Facts*. October 17, 2011.

<http://www2.fbi.gov/quickfacts.htm> (accessed December 23, 2021). The Coca-Cola Company. *SEC Form 10-K (Annual report - 2021)*. February 22, 2022. [https://investors.coca-colacompany.com/filings-reports/annual-filings-10-k/content/0000021344-22-000009/ko-20211231.htm?TB\\_iframe=true&height=auto&width=auto&preload=false](https://investors.coca-colacompany.com/filings-reports/annual-filings-10-k/content/0000021344-22-000009/ko-20211231.htm?TB_iframe=true&height=auto&width=auto&preload=false) (accessed February 28, 2022). Google. *SEC Form 10-K (Annual report - 2021)*. February 1, 2022. [https://abc.xyz/investor/static/pdf/20220202\\_alphabet\\_10K.pdf?cache=fc81690](https://abc.xyz/investor/static/pdf/20220202_alphabet_10K.pdf?cache=fc81690) (accessed February 28, 2022).

<sup>56</sup> USASOC. ARSOF Fact Book. October 1, 2021. <https://www.soc.mil/USASOCHQ/USASOCFactBook.pdf> (accessed December 23, 2021). TAPDB, "Enterprise Demographics\_TAPDB\_ver2 – 20200601."

## Federal Bureau of Investigation

The FBI openly admits it has a diversity problem, particularly when it comes to its special agents. Despite 15-years of diversity recruiting campaigns, the FBI did not significantly improve its minority representation. In 2004, the FBI overhauled its recruiting program to improve public perception and recruit the most qualified and diverse candidates possible. However, that plan failed because it focused on niche grassroots recruiting efforts using minority college students to develop and market to peers on limited budgets. The FBI underfunded the initiative and did not receive senior FBI leadership emphasis.<sup>57</sup>

In 2009, the FBI refurbished the program by directing its human resources recruiters to focus more on minority college students. However, the organization did not address inequities in its application process, and senior FBI leaders used the initiative as a talking point, but otherwise remained aloof to the recruiting process. After a decade of effort, the minority composition of the FBI increased a paltry 0.8% from 2009 to 2019. Even more related to ARSOF, the diversity of special agents changed only slightly, with an increase of minority representation of only 1.4% over a decade (Figure 12).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Gwendolyn Hubbard, Robert K. Cromwell, and Tony Sgro. "Mission Possible: Creating a New Face for the FBI." *Police Chief* 71, no. 10 (October 2004): 37-38,41-42,44.

<sup>58</sup> Courtney Buble. *FBI Has Failed to Move the Needle on Diversity Over the Past Decade, Despite Efforts of Recent Directors*. February 14, 2020. <https://www.govexec.com/workforce/2020/02/fbi-has-failed-move-needle-diversity-over-past-decade-despite-efforts-recent-directors/163127/> (accessed January 19, 2022).



Figure 12: FBI Demographics—10 years separation (Total FBI and Special Agents).<sup>59</sup>

The FBI is a significant case study because the FBI and USASOC are similar-sized and organized workforces. ARSOF is a subset of USASOC, like special agents are to the FBI. The organizations' recruiting and assessment processes are comparable. The demographic disparities between the FBI's total force and special agents are analogous to USASOC's entire workforce and ARSOF. USASOC's total workforce includes 32.7% minorities, and ARSOF has 20.8% minorities.<sup>60</sup> The FBI's total workforce is 25.5% minorities, and its special agents are 18.4%.<sup>61</sup>

When the FBI realized it had a diversity problem, it tried using a generalized recruiting approach labeled a "grassroots student outreach campaign" to increase

<sup>59</sup> Courtney Buble. *FBI Has Failed to Move the Needle on Diversity Over the Past Decade, Despite Efforts of Recent Directors*.

<sup>60</sup> Total Army Personnel Database (TAPDB), "Enterprise Demographics\_TAPDB\_ver2 – 20200601."

<sup>61</sup> Courtney Buble. *FBI Has Failed to Move the Needle on Diversity Over the Past Decade, Despite Efforts of Recent Directors*. February 14, 2020. <https://www.govexec.com/workforce/2020/02/fbi-has-failed-move-needle-diversity-over-past-decade-despite-efforts-recent-directors/163127/> (accessed January 19, 2022).

minority representation.<sup>62</sup> However, it lacked strategic direction, a holistic recruiting strategy, and consistently engaged leaders over fifteen years. Minority recruiting was inconsistent in tempo and duration, was not organized in its geographic areas, and the agency was not "intentional in how it recruits, hires and promotes."<sup>63</sup> The lack of a codified recruiting strategy limited the FBI's understanding, actions, and decisions on how the FBI recruited minorities.<sup>64</sup> Coupled with leaders allowing disjointed recruiting operations, recruiting was not adequately resourced, enabling personal biases to affect hiring.

While saying it was non-discriminatory, the FBI demonstrated selection bias in its hiring practices, hiring more employees and agents that looked much like the current ones, resulting in the FBI of 2020 not looking radically different than the FBI 15 years prior. Peter Sursi, the FBI's Senior Executive of Recruitment and Hiring, said their "idea of the diversity crisis...was true, but was not resonating with our population."<sup>65</sup>

In 2015, FBI director James Comey spoke to Georgetown University about attitudes, relationships, and culture. His speech was the first time an FBI leader openly talked about diversity problems within the FBI. His comments revealed the underlying problem: "many people in our white-majority culture have unconscious racial biases and react differently to a white face than a black face."<sup>66</sup> Comey's concern was that the FBI

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<sup>62</sup> Gwendolyn Hubbard, Robert K. Cromwell, and Tony Sgro. "Mission Possible: Creating a New Face for the FBI."

<sup>63</sup> FBI. *Diversifying the FBI*. September 7, 2021. <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/beacon-project-connects-fbi-and-hbcus-090721> (accessed February 28, 2022).

<sup>64</sup> Nilanjana Dasgupta. "Implicit Attitudes and Beliefs Adapt to Situations: A Decade of Research on the Malleability of Implicit Prejudice, Stereotypes, and the Self-Concept." Chap. 5 in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, by Elsevier, edited by Ashby Plant Patricia Devine, 233-279. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2013.

<sup>65</sup> Samantha McLaren. *How the FBI Overhauled Its Hiring Process to Improve Diversity and Create a Better Candidate Experience*. November 4, 2019. <https://www.linkedin.com/business/talent/blog/talent-connect/how-fbi-overhauled-hiring-process-to-improve-diversity-and-candidate-experience> (accessed January 19, 2022). Luke O'Neil. *Not so special agent: FBI struggles to attract new recruits*. February 27, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/feb/27/fbi-struggles-to-attract-new-recruits> (accessed January 19, 2022). Courtney Buble. *FBI Has Failed to Move the Needle on Diversity Over the Past Decade, Despite Efforts of Recent Directors*.

<sup>66</sup> James B. Comey. *Hard Truths: Law Enforcement and Race*. February 12, 2015. <https://www.fbi.gov/news/speeches/hard-truths-law-enforcement-and-race> (accessed January 19, 2022).

became even less diverse despite its ongoing minority recruiting campaign. As Figure 13 shows, from 2006 to 2016, the US population became increasingly diverse, but the FBI did not. Notably, the percentage of minority special agents dropped from 18.9% in 2006 to 17.9% by 2016.<sup>67</sup>

