

Dancing to the Guerrilla Sound: Recruitment-oriented communication by FARC-dissident-coded TikTok accounts in Colombia

TikTok como herramienta de reclutamiento de guerrilleros disidentes de las FARC en Colombia

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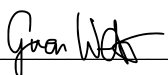
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Submission date: 04/15/2026

Author's Note

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Munich, April 15, 2026, Gwendolin Rosa Weber

Abstract

This master's thesis studies how FARC-dissidents use TikTok as an additional tool for recruitment-oriented communication. To address this question the content of 24 posts of seven dissident coded TikTok accounts uploaded between January 2024 to April 2025, have been analyzed, focusing on how recruitment-relevant messaging is articulated through multimodal content and interactional practices. Conceptually, this thesis draws on mediatization and discourse theories, treating TikTok not as a neutral channel but as a platform, whose algorithmic affordances shape the circulation, presentation, and normalization of content, including guerrilla communication. Methodologically, this study employs a mixed-method design combining qualitative multimodal analysis with descriptive quantitative coding. All material was coded in MAXQDA across visual, textual, audio, interactional, and platform-specific dimensions.

The findings suggest that TikTok operates less as a channel of continuous explicit recruitment for FARC-dissidents, but as an affective and communicative environment in which guerilla affiliation seems to be normalized, even desirable. Recruitment-oriented communication is shaped by normalization narratives, belonging cues and especially the affective infrastructure of sounds and lyrics used in the TikTok posts. This indicates that audio is not merely decorative but functions as a central narrative resource that helps frame group and guerrilla identity as emotionally and socially compatible with ordinary life. Also, explicit calls to join a dissident front by the TikTok account owners are present but remain comparatively episodic.

Accordingly, it is argued that recruitment on TikTok is best understood as a staged ecology, in which accounts produce ambient persuasion, identity cues and

symbolic legitimization of dissident groups, while in interactional comment sections recruitment dynamics emerge with viewers signaling interest and redirection by the account owners to private messaging.

Keywords: TikTok, FARC dissidents, recruitment-oriented communication, mediatization, multimodal analysis, platform affordances.

Resumen

Esta tesis de maestría analiza cómo las disidencias de las FARC usan TikTok como una herramienta adicional para la comunicación del reclutamiento. Para abordar esta cuestión, la tesis analiza el contenido de 24 videos de siete cuentas de TikTok publicados entre enero de 2024 y abril de 2025, centrándose en cómo se articulan los mensajes relevantes para el reclutamiento a través de contenidos multimodales y prácticas interactivas. La teoría de esta tesis se basa en la mediatización y en las teorías del discurso para destacar que la plataforma de TikTok no es un canal neutral sino una plataforma cuyas posibilidades algorítmicas determinan la circulación, la presentación y la normalización de la comunicación de la guerrilla. En cuanto a la metodología, este estudio emplea un diseño de métodos mixtos combinando un análisis cualitativo multimodal con la cuantificación descriptiva. Todo el material se codificó en MAXQDA en dimensiones visuales, textuales auditivas e interactivas, específicas de la plataforma.

Los resultados sugieren que TikTok opera menos como un canal de reclutamiento explícito y más como una infraestructura afectiva de normalización y persuasión indirecta, donde la afiliación a la guerrilla parece normalizarse, e incluso resultar deseable. La comunicación orientada al reclutamiento se caracteriza por narrativas de normalización, señales de pertenencia y, sobre todo, por la infraestructura afectiva de los sonidos y las letras que se utilizan en las publicaciones de TikTok. Esto indica que el audio funciona como un recurso narrativo central que enmarca la identidad de la guerrilla como emocionalmente compatible con la vida cotidiana. También hay invitaciones explícitas a unirse a un frente disidente, pero estos son esporádicos. Para concluir, se sostiene que la comunicación del reclutamiento de las disidencias en TikTok se entiende mejor como un ecosistema

por etapas, en el que las cuentas generan una persuasión a través de señales de identidad y legitimación simbólica de la guerrilla, mientras que en las secciones de comentarios surgen dinámicas para mover la conversación sobre el reclutamiento al espacio privado.

Palabras clave: TikTok, disidentes de las FARC, comunicación orientada al reclutamiento, mediatización, análisis multimodal, posibilidades algorítmicas de las plataformas.

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1. Introduction

Social media platforms have transformed human communication and consequently influenced the way armed groups are organized and able to spread their narratives (Rehman & Riaz, 2021). In the last few years, the video-sharing social media platform, TikTok with its rapid algorithm and ease to create content has transformed from a new app into a dominant force, as it is one of the most influential platforms for youth engagement with reporting over 1 billion active users globally and recent audience-demographic estimates a strong connection among younger adults¹ (DataReportal, 2025). Therefore, TikTok's relevance for younger users and its circulation in conflict-affected contexts make it analytically relevant for studying recruitment-oriented communication. In Colombia, after the 2016 peace accords with the FARC, some factions rejected the peace process, leading to the rise of dissident groups, such as those associated with the Estado Mayor Central (EMC). Recent reporting suggests that these groups have increasingly turned to digital tools to capture attention and recruit new members, including adolescents and children. This paper investigates how TikTok, a platform typically associated with entertainment, can also function as a space in which insurgent narratives and recruitment-oriented communication circulate in ways that may appeal to younger-coded audiences.

While national and international news media has highlighted guerrilla recruitment on TikTok, such as reports that over 110 minors were recruited via the platform in 2023 (France24, 2024), academic research on this phenomenon remains scarce. Most academic studies have focused on traditional recruitment methods or older social media platforms like Twitter (Romero-Moreno & Cabrera, 2022),

¹ Approximately 66% of the global ad audience is aged 18-34, according to DataReportal.

leaving a research gap regarding how guerrilla groups exploit TikTok². Therefore, the central research question of this thesis is how FARC-dissident-coded TikTok accounts perform recruitment-oriented communication on a platform with substantial uptake among younger users in Colombia.

2. Literature Review and Relevance

The rise of social media has fundamentally changed conflict dynamics, with platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube being used for propaganda and recruitment by insurgent groups. Researchers have documented how extremist groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda have leveraged these platforms to spread their ideologies (Zeitsoff, 2017). However, the role of newer platforms like TikTok in guerrilla recruitment, particularly in the Latin American context, remains underexplored.

Conflict studies have explored the impact of social media in various conflicts globally, including the so-called “Facebook and hashtag wars” linked to the Arab Spring, where social media not only documented but also influenced conflict dynamics (Rehman & Riaz, 2021). Other scholars have examined the performative use of social media during conflicts, such as the Sino-Indian border crisis (Zhang, 2019). More recent studies, like those have investigated TikTok’s role in documenting the Russia-Ukraine war, dubbed the “first TikTok war” (Marino 2024). These studies highlight the growing use of the platform in conflict-related content creation.

² Only Indepaz has published a study in September 2024 about the topic, which used an artificial active TikTok profile that had contact with dissident FARC groups, but also ELN and Clan del Golfo. The study was shared on YouTube.

In the Colombian context, the polarization of political discourse on Facebook and Twitter has been well documented, particularly regarding public reception of the peace process (Chenou et al., 2020; Chenou & Restrepo, 2023). Content analysis of TikTok in Colombia has also examined emotions and narratives in political campaigns (Wilches et al., 2024). However, in the Colombian context the recruitment strategies employed by guerrilla groups like the FARC dissidents on TikTok have been overlooked and remain unstudied.

Research on insurgent recruitment via social media has primarily focused on extremist groups in the Middle East, notably ISIS. These studies have emphasized how emotionally charged content is used to attract young followers globally (Zeitsoff, 2017). TikTok's rapid rise to prominence among minors and Generation Z has also garnered academic attention. For example, Literat et al. (2022) have explored how TikTok has become a space for political activism, such as the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States. Additionally, studies by Looor-Ávila and Baquerizo-Álava (2022) have analyzed TikTok's impact on political communication among youth in Ecuador. Medina Serrano et al. (2020) investigated how TikTok has been used to spread political ideologies, highlighting the platform's capacity to engage users through short, emotionally resonant content. TikTok's algorithm, which promotes content based on viral potential, may facilitate an environment for insurgent groups to easily disseminate their narratives on that platform. However, how these features are leveraged by FARC dissidents for recruitment in Colombia has not been adequately studied.

Divon and Krutrök (2024) introduced the concept of "playful trauma" on TikTok, analyzing how users mix humor with serious topics like war and conflict. Marino (2024) and Wilches et al. (2024) demonstrate how TikTok has been used to

document conflicts, with storytelling strategies employed during the Russia-Ukraine war and Colombian political campaigns, respectively. These cases offer parallels to how guerrilla groups in Colombia might be using similar techniques to attract recruits, as they may be blending insurgent messaging with popular TikTok trends, making their content more appealing and relatable to younger audiences.

Research on guerrilla recruitment in Colombia has predominantly focused on traditional methods used by the FARC (Villamil Gómez & Echeverry Cano, 2023). Fattal's studies (2014, 2018) on the FARC's use of YouTube to spread propaganda and their adaptation to digital marketing tactics provide valuable insights into how the group has evolved its media strategies. Amaya Llamas (2018) further explored how the FARC adapted their messaging to the digital era, which is central to understanding how their dissident factions might be using TikTok today. While existing research has primarily examined Facebook and Twitter in the context of guerrilla recruitment, TikTok's unique features, such as its fast-paced algorithm and accessible content creation tools, offer new opportunities for insurgent groups to recruit youth. Although TikTok's role in guerrilla recruitment has yet to be fully examined, parallels from other conflicts (e.g., Marino, 2024) suggest that it could be an effective medium for insurgent narratives.

While there is a growing body of literature on social media and political communication, there is a significant gap in understanding how guerrilla groups like FARC dissidents are leveraging TikTok for recruitment purposes. Existing studies (e.g., Medina Serrano et al., 2020) provide a foundation for analyzing how TikTok's unique structure allows insurgent narratives to thrive, but they do not specifically address how these tactics are being used by Colombian guerrilla groups. Moreover, while scholars have studied traditional recruitment tactics of FARC (Villamil Gómez

& Echeverry Cano, 2023), the intersection of guerrilla recruitment and digital platforms in Colombia remains largely unexplored – apart from an investigation by the Colombian Institute of Development and Peace (Indepaz), that underlined the danger of children being recruited by members of various guerrilla groups. This research seeks to fill this gap by exploring how FARC dissidents are utilizing TikTok to perform recruitment related and propagandistic communication that might lead to the recruitment of new members. Thereby this study particularly focuses on the narratives they employ, the social and emotional impacts on likely younger audiences, and the platform's role in amplifying insurgent content. By doing so, it contributes to both conflict studies and digital media research, providing insights into how traditional insurgent tactics are being adapted to the digital age.

3. Research Question

The core question driving this research is: How do FARC dissidents, fractions that rejected the 2016 peace accords and continue armed operations, perform recruitment-oriented and dissident-coded communication on TikTok through multimodal content and interactional practices in a sample of posts from January 2024 to April 2025?

This inquiry focuses on how TikTok's unique algorithmic features and content-creation tools may facilitate recruitment-oriented communication by guerrilla groups. Also, what discursive and multimodal mechanisms (e.g., audio-level of TikTok posts, territoriality or normalizing certain content) structure such messaging within this sample and what can be said about very explicit mobilization calls to join a dissident fraction across videos and accounts. Further this study wants to analyze how supportive comments can function as legitimization of guerrilla

communication on TikTok and how often interactions indicate redirection to private channels to potentially start a recruitment process. By understanding the key narratives and tactics employed by FARC-dissident coded TikTok accounts within this sample, this study aims to provide deeper insights into the intersection of digital media and guerrilla recruitment.

4. General and specific objectives

The primary objective is to analyze the content and themes of a sample of TikTok posts produced by FARC-dissident coded accounts since 2024, using a mixed-method design in which quantification described within-corpus dispersion and concentration of coded mechanisms. Qualitatively, this will involve identifying the types of videos that are associated with higher interaction and uncovering recurring narratives, imagery, sound practices and legitimacy cues with the help of critical and multimodal discourse analysis. Another key objective is to assess the engagement of audiences, including platform metrics and analyze interactional dynamics in comments as recruitment relevant, while also considering qualitative engagement factors such as emotional responses and ideological alignment seen in comment sections. Also, coded occurrences will be quantified to describe how mechanism are distributed across this sample, without claiming prevalence beyond it or offline recruitment success. Further, findings will be contextualized within scholarship on insurgent recruitment strategies of FARC history to assess this study's interpretative implications.

5. Conceptual framework

In recent years, TikTok has evolved from a platform for viral trends into a powerful tool for political communication and recruitment by non-state actors. In

Colombia, TikTok appears to offer FARC dissidents a platform on which recruitment-oriented communication can be adapted to digital and short-form formats. At the same time, guerrilla-related sounds and aesthetics may circulate beyond clearly attributable actors, further blurring the boundary between insurgent communication, platform vernacular, and user remix practices.

Through the lens of mediatization and critical discourse analysis, this work explores how such content is shaping conflict dynamics, serving as both a guerrilla recruitment tool and a stage for reimagined FARC narratives. Before turning to the theoretical frameworks that guide this analysis, it is essential to contextualize two key elements: first, the recruitment methods historically employed by the FARC during the years of armed conflict. Understanding how these strategies have evolved since the 2016 peace agreement provides the necessary background for analyzing their contemporary adaption to the digital sphere. Secondly, concerning TikTok itself, the platform's visual and sonic storytelling, and algorithmic amplification.

5.1. Guerrilla Recruitment in Colombia in the 20/21st century

In Colombia, guerrilla recruitment strategies are deeply embedded in the historical and sociopolitical fabric of the armed conflict and have consistently targeted vulnerable demographics. In line with the *Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz* (JEP) the phenomenon of child recruitment is here seen as any recruitment of minors by armed groups and any so-called voluntary recruitment is *de facto* forced as the JEP established in its *Macrocaso 07*. Voluntariness is only apparent under structural coercion, since pseudo-consensual entry into a guerrilla group in the context of a child's mind always aligns with manipulation and exploitation, false promises, and

systematic vulnerability. Accordingly, the *Macrocaso 07* of the JEP³, calls all recruitment of children “forced” recruitment, since there is no recruitment of children that was not “persuaded” (Villamil Gómez and Echeverry Cano, 2023: 294-295). Therefore, recruitment in this context means, all type of separation of children from their families or communities to be directly involved in military actions or for them to have any type of role inside an armed group. The Colombian Constitutional Court established in 2008, that all recruitment is coercive, is illegal and any child recruited is viewed as a victim accordingly (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar, 2022: 6, Quintero and Hoyos, 2022: 10-11). As Carmona et al. (2011) found, minors often joined out of “self-assertive” motives—searching for identity, revenge, or belonging, later rationalized as ideological conviction. Yet even such cases occurred under social and economic coercion, confirming the judicial (transitional court of Justice and the estates tribunal’s) conclusion that all child recruitment during the conflict was inherently forced. Still, in their analysis of the JEP’s perspective on child recruitment, Villamil Gómez and Echeverry Cano (2023) underlined that by appealing to notions of identity, community, and purpose in the context of social and economic inequalities, the FARC have systematically incorporated minors into their ranks to give them a sense of belonging and empowerment. This institutional logic extended beyond combat, all children were integrated as couriers, informants, and cooks, while girls and LGBTQIA+ children were often subjected to sexual violence and forced contraception (UN Report 2023; Defensoría del Pueblo, 2021: 10).

³ Macrocaso 07 of the JEP investigates forced recruitment and use of children during the armed Colombian conflict

Historically the FARC have always recruited minors on a large-scale to sustain territorial expansion and organizational reproduction. Between 1999–2021, 56% of all demobilized minors originated from FARC ranks ($\approx 3,878$ of 6,958 cases) (ICP, 2021: 12). According to the Comisión de la Verdad, Colombia's Truth Commission, between 1990 and 2017, at least 16,238 victims under 18 years old were recruited by all type of armed groups, but the majority of the FARC (CEV, 2022: 180), 47% of those were under 15 years old, despite the guerrilla's formal prohibition of recruiting minors (CEV, 2022: 192). These figures underline that recruitment was institutionalized by the FARC's internal hierarchy, since also local commanders of the guerrilla group were expected to meet certain numerical growth targets, which included quotas of minors and at the same time portraying children as “revolutionary youth” essential to the movement's expansion and ideological continuity (ICP, 2021:21; Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica 2017: 290).

Recruitment patterns also reflect Colombia's geography of exclusion, the Centro Nacional Memoria Histórica (2017) confirms that guerrilla groups, especially the FARC were strategically present in the spaces where children lived their daily lives e.g., schools, sports fields, markets, and community gatherings, thus facilitating gradual socialization and ideological indoctrination (CNMH, 2017: 185; Villamil Gómez and Echeverry Cano, 2023: 295). In rural and indigenous areas, where state presence is weak and illegal economies prevail, children remain particularly vulnerable (UN Report of 2023, Villamil Gómez and Echeverry Cano, 2023: 196). Such regions like Cauca, Putumayo, and Norte de Santander are still controlled by dissident fronts and continue to serve as strongholds for such practices, since those rural zones, of which some are abandoned by the state, have a higher poverty rate and a population easier to indoctrinate, remain strategic for the FARC dissidents not

only for recruitment purposes, but as territorial expansion and hide outs in the jungle. In those contexts, indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and migrant boys have been more likely to be recruited for combat, used to commit physical violence on the enemy, for messenger purposes or in coca cultivation, while girls and LGBTQI+ children have been more likely to be used for cooking, sexual exploitation, and abuse (UN Report 2023, Defensoría del Pueblo 2021:10).

Villamil Gómez and Echeverry Cano (2023) also highlight the normalization of guerrilla identity in territories long abandoned by the state. In such environments, belonging to an armed group was often perceived as legitimate or even prestigious, offering displaced and orphaned youth a pseudo-familial structure (Villamil Gómez and Echeverry Cano 2023: 296-305; Gomez Nunez, Lina Marcela 2018: 18). Yet the absence of violence at the moment of recruitment did not imply safety within the group: physical punishment, sexual abuse, and coercion were pervasive once children were incorporated. In urban contexts, by contrast, FARC structures since the 1990s have relied on alliances with local gangs to incorporate minors as drug couriers or extortion intermediaries through promises of social status, power, or belonging, blending guerrilla and organized-crime logics (UN Report 2023; CNMH, 2017: 123; Defensoría del Pueblo 2021: 10). Familial ties further facilitate recruitment, as children with relatives in armed groups are often enlisted, while debts or threats against families remain common coercive tactics (UN Report 2023). Once children start receiving income or drugs from armed groups, they become increasingly at risk of being coerced into permanent involvement (UN Report, 2023) (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2021). The Analysis of the *Instituto de Ciencias Políticas Hernán Echavarría Olózaga (ICP)* in alliance with the *Comisión de Esclarecimiento*

de la Verdad (CEV) thus identifies the FARC as the principal actor and architect of systematic recruitment practices throughout the conflict (ICP, 2021: 12).

These emotional strategies like manipulation, small material incentives, promises of protection or prestige (ICP, 2021: 46-47), have endured and been adapted by dissident factions after the 2016 peace accord. As the Colombian Defense Ministry *Defensoría del Pueblo* (2021) warns that the old dynamics of the conflict, which have transformed through new modalities of violence since the signing of the peace accords, could continue to have devastating consequences for the rights and wellbeing of children and adolescents.

5.2. From Field to Feed: Recruitment in the Digital Age

Nowadays, FARC dissidents have also adapted these strategies to the age of social media. As described by Fattal (2014) social media marketing now serves as a crucial tool to gain potential recruits. This transformation in messaging underscores a significant shift towards digital guerrilla recruitment, where modern media channels enable a broader and more efficient outreach (Amaya Llamas 2018: 154). By extending these practices to TikTok, dissidents adapt guerrilla recruitment to the platform's multimodal affordances and affective culture. These online tactics coexist with traditional field-based recruitment in rural zones, indicating that digital propaganda complements rather than replaces physical presence. In this hybrid ecology, guerrilla content may also originate from within communities through indoctrinated youth producing videos themselves and thus further blurring the boundary between digital self-representation and insurgent communication.

A study by the NGO Indepaz (2024) on the topic of TikTok and recruitment has shown the urgency and danger of the problem, which recent Colombian press has

also reported on, indicating that both FARC dissidents and other guerrilla groups like ELN have used TikTok to recruit minors, with the *Fiscalía General* (Attorney General of Colombia) revealing cases where over a hundred adolescents were lured through platform-based propaganda (Ramírez Ariza, 2025). These accounts confirm the urgency of analyzing TikTok not just as an incidental medium but as a structured and algorithmically mediated tool of recruitment.

5.3. Social Media, TikTok and Conflict Communication

Social media platforms emerged in the 21st century, introduced an interactive component to the web that fundamentally transformed how information is shared and consumed. An internet platform is considered a social media, when users have a social group of followers and other users they follow (Medina Serrano et al. 2020: 2, Rehman & Riaz, 2021: 79). Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have become catalysts for social change, enabling users to build social and political connections beyond geographical boundaries (Rehman & Riaz, 2021: 80). With its rapid growth and use, social media plays also a significant role in political discourse, allowing politicians, insurgents and protestors to shape opinions and reach broad audiences (Zeitsoff 2017: 60, Romero-Moreno & Cabrera 2022: 112), making it necessary to study social media and its diverse forms of communication. However, the role of social media in conflict is complex: on one hand, it can mobilize social movements, but on the other, it can also serve as a vehicle for dissident groups to reach global audiences and disseminate their narratives independently from traditional media channels (Rehman & Riaz, 2021: 82). Social media critical discourse must be studied and cannot ignore the changes in dynamic of discursive

power since either way social media communication is a macro political tool (KhosraviNik, 2017: 583).

