

# LAW NO. 775, OF 1949, AND THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FORMATION OF NURSES OF CEARÁ

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## A LEI N. 775, DE 1949, E AS CONSEQUÊNCIAS PARA A FORMAÇÃO DA ENFERMEIRA CEARENSE

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## LA LEY N.775, DE 1949, Y LAS CONSECUENCIAS PARA LA FORMACIÓN DE LA ENFERMERA CEARENSE

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Objective: analyze the consequences of Law No. 775, dated August 6, 1949, or a new order, in the training and practice of the Nurse in Ceará from 1949 to 1961. Method: historical study using a qualitative approach that “sees” the sources used through Cultural History. The instrument of data collection used was the interview. Results: it was inferred from written and oral sources from the São Vicente de Paulo Nursing School in Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil, that the institution of Nursing Assistant promoted a “new order” in the field of care and generated consequences in the formation and in the role played by the Nurse, and in their social recognition, identity and in the field of power. Conclusion: Law No. 775, of 1949, had as a consequence, for the Nurses’ practice, the transformation of the training and the object of these professionals to work not only in the state of Ceará but also throughout Brazil.

Descriptors: Decree-Law. Nursing History. Nursing Research.

*Objetivo: analisar as consequências da Lei n. 775, de 6 de agosto de 1949, ou nova ordem, na formação e prática da Enfermeira cearense nos anos de 1949 a 1961. Método: estudo histórico, com abordagem qualitativa, que “enxerga” as fontes utilizadas por meio da História Cultural. O instrumento de coleta de dados utilizado foi a entrevista. Resultados: depreendeu-se das fontes escritas e orais oriundas da Escola de Enfermagem São Vicente de Paulo de Fortaleza, Ceará, Brasil, que a instituição da profissão de Auxiliar de Enfermagem promoveu uma “nova ordem” no campo do cuidado e gerou consequências na formação e na função exercida pela Enfermeira, seu reconhecimento social, identitário e no campo de poder. Conclusão: a Lei n. 775, de 1949, teve como consequência, para a prática da Enfermeira, a transformação da formação e do objeto de atuação dessa profissional não apenas no estado do Ceará como também em todo o Brasil.*

Descritores: Decreto-Lei. História da Enfermagem. Pesquisa em Enfermagem.

*Objetivo: analizar las consecuencias de la Ley n. 775, de 6 de agosto de 1949, o nuevo orden, en la formación y práctica de la Enfermera cearense en los años de 1949 a 1961. Método: estudio histórico, con abordaje cualitativo, que “ve” las fuentes utilizadas por medio de la Historia Cultural. El instrumento utilizado para recolectar los datos, fue la entrevista. Resultados: se dedujo a través de fuentes escritas y orales oriundas de la Escuela de Enfermería São Vicente de Paulo de Fortaleza, Ceará, Brasil, que el establecimiento de la profesión de Auxiliar de Enfermería*

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*promovió un “nuevo orden” en el campo del cuidado y generó consecuencias en la formación y en la función ejercida por la Enfermera, su reconocimiento social, identidad y en el campo de poder. Conclusión: a Ley n. 775, de 1949, tuvo como consecuencia, para la práctica de la Enfermera, la transformación de la formación y del objeto de actuación de esta profesional no solo en Ceará sino también en todo Brasil.*

*Descriptor: Decreto-Ley. Historia de la Enfermería. Investigación en Enfermería.*

## Introduction

Law No. 775, dated August 6, 1949, imposes a “new order”<sup>(1)</sup> at the time it creates another occupational category in nursing, the Nursing Assistant. This professional officially works in the area of health along with the “graduate” Nurses, especially in the hospital context, as well as to share with them (Nurses) the same training space and field of action. In these terms, Law No. 775, of August 6, 1949, is a turning point in the Nursing profession, as it legalizes the formative split of nursing care between two categories of the profession.

This legalization implies a diversity of consequences that are evidenced throughout this article. One of them is that this care is practically “ceded” gradually and, afterwards, it is practically “restricted” to the Nursing Assistants, while Nurses are predominantly responsible for supervising this function.

