

International Crisis Communication

How the UNSC Communicated about COVID-19 During the Pandemic

MOTIVATION

- A global problem that truly affected the entire world, something that impacted every society, country and even person.
- This project explores how the United Nations communicated about Covid-19 during the global pandemic from 2019 to 2023.

HYPOTHESIS

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, UN communications mainly focused on globally important countries (due to size, power, or crisis level) and on vulnerable regions where the pandemic overlapped with conflict and humanitarian issues.

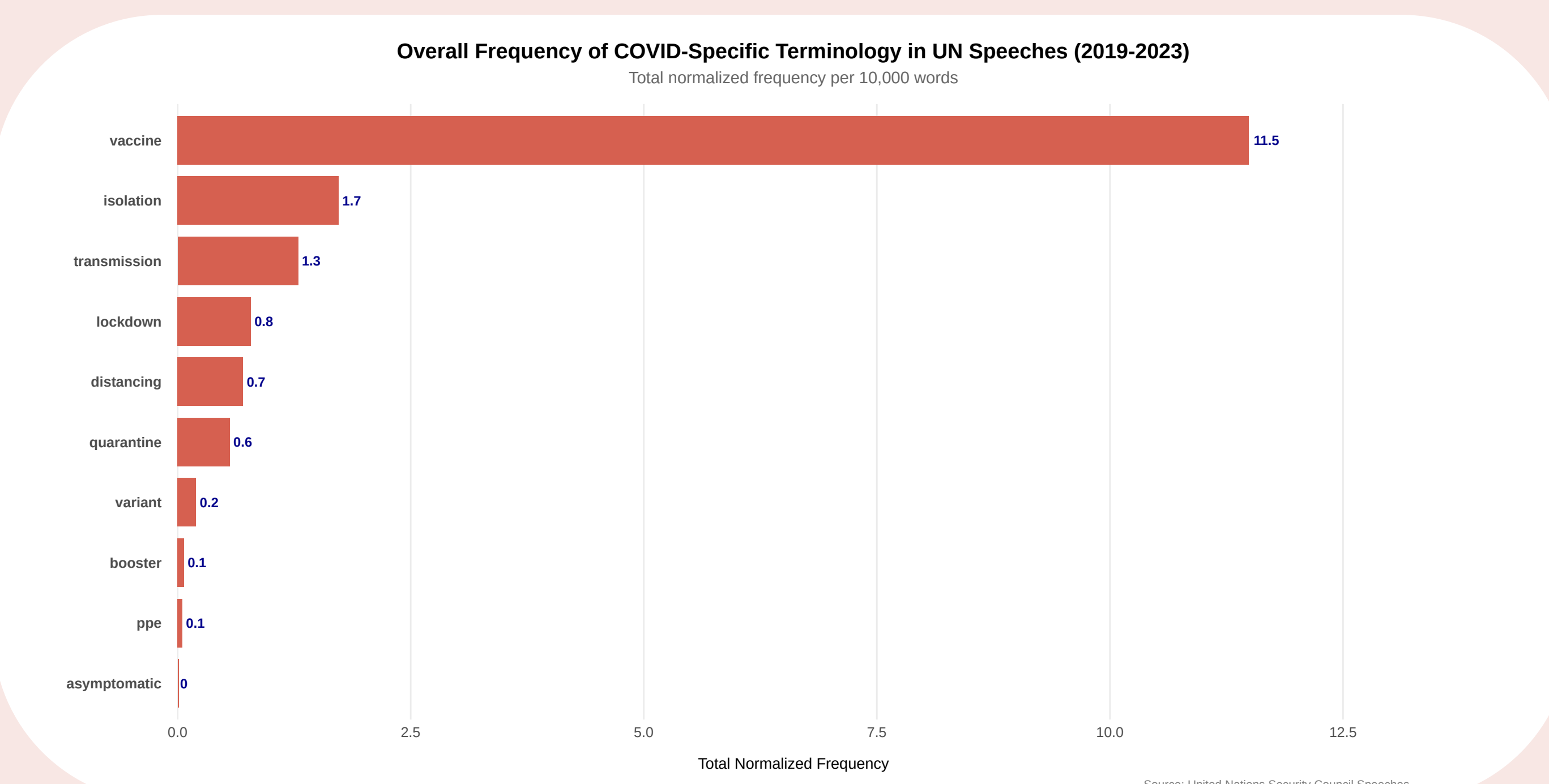
CONCLUSION



The **dual-focus hypothesis** on both global powers and vulnerable regions in UN COVID-19 communications **is supported by the data**.

