

Empowered by Information

Disease Outbreak Reporting at the WHO

ZOE XINCHENG GE

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

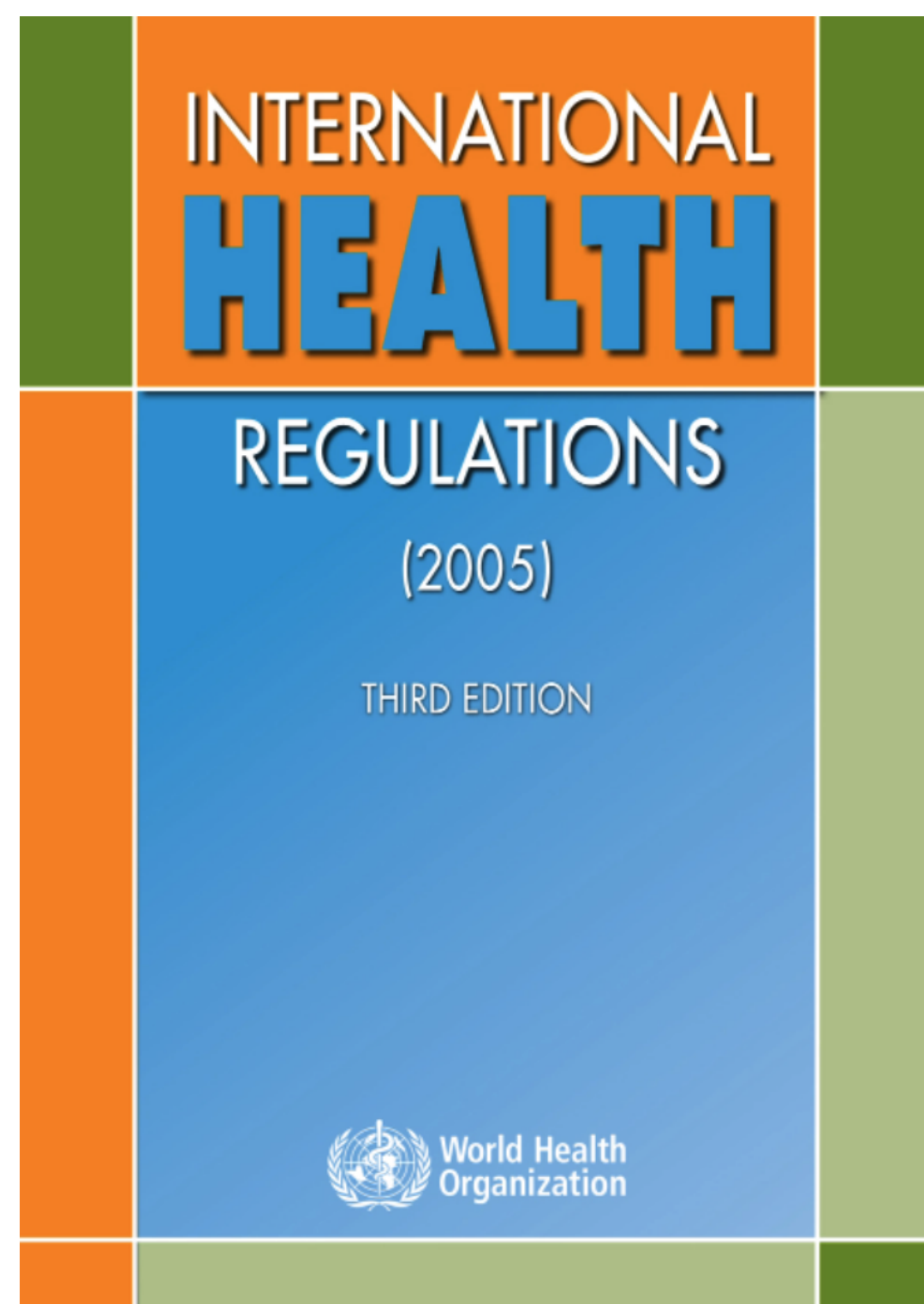
Puzzle

SARS vs. COVID

- Why did China respond differently?