This fact is reinforced over the years, especially due to the structural conditions of the Brazilian and Ceará markets, in this case, and the shortage of qualified personnel to perform the care. The question of labor in the profession in the 1940s was beginning to generate a serious problem for the Union and for states to respond to the growing demands for nursing care, since at that time there were about 2,600 Nurses working in the country, a small number in relation to the national population<sup>(2)</sup>. Epidemics were also a reason and contributed to this situation, since they were among the priorities of the health agenda in Brazil in this period<sup>(3)</sup>.

Other factors also contributed to the promulgation of the aforementioned law or the “new order”, including: influence of other countries, especially England, on the conception

of work and its relations and segmentations, in this case, the social division of Nursing work, in addition to the alliance that became stronger between the State and the Church in Brazil, notably favoring the massive presence of congregations and their religionists in hospitals and Santos Casas.

Thus, it is considered that the proposed research is innovative in nature, since, even researching themes from the recent past, it does so on a more comprehensive basis and from other sources of discoveries capable of evidencing other facts and understandings for the knowledge regarding the consequences of Law No. 775, of 1949, for Nurses’ profession. The strong and official split in the training and, consequently, in the provision of care – the greater function and the essence of the profession – that happens to be performed, above all, by the Nursing Assistants, is one of the main consequences of this new rule.

The interest in this field of research arose with the immersion of researchers in the development of the Center for Documentation, Information, History and Memory of Nursing in Ceará (NUDIHME<sup>n</sup>)<sup>(4)</sup>, which has contributed to the development of studies on nursing in Ceará. Therefore, the research is justified by bringing nursing training to the surface and to understand what was implied in the conduct of its vocational trajectory. It is understood that the history of this profession does not follow a linear course, but is the outcome of results, mostly conflicting, involving a game of forces and powers in which the winner (almost always) is the dominating group.

The research also brings innovation, by contributing to fill gaps in this subject, such as research in the field of scientific production in the area of nursing education, focusing on the repercussions of Law No. 775, of 1949, for the Nursing profession. The study of the state of the art of this object of investigation allowed obtaining important findings<sup>(5)</sup>.

This study aims to analyze the consequences of Law No. 775, of August 6, 1949, in the formation and practice of nurses of Ceará, from 1949 to 1961.

## Method

This is a historical study of a qualitative nature. Cultural History (CH) was chosen as a theoretical-methodological framework to develop this research, especially focusing on the relationship between CH and the sources and their treatment. The CH was essential for understanding the object studied, since the epistemological question of this historical position would be centered in the concept of culture as object of investigation, in the study of the social representations, and of the cultural practices and the process of appropriation, central foundations for the understanding of the professionalization at the time of the institution of Law No. 775, 1949. The theoretical anchorage of this choice is the studies<sup>(6-7)</sup> that clarify the epistemological changes of this historiographic current. In the process of analysis, the CH perspective was also developed<sup>(8)</sup>. The other theorists used in the discussion of this article repeatedly tell the history of nursing and, directly or indirectly, focus on the circumstances of officialization of said law<sup>(2)</sup>.

The São Vicente de Paulo School of Nursing (EESVP) in Ceará, Brazil, was the empirical field of this study. It is in the educational institutions that the encounter of diverse cultures takes place, because they are environments in which the individual has the opportunity to express his lived culture<sup>(9)</sup>. Faced with the choices and orientations about CH, it was decided to focus the lens of this article on the relationship

between CH and sources and their treatment. Once these considerations have been made, and in this direction, historical documentary research is prioritized methodologically. Consequently, the study is based on the analysis of written<sup>(5-8)</sup> and oral<sup>(10)</sup> documentary sources.

In order to instrumentalize this research methodologically, sources from the EESVP were used, including the teaching program of the nurse from Ceará, from 1953 to 1963, which was in compliance with Law No. 775, of 1949, and the teaching program of Nursing Assistants, from 1954-1961, for being the first teaching program of this category in said school.