- The charts show frequent mentions of major powers like **the US, China, India, Brazil, and Russia** — likely due to their **global influence and high case numbers**.
- Mentions of **Syria, Yemen, and Iraq** highlight concern for **fragile, conflict-affected regions**.
- Focus on **health and conflict topics** supports this dual attention to **powerful and vulnerable areas**.

RESEARCH QUESTION: How the language and focus of these communications changed during different phases of the pandemic?



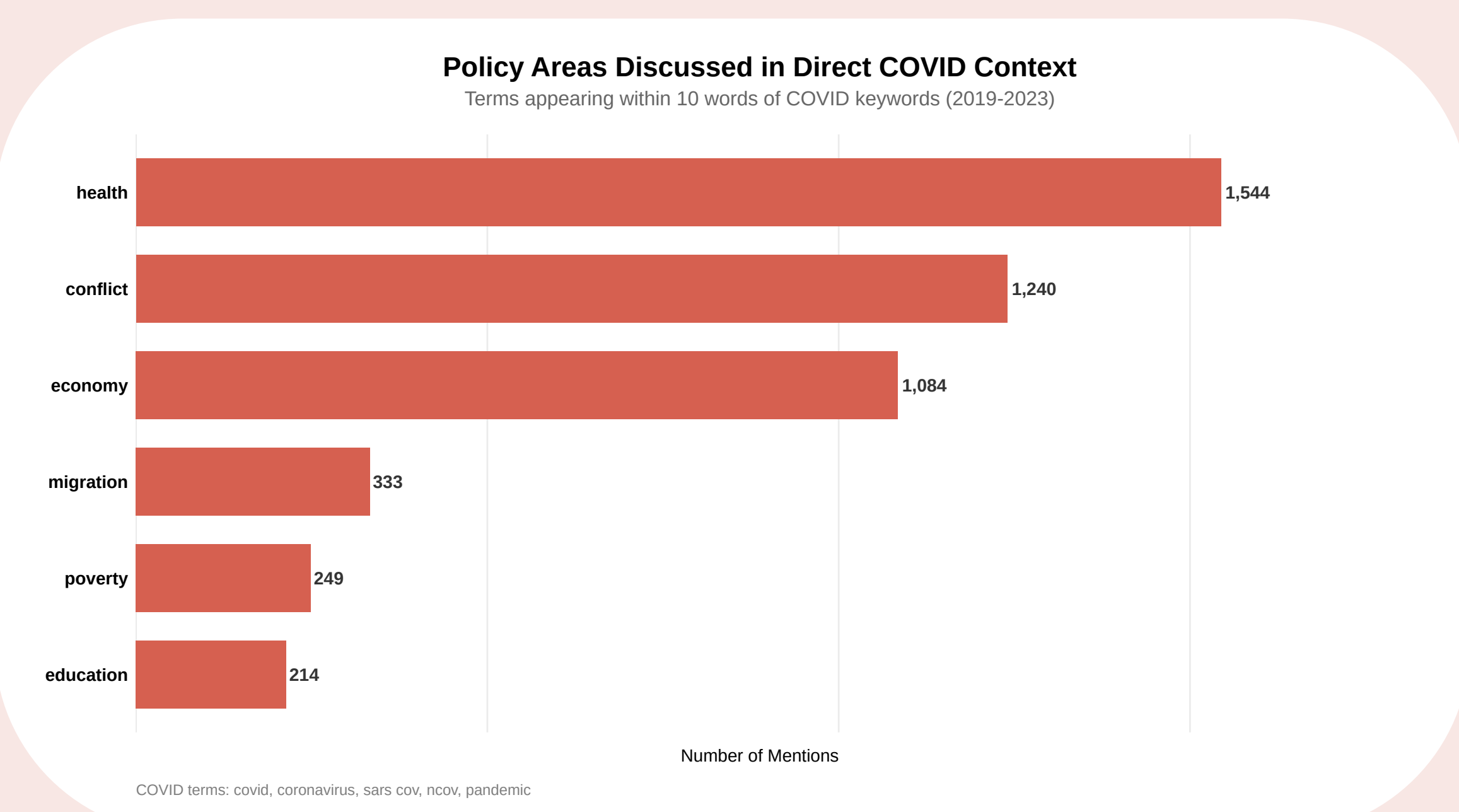
The most frequently used term is **“vaccine”** (11,5 mentions per 10.000 words), far surpassing all other COVID-related terms.

- 2020 (early pandemic):** focus on **containment-related terms** — **“isolation”, “distancing”, “lockdown”** — reflecting anxiety and mitigation efforts.
- 2021 (pandemic peak):** shift in focus — strong emphasis on vaccines, while containment terms decline.
- 2022-2023 (decline):** COVID-related language largely disappears as **the pandemic fades** from the Security Council agenda.

