

Does Peace Remain After the Peacekeepers Leave? An Exploration of Peacekeeper (In)Effectiveness

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Introduction

Does peace remain after peacekeepers leave? We argue that peacekeeper (PK) violence displacement results only in temporary pauses in civilian targeting because peacekeeper exit leaves a power vacuum later filled by actors without negative incentives to harm civilians inside an area with no existing power structure to protect non-combatants. We utilize recent innovations in the difference-in-difference literature to understand the direct effects of UN peacekeeper entrance and withdrawal. Finally, we examine violence in neighboring cells to examine whether peacekeepers displace violence.

Data and Methods

- Armed Conflict Location and Event Database (ACLED) violence data
- Robust Africa Deployments for Peacekeeping Operations (RADPKO) data on UN peacekeeper movement
- Spatially disaggregated panel model
- Callaway and Sant'Anna's group-time average treatment effect, newly utilized in the PK literature.

H1: As peacekeepers leave a cell, local violence is more likely to increase.

H2: As peacekeepers enter a cell, violence in neighboring cells is more likely to increase.

Data Visualized

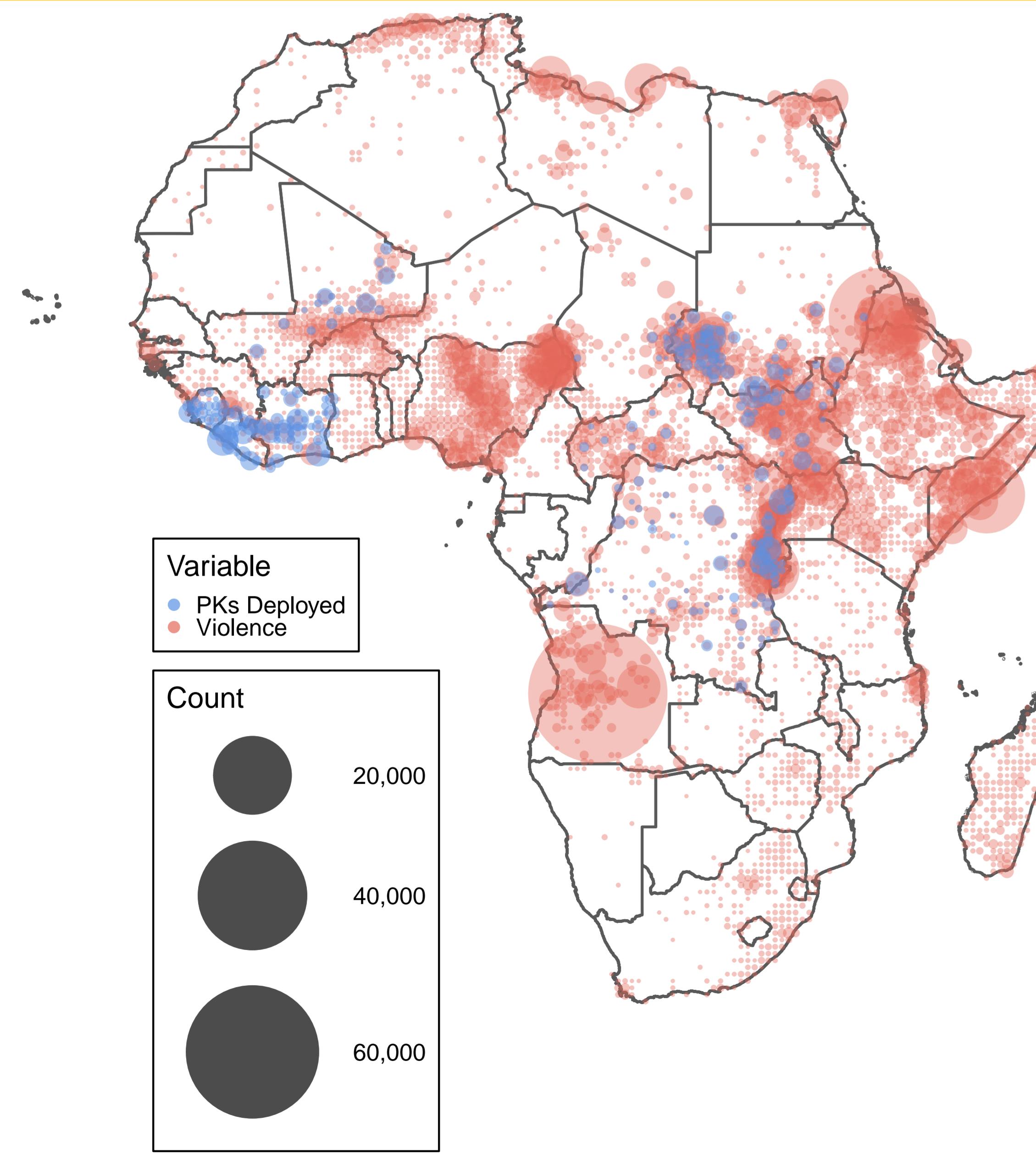


Figure 1. The dispersion of violence and Chapter VII Peacekeeping Operations throughout Africa from 1999-2018.

