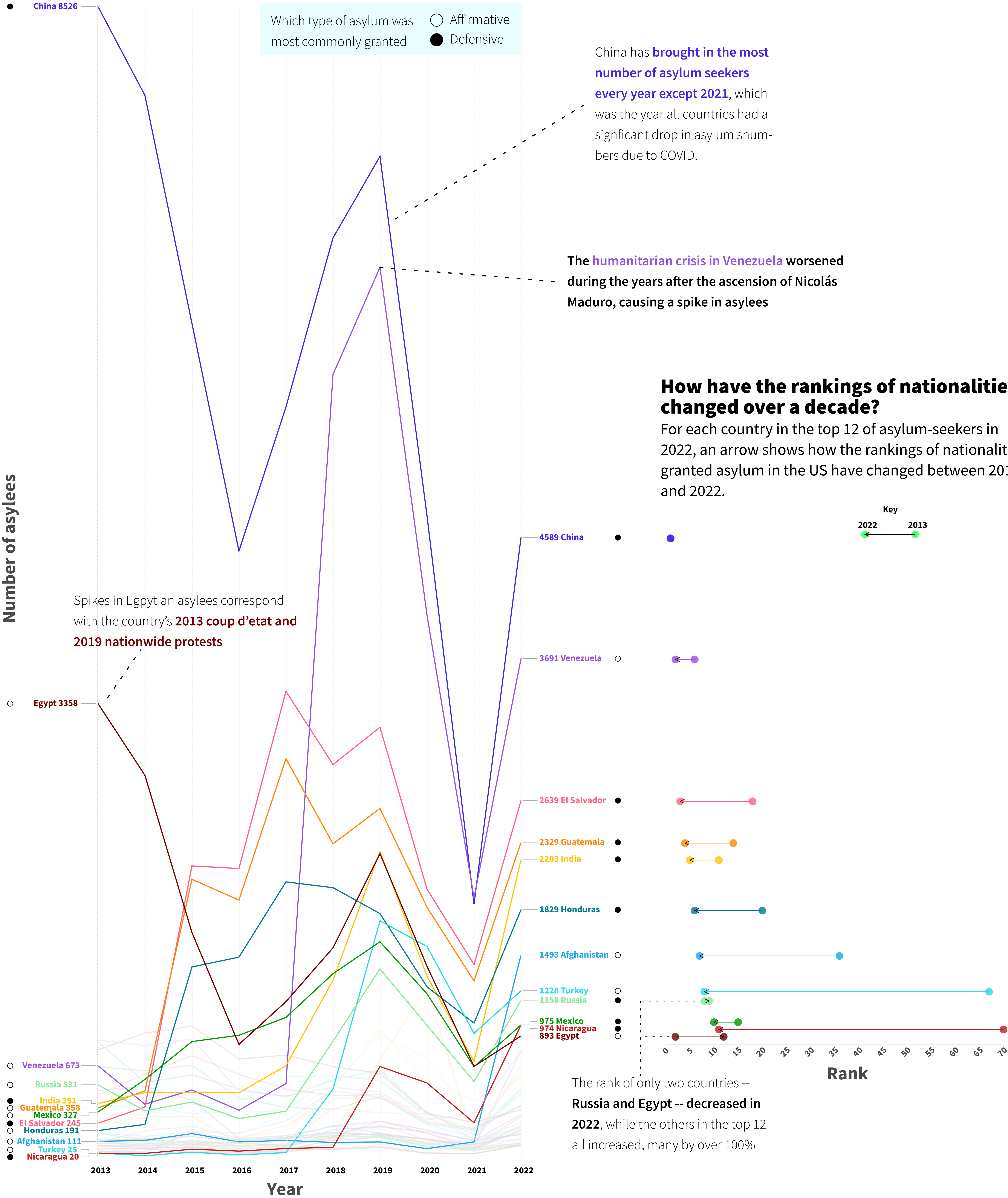


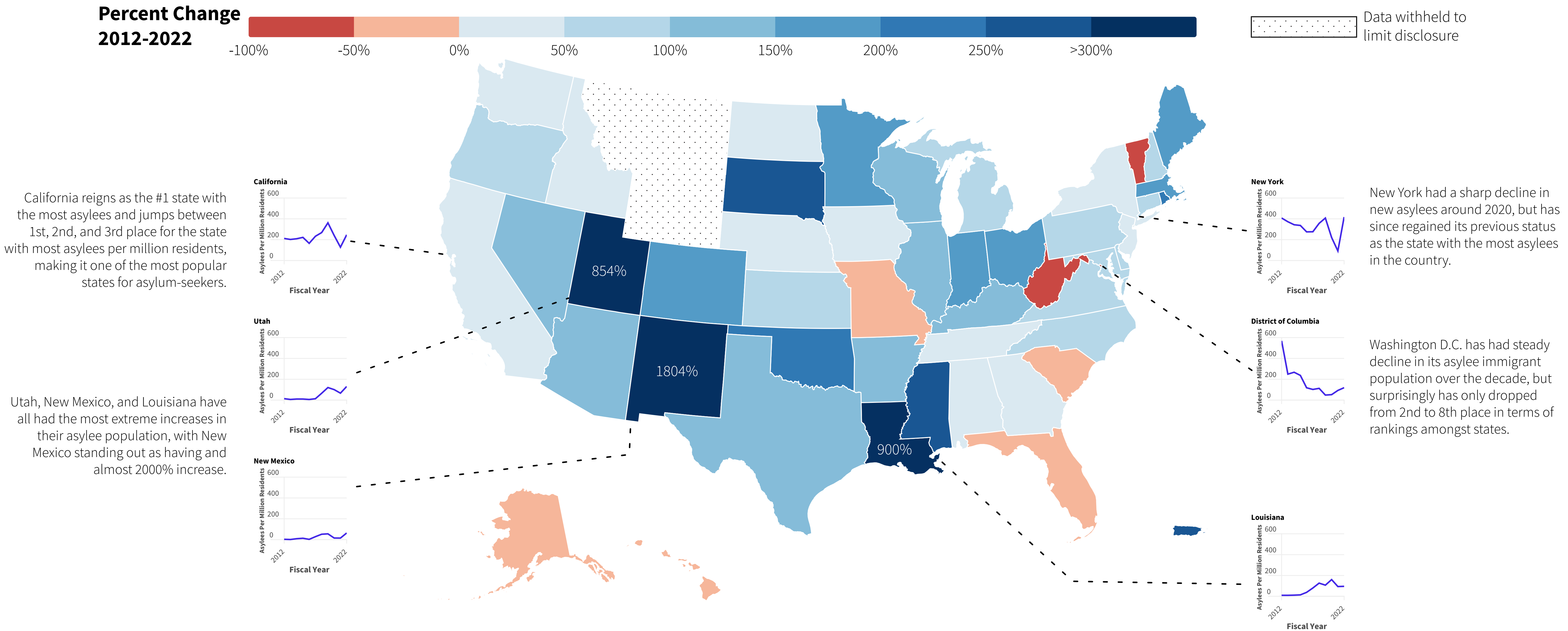
**What countries have brought the most asylees into the US?**  
Combining data from both affirmative and defensive asylum records, we look at how the total number of asylum-seekers of various nationalities have changed from 2013-2022. In this graphic we highlight the top 12 nationalities that were granted asylum in the US in 2022. For each country, we also show whether affirmative or defensive asylum was more commonly granted in 2013 and in 2022 using an open circle or closed circle, respectively.