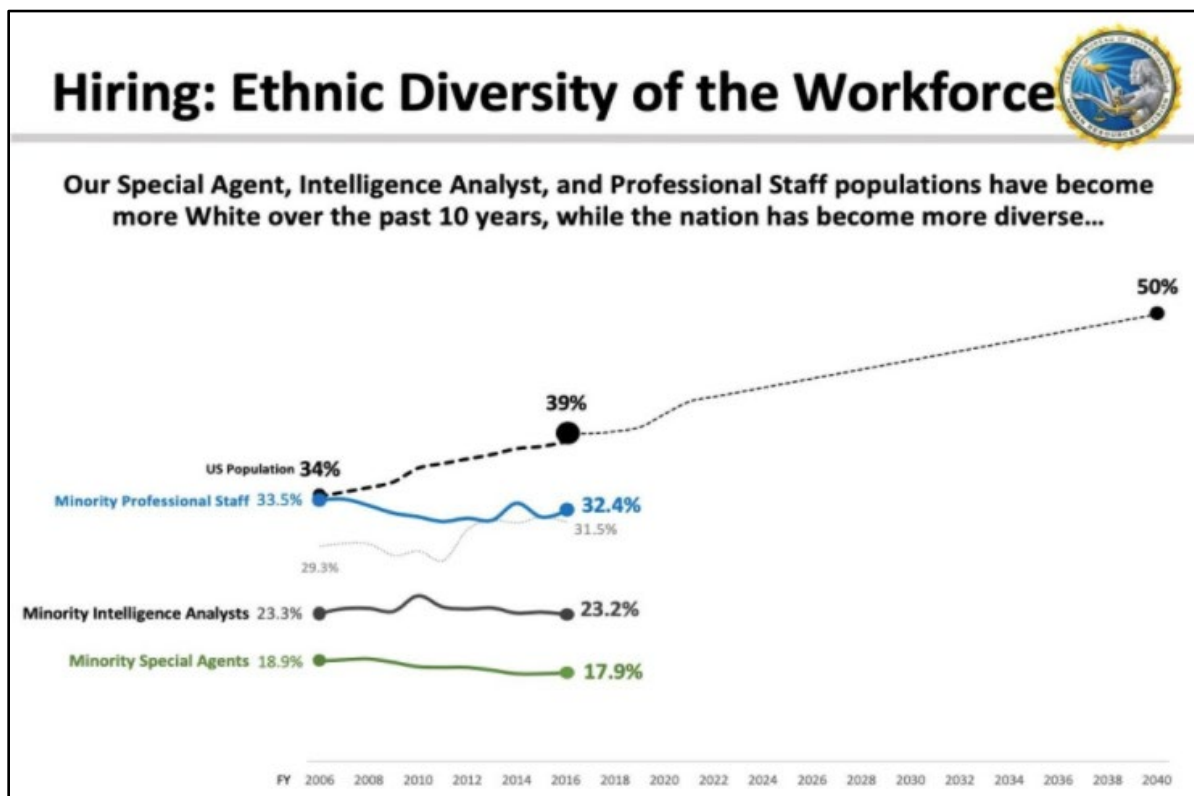


Figure 13: FBI Diversity rates 2006-2016 compared to US Population.<sup>68</sup>

After Comey's landmark statements, the attitudes of FBI leadership, unfortunately, did not drastically change. Some leadership had a systemic discriminatory attitude toward diversity initiatives and training, creating an unstable policy environment for DEI.<sup>69</sup> While

<sup>67</sup> Samantha McLaren. *How the FBI Overhauled Its Hiring Process to Improve Diversity and Create a Better Candidate Experience*.

<sup>68</sup> Samantha McLaren. *How the FBI Overhauled Its Hiring Process to Improve Diversity and Create a Better Candidate Experience*.

<sup>69</sup> Topher Sanders. *The FBI Has a Serious Diversity Problem*. March 20, 2018. <https://psmag.com/social-justice/the-fbi-has-an-ongoing-diversity-problem> (accessed January 19, 2022).

Comey was starting to change the FBI culture, he was abruptly fired prior to a minority recruiting event in 2017.<sup>70</sup> As imperfect as Comey was with his diversity plan, the former FBI director understood the profound importance of an agency that looked like the Nation it served.<sup>71</sup> The FBI's complacency towards diversity set in, and the initiatives for minority recruiting stopped flowing because of outdated recruiting initiatives.

FBI applications dropped significantly from 68,500 applicants in 2009 to 11,500 applicants in 2018 (-84%).<sup>72</sup> The FBI lost its appeal to potential minority recruits and diversity retention by appearing as a white-dominated organization. The rhetoric came after leaked internal FBI documents unveiled the FBI's use of racial and religious profiling to target investigations, which supported the American Civil Liberties Union's (ACLU) reporting on the FBI's ethnic and racial "mapping" of the US communities.<sup>73</sup>

Recently, due to the lack of applicants and appeal to a broader pool of candidates in underrepresented markets, the FBI refocused recruitment efforts to reach more minority and female candidates.<sup>74</sup> Even retirees became involved in recruiting with the "MIRROR Project" to increase the number of minorities in the FBI after years of failed attempts at recruiting diversity.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Richard Winton and James Queally. *Comey was 'caught flat-footed' and learned of firing from TV while talking to FBI agents in L.A., source says*. May 10, 2017. <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-comey-los-angeles-20170509-story.html> (accessed January 19, 2022).

<sup>71</sup> Ellen McGirt. *FBI Director James Comey's Dismissal Marks a Huge Loss for Diversity*. May 10, 2017. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/fbi-director-james-comey-dismissal-162240414.html> (accessed January 19, 2022).

<sup>72</sup> Luke O'Neil. *Not so special agent: FBI struggles to attract new recruits*. February 27, 2019.

<sup>73</sup> Agence France-Presse. *Ex-FBI Agent Who Leaked Documents Showing Racism, Jailed For 4 Years*. October 19, 2018. <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/terry-albury-ex-fbi-agent-who-leaked-documents-showing-racism-jailed-for-4-years-1934259> (accessed January 19, 2022). ACLU. *Mapping The FBI: Uncovering Abusive Surveillance and Racial Profiling*. Updated January 1, 2022. <https://www.aclu.org/issues/national-security/privacy-and-surveillance/mapping-fbi-0> (accessed January 19, 2022).

<sup>74</sup> Aruna Viswanatha and Byron Tau. *FBI's Most Wanted: More Applicants for Special Agents*. February 24, 2019. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/fbis-most-wanted-more-applicants-for-special-agents-11551023975> (accessed January 19, 2022). Topher Sanders. *The FBI Has a Serious Diversity Problem*.

<sup>75</sup> Jeff Pegues, Andrew Bast, and Michael Kaplan. *Former Black Special Agents Say FBI's Culture Is "Not Conducive to Minorities"*. October 7, 2020. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fbi-culture-minorities-black-special-agent/> (accessed January 19, 2022).

Furthermore, and led by the active engagements of the FBI's Director and its Chief Diversity Officer, the creation of the FBI's Beacon Project now highlights transparency in public affairs and community relations to find, attract, and recruit minority candidates.<sup>76</sup> Peter Sursi, the FBI's Human Resources and Talent Acquisition Chief, stated that diversity helps them "look like the population we serve and protect."<sup>77</sup> Energized with its lessons learned, the FBI's minority representation increased by 0.3% in two years, from 2019 to 2021, a faster rate than the 0.8% increase from 2009 to 2019.<sup>78</sup>

The FBI's generalized approach to diversity recruiting did not treat it as a complex problem or tie recruiting to its missions and values. The complacent attitudes tamped initiatives, kept outdated processes, and did not incorporate interactive and appealing marketing for minorities. Most importantly, weak leadership emphasis on the efforts led to less interest in them throughout the organization.

### Coca-Cola Corporation

In 2000, Coca-Cola Corporation (Coke) settled one of the US's most significant discrimination lawsuits for \$193 million from over 2,000 employees.<sup>79</sup> With a composition of only 26% minorities, Coke launched a long-term program to increase its diversity representation.<sup>80</sup> However, Coke struggled for the next twenty years because it lacked

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<sup>76</sup> Ryan Lucas. *The FBI is trying to add diversity to its ranks by recruiting at HBCUs*. December 8, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/12/08/1062478183/the-fbi-is-trying-to-add-diversity-to-its-ranks-by-recruiting-at-hbcus> (accessed February 28, 2022).

<sup>77</sup> Peter Sursi, interview by Mike Kapetanovic. Coffee Chat with FBI's Head of Talent Acquisition. (May 19, 2019). <https://www.growthlab.us/blog/fbi-recruitment-marketing-interview> (accessed January 19, 2022).

<sup>78</sup> Jessica Schneider. *FBI Faces Its Own Racial Reckoning while Leading Probes into Police Shooting Deaths*. June 10, 2021. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/09/politics/fbi-race-diversity-officer/index.html> (accessed January 19, 2022). Courtney Buble. *FBI Has Failed to Move the Needle on Diversity Over the Past Decade, Despite Efforts of Recent Directors*.