It was understood that these written documents are monuments<sup>(11)</sup>. The analysis of the written documents was guided by a study on the historiographic operation in regional themes<sup>(8)</sup>. The path taken to develop the research demanded that oral sources be allied to written sources, in order to complement the information and, above all, to ratify them when necessary. Thus, the recorded word was taken from four EESVP female nurses who had direct insertion not only in the Nurses' training course, but especially in the Nursing Assistants' course and/or program in Fortaleza (CE).

In order to preserve the identity of the teachers interviewed, their names were replaced by the letter N for Nurse (basic training of the interviewees), followed by the cardinal numeral of the order in which the first contact with the interviewees occurred. Exemplifying: N1 (Nurse and first contact with the researcher), N2 (Nurse and second contact with the researcher) and so forth. After the collection of the sound document that was recorded and authorized by the teachers, the material collected was analyzed, according to the guidance contained in Manual and Oral History<sup>(12)</sup>.

The study, extracted from a doctoral thesis entitled *Training and Practice of Nurses of Ceará: Implications and Consequences of the Implantation of Law No. 775 of 1949*, defended at the Universidade Estadual do Ceará in 2017, was approved by the Ethics and Research Committee

of the State University of Ceará, by Opinion No. 1,509,938.

## Results and discussion

As a way of expressing the results and the discussion of this study, it is initially presented the comparison of the teaching programs proposed by the “new order” for Nurses and Nursing Assistants of Ceará, especially the nurses’ programs from 1953 to 1963 and Nursing Assistants of the EESVP from 1954 to 1961. It is

interesting to point out in this research that the decision is made to focus the discussions in the disciplines/units that had their stages linked to hospital care. For this, the complete curriculum of the two training proposals is presented in Chart 1. The option for this focus of discussion and analysis is strengthened by the fact that they are typical contents of the training for Nurses and, above all, helpers within the hospitals, since the “new order” makes it clear that this “new category”, in the case of Nursing Assistants, would meet the demands of this field.

**Chart 1** – Theoretical-practical contents of the teaching program of the Nurses (1953-1963), expressed in the first, second and third series, and Nursing Assistants (1954-1961). São Vicente de Paulo Nursing School. Fortaleza, Ceará, Brasil

(continued)

First Series/year - EESVP (1953-1963)	Second Series/year - EESVP (1953-1963)	Third series/year - EESVP (1953-1963)	Teaching Program of Nursing Assistants of the EESVP (1954-1961)
Nursing technique (430 h)	-	-	Nursing technique
Bandage technique (30 h)	-	-	Bandage technique
Anatomy and Physiology (180 h)	-	-	Anatomy
Individual Hygiene (30 h)	-	-	Hygiene and its relation with health
Ethics/Professional Ethics (30 h)	-	Ethics (30 h) Deontology (50 h)	Notions of ethics
Nursing History (30 h)	-	-	Nursing History
-	Pediatrics (90 h)	Pediatric Nursing (60 h)	Pediatric Nursing
Nutrition and Dietetics (30 h)	Children’s Dietetics (30 h) Diet therapy (40 h)	-	Food and its preparation
Sanitation (30 h)	Nursing in communicable diseases (70 h) Communicable diseases (30 h)	Public Health Nursing (80 h) Hygiene and public health (80 h)	Nursing and Public Health
-	Obstetric Nursing (80 h)	Obstetric Nursing (80 h)	Maternal and Child Nursing
-	-	-	
-	-	Hospital organization and administration (70 h)	
-	-	Nursing Otorhinolaryngology (30 h)	
-	-	Obstetrics (70 h)	
-	-	Social service (50 h)	
-	Surgical pathology nursing (90 h)	-	
Drugs and solutions (30 h)	-	-	
Psychology (20 h)	-	-	
General pathology (80 h)	-	-	
Pharmacology and Therapeutics (180 h)	-	-	
Chemistry and Biochemistry (80 h)	-	-	
Sociology (80 h)	-	-	
Microbiology and parasitology (70 h)	-	-	

