

Social Contracts and Contraband: A study in the Colombian Venezuelan Border

Los pactos sociales y el contrabando en la frontera colombo-venezolana

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Abstract: Present-day social contracts and border contraband on the Northern Santander Department (Colombia) and Táchira State (Venezuela) are promoted by various actors. A dynamic economy that responds to a problem encouraged by the difference between the economies of both countries, generating asymmetry in the differential exchange, cost of goods and services, and forming part of the social, cultural and economic relations in the border under study; there are many families that sustain their economy with this income. Consequently, the article analyzes these relationships from a first focus, with a Categorical Regression analysis in Optimal Scaling (CatReg) over two samples: 2,394 and 1,398 people, respectively. Results were shown in following significant independent variables with more importance in both contexts: armed groups outside the law are part of the border dynamics and the perception of an environment of illegality, and the behavior of border people not based on conventional rules.

Key words: Social contracts, space, territory, border, contraband.

Resumen: Los pactos sociales y el contrabando en la frontera Norte de Santander (Colombia)-Táchira (Venezuela) son promovidos por diversos actores. Esta dinámica responde a un problema alentado por la diferencia entre los modelos económicos de ambos países, que genera asimetrías en el diferencial cambiario y costo de bienes y servicios, creando parte de la dinámica social, cultural y económica de esta frontera. Son numerosas las familias que sostienen su economía con estos ingresos. Por ello, el artículo emprende un primer análisis

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de estas relaciones con la aplicación de la Regresión Categórica, mediante el Escalamiento Óptimo (CatReg) en dos muestras de 2.394 y 1.398 personas. El resultado indicó que las variables independientes más significativas en ambos contextos son las siguientes: los grupos armados al margen de la ley son parte de la dinámica fronteriza, y la percepción de un ambiente de ilegalidad y comportamiento de las personas no basado en normas convencionales.

Palabras clave: pactos sociales, espacio, territorio, frontera, contrabando.

Introduction

Social relationships and implicit or explicit contracts developed by dwellers, or groups of them, within a geographic context, foster and institutionalize specific cooperation and reciprocity relationships. These motivate individual actions by their members without full awareness; though, extrinsic factors such as territory and culture produce the appearance of certain social alignment. Owing to this, it is important to study border space and territoriality to understand these contracts as a construct of the inhabitants, though focused on contraband.

The entire border has a number of conceptions that may relate with the concepts of space and territory; therefore, we start by revising the notion of these elements. On the basis of the nature of the object of study, in the present work, such elements are examined from a sociologic standpoint.

Conceived beyond a relationship of emplacement or location from the demographic notion, where there are vicinity relationships between points or elements, where it is interesting to find out the sort of relationship and circulation, space is understood as the sphere where images associated with group relationships that originate in various representations appear, and that depend on the individuals, collectives or circumstances. In this sense, and according to Simmel (1977) criteria, every limited space or with limits, produces one or some psychologic reactions different from those produced by non-limited spaces, or with open limits, for in this concept of space, the physical site and social, cultural, historic, economic and symbolic dimensions conjugate. A whole modified by history and where the most relevant are relationships of bonding and interaction between the members in space.

Other authors such as Vargas (2012: 321), state that such relationships produced in spaces where human activities such as agrarian, urban topographic, biogeographic, services, habitats, among others, are involved,

take place on structured spatial organizations of variable extension which comprise scales with magnitudes from the local to the global. There, each organized space connects with others by means of energy and material flows.

Changing to the territory dimension, Raffestin (1986) points that it is at the core of the representations of complexity that surrounds us. It is so, in the first place, a geographic space, but this may be restricted to the physical environment, that is to say, that which sustains and holds human reality. Then, the term territory is a broader definition than physical space because it combines the natural physical environment and that ordered or humanized, comprising the people who appropriate it. These premises allow elucidating the confusion that may arise because of referring space and territory with a single word.

