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Training elites and structuring the medico-social sector in Guadeloupe (1967-1980). The role of the 1967 generation

Ferez Sylvain, Ruffié Sébastien et Villoing Gael

INTRODUCTION

In Guadeloupe, the medico-social sector was set in place from the 70s onwards, in a politico-union context which was marked by pro-independence claims. Although this context has been studied within the field of political and/or cultural history (Dumont, 2010; Sainton, 2012), the history of the development of the medico-social sector as a professional sector still remains unstudied. It should not be amalgamated with the development of the same sector in France, nor should it be written about without taking into consideration the issues linked to the training and professional commitment, but also the political and civic engagement, of a certain number of "builders" who became leading figures of the sector.

While this sector emerged within a particular context, which gave meaning to the commitment of these "builders", it also needed to compose with pre-existing structures coming from another time, the time of colonies. In 1928, Guadeloupe was hit by a cyclone. Some dignitaries took action in order to accomplish some "good deeds". In this way, Merry Élysée founded the "Milk drop", in order to care for orphans and feed those children who were in danger. This structure later became more strongly established with the instigation of nursery and day care services. In 1935, an Association for Child Protection (ACP) was created under the patronage of Bishop Genoud. Its first board of directors included "great creole families", two priests, two notaries, a merchant and an industrialist (Schneider, 2018, p. 25). The goal was unambiguous:

"To take under its patronage, upon request of the colony's Governor, the wards of Public Assistance, and, by request of either the magistrates, presidents and investigating judges, or request of the families, minors who present a difficult or worrying character. It will also take under its care children who are poor, neglected or those who were found. In a general manner, the Association will be able to provide help for any minor, orphan or not, in moral danger"[1].

It was under the auspices of the ACP that Saint-Jean Bosco was created, in 1944, under the direction of Father Belloc[2]. Under the cover of this "charitable religious" initiative, Schneider (2018) described a "correctional institution". It shut its doors in 1997, following incessant conflict with actors from the medico-social sector. On the 1st December 1949, a decree from the Prefect transformed the "Milk drop" into the Department House for Children (DHC), which became a public establishment for the department on the 20th March 1957.

After the war, Guadeloupe became a French department and the so-called assimilation law changed everything. Promulgated on the 19th March 1946, it came into effect on the 1st January 1948 (Constant and Daniel, 1997) and was evidence of the success of claims from communist and General Confederation of Labour (GCL) militants that had been pending for half a century (Mam Lam Fouck, 2006). During the interwar years, the idea that inequality went through an alignment consistent with the mainland became widespread (Dumont, 2010, pp. 55-87). In this way, the pioneers of the medico-social sector were all baby-boomers who were born in a French department, and not in a colony.

The expectations linked to this assimilation were strong. There was hope for a swift development of Social Security, which was to be a substitute for the many fraternal benefit

[1] Diocesan Archives of Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe.
[2] The association also managed Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, a centre for young girls, in 1957.

societies in place at the time (*Id*., p. 166)[3]. In actual fact, there was a hiatus between the law of 19th March and article 73 of the 1946 Constitution. The latter "allows two interpretations for its application, with on the one hand, the adaptation principle chosen by the executive, and on the other hand, the intention of those who initiated the text, which was to inscribe the "old colonies" within mainland common rights" (Lavenaire, 2017, p. 22). The promise of an alignment of social benefits with those of the mainland came up against certain resistance and only totally came to happen in 1996 (Dumont, 2010, p. 168).

The economic situation during the years 1950 to 1960 was harsh. Sugar factories closed one after the other (Lavenaire, 2017; Schnakenbourg, 2016). This sugar crisis took place within a period of demographic increase: the population went from 229 120 inhabitants in 1954 (Dumont, 2010, p. 167) to 312 724 in 1967 (Gama and Sainton, 2011, p. 43)[4]. This growth, notably from an urban perspective[5], constituted an "aggravating factor" for social difficulties (Leiris, 1955, p. 178). In 1955, although criminality was limited, there remained a "problem of morally abandoned youth" (*Id*., p. 39). In order to counter this, the child protection "social projects" instigated during colonial times prospered (*Id*., p. 94).

