

VOLUNTOLD: TACTICS IN US ARMY ENLISTED RECRUITMENT

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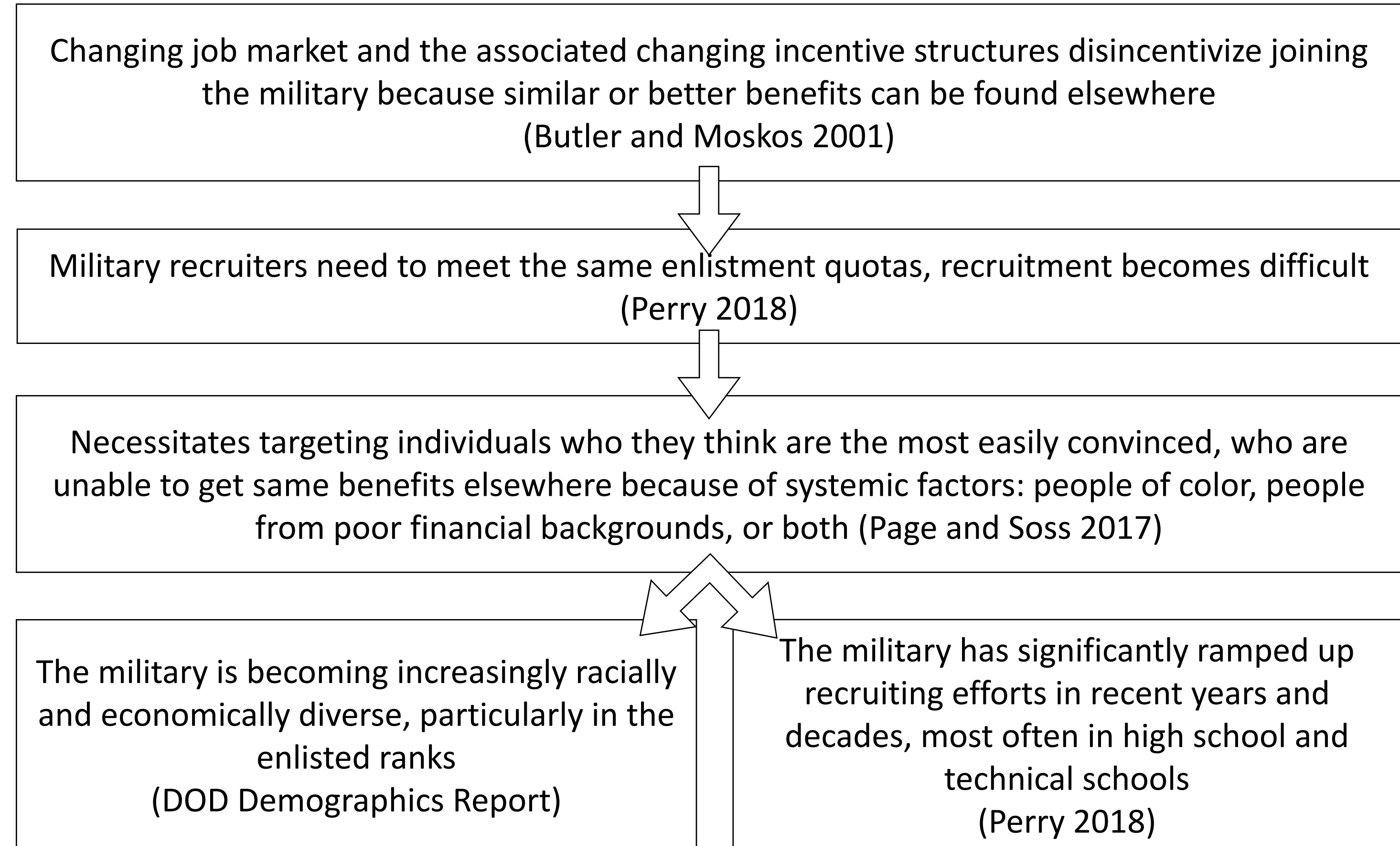
Introduction

The maintenance of the size and strength of the US volunteer military heavily depends on its recruitment arm to prospect and inform potential recruits. In a country where military service is believed to offer benefits such as steady incomes and college education to disadvantaged communities while implying they are unavailable through other means the concern becomes that recruiters target these communities for recruitment. This thesis first draws on the existing literature about citizen-state interactions to derive a new theoretical perspective about predatory practices. Then, the thesis begins to evaluate that theory through a qualitative analysis of military recruitment manuals and documents. The findings suggest that predatory practices may be occurring at lower levels of the recruitment hierarchy and those in charge are aware and unable or unwilling to prevent.

Methods

- Creation of a new theoretical framework for military recruitment
 - Describing trends in military diversification
 - Engaging with previous literature about citizen-state interactions, military interconnectedness
- Supporting theory with qualitative analysis of military recruitment documents
 - Freedom of Information Act Request for recruitment manuals
 - Content Analysis of 3 Documents
 - Searching for targeting, suspect or arbitrary qualifications, directions for recruiters
- Request hampered by ongoing pandemic

Theory



Analysis

- Army Regulation 601–1 Assignment of Enlisted Personnel to the U.S. Army Recruiting Command
- Criteria for becoming a recruiter favors single, white, higher socioeconomic status soldiers
 - Requirements for lack of children, prevents female recruiters
 - Prohibition on tattoos, “adultery,” or “drunkenness” which are arbitrarily, all of which disproportionately affect people of color and lower income soldiers (Ipsos 2019)
 - “Financial suitability” requirement, ability to take on additional potential costs
 - Choosing soldiers who have only had positive experiences and have faced no adversity, presenting a glossed over and idyllic version of being a soldier
 - Accountability system hard to navigate, hard to get recruiters removed
- Army Directive 2016-17 (AD2016-17)
- Prohibited relations between recruiters and community members or prospects
 - Issues persist and military unable to find and prevent them
- Army Regulation 601–2 (AR601-2) Personnel Procurement Army Recruiting Support Programs
- Targeting of centers of influence, like schools, to recruit and “bolster” Army’s Image

Findings

- Initial findings support theoretical framework
- Individual recruiters, trying to meet quotas, are targeting individuals in places they are most vulnerable
- Three main points:
 - The selection system preferences recruiters who are single and from affluent backgrounds
 - The recruiter selection system is easy to get placed into but difficult to get removed from
 - The systems in place to address grievances and issues do not adequately protect those being recruited
 - Recruitment is as much about image repair as it is about persuasion
- Documents here shed light on the internal processes regarding what types of people are able to become recruiters, patterns of behavior those individuals engage in, and the efforts the army goes to bolster its image in the communities it recruits from

Next Steps

- Further FOIA requests/re-opening of USAREC post-COVID-19 required to further test theory
 - More document analysis, interviews

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