

**THE MARQUIS OF POMBAL REFORMS IN ACCOUNTING AND TODAY'S
IMPLICATIONS**

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Área temática: E) História da Contabilidade

Palavras chave: Accounting; Accounting history; Certified Public Accountant; Marquis of Pombal; Portugal.

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Abstract

The Marquis of Pombal introduced many reforms across the country. For the first time in Portugal, there was a recognition of the importance of accounting for business and for the country's interests. Accountancy has developed considerably since the 18th century. This paper explores how the basic principles of some reforms remain until today. Reforms related to the access, practice, and regulation of the accountancy profession in Portugal, since the 18th century were studied. This paper contains: a historical background of Portugal, and a review of the reforms achieved by Marquis of Pombal in the accountancy profession, and its today's implications.

Keywords: Accounting history; Bookkeepers; Certified Public Accountant; Marquis of Pombal; Portugal.

Introduction

Sebastião José de Carvalho e Mello (1699-1782), known as the Marquis of Pombal, lived abroad for several years, across Europe. Returning to Portugal, he found a disorganized country, although still enjoying the remnants of the great wealth of the discoveries period (Maxwell, 2015; Boto, 2010; Rodrigues, Craig, & Gomes, 2010b; Rodrigues, Craig, & Gomes, 2010a). Marquis was aligned with some of the ideas of the Enlightenment philosophy, yet, on the reforms achieved by him in Portugal, everything was done according to his wishes, alone. If someone did not agree with his system, it was immediately removed from any kind of power. He surrounded himself only by (assuredly) loyal people to him. In fact, Marquis of Pombal could be seen as a paradigmatic example of the Enlightened Despotism (Maxwell, 2015).

The Marquis rose in power by delegation of the King, D. José I, who give him the governance of all kingdom, just after Lisbon's earthquake, in 1755. In the aftermath of the earthquake, it was Marquis of Pombal who restored Lisbon, which became a city model at a European level. This work was achieved quickly and with great vigor (Maxwell, 2015; Boto, 2010), winning the royal trust to rule by himself.

The Marquis sought to restore national economy and position Portugal at the Europe forefront. Some of the reforms conducted by him were related to the promotion of academic qualification of the Portuguese businessmen. Some of these specific reforms were oriented to education and to accountancy (Maxwell, 2015; Rodrigues et al., 2010a).

The main question of this research study is to identify hints of the reforms achieved by the Marquis of Pombal on current accountancy in general and in accounting profession, in particular.

In order to understand the origin of these lasting reforms, this study aims to: (1) understand the Portuguese economic and social context in early 18th century, as well as their implications to accountancy; (2) recognise the influence of the European Enlightenment philosophy on Marquis of Pombal reforms; (3) explore the role of the Marquis of Pombal on the political scenery and his governance power; (4) reflect about the implications of the reforms he performed in accountancy and accountancy occupation nowadays.

A qualitative research methodology was adopted, based on content analysis of the procedure of "analysis of texts and documents" or "source documents" and also "investigation file", as is usual in research related to history (Gonçalves, 2012). It was performed a wide-ranging search of the main databases looking for the keywords "accounting history", "accounting education", "Marquis of Pombal", "accounting regulation", and "Enlightenment period".

Thus, in addition to a first reflection about the Portuguese historical background in the early 18th century and the Enlightenment period, this study also does an overview of the reforms made by the Marquis of Pombal regarding the accountancy settled until today. This last overview includes the following analysis: (1) the education reform and the evolution of the accounting studies; (2) the access to and the exercise of the bookkeepers' job to the current Certified Public Accountant (CPA) profession; and (3) the steps of the bookkeeping practice until the regulation of the accounting profession.

Economic and social reasons for the absolute power of the Marquis of Pombal

Portugal experienced a period of prosperity in the 15th century, due to the Portuguese discoveries all over the world. However, in the following centuries, there was a decrease in wealth, and foreigners started to dominate Portuguese trade. There were only a few Portuguese traders, and they had slight capital, limited knowledge of the commercial activity, and few academic qualifications (Rodrigues, Gomes & Craig, 2003).