**Chart 1** – Theoretical-practical contents of the teaching program of the Nurses (1953-1963), expressed in the first, second and third series, and Nursing Assistants (1954-1961). São Vicente de Paulo Nursing School. Fortaleza, Ceará, Brasil (conclusion)

First Series/year - EESVP (1953-1963)	Second Series/year - EESVP (1953-1963)	Third series/year - EESVP (1953-1963)	Teaching Program of Nursing Assistants of the EESVP (1954-1961)
Massage (30 h)	-	-	
Pedagogy (30 h)	-	-	
-	Medical Pathology (90 h)	-	
-	Surgical Pathology (90 h)	-	
-	Childcare (70 h)	-	
-	Physiology (70 h)	Nursing in Tisiology (70 h)	
-	Nursing in Emergency Relief (50 h)	-	
-	Nursing in Gynecology (30 h) and Nursing in Urology (30 h)	-	
-	-	Dermatology and Venereology (60 h)	
-	Operations room (90 h)	-	
-	Gynecology (30 h) and urology (30 h)	-	
-	Emergency Relief (50 h)	-	
-	Medical Pathology Nursing (90 h)	-	
-	-	Technical review (70 h)	
-	-	Otorhinolaryngology (20 h)	
-	-	Orthopedic Nursing (70 h) Orthopedic Clinic (45 h)	
-	-	Ophthalmology (30 h) Nursing in Ophthalmology (20 h) Ophthalmology (30 h)	
-	-	Psychiatric Nursing (60 h) Psychiatry (20 h)	Psychiatric Nursing
-	-	-	Elementary Nursing
-	-	-	Introduction to Nursing
-	-	-	Hospital Economics
Total workload: 1.390 h	Total workload: 1070 h	Total workload: 1.095 h	Total working time: 399 h

Source: Created by the authors.

As can be seen in Chart 1, nine disciplines were taught to the Nursing Assistants from Ceará. Of these, eight – Nursing Technique, Bandage Technique, anatomy, hygiene and its relationship with health, pediatric nursing, maternal and child nursing, psychiatric nursing, and food and their preparation – presented contents for hospital assistance and were also taught to the Nurses of EESVP. Of these eight similar disciplines in the two programs analyzed, five – Nursing Technique, Bandage Technique, anatomy, hygiene and their relationship with health, and food and their preparation – appear

in the first series of the course for Nurse Training. The other two appear in the second and third series with the Pediatrics denomination (second series) and Pediatric Nursing and Psychiatric Nursing (Third Series) and Obstetric Nursing (Second and Third Series).

The subjects Nursing Technique and Technique of Bandage maintain the same nomenclature in the first series/year of the Nurses and of the program of education of the Nursing Assistants, as well as Psychiatric Nursing, which appears in the third series of Nurses. Other subjects, however, emerge with different

terminologies – although it is believed that their contents were similar.

There is clear evidence of passing on these contents or adapting this basic set of Nurses' materials to train the assistants, although it is understood that the training proposal of these assistants was more elementary. Thus, in general, the teaching programs of the EESVP, demonstrated and presented, show the modeling of nursing education to meet the hospital needs that emerge in the state. On the other hand, the teaching of the Assistants presents subjects that bring similar or approximate nomenclatures of the course of Nurses.

When Chart 1 is observed, it can be seen that there is no specific time allocation by discipline in the curricular matrix of the Nursing Assistants of the EESVP (1954-1961). However, it is important to emphasize that only one of the disciplines related to the Nurses' program was enough to overcome the total workload of the theoretical content proposed for the Nursing Assistants, in this case, the Nursing Technical discipline, for example. This seems to be a stance taken by the EESVP Nurses to somehow establish the distance between the two professions, at least in the field of care training. It is recalled that the Brazilian and Ceará Nurses, under the 1949 law, had one more year of training than the Nursing Assistants, a fact that necessarily implied a greater workload in this teaching program. However, with regard to the content of the subjects analyzed, it can be said that the program, although without clear delimitation, treated practically the same contents, as evidenced by the interviewed Nurses, but the degree of deepening was differentiated. Teacher N1 agrees on this issue:

