A continuación, se presenta una copia del artículo:

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En los márgenes he anotado algunas páginas del siguiente libro donde aparece el mismo texto en español:

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Abstract: The professional blind (people who use their blindness as a source of income) occupy a special place in Spain. The case shows how social conditions and self-organisation can allow disadvantaged groups to escape from a welfare dependency which is sometimes seen as inevitable. In most western countries, the blind beggars of the middle ages have become today's welfare clients. In Spain, the blind control their own national lottery and thereby have a standard of living higher than many non-blind groups. This outcome reflected a long historical process. During the nineteenth century, the inability of State or Church to provide welfare encouraged the blind to develop their own organisations. These organisations were strengthened during the Franco period. The focus on the lottery stemmed from particular features of the lottery system in Spain.

THE PROFESSIONAL BLIND IN SPAIN

Roberto Garvia

Regarding the occupational status of the blind, it is necessary to borrow the distinction between the 'blind professionals' and the 'professional blindmen' coined by Scott (1969). Whereas blind professionals are simply professionals who are blind (just as they could be not-blind), professional blindpeople are people who use blindness as their source of income. This might be done in different ways: professional blindpeople might be granted a non-contributory pension because they are blind; might 'self-employ' and commercially exploit their blindness through begging; or might work (even as professionals) in a public or private organisation for the blind because they have not been able to find a job elsewhere.

Even in the open societies of the Western world, the most common figure is that of the professional blind since governments (at least the most generous) have found it more expedient and cheaper to grant them a disability pension than to train and help them to find a job. Table 1 indicates the number of the active blind in some developed countries (the rest of them receiving disability pensions at best).

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Table 1 highlights the deviant case of the Spanish blind. The data are more reliable than those included in the last international survey on the blind (AMS 1971), since the latter reflected the percentage of active blind over the total number of the blind, and not over the total number of working-age blind. Whereas in the U.S.A., France, United Kingdom and Sweden only one out of three blind are working, two thirds of the Spanish blind have a job. The Spanish blind, notwithstanding, are also, for the

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Table 1 Percentage of the active blind over the total number of working-age blind in some countries.

Germany	18
Spain	**67**
U.S.A.	30
France	30
Japan	22
United Kingdom	31
Sweden	30

Source: Data from Spain in Alvira (1988). Data from the other countries were collected through a questionnaire mailed on February 18, 1991, to the most representative organisations for the blind. The data collected through a questionnaire were double-checked against other published sources, such as Momal (1984), Hall (1982), Kappalo (1991) and Kirchner and Peterson (1988).

most part, professional blind, but contrary to those of other developed countries, the Spanish professional blind are not welfare clients, but engaged in an extremely profitable occupation which they only, and not any other group of disabled, can practise. This occupation has actually made of the Spanish blind a privileged group not only when compared with the blind of other countries, but also with the Spanish not-blind. For example, whereas the rate of unemployment of the Spanish population has fluctuated between 15 and 20 per cent for the last ten years, that of the Spanish blind has not been higher than 4 per cent. Moreover, the average income of the Spanish working blind is higher than that of the not-blind (Alvira 1988: 73 and 98–104).

At the beginning of the 19th Century, the occupational status of most of the blind in Western societies was the same: they earned their living by begging. But, whereas in most of these countries the blind have been transformed into welfare recipients (given the difficulties of placing them in the labour market), the Spanish blind have transformed themselves into something unique: vendors of tickets to a lottery from which they benefit. This article describes the difficulties it involved, the most important being that the blind themselves did not want to become lottery-ticket sellers, since this occupation was deemed almost as humiliating as that of begging. Forced by their social and political environment to become lottery-ticket sellers, they finally came to terms with their occupation (however reluctantly), and ended up holding exactly the opposite opinion: that the sale of lottery tickets is as reputable an occupation as those of the blind professionals in other countries. Thus, the interest of the story of the Spanish blind derives not only from their particular occupational

transformation, but also from the changing perceptions they themselves held of it.