Throughout the 18th century Portugal was, according to Gonçalves, Lira & Marques (2013), in a critical economic situation due to several factors: (1) the organizational structure of the state was inoperable; (2) there was fraud in the dependent state organizations; (3) industry was stationary; and (4) trade was declining and mostly in the hands of foreigners, especially British.

Rodrigues & Gomes (2002) remark the tangible circumstances that influenced the rules of accounting at the time: (1) foreign businessmen dominated Portuguese trade, mainly due to the fact that the Portuguese traders were few, poorly capitalized, and illiterate; (2) around 1750 there were few private factories, due to the idea that industry would not develop successfully in Portugal and to the bad image of industrial businessmen; (3) there was a lack of qualified bookkeepers, and those who were qualified were mostly Italian or French. These circumstances solidified the power of foreigners in Portuguese economic activity.

The King, D. José I, was not ready to rule the country, and he was very ill. Maria Ana of Austria, his wife, was regent of Portugal during the King's illness. By 1750, she empowered Sebastião José Carvalho e Mello, future Marquis of Pombal, handing over partial governing power to him. This governance power became total following the earthquake in 1755, due to his success in dealing with this catastrophe. Marquis of Pombal was able to make quick, effective and ruthless action after an earthquake that was followed by a tsunami and a fire that lasted for a week. Lisbon was fully destroyed in about a third of the city and near 15,000 people lost their lives (Maxwell, 2015).

According to Maxwell (2015), Sebastião José de Carvalho e Mello was born into a minor noble family in 1699. He received the title of Count of Oeiras in 1759 and later, in 1769, the title of the Marquis of Pombal, when he was already 71 years old. He is known in history by this title, and, for that reason, this study treats him as Marquis of Pombal. The King, D. José I, granted him with this title as a reward for his services rendered to the monarch and to the Portuguese kingdom.

The Marquis of Pombal studied Law at the Coimbra University. Later, he represented Portugal in St. James Court in London from 1739 to 1743. During these years, the Marquis increased very detailed knowledge about British politics and about the intentions of European countries toward Portugal. These intentions were mainly related to the Portuguese possessions in Brazil and India. He considered it was essential to attract foreign businessmen, experienced in international trade so that they would bring business knowledge to Portuguese people. Portuguese businessman lacked such knowledge, and the Marquis considered it essential (Maxwell, 2015).

Still according to Maxwell (2015), leaving London, the Marquis of Pombal was sent on assignment to Vienna, where he met and married Countess Maria Leonor Ernestina Daun. The Countess was relative of Maria Ana of Austria, wife of the King D. José I. This fact would greatly benefit his accession to power in Portugal.

These several years abroad representing Portugal gave him the abilities, ideas, and coterie to rule Portugal between 1750 and 1777. During his stay abroad, the Marquis noticed the delay in Portugal's economy, when compared with the economies of the remain European countries. He advocated that the industry delay and the trade decline were due largely to ignorance and lack of qualification of industrial businessmen and national merchants. This led him to start national reforms exactly in these several issues (Rodrigues & Gomes, 2002).

Although the Enlightenment philosophy was not very strong in Portugal, when Marquis of Pombal returned after had been abroad for a large period of his life, he was close to a small group of Ministers and representatives of Portugal abroad, who were very impressed with the Enlightenment philosophy (Maxwell, 2015). The Marquis was a clear example of the Enlightened Despotism. This philosophy advocated the adoption of laws that aimed the progress of the state and the happiness of the people (Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2015).