TikTok, launched in 2016 after evolving from Musical.ly, is owned by the Chinese company *ByteDance*. Its core feature, short, often music-backed videos, or viral sound clips, promotes highly engaging and easily consumable content, with the average video length being just 35 seconds as of 2024 (Statista, 2024). Recently, TikTok has evolved beyond its original concept of lip-sync and dance videos to become a space where users and organizations alike can promote narratives, influence political discourse, and even recruit followers (Literat et al. 2022: 378). The platform's dominant algorithmic recommendation system focuses on content rather than direct social interaction and is uniquely suited to *mediatize* conflict in ways that other social media platforms cannot (Zeitsoff 2017: 61). Unlike other platforms, that prioritize content from known connections, TikTok's landing page "For You" centralizes content discovery, allowing users to engage with an extensive range of videos from creators they may never actively follow (Medina Serrano et al. 2020: 2). Consequently, TikTok's algorithm plays a proactive role in shaping user experience, adapting rapidly to individual preferences and reinforcing content that align with the user's viewing pattern. TikTok's high engagement format is also compatible with affective publics and narrative transportation, since its brief, audiovisual and emotionally charged content can intensify narrative uptakes and identity-relevant interpretation that may resonate with viewers watching guerrilla-coded content. The algorithm's capacity to amplify such content without audience cultivation gives guerrilla groups direct access to younger viewers, an audience highly susceptible to emotional engagement and identity-building narratives. This structure, where content goes viral "from nowhere" (Guinaudeau et al. 2022: 470),

makes TikTok an active participant in the conflict by influencing how insurgent narratives are encountered, engaged with, and emotionally internalized. Through algorithmic mediatization, TikTok does not merely broadcast messages but effectively transforms user engagement into a battleground for narrative influence, making it a tool for digital recruitment and ideological expansion.

5.4. Media as Conflict Actor

In conflict theories the term *mediatization* describes the evolving role of contemporary media in shaping societal interactions. As Simon Cottle explains, we live in *mediatized times*, where media does not simply report or represent conflict situations but actively enacts and performs them (Cottle, 2006: 9). This highlights the increasing influence of media in conflict dynamics, where media becomes a participant in shaping developments and outcomes (Eskjær et al. 2015: 3). Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2015) expand on this perspective, emphasizing how media has become intertwined with warfare, turning into a battlefield themselves. Through the process of *mediatization*, media plays an active role in shaping, framing, and amplifying certain narratives in conflict, influencing both public opinion and the actions of conflict participants. Unlike traditional media, which passively delivers content, social media platforms like TikTok allow users to interact with, reshape, and spread content, making them active participants in the conflict narrative (Zeitsoff, 2017). TikTok's algorithmic infrastructure prioritizes engaging content and virality over established networks, shaping how users encounter conflict-related narratives and the way in which viral trends are fostered, making TikTok a platform where the personal and the political gets intertwined (Literat et al., 2022: 366). In this sense, guerrilla actors might be able to leverage TikTok's specific affordances like virality,

trending sounds or editing tools to blend insurgent discourse with popular entertainment formats, camouflaging violent ideology within platform logics. TikTok becomes a site where insurgency is not just communicated but actively co-constructed with users.

5.5. Critical and Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Within the broader mediatization framework, this thesis employs a Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodal Discourse Analysis to examine how guerrilla narratives are linguistically and visually constructed on TikTok. Additionally, theories of affective publics (Papacharissi, 2015) and Narrative Transportation (Green & Brock, 2000) complement this approach by elucidating the emotional and psychological dimensions of engagement.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a consistent part and established theory of social studies, provides a systematic method for examining how discourses enacts ideology and power relations. According to Foucault (1972), discourse does not only mean the use of language or text, but also to the social practice and process of meaning through which realities and identities are constructed. Thus, discourse is both textual and social practice and is shaped by the context it circulates in. Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1995) links textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice, showing how everyday communication can reproduce broader ideological ideas. In this sense, it is crucial for this study to analyze how discourses circulating around TikTok accounts that could be connected to FARC dissidents construct and communicate particular realities, whether through intentional or unintentional recruitment narratives or through everyday representations of dissident life. These online discourses not only articulate

ideological positions but also contribute to the normalization and affective framing of the armed conflict in digital spaces. Van Dijk (2015) emphasizes the cognitive dimension, analyzing how discourse legitimizes violence and shapes mental models of “us” versus “them.” In this context, such discursive practice circulating via TikTok can function as markers of identification and ideological positioning within platform-specific interpretive communities. Yet (guerrilla) communication on TikTok is not reducible to text. Its audiovisuality requires Multimodal Discourse Analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Machin, 2013; O’Halloran, 2004), where images, sound effects, music, and performative gestures operate as meaning-bearing resources.

KhosraviNik (2017: 586–587) stresses that Social Media Discourse Studies must account not only for audiovisual modalities but also for platform-specific resources such as likes, hashtags, and algorithmic recommendation systems. These multimodal and infrastructural features form the backbone of guerrilla communication on TikTok, and whether intended or not they transform recruitment narratives into culturally resonant, interactive, and emotional content. Dan and Arendt (2021, 2025) have shown that viscosity on social media reinforces ideological positions, while audiences decode such cues through shared cultural knowledge and emotional predispositions (Dan & Arendt, 2025: 608–609). On TikTok, guerrilla multimodal discourse is thus diffused by platform logics but also co-constructed by the target audience, linking processes of mediatization, affect, and ideology formation.

5.6. Affect and Narrative Transportation

Social media communication is not only discursive but also affective, as Papacharissi's concept of affective publics (2015) highlights. Emotions like anger, hope, or empathy circulate digitally, creating networked collectives tied by sentiment rather than rational deliberation. Lünenborg and Backes (2025) stress that affective dynamics are amplified on platforms like TikTok, where algorithmic visibility privileges emotionally intense content, thereby amplifying collective feelings of rage, fear, or hope. For guerrilla groups, these affective dynamics become key to mobilization, as insurgent videos frame participation as resistance, belonging, or empowerment, thereby anchoring identification through affect.

Closely linked is Narrative Transportation Theory (Green & Brock, 2000), which proposes that individuals can be absorbed into the narrative of a story and lowering their counter-arguing to such extent that it affects their real-world belief. In the context of TikTok videos, immersive storytelling may increase emotional investment and lower the ability of counter-arguing, potentially making embedded messages and values more affectively accessible to viewers. This algorithmic engagement entrenches the conflict in digital spaces, enabling FARC dissidents to reach a wide audience, emotionally engage viewers and thereby use TikTok as an affective and interactional environment in which recruitment-oriented communication may be staged, normalized, and escalated (Loor-Avila & Baquerizo-Alava 2022: 38). Narrative Transportation Theory provides a critical framework for understanding how guerrilla narratives are designed to emotionally engage viewers, suggesting viewers to get more immersed into a story connecting by connecting more deeply with its themes and values and making them more receptive to its messages. In the case of the FARC dissidents, they can foster a sense of identification with

compelling narratives that emphasize struggle or resistance on TikTok. Through this storytelling potential, dissident-coded communication may acquire persuasive force by framing armed affiliation through affect, narrative immersion, and identity-relevant cues (Marino, 2024). In this way, guerrilla recruitment is not only evolving beyond physical territories, but also highlighted by TikTok's capacity to serve as a new battleground for ideological influence and recruitment, one that increases the dissidents' persuasive power by fostering emotional involvement and influencing audience perception.

Together, affective publics and narrative transportation illustrate how TikTok's algorithmic and emotional affordances appears to convert engagement into ideological internalization. By integrating mediatization, as well as critical and multimodal discourse analysis, this study conceptualizes TikTok as an active conflict actor in the Colombian context.

6. Methodology

6.1. Design and Unit of Analysis

This study applies a qualitative, multimodal content analysis of TikTok posts that plausibly align with dissident-coded communication, rather than treating it as verified organizational communication. The attribution of the term “plausibly align” is based on observable markers of the videos and accounts. Those included (1) explicit organizational guerrilla references e.g., named dissident fronts or their logos, flags and faction identifiers, (2) recurrent guerrilla aesthetics like uniforms and weapons, rural or jungle-like settings, “camp” visuals, (3) conflict-geographic and locality markers (e.g., Cauca) and (4) interactional cues in captions, texts on the videos or comments that frame the content as guerrilla-related, including requests for

information on how to join a dissident group (e.g., “como puedo ingresar” or similar in comments) and redirecting the conversation to private channels (e.g., “info al privado” / “info al DM”). Accordingly, this study hinges on these observable markers when talking about dissident-coded communication and recruitment-oriented communications, and specifically not verified membership of such accounts.

Borderline cases, i.e., accounts not clearly qualifying on its own, were handled concerning their format. “Old-style” videos are defined here as posts that resemble legacy propaganda formats rather than TikTok-native vernacular, for example longer, less cut and edited footage with montage compilations and report-like interview clips with minimal or no use of TikTok affordances. Such videos were not included for format reasons, but only included when the surrounding account ecology (i.e., the account’s broader posting pattern and interactional cues) consistently aligned with dissident-coded recruitment communication. Concretely, this applied to one atypical video that deviated from the common TikTok format but was posted within an account otherwise meeting the inclusion markers. Content based on trends was excluded when it circulated primarily as humor or meme performances without sustained dissident or recruitment markers (see method section 6.3.).

The primary unit of analysis is the individual TikTok post (video or photo post). Embedded element like visual frames, on-screen text, captions and hashtags, sounds and comments are coded as sub-units. The implication of recruitment interest found in comments (“como puedo ingresar” / “yo quiero” or similar) are treated as discursive indicators of perceived relevance or interest rather than evidence of offline recruitment or organizational membership.

6.2. Corpus and Sampling Strategy

The corpus includes 24 TikToks posted by seven accounts between January 2024 and April 2025. A new anonymous TikTok account was created in October 2024 and used solely for the collection of data, to avoid linking any private information with the platform's recommendation system. Sampling followed a purposive strategy aimed at identifying different styles of dissident communication (e.g., explicit recruitment cues vs normalization through glorifying the “guerrilla lifestyle” or appeals to identity), not to estimate prevalence.

The data collection relied on four central entry points: (1) keyword searches (e.g., “f4rc”), (2) hashtag and locality markers (including conflict-zone toponyms), (3) navigation via sound pages and reused audios, and (4) algorithmic recommendations on the “For You” page.

A key methodological constraint is that TikTok's “For You” feed is explicitly personalized and behavior-responsive, as acknowledged by the platform itself (TikTok, 2020). This makes the visibility of certain content dependent on user-platform interaction. Consistent with research on algorithmically curated sampling, platform recommendations shape what becomes visible and therefore constitute a structural selection bias, but at the same time users develop practices around TikTok's recommendation system, co-producing the specific mode of discovery (Schellewald, 2022; Literat et al., 2022: 366). This study therefore treats algorithmic recommendations as a selection mechanism, since for sampling purposes the algorithm of TikTok's recommendation system was “trained” over weeks to make it responsive to the research focus by repeatedly watching relevant videos and saving them privately within TikTok. However, this indicates the platform's algorithm must also be treated as bias source and not as a neutral window into what exists on the

platform. Therefore, no contact with the creators was initiated and no comments were posted to reduce safety risks and to minimize researcher interference in interaction dynamics.

6.3. Inclusion and Exclusion of Data

The inclusion of specific videos into the corpus of relevant data was based on observable indicators rather than assumptions of affiliation. Posts were considered eligible when they contained at least one strong dissident marker (e.g., explicit recruitment references, named fronts, recognizable symbols or logos and militarized aesthetics) in combination with contextual cues (e.g., locality tags, conflict-geographic references) or recruitment-relevant interaction traces (e.g., comments asking how to join, creator replies with sharing information via private DMs). Location pins and on-screen text were treated as signals for relevance rather than as proof of dissident membership. To capture genre variation, accounts were selected to maximize diversity in presentation styles, so that at least one female-presenting account was being included, as well as capturing different styles in relation to explicit recruitment cues in contrast to the implicit normalization of the “guerrilla lifestyle”. In this sense, variation was prioritized over representativeness in a statistical sense since the goal was to sample heterogeneous content styles and narrative strategies rather than estimate prevalence.

Exclusion decisions were applied to reduce so called *false positives* driven by the platform itself. Thus, trend-based content like one humorous trend revolving around a failed relationship leading the, in many cases, young women to join the “guerrilla” was initially included but later excluded when systematic checking showed that the trend circulated largely without sustained dissident markers and

without recruitment-oriented interaction cues but was performed and received as primarily humoristic (see Figure 1). Such trends remain analytically relevant as part of the platform culture but did not meet the study’s inclusion criteria for dissident-coded communication.

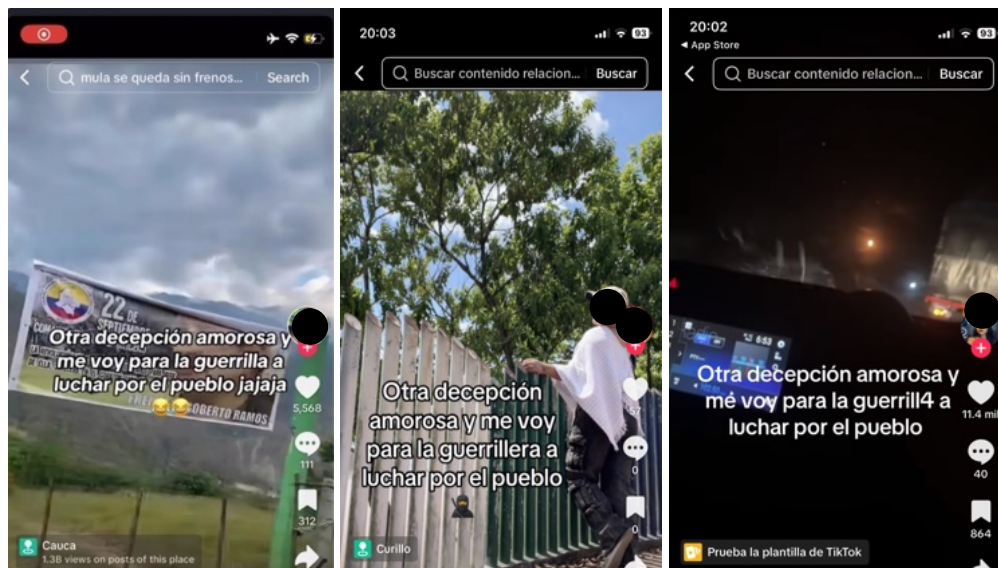


Figure 1.

Trending “Text on screen” that was cut out of the sample.

Sampling stopped when repeated searches across hashtags, sounds or location markers yielded primarily duplicate accounts or already-observed marker combinations, indicating diminishing returns of the identified account styles.

6.4. Data Capture

To stabilize the analysis, the corpus was frozen in April 2025. Given the volatility of TikTok content and the platform itself being able to moderate and remove content, all selected items were captured via screen recording and stored securely on institutional cloud infrastructure with restricted access, ensuring the analytic data remained stable even when videos were removed from the platform.

This means that the corpus is defined by the captured dataset at the freeze time, not by continued online availability.

For transparency reasons, metadata was logged for each account and video/post (see Appendix A). Metadata on the account-level included: user ID and profile name, profile description (bio and profile pic), follower and following counts, total likes, number of videos and first-post date. Video-level metadata included: upload date, location pin, video length, caption and hashtags, audio used and audio text, on-screen text, visual elements, and engagement (views, likes, saves, shares, comments count) as well as recruitment-relevant cues, like whether a dissident front is mentioned, recruitment cues and comments indicating involvement. This metadata supported the cross-account comparison and normalization.

6.5. Segmentation Rules and Coding Procedure (MAXQDA)

All material was captured and transcribed in MAXQDA, creating an audit trail from raw data to coded segments and analytic memos. Segmentation rules defined sub-unit boundaries as (1) visual segments bounded by cuts, photo change e.g., carousel posts, or salient shifts in scene/setting, (2) textual segments were bounded by changes in on-screen text including lyrics and/or caption meaning units, (3) comments were counted as one comment per user, with creator replies included when they explicitly responded to recruitment interest (e.g., directing to DM).

The coding started with a preliminary viewing of the data and was initially organized into four multimodal domains: (1) visual content, (2) audio/music, (3) narrative/language, and (4) engagement/interaction. During coding, the fifth category *TikTok platform logics* was added to capture algorithmic affordances specific to the platform. In this regard, mediatization informed the coding of how TikTok shapes

the circulation and presentation of conflict- and guerrilla-related content, this means codes like video length, hashtags, “For-You page” markers and location pins captured practices by the creators for visibility. For the same reason, trend participation (e.g., via reused audios) and editing tools like filters or compilation aesthetics were coded. Also, all kind of TikTok visual styles and forms of visual content how e.g., uniforms and weapons are shown or if the setting of the video is located in a rural area were primarily coded based on how these different modes of visual expression affect and mediatize conflict on the platform. Likes, views, and shares as well as comment counts were coded to better differentiate between high and low engagement, but are treated as meaning-bearing signals of visibility of the video, and not as direct measures of persuasion or actual recruitment.

After initial coding, subcodes were added inductively to capture emergent TikTok-specific resources (e.g., recurring obfuscated hashtags, particular editing styles) and recurring narrative formats. Throughout, the code system was periodically consolidated to prevent unnecessary proliferation and to maintain comparability across cases. The final analytical codebook included 164 codes with subcodes across the five analytical categories. For analytical reduction and quantitative aggregation, these were grouped into 25 code composites (see Appendix B1). As a result, three analytical dimensions of guerrilla communication mediatized on TikTok can be established. First, platform-specific affordances identifying how TikTok’s algorithmic logic, hashtags, emojis, and short-form video conventions structure visibility and affective engagement. Second, narrative and identity constructions capture how *guerrilla life*, territorial belonging, and everyday practices are discursively represented. Third, interaction and recruitment dynamics respond to audiences and potential recruitment cues observable in comment sections and creator

interactions. Going back to the research question, this layered structure allows the analysis to treat recruitment as a broader communicative process shaped by multimodal presentation of the narrative, the platform itself and interaction dynamics rather than solely focusing on the explicit calls to join.

While the top-level structure was introduced deductively to reflect the multimodal architecture of TikTok, most subcodes were developed inductively during the coding process and writing the memos. As Mayring stated, when all coding units are completed, it can be helpful to re-write or re-contextualize those units to only have content-bearing statements, accordingly also in this study paraphrasing after Mayring helped to understand the TikTok material as analytical categories (Mayring 2014: 67). The deductively integrated coded segments like caption, lyrics segments or on-screen texts were paraphrased and reformulated in a concise neutral statement (in the memo) to restructure the relevant meaning of a segment. For analytic reasons the Spanish segments were often paraphrased into English, while preserving key metrics that in their contexts carried meaning like “frente” or “monte”. Thereby, paraphrasing is a controlled interpretative step to help analytic decisions and therefore paraphrases and abstraction steps were documented in memos linked to the respective coded segment, allowing later revision during cross-account synthesis. Through that procedure readability of affect-heavy platform discourse could be increased and reduces the risk of single phrases dominating the interpretation, since the unit of analysis is the generalized meaning of the video, rather than the rhetorical surface form (see Appendix C).

6.6. Analytical Strategy

This study treats each TikTok account as a case but samples videos within accounts selectively, this means only those videos meeting the inclusion criteria were added to the pool of samples. Each account contributed at least two eligible videos, but the number of sampled videos per account is unequal, which will be addressed later through normalized cross-account comparison (relative code prominence and co-occurrence patterns rather than raw counts alone).

First, a within-account analysis treating each account as a case with all selected videos for that account was conducted. For each case, video-level memos and an account-level analytic memo was produced. Those memos included all core multimodal code families (visuals, sound/lyrics, TikTok affordances and interaction patterns, recruitment cues). Second, a cross-account comparison identifies recurring patterns and differentiating features to build a typology of account styles. Despite different N, the seven accounts can be compared since matching patterns and normalized indicators (e.g., relative prominence of code families, co-occurrence structures) include more evidence than raw evidence. Different account types were identified, and the results quantified.

Four sensitizing propositions guided the sampling process as well and informed discovery and selection: (1) sound and music may function as primary narrative carriers, therefore commonly used sounds were searched for systematically, (2) the dissident-related audio cluster (commonly referred to in comments as “un gran líder” / “saludos a los frentes”) was widely used and may act as dissident-coded indicator, especially in EMC-related contexts, because it references EMC dissident fronts, (3) recruitment functions may appear more clearly in interaction spaces, therefore comments and creator replies were included as sampling material, and (4)

since TikTok is a public space, risk-sensitive information exchange may be displaced into private channels, therefore DM invitations were treated as platform-specific recruitment cue rather than dismissed as irrelevant.