The years going from 1960 to 1970 were a "major turning point": "Not that the prior problems disappeared, but certain elements of modernity that were brutally introduced set askew the reference points of a population that was itself in full transformation" (Dumont, 2010, p. 187). A new actor came on the scene: "the youth"[6]. Exiting the sugar era and the strong dependence on mainland France led to fears concerning the erosion of a local identity associated to rural brotherhood (Butel, 2007, p. 481). With this as a background, the "autonomist tendency" which had appeared as early as the second half of the fifties, became stronger: "Already in those years, and even more so during the following decade, the preoccupation of maintaining the West Indian identity induced people to say yes to departmentalisation and no to assimilation" (*Id*., p. 482).

Certainly, West Indians "were integrated to the French Community since slavery was abolished in 1848" (Lavenaire, 2017, p. 52), unlike Algerian indigenous people. They had access to universal suffrage and political representation, for men only, since the Third Republic, which granted them access to citizenship, defined as "*a collection of rights and obligations which give individuals a formal legal identity*" (Turner, 1997, p. 4). However, in light of the effective exclusion from any of the more enviable social positions, the latter was rather seen as only a "skin-deep citizenship" (Lavenaire, 2017, p. 282).

At the heart of the fifties, Leiris was optimistic: "It thus only took one century for those "African savages" hailed by Victor Schœlcher to become citizens who are sufficiently armed culturally to successfully act as their own defenders" (1955, p. 175). He noted, however, just what a challenge it represented to ensure the professional training and orientation regarding the skills needed by Guadeloupe, and even more so while satisfying the legitimate aspiration "manifested by many coloured natives to take a larger part (by occupying places individually, preferably from the mainlanders) in managing local affairs" (*Id*., p. 177). It is because neither the formal equality linked to the legal access to citizenship, nor departmentalising, produced the equality that was hoped for that the situation grew tense in the sixties.

Beyond equality in the face of the law, Marshall (1950, 2009) distinguished two other dimensions to citizenship: a political one, linked to the right to participate in the exercise of power (by voting, by having duties), and a social one, relating to the access to economical and institutional resources (and notably to education). This triple vision of a civil, political and

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[3] In 1952, according to Leiris (1955, p. 57) 70 could still be counted, encompassing around 40 000 people.

[4] It was only from 1970 onwards that a demographic stability took place, allowed by a policy of incitation to immigrate to the mainland, which was led by public authorities in the 1960s (*Id*., p. 476).

[5] Pointe-à-Pitre went from 42 000 inhabitants in 1950 to close to 70 000 inhabitants in 1967 (Butel, 2007, p. 477).

[6] In 1961, 53% of the population was under 20 years old (Dumont, 2010, p. 193).

social citizenship brings to light the stakes linked to the secondary and higher training of the actors under study, and its consequences on the way in which the medico-social sector was structured over time. The access to higher education and the movements between Guadeloupe and the mainland participated, in the end, in a politicisation process of the actors which, after the events of May 1967, became ineluctable. To what extent was this access used as tool for meeting political ends? In what manner did it contribute to a *grammar of citizenship* (Cooper, 2014; Mkhize, 2015; Saada, 2017), located at the intersection of local and mainland social structures?

RESULTS

In order to answer these questions, we will use data that was collected between 2007 and 2020 from pioneers of the medico-social sector in Guadeloupe. During over ten years, relations based on trust and collaboration were woven with the interviewees. Spoken archives were created both from individual and group interviews. Six group interviews were carried out between November 2007 and January 2015[7], lasting 3 hours on average, five of which were entirely recorded and transcribed. In total, 18 actors were questioned in this context, in groups of 4 to 6 people[8]. In parallel, individual interviews (1 to 2 hours long), some of them repeated, were carried out with certain participants, but also with certain other important actors who were not present during the collective meetings. The analysis is more specifically based here on the stories of 12 participants (table 1), selected because of their central role in the structuring process in the 1970s (creation and/or direction of establishments and/or implication in the first professional and unionised organisations). These spoken sources were cross-referenced with the information gathered within several written sources: the personal archives of four interviewees (Émile Pulvar, Thierry Césarus, Emmanuel and Anne-Lise Corvo) as well as the archives of the DHC (1949-1990)[9].