According to Boto (2010) and Gonçalves & Ribeiro (2015), the Enlightenment philosophy started in Europe, in the middle of the 18th century. There are, however, authors who consider that the origins of this philosophy can be found in the sixteenth century (Hartle, 2016). This movement sprang mostly from the ideas of Descartes, Newton, and Locke. Maxwell (2015) states that these men were able to establish the advantage of logical

discourse over the tradition of authoritarianism, throughout the 17th century. Descartes sustained that the ideas had to be analyzed without preconceived concepts, regardless of established authoritarianism. Newton gave credibility to scientific experience and reason, as well as to the use of logical discourse. Lastly, Locke applied this reasoning and logical explanation to human nature, explaining how it could improve using these methods.

In Portugal, there were some issues about philosophical questions and education, side by side with concerns about several aspects of economic policy and the threat of Spain, as well as commercial allies who wanted to take advantage of Portugal's weakness. In turn, the Enlightenment philosophy was adopted by influential Portuguese men, such as Martinho de Mendonça Pina and Proença (1693-1743), Dr. Jacob de Castro Sarmiento (1692-1762) and Dr. António Nunes Ribeiro Sanches (1699-1783), all of them related to the Marquis of Pombal (Maxwell, 2015).

Around 1717 there were several social gatherings, called the Academy of the Illustrious (*Academia dos Ilustrados*), at the Marquis of Pombal's uncle's home, Paulo de Carvalho, who was the Archpriest of the Lisbon Patriarchal (Lopes, 2017). Despite being frequented by few, they were all influential men and were later very close to the Marquis de Pombal. There was even a small group of Ministers and representatives of Portugal abroad who were very impressed with the Enlightenment philosophy. They were called "*estrangeirados*" due to their complete acceptance of foreign models. This term was used in a pejorative way to refer to this group because they overvalued the ideas from abroad ("*estrangeiro*").

However, Portugal was seen as the "paradigm of the Enlightenment". It was a time of many reforms, especially after 1750, when the Marquis of Pombal began to exercise the government of the whole nation. There were many reforms in legislation in general, including the establishment of the first State school system, the reduction of the power of the Inquisition, the abolition of slavery in Portugal, and the modernization of the Army. After the 1755 earthquake, Lisbon reconstruction was even considered indeed a model of Enlightenment urban planning.

Even though the Enlightenment philosophy was the basis of these reforms, they succeeded under an absolutist regime. Historians call it a regime inspired by reason of the absolutism, as the Marquis of Pombal's authoritarianism was essential for restoring control over the economy and over the renewal of the state. Lopes (2017) also refer to this philosophy as Enlightened despotism, defined by Behrens (1975) as a kind of leadership where "monarchs enjoyed a greatly increased degree of power as a result of having emancipated themselves from clerical domination and the tyranny of court etiquette. This was the phase of enlightened absolutism (or despotism), epitomized by the phrase that the monarch was the first servant of the state".

During the 27 years of governance of the Marquis in Portugal, there were many reforms imposed by him. Mostly, these reforms were imposed quickly and his opponents were promptly removed (Maxwell, 2015).

Maxwell (2015) still notices that the King's daughter did not like the Marquis, and when D. José I died, in 1777, and D. Maria I became Queen, she dismissed him immediately. He was not only removed from power but also accused of corruption and abuse of power. The Marquis finished his days in 1782, nearly alone and near Pombal.

The whole situation after Lisbon earthquake gave the Marquis of Pombal the power, the knowledge and the opportunity for conduct massive reforms in several areas. Accountancy owes him a great development and the recognition of its value to the country development.

Research Design

This historical review research study follows a qualitative methodology. According to Creswell (2002), constructivism is adequate to a social and historical construction study. This methodology is as well consistent with the one used by Stock & Sales Baptista (2012) in literature review approach. Also, the literature review follows, in general, a qualitative research methodology based on the technique of content analysis, through "analysis of texts and documents" or "source documents" and also "investigation file", as is usual in research related to history (Gonçalves, 2012).

After the historical background of the Portugal economic and social condition in the early 18th century and the influence of the Enlightenment philosophy, this paper now proceeds in one more step: the outstanding reforms related to accountancy that the Marquis of Pombal achieved in this historical period and that boosted given to the accountancy profession to its present state.

