CHAPTER 5

Setting up Frontiers, Crossing the Border: The Making of the Kari'na Tyrewuju

Gérard Collomb and Odile Renault-Lescure

1 Introduction

The European intrusion on the Guayana coasts adversely affected the mobility patterns of the native populations throughout this region, and caused a fragmentation of the ancient social and economic networks which linked the Amerindian groups, upsetting their social, economic, and also warlike relationships (Butt Colson 1973; Gallois 2005). Occurring simultaneously with a demographic collapse, these changes led to a creation and reinforcement of ethnic frontiers as an adaptive response to the changes that were occurring (see Whitehead 1993; Collomb and Dupuy 2009).

When European colonists arrived, the Kari'na formed a constellation of peoples speaking a Cariban language, settled on the coast between the Orinoco and the Approuague rivers. The members designated themselves as ‘Kari’na’. They had created a taxonomy of their ethnic environment based on relationships of social and economic exchanges and on war (Hoff 1995). Later, European struggles over land separated the eastern Kari’na, living in modern day Suriname and French Guiana, from the western Kari’na, found in contemporary Venezuela, close to the middle reaches of the Orinoco River and in Guyana, near the Venezuelan border. Among these eastern Kari’na, a group calling itself ‘Kari’na Tyrewuyu’ had settled on both banks of the lower Maroni (Marowijne) and Mana rivers, and on the upper reaches of the Iracoubo River in contemporary French Guiana, straddling the political border between Suriname and French Guiana. This region had long remained on the fringe of Dutch and French colonial settlements in the Guianas because in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the French colony was focusing its main activities on the area between the Approuague and the Kourou rivers, while further west, the Dutch colony had shown little interest in the lands near the

1 Many thanks to Diane Vernon and the editors for her reading of the English version.
2 We adopt here the Surinamese spelling, except for their French Guianese toponyms, citations and examples.
Maroni as most of its economic activity concerned sugar cane cultivated south and east of Paramaribo. These eastern Kari’na still thought of their social space as stretching up to the Essequibo and the Orinoco, but from the nineteenth century onwards they seldom went westward anymore to exchange goods or contract marriages. Their social and political life, and the processing of their ethnic identity, from then on took place in the territory between the lower Mana and Maroni rivers. Villages and/or families were frequently moving between the Dutch and French colonies, depending on the political developments of the time and/or, more frequently, in the hope of gaining advantages from one country or the other. For example, movement patterns were often based on considerations of the diversity and the quality of the goods offered by the Dutch and French colonial governments. Even if the idea of a border did not mean much to the Kari’na, they were aware that two ‘nations’ were competing for control of the Maroni river, trying to attract them to their ‘nation’ as hunters or as providers of goods for the colonial trade or, later, as a human presence against the people who were escaping from slavery. The Kari’na were thus keenly aware that they could benefit from this situation in various ways.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, French Guiana and Suriname entered a new stage of their colonial development. In French Guiana, an agricultural settlement was implemented in the western part of the colony, and from 1858 on, a penal colony (le Bagne) developed in the lower Maroni region, giving rise to the creation of the town of Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni, opposite the town of Albina on the Surinamese side of the Maroni River. In the Dutch colony, in the course of the eighteenth century, a dense network of plantations had been developing on the Suriname and Commewijne rivers, an area which was mostly off-limits for Amerindians. They, therefore, had to restrict their activities to the Marowijne region, on the Surinamese side of the Maroni River. However, this area was also of interest to the escaping slaves or Maroon populations (Ndyuka, Aluku, Bakabusi sama) who fled to or settled in the forests west of the Marowijne/Maroni River. The two population groups therefore became competitors. These co-occurrences, that had previously prevented the Tyrewuju from maintaining a distance from the colonial places, materialised at a moment when the Kari’na Tyrewuju were at their lowest demographic level, reduced to only a few hundred people. They became more and more limited in their collective mobility, and their economy became more dependent on the colony’s activities. From this period, their contacts with other Amerindian groups diminished sharply, and in the second half of the nineteenth century they ended up in a new world that they had to share with other, culturally different populations, namely French and Surinamese Creoles, Maroons, and Europeans. The history of the Kari’na, their ethnic identification (either self-
constructed or ascribed) and their territorial inscription thus became more or less inseparable from the European colonial expansion in the region, a situation obtaining till the present day.