Violence Displacement and Return

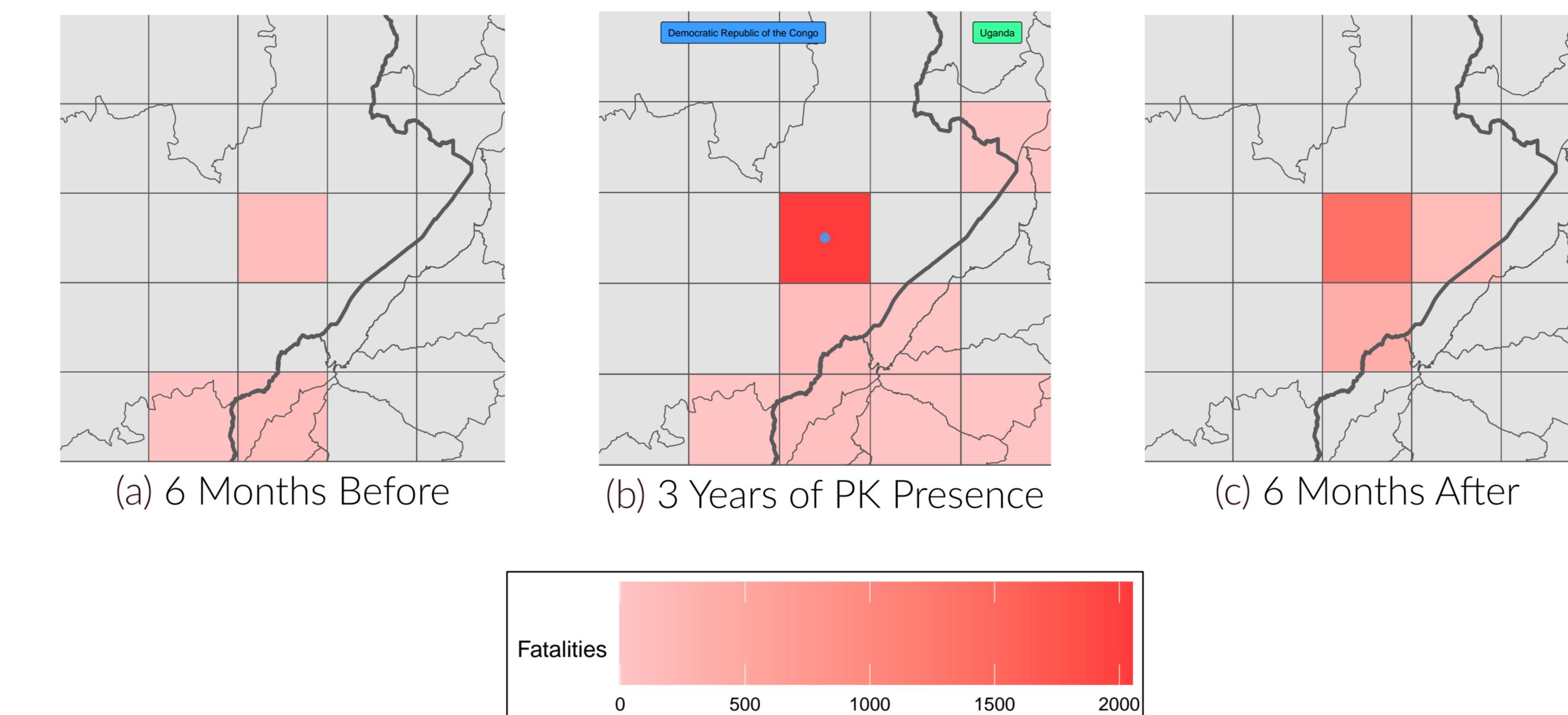


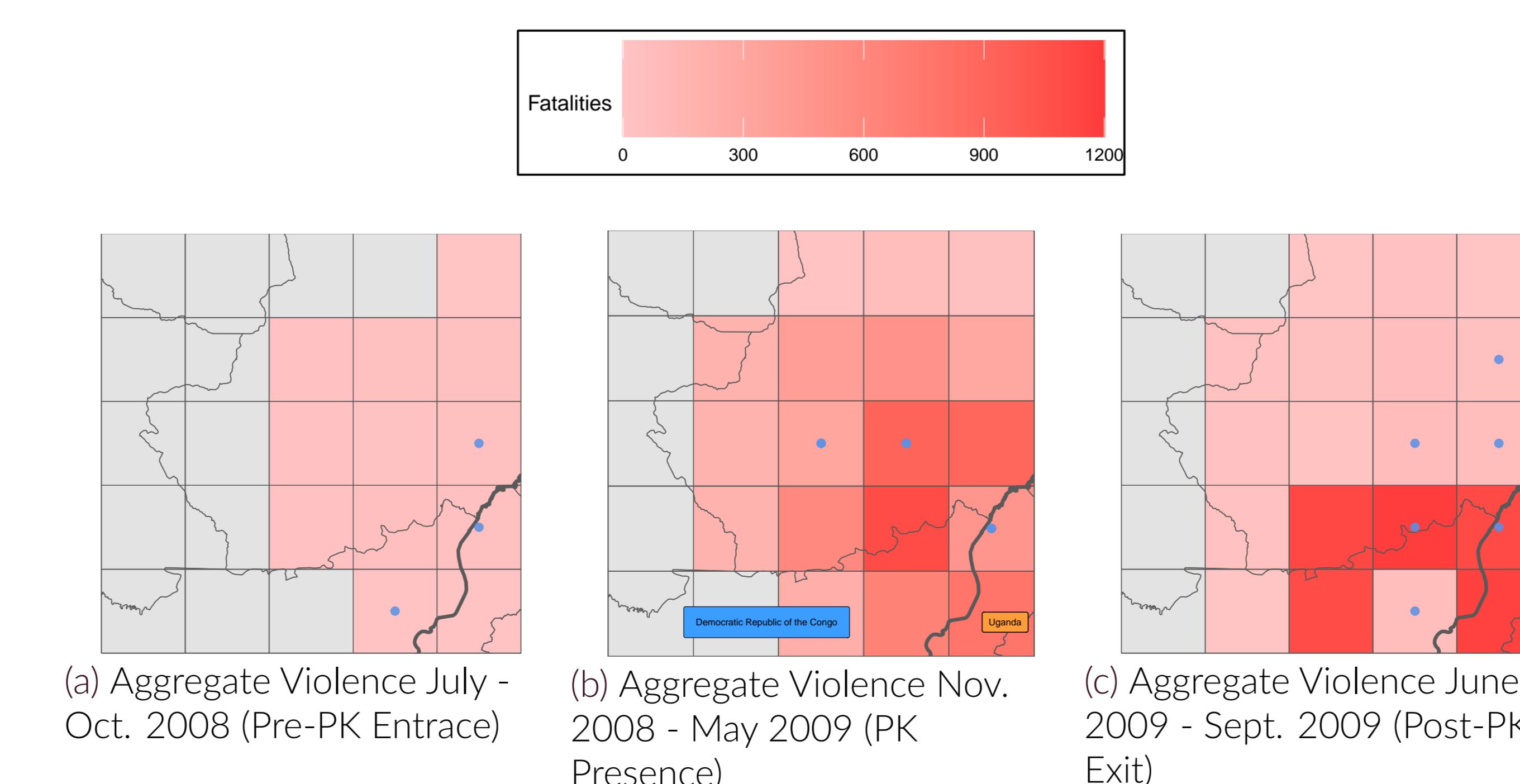
Figure 2. Aggregate Violence in the DRC six months before peacekeeper entrance, three years during peacekeeper presence, and six months after peacekeeper exit.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO) has been mandated to:

- Protect civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders from violence.
- Assist the DRC's government in peace and stabilization efforts.

In MONUSCO, in Figures 2 & 3, we see a clear example of the effects discussed in our paper. Figure 2 shows peacekeepers move into the central grid, violence increases, and after withdrawal from that grid, violence fills the vacuum peacekeepers left behind. Figure 3, on the other hand, shows how peacekeeper entrance into the central grid results in violence displacement into neighboring grids. This movement data illustrates the effects discussed in our hypotheses. The following section shows how these results translate to the larger picture, where peacekeeper entrance and exit affect violence dramatically.