# Have the states where asylees seek refuge changed from 2012 to 2022?

## We looked at the percent change of the total number of affirmative and defensive asylum applications per million residents granted in different U.S. states between 2012 and 2022.

Most states had an overall slight increase in number of asylees per million residents despite the sharp drop during the pandemic peak, with a few notable and unexpected outliers: Louisiana, Utah, and New Mexico all experienced dramatic increases in their asylum population, while West Virginia, Vermont, and Washington D.C. had sharp declines.



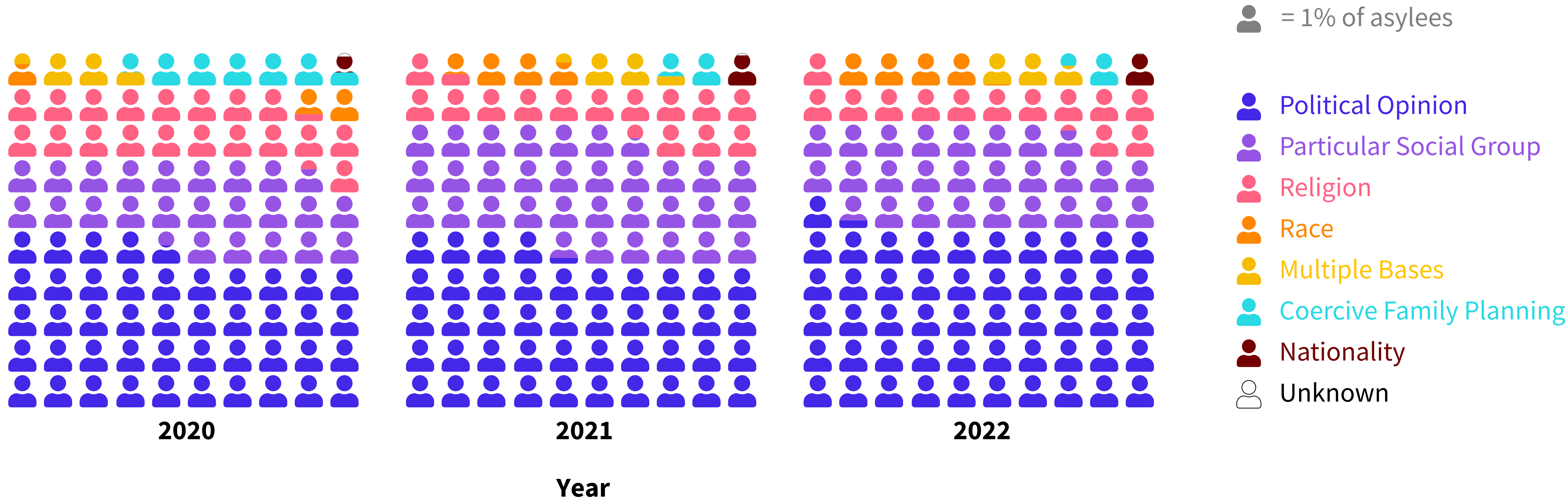


# Diverse Asylees, Stagnant Offices:

Immigrants seek asylum for many reasons, but most wait years for a decision while immigration offices struggle to deal with an ever-growing backlog of applications