The Professional Beggars

In mediaeval Europe the profession of blindness was beggary. The blind were beggars *par excellence* because blindness handicapped them for manual work much more than other disabilities and, more importantly, because in Western culture blindness has traditionally generated more sympathy and compassion among almsgivers than most other illnesses or disabilities, something which gave the blind a competitive edge in the charity market.[1] This competitive edge was enhanced since the blind (and not any other group of handicapped) formed their own brotherhoods or guilds. Guilds of the blind, like any other guilds, offered their members a sort of insurance against sickness and death, and legally monopolised the practice of begging for their blind members, prohibiting those outside their ranks to solicit alms. This was the case, for example, of the blindmen's brotherhood of Barcelona (founded in 1339), and that of Valencia (founded in 1329).[2] Other blindmen's guilds, however, obtained a monopoly over other activities. The blind of Zaragoza, for example, monopolised the service of house prayer. Only blind of the guild, and no other blind or seeing individual (with the exception of members of the Church), could offer this particular service (Sancho Seral 1925: 85). In a similar manner, the blind in Madrid enjoyed two monopolies: the sale of the *Gaceta*, and other official leaflets and newspapers (such as *El correo de Madrid*, called, for this reason, '*El correo de los Ciegos*', 'The Blindmen's Post'), and the musical performances in the streets of the city (at which the blind sold their own literature, popularly called *pliegos de cordel*, or *pliegos de ciegos*).[3]

The blindmen's guilds shared, however, the same fate as all other guilds with the triumph of the ideas of the Enlightenment and Liberalism in Spain. The liberal Salustiano de Olózaga (1834), for example, at the request of the Madrid city authorities, wrote a fiery attack on the monopoly enjoyed by the blindmen's guild. Both the defence of a free market and campaigns against begging contributed, in this way, to the dismantling of the blindmen's guilds. To prevent the blind from becoming totally destitute after their guilds were dismantled, 19th Century society offered two solutions. The first consisted of the creation of special schools for the blind, in which they could learn a vocation, and the second was the seclusion of the blind in poorhouses or asylums.

In this manner, the School for the Blind was created in Madrid under the protection of the *Sociedad Económica Matritense* (Economic Society of Madrid), a private organisation devoted to promoting the economic development of the country. Later on, the Law of Instruction of 1857

envisaged the creation of local schools for the blind. Yet, given the situation of the Spanish treasury in that century, and the even worse situation of the local treasuries, the results were very poor. Madrid's School for the Blind did not exceed twenty students until the 1860s (Nebreda 1871: 6–7) and, in 1900, in all of Spain, only 136 blind were high school graduates (Molina 1900).

The policy of seclusion also failed. During the 19th century, the civil wars between liberals and supporters of the *ancien régime* and the slump in agriculture were factors which contributed to the migration to the cities of new masses of unemployed day labourers and hungry peasants, and begging became an increasingly competitive activity. Local governments responded to the rise in begging by sending the blind to poorhouses or asylums, but the municipal treasuries could not afford to maintain them there for long. Thus, beggars suffered 'persecution and a return to a mendicancy furtively exercised (. . .) caught in the act of holding out their hands, they go from the poorhouses to the streets, and the other way around in continual flux' (Bernaldo and Llamas 1901: 338).

The creation of special secondary schools for the blind had an unanticipated consequence of the utmost importance. These schools offered very little professional training in manual work, which came to be considered as wasted on a blind person. For this reason, many of the blind who went to these special schools found themselves begging and, more importantly, leading the informal blindpeople's organisations which still operated after the official dismantling of the old guilds.

Organisations of the Blind

That there were informal organisations of the blind is not surprising, since mendicancy in large cities had never been an individual practice, but rather a practice (or occupation) loosely organised and structured through hierarchies, specialisations and demarcations of territory which, consequently, gave an advantage to the organised. These underground organisations emerged as soon as the liberal political class allowed for the creation of workers' and mutual aid bodies. Thus, in 1882, the mutual aid society *Esperanza y Fe* (Hope and Faith) emerged as the first legal organisation of the blind in Madrid since the break up of the guilds. This was an association of beggars practically indistinguishable from the old medieval guilds of the blind, except that they lacked any kind of trade monopoly. In 1894, former *alumni* of the Madrid's School of the Blind created the association *Centro Protectivo e Instructor de Ciegos*. The *Centro*, led by an educated elite of blindmen, fiercely criticised the ineffectiveness of the special schools and the injustice of the policy of forced seclusion.

> After so many centuries of charity (. . .) the blind today do not have any other recourse than begging. [The blind] are educated in organized special schools in

> order that later they are secluded in squalid sewers that the charitable spirit calls asylums, but which cannot accommodate not only the average poor, but not even the last being disposed with a shred of dignity and the slightest spark of reason. (*Asamblea* 1908: 337).

As a result of criticisms of this sort and the support which some educated blind had been able to win from members of the political class, the Ministry of Education convened the National Assembly for the Betterment of the Fortune of Deaf-mutes and the Blind in 1907. In this assembly, the decision was made to create a public Trust (*Patronato*) which would attend to the problems of the blind, deaf-mutes, and the 'abnormal'. The state, the blind were happy to think, had decided, once and for all, to solve the problem of begging among the blind.