As a consequence, territory is the space symbolically and instrumentally chosen and occupied by social actors (individuals and collectives), and considered a geopolitically strategic area and political-administrative division alike (Bonnemaïson, 2001; Sack, 1997).

From the standpoint of Brenna (undated) and Geiger (1994), territory may be also approached as a limited terrestrial space or extension, where power, management, and state-control relationships take place between individuals, groups or organizations, which express as territoriality. Hence, a link of affectivity, identity and loyalty is produced by territorial actors, which in spite of having different interests, perceptions, values and attitudes may establish relationships of collaboration, reciprocity or conflict.

According to Quijada (2000), territory is also used as a cultural and ideological element from nationalism as one of social cohesion and economic and physical context for the cementation of markets and the unfolding of geopolitical strategies to take place.

The border is also represented as a geographic space in which the definition of territory complements the complexity and dynamics that characterize it; in this way, for Quijada (2000), it is the place where state control is set for the space and for the production of national identity. Border is considered the region that separates two or more countries and that comprises two elements: boundary and limit.

Limit would be the division line, while boundary is the area adjoining the limit. However, the border transcends aspects of limit, as it is an integration/separation zone; a transition area between territories, where various regulations, pacts and agreements exist and interact, and identify each territory. There, the limit represents a barrier and a permeable membrane as defined by Sánchez (2015), and Taylor and Lawrence (2007). Owing to this,

a part of the social, economic and cultural dynamics that identify the border cannot be framed within the geographic space, or territory, that describes them, due to the impact they produce beyond the limits that define it.

From this theoretical context the goal of the present article focused on the study of social contracts and contraband activities that occur at the border between the oriental limit of North Santander Department, Colombia, and the occidental limit of Táchira State, Venezuela. To do so, the category regression method was resorted to, with Optimal scaling (CatReg), considering 12 categoric variables (some ordinary, while others nominal), and the dependent variable was visualization of informal social pacts (agreements between people and/or institutions) in at the border zone (ordinal category).

The statistical tool or SPSS software allowed describing and determining the relationships between predicting variables and the dependent one. In like manner, the relation between social pacts and contraband was analyzed, since this activity is part of the social, cultural and economic dynamic at the referred border. A large number of families live on contraband incomes; hence, the researchers' interest in finding out the perception of respondents on these topics. Finally, the statistical results of the study are presented in three tables at the end of the article.

Even if contraband at the North Santander (Colombia) – Táchira state (Venezuela) border is facilitated and promoted by a number of actors, this economic dynamic occurs more intensely after the collapse of Venezuelan economy as of 2012, strengthened by the difference between these countries' economic models, which produce asymmetries in the differential exchange rate, cost of goods and services, among others. Concurring with Tejedor (2012), who defined Colombia as a country with an economic model oriented toward capitalism and free market, as opposed to Venezuela's economic model, of socialist-communist nature, with state control on exchange rates, production means and prices.

According to Álvarez (2007), this has affected the national production of goods, as it is accompanied by a policy of populist subsidies in staple foods, drugs and fuels. At present, the economic bankruptcy of Venezuela has created a political and social crisis, where inflation and scarcity prevail, producing a situation that continues potentiating the practice of contraband, in spite of the efforts of authorities at both sides of the border to control it.

One of the most complex and dynamical international borders in Latin America

For Rhi-Sausi *et al.* (2009), the establishment of national States in Latin America propitiated the inception of 36 borders along 41,000 kilometers. These are conceived as “interstate” spaces, where relationships between the inhabitants and various State agencies take place and competences shall be shared in the scope of regional and local governments; whilst, the border line and what it entails are reduced to a mere affair of the national governments.

Similarly, Rhi-Sausi *et al.* (2009) state that each border space possesses proper characteristics, which enables them to build a typology of their own at once. That is to say, each border is a unique reality, and the occidental border between Colombia and Venezuela is not an exception. There are “different and uneven symbolic universes” which live within and participate in the border economy, which diversifies between the legal and illegal, where “transborder actors” concur (Carrión and Espín, 2011: 13). Among other problems in this region, contraband occurs as a recurrent commercial practice, promoted by distortions in the market due to the existence of economies and uneven juridical relationships, which generate accentuated differences.