It was performed a wide-ranging search of the main databases (Google Scholar, B-On, and Science Direct), searching for articles, theses, dissertations, conference materials, and books, looking for the keywords "accounting history", "accounting education", "Marquis of Pombal", "accounting regulation", and "Enlightenment period".

Table 1 shows the number of publications under each keyword, by database, between 1950 and 2017. For this analysis, it was used most recent outputs, mostly after 2000, because there was a huge improvement in this scope research. For "Marquis of Pombal" and "Enlightenment period" we found most of the papers in historical accounting reviews, such as Accounting History, The Accounting Historians Journal, papers presented in some international conferences related to these themes, and books. For "accounting history",

“accounting education” and “accounting regulation” we found our literature mostly in accounting reviews, such as Accounting History, The Accounting Historians Journal, Revista Universo Contábil and Revista da Ordem dos Técnicos Oficiais de Contas. It was also found newsworthy papers presented in some international conferences related to the issue.

Table 1. Number of publications between 1950 and 2017 in the main databases.

Database	Accounting history	Accounting education	Marquis of Pombal	Accounting regulation	Enlightenment period
Google Scholar	10 100	32 100	1 690	15 300	12 800
B-On	3 807	16 445	333	3 948	360
Science Direct	9 383	5 278	4	7 031	51

The Marquis of Pombal reforms in accounting and today’s implications

The educational reform and the evolution of the accounting studies

Before the creation of the first Portuguese university, only a few monasteries were engaged in an educational mission, in which only reading, writing, and counting were taught. Education was essentially a religious character (Rodrigues et al., 2010b).

The first Portuguese university was founded during the D. Dinis reign, in 1288, in Lisbon. However, in 1537, it was moved to Coimbra (Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2015). This University had the exclusivity of higher education in Portugal until 1837 (Gonçalves & Marques, 2012).

In the 16th and 17th centuries, education was taught almost exclusively by the Jesuits, except in the case of the University of Coimbra. However, the Marquis of Pombal excluded the Jesuits in the 18th century and established public schools, continuing the Jesuit tradition of free education (Rodrigues et al., 2010b; Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2015).

In the wake of the reform in education, the Marquis established the public education in Portugal, and created the Class of Trade, in the School of Commerce in Lisbon (Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2015). This class was directed to traders and sons of traders, in order to improve their knowledge in the commercial and accounting areas (Rodrigues & Gomes, 2002).

School of Commerce was a reflection of the Portuguese Enlightenment philosophy, as it intended to support mercantilism and to enforce a better education on business activity (Rodrigues, Gomes, & Craig, 2004).

Accounting education was eminently practical since its beginning. However, it did not always have as main aim practicing bookkeeping job. In Portugal, in 1759, the School of Commerce had the first curriculum which include accounting issues, (Rodrigues et al., 2010a). It was followed by the School of Commerce of Oporto in 1803 (Gonçalves & Marques, 2012). Rodrigues et al. (2010b) conclude that the Lisbon Class of Trade was probably the first official school to be created in Europe specialized in business subjects. In fact, there were no comparable trainings elsewhere in the world. The study of Rodrigues et al. (2010a) suggests that there is a high probability that it was also the first public school of trade and accounting in the world.

Lisbon Class of Trade included, for the first time, double entry accounting. Rodrigues et al. (2010a) proved the existence of several schools in Europe that taught accounting and other business subjects. However, these were private schools and had no formal education. It was after the opening of the School of Commerce of Lisbon that other public schools appeared teaching issues related with trade, and accounting, in other European countries.

Until the creation of the Class of Trade, there were only a few national accounting professionals. They were called “bookkeepers”. With this national Class, the number of qualified bookkeepers increased, and there was no need to depend on foreign bookkeepers as before. Students attending Class of Trade could work in private companies, but also in public institutions. In these organizations, the preference was given to students who finished their studies in this class (Rodrigues & Gomes, 2002).