<sup>79</sup> Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev. "Why Diversity Programs Fail." *Harvard Business Review*, (July–August 2016): 52-60.

<sup>80</sup> Shari Caudron. *Task Force Report Reveals Coke's Progress on Diversity*. September 18, 2003. <https://workforce.com/news/task-force-report-reveals-cokes-progress-on-diversity> (accessed March 7, 2022).

strategic direction and actively engaged leadership to keep recruiting efforts focused.

From 2000 to 2006, Coke revamped its recruiting and mentoring programs and stayed under advisement from a court-appointed task force. The task force included business and civil rights experts with unprecedented power to dictate the hiring, compensation, and promotion practices of women and minorities. Coke's most notable change was restructuring its personnel practices and recruiting operations.<sup>81</sup>

Closing out 2007, at the height of Coke's diversity practices, the company shifted its focus from improving Black representation to increasing its composition of women to 50%. This shift, however, occurred before it had reached its initial goals with Black employees set by the task force. As a result, managers stopped willingly participating in college recruitment programs, and Coke slowed recruitment efforts at historically Black institutions. The company also stopped mandating diversity on interview boards.<sup>82</sup>

In 2010, Coke again shifted its recruiting focus to Hispanic and Latino representation. Later that year, two leading Hispanic business magazines and the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility recognized their efforts.<sup>83</sup> While Coke earned accolades for its Hispanic efforts, complacency simultaneously set in for the other demographics, and overall minority recruiting slowed.<sup>84</sup>

By 2012, sixteen Black and Hispanic employees sued Coke. Their lawsuit claimed Coke forced labor in a "cesspool of racial discrimination." The parties settled before it

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<sup>81</sup> Amanda Ernst. *Coca-Cola Diversity Task Force Ends After Five Years*. December 1, 2006. <https://www.law360.com/articles/14408/coca-cola-diversity-task-force-ends-after-five-years> (accessed January 22, 2022).

<sup>82</sup> Jennifer Maloney and Lauren Weber. *Coke's Elusive Goal: Boosting Its Black Employees*. December 16, 2020. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/coke-resets-goal-of-boosting-black-employees-after-20-year-effort-loses-ground-11608139999> (accessed January 22, 2022).

<sup>83</sup> Coca-Cola Consolidated. 2011. *2010 US Diversity Stewardship Report*. Atlanta: Coca-Cola Consolidated.

<sup>84</sup> Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton, and Sara Prince. *Diversity Matters*. February 2, 2015. <https://www.insurance.ca.gov/diversity/41-ISDGBD/GBDEExternal/upload/McKinseyDivmatters-201501.pdf> (accessed March 7, 2022).

went to court.<sup>85</sup> Over the next decade, Coke continued to struggle to keep diversity standards when compared to more than three hundred significant companies in twenty industries (Figure 14).<sup>86</sup>

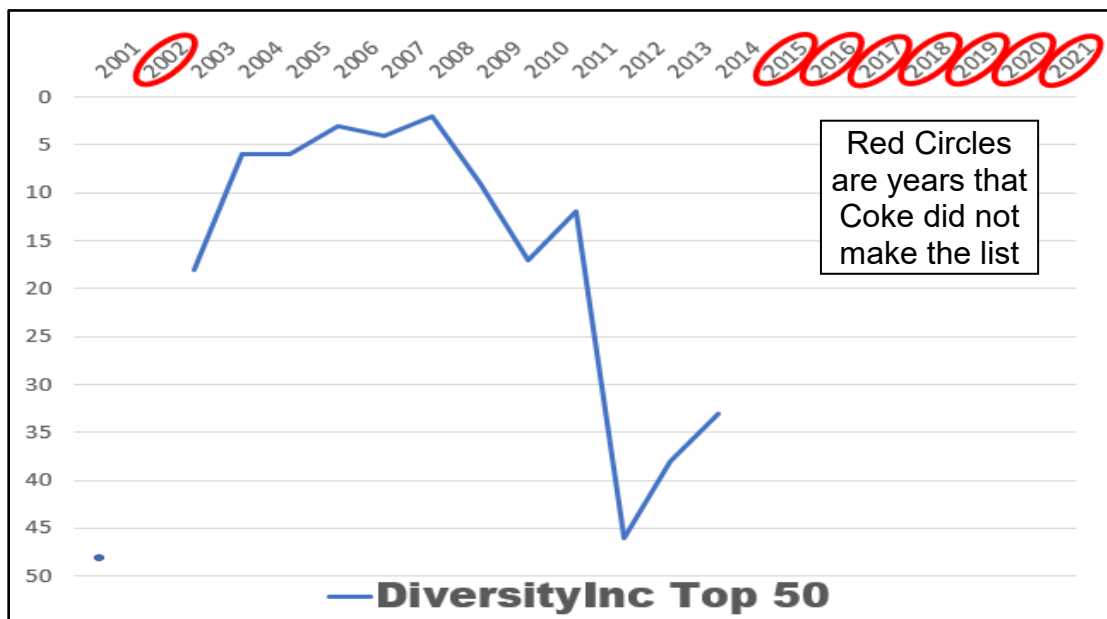


Figure 14: Coke struggling for diversity recognition by Diversity Inc.<sup>87</sup>

Coke launched yet another task force in 2020 to "mirror the richly diverse markets we serve to continue in diversity efforts."<sup>88</sup> The task force launched Coke's "Better Together" inclusivity learning curriculum. However, Coke came under heavy scrutiny from

<sup>85</sup> John Marzulli. *Coke's not it: 16 workers sue, call giant 'cesspool' of racial discrimination*. March 16, 2012. <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/coke-not-16-workers-sue-call-giant-cesspool-racial-discrimination-article-1.1041197> (accessed January 22, 2022). Daniel Blackburn. *Coke sued for alleged unfair practices*. January 28, 2013. <http://calcoastnews.com/2013/01/coke-sued-for-alleged-unfair-practices/> (accessed January 22, 2022). Judy Greenwald. *Coca-Cola Unit Sued for Alleged Racial Discrimination*. March 20, 2012. <https://workforce.com/news/coca-cola-unit-sued-for-alleged-racial-discrimination> (accessed January 22, 2022).

<sup>86</sup> Diversity Inc. *DiversityInc Top 50 Lists Since 2001*. May 6, 2021. <https://www.diversityinc.com/diversityinc-top-50-lists-since-2001/> (accessed January 22, 2022).

<sup>87</sup> Diversity Inc. *DiversityInc Top 50 Lists Since 2001*.

<sup>88</sup> Coca-Cola Consolidated. *2020 Annual Report*. November 1, 2021. <https://investor.cokeconsolidated.com/static-files/4df74450-9c10-4e3f-b0fb-86b914457e1c> (accessed January 22, 2022). Montserrat Cataldi. *How The Coca-Cola Company Exemplarily Embodies Diversity and Inclusion*. June 8, 2020. <https://topicinsights.com/sustainability/coca-cola-company-diversity-inclusion/> (accessed January 22, 2022). Coca-Cola Consolidated. *Employee Representation Goals: Mirroring the Markets We Serve*. January 4, 2022. <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/shared-future/diversity-and-inclusion/racial-equity/internal-action/black-representation> (accessed January 22, 2022).

allegations of anti-white rhetoric after online training suggested that being white constitutes racism.<sup>89</sup> After that debacle, Coke announced a new set of unethical diversity guidelines for external law firms mandating they follow race-based hiring and staffing decisions to reflect Coke's diversity aspirations. The mandate brought more scrutiny to their diversity programs and recruiting efforts for minority professionals.<sup>90</sup>

After twenty years, Coke announced that it did not achieve all its goals in hiring a more diverse workforce. However, Coke steadily changed its workforce demographics over time.<sup>91</sup> Coke had twenty years of intermittent success in diversity endeavors. Nevertheless, its leaders did not constantly focus on diversity recruiting and retention practices for just over 9,000 US-based employees.<sup>92</sup> While fighting the complex and adaptive problem of increasing diversity, Coke struggled with a court-ordered diversity task force and two internal recruiting and retention delegations. Coke eventually raised the composition of its minority representation significantly from its 2000 discrimination lawsuit (Figure 15), but stumbled through several others because of the inconsistent efforts over the next two decades.

