Introduction

In our final case study we turn attention to the oppositional field encircling the Global Forum on Migration and Development and CSO strategies towards it. After a brief introduction to the GFMD below, the next part of the chapter moves on to exploring the oppositional field. The following section details the political opportunity structure; we then proceed to the advocacy strategies chosen by various CSOs. The final part sums up the main findings.

The GFMD differs from our other two case studies in three important respects. First, GFMD is not a formal international organization. It does not have those attributes that make up an IO, such as a constitution, an explicit mission, a formal organizational structure and staffed headquarters. It does not implement policies and does not aim at taking any binding decisions. Instead, it is described on its webpage as ‘a voluntary, informal, nonbinding and government-led process’ (emphasis added) (GFMD 2014b). Its objectives are (1) to offer a venue for policy makers and practitioners to informally discuss the pros and cons related to migration and development and engage with other stakeholders to foster practical policy outcomes; (2) to exchange good practices in order to maximize the developmental benefits of migration; (3) to identify policy, institutional and informational gaps at different policy levels; (4) to enhance cooperation and partnerships between governments, as well as between governmental and non-governmental actors and (5) to structure the international policy agenda on the migration-development nexus (GFMD 2014c). The GFMD takes concrete form in the annually (with few exceptions) recurring meetings and in the various preparatory events that proceed them. Hence, while not a proper IO, GFMD
Civil Society and the Governance of Development

definitely has what it takes to be described by the broader term ‘global governance institution’.

Second, in contrast to the others, GFMD is global rather than regional in scope. It is open to all state members and observers to the UN, including both migrant origin and destination states, coming from all world regions and all income levels. However, as GFMD is not a formal IO these participating states are not official members but precisely ‘participants’ or ‘contributors’.

The last way in which GFMD differs from the other two case studies is in its more restricted agenda. While the EU as well as the ADB approaches development in multiple ways, the GFMD is only concerned with the migration and development nexus. This is in itself a very broad topic, as the causal linkages between migration and development are complex, ambiguous, still to a large extent unknown and vary with different levels of analysis (local, regional, national, etc.) (Skeldon 2002). Discussions have successively broadened from a narrow focus on remittances and other economic factors to include questions of, for instance, migrants’ human rights. Yet the agenda is narrower compared to the other two GGIs.

Critics have described GFMD as a ‘talkshop’ for governments, which accomplishes little, lacks in transparency and public control and is normatively dubious as it is formally outside of the UN system. We will return to some of these arguments below as they are relatively frequent among oppositional CSOs. No matter what position one takes on the GFMD in substantive terms, one has to recognize that it is a remarkable institutional development if one takes the history and structure of the governance of migration into account. States were for long extremely reluctant to even discuss migration in multilateral forums, not to mention entering any form of agreement or commitment not strictly bilateral or regional. As a result the level of international cooperation in this area is very low when compared to other transboundary issues such as trade or contagious disease. It differs from the neighbouring issue area refugee protection, where there exists an established international regime centred on the Geneva Convention of 1951 and the work of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This difference can to some extent be explained by the traditional framing of the different forms of mobility: while the forced movement of refugees is understood as a humanitarian concern for the international community, migration is considered an economic, social and political question on which receiving states are justified to decide on their own. But the low level of institutionalization of this field is also to be attributed to