PONTIFICIA UNIVERSITÀ GREGORIANA

Istituto di Antropologia

IADC

Challenges in welcoming minor migrants. Subsidiarity-based cooperation for development as an ethical model

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Migration of minors: a complex phenomenon

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Some definitions

Unaccompanied minor migrants

A person under the age of eighteen, unless, under the law applicable to the child, the majority is, attained earlier and who is 'separated' from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has the responsibility to do so.

Source: UN Committee on the Right of the Child, *General Comment n. 6/2005*

Separated minor migrants

Minors who have been separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members.

Source: UN Committee on the Right of the Child, *General Comment n. 6/2005*

Minor asylum-seekers

Minors who intend to seek, or who are awaiting a decision on, their application for international protection. In some countries, this term is used legally to refer to individuals who have applied for refugee status and have not yet received a final decision on their claim.

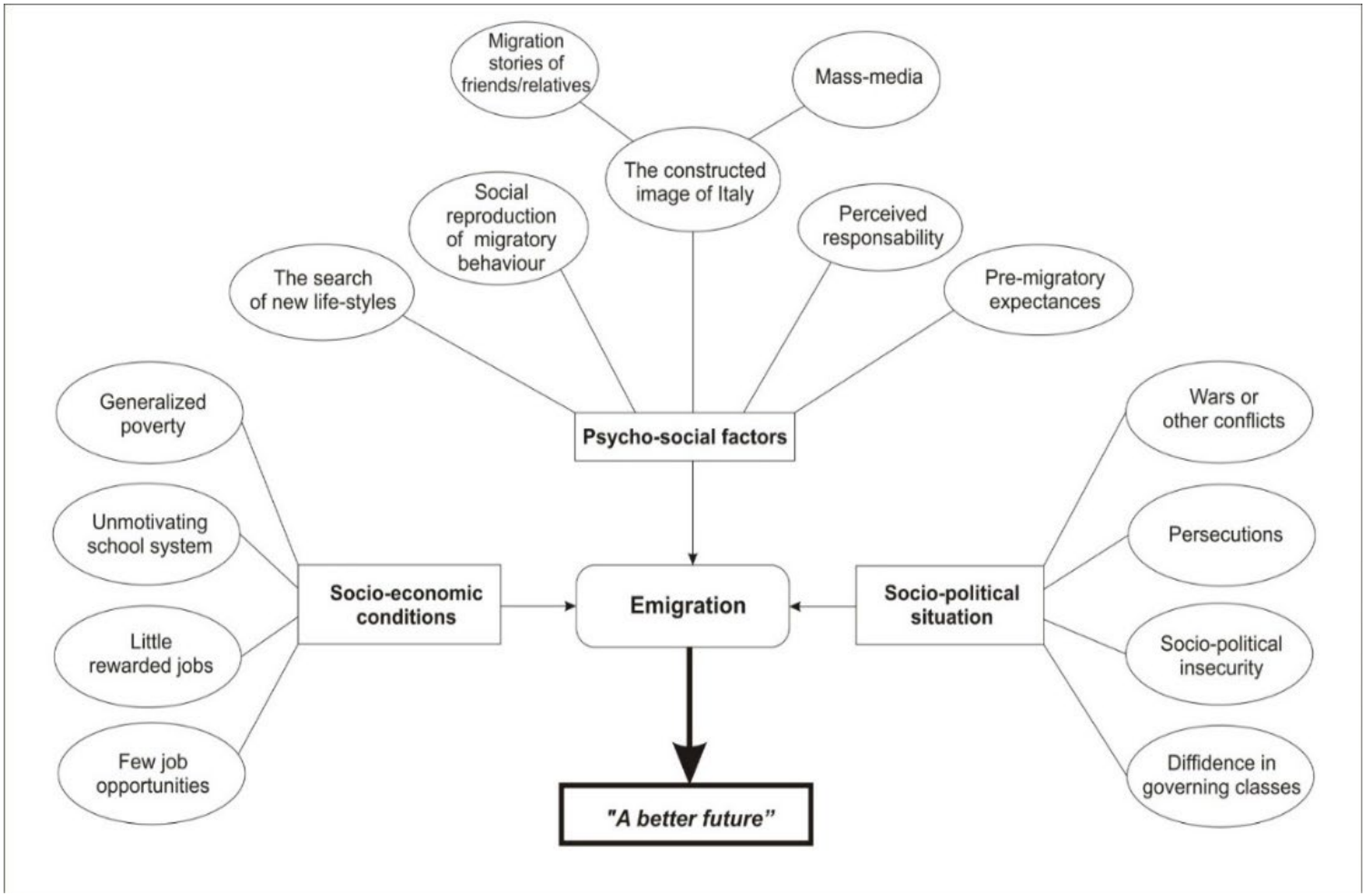
Source: UNHCR

Refugee minors