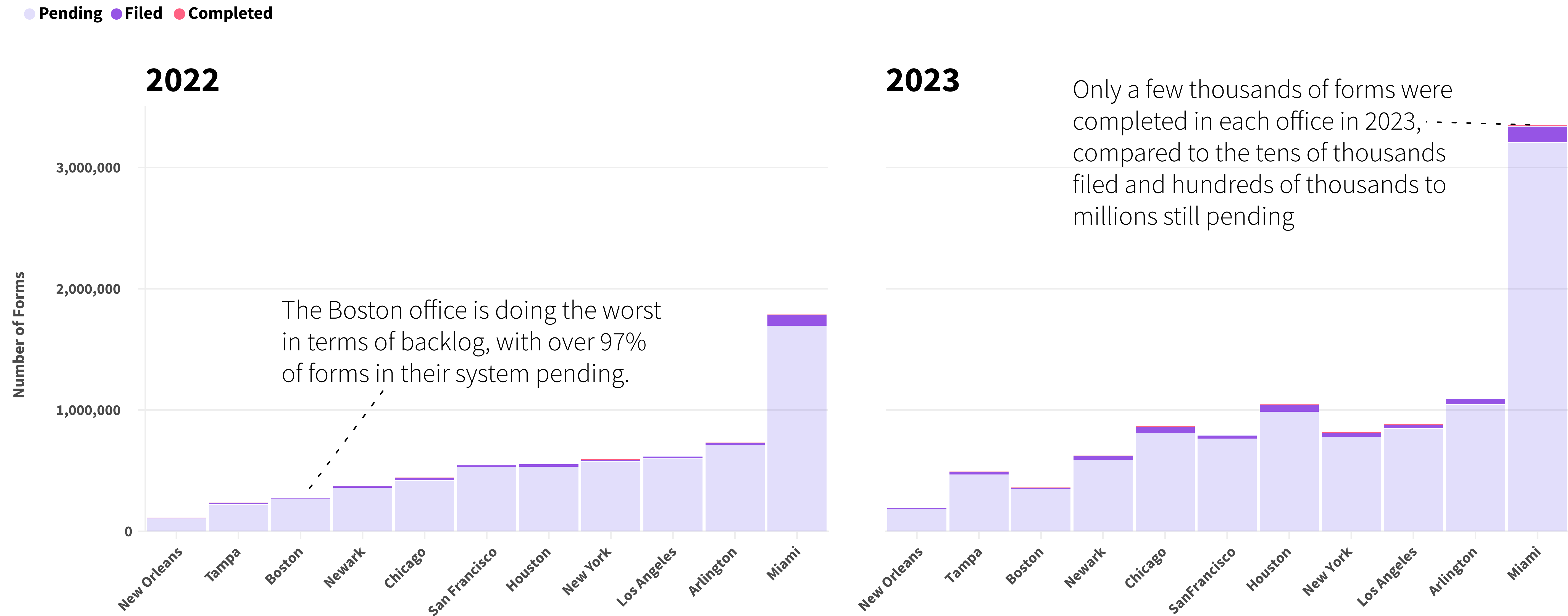
## Grants of Affirmative Asylum by Basis of Claim: Fiscal Years 2020 to 2022

This graphic shows the percent of affirmative (form I-589) applications granted for different reasons. The most common reason for the asylum ask is **Political Opinion** (~50%), followed by being part of a **Particular Social Group** (~20-30%).



## Status of Affirmative Asylum Forms Submitted to Various Offices: Fiscal Years 2022 & 2023

A breakdown of the total number of pending, filed, and completed I-589 (Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal) forms to various United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) offices in 2022 and 2023. **All offices have an overwhelming backlog of pending cases which is only increasing over time.** Miami, the office seeing the most total number of forms, went from over 1,690,000 pending forms to over 3,200,00 in one year, an almost 100% increase.



# Asylum in America, by the Numbers

Original article online:

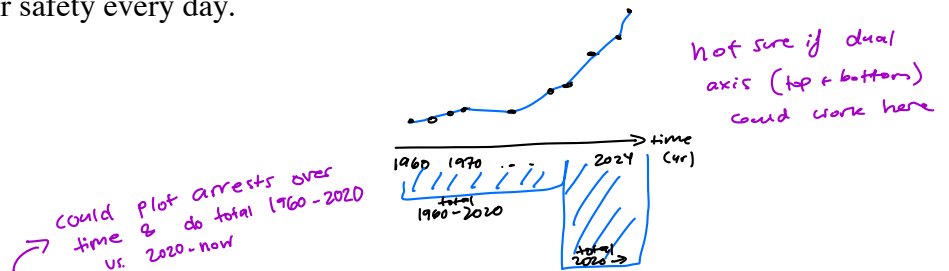
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/21/us/politics/migrant-crisis-border-asylum.html>

Headline: A migration crisis is overwhelming government resources as thousands of people come to the United States looking for safety every day.

By [Eileen Sullivan](#)

Reporting from Washington

Nov. 21, 2023



Under President Biden, the Border Patrol has arrested more people for illegally crossing the southern border into the country than in any other period since the government started keeping count in 1960.

His time in office coincides with a global migration movement driven by tens of millions of people displaced because of war, persecution, climate change, violence and human rights abuses, according to the United Nations.

are there stats on reasons ppl immigrate? might be interesting to see most common ones!

More Americans far from the border are witnessing the trend as migrants make their way to cities around the country. Most of these migrants have been told to appear in immigration court, often years from now. Some seek asylum with the goal of staying in the country permanently.

what cities have the highest % of asylum seekers? where are they typically sent to wait?

Republicans have long used immigration as a cudgel against Democrats. Now Democratic officials in parts of the country are asking the Biden administration to do more to help support the hundreds of thousands of migrants who arrive in their cities with nothing.

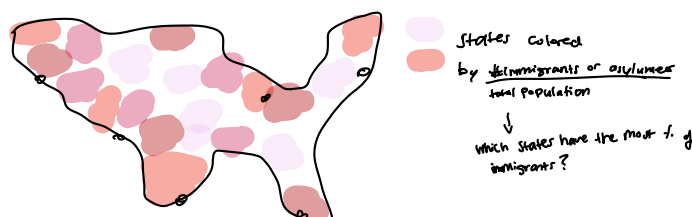
It is drawing attention to an immigration system that has been under strain for decades. Congress has failed to update laws designed to address the American economy and migration trends of 30 years ago. And the asylum system, chronically understaffed and underfunded, has a backlog of two million cases that some say is insurmountable.

how many cases presented/year vs. how many have been dealt w/ & on what timescale?

Here is a by-the-numbers look at the current system based on data from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Customs and Border Protection and the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University.

## More than six million arrests

Border Patrol agents made that many arrests from February 2021 through the end of this September. During that time, border officials quickly released more than 1.7 million people to

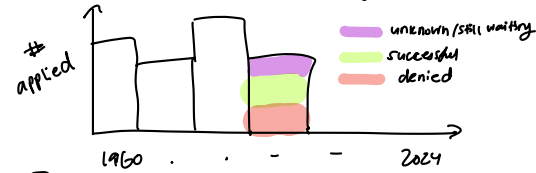


• Points where an immigration office or point of control is

stay in the country temporarily. Thousands more were transferred to an immigration detention center and released to do the same.