A multimodal perspective guided coding across image, text, and sound as integrated meaning resources. This means, in some cases discourse analytic concepts could be operationalized through observable markers, such as actor representation (us vs. them), legitimation (“la gente cree que en las Farc todo es malo, pero...”), and symbolic cues like logos, flags or emojis that construct in- and out-group distinctions. Affective publicness was operationalized via affective stance markers across modalities (e.g., emotive imagery, emphatic sound design, emojis, gender and/or identity markers such as *guerrillera*, and interactional comments (support, rejection, or recruitment inquiries)). These codes capture the form and circulation of affective appeals and follow the argument that digitally mediated publics are constituted through affective expression and circulation rather than only rational deliberation (Papacharissi 2015: 26).

In this study, sound and music were treated as potentially central narrative carriers not merely by deductive decision, but because this assumption is theoretically and historically plausible and was then evaluated through iterative coding. From an affective publics’ perspective, TikTok’s sound layer is a key resource for circulating affect and shaping collective attachment, since music and audio cues can intensify stance, enable identification, and facilitate the rapid uptake of shared emotional-political signals across videos (Papacharissi, 2015: 117). This is reinforced by the historical communicative repertoire of the FARC-EP, where “música fariana”, referring to their musical body of work, functioned as more than entertainment. Rafael Quishpe documents and extensive musical production (500 or

more songs) and argues that insurgent music supported cohesion, motivation, and collective identity, while also being used in political-military work and recruitment-oriented practices (Quishpe, 2020: 558). Against this background audio-related codes were introduced, e.g., FARC-/dissident-associated songs, war-themed music, spoken references or environmental/weapon sounds, but the degree to which sound carried narrative and identity work was assessed inductively by tracing lyrical or sonic references to groups and belonging, and by the co-occurrence between audio codes and visual or textual markers (logos, uniforms, setting, on-screen text) as well as interactional uptake in comments. In short, sound as narrative was treated as a theoretically motivated expectation that was empirically specified through multimodal coding patterns rather than presupposed as a finding.

6.7. Emergent Propositions guiding Cross-Account Comparison

Beyond the four sensitizing hypotheses used to guide content sampling, additional propositions emerged during coding and memo writing, and were used to structure cross-account comparison. The (1) proposition emerged out of the code “Content: Narratives & Identities > Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Everyday Life Narrative (Normalization of Guerrilla Life)” suggesting that normalization of guerrilla identity is a lifestyle biographical choice rather than solely danger or combat. Secondly (2), it was observed that systemic redirection to DM for private contact could be a platform-specific practice and recruitment seems to be staged as a funnel from public to private exchange. Further, (3) territorial authenticity was seen as a legitimacy resource of some accounts, meaning visual rurality and locality markers via hashtags or pins plus repeated references to specific regions (in Cauca or Huila) suggested that territorial cues operate as identity claims in contested

geographies. Connected to that stands the proposition (4), that organizational branding, meaning naming of certain dissident fronts, can function as legitimation as well. Naming of dissident fronts and columns, logos or propaganda aesthetics works as in-group markers and showcase organizational reality that can function as implicit recruitment cues, even without direct joining calls. Lastly (5), supportive comments (e.g., blessings, greeting and expressions of camaraderie and alignment) and in-group language constitute a layer of legitimacy for dissident communication that may normalize this type of content and signals affiliation. These propositions are treated as analytic expectations derived from the dataset, not as generalizable claims about the broader platform population.

6.8. Quantification of Qualitative Findings with MAXQDA

To support cross-account comparability and typology-building, “core codes” were identified using a transparent rule: codes were considered core when they were (a) prevalent across the corpus, (b) central in linking modalities (sound–visual–interaction), and (c) recurrent in co-occurrence patterns. Core codes included: Jungle Setting (24), Visual Affectiveness via emojis (26) including the Ninja/guerrilla emoji (21), Typical military clothing (13), Farc-related songs (14), sound-driven storytelling (18) and guerrilla identity via sound (12), supportive comments (90) and recruitment interest comments (89), TikTok logic cues such as Video Length < 1 min (16), and narrative clusters that normalize guerrilla life or violence and frame it as lifestyle/identity (e.g., “Soft Recruitment / Lifestyle appeal”, 11; “Normalization of conflict/militarized romance”, 6; “Normalization of violence and self-sacrifice”, 3). These codes are treated as discursive and multimodal indicators, not as evidence of offline recruitment outcomes.

Engagement metrics (views, likes, shares, saves and comments) are interpreted as visibility and interaction signals shaped by platform logics, not as direct measures of offline recruitment success or impact. Where comments are disabled, comment-based measures are treated as structurally missing rather than “low engagement,” and comment-content indicators are not coded as absence.

Given TikTok’s personalized recommendation system, the corpus is not statistically representative, it is rather an analytically constructed sample designed to capture variation in how dissident-coded messaging is formatted, circulated, and interacted with on the platform.

6.9. Ethics, Safety, and Limitations

Considering the conflict related topic of this study, no contact with the creators of the studied TikTok accounts, nor interaction via commenting was undergone to minimize safety risks. Although the analyzed material was publicly accessible on TikTok, all account names, usernames, screenshots, and other directly identifying elements were anonymized in the thesis to reduce the risk of re-identification and potential harm. This decision was taken because the material could include identifiable audiovisual content of minors or conflict-affected persons, which in accordance with the guidelines of *El Comité de Ética en Investigación de la Universidad del Rosario (CEI-UR)* is to be considered ethically sensitive and was therefore censored. In relation to that, analytic claims are framed conservatively as discursive and multimodal indicators (i.e., observable signals in visuals, text, sound, and interaction) rather than assertions about intent, membership, or offline recruitment outcomes.

Key limitations arise from the platform environment and study design. First, it must be stated again that, TikTok's own recommendation system is personalized and responsive to user interaction, which makes neutral sampling impossible and contributes to the selection bias. In line with research on algorithms, data discovery must be understood as co-produced by the platform itself rather than a stable curation of content (Schellewald, 2022). Accordingly, this dataset supports analytic pattern claims, not prevalence estimates.

Second, platform volatility and moderation mean availability can change over time, so freezing the corpus improved stability but does not eliminate selection effects prior to capture.

Third, planned expert consultation (e.g., governmental or specialist interviews) could not be realized due to time and logistical difficulties therefore the analysis limits claims about intent by the creators and contra-measurements taken instead it foregrounds form, circulation, and dissident guerrilla recruitment positioning as they become observable on the platform.

This method allows to focus on the interpretative aspects of video content and audience interaction, aligning with the mediatization approaches that conceptualize media as active in shaping conflict communication rather than merely transmitting it (Cottle, 2006).

7. Results I: Qualitative Within-Account analysis

7.1. Purpose and Analytic Logic of Within-Account Analysis

All seven accounts were treated as cases to reconstruct how armed-group affiliation and recruitment style communication are performed on TikTok through (1) narrative and identity work, (2) affective platform-logics (sound, emojis, short

clips etc.), and (3) interactional and platform dynamics (comments, visibility). The goal here was not statistical comparison, but qualitative reconstruction within each account to identify each account's discursive strategies (what is said/shown, how it is staged, and how audiences reacted) and to be later concluded in a cross-account synthesis.

Methodologically, the dataset contains 24 TikTok posts, supported by 9 supplementary screenshots (33 files in total). 30 of the 33 files contained at least one code. Descriptive coding metrics (mean number of unique codes per video: 28.67 and standard deviation: 5.25) are reported at the level of the video ($n = 24$). Since the number of sampled videos per account varies (2-5 videos, mean = 3.43, SD = 1.51, $n = 7$) code frequencies are treated as descriptive context rather than evidence for prevalence. For comparability, each case was reported into a memo along the same dimensions: 1. Account positioning (propaganda node, recruitment interface, lifestyle normalization), 2. Core narrative (belonging, sacrifice, rurality etc.) 3. Affective repertoire (sound type, emojis, visual style, editing, clip length), 4. Recruitment modality (explicit or implicit, via DM), 5. Engagement types (supportive or rejecting comments, creator-audience interaction), 6. Interpretation of the account in relation to TikTok's affordances (see Table 1). This procedure foregrounds discursive and multimodal indicators and avoids overclaims about actual recruitment success.

Table 1.*Account positioning (N=7 accounts)*

Account	Account positioning	Core Narrative	Affective Repertoire	Recruitment modality	Engagement type
Account 1	Propaganda-recruitment interface	Normalization of guerrilla membership as an identity and life path	Text on screen narration, militarized visuals, instructional tone	Explicit (direct invitation)	Limited (comments off), controlled reception
Account 2	Propaganda-recruitment interface	War-themed storytelling; conflict aesthetics used to narrate belonging and status	War-themed sounds, identity signaling via visuals and edits	Explicit calls to join, also in comments	Comment-visible recruitment cues, audience negotiation observable
Account 3	Micro-recruitment	Normalization of joining the guerrilla	Sound as narrative driver, emojis and in-group markers	Implicit, DM-based	Mixed comments, implicit prompts shift conversion to private channels (DMs)
Account 4	Micro-recruitment potential	Normalization of violence and armed masculinity as routine	Militarized imagery, edits, and framing violence as status	Implicit, semi-personal, suggestive rather than direct	Engagement varies

Account 5	Micro-recruitment	Romanticization and affective intimacy of guerrilla, affiliation framed through emotions	Romantic / lyrical sounds, emotive text-on-screen, female personalization	Mostly implicit (affective alignment)	Engagement tends to be affective admiration; recruitment cues are indirect
Account 6	Soft propaganda / moral legitimization	Militarized order and moral justification, “rightness” of armed stance	Moralizing narrative, militarized visuals	Implicit (normative framing)	Contested comment space (not only support)
Account 7	Soft propaganda / lifestyle normalization	Sound narrative: Guerrilla identity as style and sense of belonging	Sound-centric posts, identity references, but low / soft narrative	Implicit, identity display over calls to action	Supportive micro audience

Within-account analysis indicates that insurgent-themed TikTok content does not operate as a single, uniform recruitment message. Instead, accounts differentiate along a spectrum from explicit recruitment interfaces to soft normalization nodes, as core content and narratives of insurgent guerrilla themed videos on TikTok and their recruitment strategy per account suggests (Table 2). Account 1 and 2 most strongly approximate recruitment-oriented communication by staging entry as a direct option (via text-on-screen or comment prompts) and by using platform-native attention cues (sounds, montage edits) to stabilize a militarized identity narrative. In contrast, several accounts function more plausibly as identity maintenance and legitimization spaces, where the central work is normalizing armed affiliation (and, in some cases, violence) through repetitive aesthetic templates, moral claims, or romanticized affectual narratives.

A key qualitative finding is that TikTok affordances shape recruitment plausibility indirectly via sound and short form editing, compressing political realities into affective moments. Recruitment, where present, is often less a single directive than a channel architecture (comment visibility or DM-shifting) that turns public content into potential private contact.

Table 2.*Core codes (Code frequencies of all coded documents, N=30 coded documents)*

Core code	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Jungle setting	19	57.58	63.33
Visual affectiveness (use of emojis)	18	54.55	60.00
Supportive comments	18	54.55	60.00
Storytelling through sound (music)	17	51.52	56.67
Video length < 1 min	16	48.48	53.33
Rural Colombian identity (guerrilla marker)	16	48.48	53.33
Recruitment-interest comments	15	45.45	50.00
Colombian national identity	14	42.42	46.67
Anonymity / risk management	13	39.39	43.33
Typical military clothing	13	39.39	43.33
FARC-related song	13	39.39	43.33
Emojis as affective intensifier	12	36.36	40.00
Ninja (“guerrillero”) emoji	11	33.33	36.67

Everyday-life narrative (normalization)	11	33.33	36.67
Soft recruitment / lifestyle appeal	10	30.30	33.33
Criticism / rejection comments	10	30.30	33.33

7.2. Explicit Recruitment-Themed Accounts

7.2.1. *Account 1 (5 Videos)*

Account 1 operates as a hybrid propaganda–recruitment node tied to FARC dissidents in the Cauca region, combining “corridos” (música fariana) and collectivist sonic narratives, everyday-life and infrastructural visual stories. An important platform choice is the controlled publicness it achieves by turning the comments off, so no discourse space or comment-wise recruitment information is given, but the account rather steers meaning toward curated narration.

There normalization of guerrilla as a lifestyle is a key factor, achieved through belonging-purpose-militarized lifestyle, with recurrent markers such as military clothing and weapons across most videos. Explicit recruitment calls, via text, and “invitations to belong” coexist in a community/solidarity framing (male bonding coded).

The account mixes FARC-related music with occasional “pop” tracks and relies strongly on text-on-screen narration rather than sound-driven storytelling (in contrast to Account 3). Visual grammar included jungle settings and compilation-style editing that resembles mainstream TikTok formats while embedding propaganda content. Recruitment is explicit but seems to be strategically

implemented by turning the comments off, thus the creator limits dialogic recruitment cues but maintains a strong, non-contested narrative.



Figure 2.

Video 4 of Account 1

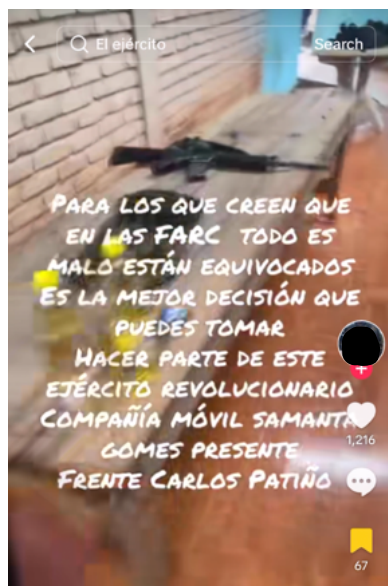


Figure 3.

Video 2 of Account 1

Interpretation: propaganda with high meaning control, recruitment rendered as a directive narrative under conditions of restricted audience feedback.

7.2.2. Account 2 (2 Videos)

Like the account above, a propaganda-recruitment account, here TikTok seems to be even more directly tied to the recruitment communication combined with performative militarized masculinity. The account owner explicitly invites to a dissident group and with the comments being turned on, recruitment is not only visible in the content but also in the highly polarized comment sections, combining support, interest and resistance comments (see Table 3, Figure 4, 5 and 6).

Sound is interpreted as the central affective resource with war-related lyrics and visuals confirming rural or guerrilla identity. The account explicitly mixes lifestyle appeal with recruitment cues. Recruitment is explicitly asked but mostly based in comments by users requesting entry information into a guerrilla group.

Table 3.

Code Matrix on Engagement for Account 2, N=coded comments

	Critical / Rejecting	Rival group criticism	Recruit- ment interest	Creator reply	Supportive	Supportive + creator reply	Explicit anti out- group	Anger / revenge / grievance
Video 2	17	6	9	1	16	0	0	0
Video 1	13	0	47	0	5	0	0	0
Total	30	6	56	1	21	0	0	0

Note. Values are frequencies of coded comments for the two sampled posts in Account 2, with creator replies counted only when they explicitly responded to recruitment interest or supportive comments.

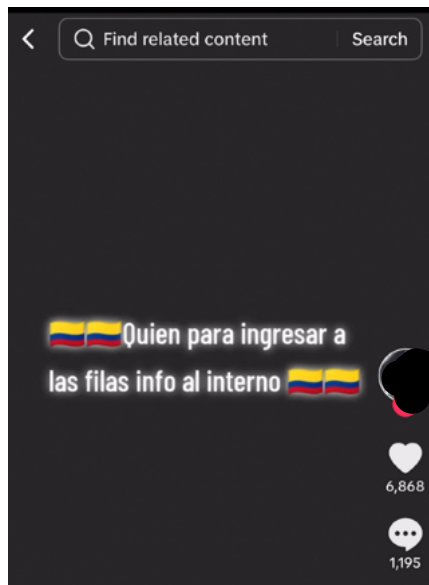


Figure 4.

Video 1 of Account 2 shows an explicit recruitment invitation.

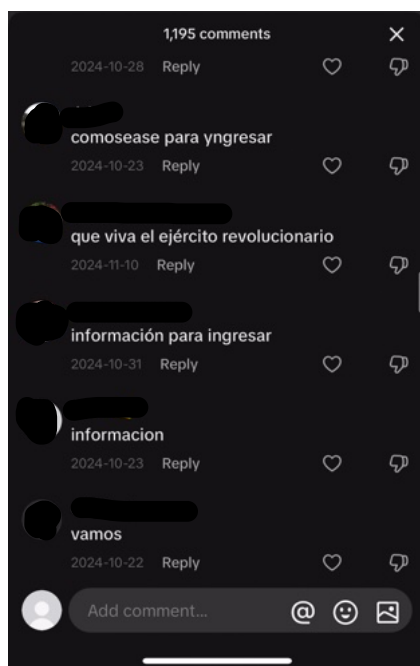


Figure 5.

Comments of Video 1 by Account 2



Figure 6.

Comments of Video 2 by Account 2

Interpretation: Account 2 substantiates the hypothesis that TikTok can function as a public-facing recruitment affordance and that the recruitment narrative is tied to the sounds or music while inviting public contestation as part of the discourse.

7.3. Micro Recruitment

7.3.1. Account 3 (5 Videos)

This account performs a micro targeted approach to recruitment through portraying guerrilla as a glorified lifestyle orientated towards rural male youth. Unlike Account 1's controlled broadcasting, videos are more random and communication relies on interaction and platform affect (emojis, short clips, comments).

Recruitment can be conceptualized as aestheticized normalization: joining is portrayed as a “normal” life option in a conflict zone via a biographical arc (first his school life is over, then separation from his family occurs by third, integration into a dissident front). Sacrifice is acknowledged but does not stop the creator from joining a guerrilla group (coding of “guerrilla over family” meant as accepted consequence).

This account also relies heavily on sound as the central narrative driver with FARC-related corrido’s, linked to “Cristian Perez”⁴, plus a dense emoji use and very short video duration (approx. 8 seconds) makes it appealing to the platform logic.

Interaction and recruitment are mediated through comment and DM dynamics, since supportive and negative comments surface explicit recruitment interests and creator responses and “DM-based recruitment” are decisive.

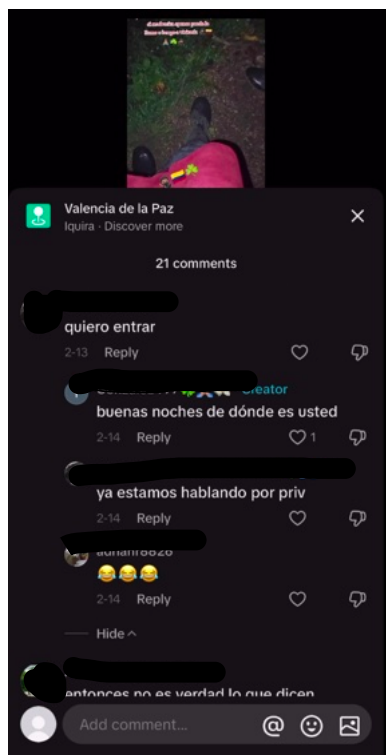


Figure 7.

Video 2 Comments (Creator-Audience Response) by Account 3

⁴ Musician linked to EMC dissident group (see Quishpe, 2020)

Interpretation: Account 3 uses a platform-native recruitment path by creating lifestyle appealing content and using the comment section as way to move the conversation to private chats.

7.3.2. *Account 4 (2 Videos)*

Account 4 is a small account with occasional high reach. The creator uses the first-person narrative to create a narrative of joining the guerrilla by using rural Colombian identity markers with a comparatively simple visual style. The storyline centers on youth transition towards the guerrilla, with finding belonging and purpose in it, alongside violence and being part of a guerrilla group is framed as a reasonable life trajectory and thereby normalizes it.

Recruitment potential seems semi-personal and on a micro-scale, potentially mediated through supportive comments and DMs rather than public calls by the creator himself.

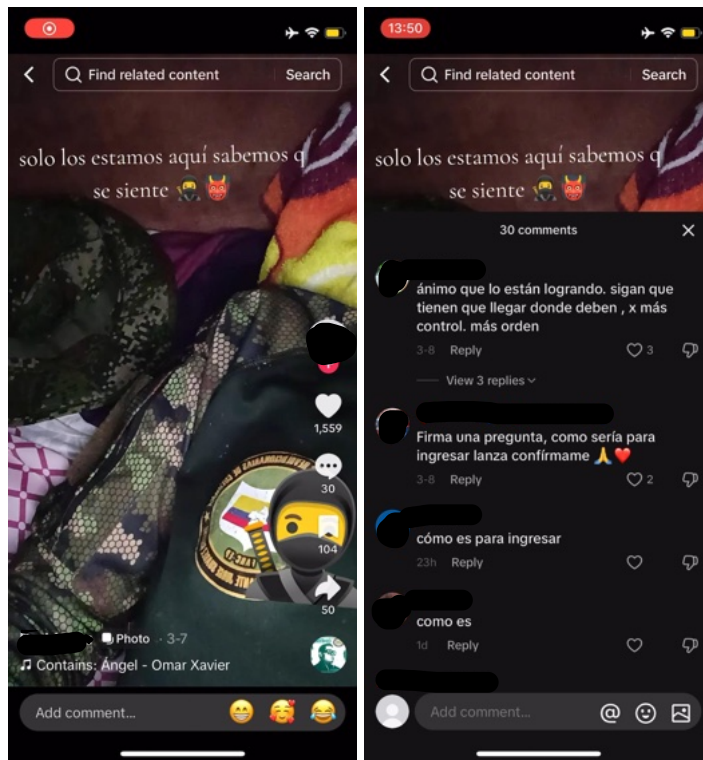


Figure 8.