The totality of the border between Colombia and Venezuela comprises an extension of 2.219 kilometers, and it is the longest of the Colombian borders. From north to south it includes the departments of La Guajira, Cesar, North Santander, Boyacá, Arauca, Vichada and Guainía, while on the Venezuelan side the states of Zulia, Táchira, Apure and Amazonas. Authors such as Carreño (2014) point out that drug trafficking and smuggling of fuel, basic basket foods, medicines, agro-industrial products, among others, are the main illicit business that take place in this border.

The North Santander Department is in northeastern Colombia, and it borders the state of Táchira, in Venezuela. Here, legal and illegal trade with the border cities of the Táchira State such as San Antonio, Ureña and San Cristóbal have historically been the main income sources in the department. The two first cities surround the border, while the third is the capital of Táchira, which connects with such border via various land roads.

As regards socio-spatial relationships in this region, Carreño (2014) explains that ever since the Spanish colony there has always been a migratory flow of people (Colombian and Venezuelan) from one side toward the other, being economic one of the reasons to do so. This has produced a dynamic that moves between legal and illegal actions.

Among illegal actions one finds transnational crimes, for example money laundering, drug, people, organ, technology trafficking and gunrunning, among others. As described by Niño *et al.* (2012), another instance of this dynamic is the presence of groups organized outside the law, which operate by means of organized actions, using violence, corruption or other means, to directly or indirectly obtain high economic benefits, among which one finds contraband. In this sort of contraband, two modalities are noticed: 1) small amounts; and, 2) large amounts that do not pay any tariff. In the case of small amounts, these concentrate in foods and products for mass consumption, owing to the differential exchange rate between Colombia and Venezuela. As regards large amounts, this sort of contraband is linked to guerrillas, paramilitary groups, criminal organizations or common crime, which fight for the control of roads or informal routes for the transit of goods, and “hold the monopoly and earnings that concentrate in a few hands” (Albornoz *et al.*, 2016: 101).

These individuals and groups act in complicity with Venezuelan functionaries and security agencies that reveal a “cooperative cooperation” behavior, in terms by Traxler and Spichtig (2011), and public functionaries and contrabandists at the border of North Santander and Táchira, deeply characterizing this socio-spatial dynamic.

Paramilitary groups appeared in Colombia in 1990, under the name *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, AUC [United Self-defense Forces of Colombia], with a view to combating guerrillas. The paramilitary appropriated the territories to obtain economic benefits so that they were able to continue carrying out their criminal activities. For their part, those known by the names of “*Urabeños*” and “*Rastrojos*”, operate at the Colombia-Venezuela and live on the benefits of drug trafficking, contraband and extortion (BBC Mundo, 2015; Carreño, 2014; Niño *et al.*, 2012).

In like manner, immersed in smuggling are guerrilla groups, mainly *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, ELN [National Liberation Army] and *Ejército Popular de Liberación*, EPL [Popular Liberation Army], which exist in Colombia, as of the beginning of the domestic conflict in the past century and whose manifestations of violence have affected the entire country (Niño *et al.*, 2012; Rodríguez-Albor *et al.*, 2016).

The social contract and its theory as an efficacious instrument to face the contraband problem in Latin America and the Caribbean

With the development of humanity, societies have had the need to set up laws and regulations that enable them to regulate their social relationships, fix responsibilities and establish mechanisms to censor or reproach behaviors alien to such relationship. For such purpose, the State decrees roles that make it predictable the behavior of each of the actors in society, which from a stability standpoint, creates contracts so that such relationships take place in harmony, by means of establishing regulations set in principle on the political Constitution of such State which, according to Bobbio (2005), are intuited as juridical agreements between individuals who want to pacifically coexist.