The data on which this chapter is based are taken from the field of language contact, and consist of both the observation of linguistic practices and changes induced by contact, and ethnographic field work among the Tyrewuju communities in French Guiana and Suriname (Collomb 2008). The overall aim of this chapter is to over-ride the ‘in/out’ categories associated with the border, and to focus on the different levels in which these processes occur, in a dynamic relation between the centre and the margins. In Section 2, we distinguish two main Kari’na dialects and deal with the diversity of borrowings into Kari’na over time, due to the history of mobility and contacts with European and creole languages. In Section 3, we turn our attention to symbolic features in which the Tyrewuju built a shared world that they set in the lower Maroni area. In Section 4 we continue with the notion of shared identity giving examples of a Kari’na narrative of mobility through the area. In Section 5, we examine how, more recently, the Tyrewuju have had to learn to compromise and deal with the new institutions of states and their political borders, both in French Guiana and Suriname, and how this has changed their former mobility into present migrations. The linguistic practices reveal this new stage of their history, through new processes of changes, including morphosyntactic changes and code mixing, in relation to the status of the different languages used in both countries. Finally, in Section 6, we draw some conclusions about the completed and ongoing linguistic and social changes showing differences in generational perspectives.

2 Language as a Marker of Identity, Loanwords as a Marker of History

Linguists have identified two dialects within the Kari’na language3 spoken today in Suriname and French Guiana: an eastern dialect spoken on both sides of the Maroni, on the Mana river, and eastwards, up to Iracoubo, and a western dialect, used in the centre and in the west of Suriname (Hoff 1968; Renault-Lescure 1985; Courtz 2008). The border between these two dialects can be drawn along the west (Surinamese) bank of the Maroni River. These dialectal variations reflect the history of the contacts, migrations and mobilities of the Kari’na people.

3 Named Carib language (Hoff 1968; Courtz 2008), Kari’na (Carlin 2002) and Karinja (Yamada 2010).
A first significant example of these mobilities can be found in the way the ‘Galibi Pidgin,’ a Kari’na-based lingua franca, spread in earlier times. This language is assumed to have accompanied raiding warriors and people travelling for exchanges throughout the mainland coast and the Lesser Antilles islands in the pre-Columbian period. One can see evidence of its presence in the Amerindian language spoken in Dominica at the arrival of the first settlers (Taylor and Hoff 1980; Hoff 1995; Renault-Lescure 1999), as well as its traces in the memories of the Amerindians of Amapá (Brazilian Guiana), non-native speakers of Kari’na today (Tassinari 2009). This lingua franca was also the language spoken in the Jesuit missions on the Guayana coast during the eighteenth century, and it is likely that words from this pidgin were borrowed by European and creole languages during the first contacts, to designate elements of an unknown world.

During the seventeenth century, a new vocabulary, related to the contact with Europe, appeared in Kari’na which has the tendency to borrow from various contact languages rather than use other methods for forming neologisms. It should be emphasised that these borrowing strategies are parallel with other strategies, used in other non-linguistic contexts: to appropriate, to resist or to take control of the structures set up by the Whites. This is thus not only a linguistic strategy but a political, administrative, and economic one as well. Such a pragmatic attitude, combined with a multilingual social environment, highlights a capacity for resistance by the Kari’na throughout their history (Renault-Lescure 2002). This propensity of the Kari’na for borrowing words gives us a key for understanding some characteristics of their history made of mobilities and contacts with other Amerindians and with colonial populations, and this feature is still evident in the present-day language.

The first period of contacts with the Europeans and their languages (Spanish, Portuguese, sometimes English, Dutch, and French), quickly led to a set of borrowings which spread along the coast of the Guianas, from the mouth of the Orinoco up to the Approuague in eastern French Guiana. These loanwords describe the objects of the first period of contact with the West, marked by violence and by the development of trade (e.g., alakapusa ‘musket, rifle’, from Spanish arcabuz, and kasulu ‘glass bead’, from Portuguese casulo). In

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4 Taylor and Hoff 1980. ‘Galibi’, perhaps derived from the word ‘Kali’na’ (see Hoff 2002: 53) was a name used, till quite recently, to refer to the Kari’na people in French Guiana.

5 Antonella Tassinari, Personal communication.

6 First occurrence in a colonial lexicon 1654 (Boyer 1654).

7 First occurrence in a colonial lexicon 1644 (Biet 1896).
the languages from which they are taken, these words are nouns, and they are directly integrated into the class of nouns in Kari'na.