People have one year from the day they enter the United States to file an asylum application. There is no public data about the percentage of people who cross into the country without authorization and end up applying for asylum. !

## More than 800,000 applications



That is the number of people who applied for asylum in the past year, a 63 percent jump over the number of applications filed in the previous year.

Because people have a year to apply for asylum, the number of applications each month often correlates with the number of crossings the previous year. In the 2022 fiscal year, border officials made 2.3 million apprehensions, the highest number of [illegal crossings recorded since at least 1960](#), when the government first began tracking such entries.

## More than two million in backlog

That is the number of people in the United States who are waiting for an answer from the federal government about whether they will be granted asylum.

Some of the migrants face persecution or torture in their home countries and could qualify for [asylum in the United States](#). But most do not fit within the qualifications set in a 1980 law that Congress has not updated.

*is there data on why asylum applications are rejected & most common reasons?*

During periods of increased crossings in the past couple of years, at least half of the migrants who have been apprehended have been given permission to stay in the country and fight deportation orders in immigration court.

Although the numbers vary by month, [U.S. government data shows](#) that more than half of the people who crossed the southern border illegally in July and August were released from custody after a few days with permission to stay temporarily.

## Fewer than 1,500 judges and asylum officers

*is there data on # workers vs. # cases over time? see if workers # grow slower than asylum cases*

There are 659 immigration judges and about 800 asylum officers who make decisions about asylum claims. In July, the government received about nine applications for every case it closed.

Asylum applications are filed to two separate government agencies: immigration court, which is part of the Justice Department, and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, an agency within the Homeland Security Department.

Immigration court is typically the route used by people who have crossed into the country illegally at the southern border. They line up to turn themselves in to Border Patrol agents and are placed in deportation proceedings. While their cases are being decided, they can apply for asylum in immigration court.

It would cost more than \$2 billion to eliminate the immigration court backlog over the next five years, according to [analyses](#) and data in [recent funding requests](#).

People who apply for asylum through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services often are those who came to the country legally, **such as through a humanitarian parole program or on a visitor's visa.**

*is there data on the diff. ways ppl immigrate?*

The agency would not provide an estimated cost for what it would take to get rid of its asylum backlog. But officials say it is too deeply underfunded to catch up any time soon. The agency's asylum backlog just exceeded one million for the first time.

*what countries do immigrants typically come from?*

## Ten years in limbo

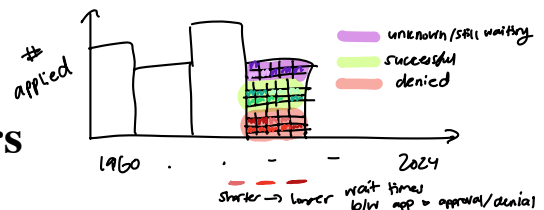
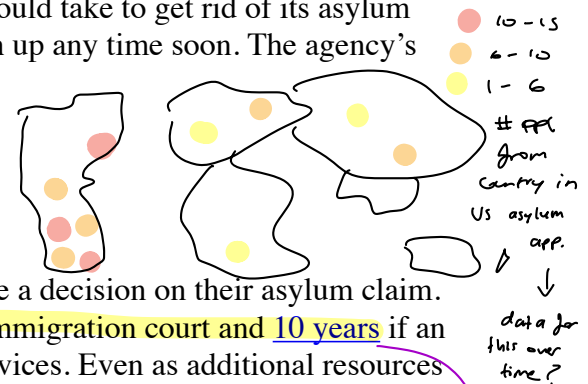
That is how long some people wait for the government to issue a decision on their asylum claim. Recent estimates show the **wait times average three years in immigration court and 10 years** if an application is filed with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Even as additional resources are added to help manage the overwhelming workload, far more asylum applications are filed each year than the government is able to resolve.

For many, the yearslong wait for a decision is benefit enough. Asylum seekers can work legally and often live in much safer environments than the ones they fled. Policymakers say this waiting period, which tends to grow as the backlog grows, has been one of the biggest drivers of illegal immigration.

## 1.3 million with deportation orders

That is the number of people who have been told they must leave the country but are still living in the United States, according to an official familiar with the internal government data. This includes people whose asylum claims have been denied. Once migrants are told by an immigration judge that they must leave the country, they have 90 days to do so. But many never do.

A version of this article appears in print on Nov. 28, 2023, Section A, Page 15 of the New York edition with the headline: Asylum in America, by the Numbers.





## Static Visualization Project

### General Ideas

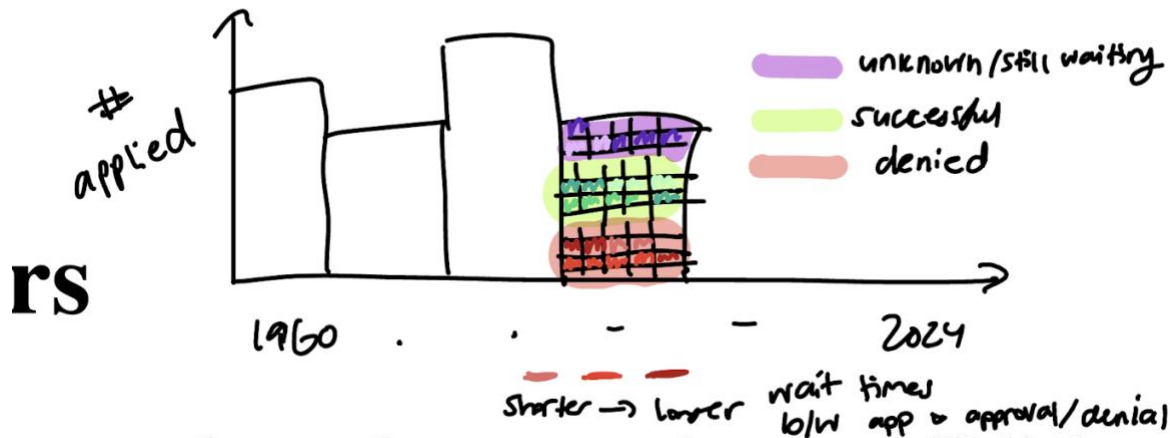
While reading the article, I highlighted parts that looked important and wrote down some questions that I had as a reader that I thought might be interesting to investigate that weren't necessarily stated in the article. While the article was chock-full of statistics, it also had some vague statements such as "More Americans far from the border are witnessing the trend as migrants make their way to cities around the country" or "Some of the migrants face persecution or torture in their home countries and could qualify for asylum in the United States." This got me thinking about ways I could get more specific statistics for these and make visualizations to complement the already-existing numbers to answer some questions not directly posed in the article. Here are the questions I came up with during my thought process:

