



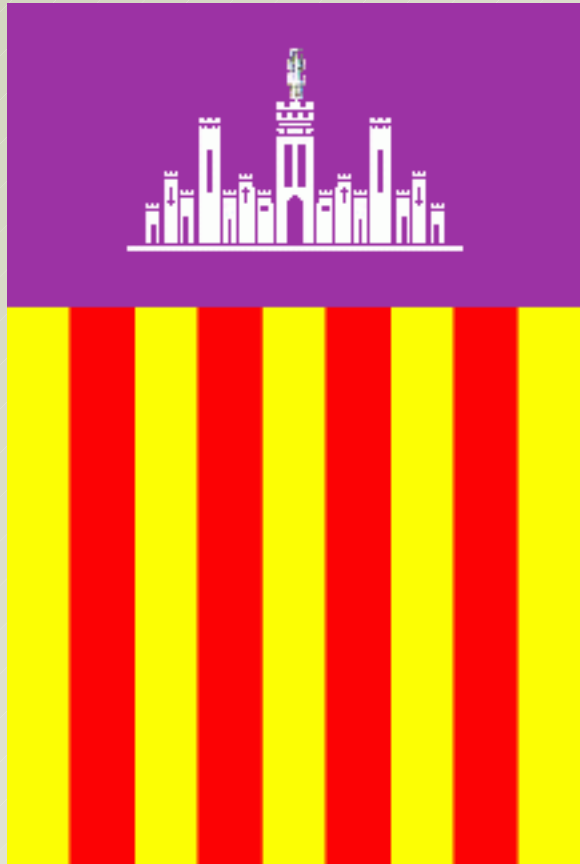
# Functional illiteracy among migrant groups in the Balearic Islands (Spain)

Rudolf Eduard Roth

# Spain and functional illiteracy

- Spain has not conducted general functional illiteracy surveys and does not recognize functional illiteracy as illiteracy
- Spanish Labour Survey (LFS), which provides information on the illiterate *working age population* as well as people without training at the regional level is the *only source of information*
  - According to the study in 2007 functional illiteracy in the Spanish population of working age had been reduced a 50% since 1980 (from 23.7% to 11.9%), yet with some southern regions of Spain like Extremadura and Castile-La Mancha, exceeding 20%.
- Existent studies are biased to some extent and thus arguably misleading, as they assume that people who have gone to school for a couple of years are not illiterates or functional illiterates.

# Functional illiteracy in the Balearic Islands



- 50% of the students of Secondary Education (ESO) abandon the school being functionally illiterate, meaning that they are unable to understand a job advertisement, poster or information to correctly perform a simple mathematical calculation (M. Terrasa, 2011)
- High school dropouts in the Balearic Islands reached 40% by 2012 (report on education presented at the Chamber of Commerce)

# Functional illiteracy in the Balearic Islands

- The percentage of functional illiterates slash 50% of the students in their final year of compulsory education Among other things, one of these students (considered functionally illiterate) can not fill in an official document or understand what it is said in an airport information display
- 48,5 percent of students who leave compulsory education do not have numeracy competencies and that 50% of these people leave school without possessing a level of linguistic understanding to enable them to locate information or to make deductions direct from a written document

*(Juan Jimenez Castillo, 2012 – survey on 704 students in 4th Secondary Course from 42 public and private schools)*

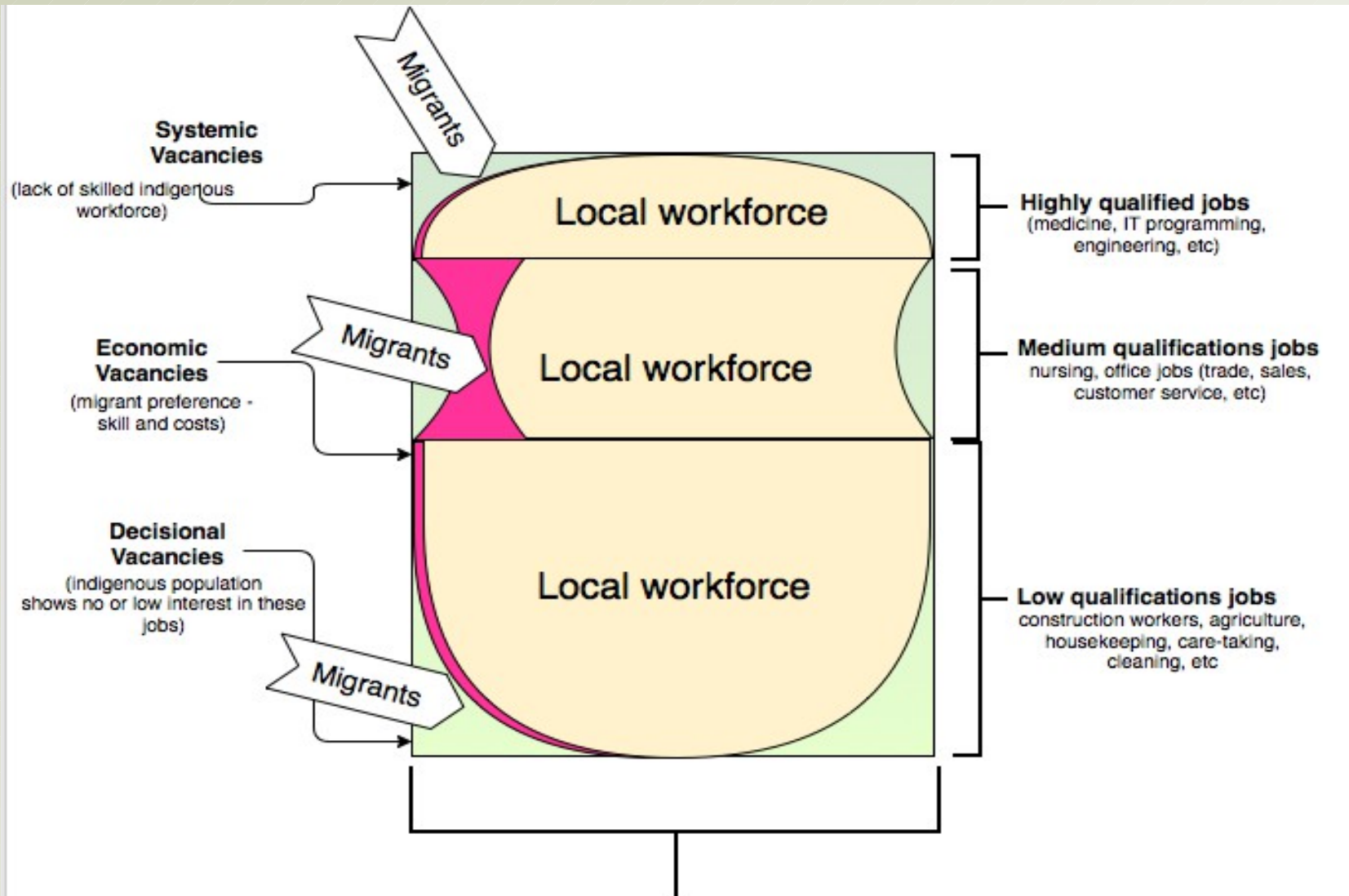
# Functional illiteracy in the Balearic Islands