Minors who have been compelled to leave their country and cannot return because of a serious threat to their life, physical integrity, or freedom as a result of persecution, armed conflict, violence, or serious public disorder. It is a legal status that provides an individual with certain rights and protections.

Source: UNHCR

Push and pull factors of migration



Cfr. S. Everett Lee, *A Theory of migration*, in "Demography", vol. III, 1966

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Ethical issue behind migration

The complexity of migration resists simplifications, so we need to explore the factors that make this issue so complex.
What do we need?

A person-centred approach

So that the person is at the center of our reflection

- *There is a **person** who live in **a condition of vulnerability***
- *A **dignity** is to be cared and protected*
- ***Human integral development** has to be considered*

A systemic view – community/based

Several agents (political, social, economic, ecclesiastical, religious) are engaged

- *Several **contexts** are involved*
- *There is a need for **law and norms** to be adopted*
- ***Safeguarding measures** are crucial*

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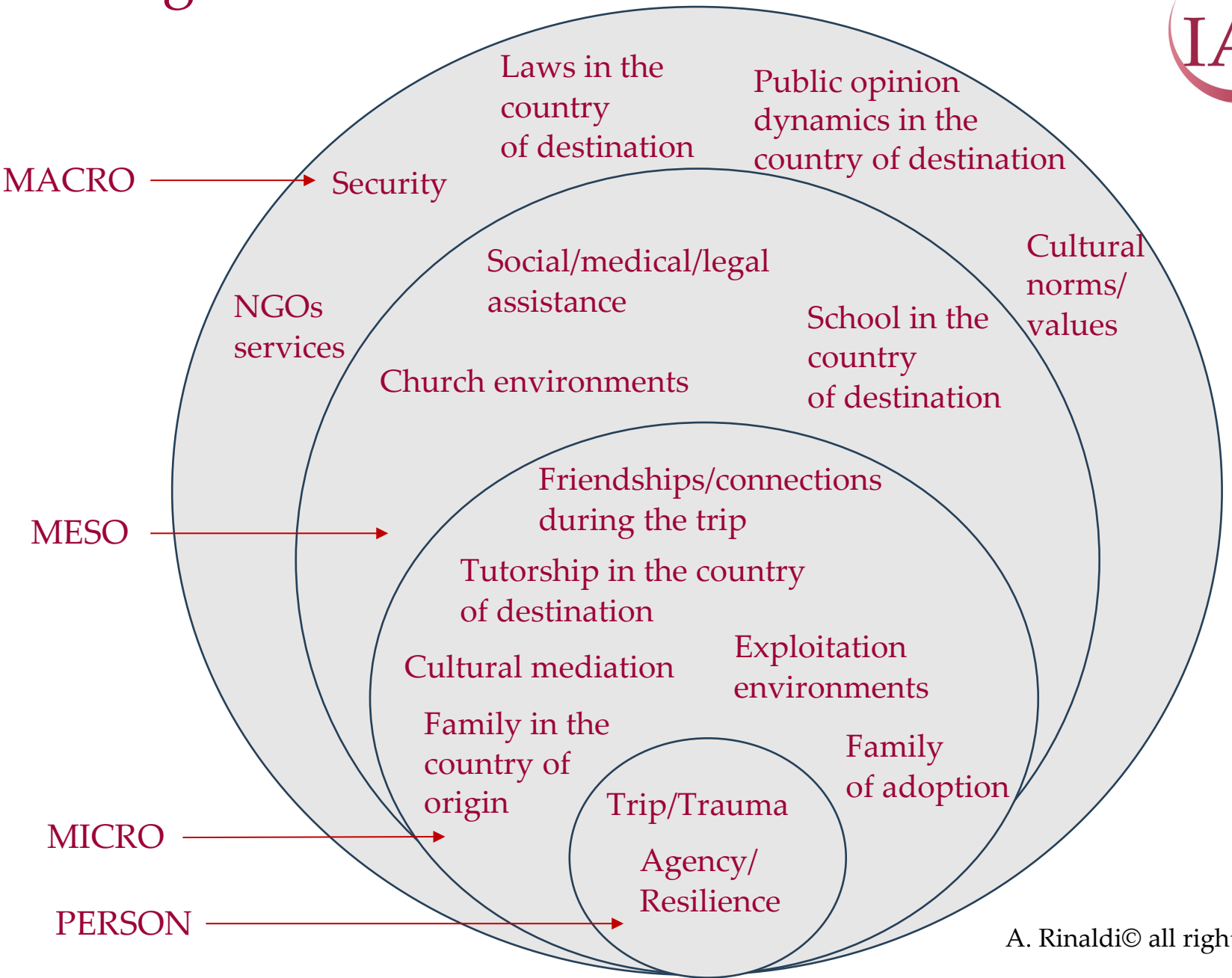
Ecological model - Bronfenbrenner



