



International Migration Institute
James Martin 21st Century School
University of Oxford



Keeping People in Their Place: The uncomfortable relationship between development agencies and international migration

Oliver Bakewell
International Migration Institute
University of Oxford

A retrospective view of migration and development

- Impact of development on migration
 - Push and pull factors: inequality, expected income, spreading risk
 - Conflict, instability → forced migration
- Impact of migration on development
 - Remittances – generally used for consumption
 - Brain drain
 - Transfer of skills
 - Transnational linkages – businesses, networks

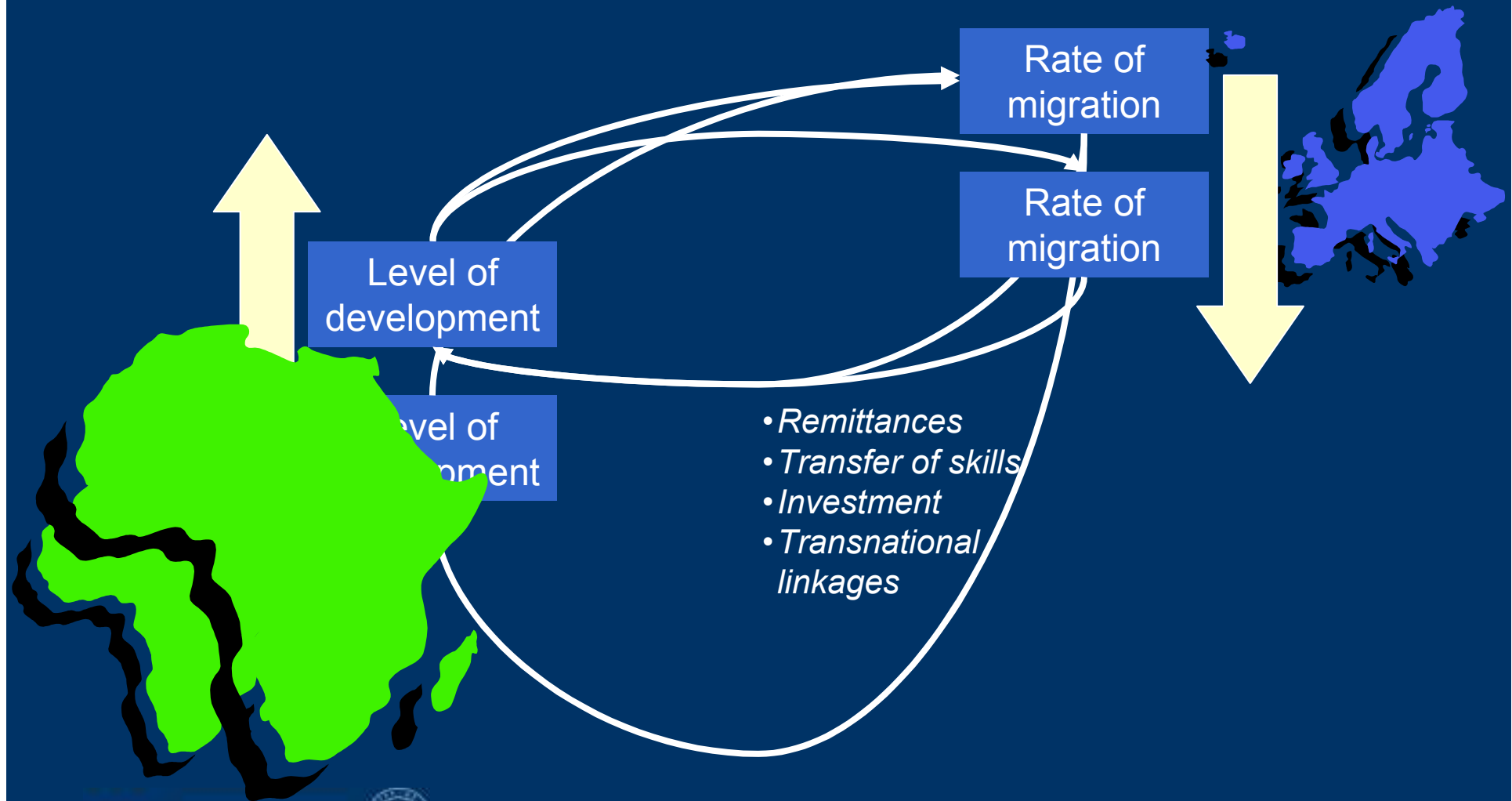


Migration and development moving to centre stage

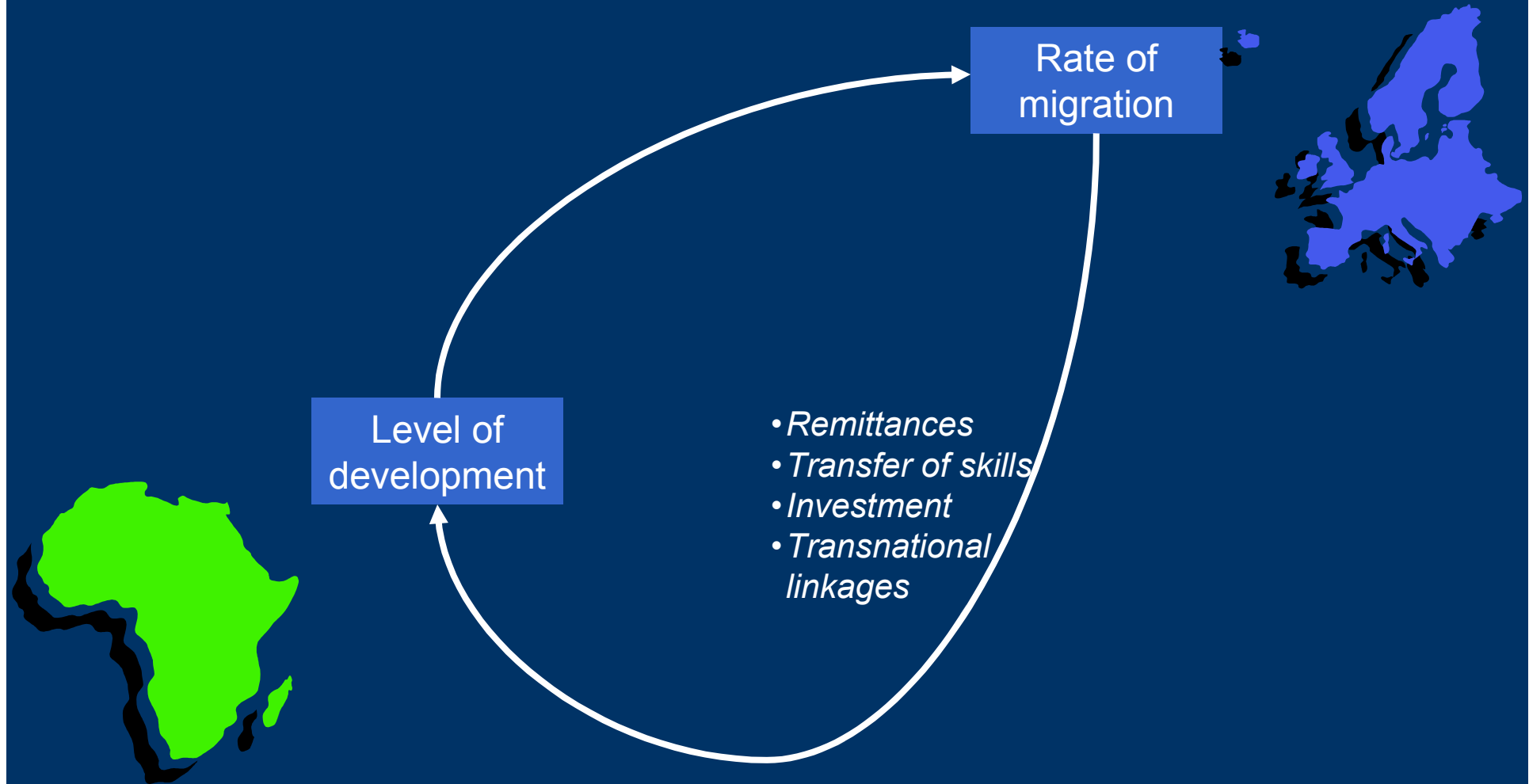
- Failure of development – looking for a new approach
- Discovery of remittances – ‘the new development mantra’? (Kapur 2003)
- Growth in irregular migration from developing countries
- Potential for diaspora engagement in development
- Desperately seeking the win-win-win scenario