For Avdagic (2011), these contracts have been instruments to design effective policies for social control, regulation and citizen behavior. Likewise, they have been used as tools to include the representative groups of society in social reforms (Habermas, 1989). Owing to this, given the scope of this notion of commitment, authors such as Daros (2005) point out that the social contract demands mutual respect from the people involved, and represents mutual respect for life in liberty, symbolizing the continual political interchange between social actors in an autonomous manner. These are regulations which, according to Öberg *et al.* (2011), develop interactions.

Such regulations are known as institutions, game rules that produce social change (Drobak and Nye, 1997; North, 1994). Likewise, they refer the conditions established and imposed by people who propitiate social, economic and political interaction, in the terms exposed by Briceño-León (2016). Such rules may be formal as the ones established in the constitutions and legally recognized laws, codified for public knowledge; or informal, which are in the customs, traditions and social regulations (Coleman, 1994; Prats, 2007).

As regards formal regulations, Posada *et al.* (2015) explain that these work as laws that regulate the behavior of individuals to one another, establishing what can and cannot be done. For their part, informal rules (social) are defined as the common values of the group that influence on the individuals' behavior by means of the internalization of the preferences of a society (Mixon *et al.*, 2015).

Likewise, by conceiving a social regulation as a regularity, Plancarte (2015) points out that it may emerge from a process where certain practice or action begins to be made periodically. That it to say, it is codified that

from an individual or group begins to establish certain behavior, in a context where other people will be willing to imitate such action. This process frequently takes place due to inertia or believing that such practice makes sense. Owing to this, culturally, such practice becomes periodical. Not behaving accordingly is “frowned upon”, mostly when sanctions arise, which implies that the practice is turning into a regulation.

From the standpoint of Parsons’ (1997) structural functionalism, social subjects create systems of interaction: cultural (behavioral patterns, symbols and beliefs), social (labor division and social stratification). Therefore, it is assumed that social regulations are defined by culture and affect individual motivations, as some are unable to comply with them; although society will typify these individuals’ behaviors as unconceivable, which forced them to amend the behavior (Collins, 1996). According to Elster (1989: 16), social norms differ from moral and juridical norms.

The term social norms implies an action category that includes orders, prohibitions, and permissions, which may differentiate from other sort of practical, ‘ontological’, epistemological considerations and regulatory bases” (Morrow, 2014). There are four key characteristics that indicate their distinctive nature: 1) the function of particularity; 2) the practice-rooting; 3) the function of the intentional group; and, 4) the function of accountability of its inception.

According to particularity and practice-rooting, social norms circulate in specific groups, organizations or societies and are normative only for their members. However, for Zorrilla (1992), the excess of regulations in a society fosters or increases corruption as a mere violation of legality. The violation of the norm, also known as deviant behavior, is an expression of social homeostasis processes, as it is the case in most of the instances in the so-called black, informal or marginal market. For Calhoun *et al.* (2000), such deviancies are the result of the interaction of individual behaviors, social problems and social conditions.

Therefore, contracts come from agreements and materialize via legal, moral or social norms. Social contracts are created by means of informal social rules, either legal or illegal. Calderón (1999) considers that the emergence of social contracts, and especially those illegal, takes place due to the various problems faced by the individuals, but also because it is supported on ungovernability actions and market problems, which make people produce parallel agreements by means of which they somewhat satisfy their needs.

Social contracts may be something positive for society when they do not entail illegality. Carmona (2006) states that for governmental entities

and social institutions, by and large, these contracts may become a local development modality by means of collective work and negotiation; in this way, they may be incorporate as a reinforcing element in the struggle against contraband at Latin American and Caribbean borders.

A specific case of social pacts and contraband at the Colombia-Venezuela border

Methodology and data processing

The research, from an exploratory-descriptive standpoint, obtained and analyzed data from a semi-structured survey, applied to individuals (household heads) between 18 and 69 years of age. The population of North Santander (Colombia) was $N = 830.872$ inhabitants (DANE, 2015); the sample size was $n = 2.394$, at a confidence level of 95%, and maximum permissible error of 2%. The sampling was stratified, with proportional allocation depending on the population size in the geographic areas of the department. In Táchira (Venezuela), the population was $N = 317.594$ inhabitants (INE, 2012); sample size $n = 1.398$, at a 95-percent confidence level and a maximum permissible error of 3%.