Disillusionment followed quickly behind. The Trust, from the moment of its creation in 1910 until the Primo de Rivera Dictatorship (1923–1930), underwent six reforms. All seven trusts were merely advisory committees deprived of executive power and made up of bureaucrats and welfare professionals, such as doctors and pedagogues. These trusts, furthermore, were fundamentally oriented towards educational and health policies, but not towards social policies.

Perhaps the most important decision made by these trusts was to send Canora, a member of the *Centro*, to some provinces of eastern and mid-northern Spain, to assess the special schools and the goals and resources of local organisations of the blind. The impressions gathered by Canora were devastating. Organisations of the blind, which existed in most cities visited, were dedicated almost exclusively to begging. Most of the special schools lacked resources or had already been closed (Canora 1913: 64).

Canora had a second mission, however. In his dual position as representative of the Trust and the *Centro* of Madrid, he encouraged the local blind organisations to create a National Federation of the Blind. In 1924, the first national assembly of organisations of the blind convened and put pressure on the government to create a new Trust, one in which the blind themselves would have strong representation and which would have the necessary funds to create vocational training workshops for the blind as well as to grant pensions for elderly blind.

As the Minister of Internal Affairs during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, the authoritarian Martínez Anido interpreted these demands according to his own perspective. Although he did reform the Trust and gave it abundant funds, the organisation was designed to serve a function very different from that desired by the blind. The new Trust would create three great asylum centres for the blind (euphemistically called *residences*). The blind were fortunate enough to see the dictatorship come to an end before the first asylum was finished, but their experience with Martínez Anido encouraged them to unite and to create the *Federación Hispánica de Ciegos* (Spanish Federation of the Blind), in 1932. The Second Republic

(1931–1936) reformed the Trust in 1934, and allowed for some blind to have a voice in it.

The 1934 Trust began its activities in a way that satisfied the blind: it conducted a census of the blind, created three vocational workshops, subsidised three orchestras, provided pensions for one hundred elderly blind in Madrid, and subsidised, in a small way, two organisations of the blind (*La Luz* 23: 9–10). Yet, the orientation of the Trust shifted rather quickly and it began to devote its funds to the anti-begging and anti-asylum campaigns. By this time, the blind were convinced that the state was of little help and that they could only count on themselves to solve their problems.

The *Federación Hispánica de Ciegos* and its journal *La Luz* served as forums for discussions of the new strategies of the Spanish blind and the blind of other countries. Outside Spain, the 1930s were a landmark era for the European and American blind. The massive use of chemical weapons during World War I gave rise to a large contingent of blind veterans in the belligerent countries. As soon as the war was over, the blind veterans organised and began claiming jobs and welfare benefits.[4] At the same time, the introduction of Fordism, which allowed for the division of manual labour into simple and repetitive tasks, facilitated the employment of blind people in companies such as Siemens, Ford and Renault. These outcomes were discussed with great interest by the Spanish blind and, as is to be expected, many of them placed their hopes in the mechanisation of industry.[5] In fact, some leaders of the Spanish organisations of the blind insisted that they themselves should create their own special industrial schools and workshops. In most cases, however, the rank-and-file blind beggars opposed this, since it might have put into jeopardy the assistance funds of their organisations.[6]

Lotteries

There was also a great deal of discussion about lotteries. For some years organisations of the blind in eastern Spain had been running their own illegal lottery business. In April 1933 three organisations of the blind introduced their own lottery in Madrid but competition among these three societies as well as rumours of fraud, perhaps launched in the heat of competition, resulted in the failure of the lottery strategy in Madrid. This was not the case in Barcelona, however, where, in order to avoid competition, three organisations of the blind united to create the *Sindicat de Ceçs* (Union of the Blind), which in 1934 began to operate its own lottery with great success. With the proceeds from this lottery, the blind of Barcelona created their own vocational training workshop, a special school and a Braille library, as well as free medical services for the blind and their families. To many blind, it seemed that the *Sindicat de Ceçs* had found the

solution to the problem of begging. If each locality created an organisation such as the one in Barcelona, the proceeds of the lotteries could build workshops where the blind would be taught a vocation and thus begging would be eradicated.

Yet the blind themselves did not agree on the lottery strategy. Among them, those whom the blind beggars called *los señoritos* (that is, blind of comfortable origin or professionals who had lost their sight after having begun their careers), felt little enthusiasm towards the lottery. For them there was small difference between begging and selling lottery tickets, an unseemly occupation which would reinforce the stigma of uselessness and incompetence placed on the blind. For the *señoritos* the solution to the problem of begging was to provide manual jobs in factories and workshops. By working elbow to elbow with other workers in factories and workshops, the blind could break their social isolation and rebuild their self-esteem. Moreover, by working in factories, the blind would create wealth and contribute to the development of the country, whereas by selling lottery tickets on street corners, the blind did not create wealth but only transferred it from one set of hands to another.