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<sup>89</sup> Paul Bond. *After Coca-Cola Backlash, LinkedIn Removes Diversity Lesson Telling Employees to 'Be Less White'*. February 23, 2021. <https://www.newsweek.com/linkedin-removes-diversity-lesson-less-white-1571205> (accessed January 22, 2022).

<sup>90</sup> Bloomberg Law. *Coca-Cola Diversity Policy in Review May Get Legal Challenge*. April 30, 2021. <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/business-and-practice/coca-cola-diversity-policy-under-review-may-get-legal-challenge> (accessed March 5, 2022). Ed Whelan. *Racial Discrimination Goes Better with Coke?* February 11, 2021. <https://www.nationalreview.com/bench-memos/racial-discrimination-goes-better-with-coke/> (accessed March 5, 2022). Richard Epstein. *Coca-Cola's Diversity Diktat Falls Flat*. February 16, 2021. <https://www.hoover.org/research/coca-colas-diversity-diktat-falls-flat> (accessed March 5, 2022).

<sup>91</sup> Jennifer Maloney and Lauren Weber. *Coke's Elusive Goal: Boosting Its Black Employees*.

<sup>92</sup> Shari Caudron. *Task Force Report Reveals Coke's Progress on Diversity*. Coca-Cola Consolidated. *2020 Business & Environmental, Social and Governance Report*. April 19, 2021. <https://www.coca-colacompany.com/content/dam/journey/us/en/reports/coca-cola-business-environmental-social-governance-report-2020.pdf> (accessed January 22, 2022). The Coca-Cola Company. *SEC Form 10-K (Annual report - 2021)*. February 22, 2022.

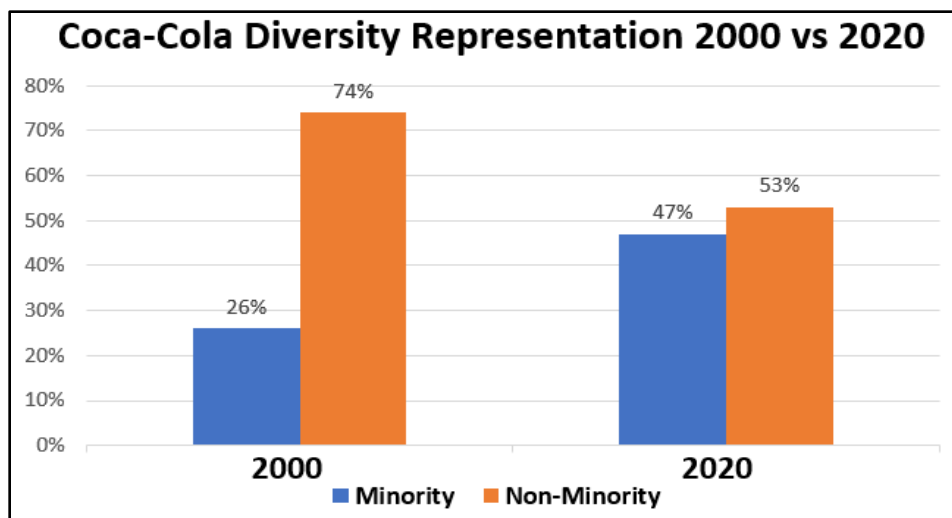


Figure 15: Coca-Cola Diversity Representation 2000 vs. 2020.<sup>93</sup>

Coke's experience shows that recruiting for diversity is a constant leader-focused effort to increase all underrepresented demographics. Despite increasing minority representation overall, Coke struggled when it diverted its attention from one specific diversity metric to another while stumbling through discrimination lawsuits. Minority recruiting success requires universal and continuously focused effort with actively engaged leaders. Coke's leaders did not sustain diverse recruiting operations with active involvement, proper resources, and strategic focus. While Coke did improve, Valerie Love, Coke's Senior Vice President of Human Resources, summed up the twenty-year struggle by saying, "we did not keep our eye on the North Star."<sup>94</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Coca-Cola Consolidated. *2020 Business & Environmental, Social and Governance Report*. Shari Caudron. *Task Force Report Reveals Coke's Progress on Diversity*.

<sup>94</sup> Jennifer Maloney and Lauren Weber. *Coke's Elusive Goal: Boosting Its Black Employees*. December 16, 2020. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/coke-resets-goal-of-boosting-black-employees-after-20-year-effort-loses-ground-11608139999> (accessed November 19, 2021).

## Google

Since 2014, Google has successfully improved diversity in its corporate workplace. In 2014, Google's leadership acknowledged its diversity problem and voluntarily published its employment demographics. The executive team believed the lack of diversity in its company could not change unless Google's leaders were honest with themselves and transparent with the public. The company's decision to openly report that its workforce comprised of only 35.5% minorities was the first step toward improving diversity.<sup>95</sup>

Seven years later, in 2021, Google's workforce included 49.6% minorities, a significant increase. Google focuses on the growth of underrepresented demographics and continually adapts to the complex problem of recruiting the best candidate from the available market by adjusting its practices to meet its needs. Google's constant changes also led to 2021 being their best year for hiring women in technical fields and US-based Black and Latino personnel (Figure 16).<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Caroline Fairchild. *Why Google voluntarily released dismal diversity numbers*. May 29, 2014. <https://fortune.com/2014/05/29/why-google-voluntarily-released-dismal-diversity-numbers/> (accessed February 5, 2022). Kia Kokalitcheva. Laszlo Block. *Getting to Work on Diversity at Google*. May 28, 2014. [https://googleblog.blogspot.co.uk/2014/05/getting-to-work-on-diversity-at-google.html?\\_ga=1.67373271.790100141.1401366085](https://googleblog.blogspot.co.uk/2014/05/getting-to-work-on-diversity-at-google.html?_ga=1.67373271.790100141.1401366085) (accessed February 5, 2022).

<sup>96</sup> Google. *2021 Diversity Annual Report*. December 31, 2021. <https://diversity.google/annual-report/> (accessed February 5, 2022). Laszlo Bock, interview by Gwen Ifill. 2014. *The PBS NewsHour* (May 28). <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/google-report-shows-women-and-minorities-left-behind> (accessed February 5, 2022).

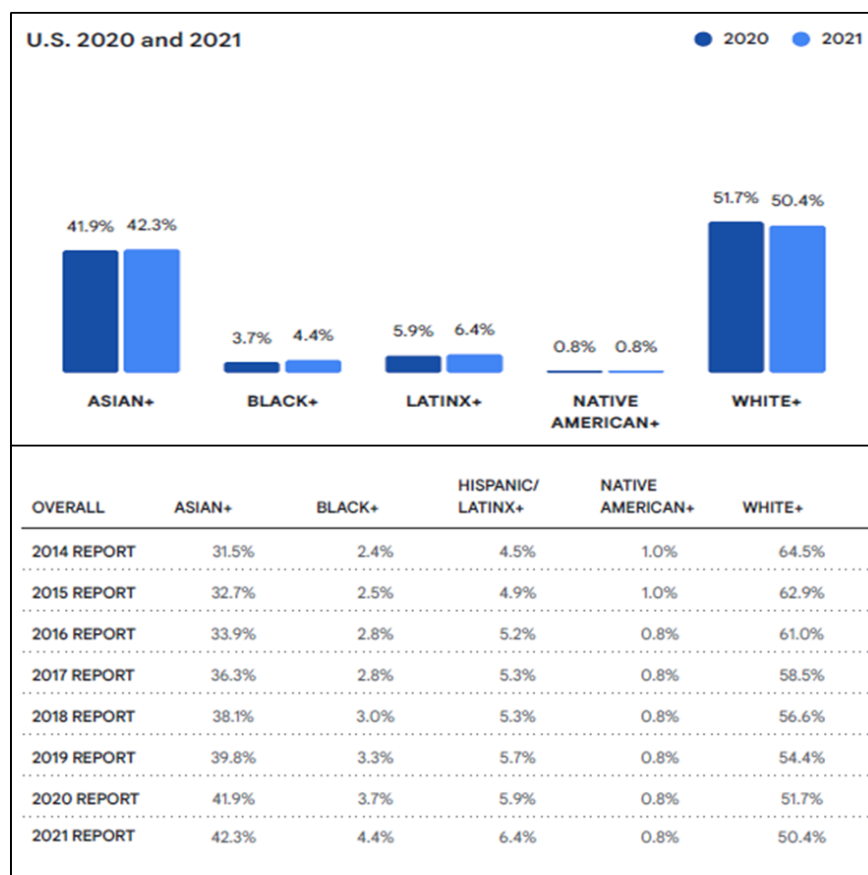


Figure 16: Google's workforce diversity representation.<sup>97</sup>

When Google shifted to a holistic diversity improvement concept, it created a task force with unprecedented power in recruiting and hiring, performance management, career progression, and retention practices of women and minorities.<sup>98</sup> Google then focused on four intensive resource initiatives—recruiting and hiring, inclusion and innovation, education, and communities.<sup>99</sup>