In order to ensure sample representativity, the register of real estate units in both places was used as a reference framework. The characteristics of the sample are in table 1.

Likewise, the creation of informal social contracts was observed, i.e., agreements between people and/or institutions at the border zone, such action was defined as a dependent variable, which was selected when considering that some of the characteristics of the border between Latin American countries are stressed and varied economic, social and cultural relationships —among them crime and violence— which according Carrión (2011), arise and disseminate from sociopolitical factors, economic and legal asymmetries, from institutional and ethical-cultural aspects.

Variable characterization

Twelve independent variables were considered in the present study: 1) gender; 2) age; 3) schooling; 4) employment status; 5) existence of cooperation relationships between security functionaries and smugglers; 6) bureaucracy in the posts dealing with the control of contraband goods has increased bribery; Colombia efficaciously acts to control contrabanded goods;

8) confidence in public power institutions to restrict the scour of smuggling; 9) groups aside the law are part of the border dynamic; 10) large amounts of contraband goods trafficked at the border due to relationships of cooperation between functionaries and informal traders; 11) illegality is perceived; and, 12) the behavior of individuals is not based on the border rules. The national and regional governments have notified and published information about findings, laws, decrees and resolutions regarding contraband.

With a view to describing, quantifying and ascertaining the relationships between predicting variables and the dependent one, finding out the influence or importance of such relationships on the dependent, given the nature of their qualitative assessment, the multivariate statistical technique known as CatReg was resorted to (Categorical Regression with Optimal Scaling) (De Leeuw, 2005; IBM Knowledge Center, undated; Preisser and Koch, 1997; Van Der Kooij and Wetenschappen, 2007).

Empirical analysis

All the variables were included in the initial model and the partial contributions of the standardized coefficients of the transformed variables to the variance explanation as well as the significance level in the model were obtained. The results for North Santander were $R^2=.397$ and ($F = 72.587, p < .05$), and four nonsignificant variables: 1) sex; 2) bureaucracy at the security posts to control contraband goods has increased bribery; 3) Colombia acts efficaciously in the control of contraband; and, 4) confidence in public power institutions to restrict the scour of smuggling.

In the case of Táchira State, the result was $R^2=.517$ and ($F = 69.003, p < .05$), with five variables without significance: 1) sex; 2) age; 3) there are cooperation relationships between functionaries and smugglers; 4) confidence in public power institutions to restrict the scour of smuggling; and, 5) national and regional governments have notified and published information on the findings, laws, decrees, and resolutions related to contraband.

In order to optimize the model, variables with no significance were sequentially excluded (following the successive step criterion). This process was carried out systematically up to obtaining all the significant variables that explain the best fit as a set.

Model validity and results

Variance analysis results (ANOVA) present the model validity. In the case of North Santander, the estimator of the regression variance (63.521) is greater than the residual variance estimator (.606) and the value of the contrast statistic and the critical level associated ($F = 104.813$; $p = .000$). This indicated that adjustment is statistically significant ($p < .05$). In the model for Táchira, the variance regression estimator (48.702) was greater than that of the residual variance (.483) and the value of the contrast statistic and the critical level associated ($F = 100.840$; $p = .000$), showing that the adjustment was statistically significant ($p < .05$). The value of the determination coefficient adjusted for the case of North Santander is $R^2 = .394$ while for Táchira, $R^2 = .517$; which indicates that 39.4% and 51.7%, respectively, of the variability of the dependent variable is explained by the predicting variables considered in the optimal model.

In Table 2, the standardized partial regression coefficient of the transformed variables associated with the model are displayed. All of them display significant contributions to the values of the model variable ($p < .05$), pointing at the change of the quantification that each predicting variable produces on the dependent one.