The 1935 convention of the *Federación* put an end to this debate. It was agreed to pursue the lottery strategy and to put pressure on the government to legalise the lottery of the blind. The profits of this lottery were to be devoted to setting up special schools and vocational workshops in order that they could learn a trade and make their living from it. Only those blind who, being either elderly or in ill-health, had no hope of finding a job in a factory or workshop would fully dedicate themselves to ticket-selling. In other words, the means was the lottery and the goal was to transform the blind from beggars into workers useful to society, but not into ticket-sellers.

At the height of the civil war (1936–1939) the southern organisations of the blind expanded their lottery under the protection of the Francoist military authorities, and in 1938 they managed to persuade the government to create a National Organisation of the Blind (from here on, ONCE), which would be funded by its own legal lottery business. The blind did not have to exert much pressure to achieve this, since their claims (i.e. the creation of a single organisation of the blind which, under the strong supervision of the state, would take over public policies and co-ordinate the representation of their interests), fitted very well with the corporatist programme of the Francoists. This corporatist formula was not, in fact, very novel: ONCE very much resembled the mediaeval blindmen's guilds. And so, in the twentieth century the blind enjoyed, again, a monopoly over a trade, as long as, it was specified, they and not any other group of disabled would operate a lottery business.

The shame of the lottery-ticket seller

For the first couple of years in the life of ONCE, this organisation firmly adhered to the programme put forward by the old leaders of the *Federación*: it took charge of the bleach factory which the *Sindicat de Ceçs* had put into operation during the civil war, opened a sweet factory and two broom factories, regulated the orchestras of the blind in order to professionalise them, and created special schools for children and evening schools for adults. All this was funded from the lottery.

However, and much to the surprise of the leaders of ONCE, it was not always easy to persuade the old beggars to join the organisation. Some regarded ONCE as a something alien to them, laid down by the new Francoist state to prevent begging and, thus, of ruining their way of living. For this reason, the incorporation of the blind into ONCE was a slow and gradual process. This process sped up in the late 1940s when, because of pressure by bureaucrats from the General Direction of Social Works (the state agency that supervised ONCE), the organisation of the blind changed its goal from providing manual jobs and vocational training and transformed itself into a plain welfare charity, aiming to provide its members with a wide range of welfare benefits (such as disability and retirement pensions, medical and pharmaceutical services, and illness, death, and marriage grants).

To finance this welfare programme meant that, in the mid 1950s, most of the blind ended up as lottery-ticket sellers, since ONCE did not receive any subsidies from the state and the lottery was its only source of revenue. This was a very distressing outcome for the leaders of the old organisations of the blind, who witnessed how the blind were making their living through an activity which closely resembled begging and reinforced the idea of their helplessness and incapacity to perform any kind of manual or professional job. Moreover, the sale of lottery tickets lent support to the popular myth that the blind, by the way of unknown extra-sensory powers, were able to forecast the future and give luck (Starck 1973: 58; Opie and Tatem 1989).

However, the authoritarian state did not allow these criticisms to become public. Only occasionally were the critics able to make themselves heard.[7] When this happened, ONCE either justified the course of action it had been forced to adopt, or recommended tactfulness and patience. Regarding foreign organisations of the blind, however, ONCE allowed for itself higher doses of sincerity and, with some remorse, regretted the path it had taken (Farrell 1956: 157). The only thing the leaders of ONCE could do to ease their consciences was to recommend the ticket-sellers to abandon their old begging habits: they should use white canes, wear dark glasses and behave properly, and should not go accompanied by young seeing guides (*lazarillos*), or wear ragged clothes.

As a consequence of the partial economic and political liberalisation of the Francoist regime of the late 1950s, ONCE regained a great deal of self-government. For many blind, this was their opportunity to rectify policies and to steer ONCE according to its original goals. In order to justify the new direction, the history of the blind was revised and the slogan of the 'leap forward' began to appear in ONCE's official journals. In the words of the new leader of the organisation:

> The lottery was an indispensable means of building the organisation: it saved thousands of men from having to beg and guaranteed the well-being of thousands of families [but now we must be] thinking of other solutions, of moving beyond the lottery itself (. . .) A new era is shining in ONCE: the era of integration into the world of all. But the leap involves great difficulties (*Sirio* 8: 1).