Change at WHO: IHR Reform

- Authority to disseminate info



Research Question

Can toothless international organizations (IOs) like the WHO make states share info?

Argument

Assumption

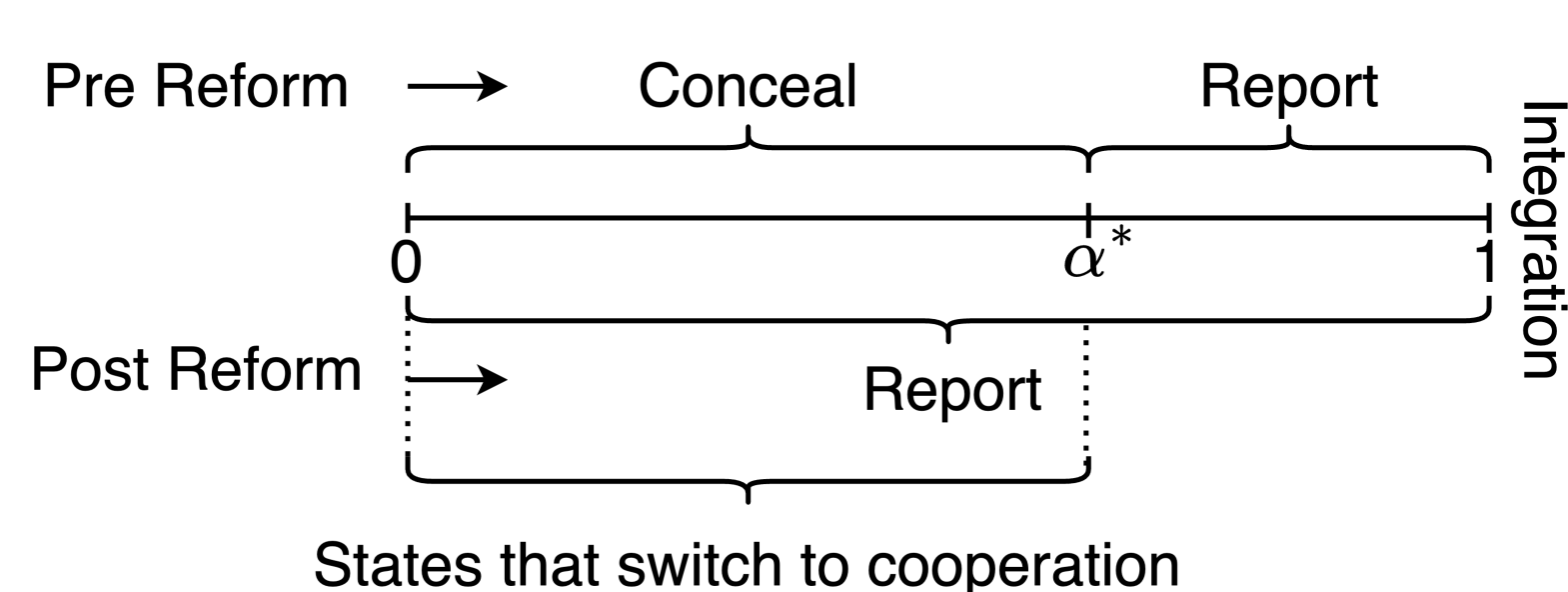
- State integration w. global system ↑
 - Resources for outbreak mitigation ↑
 - Trade and travel bans ↓