*Recruiting and Hiring:* Google vowed to raise minority representation in its

<sup>97</sup> Google. *2021 Diversity Annual Report*. Google. *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*. January 1, 2022. <https://diversity.google/> (accessed January 11, 2022).

<sup>98</sup> Sundar Pichai. *Our commitments to racial equity*. Danielle Abril. *How This Google Team Is Trying to Make the Company's Products More Inclusive*. October 8, 2019. <https://fortune.com/2019/10/08/google-product-inclusion-team-ai-bias/> (accessed February 5, 2022).

<sup>99</sup> Ellen McGirt. *An Inside Look at How Google Is Embracing Diversity*. January 20, 2017. <http://fortune.com/2012/02/24/inside-googles-recruiting-machine/> (accessed February 5, 2022).

leadership by 30% by 2025, increase the representation of Black, Hispanic, and Native Americans in non-leadership roles by 100%, and add 10,000 minority employees in Atlanta, Chicago, New York, and Washington D.C.<sup>100</sup> To do that, Google started a program to track candidates from recruitment through the hiring process, allowing for focused recruiting and hiring efforts on new diverse talent. In this case, human resource activities and policies drove corporate business success.<sup>101</sup> Managers willingly helped with minority recruitment programs and minority employees volunteered for interview boards to reduce biases related to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or disabilities.

*Inclusion and innovation:* Google created Diversity Core, allowing its employees to develop innovative ideas to create a more welcoming culture and increase its diversity.<sup>102</sup> Google allocates human resource employees 20% of its time to innovate and work on diversity initiatives.<sup>103</sup> Google then partnered with the Equity Project Management Office and Black Leadership Advisory Group to expand their mental and physical benefits packages to minority employees and families.

*Education:* Google acknowledges unconscious biases impact recruiting, and as a result, Google employees designed and implemented antiracism, antibias, and DEI programs.<sup>104</sup> Google also revamped its career and professional development model to promote hiring and are transforming the composition of the company.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Google. *2021 Diversity Annual Report*. Sundar Pichai. *Our commitments to racial equity*. June 17, 2020. <https://buildyourfuture.withgoogle.com/programs/bold-immersion/> (accessed February 5, 2022).

<sup>101</sup> Ann VanderMey. *Inside Google's Recruiting Machine*. February 24, 2012. <http://fortune.com/2012/02/24/inside-googles-recruiting-machine/> (accessed February 5, 2022).

<sup>102</sup> Jessica Guynn. *Google Gives Employees 20% of Time to Work on Diversity*. May 14, 2015. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2015/05/13/google-twenty-%-time-diversity/27208475/> (accessed February 5, 2022).

<sup>103</sup> John Sullivan. *A Case Study of Google Recruiting*.

<sup>104</sup> Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald. *Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good People*. New York: Delacorte Press, 2013.

<sup>105</sup> Ellen McGirt. *An Inside Look at How Google Is Embracing Diversity*. Sundar Pichai. *Our commitments to racial equity*.

*Communities:* Google pays employees to volunteer with community projects and donates \$50 for every five volunteer hours.<sup>106</sup> The company started its BOLD (Building Opportunities for Leadership and Development) summer internship program for minority undergraduates.<sup>107</sup> Google routinely commits millions of dollars, in \$3+ million increments, to increase minority representation in computer science education and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programs at high schools and colleges.<sup>108</sup> Finally, Google announced a \$175 million economic opportunity package for minority business owners, startup founders, job seekers, and developers.<sup>109</sup>

Supporting these four pillars, Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev published how companies can positively or negatively influence diversity programs. For their research, Google meets the criteria that companies can change all demographics for the better when they abandon control tactics and elicit support for DEI initiatives over time.<sup>110</sup> Their conclusions also support USASOC's DEI initiatives and SORB's potential minority recruiting for ARSOF diversity (Figure 17).

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<sup>106</sup> Fortune. *Best Companies to Work For 2014*. January 1, 2022. <https://fortune.com/best-companies/2014/google/> (accessed February 5, 2022).

<sup>107</sup> Google. *BOLD Immersion*. January 1, 2022. <https://buildyourfuture.withgoogle.com/programs/bold-immersion/> (accessed February 5, 2022).

<sup>108</sup> Thurgood Marshall College Fund. *TMCF and UNCF receive a \$6 Million Investment from Google to Expand Pathways for HBCU Students in the Tech Industry*. February 9, 2022. <https://www.yahoo.com/now/tmcf-uncf-receive-6-million-143400986.html> (accessed February 5, 2022). Anne Stych. *Tech companies pledge \$300M to STEM education*. September 27, 2017. <https://www.bizjournals.com/bizwomen/news/latest-news/2017/09/major-tech-companies-pledge-300m-to-stem-education.html?page=all> (accessed February 5, 2022).

<sup>109</sup> Sundar Pichai. *Our commitments to racial equity*.

<sup>110</sup> Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev. "Why Diversity Programs Fail."

% CHANGE OVER FIVE YEARS IN REPRESENTATION AMONG MANAGERS								
Type of program	White		Black		Hispanic		Asian	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Voluntary training			+13.3		+9.1		+9.3	+12.6
Self-managed teams	-2.8	+5.6	+3.4	+3.9				+3.6
Cross-training	-1.4	+3.0	+2.7	+3.0	-3.9		+6.5	+4.1
College recruitment: women*	-2.0	+10.2	+7.9	+8.7		+10.0	+18.3	+8.6
College recruitment: minorities**			+7.7	+8.9				
Mentoring				+18.0	+9.1	+23.7	+18.0	+24.0
Diversity task forces	-3.3	+11.6	+8.7	+22.7	+12.0	+16.2	+30.2	+24.2
Diversity managers		+7.5	+17.0	+11.1		+18.2	+10.9	+13.6

\*College recruitment targeting women turns recruiting managers into diversity champions, so it also helps boost the numbers for black and Asian-American men.

\*\*College recruitment targeting minorities often focuses on historically black schools, which lifts the numbers of African-American men and women.

NOTE GRAY INDICATES NO STATISTICAL CERTAINTY OF A PROGRAM'S EFFECT.

SOURCE AUTHORS' STUDY OF 829 MIDSIZE AND LARGE U.S. FIRMS. THE ANALYSIS ISOLATED THE EFFECTS OF DIVERSITY PROGRAMS FROM EVERYTHING ELSE GOING ON IN THE COMPANIES AND IN THE ECONOMY.

FROM "WHY DIVERSITY PROGRAMS FAIL," BY FRANK DOBBIN AND ALEXANDRA KALEV, JULY-AUGUST 2016

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Figure 17: Statistical changes of positive influences in DEI programs.<sup>111</sup>

In the "War for Talent," research has shown that leaders will improve talent when positive changes occur, including actively recruiting and retaining diversity.<sup>112</sup> To match their market, Google's frequent changes in hiring practices increase minority representation (Figure 18).