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Challenges and risks

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Migration as a systemic issue

Among the main challenges that minor migrants face in the host or transit country, we want to focus on

Limitation of personal agency

in a foreign context characterised by norms and attitudes that belong to a different culture and background

Cf. A. Bandura

A hostile public opinion

that develops conflicting views, a "fear of the other," and might create social difficulties without a constructive dialogue among cultures

Cf. E. Noelle-Neumann

They are both challenging because they imply

- **Facing a clash of cultures**
- **Multicultural coexistence**
- **Safeguarding issues**

Cf. Rinaldi, A. (2020). *Una migrazione che dà speranza. I minori non accompagnati in Italia.* Milan: Mimesis

An ethical model

An ethical (systemic) model

Subsidiarity-based cooperation for the development of the person (and the whole community)

Based on Human Dignity and the best interest of the minor (the member who suffers), all the social subjects (the other members) act together, according to and respecting their abilities and possibilities and integrating each other to go beyond their own limits, so that the minors can get the respect of their rights, be cared/protected/safeguarded and welcomed into the society where they arrive.

Rinaldi, A. (2020). *Una migrazione che dà speranza. I minori non accompagnati in Italia.* Milan: Mimesis

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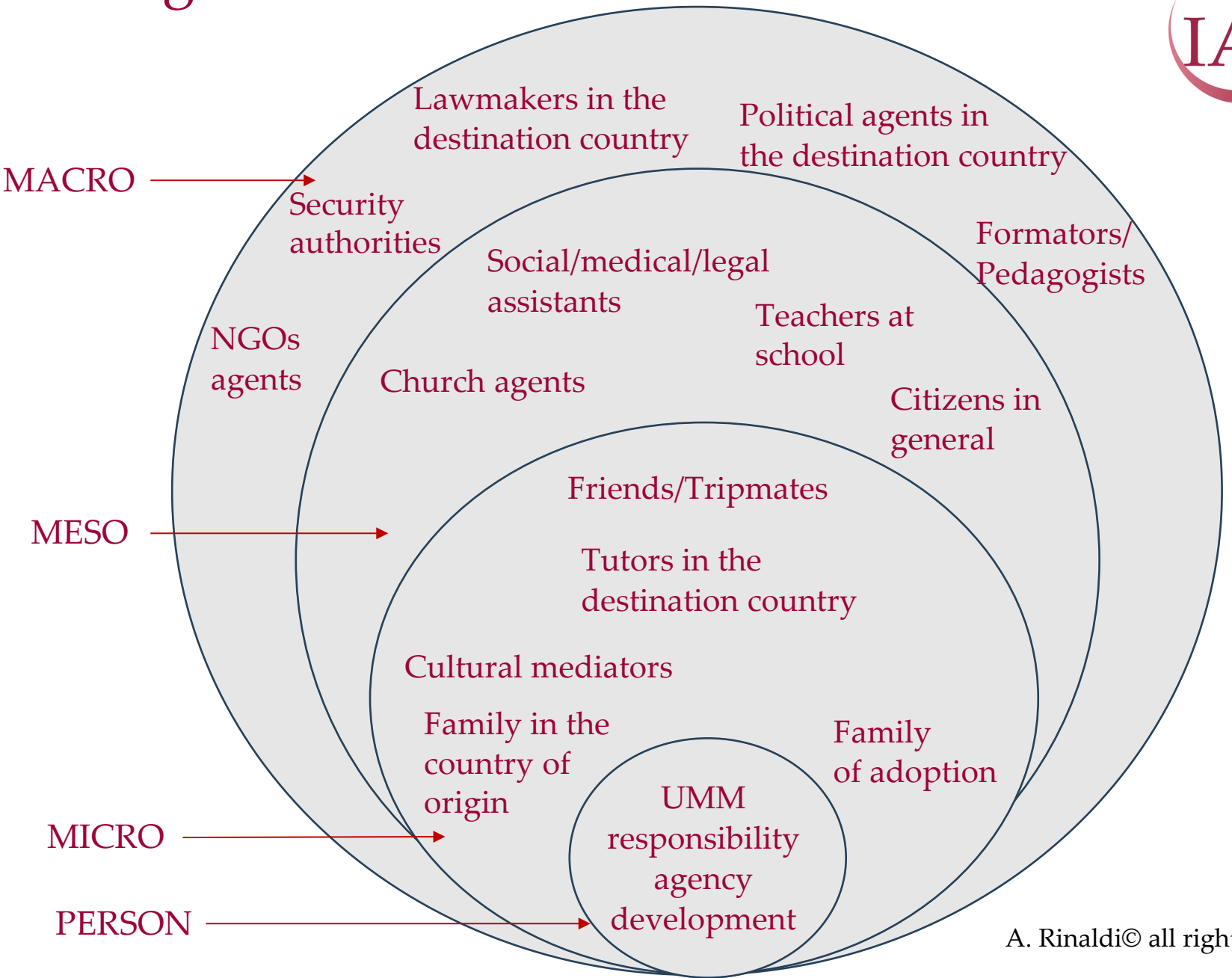

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Some best practices and possible gaps on the individual level

Person-centered actions

- actions (outreach) on the streets
-personal/psychological accompaniment