Later, the contacts with these languages declined, replaced by contacts with the new languages evolving in the colonies with the development of slavery, namely Sranantongo, an English-based creole, in Suriname since the second half of the seventeenth century, and Créole, a French-based creole language spoken in French Guiana. In this period the Kari'na speakers acquired some degree of bilingualism, and had more socioeconomic relationships with the new Surinamese Creole society. For this the reason, a lexicon formed of words borrowed from Sranantongo entered all varieties of the Kari'na language, the western (spoken in the centre and west of Suriname) and the eastern (spoken in French Guiana and eastern Suriname). The lexical items in question relate to material goods and other concepts associated with non-Amerindian products or practices (Renault-Lescure 2009), for example:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{kapiteni} & < \text{kapten} \text{ 'chief'} ; \text{kontere/kontele}^8 < \text{kondre} \text{ 'country, town'} ; \text{kereke/keleke} < \text{kerki} \text{ 'church'} ; \text{wenkere/wenkele} < \text{wenkri} \text{ 'shop'} ; \text{perere/pelele} < \text{brede} \text{ 'bread'} ; \text{areisi/aleisi} < \text{aleisi} \text{ 'rice'} ; \text{puruku/puluku} < \text{bruku} \text{ 'trousers'} ; \\
\text{panki} < \text{pangi} \text{ 'cloth, skirt'} ; \text{karasi/kalasi} < \text{grasi} \text{ 'glass'} ; \text{suma} < \text{suma} \text{ 'person, somebody'} ; \text{mati} < \text{mati} \text{ 'friend, black person'} ; \text{sinesi} < \text{sneisi} \text{ 'Chinese'} ; \\
\text{juru/yulu} < \text{yuru} \text{ 'hour'} ; \text{tori/toli} < \text{tori} \text{ 'story'}^9
\end{align*} \]

On the other hand, during the next period of contact, one notices a reinforcement of the dialect boundary between western and eastern areas: newly borrowed words from the French Guianese Creole now only entered the eastern dialect (Tyrewuju) since intense social relationships with the Guianese Creole population were upheld by the Kari'na on both sides of the Maroni River. Such a situation draws a picture of an increasingly multilingual environment for the Tyrewuju, contingent on their mobility and the ability of some people to speak different creole languages:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{muperu/mupelu} & < \text{monpè} \text{ 'father, priest'} ; \text{maso} < \text{maso} \text{ 'nun'} ; \text{konpe} < \text{kompè} \text{ 'comad'} ; \text{muisuwe} < \text{muchwè} \text{ 'handkerchief'} ; \text{paran/palan} < \text{palan} \text{ 'long-line'} ; \text{tiriko/tiliko} < \text{triko} \text{ 'tee-shirt'} ; \text{pisukuwi} < \text{biskwi} \text{ 'biscuit'} ; \\
\text{bidon} < \text{bidon} \text{ 'oil can'} ; \text{rakere/lakele} < \text{lakle} \text{ 'key'} ; \text{buton} < \text{bouton} \text{ 'button'} ; \text{rabaret[\text{y}]/labalet[i]} < \text{labalet} \text{ 'catapult'}^10
\end{align*} \]

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8 Where necessary we indicate the two spellings used in Suriname and French Guiana.
9 See Hoff (1968) and Yamada (2010).
Later some variations between borrowings from Sranantongo and Guianese Creole entered the linguistic practices of the Tyrewuju as shown in Table 5.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tyrewuju</th>
<th>&lt; Sranantongo</th>
<th>Tyrewuju</th>
<th>&lt; Guianese Creole</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘milk’</td>
<td>meriki/meliki</td>
<td>melki</td>
<td>dilet[i]</td>
<td>dilèt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘tin plate’</td>
<td>berekyry/berekili</td>
<td>breki</td>
<td>buwet[i]</td>
<td>bwèt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘beer’</td>
<td>biri/bili</td>
<td>biri</td>
<td>labye</td>
<td>labyè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘school’</td>
<td>sikoro/sikolo</td>
<td>Skoro</td>
<td>lekol[i]</td>
<td>lekol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘shovel’</td>
<td>sikopu</td>
<td>skopu</td>
<td>lapel[i]</td>
<td>lapel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Setting up Frontiers: “We are Tyrewuju from the Mana and the Maroni”