Video 1 of Account 4

Interpretation: The account is a “minimalist” case, as it demonstrates how even low-production content can articulate a joining/recruitment narrative.

7.3.3. Account 5 (5 Videos)

This account broadens recruitment content by framing guerrilla affiliation through a gendered role, since the creator is female and positions herself as girlfriend of a “guerrillero”, thereby she normalizes guerrilla involvement as socially imaginable for young women in Colombian conflict zones.

The core narrative is combining romanticizing and normalizing “the guerrilla lifestyle” and embedding it into familiar TikTok content types e.g., relationship advice, emotional text snippets and single photo posts. By that she presents romantic involvement as one possible life trajectory rather than as an ideological legitimization or commitment. The account uses “corrido’s” as well as pop sounds and strongly

plays with the platform (filters, edits, emojis, For-you-page-markers). Engagement level varies and comments are supportive. There is no explicit recruitment, but the account still contributes to recruitment by affectively legitimizing identities and relations to armed actors.

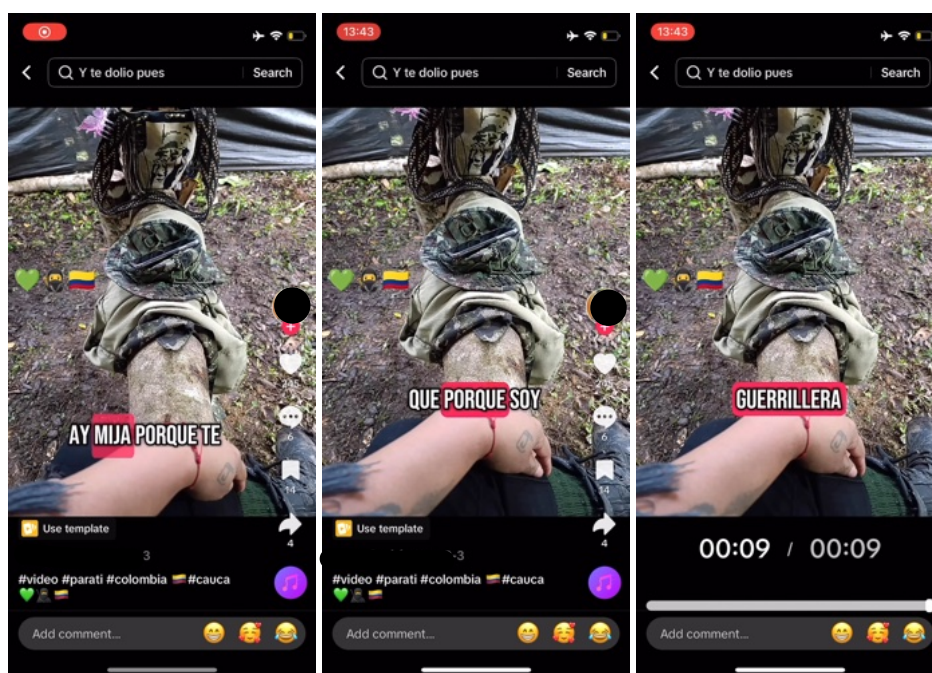


Figure 9.

Video 4 by Account 5. Alignment of grammatical gender in on-screen text to match a masculine coded sound.

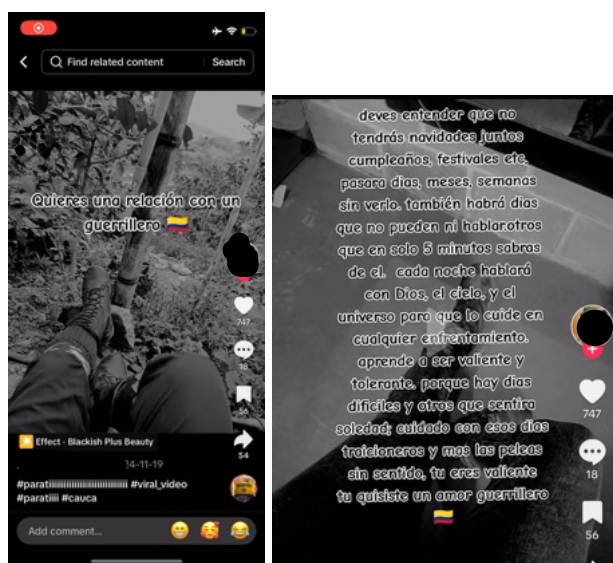


Figure 10.

Video 5 by Account 5. Giving relationship advice in a guerrilla related context.

Interpretation: Account 5 is read as a social normalization account, that lowers symbolic barriers by reframing armed affiliation through intimacy and care.

7.4. Soft Recruitment

7.4.1. Account 6 (2 Videos)

This is a comparatively small, masculinity-forwarded lifestyle account with guerrilla indicators and supportive comments. His account name “[REDACTED] JM” combined with a fighter emoji and the Colombian flag as emoji is potentially referencing a specific front (Jaime Martínez dissident front) via naming. The core narrative of militarized identity paired with a rural youth appeal shows indirect recruitment intentions with emotional and religious markers (via music and emojis). Weapons and uniforms are in both videos visible (see figure 11 and 12).

The account aligns with “soft recruitment” logics through normalization and moral legitimization of guerrilla rather than explicit public recruitment calls.

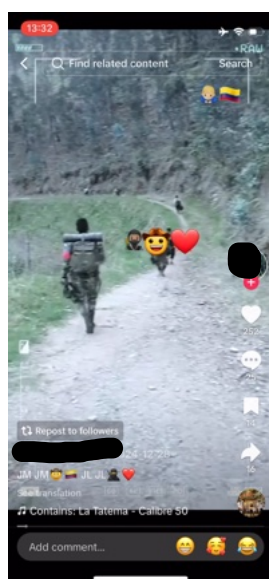


Figure 11.

Screenshot of Video 1 by Account 6. Referencing “JM” in the caption.

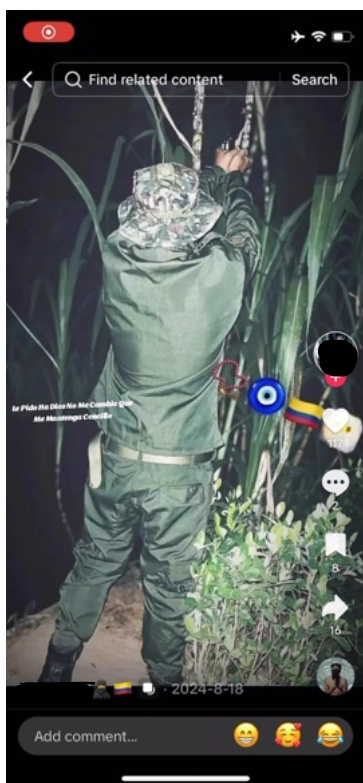


Figure 12.

Video 2 by Account 6

Interpretation: The account strengthens the pattern that lifestyle militarization can work as recruitment content even at a low scale.

7.4.2. Account 7 (3 Videos)

Account 7 appears as a young rural EMC-linked profile producing soft and affective propaganda (nostalgia, rurality, and mobility imagery), while the comment section function as a recruitment space, where explicit interest to join or re-join, moral support and geographically extended attention is voiced.

Thereby he normalizes joining the guerrilla through rural identity markers (Cauca markers, mountain/jeep visuals) and insurgent sound cues (“saludos a los frentes” snippet as dissident index) (see figure 13). Recruitment cues therefore do not primarily originate from explicit creator directives, instead they emerge through public discourse in the comment section and may shift into private messaging.

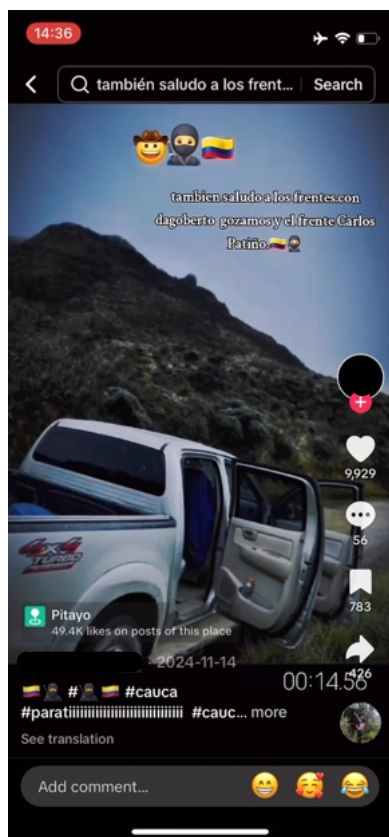


Figure 13.

Video 2 with Farc-related lyrics on screen by Account 7



Figure 14.

Contested comment section of Video 2 by Account 7



Figure 15.

Recruitment-interest comments of Video 1 by Account 7

Interpretation: Account 7 illustrates how TikTok can host recruitment in a micro-public space even when the recruitment content stays “soft”, thereby recruitment cues surface in comments and musical references (see figure 14 and 15).

7.5. Qualitative Conclusion

The within-account analysis suggests that dissident guerrilla recruitment on TikTok is not a single communicative act but a spectrum of recruitment modalities ranging from explicit calls to join to soft normalization via lifestyle or affect and moral framing, including a gendered guerrilla normalization narrative. This suggests that across cases, recruitment becomes legible through (1) narrative framing, (2) affective intensity, and (3) platform channeling, e.g., visibility and shifting the conversation to private DMs or similar, suggesting recruitment on TikTok is not a

discrete message with transparent intent, but rather an affordance-driven pathway that can convert identity performance into contact opportunities.

In a next step, these qualitatively derived types provided the basis for the cross-account analysis, that tried to find patterns across account types on a post level, while remaining cautious about inference and avoiding claims about offline recruitment outcomes.

8. Results II: Quantitative Cross-Account comparison

8.1. Quantification of Qualitative Categories

The within-account analysis suggests the qualitatively constructed recruitment spectrum into three recruitment types: hard, micro, and soft. While also suggesting normalization as a central process that embodies different narrative and affective repertoires. This functions as a controlled descriptive step that makes the qualitative claims auditable by calculating often specific observable indicators co-occur in this corpus.

Following Philipp Mayring's logic of structured qualitative content analysis, the typology is grounded in the dominant configurations identified in the case memos. Since categorization is a controlled descriptive step based on code-frequencies that support transparency about the distribution of indicators, it does not suggest significance. Based on the rather small corpus (n=24), the reported differences are interpreted as descriptive tendencies, and not as indicators of importance.

For this purpose, aligning with mediatization theory, platform and visibility cues structure how conflict identities are performed, recruitment in this context is understood as a spectrum that can shift explicit hard asks through contact

affordances. Therefore, the following quantification should be read as pattern-matching, this means it shows how often specific indicators appear across account types without declaring those as offline actual recruitment outcomes.

8.2. Unit of Analysis, Corpus, and Audit trail

The unit of analysis is the post, meaning each TikTok constitutes one analytic unit and is represented through binary presence or absence (0/1 indicators) that reflect whether a given feature occurs in that unit. The final MAXQDA file contained 33 documents in total, however the present cross-account quantification uses 24 posts as the unit of analysis ($n=24$). To prevent double counting, codes initially applied to non-video screenshot documents (e.g. screenshots of video segments, comment screenshots and documents coded as “Visual Style > Simple Photo”), which were used as evidentiary support for interpretation, were transferred into the corresponding video documents. No screenshot remained separately coded for the quantification since the unit of analysis was the video.

Three account types were defined based on the dominant recruitment modality observed qualitatively:

- Hard recruitment: Accounts 1 and 2 ($n = 7$ videos)
- Soft recruitment: Accounts 6 and 7 ($n = 5$ videos)
- Micro recruitment: Accounts 3, 4 and 5 ($n = 12$ videos)

All proportions are reported as k/n _videos within each account type (e.g., $0.143 = 1/7$; $0.083 = 1/12$; $0.2 = 1/5$). Given cell sizes are small, percentage differences are interpreted primarily as descriptive tendencies. For binary indicators, results are reported as k/n (%) because dispersion measures are redundant and for

continuous engagement metrics, mean (SD) and range are reported to reflect skew and heterogeneity (see Appendix D1: Code Matrix).

8.3. Typology

Account types were assigned to one of the three analytic types based on the dominant recruitment modality observed across that account's sampled videos and associated interaction cues (e.g., recruitment-interest comments, visible prompts toward private messaging). The typology is used to compare patterned communication strategies within this study and it is not a claim about organizational structure or offline recruitment effectiveness. Recruitment cues mean observable textual, visual, audio or interactional markers that support recruitment-oriented meaning (e.g., legitimacy or affiliation cues or comments).

Hard recruitment means recruitment-oriented communication that refers to a direct and explicit call to mobilize, to join a dissident front. In the corpus, hard recruitment is marked on the video's public layer (on-screen text, captions, comments by creator or explicit visuals) through direct joining imperatives (e.g., "quien quiere ingresar a") and/or recruitment-relevant instructions (e.g., "escribame al privado), and/or explicit organizational front naming/branding (e.g., logos visible). Hard recruitment is treated as "hard" because the mobilization function does not rely primarily on inference from lifestyle aesthetics.

Soft recruitment is defined as the indirect persuasion that emphasizes guerrilla identity, legitimacy claims, conflict framing or aspirational portrayals of armed-group life without an explicit call to join. Thereby persuasion operates through symbolic alignment (e.g., moral justification), aestheticization of armed identity and implied desirability rather than direct mobilization language. Soft

recruitment is analytically distinct from micro recruitment because the persuasive/legitimizing thrust is foregrounded, even if joining is not explicit requested in both types.

Micro recruitment refers to everyday-life or identity performance content with minimal explicit persuasion and no consistent direct call to join. Recruitment relevance is implied through normalization (i.e., integrating armed aesthetics and affiliation cues into routine, familiar and relatable settings) rather than through sustained ideological legitimation or explicit instruction. Micro recruitment is treated as the lowest-intensity modality, where recruitment has “ambient” character, which means it is operated through affect and familiarity rather than overt persuasion.

Based on these definitions, first each video was classified as hard, soft or micro and the account was assigned to the type that is most frequent across its sampled videos. Also, if hard recruitment occurs and is rhetorically central in at least one video, the account is classified as hard only if mobilization cues are not isolated or single. Ambiguous cases between micro and soft, classified as soft when the interactional cues (comments) showed legitimation rather than merely supportive engagement and classified as micro, when the dominant function is seen as routine or identity cue and persuasion remains in the background (e.g., “everyday-life narrative”). Videos that contain guerrilla-adjacent aesthetics but lack credible affiliation cues and show no recruitment relevancy in comment sections were documented as such in memos rather than used to strengthen recruitment claims. These decision rules aim to treat the typology as an analytic heuristic for comparing patterned communication strategies, not as a claim about organizational structure or offline recruitment effectiveness.

The coding of the “everyday-life narrative” meant representing guerrilla life or parts of it as an imaginable life trajectory via affective immersion and everyday aesthetics. At the video level, this included integrating codes such as group leisure/camaraderie, community markers, weapons/uniforms in routine or de-dramatized contexts, masculinity markers, and rural/jungle settings or markers to certain regions. Since one of the study’s main hypothesis concerns recruitment as predominantly implicit, normalization was treated as a central quantitative layer in the cross-account comparison.

It is important to note, that for the quantitative analysis organizational affiliation cues, e.g., front naming, were coded only when markers were sufficiently unambiguous to support a defensible attribution. Partially obscured patches/logos (e.g., hidden by emojis) and audio/lyrics that referenced fronts without clear self-attribution were treated as contextual signals and documented in analytic memos, but not coded as “org_branding_marker”. This applies to the partially occluded uniform patch in video 1 of Account 4, and the sound snippet of “saludos a los frentes” or animated lyrics naming EMC fronts like in Account 7. The handle of Account 6 “ JM” was treated as contextual plausibility to reference the front “Jaime Martinez” rather than as a codable marker for this second analysis. In this context, a second stage of indicators was developed inductively to operationalize the qualitative categories differentiating recruitment modalities. Those binary code variables include direct join imperatives, explicit contact offers and as noted organizational branding markers. They were introduced to increase construct validity of the quantitative comparison rather than to expand the interpretive scope of the code system (see Appendix D2: Variable Definitions and D3: Audit Trail).

Finally, format and account type are partially confounded in this corpus and duration patterns should be read as platform-style packaging within types rather than causal effects.

8.4. Corpus Composition and Format Constraints

Table 4 summarizes corpus composition by account type and format, containing 24 units including videos and photo posts. Here duration-based analysis logically excludes photo posts (N=20) because they do not provide a meaningful playback length.

Table 4.

Corpus Composition by account type and format (N=24)

Video length / format	Hard	Micro	Soft	Total
<1 min	3	10	3	16
≥1 min	3	0	1	4
Non-video post (photo(s))	1	2	1	4
Total	7	12	5	24

Two constraints follow directly from the format distribution. Primarily, short videos (<1 min) dominate the corpus, whereas longer video are rare. Secondly, format and account type are partially confounded. That becomes clear when looking at micro recruitment, as it does not contain any ≥1-minute videos. Any association between short-form videos and normalization may therefore reflect that micro

accounts are both predominantly short-form and more normalization-heavy.

Consequently, duration results are reported only as descriptive tendencies, meaning in this corpus normalization is often packaged into short-form videos, but the analysis design cannot disentangle format from account-type strategy.

This reading is consistent with scholarship describing TikTok as an algorithmically curated and selection-driven environment in which format conventions and visibility cues structure modes of self-presentation and attention capture (Vijay and Gekker 2021: 715; TikTok n.d.).

8.5. Core Cross-Account Comparison: prevalence of key indicators

Here, table 5 reports descriptive prevalence of ten core codes (binary) at the video level. Given the small cell sizes, the table can be interpreted as pattern mapping.

Table 5.

Descriptive prevalence of core codes by account type

Indicator (binary, video-level)	Hard (n=7)	Micro (n=12)	Soft (n=5)	Total (n=24)
normalization_strict	2/7 (28.6%)	8/12 (66.7%)	2/5 (40.0%)	12/24 (50.0%)
everyday_life_bin	2/7 (28.6%)	8/12 (66.7%)	2/5 (40.0%)	12/24 (50.0%)
soft_lifestyle_appeal	2/7 (28.6%)	7/12 (58.3%)	1/5 (20.0%)	10/24 (41.7%)
direct_join_call	3/7 (42.9%)	0/12 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	3/24 (12.5%)

contact_channel_offered	2/7 (28.6%)	1/12 (8.3%)	0/5 (0.0%)	3/24 (12.5%)
org_branding_marker	2/7 (28.6%)	2/12 (16.7%)	1/5 (20.0%)	5/24 (20.8%)
typical_military_clothing	5/7 (71.4%)	5/12 (41.7%)	3/5 (60.0%)	13/24 (54.2%)
jungle_setting	6/7 (85.7%)	8/12 (66.7%)	5/5 (100.0%)	19/24 (79.2%)
supportive_comment_present	2/7 (28.6%)	10/12 (83.3%)	5/5 (100.0%)	17/24 (70.8%)
recruitment_interest_comment_present	2/7 (28.6%)	9/12 (75.0%)	3/5 (60.0%)	14/24 (58.3%)

8.5.1. Normalization and micro recruitment

Micro recruitment accounts show the highest prevalence of normalization indicators. For example, *everyday_life_bin* appears in 8/12 (66.7%) micro videos compared to 2/5 (40.0%) soft and 2/7 (28.6%) hard videos. The stricter normalization composite (*normalization_strict*) follows the same gradient (micro 8/12 (66.7%) > soft 2/5 (40.0%) > hard 2/7 (28.6%)). This supports the descriptive claim that micro recruitment disproportionately relies on normalization through everyday aesthetics (i.e., presenting armed-group life as an imaginable, routine life trajectory), rather than foregrounding mobilization language.

8.5.2. Hard recruitment: explicit mobilization and off-staging affordances

To visualize how hard recruitment differs from micro and soft recruitment, it becomes clear when looking at join imperatives and also explicit “off-staging”, i.e., giving out ways to contact. Therefore, as mentioned, three new codes were born out

of the “Recruitment” category, *direct_join_call*, *contact_channel_offered* and *organisational_branding_marker*. The binary indicator of *direct_join_call* occurs in 3/7 hard recruitment videos (42.9%) but nowhere else. *Contact_channel_offered* appears in 2/7 hard videos (28.6%), compared to 1/12 micro and 0/5 soft videos. *Org_branding_marker* remains low across recruitment types, consistent with conservative attribution rules and the frequency ambiguity of affiliation cues in the dataset.

8.5.3. Shared representational jungle setting and typical military clothing

Jungle_setting is prevalent across all account types (hard 6/7, micro 8/12, soft 5/5), suggesting that rural/jungle imaginaries constitute a stable identity environment across modalities. At the same time, typical_military_clothing is most prevalent in hard recruitment (5/7) and less frequent in micro recruitment (5/12), indicating a descriptive tendency toward more overt militarized appearance in the hard subset.

