Abstract

The article describes the main debates and identifies some of the difficult questions emerging from the academic and policy literature on postconflict peacebuilding. It also finds there is little consensus on the content of peacebuilding activity. This reflects tensions between minimalist and maximalist visions of peacebuilding. While minimalists suggest that peacebuilding activity should be concerned with removing the sequels of conflict, maximalists focus on ending the violence and generating the conditions for full-fledged development. It suggests an intermediate path represents a compromise between the need for a stable and a viable peace. In addition to the normative discussion, the article suggests the content of peacebuilding activity is also a result of the nature of the conflict, the manner in which it ends, and the role played by the international community in peacebuilding. As to the Colombian case, the article concludes that debate about peacebuilding in the midst of conflict makes sense because it identifies goals and challenges and proposes an agenda for national and international actors interested in contributing to peace in Colombia.

Keywords

Peacebuilding, post-conflict, conflict, Colombia, political economy of conflict, peace agreements, international community