	Year of birth	**Age in May 67**
Roberte Hamousin	1931	36
Emmanuel Ibéné	1939	28
Pierre Reinette	1944	23
Albert Flagie	1947	20
Émile Pulvard	1947	20
Éric Broussillon	1948	18
Emmanuel Corvo	1949	18
Anne-Rose Boisson	1950	17
Serge Urgin	1950	17
France-Lise Corvo	1951	16
Guy Saint-Martin	1952	15
Thierry Césarus	1954	13

Table 1: Actors selected for the analysis

Tipping the scales in the year 1967

It was in a particular context that, as much from an educational, economics and political perspective, the new decade began in Guadeloupe in 1960. Although schooling rates had strongly progressed, constituting a strong basis for a "long hoped for social ascension"

[7] One in 2007, two in 2008, one in 2009, one in 2014 and one in 2015.
[8] Seven actors participated several times (two, three or four times), eleven participated only once.
[9] Archives which the context of the survey allowed to save digitally.

(Lavenaire, 2017, p. 423), poverty remained very much present. In reality, the island was divided, particularly within urban zones. Pointe-à-Pitre was a city split in two: on "the boutique side", the bourgeoisie; on "the backyard side", those who had "fallen between the cracks" (Gama and Sainton, 2011, p. 56). On the political front, the left was also divided between the proponents of an autonomist line, supported by the Guadeloupean Communist Party (GCP), and those engaged in a fight for independence such as the National Organisation Group of Guadeloupe (NOGG) or the General Association of Guadeloupean Students (GAGS). The right was organised around the Gaullist party of the Union for the New Republic (UNR).

In 1967, several events took place. First, in March, in Basse-Terre, a "racist incident" triggered riots throughout the town (Vernhes and Bloch, 1970, pp. 18-19). Then, in May, in Pointe-à-Pitre, construction workers went on strike in a bid for a 2% increase of their salary. This claim was denied, with a certain level of arrogance. Over a thousand people convened in front of the Chamber of Commerce where the Prefect gave the order for the law enforcement agents to "shoot to free themselves" (*Id.*, p. 97). Tension escalated. The next day, a procession of a thousand high school students gathered (Gama and Sainton, 2011, p. 37). By the beginning of the afternoon, law enforcement agents began shooting passers-by. "The massacres" of 26th and 27th May 1967 in Pointe-à-Pitre brought the drama that had been unfolding in Guadeloupe since 1966 "to a head". The official death count was of seven people. On 14th March 1985, during the radio broadcast of the news on "RFO Guadeloupe" at midday, Georges Lemoine, State Secretary to the Overseas Departments and Territories (in 1985-1986), spontaneously evoked the number of 87 dead (*Id.,* p. 125).

The riots of May 67 constituted a founding event for a whole generation of Guadeloupians, and notably for those who, as high school or university students at the time, came back to construct the medico-social sector in the 1970s. Having grown up in the context of the 1950s and 1960s, the latter were just accessing political and civic awareness when these events took place. In this way, amongst our sample of "builders" of the medico-social sector, only Emmanuel Ibéné, the son of a prominent leader of the GCP (who is also a lawyer), born in 1939, was not part of this generation. The other interviewees were for the most part young high school students or in training at the time of the riots, on the brink of leaving to go and train on the mainland. For them, the events of 1967 constituted a "*brutal wake-up call*"[10] and a turning point in their way of seeing political engagement. This popular uprising allowed the idea of independence to germinate within the minds of a youth that, from then onwards, considered it as a viable option: "The young people, those who had experienced 67, had become advocates for independence" (Gama and Sainton, 2011, p. 231). In this context, "studying in the dominating country"[11] became a political stake.

During their training in the mainland, the participants to this study became, for the most part, active members of the GAGS and held important positions within it. This "*strongly politicised*" student association functioned as a "*sort of training centre for young expatriates with patriotic ideas*", according to Éric Broussillon, who became its president in 1969.Those in charge openly militated for the "*national independence of Guadeloupe*". The Bordeaux section, where the GAGS was created in 1938, was considered as being "*the most active and radical*". Pierre Reinette, a student of political sciences in Bordeaux in 1969, explained that "*most of the leaders of the GAGS, the most intense ones, the most well-known, the most engaged, were in Bordeaux*"[12], such as Jean Théodore, leader of the NOGG and at the origin of the organisation of the Union of Agricultural Labourers (UAL) in 1970, and of the General Union of Guadeloupian Workers (GUGW) in 1973. Some of the builders of the sector frequented the

[10] Broussillon, interview of 17/06/2020.
[11] Paraphrasing Patrick Chamoiseau, *Écrire en pays dominé* [Writing in a dominated country], Paris, Gallimard, 1997.
[12] Interview of March 2015.