8.6. Platform Affordances: duration and normalization

Since TikTok functions through its selection-driven algorithm and encourages short and affective narratives, it is plausible that normalization narratives are more frequently expressed in condensed formats. Therefore, for analysis purposes, duration is treated as a packaging dimension rather than a causal driver. Since photo posts were excluded, the corpus is $n=20$, resulting in strict normalization occurring in 9/16 short videos (<1 min is 56.3%) and in 1/4 long videos (≥ 1 min is 25.0%), which is consistent with the expectation of TikTok’s algorithm promoting short videos.

Table 6.*Duration x strict normalization (videos only: N=20)*

Length	Not normalized (0)	Normalized (1)	N
<1 min	7 (43.8%)	9 (56.2%)	16
≥1 min	3 (75.0%)	1 (25.0%)	4

However, when looking at the long video cell of table 6 (≥ 1 min = $n = 4$), the interpretative leverage is limited, also micro recruitment included no long videos at all (see 8.4). Therefore, the conclusion must be a descriptive tendency, which included normalization being used in short-form videos without separating duration effects from account types.

8.7. Descriptive Co-occurrences

Two co-occurrence tests were used to assess whether the typology rests on bundled features and whether normalization co-occurs with audience stance indicators.

8.7.1. *Joining statements x offering of contact*

Table 7.

Co-occurrence of direct joining statements and contact channel offered, reported as frequencies by account type across the 24 sampled posts

Account type	Count of co_join_and_contact	N videos
Hard	2	7
Micro	0	12
Soft	0	5
Total	2	24

The indicator *co_joining_and_contact* in table 7 captures the intersection of *direct_join_call* and *contact_chanel_offered*. They co-occur in 2/7 hard-recruitment videos and in 0/12 micro and 0/5 soft videos (overall 2/24). This supports the interpretation that explicit recruitment is paired with off-staging mechanisms primarily within the hard subset.

Also, qualitative evidence suggests that an explicit joining prompt like the one in the Cristian Video 1 (text on screen: “Quien para ingresar”) co-occurs with an explicit contact invitation (“info al interno”) and 47 comments include recruitment-interest queries. Given the present design this is interpreted as an interactional signal (audience stance) and not as evidence of actual offline recruitment.

8.7.2. *Normalization (strict) x supportive comments*

Among videos coded as strict normalization (n = 12), supportive comments are present in 8/12 overall (micro 6/8; soft 2/2; hard 0/2). This suggests that within

this corpus, strict- normalization content is more often accompanied by supportive audience stance in the micro/soft subsets than in the hard subset (see table 8). But given the small N and potential comment visibility constraints, this pattern is interpreted descriptively.

Table 8.

Co-occurrence of strict normalization and supportive comments (N=12).

Account type	Proportion ⁵	Video with supportive comments present
Hard	0	2
Micro	0.75	8
Soft	1	2
Total	0.67	12

Qualitatively, comments indicate that the co-occurrence between strict normalization and supportive audience stance is expressed through recurring affiliative repertoires. In strict normalization videos from the micro/soft subset (e.g., Account 4 and 7), supportive comments are often full of emojis that frequently use camaraderie markers (“camarada”, “firme compañero”), encouragement framing (“ánimo muchachos”) and moral legitimation (“bendiciones”). Few even include militant endorsement and voice violence or revenge rhetoric against the state’s military. These responses mirror the videos’ normalization strategy, by presenting armed affiliation through everyday identity, belonging, and affect. At the same time,

⁵ Supportive comments were coded binarily, 1 if ≥ 1 supportive comment occurred, 0 otherwise. Mean equals proportion of videos with supportive comments.

supportive comments even include meta-observations that point to recruitment interpretations (e.g., comments such as “ahora reclutan por TikTok”), which underscores that comment uptake normalizes and critically frames the same content at the same time. Overall, in the strict normalization cases the comment layer functions as social proof where identity performance is rendered relatable and interactionally accessible, while remaining a corpus-bound, descriptive tendency rather than evidence of persuasion effects.

8.8. Engagement Metrics

In order to contextualize audience interaction across recruitment types, engagement metrics are used here as indicators of potential reach and interactional uptake across recruitment types, supporting the research through discursive and multimodal patterns within the platform’s visibility and interaction dynamics without treating engagement as evidence of persuasion or recruitment success.

Engagement metrics were standardized as rates per 1000 views for likes, saves, shares and comments to improve comparability across videos with unequal reach. Where comments are disabled, comment-based indicators are coded as structurally missing (NA), not as absence of engagement or stance. As established, distribution on TikTok is strongly shaped by the recommendation system and absolute counts largely reflect algorithmic exposure as much as audience response (TikTok, n.d.). Given the small, purposively sampled corpus and the typical concentration of attention on social platforms, these metrics are reported as exploratory descriptors rather than stable performance estimates.

Table 9.*Condensed engagement exploratory table*

Account type	Views: (mean [min-max]), N	Likes rate per 1000: mean (SD) [min-max], N	Saves rate per 1000: mean (SD) [min-max], N	Shares rate per 1000: mean (SD) [min-max], N	Comments rate per 1000: mean (SD) [min-max], N
Hard	121.714 [12.000 – 371.600], 7	23.11 (3.08) [18.48-28.32], 7	1.26 (0.39) [0.88-2.00], 7	1.50 (1.12) [0.25-2.84], 7	2.66 (0.78) [2.11–3.22], 2
Micro	47.159 [267-205.100], 12	50.50 (22.94) [21.96-101.12], 12	3.43 (1.92) [0.94-8.39], 12	2.08 (1.92) [0.00-7.19], 12	0.81 (0.70) [0.00–2.40], 12
Soft	59.635 [4.122-211.800], 5	53.47 (17.35) [27.51-73.95], 5	3.45 (1.02) [1.88-4.72], 5	2.76 (1.00) [1.76-3.88], 5	1.51 (2.55) [0.26–6.07], 5
Total	71.504 [267-371.600], 24	43.13 (21.91) [18.48-101.12], 24	2.80 (1.74) [0.88-8.39], 24	2.05 (1.57) [0.00–7.19], 24	1.19 (1.46) [0.00–6.07], 19 ⁶

⁶ Comment rate (N) varies due to comment disablement since those were treated as NA, not zero.

In this dataset, the wide view ranges (spanning orders of magnitude) further indicate that means can be dominated by outliers, accordingly Table 9 reports mean, dispersion (SD), and min-max to foreground heterogeneity rather than infer differences between recruitment types. Also, Table 9 shows across the corpus higher mean likes per 1000 views for micro and soft recruitment than hard recruitment (micro: 50.50, soft: 53.47, hard: 23.11). However, dispersion is substantial, meaning high standard deviations and wide ranges, indicate within-type heterogeneity. Consequently, these differences are interpreted as suggestive patterns that contextualize qualitative findings.

Also, comment-based indicators are not comparable across types since in the hard account type comment functionality was systemically unavailable, due to comment disablement in 5/7 hard recruitment type videos. Therefore, as established, “supportive_comment_present” and “recruitment_interest_comment_present” were coded as structurally missing (not “0”) where comments were off. As a result, any apparent differences in comment rates should be treated as artifacts of data availability rather than substantive audience response patterns. Engagement is interpreted as a visibility and interactional signal within platform dynamics, not as evidence of persuasion or recruitment outcomes. The full exploratory engagement tables, both by account type and by TikTok accounts are reported in Appendix E.

8.9. Limitations

Overall, three limitations have come up that bound interpretation. First it must be stated that the corpus is rather small with $N=24$ and quantitative results remain descriptive. Quantification is included to primarily illustrate and contextualize the qualitative analysis, rather than to support statistical claims. Second, format and account type are partially confounded (e.g., micro recruitment

contains no videos longer than one minute), and limit claims about duration effects. Third, conservative attribution rules reduce false positives for affiliation markers but likely undercount ambiguous branding cues, while comment capture cannot be completed due to creators disabling comments.

Future research could strengthen reliability by adding second-coder checks on a subset of posts and by expanding the corpus to reduce confounding and increase robustness of cross-account comparisons.

9. Results III: Joint Interpretation

9.1. Integration Logic and Joint Display

Following mixed-method integration as concluding analytic step, qualitative and quantitative components are integrated through a joint display, to align qualitative interpretive mechanisms (discursive and multimodal cues) with quantitative distributive patterns and constrains at the video-level. This is necessary, because TikTok's algorithmic recommendation and volatility inevitably lead to a selection bias, meaning neutral sampling is not feasible and content visibility relies on algorithmic curation. Given these constraints and the multimodal segmentation logic of the coding procedure, quantification is used as descriptive support, and not as evidence of recruitment outcomes. The joint display is therefore used to contextualize both data types to assess convergence, complementarity, and specific boundary conditions for the key claims. For this reason, a bounded inference rule was applied, that (1) explains qualitative indicators as explanation for how meaning and persuasion are constructed, while (2) quantitative distributions generalize how far those qualitative interpretations can be generalized across this frozen corpus of 24 posts by seven accounts. Concretely, high coverage across videos and accounts

supports treating a mechanism as a cross-corpus tendency, whereas concentration in a smaller subsets function as boundary condition indicating episodic intensity rather than general presence.

9.2. Convergence: Joint Interpretation

In this joint display (table 10), “quantitative segments” refer to coded occurrences derived from MAXQDA and serve as descriptive context to indicate whether a mechanism appears and how strongly is expressed across accounts and videos. To avoid conflating prevalence (whether a claim occurs at all) with intensity (how often it occurs when present), medians and ranges are calculated only for videos with ≥ 1 occurrence of the respective claim (i.e., excluding zero-count videos). Also, coverage is reported at both video and account level to differentiate dispersed patterns from account-specific effects.

Table 10.*Joint Display of qualitative and quantitative measures (N=24 posts, 7/7 accounts)*

Key Claims	Qualitative indicator	Quantitative segments ⁷	Inferences
Sound/Music as main narrative or identity cue	Recurrent use of militarized or Farc-related music or lyrics on screen (e.g., "Saludos a los frentes" / "me fui pa la guerrilla") or militarized romance via music	Coverage: V 24/24 (100%); A 7/7 (100%). Intensity: Seg 55; Med 2 [1–5]	Audio functions as a TikTok-native carrier of meaning in this corpus, enabling portable identity signaling and replication across for-you-pages (consistent with narrative-transport cues)
Recruitment staged as a funnel (Code: call to DMs)	Comments asking how to join and creators directing the conversation to private channels; fronts named or logos visible	Coverage: V 16/24 (66.7%); A 6/7 (85.7%). Intensity: Seg 100; Med 2 [1–50]	This pattern supports a public to private conversation logic, where public visibility attracts interest; alternative explanations remain plausible (like performative "DM me," influencer-style interaction ideas); range 1-50 driven by few videos
Normalization (joining or being part of the guerrilla as normal life option/choice)	Daily life content, TikTok compilations, storytelling via music, normalization of uniforms and weapons, rural area, love life with guerrilla, affects, naming fronts	Coverage: V 22/24 (91.7%); A 7/7 (100%). Intensity: Seg 63; Med 3 [1–7]	Armed identity is rendered compatible with everyday rural life/relationships in this corpus, supporting the normalization argument; alternative explanations possible

⁷ Coverage: videos: n/N (%); accounts: n/N (%); Intensity: segments: total; per-video median [min–max]; V = videos with ≥1 occurrence / 24 (%); A = accounts with ≥1 occurrence / 7 (%); Seg = total coded segments; Med = median segments per coded video; min–max shown for coded videos. Quantification indicates within-corpus dispersion and intensity, not population prevalence or persuasive "strength"; prominence is assessed qualitatively.

Moral Legitimization (Guerrilla over family code)	Discursive prioritization of guerrilla over family (also in lyrics): sacrifice of leaving family legitimized as duty	Coverage: V 8/24 (33.3%); A 4/7 (57.1%). Intensity: Seg 13; Med 1.5 [1–3]	Episodic mechanism, that where present, frames identity choice as moral reordering
Platform affordances as participatory identity display	Emojis, FYP markers, filters, lipsync, short-form packaging	Coverage: V 18/24 (75.0%); A 7/7 (100%). Intensity: Seg 50; Med 3 [1–5]	Recruitment cues can be seen as platform vernacular: short-form, algorithm compatible formats may indicate virality/spreading
Territorial Authenticity: Rural Colombia	Landscape filming; hashtags and locality pins; obstructed spelling (e.g., "f4rc")	Coverage: V 20/24 (83.3%); A 6/7 (85.7%). Intensity: Seg 48; Med 2 [1–4]	Frequent territorial cues support authenticity claims, variation across accounts suggests it is a flexible resource rather than a requirement
Supportive comments co-produce legitimacy	Praise/in-group language ("bendiciones a las farc"); camaraderie; creators validate/redirect conversation; recruitment interest voiced	Coverage: V 17/24 (70.8%); A 6/7 (85.7%). Intensity: Seg 88; Med 4 [1–16]	Comments act as public social proof that can legitimate the identity performance and signal low-threshold alignment; absence of comments is not evidence of absence of alignment
Hard vs. soft/micro accounts differ as risk-management strategies	Hard: Codes: direct call-to-join + contact cues; Soft/micro: lifestyle + identity + ambiguity	Explicit cues: V 5/24 (20.8%); A 4/7 (57.1%); Seg 10; Med 2 [1–3]. Soft/lifestyle: V 10/24 (41.7%); A 5/7 (71.4%); Seg 11; Med 1 [1–2]. Risk-management: V 13/24 (54.2%); A 5/7 (71.4%); Seg 13; Med 1 [1–1]	High-risk explicit mobilization is episodic; soft/micro rely on normalization and identity branding (but uneven sampling); supports interpreting TikTok as more suited to indirect recruitment communication under plausible deniability constraints

Organizational branding / front naming as legitimization strategy	Logos/markers; front naming; propaganda material; “FARC marker” cues	Coverage: V 12/24 (50.0%); A 5/7 (71.4%). Intensity: Seg 47; Med 4 [1–9]	Cross-account occurrence indicates availability of organizational cues, but counts capture occurrence not prominence; rhetorical force depends on display intensity/backgrounding
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This joint display table indicates highest convergence for (1) sound/music as narrative infrastructure, as that is present in all videos/accounts (100% coverage), (2) normalization of group affiliation as compatible with the everyday life narrative, showing high video-level coverage, and (3) platform affordances like FYP markers, emojis and short-form videos. In contrast, explicit recruitment cues remain rare and clustered in a subset of videos (5/24), while recruitment related dynamics are more often observable through interactional escalation, meaning comments and redirection to private messaging. Because coded presence does not capture salience (e.g., whether a logo is central, fleeting, obstructed, or backgrounded), counts should be interpreted as occurrence, not as a direct proxy for persuasive strength, qualitative memoing is therefore primary for evaluating prominence and rhetorical function. Importantly, the numeric distributions should be read as within-corpus dispersion indicators rather than prevalence estimates, for example “organizational branding/front naming” appears across 5/7 accounts indicating cross-account availability of such branding markers, but this does not specify how viewers interpret those cues or whether they function in each instance. These distinctions are addressed by prioritizing qualitative interpretation and using quantitative counts to flag where mechanisms are pervasive or concentrated.

9.3. Complementarity

Complementarity emerges because the two analytic components provide different forms of analytic leverage. The quantitative component adds stats, coverage, and intensity of videos, contributing where such mechanisms appear and how concentrated they are when present. Concurrently, the qualitative component contributes to how these mechanisms operate by interpreting their meaning. This includes the semiotic functioning of sound, imagery and branding mechanisms, and the interactional logic through which comments perform legitimation and redirect conversations to private spaces, as well as the specific context of TikTok as a multimodal platform.

Following the inference rule, broad quantitative coverage can be interpreted through qualitatively identified mechanisms, while qualitative interpretations can be bound by quantitative patterns of unevenness. For instance, explicit recruitment segments cluster in a small number of videos, suggesting episodic and intense mobilization cues, potentially depend on interaction uptake or escalation dynamics in comment sections, not as constituting evidence that recruitment content is broadly prevalent.

9.4. Boundary Conditions

Table 10 also shows divergence and conditions that constrain interpretation, for example uneven distribution of territorial cues (e.g., locations pins, hashtags) appear in 83% of the videos but not across all accounts, indicating that “territorial authenticity” is a common resource, but not an invariant feature of all dissident communication in this corpus.

Also, concentration of recruitment content is visible but not everywhere, it is rather episodic and concentrated in a subset of videos with high engagement and number of comments, redirecting to private conversation channels (DMs). This supports an interpretation of recruitment seen as dependent on interaction, rather than being continuously explicit across all analyzed data.

Further, mechanisms that indicate guerrilla identification (sound, normalization) are widespread across the corpus, whereas explicit calls to join a dissident group are visible but comparatively rare. This boundary condition is consistent with anonymization of creators (e.g., not showing their faces) and platform governance, but alternative explanations (e.g., attention-seeking performances, trends) remain plausible.

9.5. Revised Propositions and Consolidated Typology

The four sensitizing propositions that guided the sampling process (Methods section 6.6.) and the additional ones used for cross-account comparison (Methods section 6.7.) have now been aligned considering the joint display. This does not provide offline recruitment evidence, but it does indicate which propositions are consistently represented across this analysis via high coverage and which appear episodically or in clusters.

9.5.1. Refined sensitizing propositions

- (1) Sound/music as primary narrative carrier is strongly supported at the level of distribution, meaning sound related storytelling is coded across all videos and accounts, indicating that it can operate as a recurrent identity and narrative

infrastructure cue for affiliation and interpretative framing, giving it recruitment-related meaning in this corpus.

- (2) The second proposition referred to certain audio clusters, such as “Saludos a las frentes”, as dissident-coded indicators. This is consistent with the observed centrality of sound-based narratives, however the joint display also warrants that while the audio cluster is a present narrative marker in this data, it is not of exclusive use to dissident actors or a stable implication across wider platform environment.
- (3) The expectation that recruitment functions are more frequently observed in interactive spaces (in comments) is supported, since recruitment interest is more frequently observable in comments than through explicit calls to join.
- (4) The proposition that sensitive information exchange for recruitment details is moved into private channels aligns with the observed analysis patterns insofar as recruitment is more often staged as public interest (in comments) and then likely followed by private-channel contact, or at least announcing such private contact publicly.

9.5.2. Refined emergent propositions during the coding process

- (1) Normalization as dominant recruitment narrative is supported by heavy coding of everyday-life framings, affective relational cues and routine integration of armed aesthetics occurring across most videos and account types (22/24 videos (91.7%) and all accounts (7/7), with a non-trivial intensity (Seg = 63; Med = 3; range = 1-7; Table 10).
- (2) That systematic redirection to DMs is a common practice on TikTok could be supported in this corpus, but as we can see in the joint display it is unevenly

distributed and concentrated in a subset of videos, suggesting episodic escalation rather than continuous explicit mobilization. Public observable comment redirection to private messaging (or claims of having redirected) in recruitment-themed contexts occur in 66.7% of all videos and in 85.7% accounts, implying that a small subset of videos disproportionately hosts interactions referencing recruitment, however this does not imply that direct private messages actually occurred.

- (3) Considering territorial cues, via ubication pins clustered in Cauca or Huila and visual rurality, they appear frequently but not universally across accounts (83.3.% of videos). This supports an interpretation of territoriality as a flexible legitimacy resource rather than a necessary feature of dissident communication in this dataset.
- (4) The upcoming expectation that referencing certain fronts or showing logos (“propaganda aesthetics”) would serve as legitimation tool and identity claim is supported by the joint display, as such composites occur in 50% of videos and in 71.4% of accounts, with substantial intensity present. This shows that when present, organizational references function as a legitimacy and identity resource.
- (5) As expected, supportive comments do contribute to legitimacy and normalize the content, as they appear in 70.8% of videos and 85.7% of accounts with relatively high intensity (see table 10). This supports the interpretation of comments being able to normalize dissident communication content and signal alignment. However, the interference remains methodologically bound by the TikTok algorithm, meaning comment visibility is shaped by exposure and this study’s sampling, since observed interaction likely reflects a

selective audience rather than a representative public. Accordingly, supportive comments are treated as discursive indicators of legitimation and alignment but not as evidence of broader social acceptance, which was not experimented on here.

Taken together, the refined propositions indicate that recruitment communication in this corpus is anchored less in continuous explicit mobilization or recruitment calls, but more in normalization and audio-based narratives, which is complemented by episodic interactional escalation and variable legitimation resources, including territorial cues, supportive comments, and front naming.

10. Discussion

10.1. Answers to the Research Questions

This thesis addressed the research question of how FARC-dissident coded TikTok accounts perform recruitment-oriented communication on TikTok. By conducting a mixed-method analysis of 24 sampled TikTok posts by seven accounts, the findings indicate that recruitment-relevant meaning is anchored less in continuous explicit mobilization than in two pervasive mechanisms, which are normalization narratives and affective narratives based on audio infrastructure. Together, these two main implications render guerrilla affiliation more compatible with everyday life markers and affectively resonant forms of storytelling specifically on TikTok. Explicit calls to join are also present but episodic, as they occur in just five out of 24 sampled TikTok posts. By contrast, recruitment-relevant dynamics are more frequently present in interactional spaces, e.g., in comments signaling interest (e.g., asking for more information on how to join) and the occasional public

redirection to private messaging of such recruitment-interest comments. In other words, this thesis interprets recruitment not as a single call to action type of content but as a staged ecology, with ambient persuasion, legitimacy, and identity performance in the video layer, while explicit mobilization cues and contact offers emerge through interactional uptakes in comment sections.