*We raised the theoretical level higher for the Nurses. There were more readings and written material that existed at the time to substantiate the part of theoretical teaching for Nurses. We decreased the number of classes and content for the Assistants. Thus, when the same subject of discipline that would have hospital assistance was offered to the Nurses and Nursing Assistants of the EESVP, we accentuated the theoretical discussion mostly to the Nurses, once it was recognized that the Nursing Assistants only needed to learn the technique. (N1).*

Based on N1's speech, it is observed that the level of education, schooling and complexity of

contents for learning, especially theoretical, were the parameter adopted or remembered by the interviewees to establish the distance between what to teach and also and especially where to teach the Nurses and the Nursing Assistants. It is recalled that the level of schooling of the Nursing Assistants was elementary, since they only had the elementary school. This directly implies the ability to grasp content that would only be necessary in its relation to the assistance to be rendered. N3 confirms this understanding:

*Now there was one thing. The Helpers were half-illiterate. We could not demand much. Otherwise, they did not follow the course. (N3).*

Thus, there was a consensus among the four teachers interviewed about the fact that the field of education or the boundaries between Nurses and Nursing Assistants were systematized points, clearly recognized as programs differentiated by them, as teachers.

The contradictions, however, were between systematizing a teaching program and giving classes to Nurses and Nursing Assistants, professionals differentiated by legal devices (new order) and, due to their formal schooling, did not constitute an easy task for that time (1949 to 1961). This is because the resources for the maintenance of these two courses in the EESVP were scarce. On this condition of systematizing what to teach and how far to teach it, it is mainly observed that this limit or separation also contained subjective components related to the perception of each teacher.

It is believed that the condition advertised does not seem to have been so simple for the teachers of the time. Moreover, the attributions of these strata were not clearly defined in 1949-1961, especially because of the precocious history of the profession in the country. However, this does not invalidate to say that there was a certain concern of the nurses pioneers of this profession in the country referring to this issue (Nurse X Auxiliary) especially in the Rio-São Paulo axis. Other authors<sup>(2)</sup> demonstrate this concern, when discussing the circumstances that led to the inclusion of the Nursing Assistant in Law No. 775/49. With the purpose of discussing and



deliberating on the problems of Brazilian Nursing, the director of the Nursing School D. Anna Neri, Dr. Lays Netto dos Reys, from 1943 until 1946, took the initiative to bring together the directors of nursing schools in operation. One of the most controversial issues was precisely the question of the insufficiency of nursing personnel and the alternatives to increase this number without any disturbance to the quality of nursing training. These subjects were discussed between the years 1944 to 1946.

In view of these issues, the Registered Nurses decided to propose to the Brazilian Association of Graduated Nurses to take charge of the work on the proposal and to follow closely the text of the law under study. This, in particular, has a direct impact on the expressed distinctions of what to teach to the Nurses and Nursing Assistants. Obviously, these discussions reached schools throughout Brazil.

However, authors<sup>(13)</sup> argue that the disciplines taught to Nursing Assistants in the most diverse courses in the country were insufficient to convey the information they really needed, since the Assistants had been performing activities that were more complex than those foreseen in teaching and, most of the time, they performed them without the guidance of the Nurses. This demonstrates, to a certain extent, that the functions that the Nursing Assistants were developing in the hospital field were approximate or similar to those performed by the Nurses and, to a certain extent, the proposal thought by the larger picture of the Brazilian Nursing as a way to guarantee the distance between the two professions was not meeting expectations.

Thus, the path of Nurse's professionalization with the "new order" needed to be redirected or reconstructed in a slow comparison that involved a long journey, other struggles and some achievements in this search for professionalization. More concrete results were achieved only in the early 1960s, with the higher education reform and the entrance of Nursing as a university course. It was strengthened, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, especially with the creation and implementation of the Federal Nursing Council

(Law No. 5,905, 1973), the creation of Nursing Deontology codes (Resolution COFEN No. 9, 1975), the Ethical Process (Resolution COFEN No. 10, 1975) and Transgressions and Penalties (Resolution CONFEN No. 19, 1975) and, later, the Professional Practice Law (Law No. 7,498, 1986).