Parisian section of the GAGS, which shared its premises with other West Indian associations[13] militating for independence. There were many exchanges with African student associations, notably with the Federation of Students from Black Africa in France, which supported the fight for independence in Algeria. Elected to the executive committee of the GAGS in 1970, Broussillon met these students during congresses which "*broadened his vision of the world*".

This involvement within militant student organisations was part, in this case, of a larger project. It related to the certainty that the fight against French colonialism should in part go through a "scientific fight", requiring a training effort (Vernhes and Bloch, 1970, p. 38). Once they were back in Guadeloupe, with their diplomas in hand, the participants pursued their careers as militants, in continuation of the student engagement within the GAGS. According to France-Lise Corvo, this generation had a "*mission*": "*raising awareness*" and "*emancipating*"[14] the Guadeloupean people.

In this context, the access to higher education for the generation of builders of the medico-social sector is the subject of contradictory perspectives depending on the point of view. Whereas it appears as a way to promote the assimilation process associated to departmentalisation from the point of view of national policies, this opportunity is, quite the opposite, part of a preparation project for the independence of Guadeloupe from the perspective of the students taking part in it. Thence, to what extent did access to higher education contribute to the denunciations of the colonial situation and/or strengthen the civic mind of those being colonised, by bringing closer the social structures of the colonised with those of the colonisers?

Training local specialised educators

At the end of the 1960s, it was on the basis of the 1945 ordinance concerning child protection that the existing structures functioned. Aspects relating to mental or physical deficiency were not really taken into account. Only the hospital took care of those matters[15]. The few structures present stemmed from the Bishopric, through the ACP: Saint-Jean Bosco[16] monitored and trained young "delinquent" boys to manual work and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce took care of the young girls. The DHC was subject to the Department Council's authority. Alongside these structures, there were also the services of the Ministry of Justice. On 12th April 1967, the Department Board of Health and Social Affairs (DBHSA) and the Department encouraged the creation of the first association under private law, the Department Association for Safekeeping Childhood and Adolescence (DASCA), which carried a project for a Medico-Professional Institute (MPI) at Moule. Presided by the juvenile judge of the Basse-Terre court, this initiative was evidence of an investment of dignitaries in social action. The only specialised educators present on the island were mainland civil servants from the Judicial Protection for Youth (JPY), including Michel Huguet. In order to counter this lack of personnel, the latter organised a first selection of local candidates to be sent to the mainland for training. Three people were thus recruited, following internships within local institutions. Anne-Rose Boisson recalled:

"*In order to become an educator, I had first contacted the DBHSA, who addressed me to the specialised educator assigned to probations for the juvenile court, Mr Huguet. So, at the time, he was the one who organised the competitive examinations, the technical and psycho-technical tests, the interviews, etc.* (…) *Finally, the internship took place here. We were two*

[13] Like the General Association of Students from Martinique (GASM) or the General Brotherhood of West-Indies Workers] (GBWIW).
[14] Interview of February 2015.
[15] In this way, every type of disability could be found in hospital: Down syndromes, hydrocephalics, etc. "*Hospitals served as a spillway for anything relating to psychological pathologies*", explained Flagie who carried out a social life internship there in 1967 before leaving to train as a specialised educator (group interview of 6/11/2008).
[16] Certified by the Ministry of Justice on 30/04/1952 and by the Department on 11/08/1961.

girls and one boy, the girls were integrated into Notre Dame de Grâce and the boy went to Saint-Jean Bosco"[17].

Boisson obtained funding from the DASCA in order to go and train on the mainland, in Marseilles. Upon her return, she had to take up a posting at the "Les Gommiers" MPI in Gourbeyre. When he went off to train in Dijon, Albert Flagie was, for his part, foreseen to take up the direction of the future "L'Ancre" MPI in Moule. This MPI was finally only created at the end of the 1980s. This was the first contingent of educators who left to be trained on the mainland but recruited locally.

In parallel, Ibéné came back from the mainland in 1970 and became commissioner in charge of parole at the JPY of Guadeloupe. After training at the National JPY School of Paris from 1966 to 1969, along with his first work experience in the Paris region, he was the first trained Guadeloupian specialised educator. When he arrived, he became secretary to the new Association for Educational Actions (AEA) presided by Gerty Archimède, a lawyer and leading figure of the GCP. In this context, Ibéné put in place the Educational Action in Open Situations (EAOS) within the juvenile court: "*When I arrived, the role of the commissioner in charge of probation was to take charge, in an open situation, of the young people addressed by the juvenile judge in the name of youth protection, but also of delinquent youths*"[18]. Whereas the court and his office for supervised education were in Basse Terre, he lived in Pointe-à-Pitre[19] and mainly monitored children from Grande Terre, notably from the Lauricisque neighbourhood: "*I found myself alone with 150 to 200 cases for all of Guadeloupe*".