Figure 3. Aggregate Violence in the DRC four months before peacekeeper entrance, seven months during peacekeeper presence, and four months after peacekeeper exit.



Peacekeeper Entrance and Exit

Local Violence

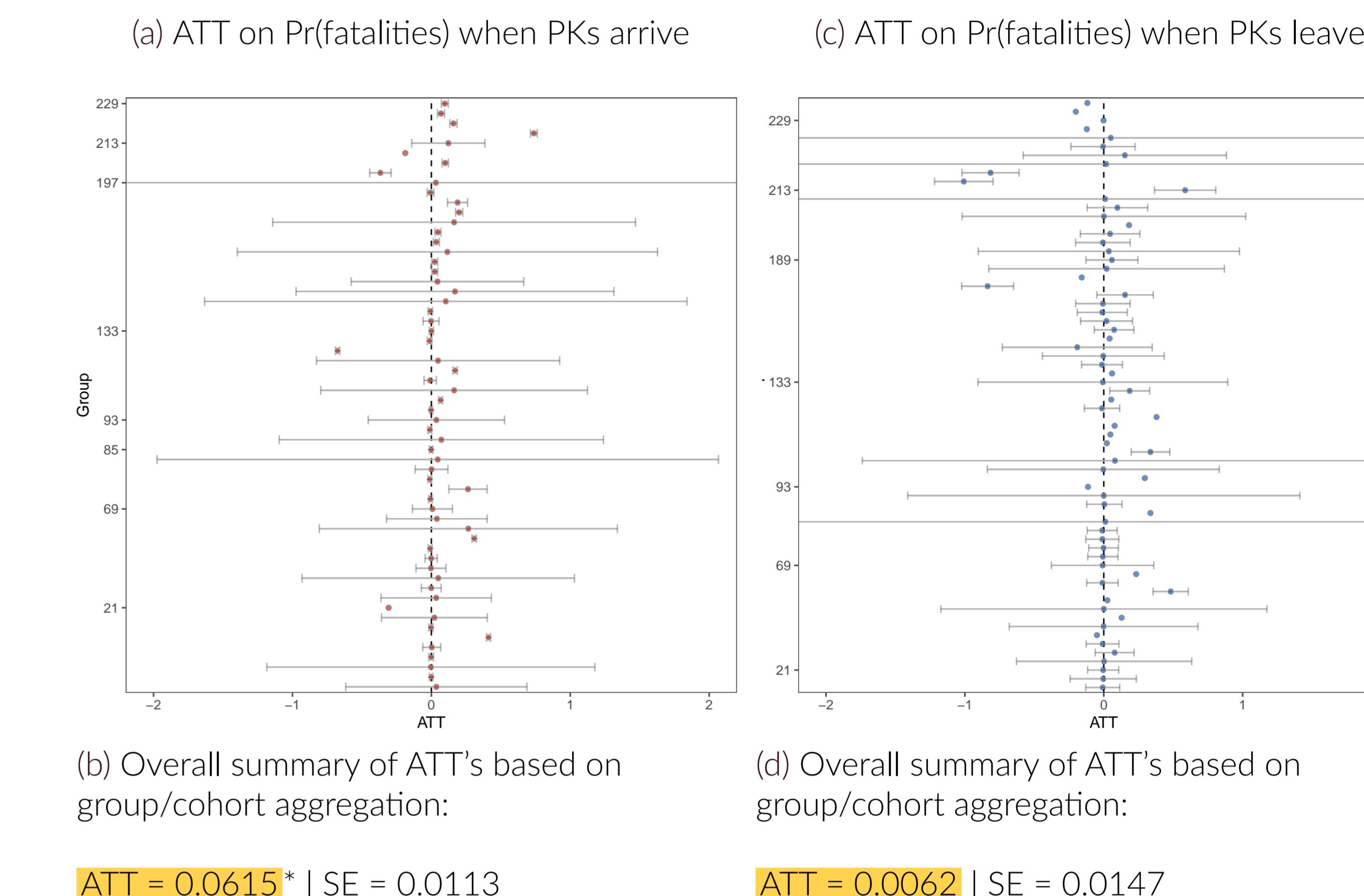


Figure 5. These results suggest a lack of support for H1, while also indicating that peacekeeper arrival increases the chances of violence. The increase in violence on peacekeeper arrival could be due to now-weaker rebel groups being forced to extract resources from the local population.