Rodrigues, Gomes & Craig (2004) recognized the four subjects taught in the Class of Trade: (1) arithmetic, algebra, and geometry; (2) exchange, weights and measures; (3) insurance; and (4) bookkeeping method (see Table 2). According to the same authors, these subjects are today the basic fare in most accounting courses of Portugal higher education.

Table 2. Core issues of the Class of Trade.

Core issues	Object of study
Arithmetic, algebra, and geometry	The four basic arithmetic operations, fractions, arithmetic and geometric progressions, simple and compound interests, discount calculations and other rules of merchant and bookkeeping exercise.
Exchange, weights, and measures	Study of weights and measures of different countries, mainly with those with business relationships with Portugal. It also included methods for exchange of currencies and calculation of dimensions and volume of solids.
Insurance	Study of insurance policies, procedures, and practices used in Lisbon and other European cities, as well as chartering formalities and the practice of commissions, prizes and commercial issues related to insurance activity.
Bookkeeping method	Explanation of the double-entry bookkeeping method and its use by companies, factories, noblemen's houses and other business. It also included the purpose of the use of various accounting books, such as the memorial, journal and ledger book.

Source: Rodrigues et al. (2004)

Currently, most accounting degrees in Portugal have some specific issues in their curricula that are required for entry into the profession, according to the Statutes of the CPAs Order (*Estatuto da Ordem dos Contabilistas Certificados*, 2015). Table 3 shows these specific issues.

Table 3. Core issues required in previous accounting studies to enter the profession.

Core issues	Object of study
Accounting and Financial Reporting	Basic and advanced training in accounting and financial reporting, including sectoral accounting applications.
Cost and Management	Basic training in cost and management accounting, including

Core issues	Object of study
Accounting	planning and budgeting, quality control, performance evaluation, and benchmarking.
Taxation	Study of the principles and foundations of tax law, the different codes of the Portuguese tax law, tax law and general legal regime of tax offenses, international tax law, and organizations' tax planning.
Finance	Study of quantitative methods to support financial accounting, principles of corporate finance and knowledge of the main financial instruments available to companies, and the preparation and evaluation of investment projects.
Enterprise law	Study of the fundamentals of the law of obligations, labor law, and commercial law, especially company law.
Ethics and deontology	Study of the ethical and professional responsibilities in accounting and taxation in relation to the environment with which these interact.

Access and pursue bookkeepers' job from Marquis of Pombal to the current CPA profession

Before the existence of the School of Commerce of Lisbon, there was no formal education in either the commercial or the accountancy fields. These subjects were learned in the workplace or in private schools (Rodrigues et al., 2010b). However, the School of Commerce of Lisbon, and later, the School of Commerce of Oporto, were intended mostly for traders, and eventually, their sons. They were not intended for bookkeepers because this occupation was not yet fully framed.

It was the Marquis of Pombal who gave for the first time in history true importance to bookkeepers' occupation. According to Gonçalves (2012), it was the Charter Law, dated 30 August 1770 that for the first time provided protection on the primacy of access to public positions to students of the School of Commerce of Lisbon. This included positions of public management and fundraising, for example. This protection was also extended to private jobs.

Rodrigues & Gomes (2002) also advocate that this Charter Law was the first attempt to regulate the accounting occupation. This Charter Law required graduation from the Class of Trade to work in some public functions. This protection finished in 1888. Then, there was a gap in the requirement of qualification for the exercise of the occupation until 1964, when a Degree or a Course of Accountancy became necessary for the exercise of the accounting occupation (Rodrigues & Gomes, 2002).

Over time, access to the accounting occupation has been very dependent on the recognition of the occupation in legal terms and, in particular, on the responsibilities for preparing taxes. The big boost in terms of recognition and regulation of the occupation as a profession took place only in 1995. This was due to the appearance of the Installation Committee and the Inscription Committee of the Association of Chartered Accountants (Gonçalves, Gonçalves, & Sequeira, 2014).

Although the occupation was very influential in accounting and tax preparation, only in 1963 it was officially recognized by Portuguese law. This recognition occurred under the Code of Industrial Tax because of the tax reform carried out from 1958 to 1963.