- What is the trend of border arrests over the years?
- What are the reasons people immigrate to the US? Top 10 most common reasons?
- What cities have the highest % of asylum seekers/immigrants? Where are they sent to wait? What cities do immigrants end up in vs. their port of entry? Where are all the points of entry?
- How many asylum cases have been presented to immigration per year vs how many have been dealt with on what timescale?
- What is the distribution of people who applied for asylum every year and those who were successful vs. denied? Were any years particularly bad for immigration cases?
- Is there data on why asylum applications are rejected? Top 10 most common reasons?
- What are the # asylum workers vs. # cases over time? Do the # of workers every year grow slower than the # of people seeking asylum?
- What is the distribution of the different ways people immigrate (through humanitarian programs, visitor visas, etc.)?
- What countries do immigrants typically come from? And where do they end up? What does the "flow" of asylum seekers look like to different cities in the US?

There were a lot of things I could focus on, but also some challenges. For example, the US government doesn't release data on how long it takes the I-589 form for affirmative asylum to be processed and accepted or rejected, so I couldn't really do much with the "how long do people wait" aspect because I struggled to find data on this. I also struggled to find data that would let me track the progress and outcomes of individual applications. One of the ideas I had was to look at all asylum applications over time in a stacked bar chart color-coded by if applications were successful, denied, or unknown/pending, and each of those could be further subdivided into squares, one per application, that would have a different density or saturation based on the wait time for that particular application. Unfortunately, data released does not go into this minute detail (likely for privacy reasons?) so this was not feasible. A lot of data also only focused on

affirmative rather than both affirmative and defensive asylum since these are two different processes governed by different government bodies.

is been one of the biggest drivers of illegal ✓



must leave the country but are still living

One of the sketches I made while reading the article that I thought would be really interesting but couldn't implement.

In the end, I decided to focus on three main issues I thought of when reading that might help a reader gain more perspective on the asylum issue:

1. What countries do immigrants typically come from? Has there been a change in which nationalities apply for asylum the most?
2. Where do these asylum-seekers end up in the long run in the US? Which states grant the most asylum applications? Has there been a change in which states are most popular?
3. Why do people seek asylum – is there a most common reason? And have these changed over time?
4. What does the asylum caseload look like for the different USCIS offices? Is one receiving more applications than another? What is the breakdown of applications submitted vs. completed vs. pending? We read that there's a huge backlog – does this change office to office, year to year?

### Trends in asylum countries:

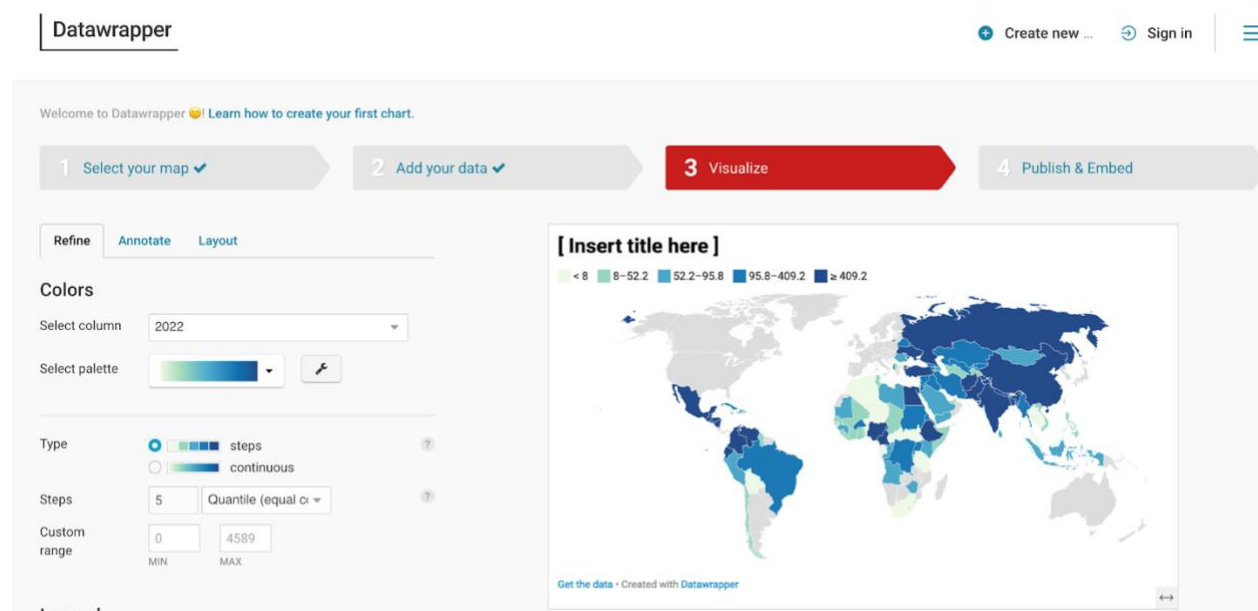
The first question(s) I wanted to tackle were about where all the asylum seekers in the U.S. were coming from – what countries/nationalities are the most popular and if that's changed over time. This visualization showcases the top 20 countries/nationalities with the highest number of asylees in 2022 (the most up-to-date info I could find) and their asylee numbers over the decade 2013-2022 as a slope chart. This lets us see how asylum numbers have changed and if there were any sharp increases or decreases in certain years (e.g. most countries have a large decrease in asylees in 2021 right after the COVID height). Since these numbers are totals of affirmative and defensive, I also wanted to highlight if asylees from these countries were granted asylum more often affirmatively or defensively and if this has changed over time as well. This is encoded in a circle next to the country name on the left (2013) and right (2022) side of the chart – a filled circle means more defensive asylum was granted and an open circle means more affirmative asylum was granted. Next to it I also show a similar but slightly different statistic—how these nationalities' rankings have changed over time in terms of number of



asylees, since for years before 2022 it is difficult to compare because of the sheer number of countries in the dataset.