OVERALL	ASIAN+	BLACK+	HISPANIC/ LATINX+	NATIVE AMERICAN+	WHITE+
2015 REPORT	34.9%	3.5%	5.9%	0.9%	59.3%
2016 REPORT	37.4%	4.3%	6.5%	0.7%	54.9%
2017 REPORT	43.0%	3.7%	5.8%	0.6%	51.1%
2018 REPORT	43.8%	4.1%	6.3%	0.8%	49.7%
2019 REPORT	43.9%	4.8%	6.8%	1.1%	48.5%
2020 REPORT	48.5%	5.5%	6.6%	0.8%	43.1%
2021 REPORT	42.8%	8.8%	8.8%	0.7%	44.5%

Figure 18: Google's hiring diversity representation.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev. "Why Diversity Programs Fail."

<sup>112</sup> Ed Michaels, Helen Handfield-Jones, and Beth Axelroad. *The War for Talent* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2001), 7.

<sup>113</sup> Google. *2021 Diversity Annual Report*.

Due to their recruiting efforts, Google is now an extremely appealing company to jobseekers and receives more than two million job applications annually.<sup>114</sup> Despite their successes, however, there is still room for improvement. A group of former employees is suing Google, alleging "systemic bias against Black employees." The case is too early in the proceedings for published outcomes, and Google denies any wrongdoing.<sup>115</sup> Fortunately, CEOs from multiple corporations and industries are progressively adopting Google's comprehensive approach to increasing minority representation. Google believes that it is essential for a company's employee demographics to reflect the people they serve.<sup>116</sup>

Melonie Parker, Google's Chief Diversity Officer, said, "We still have a long way to create true racial equity."<sup>117</sup> One of their significant challenges is increasing the representation of Blacks and Hispanics, who are less likely to have the technical skills required for company roles. However, Google leaders are involved and never satisfied, spurring them to continually question if they are doing enough to support their diversity initiatives. Once named the "Happiest Company in America," Google's efforts make them an attractive company for recruits from which ARSOF can glean lessons.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Rob Rawson. *What Does It Take to Get a Job at Google?* July 10, 2015. <http://blog.staff.com/what-does-it-take-to-get-a-job-at-google/> (accessed February 5, 2022).

<sup>115</sup> Jonathan Stempel. *Google is accused in lawsuit of systemic bias against Black employees.* March 18, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/google-is-accused-lawsuit-systemic-bias-against-black-employees-2022-03-18/> (accessed March 23, 2022).

<sup>116</sup> Boris Groysberg and Katherine Connolly. "Great leaders who make the mix work." *Harvard Business Review*, (September 2013): 68–76.

<sup>117</sup> Kia Kokalitcheva. *Google's workplace diversity still has a long way to go.* June 1, 2015. <https://fortune.com/2015/06/01/google-diversity-demographics/> (accessed February 5, 2022). Jen Colletta. *How Google is making DE&I more than a buzzword.* October 27, 2021. <https://hrexecutive.com/how-google-is-making-dei-more-than-a-buzzword/> (accessed February 5, 2022).

<sup>118</sup> Stan Phelps. *Cracking Into Google: 15 Reasons Why More Than 2 million People Apply Each Year.* August 5, 2014. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stanphelps/2014/08/05/cracking-into-google-the-15-reasons-why-over-2-million-people-apply-each-year/?sh=386feb032038> (accessed February 5, 2022).

## Section Summary

Recruiting minorities is a complex adaptive problem, as seen by the three case studies. There is no quick-fix solution that is precise in its operations; it is a long-duration effort, and sometimes there are setbacks. The FBI failed to achieve its goals, and Coke struggled because its leaders did not keep the consistency, proper resources, and strategic focus to be successful. Google succeeded because it created a robust, sustained program, supported with significant resources, and encouraged recruiting through continuous leadership attention and emphasis. These examples show that change at the enterprise level is possible, but not without constant leadership emphasis.

## **SECTION 4: ANALYSIS, COUNTERARGUMENTS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### Analysis

Like the reassessments of recruiting in the three case studies, the SORB must reevaluate its recruiting resourcing and strategies soon. Increasing diversity in ARSOF will be a complex and imprecise operation needing significant leader focus.<sup>119</sup> Additional to the insights about generational attitudes, two significant projections will affect the SORB's market by 2027. The first factor is the Census Bureau's forecast that the US population ages 18-29 will become a majority nonwhite population by 2027 (Figure 19). Also, by 2035, the projection of the total US population will be more racially blended, making racial and ethnic demographics more challenging to measure with the self-identification of multiple races.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> The Joint Staff. *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Planning*. Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, 2020. V-6. Headquarters, Department of the Army. *Army Design Methodology*, Army Techniques Publication 5-0.1 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, July 2015). [https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR\\_pubs/DR\\_a/pdf/web/atp5\\_0x1.pdf](https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/atp5_0x1.pdf). pp. 4-1 to 4-2, A-1 to A-4.

<sup>120</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. *2017 National Population Projections Datasets*. Updated October 8, 2021.



Figure 19: Distribution of the "Minority white" tipping points differ by age.<sup>121</sup>

The second factor projects the US age demographics of the number of eighteen-year-olds in the US through 2037 (Figure 20). The demographics show the beginning of the "birth dearth" where all organizations (military, corporate business, education) will struggle to attract young adults.<sup>122</sup> The projected decrease is due to reduced fertility rates (about 25% from 2006 to 2020).<sup>123</sup> By 2025, and significant to USAREC, there will be at least a decade in which each year's prospective market is smaller than the last.

<https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/2017/demo/popproj/2017-popproj.html> (accessed January 24, 2022).

<sup>121</sup> William H. Frey. *The US will become 'minority white' in 2045, Census projects*. March 14, 2018.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/03/14/the-us-will-become-minority-white-in-2045-census-projects/> (accessed January 24, 2022). US Census Bureau. *2017 National Population Projections Datasets*.

<sup>122</sup> Judith R. Seltzer. "Getting the Birth Dearth Right." *The National Interest*, no. 11 (1988): 100–106. Rick Seltzer. *Birth Dearth Approaches*. December 15, 2020. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/12/15/more-high-school-graduates-through-2025-pool-still-shrinks-afterward> (accessed January 24, 2022).

<sup>123</sup> Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*. December 15, 2020. <https://knocking.wiche.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/12/Knocking-pdf-for-website.pdf> (accessed January 24, 2022). The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inc. *The Looming Enrollment Crisis: How Colleges Are Responding to Shifting Demographics and New Student Needs*. November 15, 2019. <https://www.siena.edu/files/resources/the-looming-enrollment-crisis.pdf> (accessed January 24, 2022).

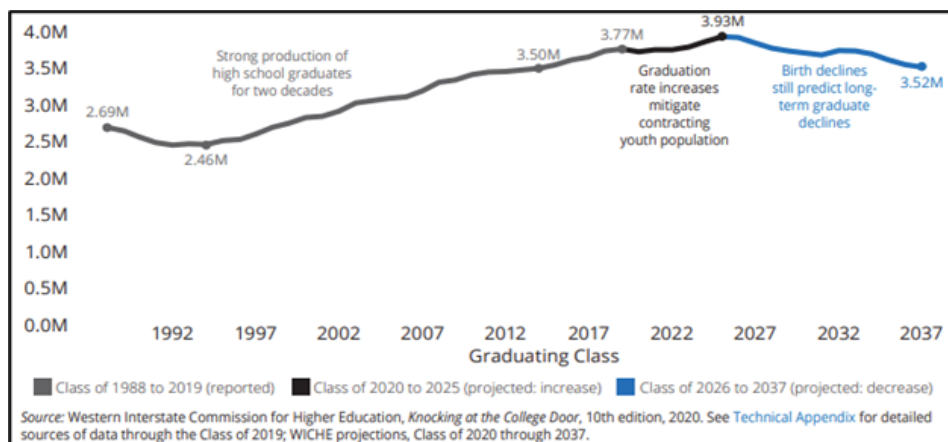


Figure 20: High School Graduates, reported and projected 1988-2037.<sup>124</sup>

Moreover, the Presidents' 2023 defense budget request wants to reduce the active-duty Army by 12,000 soldiers.<sup>125</sup> The proposed reduction may merely reflect that the Army cannot sustain its manning levels. The requested reduction compounds the "birth dearth" with the diversity projections and is significant for the SORB's market projections and recruiting goals. The SORB's recruiting pool will be smaller and more diverse from 2025 through 2037. The SORB's current recruiting approach will not be optimal if it does not have a clear aggressive recruiting plan to reach the underrepresented racial, ethnic, and gender populations in its market.