The 'leap forward' took a definitive form through the Sotillos Plan (Sotillos 1967). According to this plan, ONCE would set up an industrial training workshop similar to the one which was operating in Letchworth, England. Similarly, two schools to instruct blind people as telephone operators would be created, like those of Germany, where more than 800 blind operators were already working (Gust 1954). Another vocational centre would train physical therapists, since it was known that many Japanese blind worked in that field. Also, following the example of the British and French blind, poultry farms were to be set up. And finally, the Sotillos Plan included the creation of a rehabilitation centre for the newly blind, analogous to those operating in other developed countries. All these projects were put into practice in the 1960s and 1970s.

The outcomes, however, were very far from what was expected. As a consequence of the economic crisis of the mid 1970s, it became increasingly difficult to find external employment for the blind. Even worse, the commitment ONCE had been forced to make to its members as regards welfare benefits left little room for the kind of experiments the Sotillos Plan involved. Whereas from 1966 to 1972 welfare expenses increased 600 per cent, ONCE's revenues only doubled. ONCE's membership was ageing very quickly. In 1961, the average age of ONCE's active population was 54; for the rest of the Spaniards it was 42. By 1969, 34 per cent of ONCE's members were over 60-years-old (Finkler 1972, 19). The rapid ageing of ONCE's membership is explained by improvements in the health system, which reduced the number of cases of ophthalmia in newborns and trachoma (FIES 1975, 374). The old ticket sellers who went into retirement could not be replaced by new sellers. This meant that the organisation ran the risk of bankruptcy.

Bankruptcy would mean the end of the organisation and the transfer to the state of the policies for the blind. Recalling their experience with the old Trusts, this possibility terrified the blind. In this way, the decision was made to allow for the 'partially blind' to join ONCE as ticket sellers (and shortly afterwards as full members). This perplexing but realistic decision

was very eloquent, in that, during the very years in which the organisation was trying hard to attain its original goals, it had to betray them in order to guarantee its survival. As a result of this, not only were most of the blind selling lottery tickets but, from then on, some visually disabled followed suit.

Post-Franco Modernisation

No wonder, then, that after Franco's death (1975) and the beginning of the transition to democracy, public opinion held ONCE to be a Francoist organisation, that is to say, authoritarian, obsolete, corporativist, and isolated from the rest of society. The political debate about what to do with ONCE came to an end in 1980 and it was settled in the least costly manner: instead of assuming the responsibility of directly providing social servicies for the blind, the new democratic state decided that it had to be the blind themselves who democratically decided on the future and policies of their organisation.

Within ONCE, the new democratic leaders also thought that something had to be done about their organisation since it had not accomplished its original goals. However, the internal debates during the years of ONCE's own transition to democracy (1975–1981) showed that the new leadership was divided on this issue: there were two explanations for the organisational failure and, consequently, two options to choose from.[8] According to the blind 'conservatives,' it was true that ONCE had not been able to accomplish its original goals. However, ONCE was not to blame for this, but rather the Francoist regime, which forced the organisation to displace its goals. Also to blame was Spanish society, whose callousness neutralised ONCE's efforts of the previous decade to find external employment for the blind trained in its special schools. These and subsequent efforts, moreover, would be useless if the economic crisis persisted. But, if it was true that the sale of lottery-tickets did not meet the occupational aspirations of the blind, it was also true that the lottery had raised their standard of living. For all of these reasons, and even though it was desirable that the blind stop selling lottery tickets, this was an extremely unlikely event for the forseeable future. And, since the blind and their organisation were going to depend on the lottery what had to be done was to strengthen that lottery.

According to the 'progressives,' neither the Francoist regime nor Spanish society were to be blamed for the transformation of the blind into lottery-tickets sellers. Those responsible for this transformation were the blind themselves, who, first, had 'invented' their lottery and, second, had created an organisation which was only a lottery factory. By doing this, the blind had reinforced the social prejudices about their helplessness and incapacity, which explained their social isolation and lack of any other

occupational prospect than the sale of their lottery tickets. What had to be done, then, was to employ those with an additional disability who were really untrainable and unemployable in any other occupation. For this to be accomplished, the state should implement a labour policy which positively discriminated for the blind (as well as for other disabled populations).

Yet, despite the manifest differences between progressives and conservatives, they shared a basic understanding: the sale of lottery tickets did not promote the social image of the blind. It was a shameful occupation, which reinforced the idea that they were unable to perform any other job. As one blind person put it, 'For the Spanish society, the blind and the lottery are one and the same thing: you buy the blind, you win the blind, and you check the number of the blind' (González García 1982: 471).