Neighboring Violence

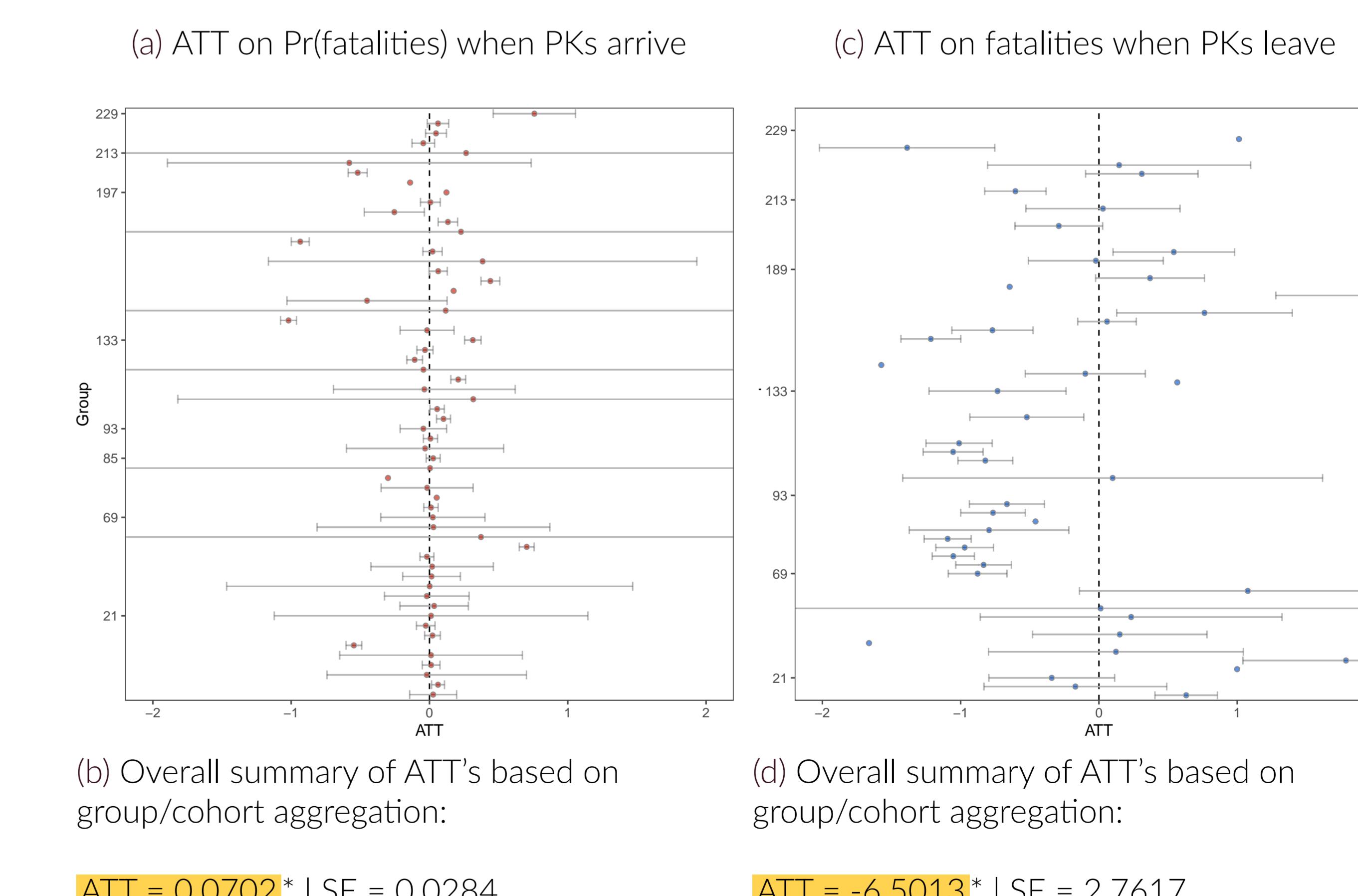


Figure 6. These results, on the other hand, suggest support for H2. Peacekeeper arrival seems to displace violence into neighboring cells; peacekeeper exit has a dramatic effect on decreasing violence in neighboring cells, indicating that political actors return to areas that no longer have peacekeepers.