By appearing as a white-dominated organization, ARSOF risks its appeal to potential recruits and the influence to retain its minority soldiers. It also risks losing appeal to potential white candidates because of their expectations of the institutions they join. USASOC can help SORB in its minority efforts by improving its DEI practices and increasing minority ARSOF accessions and retention.

<sup>124</sup> WICHE. *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates*.

<sup>125</sup> Thomas Spoehr. *Commentary: Military recruiting is increasingly AWOL. Can we fix it?*. March 31, 2022. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/commentary-military-recruiting-is-increasingly-awol-can-we-fix-it/ar-AAVHhxi> (accessed March 31, 2022).

The market research is still unclear how much the lack of minority accessions is due to barriers, conscious or unconscious prejudices, or long-standing stereotypes. The last recorded data on minority soldiers' reactions to recruiting information and materials is over two decades old and of little value.<sup>126</sup> The ARSOF surveys, the primary source of market intelligence for SORB recruiters, do not specifically address minority markets. Due to the absence of information, ARSOF recruiters may not understand minority soldiers' assumptions about the organization and may be less effective as a result.

Recognizing the ARSOF market research shortcomings, USAREC stood up its Special Operations Recruiting Support Division in the USAREC G3 in 2021. Supporting USAREC in its efforts, USASOC now has a liaison officer at USAREC headquarters to enable all USAREC recruiters with information that enhances ARSOF recruiting.

To help with recruiting and identifying diversity barriers within the ARSOF enterprise, USASOC started holding DEI Operational Planning Team (OPT) meetings. While it is still fledgling, the OPT is a coordinated effort within USASOC and SORB to mitigate structural and perceived barriers to minorities and women joining and maintaining a career in USASOC. USASOC charged the OPT to improve four lines of effort—recruiting, selection, utilization (ARSOF career talent management), and organizational culture.<sup>127</sup>

One of the first things the OPT recognized was the underrepresentation of minorities in the training and recruiting forces. Minorities made up only 14.3% of the

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<sup>126</sup> Sheila Nataraj Kirby, Margaret C. Harrell, and Jennifer Sloan, "Why Don't Minorities Join Special Operations Forces?" *Armed Forces & Society* 26 (Summer 2000): 536.

<sup>127</sup> Scott G. Nates-Njaa, "USASOC Diversity and Inclusion Operational Planning Team Directive." (Email, USASOC, Fort Bragg, NC, November 2021); Equal Opportunity Senior Enlisted Advisor and NCOIC of the USASOC Diversity and Inclusion Operational Planning Team / D&I Cell, Email message to the author, November 4, 2021.

ARSOF A&S cadre and 16.7% of SORB SF recruiters.<sup>128</sup> While SWCS does not conduct recruiting operations, the lack of a diverse cadre also sends a message that augments perceived barriers to minorities. Likewise, if SORB wants to contend in the future minority market, it needs more minority recruiters, especially ARSOF NCOs.

The OPT also acknowledged a need to support SORB's recruiting efforts with minority ARSOF NCOs. The support goal is to conduct events with a high return on investment without overburdening the operational force with excessive support requests. Like the Total Army Involvement in Recruiting (TAIR) program, USASOC modeled its augmentation package after the current USAREC TAIR teams. With recruiters, these teams represented various races, ethnicities, gender, and ranks to discuss the ARSOF environment, family life, career progression, qualification process, and benefits.<sup>129</sup>

### Addressing Three Counterarguments

Because of the cultural and organizational resistance to DEI programs, several counterarguments to pursuing them arise. The following, in bold, are the most prominent ones, followed by the argument addressing them:

(1) ***Focusing on diversity while recruiting could unnecessarily highlight a perceived cultural problem in the Army.*** While the Army is seldom at the forefront of cultural or social reform, it is unequalled in its diversity integration, and addressing DEI is

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<sup>128</sup> Jody Daigle, "SORB Monthly Update: OCT 2021" (Email, SORB, Fort Bragg, NC, October 2021); SORB CDR, Email message to the author, November 10, 2021. USASOC, "Army War College paper concerning recruiting diversity."

<sup>129</sup> Lolita C. Baldor. US military's elite commando forces look to expand diversity. June 16, 2021. <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/us-militarys-elite-commando-forces-expand-diversity-78307046> (accessed December 2, 2021). <https://recruiting.army.mil/Portals/15/Documents/Forms%20and%20Pubs/USAREC%20Pamphlets/UP%20601-2-1.pdf?ver=2019-02-08-152111-713> (accessed September 1, 2021).

mandatory to attract young, high-performing soldiers and civilians into ARSOF.<sup>130</sup> Failing to address demographic issues could compound them, creating more severe readiness and sustained force structure shortages.

**(2) Neither SORB nor USAREC needs to focus on minority recruiting because they are already making their missions with a diverse demographic.** While they are achieving the ARSOF recruiting mission, emerging trends and generational attitudes threaten their ability to recruit in the future.<sup>131</sup> Recruiting minorities is now a performance metric for Fortune 500 companies and when hiring Army Civilians.<sup>132</sup> If leaders do not use a deliberately inclusive recruiting framework, the existing ARSOF recruiting practices may succumb to the traditions plaguing some corporations as another white-dominated organization.<sup>133</sup>

**(3) An emphasis on recruiting minorities to make Special Operations more inclusive will detract from the organization's effectiveness.**<sup>134</sup> Multiple studies demonstrate that diverse and inclusive teams outperform homogeneous competitors.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Charles Moskos and John Sibley Butler. *All That We Can Be: Black Leadership and Racial Integration the Army Way*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1997. xii and 2.

<sup>131</sup> First Advantage, and Talent Board. *Gen Z Recruiting Study: Talent Acquisition Professionals Reveal Hiring Challenges & Strategies*. December 21, 2021. [http://images.learn.fadv.com/Web/FirstAdvantageCorporation/%7B5ac73f56-47d3-4703-8aad-26f7463ddf55%7D\\_TA\\_Pros\\_Reveal\\_Hiring\\_Challenges\\_Strategies.pdf?elqTrackId=4d878d28f7c84a0d9512451748bb8f71&elqaid=498&elqat=2](http://images.learn.fadv.com/Web/FirstAdvantageCorporation/%7B5ac73f56-47d3-4703-8aad-26f7463ddf55%7D_TA_Pros_Reveal_Hiring_Challenges_Strategies.pdf?elqTrackId=4d878d28f7c84a0d9512451748bb8f71&elqaid=498&elqat=2) (accessed January 22, 2022). Richard Fry. *Millennials are the largest generation in the US labor force*. April 11, 2018. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/11/millennials-largest-generation-us-labor-force/> (accessed January 22, 2022).

<sup>132</sup> Marco Quiroz-Gutierrez. *The top 20 Fortune 500 companies on diversity and inclusion*. June 2, 2021. <https://fortune.com/2021/06/02/fortune-500-companies-diversity-inclusion-numbers-refinitiv-measure-up/> (accessed January 16, 2022). Dr. Paul-Thomas Ferguson. *Army Diversity Policy Promotes the Workplace Melting Pot*. July 1, 2021. [https://www.army.mil/article/248105/army\\_diversity\\_policy\\_promotes\\_the\\_workplace\\_melting\\_pot](https://www.army.mil/article/248105/army_diversity_policy_promotes_the_workplace_melting_pot) (accessed January 22, 2022).

<sup>133</sup> Danielle Holt & Susan Davis, "Interrupting Bias in Army Talent Management," *Parameters* 52, no. 1 (2022): 21-40, doi:10.55540/0031-1723.3127.