This pattern is consistent with general platform research emphasizing how TikTok's political communication is shaped by its playful, short-form architecture, and participation design (Vijay and Gekker, 2021: 719). This is marked by the use of emojis, videos only being a few seconds long and platform-native markers e.g., for-you-page hashtags, as not merely stylistic decoration but as a part of the communicative infrastructure that shapes content circulation, which informed the interpretive frames of this study. Complementarily, Medina Serrano et al. (2020) describe TikTok's political communication as highly interactive, where users "become the content" through response practices. This supports treating comments not as peripheral reactions but as a constitutive layer in which legitimization, escalation, and recruitment interest are discursively produced. Since the attention a TikTok post receives is comparatively dominated by virality and less dependent on follower networks (Guinaudeau et al., 2022: 463), this study's methodological design reinforced that exposure and visibility of content is heavily dependent on the TikTok algorithm. Therefore, any engagement patterns remain selection-biased and naturally do not lend themselves to make clear statements about algorithmic causality, audience demographics or offline recruitment outcomes.

Situating these findings alongside current journalistic reports⁸ of FARC-dissidents using social media, especially relating to TikTok attracting younger audiences, one can observe how recent reporting describes strategies of armed actors' social media use with musical references and glamorized guerrilla lifestyle portrayed via low-profile accounts, which broadly aligns with the mechanisms observed in this dataset (audio-centered framing; everyday-life normalization; episodic explicit mobilization; occasional public signaling of private contact). This might not support an empirical verification of intent or outcomes concerning this dataset but strengthens the relevance of this research and any future research on recruitment-oriented content on social media as relevant communicative phenomenon.

At the same time, some rival explanations remain plausible and must be retained as possible alternative interpretations. First, it cannot be ruled out, that even though exclusion/inclusion criteria were applied some data may merely reflect guerrilla-coded audio or references as some sort of memetic trend participation without actual linkage to a dissident group, a disclaimer consistent with TikTok's remix culture (Darvin, 2022: 3). Second, some content can be read as identity or aesthetic performance (armed aesthetics as subcultural display) rather than a clear marker of recruitment. Third, this study could not observe creator intent or actual direct message exchange nor offline conversion. But the co-occurrence of explicit joining invitations and repeated legitimacy markers or affiliation cues (e.g., front

⁸ For journalistic accounts of armed groups' social media strategies, see Barber (2025), Redacción Colombia +20 (2025), Reynoso and Parada Lugo (2024), Rodríguez Álvarez (2023), and Suárez (2026).

naming) as well as interaction in comments and viewers requesting entry information makes rivaling explanations less convincing.

Based on this sample, recruitment-oriented communication by FARC-dissident coded accounts on TikTok from 2024 onwards, shows indications for being heavily audio-based, meaning sound functions as the main narrative carrier. This goes hand in hand with the platform's short format (TikTok videos being less than a minute long) and focus on the lyrical extract of these seconds. Thereby guerrilla identity cues play a significant role on the audio level with content revolving around identity or affective legitimatization contributing to the normalization of such content and the construction of an image of young guerrilla identity as it is audiovisually, as well as emotionally, integrated into "normal everyday life aesthetics" (e.g., community life, cooking in dissident camps or joining an insurgent group as plausible after school option). In a next step, such motives are supported in comments, either by asking for information on how to join, indicating the portrayal of a "guerrilla lifestyle" as implicit recruitment pathway or showing support. Other explicit recruitment videos show the creator not only portraying a certain lifestyle but directly asking the audience on TikTok if someone wants to join "la causa". Such explicit messaging occurs only episodically in comparison to the videos that aim towards normalizing the "guerrilla lifestyle" and when the recruitment is facilitated by invites to a private messaging and information exchange. Regardless of the difference in occurrences, both forms of interaction observed in this thesis equally make guerrilla recruitment communication visible on TikTok. The mixed-method analysis shows how such explicit recruitment appears as a clustered phenomenon (5/24 posts) rather than an invariant feature of this study, likewise public signaling of private contact in comments sections appears unevenly, which suggests that

recruitment-relevant dynamics are contingent on comment uptake rather than continuously being encoded in every video analyzed. However, territorial cues and authenticity resources (where present) function as legitimacy supports rather than necessary features of all dissident communication in this dataset. Overall, the evidence favors conceptualizing recruitment-oriented communication by FARC-dissident coded accounts on TikTok as an ecology with audio and format infrastructure, normalization, and legitimation as clear mechanisms with episodic escalation into contact between creator and viewer, rather than as an organizational propaganda tool. Crucially, this thesis' design does not permit claims about algorithm causality or audience demographics (including whether the audience is young) nor offline recruitment outcomes.

10.2. Theoretical Implications

This study gives insight into how communication adapts to platform logics, here TikTok, where visibility and participation are structured by platform design and TikTok's unique algorithmic affordance and recommendation system (Guinaudeau et al., 2022: 467). These findings contribute to mediatization theory by giving insight into how insurgent communication becomes shaped by the platform used and its affordance infrastructure rather than simply being transmitted through them. In this case of TikTok, short-form content with affective audio narratives and interaction architecture provides the conditions under which recruitment can be packaged as entertainment factor and amplified through participation in comment sections, implicating TikTok's platform design as shaping tool for political expression (Literat et al, 2022: 366). The findings of analyzing dissident communication on that platform show how popular entertainment formats originate from and simultaneously

get established into platform logics and how insurgency is presented via trends, or editing tools, co-constructing itself. In this sense, this study supports a platform-based understanding of recruitment-oriented communication, that depends on a set of adaptable performances optimized for attention, immediacy, and interaction.

From a critical and multimodal discourse analysis point of view, the study reinforces that recruitment-oriented meaning is not reducible to propositional text. Instead, meaning is carried via the multimodal level, so sound/visuals, captions or symbols or in-group markers/language are co-produced through interactional uptake. The prominence of audio as narrative infrastructure in the corpus suggests that TikTok's sonic layer should be theorized as a primary semiotic resource rather than a secondary accompaniment. This aligns with research emphasizing TikTok's multi-channel composition and interactive branching of political communication, where responses and comments become central sites of meaning production (Medina Serrano et al., 2020).

Since TikTok is structured through many algorithmically clustered subcultural publics⁹, it does not constitute a singular platform experience but a multiplicity of context-dependent feed environments, each one shaped by algorithmic curation and participatory cultures (Lerat & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2023: 2). Consequently, guerrilla-related content does not circulate within a unified political sphere but is embedded within specific user experiences that are co-produced by platform logics. Moreover, as personal expression and political communication

⁹ TikTok is characterized by the emergence of platform-specific "micro-publics" or subcultural clusters organized around shared aesthetics, hashtags, sounds and algorithmically reinforced interaction patterns.

collapse into each other on TikTok (Literat et al, 2022: 366), dissident communication adopts platform-native shows meaning-making through platform-native entertainment forms. As the findings of this study demonstrate how insurgent narratives are articulated through sounds, editing tools and even trends, rather than through traditional political messaging styles. Meaning making thus emerges through affective and adaptive micro-performances that align insurgent communication with the platform TikTok and its dominant format logic.

Further, the findings of this study suggest that recruitment-oriented communication can operate strongly via affective persuasion, meaning affective audio cues and normalization narratives make insurgent group affiliation appear familiar, relatable with routine life or even desirable, without expressing explicit joining invitations in every instance. The theoretical implication is not that affect “causes” recruitment, which this study design cannot test, but that the affective infrastructure can plausibly lower interpretive thresholds and facilitate identity alignment, while comment dynamics can provide moments of escalation and encourage recruitment or identity signals. This shows that recruitment in social media contexts is not necessarily only expressed by the efforts of direct mobilization but also through the sustained production of legitimacy, desirability, and in a sense also identity and belonging cues that can be manufactured interactionally.

Finally, the findings can be situated as a platform-specific variation of longer-standing insurgent legitimacy practices. Prior works on FARC’s media legitimacy conceptualizes their media use, historically television, as an effort to perform media legitimacy by adopting recognizable broadcast semiotics (Fattal, 2017). This thesis can be read as an insightful glimpse into the way that on TikTok a shift from relatively centralized broadcast television performances toward distributed, short-

form, trend-adaptive micro performances in which legitimacy and identity are assembled through audio-visual fragments, recurring everyday-life narratives and interactional endorsement in comments, is manifesting. Rather than being staged as a coherent and top-down representational project, legitimacy by FARC dissidents and more generally, the portrayal of the “guerrilla lifestyle” emerges as a cumulative effect of algorithmically circulated content on TikTok. While the underlying objective of legitimacy and identity constructions persists, its articulation is redefined by TikTok as a platform and its affordances. Thus, legitimacy and identity work become a platform-mediated construct, which is contingent and relatable within the TikTok environment, allowing participation rather than projecting a rigid and unitary actor.

10.3. Platform Implications

Although the sample size is rather small, the findings give several platform-relevant implications about how recruitment-oriented communication can be performed and perceived on TikTok without relying on explicit mobilization tactics only. Primarily, TikTok’s affordance algorithmic recommendation system appears to enable ambiguity, meaning short-form videos, audio reuse, emoji-heavy affective markers and organizational branding cues allow content to remain legible to the in-group, but also preserve plausible deniability to outsiders. This matters for moderation because the most recruitment-relevant signals in this corpus are not single explicit markers, but rather bundles of weaker cues (sound references, aesthetics, territorial cues, and interactional prompts) that become salient in combination. For example, with solely one FARC-dissident logo visible in a short TikTok one is therefore likely to miss a substantial portion of recruitment-adjacent

content that functions through normalization and affect rather than direct instruction if the evaluation of markers is applied too strictly.

Additionally, this study indicates that comment sections are highly recruitment-relevant interfaces, and do not just act as audience feedback. Thereby, recruitment interest is more frequently voiced in comments than in the video layer, and also public signaling of asking for entry information suggests a communicative pathway towards a private layer, which potentially becomes the site where higher-risk recruitment information and details are shared. This implies that platform governance solely focusing on the audiovisual posting is insufficient and that the interaction layer with creator responses to comments may be analytically more relevant. But as mentioned before, this study was not designed to confirm whether private exchanges occurred, nor can it observe how often such sequences lead to offline recruitment.

Furthermore, audio infrastructures appear particularly consequential. This means that dissident-coded audio can circulate beyond dissident actors on the platform. Still audio can be treated as a contextual risk indicator, especially in combination with certain territorial markers, militarized visuals, or recruitment-interest comments.

Finally, it is essential to mention that TikTok's recommendation system shapes what becomes visible and thus in a way co-produced the present sample. It is therefore crucial that the findings should not be interpreted as a definite observation of how common FARC-dissident recruitment occurs on TikTok, but that TikTok's design encourages such guerrilla-coded communication through short, affectively dense, and audio-led communication forms with interaction spaces, that can be recruitment-oriented and push insurgent performances when such actors are present.

10.4. Methodological Implications and Limitations

On a methodological level, this study demonstrates the analytic value of combining multimodal qualitative analysis with bounded quantitative pattern mapping for platform content that is volatile, affective and interaction heavy. This is supported by the final analytic step, the joint display of qualitative and quantitative segments, as it distinguishes sound and normalization narratives as main meaning carriers from episodic intensity of explicit calls to join a dissident front, while keeping numeric quantification bounded as within-corpus dispersion rather than prevalence, strengthening the internal coherence of this study.

However, key limitations constrain the possibilities of interference. Since the corpus is rather small ($N = 24$), quantitative distributions function only as within-corpus indicators and cannot support or be used to generalize dissident-coded communication on TikTok in the Colombian context on a broader level. Further, TikTok itself is biased as video visibility is shaped by algorithmic exposure that cannot be measured. While inclusion/exclusion criteria are designed to reduce false positive samples, it can never eliminate them and as already mentioned, this study cannot analyze what happens in private messaging channels, therefore DM-related findings are framed as publicly observable signals for recruitment interest and not as confirmed recruitment. Additionally, affiliation of the accounts to dissident groups ultimately cannot be verified, which is why this analysis is grounded in dissident-coded cues and recruitment-oriented patterns.

Finally, in accordance with the design and findings of this study recruitment-oriented communication can be understood as an analytically bounded construct observed through audiovisual cues and interaction patterns that plausibly support recruitment, without measuring offline recruitment outcomes.

10.5. Future Research

While this study establishes recruitment-oriented communication cues based on TikTok mechanisms and provides an in-depth qualitative analysis of TikTok content associated with FARC dissidents within a defined time window, the findings remain bounded by the small corpus and platform-specific visibility constraints. To allow a more generalized outlook on the tendencies of such forms of recruitment communication on social media, further research could test the stability of the mechanisms identified here (audio and normalization narratives, episodic mobilization, interactional escalation) and compare them across other social media platforms to generalize tendencies and address empirical blind spots of short-video research. Also automated scraping methods if ethically feasible, or a network analysis of comment sections could be integrated, since this study showed recruitment dynamics being popular in comment sections.

As mentioned, future research could test whether identity or legitimacy building differs across Facebook, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, and how platform architectures shape interpretive frames, since journalism and policy reports already describe differentiated platform roles (Reynoso & Parada Lugo, 2024), WhatsApp or Telegram groups could provide more insight on recruitment coordination.

Additionally, the comparative frame beyond FARC dissidents should be widened, including making empirical comparison with ELN, Clan de Golfo or other Colombian armed actors, as this could test whether the mechanisms found here are specific to FARC-coded narratives only or reflect a broader communication dynamic. Further, cross-national comparison, e.g. with Mexican “cartel-tok”

phenomena, could study if audio and normalization narratives are locally specific or of transnational nature.

Of further interest could be whether online communication mechanisms change under offline political pressure, aligning with the mediatization framework by questioning if conflict is reacting to media logic or vice-versa. Colombia's 2026 election cycle provides a clear window for examining the intensity of recruitment-oriented communication on different platforms. Accordingly, governance should also be seen as part of the conflict communication environment, since TikTok states that it prohibits violent and hateful organizations and that it removes content and terminates accounts (TikTok, 2025). Empirical research might be able to interrogate how such policies operate in practice, where such enforcement fails and why aestheticized guerrilla references are slipping through moderation. Complementarily, scholarship and policy research should examine state prevention strategies of the Colombian government.

Taken together, these different research directions imply that armed conflict communication should be conceptualized as increasingly embedded in digital attention economies, where legitimacy, desirability and belonging cues circulate through platform vernaculars, leaving the challenge open for future studies to scale evidence without inflating claims.

11. Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine how FARC dissident-coded TikTok accounts perform recruitment-oriented communication through multimodal content and interactional practices from January 2024 to April 2025. The central empirical contribution is that recruitment-relevant meaning is produced less through constant

direct calls to join a dissident group than through audio-based identity work, normalization narratives and interactional cues in comment sections. Thereby explicit mobilization occurred, but as a clustered rather than pervasive feature. Accordingly, this thesis understands “TikTok-recruitment” not as a constant and explicit strategy, but as part of a broader recruitment ecology.

Conceptually, this thesis contributes to mediatization-oriented conflict communication research by specifying how platform characteristics (short-form videos, audio reuse, affective markers, and a participatory design) shape the communication conditions under which insurgents’ identity and recruitment narrative can circulate. The joint display integration strategy methodologically uses quantitative numbers to contextualize qualitative interpretations, that must be read in the context to not overclaim prevalence. In that sense, the study’s findings are interpreted within the limits of the research design and do not demonstrate that TikTok causes recruitment directly, nor that audiences are strictly considered youth, nor that online interest translates into offline joining motives. However, the study can demonstrate, that within this corpus, TikTok hosts communicative performances compatible with guerrilla recruitment functions through its multimodal features. This is highly relevant because it shows how recruitment-oriented communication can operate on entertainment platforms with affective infrastructures.

Accordingly, the defensible conclusion is not that TikTok or more general, social media, is replacing offline recruitment practices, but that TikTok can be understood as fulfilling a specific function, as a normalization layer for guerrilla practices and that it fosters narratives around joining the guerrilla in a broader recruitment ecology that includes other platforms and offline structures. This study matters because it shows how recruitment-oriented meaning can operate embedded

in online entertainment infrastructures, which poses critical challenges for platform governance and future research design.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Corpus and Metadata

This appendix provides the full metadata overview of the analyzed TikTok videos included in the corpus. For each video, publicly visible platform metrics (views, likes, saves, shares, and comments), basic account characteristics, and caption information are documented.

User ID	Account name	Followers	Video	Upload date	Location marker	Video Format/Length	For-you-page marker	Caption	Views	Likes	Saves	Shares	Comments
Account 1	—	6031	Video 1	14.12.24	Cauca	01:06	No	—	14.5K	370	29	37	—
Account 1	—	6031	Video 2	17.01.25	—	02:03	No	—	54.5K	1215	66	132	—
Account 1	—	6031	Video 3	02.02.25	—	00:34	No	—	207.4K	4570	298	588	—
Account 1	—	6031	Video 4	10.12.24	—	02:46	No	—	12K	271	12	3	—
Account 1	—	6031	Video 5	11.01.24	—	00:32	No	—	78.1K	2212	104	117	—
Account 3	██████████	682	Video 1	12.02.25	Teruel	00:26	No	revolución 🇪🇸👤	40.2K	2396	193	120	25

User ID	Account name	Followers	Video	Upload date	Location marker	Video Format/Length	For-you-page marker	Caption	Views	Likes	Saves	Shares	Comments
					(Huila)			amén					
Account 3		682	Video 2	11.02.25	Valencia de la Paz (Iquira)	00:09	No	amén   	36.7K	1361	79	32	21
Account 3		682	Video 3	04.03.25	Valencia de la Paz (Iquira)	00:07	No	like    	12.3K	517	28	8	5
Account 3		682	Video 4	25.02.25	Aipequito (Huila)	00:07	No	cabezilla   	4252	192	4	2	5
Account 3		682	Video 5	13.03.25	Inzá (Cauca)	Carousel	Yes	Ami me gustan los gallos, el tequila y las armas 	267	27	1	—	—
Account 5		12.4K	Video 1	01.11.24	—	00:10	Yes	#parati #viral_video	172.5K	3788	263	217	71

User ID	Account name	Followers	Video	Upload date	Location marker	Video Format/Length	For-you-page marker	Caption	Views	Likes	Saves	Shares	Comments
								#cauca					
Account 5		12.4K	Video 2	18.02.25	—	00:07	Yes	#parati #lejos	42.7K	1309	150	131	8
Account 5		12.4K	Video 3	19.02.25	—	00:15	Yes	#parati #micaucabella #lejosdecasayfamilia	205.1K	6157	645	585	47
Account 5		12.4K	Video 4	03.03.25	—	00:09	Yes	#video #parati #colombia #cauca	3456	245	14	4	6
Account 5		12.4K	Video 5	19.11.24	—	00:11	Yes	#parati #viral_video #cauca	21.2K	747	56	54	17
Account 6		2364	Video 1	28.12.24	—	00:30	No	JM JM 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿 JL JL 👤❤️	4122	252	14	16	25

User ID	Account name	Followers	Video	Upload date	Location marker	Video Format/Length	For-you-page marker	Caption	Views	Likes	Saves	Shares	Comments
Account 6		2364	Video 2	18.08.24	—	Photo	No	—	4253	117	8	16	2
Account 7		2568	Video 1	08.11.24	El Plateado	01:00	No	🌟👤🇸🇪	14.2K	1045	67	34	7
Account 7		2568	Video 2	14.11.24	Pitayo	00:19	Yes	#cauca #parati #fyph #montañasdecolombia	211.8K	9929	783	426	56
Account 7		2568	Video 3	24.02.25	—	00:16	Yes	#cauca #parati #fyph #montañasdelcauca	63.8K	3714	227	112	17
Account 2		3277	Video 1	02.09.24	—	Photo	No	—	371.6K	6868	327	211	1,195
Account 2		3277	Video 2	07.06.24	—	00:39	No	—	113.9K	2570	107	40	240

User ID	Account name	Followers	Video	Upload date	Location marker	Video Format/Length	For-you-page marker	Caption	Views	Likes	Saves	Shares	Comments
Account 4		562	Video 1	07.03.25	—	Photo	No	—	26.4K	1559	104	50	30
Account 4		562	Video 2	20.03.25	—	00:25	No	—	834	61	7	6	2

Note. Engagement metrics reflect publicly visible values at the time of data capture (February–March 2025). “—” indicates unavailable or not displayed. K denotes thousand views

Appendix B1 – Reduced Analytical Codebook

Since the final MAXQDA file contained 164 codes, this analytical codebook does not list every micro-code from MAXQDA but was reduced to structure the codebook so that it transparently supports the findings.