The self-confident professional lottery-ticket seller

If one only takes into account the public statements the blind lottery-tickets sellers made in the late 1970s, it would seem that they shared the opinion of ONCE's new leaders about their occupation. At a closer look, however, this was not the case. According to the data of two surveys (Riera 1978; Iglesias 1979), the blind lottery-tickets sellers had a more neutral or even positive opinion of the nature of their occupation than their leaders. Even though their occupation was not as challenging and appealing as many other occupations of the blind, it provided them with a regular income and economic independence. Moreover, if most Spaniards considered that the blind could not perform any other job and, at the same time, considered that their job, the sale of lottery tickets, was intrinsically shameful, what options were left?[9] The lottery-ticket sellers felt they only had one option: to make the sale of lottery tickets as reputable an occupation as any other. The blind sellers were aware of the low recognition of their occupation, but they also knew that occupations rank high or low in society's esteem according to the labour conditions they involve and the average income they render. At their first national congress, the blind lottery-ticket sellers finally stopped disapproving of their own occupation and decided to put pressure on ONCE's leaders to dignify their jobs via the improvement of the labour conditions and incomes. In their own words: 'We have come to terms with the sale of lottery tickets, at least temporarily, but we think it is necessary to dignify this occupation as well as to leave open other occupational options.' (*El Pais*, April 13, 1979).

With this goal in mind, the lottery-ticket sellers requested some improvements in their labour conditions. To begin with, they petitioned to be legally labelled as 'workers' (in order to be granted the rights and duties of every worker), and not merely as 'remunerated volunteers,' as they had been labelled since 1959, when ONCE had charity status and its

workers were 'volunteers'. Similarly, they requested a five-day week, and some other significant changes (that social benefits be paid in cash and not in the form of extra tickets to be sold, or that street corners be assigned according to fixed and fair rules and not to the personal criteria of ONCE's sales managers). Yet, their most important demand was a salary increase. Thus, the newly constituted Union of ONCE's Workers called on their management to launch a new lottery, which might strengthen the financial position of ONCE. This proposal was accepted and in January 1982 the new lottery of the blind was on the market.[10]

The success of this lottery was unexpected. ONCE's revenues increased by 146 per cent in 1982 and the salaries of its salesforce by 77 per cent. The new lottery was such a successful product that, at least during January 1982, buyers waited at street corners for the blind sellers to come and a reselling market of lottery tickets even flourished. These unanticipated events showed the blind sellers that their customers did not buy their lottery tickets out of compassion, but because it was a competitive product in the gambling market. The blind sellers, in this way, began changing their self-pitying image: they were no longer beggars, but sales workers who, indeed, were selling such a competitive product that it left them with very sizeable incomes. Table 2 shows that the average income of ONCE's sellers was higher than those of workers and employees in different sectors.

However, ONCE's leaders were very sceptical about the new self-image the sellers were promoting. They agreed on the improvement of labour conditions for the sellers and on raising their salaries provided that this did not jeopardise the economic viability of the organisation. The 1982 reform had improved both salaries and labour conditions. Yet, no matter

Table 2 Monthly average incomes of employees and workers in different economic sectors in 1984. (In thousands of pesetas)

Employees	
ONCE's lottery sellers	**156.0**
Manufacturing	134.7
Construction	123.1
Services	119.9
Workers	
Manufacturing	88.6
Construction	79.9
Services	77.9

Sources: 1984 ONCE's Economics Report (*Memoria y Cuentas Generales, Ejercicio 1984*), and *Anuario EL Pais* (1989: 420).

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how much improvement might be granted, the leaders thought the sale of lottery tickets was an intrinsically humiliating occupation for the blind. Moreover, the success of the 1982 reform encouraged some blind people with other occupations to join the ranks of the lottery-tickets sellers. For ONCE's leaders this outcome was very disquieting.

But the 1982 reform brought unexpected consequences. The new lottery exasperated the state lottery agency which, since 1981 when slot machines were introduced, had been witnessing a steady diminution of revenues. To reverse this, the Ministry of Economic Affairs decided to merge the State Lottery Agency and the Trust for *Pari-mutuel* Sports Betting (which operated a soccer betting lottery). The new agency, ONLAE (National Organization of Lotteries and Sport Betting), decided to multiply by four the number of lottery dealers. However, ONLAE and ONCE were not alone in the lottery market. The democratic constitution of 1978 had handed over substantial political powers to the regions of the country. The fiscal capacity of the regions was, however, very weak and, to strengthen it, some of them agreed on launching their own lotteries. To this threat, the central government announced that ONLAE was ready to put two new lotteries on the market as soon as the regional lotteries were introduced. To make the lottery sector even more unstable, the media brought to light a significant number of political scandals which made it clear that both central and regional political parties intended to collect their own benefits from the gambling industry.