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Kari’na Tyrewuju (henceforth Tyrewuju) came more and more under pressure from the colonial administrations on both sides of the border between French Guiana and Suriname. Nevertheless, in this new context, the social patterns of Tyrewuju society were still in place, with the familial residential unit forming a ‘village’ which usually gathered around a founder (generally an elderly man), his extended family, as well as some other nuclear families, possibly not directly related to him but recognising his leadership (Rivière 1984).11 Within and between these small villages on the Iracoubo, Organabo, Mana rivers and on both banks of the Maroni, the extended families had woven a dense network of kinship and alliance ties, a sort of ‘Tyrewuju country’. It is from this place, from this network settled onto the border, that one can understand the production of identity referents for the Tyrewuju, the construction of a ‘self’ and of ‘others’, and the definition of frontiers. If they are historically present in the Kari’na world, the Whites, the Blacks and the other peoples who arrived more recently, neverthe-

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11 Productive activities are carried out, goods are circulated and collective works are organised from within this residential settlement. It is also from here that the great manioc beer festivals (Omankano, Epekoton) take place on the occasion of a mourning, providing a meeting point for kin groups and allies living sometimes far away from the village.
less represented a sort of ‘radical otherness’ such that it was not necessary to identify as such.

When it comes to the notion of a collective identity, Tyrewuju scholars have put forward a narrative which depicts the singularity of the group and designates a set of families as being the focal point of this identity. This narrative, which is still known and told by the elders in the villages, relates the way in which the shamans of the village of Ulemali Untɨ (located on the river Mana) in the first half of the nineteenth century, tried to bring the dead back to earth by realising what is called *epa’kano*:

*Epa’kano* was what the Whites call a ‘miracle’… Everything was ready for what was going to happen, people from all the villages gathered there, they came from as far as Iracoubo. The dead, those who are above, were about to come down… But the transgression of a taboo by a woman from the village impeded the shamans’ powers, and *epa’kano* failed: ‘Everything has stopped forever, and those from the sky have gone away…’ People began to die, and those who survived are dispersed… They went to settle in Alusiaka, in Palewasinke, in Yalimapo, in Kupali Yume… Later on, other families, having heard about *epa’kano*, came from far away in Suriname. But they arrived when everything had already stopped! (Collomb 2000: 151).

Drawing on shamanic thought influenced by the Jesuit evangelisation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the whole text has a strong spiritual and symbolic feature, but we consider it here as a narrative telling about a refounding of the Tyrewuyu world, from a ‘focal point’, the Mana River. After the demographic collapse and the political divisions caused by the European presence, the place where these miracles occurred would become the origin of the families that created the current villages all over the area. The different versions of the narrative, in French Guiana as well as in eastern Suriname, recall that these people from the Mana were the performers of *epa’kano*, even if some also came from more eastern villages (Iracoubo) to participate. After the failure, they left Ulemali Untɨ and they created the villages that we know today, or that one could know in the recent past, on the banks of the Mana and the Maroni rivers.

The narrative, thus, emphasises the legitimacy of these families, and establishes a strong opposition between them and the families who came from the west, metaphorically designated as having arrived “when everything had already failed”. As the elders explain today, these families are the ones who progressively came from what the Tyrewuju designate as *aretyry* ‘the west’ to join the Mana and the Maroni, during the second half of the nineteenth
century and throughout the twentieth century. These people from the west, settled in the villages with the other families and aggregated to them; but the narrative definitely refers to them as allochtonous, thereby establishing an implicit hierarchy. This assertion is corroborated by the naming system of the Kari'na in this area: the syntagm ‘Kari'na Tyrewuju’, claimed as a self-designation by the Kari'na of the Maroni, is thus opposed to ‘Murato’, the name given to people from the centre and the west of Suriname whom the Tyrewuju consider to be intermixed with the Maroons (Hoogbergen 1992). This occurs regardless of the phenotype since different degrees of interbreeding also occur among the Tyrewuju, but these are not considered as discriminative.

Even today the *epa'kano* narrative contributes towards legitimising the preeminent status claimed by these autochthonous families, as evidenced, for example, by the present political layout in the Amerindian village/district of Awala-Yalimapo. When one considers individual and familial strategies, alliances and alliance reversals, one can see that local politics often follows quite precisely not only the limits of the kinship networks, but also the division between the ‘autochthonous’ families and the families who “have come from Aretyry”. The ideological frame which shapes this political life stresses the preeminence claimed by the founding families (Collomb 2000).