It is important to remember that the scenario of the time had a limited contingent of Nurses and more prevalent presence of Nursing Assistants. This, in a way, led to the adoption of the specific duties of the nurses, based on training and the basis for its realization, as well as appropriation by the lack of professionals. In relation to this question, one of the nurses interviewed, teacher N1, who for a long time (1965 to 1976) was Coordinator of the EESVP Nursing Assistant course, and also teacher N4, refer:

*Since they shared the same space in the hospital, the Nurses began to demarcate some spaces of action. In general, the female nurses performed the functions they considered more administrative, such as observation and reports. It was hard for a trained Nurse to pick up the heavy one. The first Registered Nurses in Ceará didn't want to do certain things. They were very important because they were Ana Neri Nurses. So the Helper did everything, especially the heaviest activities in the unit and with the patients. (N1).*

*What was interesting at the time is that they [Nursing Assistants] knew which space to occupy. It was very difficult for a female nurse to bathe in the bed, just as we had nursing assistant students who even cleaned the floor. (N4).*

Other teachers interviewed bring the dimension of internal conflicts, not only in the division of tasks in the hospital field, but in other spaces of coexistence, when they point out the following:

*The first nurses trained by the school did not want to perform certain things, such as urine extraction, patient cleanliness, and bathing in the bed, for example. They thought they were superior to the Auxiliaries, because they were Ana Neri Nurses. (N1).*

This line refers to the observation of a position, observed in the field of practice that consciously or unconsciously distances the nurses of Ceará from some care with the patient. In a gradual way, it is understood that it exempts itself from many other types of care, to a certain extent based on the greater increase in the contingent of Nursing Assistants in the labor market, especially the

hospital, to the detriment of the growing number of Nurses trained, but on a much smaller scale.

It is also understood that the removal of the nurses from the care provided to the patient configures a way of seeking differentiation between their functions and those of the Assistant. The context also contributed to their assuming this position, which placed them ever more distant from care. Even in the 1980s, they already pointed out that this was a place (direct assistance) that was never really occupied by these professionals<sup>(14)</sup>. This, to a certain extent, strengthens what arises as a consequence of the implantation of the “new order”.

This search of the Nurses for the differentiation in small spaces, especially in the care given in the hospital field, ends up bringing them closer to the supervision and administration activities (detailed below), which will be strengthened in the profession over time. Thus, the object of nursing (assistance and care) fragments between manual and intellectual, and the latter is the main task of Nurses. In this sense, a study<sup>(15)</sup> that reflects on nursing practice contributes to this discussion, when it is pointed out that, in the late 1970s, this distance from direct care only worsened: “The functions performed by the nurse characterize, therefore, an overvaluation of the administrative and supervisory aspects of auxiliary personnel, to the detriment of the technical assistance aspects, although they emphasize expertise and evidence”<sup>(15:104)</sup>. Another important factor inherent in this issue was the Nurses’ search for space, recognition and power.

This whole movement had, as a consequence, a consonant study<sup>(16)</sup> that critically analyzes professional nursing, in which, 24 years after the new order, the Nurses, aware of their status and high level of education, no longer cared for the sick. What would have happened to the institutionalization of these roles? – questions the author. The answer to this question requires understanding that,

[...] nursing care is the *raison d’être* of nursing as a whole, but achievement requires a series of activities that are not specific to nursing, although it is geared towards it. This fact is responsible, I think, for the

problematic of the status-role of the Nurse, in whose roots lie the direct care vs. indirect care dilemma<sup>(16:86)</sup>.