Yet, ONCE's most important competitor was not the public lotteries but the illegal lottery of PRODIECU, set up in 1985. PRODIECU's lottery was sold by approximately 7,000 physically disabled people who has taken inspiration from the success of the lottery of the blind and decided to launch their own. This lottery was not only a commercial threat to ONCE, but also put into question its institutional privilege, which was (and still is) based on the exclusive right of the blind to operate in the gambling market. PRODIECU's threat lasted for more than two years, given the reluctance of the central government to dismantle a lottery which gave employment to a significant number of the physically disabled. For these two years, ONCE had to struggle against PRODIECU in both the political and commercial arenas. In the latter, however, it was the blind sellers and not ONCE's leaders who had to struggle the most, since they were facing day after day and street corner to street corner the competition of PRODIECU's sellers.[11]

In this new environment, ONCE's survival very much depended on the skills of its sellers, who were no longer selling a sort of charitable raffle in a closed market, but working hard to place their products in an extremely competitive market. For their part, ONCE's leaders finally had to admit that their organisation was not only a provider of welfare benefits, but also a company. As the managers of a company, they could not keep on telling

their workers that they were doing something humiliating, or that they should be doing something different. On the contrary, in their role as managers of a company, they should motivate their workers, and tell them that the sale of lottery tickets was as worthy an occupation as any of the other traditional occupations of the blind. Similarly, they were forced to admit that, like these other occupations, the sale of lottery tickets also involved skills and techniques which could be taught in formal settings. Thus, at the height of its commercial war against the physically disabled, ONCE's management decided to professionalise the sale of lottery tickets.

The professionalisation programme materialised in internal circulars, drafted with representatives of the sellers. The programme removed the one characteristic of the sale of lottery tickets that made it most similar to begging. Up to then, blind sellers had sold their tickets on the street corners or in the places assigned to them by sales managers. The circulars provided for the rational apportionment of sites according to their potential profitability and for the assignment of sellers to street corners in accordance with a meritocratic and seniority system. According to this system, a blind seller could begin his occupational career as a 'provisional seller' on one corner, to be promoted to the position of 'regular seller' on a more profitable one. For the first time, the lottery-ticket sellers had the prospect of a career and, perhaps more importantly, the city's streets were no longer a contested place to roam, but a symbolically-structured workspace, in which each seller had his own place.

In a TV interview, ONCE's general director was asked:

> – Is it possible, is it desirable, that the sale of lottery-tickets be eradicated?
> – No! And I am answering so emphatically because we don't consider the sale of lottery-tickets an unworthy occupation, but just the opposite. I mean, some time ago there was a psychological tendency to think of the sale of lottery tickets as something despicable, or whatever. But the organisation has accomplished (. . .) that. Today, the sale of our lottery is a very decent and honest occupation, in which many people would like to be involved (. . .) *It is so worthy* (. . .) *that we are never going to abandon it. On the contrary, we are going to develop it.* (TVE programme *En Portada*, Monday, October 8th, 1990. My emphasis).

pp. 179-180

Conclusion

The occupational transformation of the professional blind in Spain is unique in the West. Whereas the blind of those other countries have been transformed from beggars into welfare clients, the Spanish blind have transformed themselves into lottery-ticket sellers. This occupation has permitted the Spanish blind to enjoy (in terms of employment and income) a standard of living higher than that of the professional blind of other countries but also than that of the Spanish not-blind. Yet, this is not surprising since Spain is the country with highest per capita spending in lotteries.

There are two reasons which can explain this 'great transformation' of the Spanish blind. Firstly, the fiscal crisis of local governments during the 19th Century and the financial difficulties of the Church (which was forced to sell a significant portion of its real estate), did not allow for the creation of poor-, or workhouses for the blind (or, in general for the poor, see Castro 1990, and Tedde 1994). Neither was there in Spain a strong middle class with a tradition of charity to substitute for the state and the Church. Thus, the Spanish blind were left wandering and begging in the cities, giving them a chance to retain their own formal and informal associations.[12]

Secondly, Spanish neutrality during the Great War allowed the Spanish state to escape from the need to set up welfare and employment programmes for the blind, which the belligerent countries needed to meet the demands of their blind veterans (and, eventually, those of the civilian blind). The Spanish blind were given a new chance to strengthen their own organisations and to make of the Spanish peninsula an impressive laboratory in which local organisations were forced to experiment with different occupational solutions to the problem of begging (such as the sale of water in Andalusia, the musical performances in the streets, or the sale of popular literature -*pliegos de ciegos*).