I found data from the Department of Homeland Security Yearbook of Immigration Statistics that had a wealth of information about the many countries asylum seekers were coming from and statistics about how many were granted asylum (both affirmatively and defensively) by region and nationality over the years 2013-2022. The original tables did have to be cleaned up and modified substantially by me using python because they listed both the region and separate countries in one table and the headers and footers had to be taken out to be computer-readable. All of my cleaning was done using a copy of the original data document so I could look back at the original for reference. Some countries also had years where the number of asylum applications granted were so low that the number had to be hidden for privacy, so these cells have a “D” in them instead of a number, which throws off table-reading packages and software. I replaced these with a 0 just to work with the data, noting that if I were to visualize any of these countries, I would have to just omit that data point. The government spreadsheet had affirmative and defensive asylees on separate sheets, so I also had to use python to combine them to get a total of both for each country and year, as well as sort by number of 2022 applications to visualize the countries in order. I also ended up finding a package that automatically identified the region each country was in because I thought I might end up using that to color-code my visualization, but decided against that in the end because 1) I didn’t think that was super critical or useful information for the user and 2) it made the lines a little difficult to read if you had multiple intersecting lines of the same color.

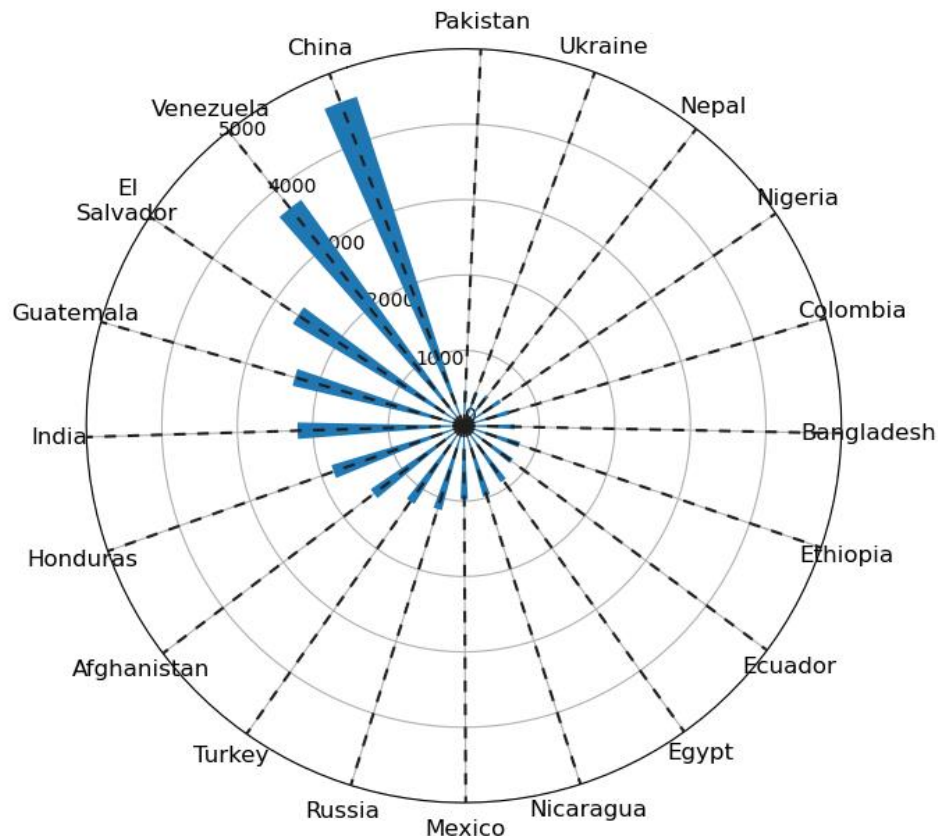
For this visualization, I first thought I wanted to do a world choropleth map, colored by the total number of asylees. I wasn’t sure how to include the time component in this – I was thinking of using something like the “small multiples” and showing multiple maps, but I figured this would be difficult to read and perceive especially with small countries. Trying out a map, I was also worried about the large dynamic range of the data and couldn’t find a satisfactory way to bin the colors when some nationalities like China had over 1000 asylees and others had only 10 or 20. I also thought about doing something like a Sankey map, but again dynamic range was a



*My first attempt at a choropleth world map which didn't end up working out*

problem and those charts are usually for visualizing flow between multiple things like country to country, not really one-sided flows like country to U.S.

I decided that the change over time factor was important to show, so abandoned the map idea for this viz and decided on finding a chart to show the change over time. The fact that my list had tens of countries also complicated the matter, and I decided that it wouldn't be feasible (nor really necessary or insightful) to show ALL of them in my viz, so I decided to only work with the top X countries in the most recent year, 2022. I considered trying to make a bar chart for different years, possibly even something like this grouped circular bar chart example in python I found. My initial thought was to make one circle for each year, and group the countries by region, showing the top 5 or 10 countries per region or the top 20 overall and color-coding by region. After an initial attempt in python, I didn't really like where this was going – the top 5 countries all had much larger asylee numbers than the rest so it was virtually impossible to tell the difference, and changing the scale from linear to log or otherwise was also confusing to read, not to mention that it was difficult to compare countries year-by-year as I had hoped.