In North Santander and Táchira State, the two standardized coefficients of the transformed predicting variables with the most correlation contribution to the model are: 1) groups outside the law are part of the border dynamic; 2) an environment of illegality is noticed, also the behavior of people is not based on the norms of the border (see Table 2).

Diagnostic from results

By implying the theoretical principles of social contracts such as mutual respect between people, commitments of those in the contract and the interchange between the actors who make their lives in the territory, it is evinced that there are social contracts at the border between North Santander and Táchira State. Particularly, social norms imposed by the actors of society were detected; these work in favor of coexistence, acceptance and participation in illegal behaviors.

These are contracts or informal agreements (and in this case illegal) related to contraband, as well as agreements between actors, where illegal armed groups –present in the zone– take part in this business, smuggling goods from one country to another and controlling grey areas for border

crossing, known as *trochas* (Carrión, 2011; Niño *et al.*, 2012; Stein *et al.*, 2015).

The negative influence of some predicting variables on the dependent was also noticed (see Table 2); in North Santander: 1) schooling; 2) employment status; 3) the national and regional governments have notified and published information regarding the findings, laws, decrees and resolutions related to smuggling. In the case of Táchira: 1) bureaucracy in security posts to control smuggled goods has increased bribery.

The above indicates a negative perception, since the individuals consulted in North Santander —regardless of their schooling and employment status— consider there are informal social contracts in the area (agreements between people and institutions). Likewise, they state that the national and regional governments have neither notified nor published information regarding the findings, laws, decrees and resolutions related to smuggling.

This reinforces the ideas exposed by Niño *et al.* (2012), who explain the way these social contracts between the various actors that facilitate and promote contraband at the border between North Santander and Táchira are military and police authorities, merchants, illegal armed groups and those who control the grey areas over which smugglers and goods transit. These contracts are difficult to control, owing to the impunity of smuggling, reason why this business permeates culture and entails tacit social acceptance.

In Táchira, the respondents' negative perception is evinced when considering that the existence of informal social contracts in the area (agreements between people and institutions) is not a product of bureaucracy in security posts to control smuggled goods and increase bribery (see Table 2).

The above concurs with Castañeda (2015), who points out that the perception of corruption in a region is related to the social imaginary people create on the functioning of the State and its institutions, and not necessarily with the experience or outcome of the problem. In like manner, Stein *et al.* (2015) refer that smuggling is a corruption network that permeates all the respondents' action spheres.

As regards measures of relative importance of the predicting variables, for the dependent one, the following predictors were observed in North Santander: 1) groups outside the law are part of the border dynamic; 2) an environment of illegality is perceived; and, 3) there are cooperation relationships between security functionaries and smugglers, adding up .93, that is to say, represent 93% of relevance (see Table 3).

The latter (imaginary of cooperation relationships between security functionaries and smugglers) concurs with what Arancibia *et al.* (2013) expose, by pointing out that the members of society share social representations, but some of them have experiences, interests and needs that draw them closer to the phenomenon they perceive, as in the case of social contracts in the face of smuggling.

Such situation also influences the exercise of governance, for the existence of noticeable widespread corruption produces generalized mistrust among the inhabitants of the area toward everything related to the public sector (Alborno and Mazuera, 2015).

For Táchira State, the set of predictors is: 1) groups outside the law are part of the border dynamic; and, 2) illegality is perceived and the behavior of people is not based on the border rules, add up .97, that is to say, they represent 97% of importance (See Table 3).

It is worth underscoring that the concurring perception of the inhabitants of North Santander and Táchira State on the presence of armed groups aside the law as part of the border dynamics was the most important predictor, which concurs with Alba *et al.* (2016), who express that smuggling—being an profitable illegal activity— needs to control territories, which the State neglects, and is related with corruption or complicity between the public and the private, and the presence of gangster organizations in charge of articulating the legal and illegal economy, funding legal firms and keeping control of territories and areas where goods circulate.