Leader's Calculus of Reporting

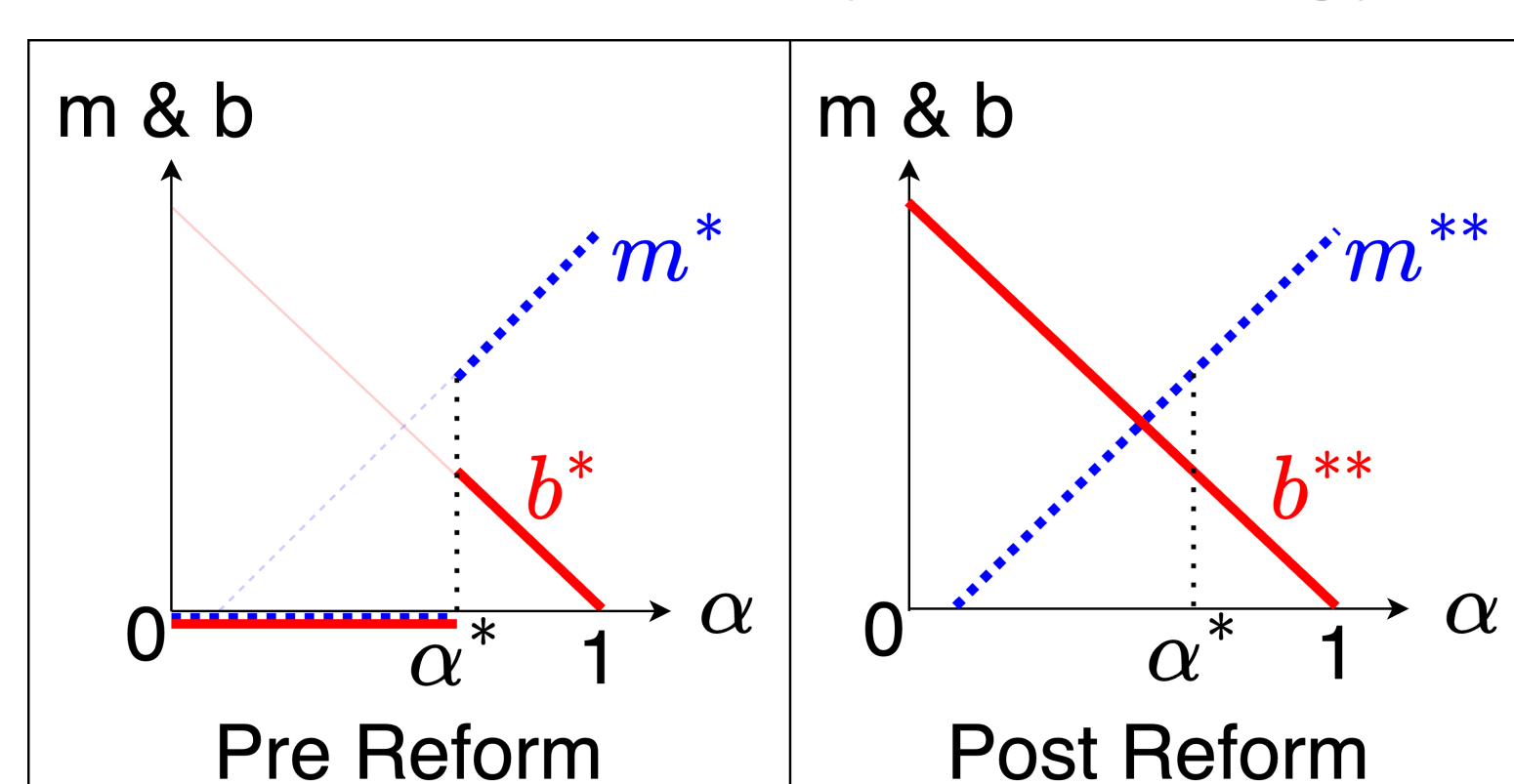
Integration	Can WHO disseminate info?	
	Pre Reform	Post Reform
Deep	Report	Report
Shallow	Conceal	Report