One can make the same observation for some features of Tyrewuju social life throughout the twentieth century. For example, examining the migrations from and to Galibi, on the Surinamese bank of the Maroni river, Kloos (1971) showed that, for the period between 1923 and 1968, most of the long-term movements (with the exception of children’s trips for schooling in Paramaribo) took place within this small area around Galibi, most of them being the result of a residential shift after marriage. In contrast, mobility based on kinship and alliance remained extremely limited westwards, marriages with the members of Kari'na villages located beyond the west bank of the Maroni remained exceptional or, more precisely, only women came from Aretyry to marry Tyrewuju men on the Maroni, a social ‘hypergamy’ strategy, partly in contradiction with the traditional uxorilocal post-marital residence rule.

4 The Feeling of a Shared World

Until recently the political border was not understood by the Tyrewuju as a limit, but rather as an interface between two political and economic sets, French Guiana and Suriname, with which the Tyrewuju have played throughout their modern history. The frontiers which they knew were different: they were social and symbolic. They were, for example, those built through the *epa'kano* narrative, which gives the different groups a role and a place, and
defines a ‘self’ and an ‘other’. In accordance with what the narrative stresses, this area of the lower Mana/Maroni was, for the native families, and remains till today, a common world that straddles the political border, indisputably distinct from a western Kari'na (Murato) world. For the people of the Maroni area, those Kari'na villages located in the centre and west of Suriname form a geographically and socially distant set, as was already noticed by Peter Kloos in Galibi: “These Caribs call themselves telewuyu, a word that is often translated as ‘real Caribs’ and they feel proud to belong to the real, pure Caribs, and not to the mula'to of West Surinam who are of mixed Carib-Negro descent” (Kloos 1971: 84). With these ‘other’ Kari'na, relations were largely loose, and frequently of a shamanic nature, fraught with mutual aggressions, the memory of which people on both sides guard.

During the twentieth century, up to the 1970s, Tyrewuju individuals and families circulated within this area, for marriages (due to the uxorilocal rule, men were generally moving), or because of rivalries or disputes within the villages. Another motivation has been, of course, closely linked to the possibilities for work, but there was no clear incentive to settle for long on either the French or the Dutch side, rather the strategy was simply to take advantage of any opportunities alternately offered by one country or by the other. By looking at some examples of these moves, one observes both the shared feeling of being in a common world, a common area, and the strategic uses made of the Dutch/French border, for social or economic reasons, mainly by men seeking work:

A man, 67 years old. A long time ago, his family left the Maroni for the Cottica; later, his father married in French Guiana and crossed the Maroni. This man was born in Amanapotili (Mana). Then his family again crossed the river and settled in Galibi. Later, they moved to Kuwasi. He married there, then he came back to Galibi for four years, and later to Mana again. A few years after, he decided to go to Cayenne, where he stayed three years. Then the family went to Saint-Georges on the Brazilian border for two years. Finally, he came back again to Mana, where he lives now. Most of his relatives live in Galibi, but come sometimes to Mana to stay several months at his home, some others to Kourou where their children live and work.

A man, 60 years old; born in Galibi (son of a former ‘capitaine’). He came to Kourou to work for several years on the construction of the launching station. Then he came back to Galibi. He crossed again to French Guiana on the occasion of the war (his Kari'na wife was French) and settled close to his wife's relatives in Yalimapo. Most of his family stayed in Galibi and in Paramaribo; two sisters work in the Netherlands, he visited them several times.
Some major changes occurred within the Maroni area in the second part of the twentieth century that have progressively inscribed the political border between French Guiana and Suriname into the daily life of the Tyrewuju. In 1946, the French colony became a so-called Département, a French territorial subdivision, a change which meant a complete integration within the national institutions and the removal of the former colonial distinction between the categories ‘French citizens’ and ‘Indigenous people’. On becoming French citizens, the Amerindians soon underwent a policy of cultural and social integration. Acquiring the right to the welfare system introduced a new source of income for the families, with important consequences for Amerindian economies and social systems. In Suriname the process has been somewhat different, because that colony received a semi-autonomous status within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1954, and then became independent in 1975. However, as was the case in French Guiana, this resulted in a monolithic citizenship that did not take into account minorities and multicultural rights, and since the 1960s, the Tyrewuju have progressively become linked to the larger Surinamese society, through its legal system and economy (Kloos 1971).