As a consequence of the greater or lesser emphasis on the contribution of the occupation assumed by the political power, the access of candidates for the occupation has diverse. Since 1964 the access has been regulated more strictly, but there were different stages and ways to this access.

Only in 1995, when the Certified Accountants Association took possession as the regulatory authority was created the Accountants Statutes (Gonçalves, 2013). This was a very important step because it became a profession rather than an occupation.

Currently, and since 2003, a professional exam is organized and carried out by the CPAs Order. This professional exam is an essential criterion to profession access. The exam is held three times per year, and on average there are about 1,000 candidates for each examination (Gonçalves et al., 2014). The inscription to the professional exam requires an

academic degree in business sciences, as well as an internship as a main practice training to the job.

The CPA concept emerged only in the Statute of CPA Chamber (*Estatuto da Câmara dos Técnicos Oficiais de Contas* (1999)). According to this Statute, "CPAs are professionals under this Statute, registered in the Chamber, and assigned exclusively to the use of this professional title, as well as the exercise of their functions."

The same Statute regulates the legal responsibilities of these professionals: (1) planning, organizing and coordinating the implementation of the accounts of entities subject to income taxes that have or should have regularly organized accounting in compliance with the legal standards and applicable accounting principles; (2) taking responsibility for technical regularity in accounting and taxation of those entities; and (3) signing, together with the legal representative of those entities their tax preparations.

According to the Order of CPAs Statute (*Estatuto da Ordem dos Contabilistas Certificados*, 2015), the accounting profession may be exercised: (a) independently; (b) as members of a company of professionals; (c) as public employees; or (d) through an individual employment contract.

Steps from the bookkeeping practice until the regulation of the accounting profession

Since the Charter Law (1770) until 1945, the accounting occupation was ruled mostly by public institutions. However, it was not regulated in a continuous form over the years. There was a regulation gap between 1888 and 1911 and another gap between 1989 and 1995 (see Table 4).

Table 4. The accountancy regulatory authority evolution.

Period	Regulatory Authority
1770-1888	Board of Commerce
1888-1911	---

Period	Regulatory Authority
1911-1936	Two chambers of chartered accountants
1936-1945	National Union of Accountants and Bookkeepers of the District of Oporto
1945-1964	Portuguese Society of Accounting
1964-1989	General Direction of Contributions and Taxes
1989-1995	---
1995-1999	Certified Accountants Association
1999-2009	Certified Accountants Chamber
2009-2015	Certified Accountants Order
2015-...	Certified Public Accountants Order

Fonte: Gonçalves (2013)

The attempt of the Marquis of Pombal to regulate the bookkeeping job lasted until 1888. Then, the Code of Trade stated that the accounts presentation is the trader's responsibility, meaning that it is possible that it is done by the trader or by a professional under his authorization (Rodrigues & Gomes, 2002). This liberal legislation, typical of that time, exceeded the concept of freedom, being contrary to all the rules and constraints of the bookkeeping and the bookkeeping job (Rodrigues & Gomes, 2002).

This situation lasted until 27 May 1911. It was changed by a Law that expressed the need to deliver accounting into the hands of qualified bookkeepers. This Law created two Accountants Experts Chambers. However, the accounting occupation was still unregulated (Rodrigues & Gomes, 2002).

According to Rodrigues & Gomes (2002), the first bookkeepers professional association, called Association of the Trade of Bookkeepers, was created around 1901. Later, on 28 January 1928, the Association of the Trade of Accountants and Bookkeepers from the North of Portugal was formed too. Its statutes were changed on 21 March 1933, and this Association was renamed Accountants and Bookkeepers of Portugal. Then, in 1934, this

Association became the National Union of Accountants and Bookkeepers of the Oporto District. From 1936 to 1945 this Union had the responsibility for providing professional licenses of accountants, without which they could not practice their profession.