Judge Valère, from the Martinique originally[20], put him in touch with Saint-Jean Bosco, which enjoyed a good reputation due to the "*exemplary professional training*" of the young men in its charge[21]. At the time, the only educational exchanges Ibéné was able to get took place with a Canadian priest, a specialised educator by training, who was trying to reform the educational practices in place at Saint-Jean Bosco: "*It had changed a little, but not that much, it still remained a question of recruitment depending on the educator's physical strength…*"[22]. This is how the idea of training specialised educators was born. The information gathered by Ibéné from the DBHSA dissuaded him from going any further. After being in contact with the few specialised educators of Martinique, a second path was explored, which was to facilitate the access to training on the mainland: "*Because it was unthinkable that a Guadeloupian who wanted to, should go to France, pass the entrance exam…succeed, then very well, but should they be unsuccessful they would find themselves over there in difficult conditions*". In 1971, along with Huguet, he made contact with Monsieur Jovino, director of the school for specialised educators in Dijon and national coordinator of the liaison committee for these schools. He offered to make a local selection in order to send over some young people to be trained on the mainland. Judge Valère freed him from certain tasks in order for him to focus on this.

A first competitive examination was organised in 1971. During the last phase, the choices made by the commission were formalised through the presence of a representative from the

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[17] Group interview of 16/01/2015.

[18] Interview of 9/06/2009.

[19] With no room at the courthouse, he was relocated to Pointe-à-Pitre within buildings of the DBHSA, at the site of the old "Milk drop".

[20] First West-Indian juvenile judge in Guadeloupe, and married to a Guadeloupian, judge Valère was presented as being "*pretty integrated*" locally (*Id.*).

[21] "*From a mechanical, woodworking, building, etc. perspective, people from the exterior snapped up those coming from Bosco*" (*Id.*).

[22] "*There was no way, even as an educator from the Ministry of Justice, I couldn't get in anywhere other than to look at the church organ!*" (*Id.*).

liaison committee of the schools[23]. In the first years, fifteen people were selected out of a hundred candidates. On a background of high unemployment rates, this competitive exam constituted a real opportunity for professional integration.

Involving the educator-director technicians in the new structures

The birth of a body of trained technicians, specialised educators and/or structure directors, modified relations within the sector. These new arrivals had to compose with the pre-existing structures, but also with the dignitaries who were involved with safekeeping endangered children and were likely to engage within the new medico-social sector. After the involvement of judge Valère within the DASCA in 1967, and then Gerty Archimède's as president of the AEA (which abutted the JPY) in 1971, service clubs (Rotary Club and Soroptimists) also engaged by solidarity with the most underprivileged[24]. Although the abandoned or delinquent youth had up until then been the main priority, intellectual and mental disabilities were from then onwards the focusing point of the projects of Medico-Educational or Professional Institutes (MEI/MPI) and of Medico-Psycho-Pedagogical Centres (MPPC). In 1970, the Soroptimists created the Association in Help of Childhood and Adolescence (AHCA), which carried a MPPC project that would be fulfilled in 1974. In between times, a first MPPC was set in place by the AEA in 1972. The dignitaries were in need of specialised educators to direct these centres. Upon her return from Marseilles, Boisson had to integrate the MPI of Gourbeyre:

"*In 1972, the institution for safekeeping* [of the DASCA] *was still not ready, so I was part, at the time, of the EAOS, the first institution to be truly structured here. So, from 1972 to 1976, when the institution for safekeeping opened, I began my career in open situations. Then I integrated the MPI, once it had opened, and at that point I was rocketed to the position of head of the education service of the MPI. Along with the director at the time, I worked to install and structure the MPI with some trained educators…*"[25].

This first MPI, which hosted many children, seemed to be at odds with the structures that Boisson frequented during training: "*It was a very big establishment whereas this was no longer the trend in France*"[26]. Beyond its size, the living rhythms imposed were more and more questioned. Flagie, after training in Dijon and completing his military service as a Volunteer for Technical Help (VTH) in Martinique, was for his part recruited by the EAOS in 1973: "*I found myself working with the juvenile judge within a service for educational action in open situations; it concerned young boys or young girls who were in danger, in difficulty, in short who had issues with their conduct and behaviour*"[27].