In the meantime, the development of the educational system, both in French Guiana and in Suriname has contributed to instilling into the young Tyrewuju the principles, structures, and the symbols of distinct national cultures, memories, and identities. In each country access to primary education has been different. In Galibi, for example, the school was founded in 1925 in the village itself as an extension of missionary activities (Kloos ibid.); the children stayed with their families and received a more traditional Kari’na education. In French Guiana, from 1946 on, the children were sent to religious boarding schools and thus were separated from their families and without a traditional education for longer periods. However, in both countries, during the second half of the past century, the schools have come under the control of the national educational systems, and accordingly the contacts with the official languages have become more intense. In the meantime the contacts with Sranantongo and Guianese Creole, changed as the speakers’ attitudes towards these languages changed—speaking Dutch or French is generally seen as a key to social mobility.12

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12 In this regard, we need to point out that Sranantongo has a different relationship to the official language (Dutch) from that of Guianese Creole to French. In addition, in Surinamese society, Sranantongo also has an important symbolic function in interethnic communication, besides being a marker of class, educational level, and social position.
Since this time, both in French Guiana and in Suriname, the villagers have been gradually included in new political spaces, even if this has long remained marginal for most of them. So, as voters, the Tyrewuju became actors in the alliances established between the political parties in Suriname, and in the clientelistic political strategies that shaped the political life in French Guiana (Collomb 2001). This growing involvement in administrative and political institutions has had important consequences for linguistic practices, which are needed in order to deal with new social worlds.

To fit into this new context, the Kari’na continued to borrow nouns from creoles and official languages (lexical strategies), and extended this practice to other strategies, borrowing adjectives and verbs, grounded on morphosyntactic processes. For the adjectives, the invariable borrowed form is followed by the attributive suffix -me, in a structure with a copula, for example, from Sranantongo pina ‘be poor’ or ‘to suffer’ we get Kari’na pina-me man ‘s/he is miserable’, and from French Guianese Creole mègzolèt ‘skinny’, we get mègzolèt-me man ‘s/he is skinny’.

The strategies are different for verbs—depending on the creole. Two parallel structures have thus been constructed, one used by Tyrewuju on the left (Surinamese) bank of the Maroni (the invariable borrowed form suffixed by the verbalising morpheme -ma, which results in a verb), the other by those on the right bank (the borrowed form followed by the postposition pokó ‘occupied with’ and a copula). The new processes which are thus created are frequently used today, resulting in the formation of a new dialectal frontier, depending on the languages in contact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sranantongo</th>
<th>Guianese creole</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>begi-ma ‘to pray to [God]’</td>
<td>priyé pokó [copula] ‘to pray’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literally: to be occupied with prayer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This dialectal frontier coincides with the political border. In addition, this process is intensified by the bilingualism introduced by education, and especially in French Guiana by the decreasing knowledge of Creole caused by switching to French. Such ease in introducing new forms of ‘ready to wear’ constructions has important consequences of allowing, by the insertion of alien forms at will, 

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13 They also developed ‘ethnic’ organisations, which were also political tools, dealing specifically with national and international institutions: by 1982 the Association des Amérindiens de Guyane française (AAGF), had been created in French Guiana and some years later, in 1992, the Organisatie van Inheemsen in Suriname (OIS) in Suriname.

14 The copula, or linking verb, is ‘to be’ (defective forms) with intransitive meaning or ili ‘to give, to put’ with transitive meaning. Examples are from Alby and Renault-Lescure (2012).
new linguistic practices and the installation of code-mixing patterns. These phenomena are made more complex by their variations depending on individuals, their life histories, their mobility and language abilities, and in relation to speech situations and contexts. In the following we give some examples of interactions in French Guiana:

(a) *Excerpt from a family conversation recorded in Awala in 2000*

- Marie-France ene ne katu wi’take kokolone oya la’a itopa Daniel a’ta
  *If possible, I’ll see Marie-France in the morning, if Daniel has got nowhere to go*
  iyonpo mo’ko wati yalopo’san *chauffeurili*
  *because he is taking me, he is my driver*
- […] Odile ‘wa *télephoner pokol waitake*\textsuperscript{15} lolipo wikai […]
  *I said, I’ll try to phone to Odile*
  anukutipa wa auti *numéroli* […]
  *I don’t know her phone number at home*

(b) *Excerpt from a Council meeting recorded in Awala in 2003*

- A.[…] amikon *architecte* antikapipa matan mo’ko kinika’san
  *Some architects don’t make it, but he makes it*
  […] *signer pokol ilili o’wa man oluwa….*
  *You have to sign three…*
  oti…*les autres apparaitre pokol eipa nan\textsuperscript{16} otipoko….*
  *Er… the others are not appearing, why?*
  bien sûr que *pratiqueme wati* man *pratiqueme* anepolipa wa…[…]
  *Clearly, it is not practical, I think that it isn’t practical*