*My attempt at a circular bar chart showing the number of asylees of different nationalities in python. After the first ~6 or so countries, the bars are hard to read and distinguish, and this doesn't show the temporal component well.*

I abandoned this idea and instead decided to try a simpler line/slope chart, visualizing the change in numbers year-to-year. This was *much* more promising – after loading all my cleaned data into Flourish, which let me easily try out different visualizations and play with color and styling settings, I started trying to adjust the settings to make this viable. Showing all top 50 or even 12 countries all at once created a hard-to-read mess of colors and lines, so my initial

reaction was to just display the top 10 or 15 countries and no others. That seemed like a good idea, but I realized that while you could see the changes in these countries, it didn't really give the viewer a sense of how those countries' numbers compared to other countries. For example, Venezuela went from 3691 asylees in 2022 to 673 in 2013, but this doesn't reflect that while it was 2nd in rankings in 2022, it was actually below other countries in 2013 that didn't make it to the top 15 in 2022 which weren't shown. Therefore, I decided to include the top 50 countries, but only highlight the top 12 (for readability since many countries were all jumbled together at the bottom), and leave the rest as visible but grayed out. I also initially was contemplating making a log scale because the top 2 countries in 2013 and 202 (China/Egypt and China/Venezuela) had an order of magnitude or more higher numbers than other countries in the top 20, but I decided to leave it in a linear scale and make the visualization really tall. This was a deliberate choice made because 1) I didn't like how the log scale looked and thought it might be more difficult to read for people who aren't used to interpreting log scale and 2) the physical act of looking up or scrolling up between the top 1/2 and the rest of the countries gives the reader a good sense of scale and really ingrains the imbalance in numbers in different years.

After I more or less settled on this part of the viz, the thought about overall numbers vs. rankings was still nagging me, so I decided to try and include that as well. I didn't want to remake the same slope chart but with rankings because that would be too overwhelming, so I decided to focus just on how the ranking changed from 2013 to 2022 instead of between each separate year. I thought about putting little arrows next to country names colored by how much they changed in rank but decided this would be hard to interpret. Since we learned in class that we're better at telling apart length differences and not really color/lightness differences, I opted instead to create an arrow plot, drawing an arrow from each country's rank in 2013 to their rank in 2022 and putting that next to that country's physical location on the 2022 side of my slope chart by manually moving the lines over in Illustrator and adding a key on how to read it. Luckily, the rankings data didn't have the same dynamic range problem as the pure number of asylees, so I was able to put this on a linear scale without hesitation. For both the slope and arrow charts, each country was also colored a unique hue for more ease in differentiating them.

In order to maximize how much information you could glean from these plots (as Tufte likes), I also decided to show whether each country had more affirmative or defensive asylees in 2013 and 2022. I wanted this to be subtle and simple and to add onto the existing viz, so I decided to calculate this statistic in python and then manually draw a circle in Illustrator next to the name of each country for whether it had more affirmative asylees (open circle) or defensive asylees (closed circle). Since I only had 12 countries, this was feasible to do by hand, and quicker than generating circles in python and then trying to get them into an SVG format to put into Illustrator. I also used Illustrator to add all the extra text and annotations for more contextual information.

Overall, I think the design can answer multiple questions at once and is simple with no "chartjunk". If I was to improve the design, I might try to calculate the number of asylees in each country per million residents or something like that to scale by population to make a better comparison – I didn't want to spend too much time trying to find the population statistics for each country for that entire decade. I might also color-code the affirmative/defensive asylum circles by the ratio instead of just which one is bigger, because it may be in some cases that the numbers are close to each other so one type of asylum is only slightly rather than wildly more popular than another.

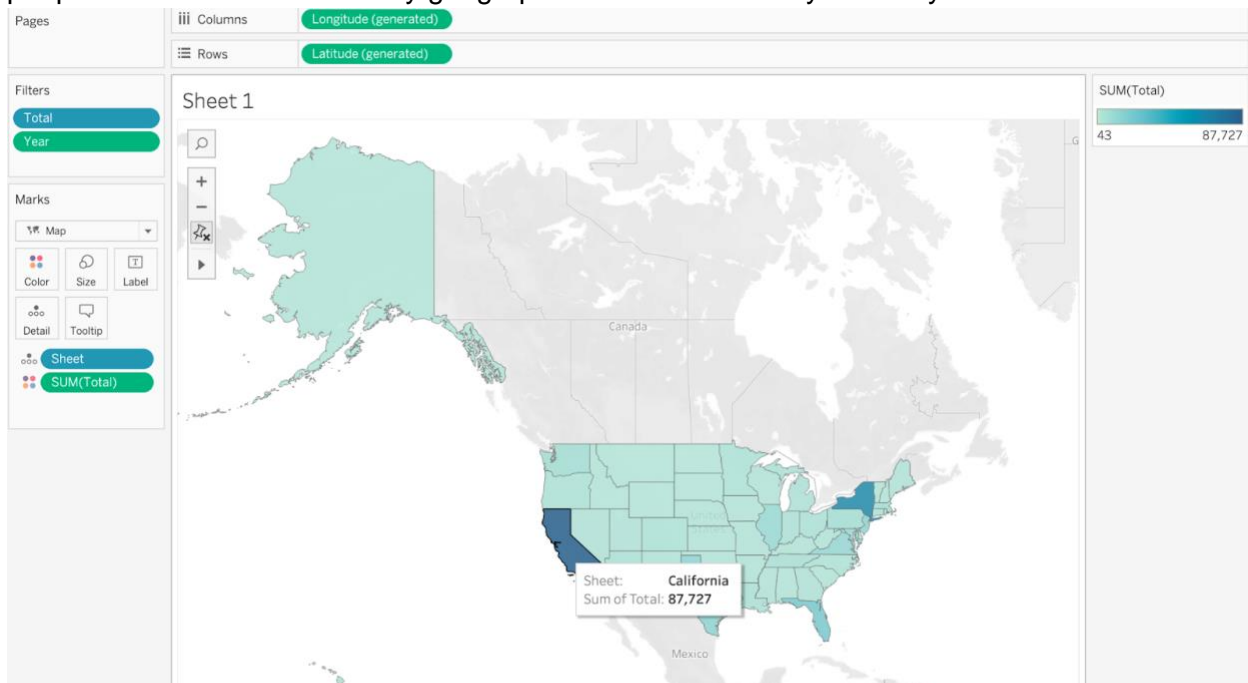
## Asylee States



Next up, I wanted to create a “companion” visualization to my first one – I visualized what countries asylees were coming from, now I wanted to see what states they were going to. Here one can see the percent difference/change between the total number of affirmative and defensive asylees per million residents in each US state between 2012 and 2022, visualized as a choropleth map, making it possible to compare different states and see which gained or lost asylee population. For selected states, we can also see a line graph showing how the asylee population has changed for that state over time.