<sup>134</sup> Naval Postgraduate school. *Professor Anna Simons*. January 1, 2022. <https://faculty.nps.edu/asimons/> (accessed January 22, 2022). Anna Simons. "Diversity and SOF: Boon or Bane?" *Special Operations Journal* 5, no. 1 (2019): 42-52. Anna Simons. *Here's Why Women in Combat Units Is a Bad Idea*. November 18, 2014. <https://warontherocks.com/2014/11/heres-why-women-in-combat-units-is-a-bad-idea/> (accessed January 22, 2022).

<sup>135</sup> David Rock and Heidi Grant. *Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter*. November 4, 2016. <https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter> (accessed September 2, 2021). Katherine Phillips, Katie Liljenquist, and Margaret Neale. *Better Decisions Through Diversity: Heterogeneity can boost group performance*.

Diversity in recruiting, retention, and other talent management metrics leads to long-term growth. Diverse groups also retain more talent with commitments from the employer and employees.<sup>136</sup> Compounding the complexity of this issue are the threats to proper manning discussed earlier in this paper.

### Recommendations

Committing to diversity in ARSOF is key to proper manning and future multi-domain operation successes. Since USASOC must still field a capable and professional ARSOF, implementing these six recommendations will help break down perceived barriers affecting potential minority ARSOF candidates. Additionally, commitments connect an individual to the organization, enhancing retention and reducing stress on the recruiting enterprise.<sup>137</sup>

(1) SORB needs a comprehensive minority recruiting strategy with significant leadership support and accountability. Active leadership garners more support from conventional forces command teams to highlight the motivators to join ARSOF, dispel myths about ARSOF, and improve a candidate's ARSOF A&S performance. As the case studies demonstrate, leadership must champion diversity initiatives with resources and emphasis to succeed.

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October 1, 2010. [https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/better\\_decisions\\_through\\_diversity](https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/better_decisions_through_diversity) (accessed September 1, 2021).

<sup>136</sup> Jessica Scott. *Male-Female Cohesion in The Military: Yes, It's Possible*. November 24, 2014. <https://warontherocks.com/2014/11/male-female-cohesion-in-the-military-yes-its-possible/> (accessed January 22, 2022). Robert Egnell. *Don't Exclude Women from Combat Units Because Of Cohesion*. November 24, 2014. <https://warontherocks.com/2014/11/dont-exclude-women-from-combat-units-because-of-cohesion/> (accessed January 22, 2022). Lindsay Dodgson and Marguerite Ward. *Here are the exact reasons why diverse companies are more profitable, according to a neuroscience and leadership expert*. February 24, 2020. <https://www.businessinsider.com/benefits-of-diverse-companies-2017-3> (accessed January 22, 2022).

<sup>137</sup> John P. Meyer, and Natalie, J. Allen, *Commitment in the Workplace – Theory, Research and Application* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997), 13.

(2) USAREC needs an Army-supported survey for active-duty soldiers assessing critical demographic factors to aid minority ARSOF recruiting. The active-duty soldier perspective can help identify successful recruiting practices allowing them to overcome barriers by garnering minority enlistment. USAREC can use this information to increase minorities in operational units (combat arms) and influence ARSOF recruiting. Potentially, USAREC could elicit support from the Joint Advertising, Market Research & Studies (JAMRS) team. The JAMRS analysis team consistently produces these types of surveys for the general recruiting market for the DoD. It could aid market research with more experiences and resources than an internal USAREC and Army survey.<sup>138</sup>

(3) SORB and USAREC must redesign their ARSOF-focused websites to be mobile-enabled, interactive, and reflect more minority representation. Between USAREC, SORB, the Army National Guard, and the Army Reserve, there are at least eight websites for the three ARSOF careers, Not including websites for SWCS, USASOC, or other Army sites referencing ARSOF recruiting. The web design needs to leverage internet videos with messages and themes dispelling negative perceptions and barriers. Soldiers want to see ARSOF soldier testimonials on preparing for ARSOF A&S, the true nature of work ("a day in the life"), how the ARSOF community supports families, and post-military potentials for ARSOF veterans.<sup>139</sup>

(4) SWCS should develop an optional ARSOF A&S preparation course for active-duty soldiers. Soldiers from non-operational units would benefit from such a course to

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<sup>138</sup> Office of People Analytics. *Market Research*. 2021. <https://www.opa.mil/research-analysis/recruiting-awareness/market-research/> (accessed December 11, 2021).

<sup>139</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing." Hise Gibson and Daniel White. *The Strategic Problem the Army Doesn't Seem to Care About: African Americans Aren't Branching Combat Arms*. US Army Demographics Office. *Blacks in the US Army—Then and Now*. Randolph C. White, Jr. *Wasting Time: Black Participation in The Combat Arms Branches*.

prepare for the assessment process and reduce the gap between them and their combat arms counterparts. The preponderance of minorities unsuccessful in the ARSOF A&S process came from non-operational units.<sup>140</sup> Preparatory training modeled after the Army Ranger School's Pre-Ranger training will prepare candidates mentally and physically for success.

(5) SWCS should investigate other metrics beyond the GT score to determine if a candidate with a 90-100 GT score would potentially be successful in ARSOF. The alternative test would open the pool of prospective candidates if given by the SORB recruiters in local markets with large populations of GT scores under 100.

(6) SWCS should change the ARSOF Noncommissioned Officers (NCO) professional development model. First, allow minority ARSOF NCOs to compete for recruiting duty earlier as an E-6/SSG. Since recruiting detail is 3-years, this enables an ARSOF NCO to promote to E-7/SFC and return to the operational force before becoming eligible for promotion to E-8/MSG.<sup>141</sup> Second, create a staff operations NCO (non-recruiter) position for a 1-year SORB assignment. The mission allows the NCO to have a broadening assignment as an "Operations NCO/S3 NCO" on an NCOER needed for promotion to E-8/MSG. The ARSOF NCO also will have an additional duty as a TAIR NCO to increase ARSOF knowledge in poor-producing market areas. The increased ARSOF presence should foster minority soldiers' propensity to apply for ARSOF A&Ss.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> USASOC, "SORB Demographic Analysis JAN 2020." USAJFKSWCS, "Army War College paper concerning recruiting diversity." Jody Daigle, "SORB Monthly Update: JAN 2022." USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing."

<sup>141</sup> USASOC, "SORB Demographic Analysis JAN 2020." USAJFKSWCS, "Army War College paper concerning recruiting diversity." Scott G. Nates-Njaa, "DA PAM 600-25." (Email, USASOC, Fort Bragg, NC, November 2021); Equal Opportunity Senior Enlisted Advisor and NCOIC of the USASOC Diversity and Inclusion Operational Planning Team / D&I Cell, Email message to the author, November 4, 2021. <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/smartbook-da-pam-600-25> (accessed November 4, 2021).

<sup>142</sup> USAREC, "2021 Army Special Operations Forces Survey." USAREC, "Army Special Operations Forces

## SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

### Potential future research for minority recruiting

Other applications for these minority recruiting recommendations could apply to the 75th Ranger Regiment (75RR). The 75RR consists of only 19.4% minorities within its total population and only 14% in the Infantry.<sup>143</sup> Additionally, other entities in the Army applying these recommendations could be other USASOC units and units within the Security Forces Assistant Command (SFAC).

### Conclusion

This paper outlined that increasing diversity in ARSOF will be a complex and imprecise operation. Emerging trends and generational attitudes present a situation where ARSOF could be less attractive as a career option to minorities and all potential recruits to the force, which potentially causes a crisis in ARSOF manning its formations. This challenge will require leaders to champion a long-term effort to achieve success. Many members of USASOC and ARSOF have been reluctant to discuss this issue, believing that poor minority representation indicates a failure on the organization's part. *Nothing could be further from the truth.* Past generations simply did not have their eye on diversity as a metric that mattered, and ARSOF slowly drifted to the state in which it finds itself today. Failure would be for ARSOF to acknowledge the risk, but ignore preparing for the problem today and suffer the consequences years in the future.

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Assessment and Selection Survey Findings: Local Marketing." Merriam-Webster.com *Dictionary*, s.v. Propensity. 2021.

<sup>143</sup> Total Army Personnel Database (TAPDB), "Enterprise Demographics\_TAPDB\_ver2 - 20200601".