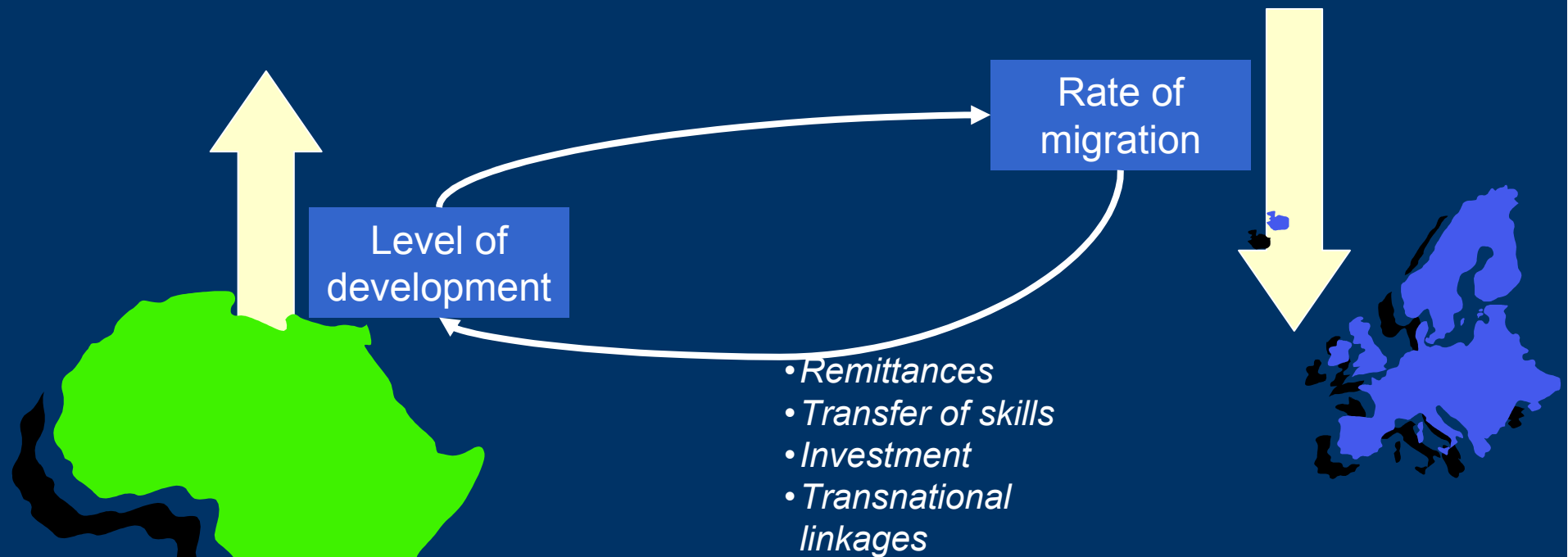
The virtuous circle of migration and development



The virtuous circle of migration and development



The virtuous circle of migration and development



Development agencies and international migration

- Operating with sedentary model of development
 - aim to improve the quality of life for people at 'home'
 - Continued out migration as an indicator of development failure
 - Migration presented in negative light
 - Response to crisis
 - Cause of spread of HIV/AIDS
 - Undermining traditional institutions
 - Or, migration is not mentioned at all!
- States and development agencies share common interest in lower migration rates



Colonial roots of 'development' and development practice

- Control of population mobility major concern of European powers in Africa
 - Slavery
 - Expropriating land
 - Labour for production mines and plantations
 - Colonial administration, police, military
- Policies to force people into the cash economy – taxes, expulsion from land, provision of services
- Need for large concentrations of workers – but avoiding permanent settlement

Colonial roots of 'development' and development practice

- Growing concern about rural-urban migration
 - Break down of traditional life, family reunification
 - Exploitation of women
 - Use of remittances
 - Return migration – retirement, reintegration
- Acceptance that cities were to stay but how to stop them growing?
- Rural development as a means to improve conditions in rural areas and reduce attraction of cities



Colonial roots of 'development' and development practice

- Development policies focused on rural areas
 - Agricultural development
 - Rural infrastructure – roads, water supply, health facilities, schools
 - Villagization and settlement schemes
- Donor shift from the state to private sector and NGOs as primary development actors
- Recognition of urban poverty
- Underlying sedentary bias continues



From rural-urban to international migration

- Neophiliacs
 - ‘developing countries’ are the new ‘villages’
 - ‘industrialised states’ are the new ‘cities’
 - ‘poverty alleviation and MDGs’ are the new ‘rural development’
- Renewed investment in development in the expectation that it will reduce international migration
- Theory, history and experience suggest that the opposite will happen



Rethinking the nature of development

- Different conceptions of the good life
 - ‘development professionals’ improved quality of life at ‘home’
 - people in developing countries freedom to follow opportunities – at ‘home’ or ‘abroad’
- National models of development
 - Creating artificial incentives to keep people in their place
 - Migration may be the best option in some cases
- Paternalistic paradigm
 - migrants are presented as victims
 - safe option is to stay at ‘home’
 - protection of the traditional way of life
 - agency of migrants neglected



Conclusion

- Re-examine underlying sedentary assumptions of development policy and practice
- Understand *changing* aspirations of poor people in developing countries
- International development to go with international migration?

‘An exacting test of how serious we are about reducing inequality in the world is whether we are prepared to allow migration into the advanced economies of people from Africa and other poor areas. By this test, few of the advocates of international aid are really serious.’
(Rimmer 2003)