Code ID	Code	Original Maxqda label	Parent Category	Operational Definition	Example Indicator
C01	Sound as narrative infrastructure	Storytelling through sound / lyrics on screen	Sound / Music Narrative	Use of music or sound to structure meaning or emotional framing of the video.	Music track framing entire narrative
C02	Ideological music	Ideological/revolutionary Farc-related music / Farc-related song or interpret	Sound / Music Narrative	Songs referencing guerrilla struggle, resistance, or revolutionary identity.	Lyrics referencing struggle or revolution
C03	Militarized romance through music	Everyday life narrative > Normalization of Conflict/Militarized Romance	Sound / Music Narrative	Music portraying armed life as heroic, nostalgic, or emotionally meaningful.	Romanticized guerrilla imagery with music
C04	Lyrics displayed on screen	Storytelling through lyrics on screen	Sound / Music Narrative	Song lyrics visually displayed as text overlay.	Subtitles of song lyrics
C05	Sound-driven storytelling	Storytelling through sound (music)	Sound / Music Narrative	Narrative conveyed primarily through the chosen audio rather than spoken dialogue.	Audio carries narrative theme
C06	Everyday-life narrative	Everyday life narrative (Normalization of Guerrilla Life) > affective framing via sound, autobiographical recruitment narrative	Normalization Narrative	Depiction of routine life activities within guerrilla context.	Daily activities, casual scenes
C07	Camaraderie / leisure	Sense of belonging > Community/Solidarity > Camaderie / group leisure	Normalization Narrative	Representation of friendship, leisure, or group bonding.	Soldiers laughing or relaxing
C08	Soft lifestyle appeal	Soft recruitment / Lifestyle appeal / Guerrilla over family	Normalization Narrative	Implicit appeal of guerrilla life as attractive or meaningful.	Relaxed lifestyle portrayals

Code ID	Code	Original Maxqda label	Parent Category	Operational Definition	Example Indicator
C09	Desire-to-join cues	(Desire to) Join / Normalization of Guerrilla Life > Affective Framing via Sound or Autobiographical recruitment narrative	Normalization Narrative	Signals that armed group life is aspirational.	Positive emotional framing
C10	Militarized aesthetics	Male bonding / Militarized masculinity and Guerrilla Aesthetic > Military camp, Farc logo visible, ninja emoji. Uniform & Weapons > typical military clothing, indication of weapons, military emojis, vehicles / mobility as lifestyle	Normalization Narrative / Visual content	Visual emphasis on weapons, uniforms, or militarized symbols.	Display of rifles or uniforms
C11	Direct call to join	Explicit recruitment – direct invitation and text written on screen / direct call to join (quant)	Recruitment Funnel	Explicit invitation to join.	Text on screen: “Quien quiere ingresar a...”
C12	Contact offered	Explicit recruitment (quant) > contact offered	Recruitment Funnel	Explicit invitation to join.	Information on display or in comments
C13	DM-based recruitment	DM-based recruitment	Recruitment Funnel	Redirection to private messaging.	“Info al privado/DM”
C14	Recruitment-interest comments	Recruitment-interest comments	Recruitment Funnel	Viewers expressing interest or desire for more information.	Comments asking for information on how to join
C15	Creator interaction escalation	Creator-audience interaction / contact offered	Recruitment Funnel	Creator responses to viewer’s interest.	Creator-replies (redirecting conversation to private messaging)
C16	For-You-Page marker	Platform-conflict logic > For-You-Page marker	Platform Affordances	Use of hashtags to target algorithmic distribution.	#parati, #fyp
C17	Emoji amplification	Visual affectiveness (use of emojis), Ninja emoji, salute emoji, weapon emoji, Colombian flag emoji,	Platform Affordances	Emojis used to intensify emotional meaning.	Flag or fire emojis
C18	Short-form video logic	Video Length under one minute	Platform Affordances	Videos structured according to TikTok short-video norms.	<1 minute format
C19	Trend participation	TikTok filter,	Platform Affordances	Use of trending sounds or formats.	Popular audio templates

Code ID	Code	Original Maxqda label	Parent Category	Operational Definition	Example Indicator
C20	Supportive comments	Supportive Comments > Creator-Audience interaction, explicit violence against out-group, affective markers like anger, revenger or grievance	Engagement & Diffusion	Comments expressing support or approval of armed group.	Praise or encouragement
C21	Interaction amplification	High/moderate/low engagement	Engagement & Diffusion	Engagement metrics indicating diffusion of content.	High/moderate/low likes or shares
C22	Comment mobilization	Creator-audience interaction	Engagement & Diffusion	Comment sections used for discussion or mobilization.	Multiple interaction threads
C23	Local conflict references	Hashtag monte, Hashtag Cauca, Hashtag Huila, Ubication Pins, Mention of place/region	Territorial Embedding	References to specific Colombian conflict regions.	Mention of Cauca or Huila
C24	Rural guerrilla imagery	Farc Markers (e.g. monte), visual content > use of emojis (flag, green heart, mountains...), jungle / rural settings, territorial markers or front naming	Territorial Embedding	Visual representation of rural environments linked to armed groups.	Mountains, jungle terrain
C25	Territorial belonging	Territorial marker > Farc as actor connecting communities, nostalgic reference > affect, famous Farc leaders	Territorial Embedding	Narrative of defending local territory.	References to homeland

Note. Codes were developed according to the theoretical framework and enriched inductively. For clearer visibility, some were renamed here. Composite analytical categories used in the results (e.g., Sound/Music Narrative, Normalization, and Recruitment Funnel) are derived from combinations of the individual codes listed in this codebook (see Appendix B2).

Appendix B2 – Composite Definitions

To enhance analytical transparency, the following table was used to document how individual codes contribute to composite analytical constructs and how these constructs support the key claims presented in the results section.

Composite Construct	Constituent Codes (Code IDs)	Analytical Function	Empirical Claim in Results
Sound / Music Narrative	C01 Sound as narrative infrastructure; C02 Ideological music; C03 Militarized romance through music; C04 Lyrics displayed on screen; C05 Sound-driven storytelling	Captures how audio elements structure narrative meaning and affective framing in videos.	Sound and music operate as the primary narrative infrastructure across the dataset and appear in nearly all analyzed videos.
Normalization Narrative	C06 Everyday-life narrative; C07 Camaraderie / leisure; C08 Soft lifestyle appeal; C09 Desire-to-join cues; C10 Militarized aesthetics	Identifies portrayals that frame armed group life as routine, socially embedded, or emotionally appealing.	Armed group affiliation is normalized through everyday-life narratives and portrayals of camaraderie and leisure.
Recruitment Funnel	C11 Direct call to join; C12 Contact offered; C13 DM-based recruitment; C14 Recruitment-interest comments; C15 Creator interaction escalation	Captures explicit and implicit recruitment dynamics observable in public content and interaction layers.	Explicit recruitment cues are rare but occur episodically, often accompanied by interaction dynamics that redirect potential recruits to private communication channels.
Platform Affordances	C16 For-You-Page marker; C17 Emoji amplification; C18 Short-form video logic; C19 Trend participation	Identifies how TikTok-specific affordances structure visibility and affective engagement.	Platform affordances such as FYP hashtags, emojis, and short-form formats shape how content is framed and distributed.

Composite Construct	Constituent Codes (Code IDs)	Analytical Function	Empirical Claim in Results
Engagement & Diffusion	C20 Supportive comments; C21 Interaction amplification; C22 Comment mobilization	Captures audience engagement patterns and diffusion dynamics within comment sections and interaction metrics.	Engagement dynamics indicate supportive audience reactions and occasional recruitment interest expressed in comment sections.
Territorial Embedding	C23 Local conflict references; C24 Rural guerrilla imagery; C25 Territorial belonging	Identifies spatial references linking content to conflict zones and territorial identity.	Videos frequently reference rural conflict regions, embedding narratives of guerrilla identity within specific territorial contexts.

Note. Composite constructs represent analytical groupings of individual qualitative codes applied to segmented video content during the coding process. These composites structure the mixed-methods integration presented in the joint display (see Section 9) and allow comparison between qualitative interpretive patterns and quantitative segment distributions derived from MAXQDA.

Appendix C – Exemplary Paraphrasing Table

This annex documents the analytic paraphrasing of coded TikTok segments. Paraphrases follow Mayring-style reduction and generalization, while the abstraction column captures the higher-level interpretive category. Segments are treated as mediated representations; claims about offline affiliation or recruitment outcomes are avoided. The paraphrasing table lists exemplary and analytically relevant excerpts to document interpretive grounding; highly repetitive comments (e.g., emoji-only or formulaic blessings) are sampled rather than exhaustively reproduced. Supportive comments are sampled to represent distinct stance repertoires (e.g., blessings/legitimation, camaraderie/in-group language, encouragement, emoji-only affect, and meta-commentary) rather than reproduced exhaustively.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
Account 2 > Video 1	Comment (audience)	“información para ingresar”	A viewer asks for information on how to enter/join.	Public entry-seeking: audience solicits joining instructions or contact.	Recruitment Interest Comments	Indicates recruitment-related demand in the comment space; interpret as interactional cue rather than evidence of offline mobilization.
Account 2 > Video 1	Comment (audience)	“informacion”	A viewer asks for “information” without specifying details.	Low-specificity access request: minimal signal of interest in joining-related information.	Recruitment Interest Comments	Analytically weaker than explicit entry requests; still relevant as a potential ‘funnel starter’ toward private exchange.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
Account 2 > Video 1	Comment (audience)	“Pero donde”	A viewer asks “but where?” (i.e., where to go/how to access).	Logistical probing: request for actionable entry points (location/channel).	Recruitment Interest Comments	Shows a shift from symbolic engagement to practical orientation; supports the inference of possible public-to-private migration.
Account 2 > Video 1	Comment (audience)	“yo” / “yoo”	A viewer posts “me/I,” implicitly volunteering or expressing willingness.	Self-nomination: minimal self-positioning as a potential participant.	Recruitment Interest Comments (self-nomination)	Under-specified, but interpreted as answer to “info al interno”
Account 2 > Video 1	Comment (audience)	“fé en la causa 🥰🥰🥰🥰🥰🥰”	A viewer expresses faith/support for the cause, amplified through affectionate emojis.	Affective legitimation: moral endorsement via low-effort emotional signals.	Supportive Comments + Affective intensifiers (emojis)	Demonstrates audience-side normalization and legitimation work; emojis function as affective reinforcement with plausible deniability.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
Account 2 > Video 1	Caption / call-to-action	info al interno 🇨🇴	The post redirects interested viewers to private messages ("more information in DM").	Recruitment channeling: migration from public interaction to semi-private DM communication.	Explicit Recruitment (New Codes for Quanti) > Contact offered	Operationalizes a low-visibility 'funnel' (public cue → private exchange). This is a strong platform-affordance indicator, but it cannot substantiate whether recruitment occurred offline.
Account 5 > Video 3	Comment (audience/creator)	@Karol Rodríguez: "👁️ Escribame"	The account invites the viewer to message privately ("Write to me").	Recruitment channeling: migration from public interaction to semi-private DM communication.	Recruitment intention implied > DM-based recruitment (platform affordance)	Operationalizes a low-visibility 'funnel' (public cue → private exchange). This is a strong platform-affordance indicator, but it cannot substantiate whether recruitment occurred offline.
Account 3 > Video 2	Comment (audience/creator)	Comment of Recruitment Interest: "quiero entrar" – response by creator:	Commenters coordinate a shift from public comments to private conversation	Recruitment channeling: migration from public interaction to semi-private DM communication.	Explicit Recruitment (New Codes for Quanti) > Contact offered	Operationalizes a low-visibility 'funnel' (public cue → private exchange). This is a strong platform-affordance indicator, but it cannot substantiate whether recruitment occurred offline.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		"buenas noches de dond es usted" – response by viewer: "ya estamos hablando por priv"	("we're already talking privately").			
Account 1 > Video 1	Caption / call-to-action	Quien para ingresar alas farc Más información Al interno 🗝️	The post redirects interested viewers to private messages ("more information in DM").	Recruitment channeling: migration from public interaction to semi-private DM communication.	Explicit Recruitment (New Codes for Quanti) > Contact offered	Operationalizes a low-visibility 'funnel' (public cue → private exchange). This is a strong platform-affordance indicator, but it cannot substantiate whether recruitment occurred offline.
Account 1 > Video 1	Caption / call-to-action	Más información Al interno	The post redirects interested viewers to	Recruitment channeling: migration from public interaction to semi-private	Recruitment intention implied > DM-based recruitment	Operationalizes a low-visibility 'funnel' (public cue → private exchange). This is a strong platform-affordance indicator, but it cannot substantiate

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
			private messages ("more information in DM").	DM communication.	(platform affordance)	whether recruitment occurred offline.
Account 6 > Video 1	Audio/lyrics	"Por algo sali vivo por algo estoy parado Y es que al final de cuentas yo nunca he sido malo Nomas te miran viada y quieren subirse al carro Vean como hay corrientes de amigos difrasados Cuando es corta la mecha	The lyric frames the narrator as a survivor who is not 'bad,' while warning about betrayal and the consequences of violence.	Moral self-legitimation: survival and righteousness used to justify vigilance and potential violence.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Positions the speaker as morally defensible within a violent environment, supporting identity legitimization through music.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		el que la prede se quema"				
Account 6 > Video 1	Visual description	Group of men in uniform and with guns (Guerrilleros) walking on a rural street	Armed men in uniform are shown walking casually along a rural street.	Banalization of armed presence: routine movement presented as ordinary everyday life.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Everyday Life Narrative (Normalization of Guerrilla Life)	Normalizes militarized identity by embedding it in mundane scenery and everyday motion.
Account 6 > Video 2	Audio/lyrics	"Le pido a Dios no me cambie Que me mantenga sencillo Eso sí, que ni le calen Conmigo no quieran pasarse de vivos Compa, lo que está tranquilo	The narrator asks God to keep him humble and warns others not to provoke him, framing conflict as a 'double-edged weapon.'	Religious-ethical self-presentation paired with deterrence: humility coexists with readiness for retaliation.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Blends piety with threat, producing a morally buffered readiness-for-violence stance.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		Hay que dejarlo tranquilo Un arma de doble filo meterse conmigo"				
Account 6 > Video 2	Caption / narration	"Le Pido Ha Dios No Me Cambie Que Me Mantenga Cencillo [sic]"	On-screen lyrics are displayed, reinforcing the soundtrack's message, reinforcing the soundtrack's message.	On-screen captioning as meaning-fixation: visual text reduces ambiguity of musical narratives.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through lyrics on screen	Strengthens normalization by turning music into explicit textual cues.
Account 2 > Video 2	Audio/lyrics	Songtext: "No te pongas nerviosa al escuchar la balacera, es que soy atrevido y no	The lyric reassures a partner not to fear shootings or armed men, implies secrecy if authorities	Romantic-thrill narrative: violence and clandestinity reframed as attractive and normalized.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Links armed life to intimacy and party settings, potentially lowering perceived risks and moral barriers.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		me has conocido. Si te ganan los nervos a ver hombres armados, ellos vienen conmigo. Si nos cae el gobierno, tú no digas nada. Todo está apalabrado, el control confirmado. Tu disruta del baile de los grupos nortños, que esta fiesta es privada Y si te asusta el peligro para que me dijiste que te gustan los hombres	arrive, and frames danger as part of the speaker's allure.			

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		de mi tipo? No te pongas nervioso a escuchar la balacera, es que soy atrevido y no me has conocido. Si te ganan los nervios a ver hombres armados, ellos vienen conmigo."				
Account 2 > Video 2	Caption / narration	Y si te asusta el peligro para que me dijiste que te gustan los hombres de mi tipo? No te pongas nervioso a escuchar la	The lyric normalizes shootings and armed men as part of an attractive, controlled environment, while urging	Violence domesticated through romance/party framing: danger is reframed as manageable and desirable.	Storytelling through Sound(Music) > Normalization of Violence and Self-Sacrifice	Combines thrill and impunity cues ('everything arranged/controlled') with secrecy, which can serve recruitment-friendly normalization.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		balacera, es que soy atrevido y no me has conocido. Si te ganan los nervios a ver hombres armados, ellos vienen conmigo."	secrecy if the government arrives.			
Account 2 > Video 1	Caption / narration	Quien quiera acabar conmigo Le toca morir peleando	The lyric threatens that anyone who tries to end the speaker must die fighting.	Honor-coded violence: death in combat presented as the necessary outcome of conflict.	Storytelling through Sound(Music) > Normalization of Violence and Self-Sacrifice	Frames violence as legitimate and inevitable, lowering moral friction through heroic self-defense tropes.
Account 4 > Video 1	Caption / narration	"Hay días en que Yo cruzó el barrio En pleno tiroteo Él va detrás de	The segment frames guerrilla life through mundane or relational	Everyday-life framing: shifts attention from violence to routine practices and identity performance.	Everyday Life Narrative (Normalisation of Guerrilla Life) > Normalization of	Supports normalization by presenting armed-group life as ordinary and socially intelligible.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		mí Si me aborrezco A veces de estar vivo Y pierdo la esperanza	scenes rather than combat.		Conflict/Militarized Romance	
Account 4 > Video 1	Caption / narration	"Hay días en que Yo cruzó el barrio En pleno tiroteo Él va detrás de mí Si me aborrezco A veces de estar vivo Y pierdo la esperanza Él va detrás de mí Si me confundo Y pierdo la fé A medio caminar El ángel me dice a mí" Levántate	The segment uses music/lyrics to narrate identity, struggle, or violence-related themes.	Music-based narrative framing: affective storytelling that can legitimate and normalize armed identity.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Sound reuse enables scalable identity signaling; mediated representation rather than evidence of offline action.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		e' la cama Ve y enfréntate a la vida Porque tu naciste Pa' sobrevivir", Levántate e' la cama Ve y enfréntate a la vida Porque tu naciste Pa' sobrevivir"				
Account 4 > Video 1	Caption / narration	Levántate e' la cama Ve y enfréntate a la vida Porque tu naciste Pa' sobrevivir", Levántate e' la cama Ve y enfréntate a la vida Porque tu naciste Pa' sobrevivir"	The lyric urges getting up and facing life because one was born to survive.	Resilience imperative: survival framed as duty amid violence.	Storytelling through Sound(Music) > Normalization of Violence and Self-Sacrifice	Turns hardship and conflict into motivational narrative, potentially making violent contexts appear normal and surmountable.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
Account 4 > Video 1	Caption / narration	Solo los estamos aquí sabemos q se siente	The segment frames guerrilla life through mundane or relational scenes rather than combat.	Everyday-life framing: shifts attention from violence to routine practices and identity performance.	Everyday Life Narrative (Normalization of Guerrilla Life) > Normalization of Conflict/Militarized Romance	Supports normalization by presenting armed-group life as ordinary and socially intelligible.
Account 7 > Video 1	Audio/lyrics	#0:00:01.0# Songtext: "Sigue mambo y remolino y todo el Bajo Patilla con la Franco Benavides, Reina el Bloque Occidental. Saludos para Cair, Amarlo Murcia y Esteban porque llevan	The song delivers shout-outs to named fronts and leaders, praising lineage and locating struggle in specific regions.	Organizational branding via music: leaders, fronts, and territory made culturally 'mentionable' and celebratory.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Functions as low-explicitness identity signaling; representational (cannot verify organizational roles).

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		el ejemplo de Marulanda y Mayimbú." <music> " Y al frente Carlos Patiño hasta la cubierta la bailamos, y el frente Jaime Martínez que en el cauca nos redime. Saludos a la Rodriguez que nuestra lucha no termine y el Frente Jaime Martínez..."				
Account 7 > Video 1	On-screen text	Lyrics animated on Screen: "sido mambo y	Lyrics are animated on screen, including shout-	Organizational indexing via stylized text: normalizes naming of structures,	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through lyrics on	Transforms organizational references into aestheticized, shareable text; caution: 'mentioning' does not verify command structures.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		remolino y todo el bajo patilla 🇪🇸 con la Franco Benavides reina el bloque occidental 🍷, saludos para cair ❤️, amarlo murcia y esteba porque llevan el ejemplo de marulanda y mayimbu. también saludo a los frentes con dagoberto gozamos y al frente Carlos Patiño 🍀 hasta la cubierta la bailamos 💃 y	outs to fronts/leaders and regional markers.	leaders, and territory.	screen	

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		al frente Jaime Martínez que en el cauca nos redime 🌿 saludos a la Rodríguez que nuestra lucha no termine"				
Account 7 > Video 1	Caption / narration	que nuestra lucha no termine"	The line calls for the struggle to continue ("may our fight not end").	Perpetuation narrative: future-oriented commitment to continued armed struggle.	Storytelling through Sound(Music) > Future-orientated Continuation of Violence	Normalizes ongoing violence by framing it as collective continuity; interpret as discursive legitimation, not operational capability.
Account 7 > Video 2	Audio/lyrics	Sound: Javier Díaz - Un gran líder (Corrido guerrillero) "También Saludos a los Frentes con Dagoberto	The song delivers shout-outs to named fronts and leaders, praising lineage and locating struggle in specific	Organizational branding via music: leaders, fronts, and territory made culturally 'mentionable' and celebratory.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Functions as low-explicitness identity signaling; representational references to fronts (cannot verify organizational roles).