Equilibria

Leader's Strategy



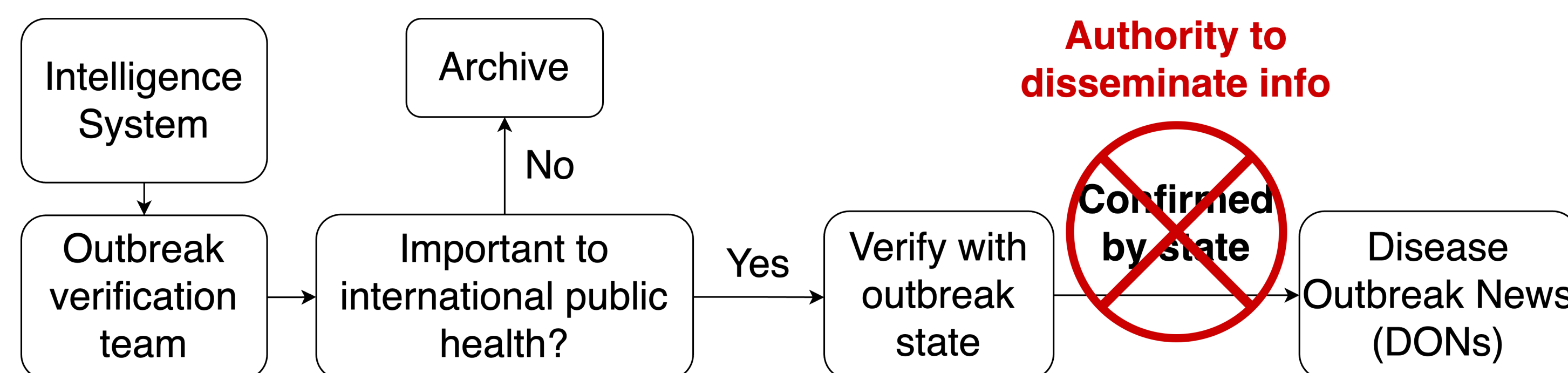
Intl' Community's Strategy



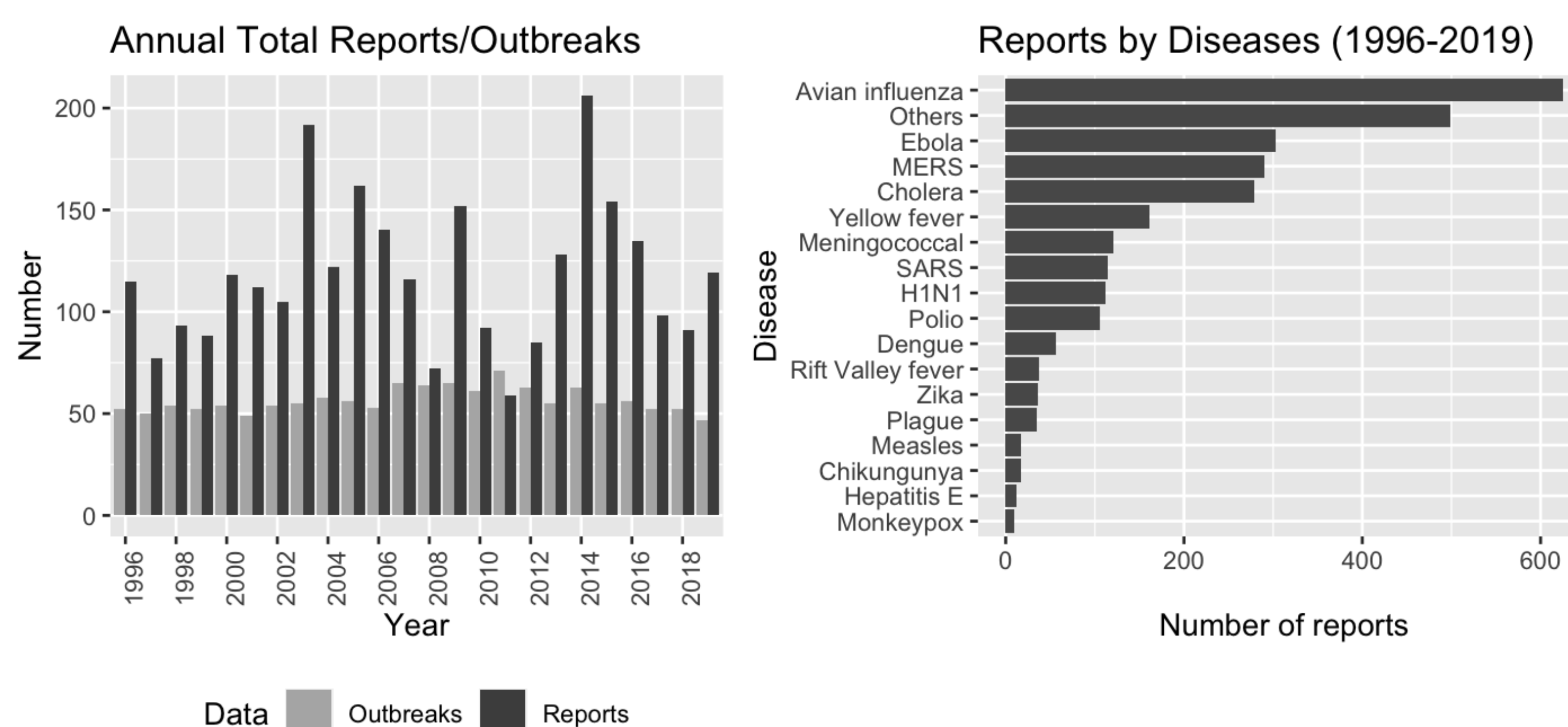
α : integration w. community; m : resources; b : bans