Another substantial change occurred in 1986, when the civil war broke out in Suriname between the government and the Ndyuka ‘Jungle Commandos’. Some Amerindians took part in the fighting, on the side of the government, and for this reason the Tyrewuju were threatened in their villages on the left bank of the Maroni. The civil war precipitated the arrival, on the French bank of the Maroni, of many people trying to escape the fighting: Ndyuka families near Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni, Amerindians in Awala-Yalimapo and in other Kari’na villages. This civil war period also broke the former economic and social balance between French Guiana and Suriname: from then on, the eco-

\textsuperscript{15} Future form.

\textsuperscript{16} *Eipa nan: negative form of the copula.*
nomic collapse of Suriname contrasted with the relative wealth of the French département, where the French Kari’na were benefiting from the welfare system. These events and their consequences have reinforced the reality of a political border on the Maroni, mainly strong-armed from the French territory. On the one hand, the French administration has increased its control over the arrival of immigrants, but on the other hand, the very existence of the border has opened the way for smuggling and for trafficking goods, for example, construction materials, rice, petrol, Haitian migrants, involving, among others, Amerindian people from villages in French Guiana.

The arrival of more than one thousand Kari’na from Suriname in French Guiana in 1986 and 1987, and their settlement in the French villages, has to be understood in this context. A massive migration, caused by the war, took place, a move that was completely different from the ancient habits of individual mobilities from one side to the other. Most of them came from the villages on the Surinamese bank of the Maroni, and they settled in the French Tyrewuju villages where they had kinship links. But the importance of this sudden population increase, apart from disturbing the classic social rules for creating residential units, is that it disrupted for several years to come, the economic, social, and political life of the villages to which they moved. In the villages that received them, these newcomers were called ‘refugees’ or ‘Surinamese’, a term applied to the Maroons who had crossed the Maroni en masse to settle near Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni (Piantoni 2009). Once the emotions stirred by the civil war lessened, the Kari’na refugees were faced by indifference. More than twenty years after their arrival, these families are still regarded in the French villages as ‘refugees’—providing the basis for a phonetic joke willingly given today in French by the Tyrewuju: réfugiés/refusés ‘refugees/refused’. Although the kinship links allow some day-to-day exchanges between individuals and family groups, the ‘Surinamese’ Kari’na are nonetheless also considered as ‘foreigners’, and they are, as such, seen as potential economic competitors with the ‘French’ Kari’na, or as social and political competitors, if one takes into account the family strategies and internal struggles in the villages.

However, if we consider this situation in the 1990s, by which time it had stabilised, it appears a little more complicated. Again, one can notice at work, at least partly, the logics of autochthony (which are also the logics of kinship): this category of ‘refugees’ or ‘Surinamese’ is still built on the basis of the belonging—or not belonging—to the Mana/Maroni families. Among the ‘Surinamese’ migrants, a few families, who came from Galibi and from other places in the lower Maroni (north of Albina)—villages which were part of the

17 This is more or less one quarter of the population.
classic ‘Tyrewuju common world’—have been fully integrated and have settled near the places where close relatives live. The other Surinamese families on the other hand, many of whom came from Bigiston (a large village that was in the heart of the conflict, south of Albina, which had been completely evacuated) have settled apart from the French villages, or have founded their own villages. These ‘Surinamese’ Kari’na who came to French Guiana are all the more Surinamese by not belonging to the Maroni family sets. And one can notice that the leaders of these families—the ‘true’ refugees and the true foreigners—are excluded de facto from the Amerindian political organisations, which are generally run by leaders from the Mana/Maroni. Nor do they, de facto, very often enjoy the participation of the Maroni families they invite to their mourning ceremonies.