Conclusion

The imaginary of informal social contracts (agreements between people and/or institutions) at the border area, which promote and facilitate smuggling, was stated in an objective diagnostic studio, by means of a perception survey on a sample of inhabitants of North Santander Department (Colombia) and Táchira State (Venezuela). Such survey was produced for the purpose of disclosing the existence of social contracts and their causes, according to the citizens' beliefs. All of this, understood as a key aspect to find out the situation in each country, as explained by Villoria and Jiménez (2012).

Two regression models that met all the suppositions were produced, thereby useful to visualize the variables that influence the opinion and perception regarding the existence of informal social contracts (agreements between people and/or institutions) at the border zone (dependent variable).

These regression models made it clear that the predicting variables that explain the dependent one in North Santander and Táchira are 1) groups outside the law are part of the border dynamic; and, 2) an environment of illegality is perceived and the behavior of people is not based on the rules of the border.

A concurring finding in these two places was the identification of the most important and common variables in both models. These were: 1) groups outside the law are part of the border dynamic; and, 2) an environment of illegality is perceived and the behavior of people is not based on the rules of the border. That is to say, the illegal activity of contraband is linked to armed groups outside the law, which concurs with the concept of anomia, as understood by Zorrilla (1992), i.e., a deviant behavior of the social actors at North Santander – Táchira border, who in spite of being aware of the rules (subjective anomia) have superficially internalized, and additionally, brake them with impunity.

Owing to this, any perception of social contracts or agreements between people and/or institutions related with contraband at the border is part of a social dynamic that involves the population, which reveals these contracts. People know the illicit activities, actors, risks and consequences, and some youth, as pointed out by González (2016), see examples to follow in them.

As a set, this allows reflecting on social representations, which are constructs shared among the members of society. It is important to clarify that some of these constructs are the closets to certain experiences, due to the interest, needs or expectations people have before the phenomenon they perceive (Arancibia *et al.*, 2013). It is the case of social contracts before contraband, in which it is noticed that all the border citizens are aware of it and the contracts around; this is the reason why the present research may serve as a starting point for other works, which deepen into this Latin American border reality.

For the case of Táchira State, since in its space it is common to see goods illegally circulating on the streets, news on smuggled goods and smugglers, neighbors, and acquaintances who actively participate in the crime, where political conjunctures, shortages, smugglers' forms of operation, social and familial dynamics to acquire basic goods —smuggled if necessary— has made illegal border social contracts more overwhelmingly or clearly perceived.

Even if there is a limit that separates these countries, Colombia and Venezuela, there is an extended space where social, cultural, economic (legal and illegal) dynamics come together. Two differenced illegalities or social

contracts concur: the formal of both countries, and the informal or illegal at each side, which may be the same or different.

Owing to the problem experienced at the border of East Colombia and West Venezuela, transborder cooperation is necessary and peremptory. This would mean help for police, social and legal economic institutions to prevent disorder and duplicity of efforts, starting from the formulation of accurate governmental policies, suitable for the local and regional reality, and defining goals, establishing functions and proposal of services between these cities on the basis of Rhi-Sausi *et al.* (2009).

In this context, the action of local governments has a fundamental role owing to its closeness to the citizens, reason why it is necessary to strengthen the management capabilities of these local actors and the productive articulation of university and municipality as an integral whole. This is a real challenge, in the middle term, to accomplish the creation of a broad learning space with the creation of mechanisms that demands total border integration, as stated by Oddone *et al.* (2016).

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Annex

Table 1

Sample characteristics, standard error and confidence intervals

		N	%	Stratification partial standard errors by geographic zone (%)	CI lower limit (%)	CI upper limit (%)
North Santander	Centro	69	2.9	0.34	2.3	3.6
	Norte	118	4.9	0.44	4.1	5.9
	Occidente	404	16.9	0.77	15.4	18.4
	Oriente	1.550	64.7	0.98	62.8	66.6
	Suroccidente	149	6.2	0.49	5.3	7.2
	Suroriente	104	4.3	0.42	3.6	5.2
	Total	2.394	100			
Táchira State	Metropolitana	560	40.1	1.31	37.5	42.6
	Montaña	147	10.5	0.82	9	12.2
	Frontera	382	27.3	1.19	25	29.7
	Norte	150	10.7	0.83	9.2	12.4
	Sur	159	11.4	0.85	9.8	13.1
	Total	1.398	100			

Source: own elaboration. Standard error and confidence intervals at 95%. Stratification of North Santander and Táchira State was carried out considering the physical-spatial, socioeconomic and political characteristics, which define the spatial functioning of each municipality.