METHODOLOGY: Word frequency analysis: to find the most common terms; TF-IDF Score

RESEARCH QUESTION:

Which policy areas were emphasized most in UN communications text?



1. Health was the most emphasized policy area in UN COVID-related communications, with 1.544 mentions near COVID terms.

2. Conflict and economy were also highly prominent, with 1.240 and 1.084 mentions respectively.

3. Migration, poverty, and education received significantly less attention — 4 to 7 times fewer mentions than health.

METHODOLOGY: Quantitative content analysis, measuring the co-occurrence of COVID-related terms with specific policy areas.

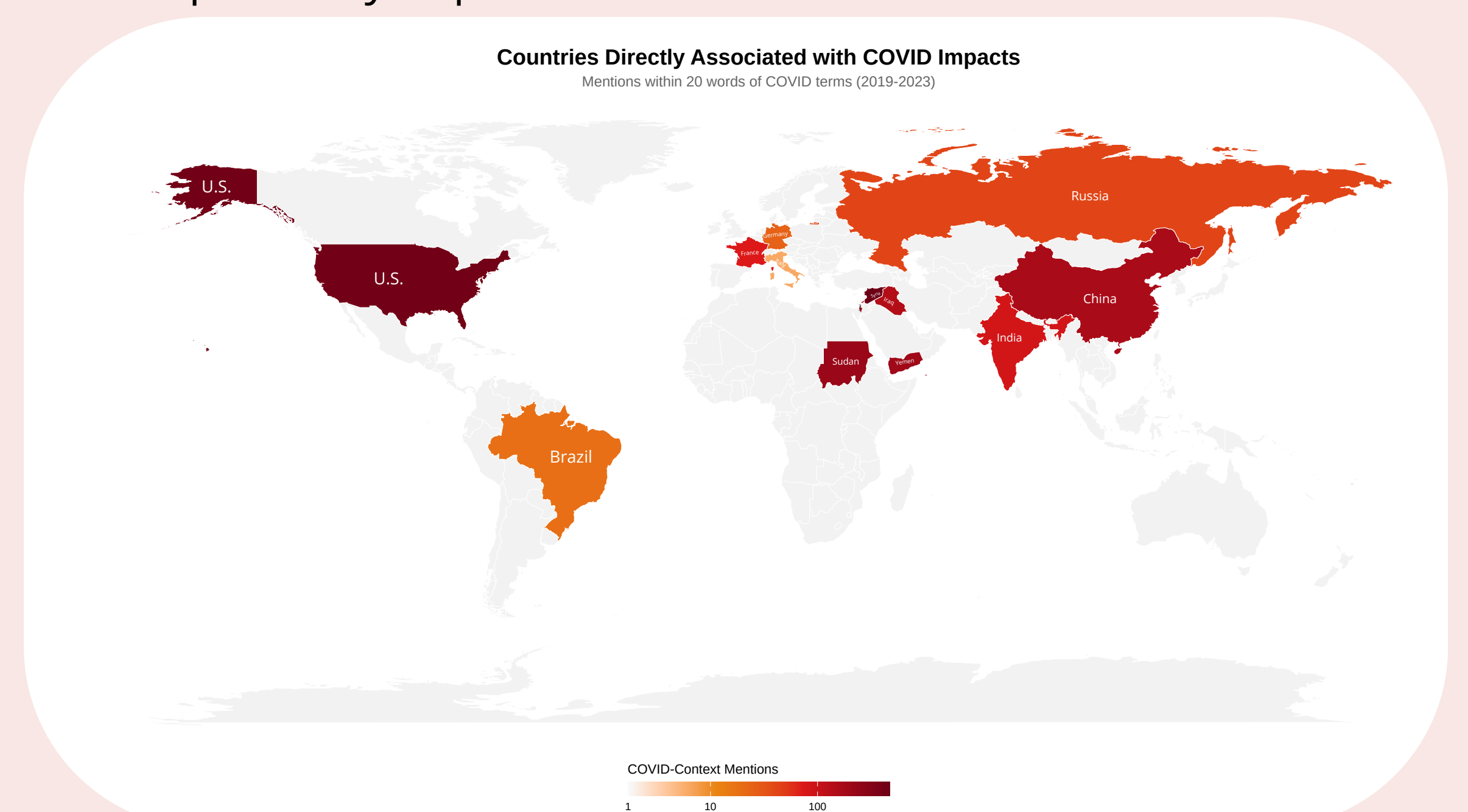
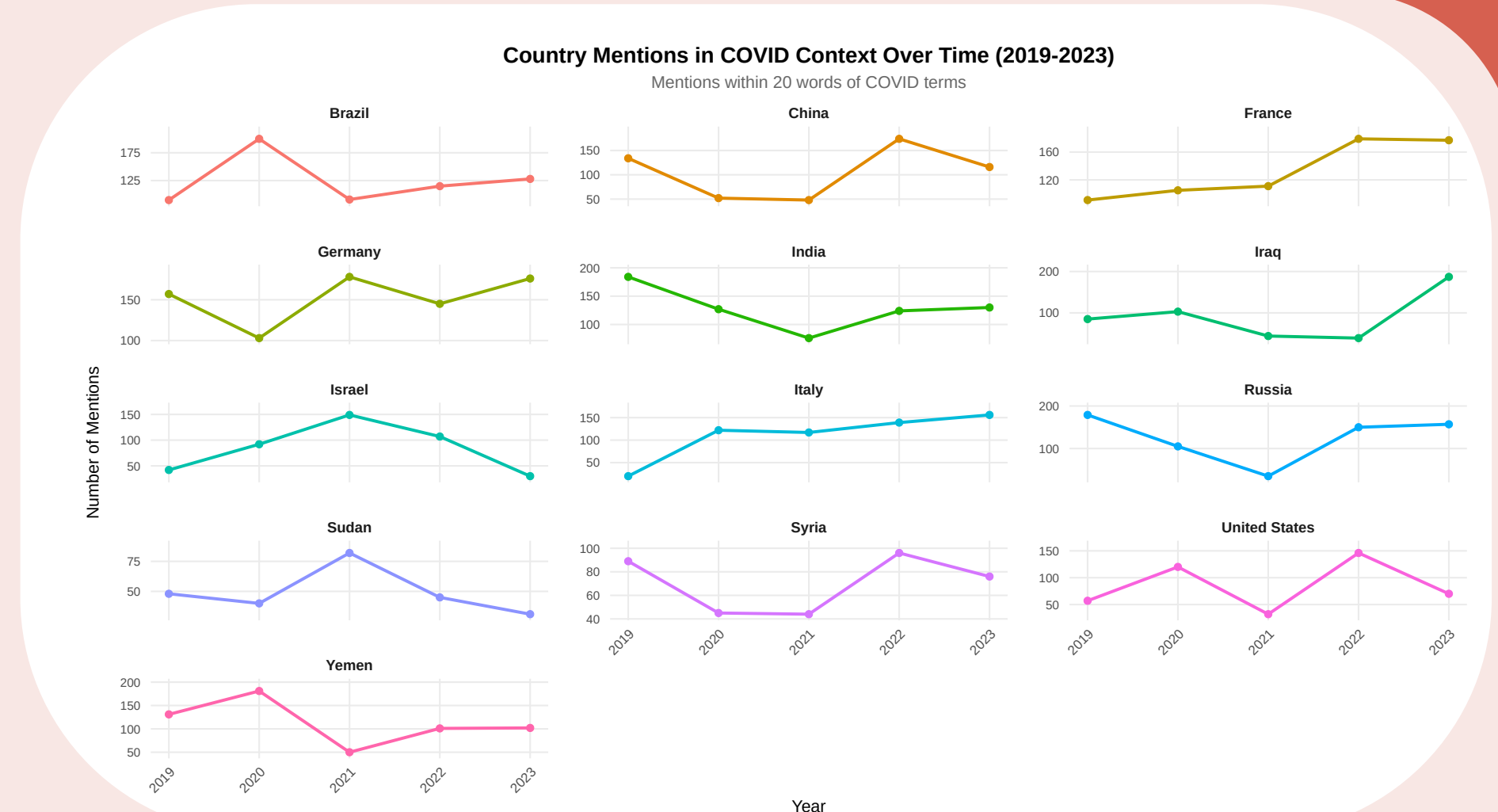
RESEARCH QUESTION:

Which countries were most often mentioned and whether geographic patterns can be seen.

- The U.S., China, India, Brazil, and Russia** are mentioned the most, showing their **importance in global politics, population, and the pandemic's impact**.

2. Conflict zones are mentioned because of both **war and weak healthcare: Syria, Yemen, and Iraq** came up often not just due to conflict, but because their health systems were fragile during COVID-19.

3. Mentions show both global coverage and regional focus: Countries from all over the world are mentioned, but especially those **in Asia and the US**, where the pandemic was especially intense and politically important.



METHODOLOGY: Geographic mapping: to link themes and keywords to specific countries or regions.