Having said this, it is still stated that the circumstances of the officialization of the Nursing Assistant course in Brazil demanded from Nurses other alternatives that could guarantee the distinctions between these two professional categories, especially in Ceará, since the EESVP employed symbols or object representations to remedy this confusion, including different uniforms used by Auxiliary students over those of Nurses. With regard to this initiative, teachers N1, N2 and N3 remember:

*The patient differentiated the Nurses from the Nursing Assistants by the uniform. (N1).*

*We had the most elegant uniform for Nurses. (N3).*

*We innovate in this matter. A different outfit was thought out, a white cream color for the Nursing Assistant. (N2).*

The first garment used by the Auxiliaries in the state of Ceará was a cream-colored fabric, later becoming light blue. This, from the point of view of the EESVP Nurses, could facilitate the correlation of the image of the Nursing Assistants as distinct figures of the Nurses. It is understood that, at the time, for reasons already explained, it was not easy to distinguish two distinct members within the profession, hence the recognition of a single image and identification of a single profession or professional. The adherence to this type of uniform reflects the elaboration of a group of ideals-images constructed by the Nurses of Ceará, in order to establish distinctions between the Nurses and the Nursing Assistants in the state.

Thus, it should be pointed out that there were two competing images in the period of the new order in Ceará - the Nurse and the Nursing Assistant - that had a nexus with the practice of caring, which leads to consider a certain approximation, linked to the public, by actions which were mixed. This necessarily implied confusing situations between the two professions, even because there was no professional practice legislation until 1961.

This image projection will pervade the long history of the profession route, setting a single



image in the eyes of the patient and consequently society. After 24 years of the implementation of the “new order”, and already under the presence of legalization of the professional exercise by Decree No. 50,387 of 1961, it was still stated that, for the patient, especially the elementary school, there were few opportunities to differentiate the nurses from the nursing assistants<sup>(17)</sup>.

This understanding is also shared by researchers<sup>(17)</sup>, in a study carried out in 2007, when they identified that the ambiguity of the professional denomination still remained 58 years after the new order, inducing the understanding that every woman wearing a white uniform and walked the corridors of hospitals was identified as a Nurse. Thus, as the image refers to professional identity, the reformulations in the nursing teaching rules or the acceptance of the new order in Ceará meant a walk towards a new professional reconfiguration of the EESVP Nurse. And the practical field made this distinction enormously difficult, for reasons already explained.

It is understood that, in the period 1954-1961, the Nursing of Ceará unconsciously sought alternatives of social recognition as a way of guaranteeing an identity and professional design of the profession, crystallizing a heterogeneous and fragmented organization of the profession, distancing itself from the function by which it is recognized: assistance, care. It is perceived that the “new order” brought this consequence to the profession (one of) and had implications that still have repercussions in the recent times of these professionals' work.

Once these considerations have been made, the only limitation of the study is the participation of only four nurses interviewed. However, it is understood that the intense experience of the Nurses of the study in the process of implementation of the course of Ceará facilitated the collection of information that allowed the achievement of the proposed objective.

## Conclusion

The article maintains that the embryonic situation of the training and practice of the nurses of Ceará, during the period of 1949-1961, establishes a crisis in the profession, as the two professions begin to have the same object of work, in this case care. Nurses from Ceará, especially in the hospital field, are looking for strategies to distance themselves from the Nursing Assistant, moving away from direct care and increasingly approaching administration and supervision activities. Object representations are also used; in this case, the institution of uniforms by the EESVP, in an attempt to differentiate the Nursing Assistant, adopted a position that was sinuous and could not define the fields and the differences, at the time. This condition establishes, within the profession, the recognition of a single image and the identification of a single profession or professional, especially by the patient. The projection of a single image directly implies the identity of the Nurses, as well as in their spaces of practice and power.

Therefore, in the face of the results obtained, a new starting point is also reached, when it is suggested that future studies return to the theme, especially with regard to the view that the existence of the Nursing Assistant made possible, due exclusively to the world's demands even if this is not the real justification. With the promulgation of Law No. 775, of 1949, not only the training, but also the object of action of the Nurses in Brazil and, consequently, in Ceará has also been transformed.

## Collaborations

1. conception, design, analysis and interpretation of data: Roberlandia Evangelista;
2. writing of the article and relevant critical review of the intellectual content: Silvia Maria Nóbrega-Therrien;
3. final approval of the version to be published: Carlos Romualdo de Carvalho e Araújo.

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