Data

Diseases Outbreak Verification System



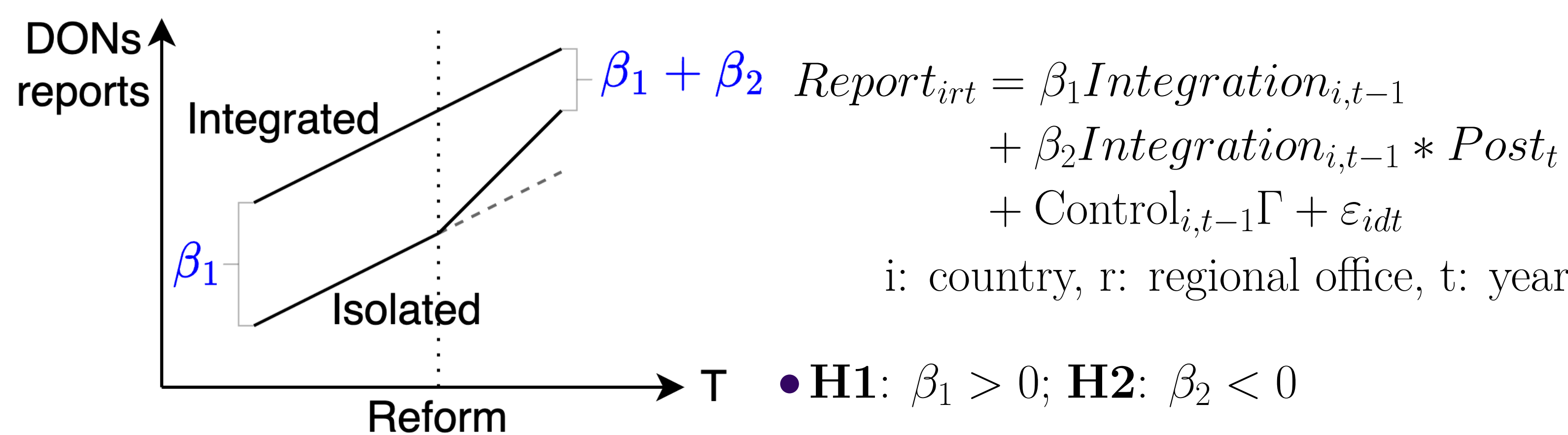
DONs Reports and Outbreak Events



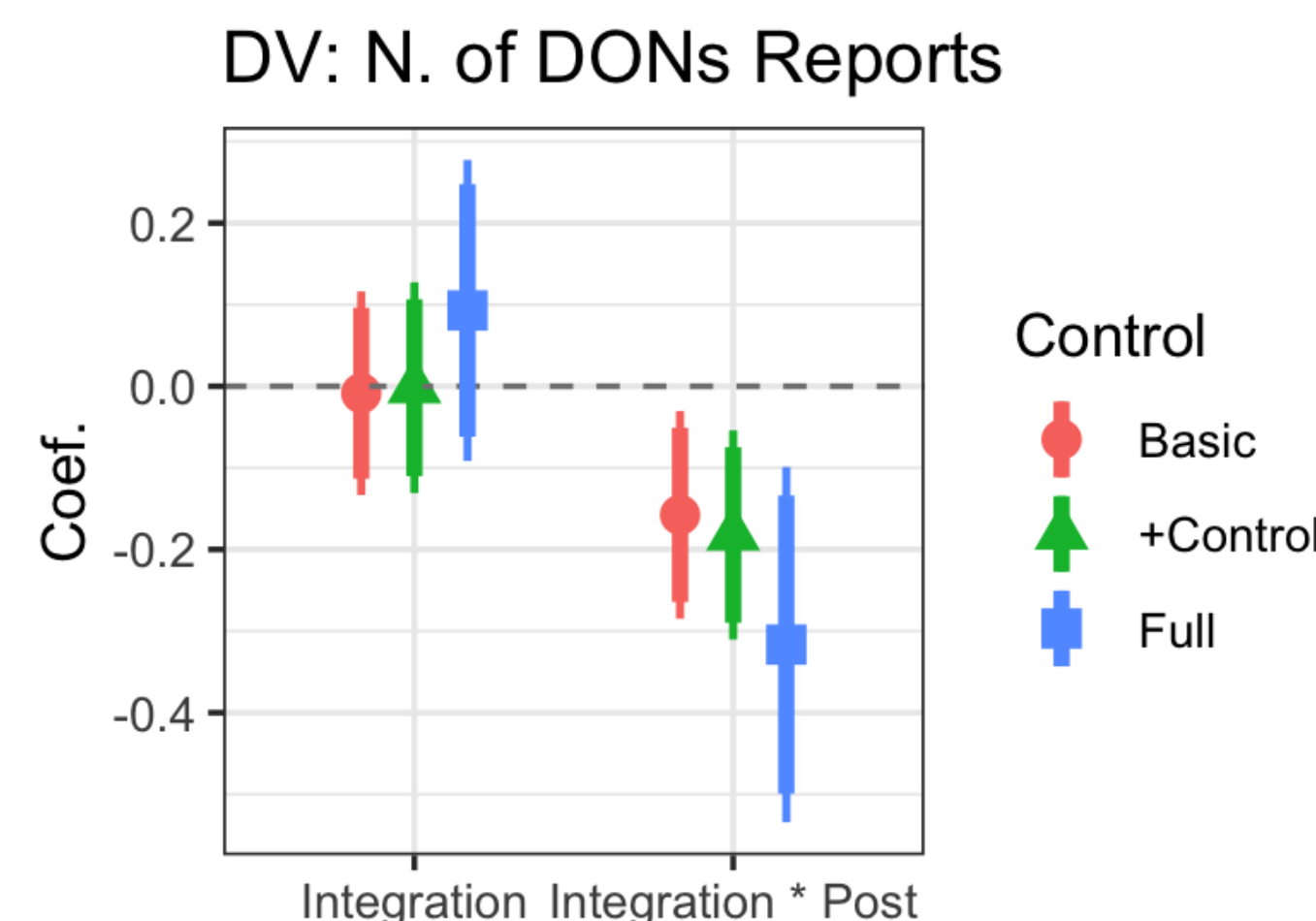
Important Result

WHO uses information to induce cooperation from states, especially from states isolated from the international community