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		gozamos y el Frente Carlos Patiño hasta la cubierta la bailamos y el frente Jaime Martínez que en el Cauca nos redime, Saludos alan Rodriguez que nuestra lucha no termine y el frente Jaime Martínez"	regions.			
Account 7 > Video 3	Audio/lyrics	"Cómo extraño mi sabana hermosa metida en la cordillera Esperando	The lyric expresses longing for a beloved landscape and waiting for the moment to	Nostalgia narrative: emotional attachment to territory framed within mobility/return themes.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Humanizes the speaker and ties identity to geography; can soften perceptions of militancy through sentimental framing.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		que llegue la hora de regresar"	return.			
Account 7 > Video 3	Visual description	Video of Ride at the back of Jeep, dog visible, his gummy boots and military uniform partly visible, Filming of Rural Landscape, Fog and Mountains; Possibly other boots (other guerrillero) visible	The segment frames guerrilla life through mundane or relational scenes rather than combat.	Everyday-life framing: shifts attention from violence to routine practices and identity performance.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Everyday Life Narrative (Normalisation of Guerrilla Life)	Supports normalization by presenting armed-group life as ordinary and socially intelligible.
Account 5 > Video 1	Caption / narration	"Soy el guerrillero, voy por	The lyric explicitly identifies the	Identity proclamation: collective armed identity and struggle framed as	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling	Explicit identification strengthens normalization by making guerrilla identity openly sayable;

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		muchas tierras, hombres y mujeres son mis compañeros, queremos derrotar..."	speaker as a guerrillero traveling with comrades and aiming to defeat an opponent.	purposeful mission.	through Sound(Music)	performed identity, not verified membership.
Account 5 > Video 2	Caption / narration	Cuando yo subo estados de algún lugar es porque ya no estoy ahí...Despistan do al enemigo y a los sapos 🐸	The creator claims they post location updates only after leaving, to mislead enemies and informants.	Operational security talk: clandestinity and surveillance avoidance normalized as routine practice.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Everyday Life Narrative (Normalisation of Guerrilla Life)	Positions the account as tactically aware and under threat, reinforcing a conflict frame and in-group vigilance.
Account 5 > Video 3	Visual description	Car ride, drinking, Rural Landscape, Church, walking	Scenes depict travel and leisure (car ride, drinking, rural landmarks)	Hybrid leisure—militarization: everyday pleasures blended with armed-group aesthetics.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Everyday Life Narrative (Normalization of	Reduces perceived exceptionalism of armed life by aligning it with common leisure practices.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		(gummi boots visible),	alongside militarized dress cues.		Guerrilla Life)	
Account 5 > Video 3	Audio/lyrics	Text (Speech of a man) dubbed over original songtext: #0:00:01.6# "Es muy malparido el que va a rezar a mi tumba" #0:00:05.1# "cuando yo muiera no no que vuelve hijepute santamaria que...." "coma su mierda, que puta, si me haga una	The segment uses music/lyrics to narrate identity, struggle, or violence-related themes.	Music-based narrative framing: affective storytelling that can legitimate and normalize armed identity.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Sound reuse enables scalable identity signaling.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		oracion"				
Account 5 > Video 3	Caption / narration	"cuando yo muiera no no que vuelve hijepute santamaria que...." "coma su mierda, que puta, si me haga una oracion"	Profane speech rejects religious mourning practices, cursing those who would pray at the speaker's grave.	Anti-religious transgression: undermines religious rituals to perform toughness and contempt.	Storytelling through Sound(Music) > Irreverence towards Religion	Signals a transgressive, violent persona.
Account 5 > Video 4	Caption / narration	"Ay mija porque te metiste a la guerrilla, que porque soy guerrillera"	A gendered dialogue frames joining the guerrilla as an identity explanation ("because I am a guerrillera").	Gendered normalization: female guerrilla identity articulated in casual, relational language.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Everyday Life Narrative (Normalization of Guerrilla Life)	Recontextualizes militancy within everyday interpersonal talk, potentially widening identification possibilities.
Account 5	Caption /	Quieres una	The segment	Everyday-life framing: shifts	Everyday Life	Supports normalization by presenting armed-group

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
> Video 5	narration	relación con un guerrillero 🇨🇴 no tendrás navidades juntos, cumpleaños, festivales etc, pasara días, meses, semanas sin verlo	frames guerrilla life through mundane or relational scenes rather than combat.	attention from violence to routine practices and identity performance.	Narrative (Normalisation of Guerrilla Life) > Normalization of Conflict/Militarized Romance	life as ordinary and socially intelligible.
Account 5 > Video 5	Caption / narration	un amor guerrillero 🇨🇴	The segment frames guerrilla life through mundane or relational scenes rather than combat.	Everyday-life framing: shifts attention from violence to routine practices and identity performance.	Everyday Life Narrative (Normalisation of Guerrilla Life) > Normalization of Conflict/Militarized Romance	Supports normalization by presenting armed-group life as ordinary and socially intelligible.
Account 3 > Video 5	Caption / narration	"Cuando termine el estudio, decidí lo que quería,	The segment uses music/lyrics to narrate identity,	Music-based narrative framing: affective storytelling that can legitimate and normalize	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through	Sound reuse enables scalable identity signaling; mediated representation rather than evidence of offline action.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		me fui para la guerrilla..."	struggle, or violence-related themes.	armed identity.	Sound(Music)	
Account 3 > Video 5	Caption / narration	"Cuando termine el estudio, decidí lo que quería, me fui para la guerrilla..."	The lyric about finishing school and deciding to join is used within an everyday-life framing.	Joining as life choice: recruitment positioned as a normalized transition within personal biography.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Everyday Life Narrative (Normalisation of Guerrilla Life)	Overlap coding suggests the same line can function both narratively and as normalization of 'routine' decision-making.
Account 3 > Video 5	Caption / narration	Lyrics: "...dejando lo que más quería, mi madre y mis hermanitos y la mujer que tenía. A mi me gustan..."	The segment uses music/lyrics to narrate identity, struggle, or violence-related themes.	Music-based narrative framing: affective storytelling that can legitimate and normalize armed identity.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Sound reuse enables scalable identity signaling; interpret as mediated representation rather than evidence of offline action.
Account 3	On-screen	Text on	Selected lyric	Textual anchoring: on-	Narrative Marker	On-screen text stabilizes interpretation and

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
> Video 5	text	Screen: Cuando termine él estudio	lines are displayed on screen, highlighting a decision to join after finishing school.	screen captions selectively foreground recruitment-relevant narrative elements.	(Storytelling) > Storytelling through lyrics on screen	increases salience of joining/sacrifice themes; treat as representational cue.
Account 3 > Video 5	On-screen text	Text on Screen: decidí lo que quería	Selected lyric lines are displayed on screen, highlighting a decision to join after finishing school.	Textual anchoring: on-screen captions selectively foreground recruitment-relevant narrative elements.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through lyrics on screen	On-screen text stabilizes interpretation and increases salience of joining/sacrifice themes; representational cue.
Account 3 > Video 4	Audio/lyrics	"Pa qué la cosa se ponga mas buena, mueve la cubierta Jacobo Arenas [Sound Effect:	A playful line encourages dancing while referencing 'Jacobo Arenas,' accompanied by gunshot sound	Playful aestheticization of violence and revolutionary iconography.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Mixes entertainment cues with armed symbols, potentially making violence feel familiar and culturally consumable.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		Gunshots	effects.			
Account 3 > Video 3	Caption / narration	Yo soy guerrillero, combatiente de las Farc,	The line states: "I am a guerrillero, a combatant of the FARC."	Direct organizational self-identification.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Explicit identity branding; self-presentation within platform context, not proof of affiliation.
Account 3 > Video 3	Caption / narration	yo saliendo de la las montañas después de aver pasado un Año..    n la Jaime Martinez     	The creator narrates leaving the mountains after spending a year in the 'Jaime Martínez' front.	Tenure narrative: prolonged armed participation framed as a life episode.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Everyday Life Narrative (Normalisation of Guerrilla Life)	Functions as experiential legitimation and normalization; self-report rather than verified membership.
Account 3 > Video 2	On-screen text	Text on Screen: ya te vas nuevamente	On-screen dialogue depicts a mother worried about	Managed separation: family absence presented as normal and emotionally	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Everyday Life Narrative	Normalizes prolonged absence as part of guerrilla life while containing moral tension through reassurance.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		hijo 🤔 si madrecita a penas pueda la llamo o bengo a visitarla 🇵🇷 🙏🌱🙏	her child leaving again; the child promises to call or visit when possible.	containable.	(Normalization of Guerrilla Life)	
Account 3 > Video 1	Caption / narration	me preguntaron usted por qué se quiere ir para el Monte 🌱🙏...y le respondí todo con esa canción 🇵🇷🙏, No Face	The segment uses music/lyrics to narrate identity, struggle, or violence-related themes.	Music-based narrative framing: affective storytelling that can legitimate and normalize armed identity.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Sound reuse enables scalable identity signaling; mediated representation rather than evidence of offline action.
Account 1 > Video 5	Audio/lyric s	Song: Los caminos de la vida: "Yo pensaba que	The song reflects on childhood beliefs that life	Hardship biographical framing: adversity used to contextualize identity and	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through	Uses widely recognizable music to evoke empathy and normalize hardship as backdrop to armed life.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		la vida era distinta cuando estaba pequenito yo creia que las cosas eran fácil como ayer	was easy, implying later hardship and disillusionment.	choices.	Sound(Music)	
Account 1 > Video 4	Caption / narration	Music with Farc-related Lyrics	The video uses music containing FARC-referential lyrics as a background track.	Sound-based affiliation signaling: ideological atmosphere created through soundtrack choice.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Low-explicitness cue that can still index affiliation within TikTok's sound-centric vernacular.
Account 1 > Video 3	Visual description	Group of guerrilleros swimming/bathing or washing themselves in a natural	Guerrillas are shown bathing/washing, cooking outdoors, and socializing in a	Domesticating camp life: care routines and sociality foregrounded over combat.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Everyday Life Narrative (Normalization of Guerrilla Life)	Humanizes armed actors and normalizes camp conditions through mundane bodily and social practices.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		waterfall outside in the jungle; cooking outside; "having fun"	jungle setting.			
Account 1 > Video 2	Visual description	Compilation of different scenes of a dissident guerrilla camp in the Jungle in "One Day in Life Video Style"	A montage presents a 'day-in-the-life' style overview of a guerrilla camp.	Lifestyle vlogging of militancy: routine camp practices framed as ordinary daily content.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Everyday Life Narrative (Normalization of Guerrilla Life)	Adopts familiar influencer formats to normalize and humanize armed-group life.
Account 1 > Video 1	Caption / narration	#0:00:06.5# Lyrics: "El 27 de junio" #0:00:10.4# "del 2018" #0:00:13.6# "ingresé a la	The lyrics mention movement between fronts, special-forces roles, and multiple armed	Autobiographical combat narrative: experience and sacrifice used to legitimate armed identity.	Narrative Marker (Storytelling) > Storytelling through Sound(Music)	Strong membership-claim cue, but methodologically treated as narrative performance rather than verifiable biography.

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		Jaime Martínez, después a la Franco Benavides, en las Fuerzas Especiales estuvé" #0:00:25.1# "Desempeñé diversas misiones" #0:00:29.2# "He estado en enfrentamientos con el Ejército y el ELN, y también con los paramilitares, el 6 de marzo casi pierdo la vida, ese día perdimos dos unidades,	confrontations with state and other groups, including casualties.			

Source	Data type	Original coded segment (verbatim)	Paraphrase (analytic reduction)	Abstraction/generalization (Mayring)	Code assignment (MAXQDA)	Analytic memo (why it matters)
		salieron muchos heridos"				
Account 7 > Video 1	Comment	"que viva el frente Dagoberto Ramos y todos los de más frentes"	A viewer expresses support for the guerrilla dissident groups	Affective legitimization	Supportive Comment	Indicates support in the comment space and legitimizes the guerrilla content

Appendix D1 – Binary Code-Matrix (MAXQDA)

This table shows the final MAXQDA Code-Matrix-Browser export on a 0/1 binary-matrix, indicating presence or absence of a category and was aligned to the analytical constructs used in this thesis.

Video ID	Account type	Sound / Music Narrative	Normalization Narrative	Recruitment Funnel	Platform Affordances	Engagement / Diffusion	Territorial Embedding	Direct recruitment cue	Recruitment -interest comments	Creator escalation
Account 1; V1	Hard	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
Account 1; V2	Hard	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Account 1; V3	Hard	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Account 1; V4	Hard	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Account 1; V5	Hard	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Account 2; V1	Hard	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0

Account 2; V2	Hard	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Account 3; V1	Micro	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Account 3; V2	Micro	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Account 3; V3	Micro	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Account 3; V4	Micro	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Account 3; V5	Micro	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Account 4; V1	Micro	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
Account 4; V2	Micro	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Account 5; V1	Micro	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Account 5; V2	Micro	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0

Account 5; V3	Micro	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Account 5; V4	Micro	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Account 5; V5	Micro	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Account 7; V1	Soft	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
Account 7; V2	Soft	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Account 7; V3	Soft	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Account 6; V1	Soft	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Account 6; V2	Soft	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0

Appendix D2 – Variable Dictionary

This table documents the variables used for quantification, aggregation, binary coding, typology assignment, and joint-display construction.

Variable name	Level	Type	Coding / values	Source	Analytical role / used in
video_id	Video	String	Unique identifier for each sampled post.	Appendix A / MAXQDA export	Case linkage across appendices and matrices.
account_id	Account	String	Username or anonymized account label.	Appendix A	Groups posts by account.
account_type	Account	Categorical	Hard / Micro / Soft.	Cross-account typology	Used in Tables 4–9 and Appendix E.
upload_date	Video	Date	Post upload date as captured.	Appendix A	Temporal metadata.
format	Video	Categorical	Video / Photo / Carousel.	Appendix A	Controls format differences and presentation style.
duration_sec	Video	Numeric / NA	Duration in seconds for playable videos; NA for photo posts.	Appendix A	Used for short-form logic and duration-related descriptives.

location_marker_raw	Video	Text	Visible location pin, place marker, or territorial hashtag.	Appendix A / coding	Raw territorial reference.
territorial_marker_bin	Video	Binary	1 = explicit territorial marker present; 0 = absent.	Derived from metadata / coding	Supports territorial-embedding descriptives.
fyp_marker_bin	Video	Binary	1 = #parati / #fyp / #fyph or equivalent present; 0 = absent.	Metadata / coding	Platform-affordance indicator.
short_form_bin	Video	Binary / NA	1 = video < 60 sec; 0 = video ≥ 60 sec; NA = non-video format.	Derived from format + duration	Captures TikTok short-form logic.
sound_narrative_bin	Video	Binary	1 = at least one sound/music narrative component present; 0 = absent.	Derived from Appendix B2 construct mapping	Used in joint display and reduced matrix.
normalization_bin	Video	Binary	1 = at least one normalization component present; 0 = absent.	Derived from Appendix B2 construct mapping	Used in Tables 5–8 and joint display.
recruitment_funnel_bin	Video	Binary	1 = at least one recruitment-funnel component present; 0 = absent.	Derived from Appendix B2 construct mapping	Used in joint display and reduced matrix.

platform_affordances_bin	Video	Binary	1 = at least one platform-affordance component present; 0 = absent.	Derived from Appendix B2 construct mapping	Used in joint display and reduced matrix.
engagement_diffusion_bin	Video	Binary	1 = supportive, critical, or mobilizing interaction signals are present; 0 = absent.	Derived from coding	Contextualizes comment-layer uptake.
territorial_embedding_bin	Video	Binary	1 = at least one territorial-embedding component present; 0 = absent.	Derived from coding	Used in territorial descriptives and joint display.
direct_join_call_bin	Video	Binary	1 = explicit public invitation to join present; 0 = absent.	Coding	Used in Table 5.
contact_channel_offered_bin	Video	Binary	1 = public contact cue or channel offer present; 0 = absent.	Coding	Used in Table 5 and co-occurrence test.
org_branding_marker_bin	Video	Binary	1 = explicit organizational/front naming or branding marker coded; 0 = absent.	Coding	Used in Table 5 and joint display.

recruitment_interest_comments_bin	Video	Binary	1 = at least one recruitment-interest comment present; 0 = absent.	Coding / comments	Interaction-layer recruitment cue.
creator_escalation_bin	Video	Binary	1 = creator reply escalates recruitment-related interest; 0 = absent.	Coding / comments	Captures public-to-private escalation signals.
comments_visible_bin	Video	Binary	1 = comments visible; 0 = disabled or unavailable.	Metadata	Missingness control.
comments_disabled_bin	Video	Binary	1 = comments disabled or unavailable; 0 = visible.	Derived flag	Used in Appendix E missingness diagnostics.
views_num	Video	Numeric	Raw visible view count at capture.	Metadata	Engagement descriptives.
likes_num	Video	Numeric	Raw visible like count at capture.	Metadata	Engagement descriptives.
saves_num	Video	Numeric	Raw visible save count at capture.	Metadata	Engagement descriptives.

shares_num	Video	Numeric	Raw visible share count at capture.	Metadata	Engagement descriptives.
comments_num	Video	Numeric / NA	Raw visible comment count; NA where unavailable.	Metadata	Engagement descriptives and missingness assessment.
likes_rate_per_1000	Video	Numeric	$(\text{likes_num} / \text{views_num}) * 1000.$	Derived	Cross-video engagement comparability.
saves_rate_per_1000	Video	Numeric	$(\text{saves_num} / \text{views_num}) * 1000.$	Derived	Cross-video engagement comparability.
shares_rate_per_1000	Video	Numeric	$(\text{shares_num} / \text{views_num}) * 1000.$	Derived	Cross-video engagement comparability.
comments_rate_per_1000	Video	Numeric / NA	$(\text{comments_num} / \text{views_num}) * 1000;$ NA where comments are unavailable by design.	Derived	Exploratory interaction comparison.

Note. For comment-based variables, unavailable or disabled comments are treated as structurally missing (NA) rather than as substantive absence and derived rate variables are standardized per 1,000 views to improve comparability across posts with unequal reach.

Appendix D3 - Audit trail

In the MAXQDA document, screenshots were taken and coded, to support and underline certain qualitative findings. For the quantitative step, screenshot-only coding was transferred into the corresponding post-level unit in order to avoid double counting and to preserve the post as the unit of analysis, therefore the table below shows those cases for transparency reasons.

Video ID	Sensitive element present	Analytical relevance
Account 2; V1	Recruitment-interest comments and high-visibility interaction layer.	Key case for visible recruitment interest in comments.
Account 2; V2	Comment-layer recruitment cues and polarized audience response.	Supports the public-facing recruitment-interface interpretation.
Account 6; V2	Militarized identity cues in a photo post.	Relevant borderline case for soft recruitment / legitimization.
Account 1; V4	Visible FARC-related logo at the end of the clip.	Relevant to branding and recruitment-oriented interpretation.
Account 1; V5	Visible FARC-related logo and recruitment-oriented text on screen.	Relevant to explicit recruitment-oriented framing.

Account 4; V1	Photo-post with visually sensitive guerrilla- coded markers.	Relevant to micro-recruitment interpretation.
Account 4; V2	Militarized and territorial markers in a (low production) post.	Relevant to the micro-recruitment / normalization claim.
Account 3; V5	Banner referencing an EMC-related front on the roadside.	Relevant to organizational and territorial plausibility cues.

Appendix E – Exploratory engagement table by account type and by account

This appendix reports exploratory engagement descriptives to contextualize audience interaction patterns across recruitment types and accounts. Metrics are standardized as rates per 1,000 views.

Appendix E1 – Engagement descriptives by account type

Account type	Views: mean [min–max], N	Likes rate/1000: mean (SD) [min–max], N	Saves rate/1000: mean (SD) [min–max], N	Shares rate/1000: mean (SD) [min–max], N	Comments rate/1000: mean (SD) [min–max], N
Hard	121,714 [12,000– 371,600], 7	23.11 (3.08) [18.48–28.32], 7	1.26 (0.39) [0.88–2.00], 7	1.50 (1.12) [0.25–2.84], 7	2.66 (0.78) [2.11–3.22], 2
Micro	47,159 [267– 205,100], 12	50.50 (22.94) [21.96– 101.12], 12	3.43 (1.92) [0.94–8.39], 12	2.08 (1.92) [0.00–7.19], 12	0.81 (0.70) [0.00–2.40], 12
Soft	59,635 [4,122– 211,800], 5	53.47 (17.35) [27.51– 73.59], 5	3.45 (1.02) [1.88–4.72], 5	2.76 (1.00) [1.76–3.88], 5	1.51 (2.55) [0.26–6.07], 5
Total	71,504 [267– 371,600], 24	43.13 (21.91) [18.48– 101.12], 24	2.80 (1.74) [0.88–8.39], 24	2.05 (1.57) [0.00–7.19], 24	1.19 (1.46) [0.00–6.07], 19

Note. Comment-based metrics are subject to systematic missingness because comments were disabled or unavailable in part of the hard subset.

Appendix E2 – Engagement transparency table by account

Account	Account type	N videos	Mean likes rate/1000	Mean comments rate/1000	N comment- rate observations	Total views	Videos with comments disabled	Total comments
Account 2	Hard	2	20.52	2.66	2	485500	0	1435
Account 1	Hard	5	24.15	NA	0	366500	5	0
Account 4	Micro	2	66.10	1.77	2	27234	0	32
Account 5	Micro	5	37.75	0.67	5	444956	0	149
Account 3	Micro	5	57.00	0.56	5	93719	0	56
Account 6	Soft	2	44.32	3.27	2	8375	0	27
Account 7	Soft	3	59.56	0.34	3	289800	0	80