The arrival of the new educators modernised the medico-social action. Since 1972, the State had decided to control the proper functioning of the structures it subsidised, and imposed that the educators, but also the monitors and directors, be trained and certified. This situation was favourable for the new arrivals. At the ACP, in 1973, the Canadian priests created a Centre for Orientation and Education (COE): "*That is to say, we take the kids, we observe them before*

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[23] "*So we did a first interview, and then we did school-level tests…then we did interviews with an educator, with the psychologist, with the psychiatrist. Those who remained after these two first phases then had to carry out a "social life internship" during a week within an institution*" (*Id.*).

[24] For Flagie, they were composed of many béké [West Indies white descendants of the first settlers] who were working to "*redeem their sins*" (group interview of 24/04/2008).

[25] Group interview of 16/01/2015.

[26] "*The institution was meant to host a hundred children. With a distribution of 26-28 children per lodge, a multidisciplinary team (educators, psychologists, speech therapists, psycho-motor therapists, sports educators, etc.)* (…) *We anticipated a functioning of the establishment as a boarding school during the week. So there were children coming and going between the MPI and their house, from Monday to late Saturday morning, and then back again on the Monday*" (*Id.*).

[27] Flagie, group interview of 24/04/2008.

deciding what their orientation would be: it's a revolution because observation techniques are the basis for socio-educational intervention techniques"[28]. In 1974, as they came back from training, Clément Didon and Francis Farant were recruited at Saint-Jean Bosco, of which they renewed the functioning system. Serge Urgin, a member of the same academic year, returned in January 1976 (after an experience in Guyane), in order to direct the division of the EAOS in Basse-Terre, created in 1975. In 1982, he became director of the second MPI of the island, the "Espoir [Hope]" MPI in Pointe-à-Pitre, created in 1978.

Coming back from the mainland, most of the educators thus gained access to high-responsibility postings. After a few years at the EAOS, in a bid to relink with fieldwork, Flagie proposed a new project to the Soroptimists:

"*From June 1978 onwards, I found myself in the role of the director of a prevention club. And then, straight afterwards, in 1979, of two more. And after that, two more! In total, I ended up with a large team whose action spread to the entire urban belt of Pointe-à-Pitre*"[29].

We can thus measure the role played by the new educators in the creation of structures, often designed on their own impulse, and with funding from associations. Their training provided them with a certain amount of credit in the eyes of the DBHSA and of the service clubs. It also fed questions. They had to permanently adapt everything they had learned to the local situation. Confronted daily with the limits of the alignment on the mainland, and with the cultural gap between the latter and Guadeloupe[30], they progressively voiced the need to constitute local knowledge. In this way, and in the tense political context of the 1970s, their links with the pro-independent movement was unquestionable in the mind of authorities, who kept a close eye on them. It must be said that, in addition to the religious current that managed the first structures, two other ideological currents were in opposition within the sector: the ideology of the AEA actors, close to the GCP – a party considered by pro-independence militants, particularly since May 1967, as being pro-assimilation – and of the actors who were close to patriotic union forces, aiming for independence.

Union stakes underlying the structuring of the sector

Beyond their impact on the training path followed by the builders of the medico-social sector, the events of May 1967 produced a reconfiguration in the landscape of unions. The patriots became aware of the limits of a "truly urban phenomenon" and the importance of "organising the mass of workers and farmers" (Gama and Sainton, 2011, p. 234, p. 239). The UAL was founded at the end of 1970, the Union of Poor Farmers of Guadeloupe (UPFG) and the GUGW in 1973, at a time when the NOGG ended. New union forces also appeared within the sector of education and a patriotic current was organised within Christian organisations: "The limits of the union movement sensitive as soon as 1975, the extension of patriotic ideas, the closing of the gap between the ideas of different patriotic currents thus led, in 1978, to the creation of a new political organisation for National Liberation, the PULG (Popular Union for the Liberation of Guadeloupe)" (*Id.*, p. 235).

At the same time as they founded the medico-social sector, the builders studied here were active parties in this union reconfiguration. From then onwards, the opposition between supposed assimilationists and pro-independence militants had an effect on the structuring of the medico-social sector as soon as it was created. This was even more so due to the fact that it was

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[28] "*The COE was the beginning of our true entry into the modern world*" (*Id.*).