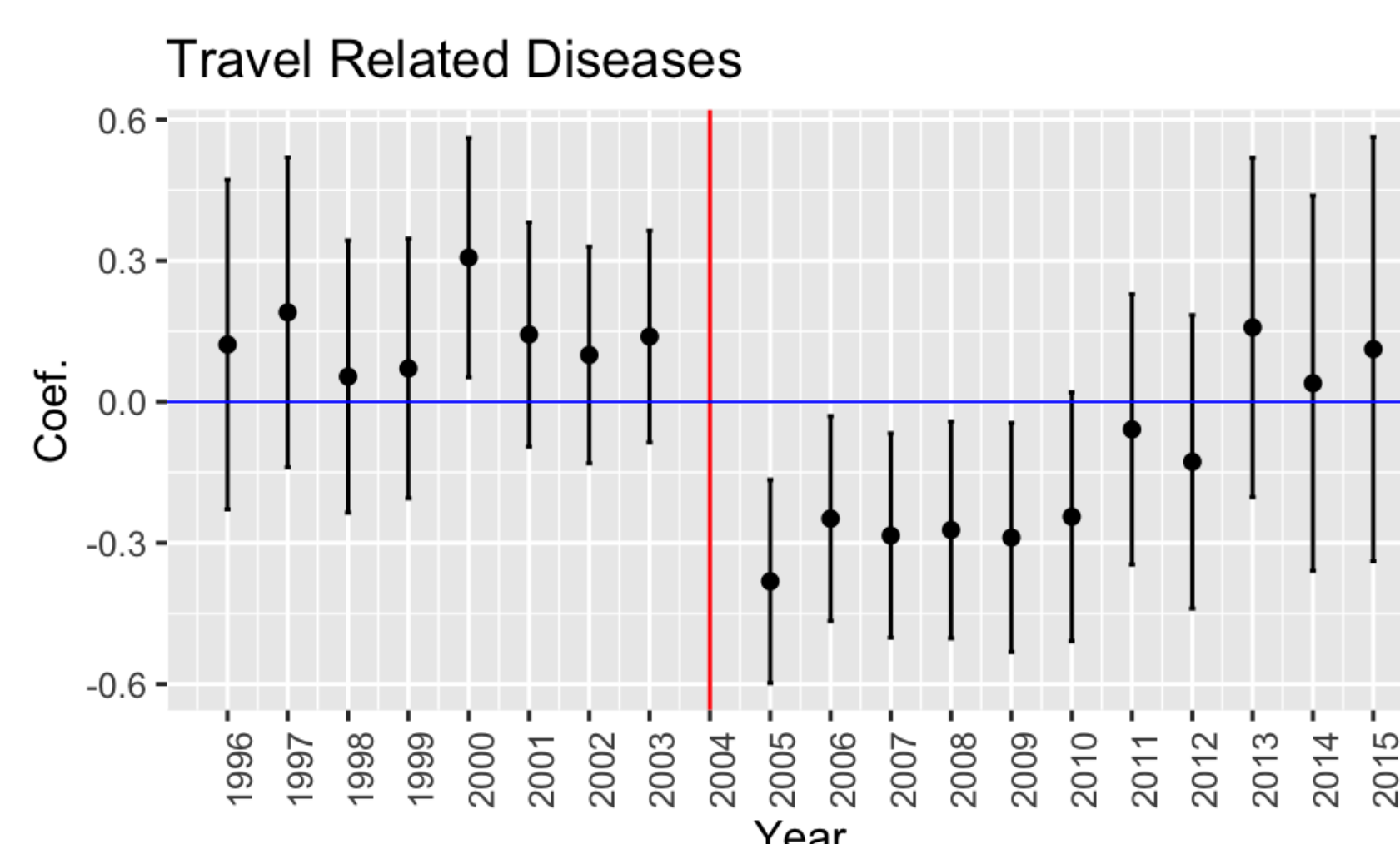
Results



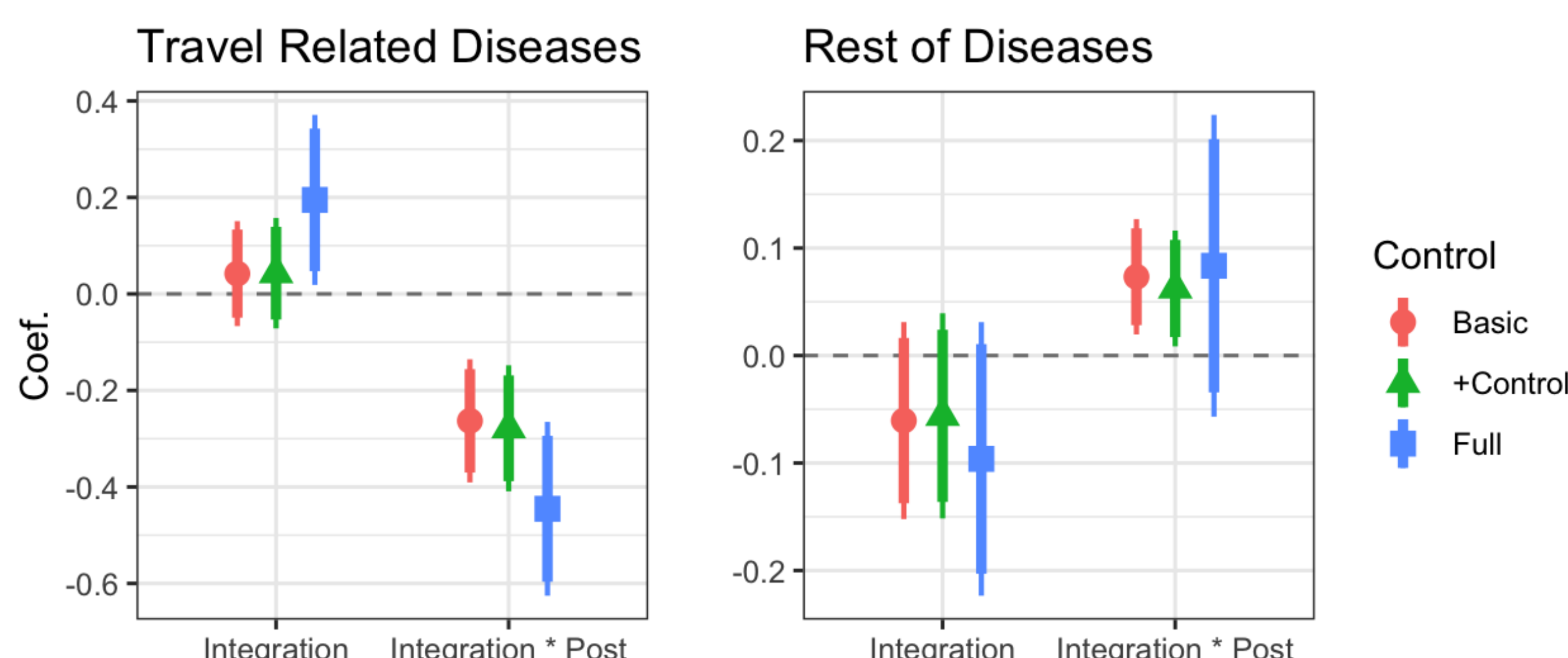
Baseline Results



Pre-Trend Analysis



Mechanism Check



Hypotheses

- H1:** Before IHR reform, states less integrated with the intl' community had less DONs reports
- H2:** IHR reform increased reporting from states w. shallow integration

Measurement

Cooperation with Reporting

- N. of DONs reports

Integration w. Intl' Community

Z-score: mean of standardized score

- Political
 - Ideal point distance (UNGA) w. US
- Economic
 - Imports from US
- Geographic
 - Seats on direct flights to US

Robustness

- Placebo test
 - Outbreak events as DV: no effect
- The results are not driven by
 - Regime type
 - Transparency
 - China/Saudi Arabia

Contributions

- Compliance**
 - Info authority empowers weak IOs
- Powerful state influence**
 - Interdependence as new mechanism
 - Independence enhances powerful actors' influence in IOs
- Global health governance**
 - Heterogeneous effect of IHR reform

Implication

Cooperation vs. politicization

"It is wrong to be any 'country-centric.' I am sure we are not China-centric. The truth is, if we are going to be blamed, it is right to blame us for being U.S.-centric."

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General of the WHO

Contact Information

- Web: <https://wp.nyu.edu/zoege>
- Email: xg762@nyu.edu