Table 2

Model's transformed coefficients

	Standardized Coefficients		df	F	Sig.
	Beta	Std. Error			
Schooling.	-0.035	0.015	2	5.29	0.005
Employment status.	-0.039	0.016	5	6.26	0.000
There is cooperation between security functionaries and smugglers.	0.112	0.024	2	22.75	0.000
Groups outside the law are part of the border dynamic.	0.360	0.029	1	151.67	0.000
Large amounts of smuggled goods due to cooperation between functionaries and informal traders.	0.071	0.024	1	8.37	0.004
An environment of Illegality is perceived and the people's behavior is not based on the border rules.	0.283	0.028	2	100.94	0.000
The national and regional governments have notified and published information as regards the findings, laws, decrees and resolutions related to smuggling.	-0.030	0.015	2	4.03	0.018

North Santander Department

Táchira State	Schooling.	0.033	0.018	2	3.41	0.033
	Employment status.	0.022	0.014	5	2.51	0.029
	Bureaucracy in security posts to control smuggling has increased bribery.	-0.041	0.017	2	5.72	0.003
	Venezuela acts efficaciously to control smuggled goods.	0.047	0.020	1	5.58	0.018
	Groups outside the law are part of the border dynamic.	0.482	0.029	1	283.15	0.000
	Large amounts of smuggled goods are because of the cooperation relationships with functionaries and illegal traders.	0.053	0.020	3	6.75	0.000
	An environment of Illegality is perceived and the behavior of people is not based on the border rules.	0.320	0.028	1	126.94	0.000

Source: own elaboration. Dependent variable: informal social contracts (agreements between people and/or institutions) at the border zone are displayed.

Table 3

Correlations and tolerance

	Correlations			Tolerance	
	Zero order	Partial	Part	Importance	Before transformation
Groups outside the law are part of the border dynamic.	0.547	0.357	0.297	0.495	0.679
An environment of illegality is perceived and the behavior of the people is not based on the border rules.	0.464	0.317	0.259	0.330	0.840
There is cooperation between security functionaries and smugglers.	0.371	0.125	0.098	0.105	0.753
Amounts of smuggled goods because of cooperation relationships with functionaries and informal traders.	0.307	0.083	0.065	0.055	0.833
Employment status.	-0.058	-0.051	-0.039	0.006	0.997
Schooling.	-0.066	-0.044	-0.034	0.006	0.982
The national and regional governments have notified and published information regarding information on findings, laws, decrees and resolutions on smuggling.	-0.058	-0.039	-0.030	0.004	0.981
North Santander Department					0.968

Groups outside the law are part of the border dynamic.	0.662	0.504	0.403	0.610	0.700	0.917
An environment of illegality is perceived and the behavior of people is not based on the border rules.	0.588	0.363	0.269	0.360	0.706	0.925
Large amounts of smuggled goods is because of cooperation relationships with functionaries and illegal traders.	0.190	0.074	0.051	0.019	0.942	0.832
Venezuela acts efficaciously in controlling smuggled goods.	0.082	0.068	0.047	0.007	0.978	0.920
Schooling.	0.025	0.048	0.033	0.002	0.992	0.867
Employment status.	0.036	0.032	0.022	0.002	0.995	0.872
Bureaucracy in security posts to control smuggled goods has increase bribery.	0.000	-0.059	-0.041	0.000	0.990	0.785

Source: own elaboration. Dependent variable: informal social contracts (agreements between people and/or institutions) at the border zone are displayed.

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