[29] "*I found that it lacked impact for the families and the kids, I wanted to go back to the streets; and as no one was offering I created a project for a prevention club, a team that took action in the streets*" (interview of January 2008).

[30] "*The question of delinquents grabbed my attention. I couldn't understand, there was a discrepancy between what I had learned at the training institute, the discourse of people here, and what I was seeing in the field*" (*Id.*).

a carbon copy of the mainland model, because of the "departmentalisation" context. A number of initiatives led by the first educators and directors were suspected de have been part of a pro-independent agenda. The latter experienced the power of the State over them as a form of "repression". Setting up the first structures thus led to conflicts between the actors involved, concerning the distance desired regarding the mainland example. The sector was finally organised around a tension between the search for autonomy, the inclusion of local specificities, and leaning on the national context in order to be recognised as equals, at the risk of an assimilation which eluded its particularities. The strong debates concerning the caring for disabled children, but also the training of the educators, were part of a wider socio-political framework.

The educators swiftly self-organised in order to gain recognition of their status and rights. In 1971, the collective convention number 66[31] was put into application for the first time within the services of the EAOS. In 1972, upon her return from the mainland, Boisson formed an alliance with Ibéné in order to initiate the Guadeloupean Association of Educators for Ill-Adapted Youths (GAEIAY): "*This association took care straight away of selecting educators and monitor educators in situ, it also managed the relations with the DBHSA, but also with Martinique for future training*"[32]. Rapidly, apart from the deviation away from the structures within the sector that were of a religious nature, the landscape of specialised educators divided depending on union affiliations. Urgin explained:

"*It didn't stop us from creating professional and ideological links, and maybe that is what we cannot find today, a desire to find ideas as a starting point. How to articulate your ideas with a professional approach which, I would say, would stray from the beaten track. Here we militate. We didn't have any weekends off and we met up at our parents' houses. Although it has to be said that there were fewer of us*"[33].

On one hand, in 1977, Boisson was one of the founders of the Workers' Union for Ill-adapted Youth (WUIAY), just like Flagie who was its secretary up until 1978. An offshoot of the GUGW, this union incarnated the patriotic move to which Broussillon belonged. Guy Saint-Martin, back from training in 1975, was its general secretary and Thierry Cesarus – a locally trained educator – was its deputy general secretary. On the other hand, Ibéné militated for General Confederation for Work in Guadeloupe (GCWG, close to the GCP), which was considered by the GUGW as an assimilationist union. Urgin reminisced: "*In 1977 the WUIAY was created and I integrated the GCWG just to keep safe from the WUIAY which had, well… for rather personal reasons!*"[34].

Throughout the 1970s, the structuring of the medico-social sector was thus affected by the socio-political tensions between militants for assimilation and those for independence. In this context, emerging questions concerning the benefits of local training rather than on the mainland became increasingly central. From 1976 onwards, a true "war" for training began. Those who hoped to set up local training were faced with those who wanted to go to the mainland at all costs in fear that the merit of their diploma would not be otherwise recognised. The State's logic of control tended to confirm these fears, since those who were locally trained rarely accessed higher posting positions.

DISCUSSION-CONCLUSION

[31] The collective convention of 15th March 1966 concerns the work of institutions and services for ill-adapted or disabled people and applies to establishments from the social and medico-social sectors throughout the national territory.

[32] Boisson, group interview of 16/01/2015.

[33] Group interview of 16/01/2015.

[34] *Id.*

Although the West Indians lawfully gained access to the status of "citizen" upon the abolition of slavery at the beginning of the Second Republic, equality between different citizens was purely formal up until the middle of the 20th century. In addition, the hopes that accompanied the end of the colony status were immense. In making Guadeloupe a department, the assimilation law brought the promise, aside from a civic and political citizenship (with the possibility of electing Guadeloupean representatives to the French Parliament), of a social citizenship, linked to global access to economical and institutional resources, and notably to education (Marshall & Bryan, 2009).

The generation born in the years prior, and after, 1946 grew up in a context that was marked by the development of access to secondary school, and then to higher education. However, it was also brought up with a sense that this promise had failed. From the 1960s onwards, this feeling grew stronger, as the fight for decolonisation led to the independence of Algeria and spread to South America. The growth of patriotic currents, their incapacity to group around an autonomist project, the break with assimilationist forces (whether they be on the side of the clergy, of the white bourgeoisie or of the GCP), but also the fear of a Gaullist State haunted by the Algerian trauma, all led to the insurrectional climate of 1967. The events of May 67 opened the path to a political configuration that left a mark throughout the 1970s.