The linguistic consequences of these new migrations still have to be investigated. But we can notice in the language practices of ‘Surinamese’ migrants in Awala-Yalimapo some interesting processes. Among the oldest Kari’na who arrived in French Guiana in 1986 with their nuclear families, the need to speak and to learn French doesn’t really exist. Furthermore, their language practices in Kari’na show no use of inserted words from Sranantongo or Dutch, due both to their determination not to be seen as ‘Surinamese’, and their need to be understood in a francophone environment. They really live in a Kari’na area, maintaining family relationships on both sides of the Maroni. Their language production is similar to that of their peers, either on the French bank or on the Surinamese bank, in a wish to speak the same language.18 The linguistic repertoires of younger migrants, on the other hand, often married to people from Awala-Yalimapo, show Guianese Creole—or even more so, French—insertions of nouns and adverbs,19 adjectives and verbs, in the typical code-mixing from French Guiana (Alby and Renault-Lescure 2012). An example is given in the following:

Awala, 2009, Interview with a woman born in Galibi, who arrived in French Guiana in 1986:

Iloke lo itopa wei, refuser poko sɨlɨi molokon
It is for this reason that I didn’t go, I refused all things
[. . .] jamais itopa wa [. . .] handicapéme man, da nokɨ ko nenetan
[. . .] I have never gone [. . .] He is handicapped, so who will watch over him?

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18 This wish is sometimes masked by ‘purist’ linguistic ideology.
19 Directly integrated, as nouns.
Without making explicit claims, what can be observed among these young migrants, as has been described by Rey and Avenne for African migrants in Italy, is perhaps already, an attempt “to rebuild a linguistic identity, based on the pattern of the host society” (Rey and Avenne 1998: 129). In these villages, one can see the ‘Surinamese’ Kari’na seeking integration in French Guiana, within the frame of a shared space between the east and west banks. Their search for a better standard of living in French Guiana, for a welfare that they could only observe from their former villages, cannot really console them with that important rupture with Suriname—an expression of the new border which they have now to deal with:

I live well here in Awala Yalimapo: it’s a nice village. How could I say it better? Life is pleasant here. This does not mean that I left Suriname, that I do not want any more to go to Suriname! No! On the contrary, I go to Suriname. I have a lot of family in Galibi, really. My parents live in Langamankondre [Galibi]. I have some family in the Netherlands, and also in Paramaribo... (Awala-Yalimapo, 2009, translation from Kari’na).

For them, the future is explicitly linked to a life plan for children, in which French is seen as the key determinant for success in school and for having access to paid employment:

For me, it's because of the war that I came in ‘86. I lived in Suriname, I saw that the educational system was not good. I took my children with me to come to French Guiana. I took my children because I wanted them to learn French to talk to White people. I come from Galibi and when I go back, I see the situation of the children there, and I say to my children that if they had not come to Awala, they would still go fishing and hunting to survive, they must absolutely learn and get into the school [...]. If I stayed in Galibi, I could work, but my son will grow up, he must have future opportunities (Awala-Yalimapo, 2009, translation from Kari’na).

6 Conclusion

For the Tyrewuju, those Kari’na settled between French and Dutch colonies, between Suriname and French Guiana, the political border has, for a long time, been rather less a limitation than a piece of the contextual data that accompanied a history grounded in a double process: on the one hand, an effort to define or to move ethnic boundaries which allow an identification of ‘self’ and
other', and, on the other hand, a strategy to manage and to take advantage of a political, cultural, and economic differential between the ‘colony of Cayenne’ and ‘Suriname’. We have shown that these representations, rooted in history, are still present today in Tyrewuju culture and social life, making much less interesting the binary categories associated with the ‘border’ (‘in/out’, ‘legal/illegal’). A better understanding comes from focusing one’s attention on the different levels at which these processes take place, and on the dynamics at work between the centre and the margins. In the meantime, if one now considers the situation on one side of the new ‘divide’, for example in French Guiana, one can observe that the social and political systems that grounded the ‘polities’ of the ancient Tyrewuju have been largely weakened by the increasing articulation of Kari’na society with the national (French) social, political and economic system. The elders still keep in mind the narratives and the rules which organised the Tyrewuju ‘ethnic set’ within the villages on the Maroni and the Mana, but the younger generation (50 per cent of the Amerindian village population is younger than 20 years old) is aiming for a greater place in Guianese society, and tends to build new forms of collective identification. The young political leaders today, who are no more the former Capitaines, have opened the way for other strategies: one is to take part in the Guianese political system, shedding their historical situation on the margins, and to play a role in the building of a forthcoming ‘Guianese nation’—a question in debate nowadays in French Guiana. Another strategy is to shake off the status of ‘minorities’ which is theirs in the French nation, and, using current political concepts, such as ‘indigenous people’ or ‘First Nation people’, built on the basis of universal values legitimated by international institutions (Collomb 2006).