The Portuguese Society of Accounting, the first private association of the accountants was created in 1945. This society fought for the reform of technical education and the professional regulation of accountants. It ruled the activity until 1964, when the Code of Industrial Tax recognized the accounting occupation and legislated this activity, under the regulation of the General Direction of Contributions and Taxes. This was, once more, a public Direction. However, the Portuguese Society of Accounting represented Portugal in the international accountancy events until 1988 (Rodrigues & Gomes, 2002).

During the regulation of the General Direction of Contributions and Taxes, requirements for admission as accountants were regulated. Only registered professionals could prepare and submit the companies' accounts for tax purposes (Rodrigues & Gomes, 2002).

From 1989 to 1995, there was another regulation gap. It was not essential to be an accountant to be responsible for the companies' accounting. In fact, there was no formal regulatory entity. Accountants at the time performed an occupation that was not recognized as an important one. In 1995, the Accountants Statutes were finally published. In the same year, and in order to valorize and regulate the profession, the Certified Accountants Association was created (Rodrigues & Gomes, 2002). It was the beginning of the modern regulation of the accounting profession.

Gonçalves (2013) states that, following the publication of the Statutes of Certified Accountants Chamber (*Estatuto da Câmara dos Técnicos Oficiais de Contas*, 1999), the Certified Accountants Association was renamed Certified Accountants Chamber. Its Statutes were adopted in 2000. In 2009, this professional association was renamed Certified Accountants Order. Its last change was in 2015 when the Certified Accountants Order was renamed Certified Public Accountant Order. Currently, the Certified Public Accountant Order

is the largest Portuguese professional association. It has about 70,443 members (*Ordem dos Contabilistas Certificados*, 2017).

Conclusions

The European Enlightenment philosophy started in Europe in the middle of the 17th century and was adopted by some influential Portuguese men around the 18th century. The Marquis of Pombal was aligned to the Portuguese Enlightenment supporters. In fact, enlightenment ideas could be recognized in some of the reforms achieved by the Marquis.

State intervention in the commercial and accounting education was very important in Portugal in the 18th century. At the time, Portugal was in the wake of the discoveries period, and in a unwarranted economic situation. This state of affairs led to several reforms promoted by the Marquis of Pombal, some of them related with public education in general, and accountancy teaching in particular. The Marquis had represented Portugal abroad for several years, and at the same time, he was very knowledgeable of the weaknesses of Portugal. He intended to boost the Portuguese economy to the splendor of former times.

One of the major reforms performed by him was the creation of the School of Commerce of Lisbon, as a public school. This school had the goal of teaching traders and their sons to be able to boost the economy. The School of Commerce of Lisbon was the first public school to teach accounting in Europe, and perhaps the first one all over the world. In Europe there were already some trade schools, some even teaching accounting techniques, but they were private schools.

Traces of reforms achieved by the Marquis of Pombal in the 18th century related to accountancy and its actors can still be currently found. The present study analyze some features of current accountancy and accounting profession, especially in access and practicing, that have its origin in that historical epoch.

At present, there are higher education degrees focused in accounting training, that could be heirs of the Lisbon Class of Trade created by the Marquis of Pombal, which was the first curriculum to include accounting issues.

Currently, a higher education degree in accountancy is mandatory for accessing the CPA profession and Lisbon School of Commerce was surely the first public school in the all world to qualify its students to exercise accountancy.

Although the several changes over the years, now, the profession is ruled by the Certified Public Accountants Order and the Charter Law (dated 30 August 1770 and signed by the Marquis of Pombal) was the first attempt to rule the occupation.

In short, several important issues related to accountancy had its prime time in the Marquis of Pombal reforms. The present study analyzed only the reforms on accountancy related to the accounting profession, but there were equally important issues related to accountancy itself that had their origins in Portugal due to the Marquis of Pombal. It would be interesting to analyze these issues in future studies. Nevertheless, it is noticeable that Portugal took on a remarkable role in the emergence of accounting not only as a distinct profession, but also in the training of specialized professionals to strengthen the national economy.

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