It could be said that, in Guadeloupe, the builders of the medico-social sector belonged to the "generation of 67", that is to say the generation for which May 67 constitutes a *dating* event, in the sense that "*it hit in full force young people who were just gaining access to political awareness*" (Winock, 2011, p. 9). There is a "May 67 moment", and not a "May 68 moment" as is the case in mainland France (Zancarini-Fournel, 2008), where the "68 generation" played an important role for specialised educators, notably in the distancing from the "field of ill-adapted youth or teenager hood, and disability" inherited from the 1940s (Roca, 2004). The militant – and then professional – awareness and engagement of the actors of this study was constructed in this particular "moment" which figures a biographical marker (Dosse, 2005). May 67 appears as a moment when everything tilted, where questions were reframed in order to outline issues and elements of controversy that durably oriented the direction of their engagement, both in their training paths and their professional careers.

When it took place, departure for the mainland in order to train was inextricably linked to a political situation. It was the opportunity to invent a *grammar of citizenship* at the crossroads of local and mainland social structures (Cooper, 2014; Mkhize, 2015; Saada, 2017), by means of a cultural engagement and a militancy that were initially expressed within student associations, and then within politico-unionised structures. The access to higher education thus took on an equivocal signification. Conceived as being a training instrument in order to allow the alignment of Guadeloupe on mainland France for some, it appeared as an opportunity to feed a project of political independence to the "generation of 67". For the latter, the effects of training on the mainland were paradoxical and shed light on the singular stakes of "departmentalisation" in decolonisation times. On the one hand, this training sustained citizen grammar contesting colonial domination within the framework of the GAGS's activities. On the other hand, it produced cultural assimilation effects in relation to the years spent living on the mainland, but also because of the impact of the contents of the training received.

In this way, student stays on the mainland generated a double contradictory movement of protest and of incorporation of the coloniser's social structures. Upon their return to Guadeloupe, the intermediary elites who founded the medico-social sector continued to be worked by this double movement. Firstly because they had to make do with the pre-existing structures (and notably those establishments under management of the bishopric), but also collaborate with assimilationist spheres in order to found the first structures. Although they were naturally led to a politico-unionised engagement from the side of patriotic forces, they effectively had to consent to form an alliance with the dignitaries and with a certain number of

actors in favour of assimilation, whether these were elected communists or representatives of the service clubs.

However, this necessity of composing with the political "adversary" was added onto a professional questioning, linked to the feeling that the intellectual tools stemming from the training received on the mainland were not adapted to the situations encountered on the island. It was thus necessary to install a form of "local" training. Through a series of paradoxes, throughout the 1970s, it was therefore mainly actors who were close to the patriotic movement – and in favour of independence – who, in the name of the legitimacy and technical abilities that the State certification conferred them, built the medico-social sector within a logic of alignment on the mainland. Although the latter did not fully satisfy them, it allowed them to initiate a break with the "local" practices which reigned within the older generation of structures held by assimilationist forces, and notably by the Bishopric.

In Guadeloupe, the medico-social sector was thus organised within the framework offered by the issue of "departmentalisation", such as it emerged in the 1950s (Lavenaire, 2011)[35], that is to say in the tension between alignment and adaptations (allowed by the legal framework) or between the desire for autonomy and the strengthening of dependence (notably institutionally and economically). In this context, we can grasp the importance of the political background following May 67, and the durable stakes it outlined for the builders of the sector. How can the impact of the political opposition between assimilation (or dependence) and autonomy (or independence) on a professional sector dealing with "ill-adapted" and "disabled" people, as well as on its founders, be ignored? In itself, does the creation of this sector not oblige the "generation of 67" to replay the issues of "delay"[36], of "disability"[37], and of "dependence" or of "autonomy" on another field?

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[35] Lavenaire observed that this notion did not exist before the 1950s, when they only spoke of "assimilation", with reference to the law of 1946 (2017, p. 6).

[36] About the Guadeloupe's backwardness on the metropolis.

[37] In 1955, Leiris noted: "In fact, the input of the Blacks turned out to be rather considerable within regional life and will provide a testimony– amongst many others – of the sturdiness of these negro-African civilisations that were disabled [underlined by us], throughout their history, through the little development that techniques received there, in such a way that Occidentals generally did not estimate them to their just value" (1955, p. 41).

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