- Studies do not cover the functional illiterates group, represented by Spanish citizens who – for various reasons – end up studying or working in Mallorca, without prior knowledge of the Catalan language.
- Mallorquin authorities however opened specific training Centers for Adults in order to provide literacy qualifications to reach minimum Secondary Education objectives
- The autonomous government set up intra-school counseling services to students in order to decrease dropouts and to facilitate the basic skills of language use or basic mathematical operations.

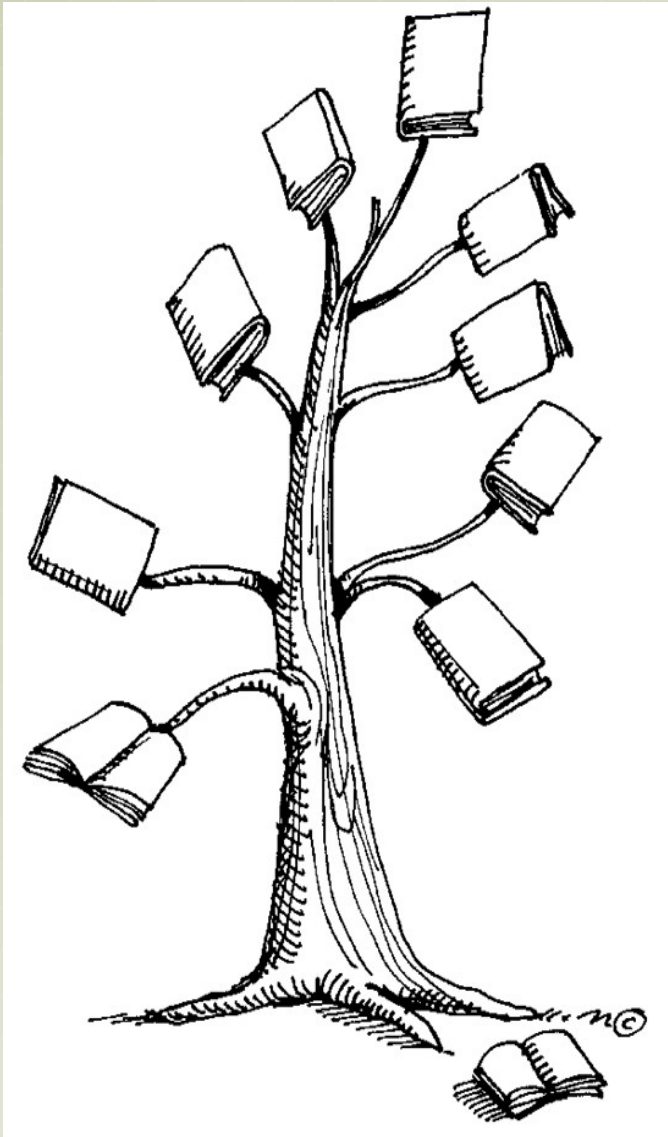
# Functional illiteracy within the (Romanian) migrant communities in the Balearic Islands

- There are no studies regarding this topic
- The official data regarding the migrant communities cover only residents with official residency permits
- The presence of Romanian authorities, Romanian media and Romanian cultural centers is scarce or not-existent
- Mallorquin authorities stopped their free Spanish classes programs destined to migrants, offering only limited places for Catalan language
- The majority of the small Romanian community works either in highly skilled jobs (medical sector, IT programming, either in tourism, transportation, agriculture or boat maintenance)

# Spanish job market







*The ratio of literacy to illiteracy is constant, but nowadays the illiterates can **read** and **write**.*

**Alberto Moravia**

Thank you!