Yet, it remains to be explained why the specific occupational solution of the sale of lottery-tickets succeeded in Spain and not in any other European country. Basically, the reason is that the European public lotteries still in operation in 19th Century Europe were extremely difficult to imitate by any particular group: the Austrian, Hungarian, Polish and German *Klassenlotterien* consisted of five consecutive draws – or *Klassen* – which extended for a period of five months; and the Italian lottery was *lotto*-like (based on a *pari-mutuel* system, which requires the promoting organisation to keep a record of every 'played' number). The Spanish public lottery was very much like a raffle (weekly separate draws, and tickets with fixed numbers), which made it extremely easy to imitate at a local level.

The transformation of the Spanish blind into lottery-ticket sellers nevertheless was not what they expected. It took them almost fifty years to accept it. And when they did, they did not do it delightedly, but rather reluctantly: unable to stop doing what they were forced to do (i.e. to sell lottery tickets), they had to come to terms with it and attach value to it. The debate on the qualities of their occupation has still not completely settled down, however, and it seems that it will continue for years to come.

Notes

1. In fact, even nowadays it is easier to 'sell' the product of blindness than the product of other disabilities even more incapacitating than blindness in the

charity market. This cultural property of Western societies partially explains why the organisations for the blind are among the wealthiest operating in the third sector. On this, see Kramer (1987: 243), Cohen (1972: 31), Kirtley (1975: 49). On the blind beggar in mediæval Spain, see López Alonso (1986, 52). The blind beggar was also main character in some of the classics of Spanish literature, for example 'La cantiga de los ciegos' in *El libro del buen amor* (by the Archpriest of Hita).

2. Blindmen's guilds have been uncovered not only in Spain, but also in Germany, England, Italy and France (Pardey 1986: 471–473; Fisher 1982: 29; Farrel 1956: 149–150).
3. On the Madrid's Brotherhood of the Blind, see Rumeu (1942: 271), and Jiménez de Salas (1958: 251). *El correo de los ciegos*, Iglesias y Mañá (1968), the *Pliegos de cordel*, Caro Baroja (1990).
4. The German *Bund des Kriegsblinden* and the *French Union des Aveugles de Guerre* date from these years. In Italy, the blind veterans joined forces with the civil blind to create the *Unione Italiana Ciechi*, later endorsed by the Fascist government, which employed some blind in the weapons industry.
5. H. Ford himself was a constant reference in the magazines of the blind at this time, since, in order to contradict criticisms concerning the substitution of workers by machines, he boasted that the mechanisation of his factories had created more job positions for blind than there were blind to fill them. See his article, *La caridad y los ciegos* (Charity and Blindness), reprinted in *Los Ciegos*: 82. See also the *Boletín Oficial del Centro Instructor y Protector de Ciegos 19*, 10-11, and Ford (1923, 124–129).
6. The periodicals of the blind of this period reveal the tensions between leaders and rank and file on this issue. See *Los Ciegos* (Madrid, 1916–1941), *Boletín Oficial del Centro Instructive y Protector de Ciegos* (Madrid, 1931–1933), *La Luz* (Madrid, 1930-1936), and *El Tiflófilo* (Barcelona, 1934).
7. For example, on the 25th Anniversary of the creation of ONCE, an article written by one of the founders of ONCE was not able to pass the censors and was never published in the official journal of ONCE. The article, however, was widely circulated in the organisation.
8. During the Francoist regime, ONCE, like any other interest organisation, was an authoritarian organisation; this is to say, ONCE's National Leader (*Jefe Nacional*) was chosen by the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (to which ONCE was linked), and not by the blind. This changed by 1981, when a Royal Decree allowed for democratic elections. ONCE's first democratic elections took place in January 1982.
9. According to a survey of the Center for Sociological Research (*Centro de Estudios Sociológicos*), 81 per cent of adult Spaniards thought that the blind were not employable in 'regular' jobs and, at the same time, 71 per cent thought that it was desirable that the blind were employed in 'regular' jobs.
10. For all ONCE's history, the lottery of the blind consisted of daily local draw. The 1982 reform replaced these draws by a single national drawing which allowed for bigger jackpots and, thus, was much more alluring for the consumers.
11. On the quarrel between PRODIECU and ONCE and its consequences for the interest representation system of the disabled population, see Garvía (1995).
12. Unlike the blind of other countries who, nurtured and secluded in poorhouses and charities especially devoted to them, were forced to hand over the representation of their interests to welfare professionals and philanthropists.

In fact, one of the most important demands of the 20th Century blind is to regain the representation of their interests against the claims of welfare professionals. This explains the traditional contentions between the organisations *of* the blind and the organisations *for* the blind (i.e., in the United Kingdom between the Royal National Institute *for* the Blind and the National League *of* the Blind, or in the United States between the American Foundation *for* the Blind and the National Federation *of* the Blind).

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