-social/legal assistance
-formation, education, sensitisation

Person

-Migration projects
-Traumas and needs
-Distrust
-Developmental phases
-Contacts with the families of origin
-"No freedom" to decide
-No trained social agents
-No sensitised communities

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Some best practices and possible gaps on the community/organisational level

Community-based measures

-Activities in schools
-Contact with companies for internships
-Religious/Church communities' involvement
- Cooperation with NGOs and Institutions for a personalised project for development
-Selection of agents and organisations that can be part of a network around the minors
-Sensitisation campaigns and community involvement

Gaps in the communities

-No prepared teachers/school personnel
-No available companies
-Aid dependency
-Poor network around the minors
-No sensitisation campaigns and community involvement

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Safeguarding: the 3 principles

TRANSPARENCY
Transparent organisations/ institutions

- Give a voice to the minors and make them feel heard
- Allow the minors to be the main characters of their (migration) projects
- Train and sensitise people for a more welcoming public opinion

ACCOUNTABILITY
Accountable organisations/ institutions

- Work for the best interest of minors
- Stay on the side of minors, respecting subsidiarity
- Review the norms and the laws to grant more rights
- Support the agents and the people committed to safeguarding

COMPLIANCE
Compliant organisations/ institutions

- Build trust in the communities and among the stakeholders
-Make the minors' rights heard through advocacy
-Create the conditions for the implementation of public policies and safeguarding measures

Thank You!