I found data from the Office of Homeland Security’s State Immigration Data Sheets that listed in a separate tab each state’s immigration totals per year, including the state’s population and number of permanent residents, immigrants, etc. and they had one table for total number and one for the total number per million residents. I only cared about the number of asylees and the population of each state and figured I could calculate the number per million residents myself in python later (especially because the government tables rounded the latter values to whole numbers, which I didn’t like), so I took out all the extraneous information. There were also two different files – one with years 2012-2021 and one with years 2013-2022, so I combined the updated 2013-2022 numbers with the 2012 numbers so I could have the option to visualize a slightly wider timeframe. I especially wanted to include 2022 instead of 2021 info because 2021 was still a year more widely influenced by the pandemic. I also had to use python in order to combine all the states’ data because originally each state was on a different Excel sheet and also calculate the number per million residents and percent difference of that between years. This data also had some states with “D” to represent too few numbers to show, so I turned those to 0 knowing that when I calculated percent difference, it would be -100% so I could manually remove those states from the dataset.

My first instinct was to attempt a choropleth map again using Flourish since the US states are much more manageable to interpret than 200+ countries on a tiny map, and this would also let people visualize if there are any geographic trends more easily. I initially tried to color states

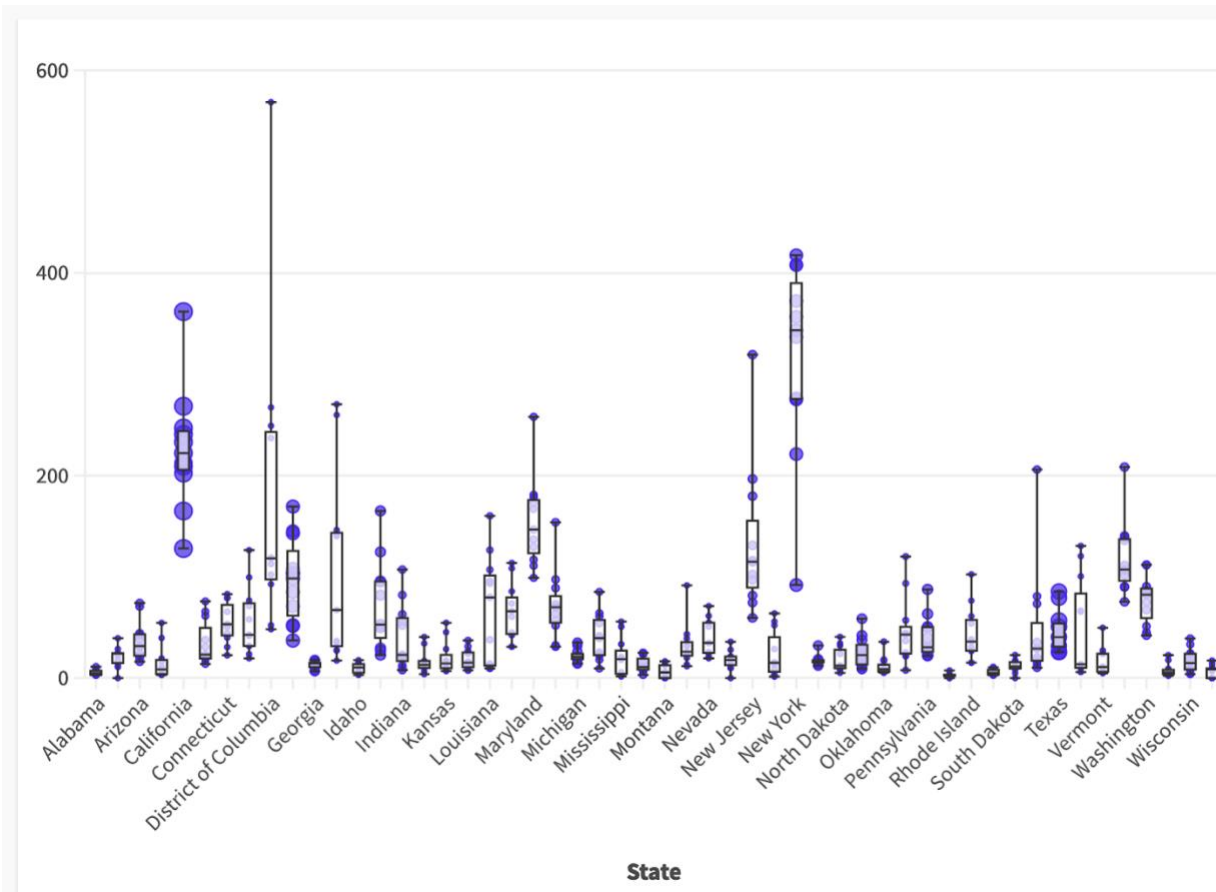


*Attempt at a US choropleth map – the problem of dynamic range pops out as California and NY dominate the color scheme while the rest of the states all blend into one color.*

simply by the number of asylees in a given year, but I ran into dynamic range problems yet again – California and New York were dominating the colorbar and the rest of the states had no color variation, so it wasn't a very useful visualization. Population-adjusting didn't help very much, and I had to mess with the colorbar scale a lot to get a nicer variation in state hues. These challenges, plus the fact that once again I had a temporal side to this I wanted to explore, let me to abandon the idea of just using the asylee population as the statistic visualized.

After the process of making my first country visualization, I decided to also try calculating some sort of change between years, but I didn't want to repeat the same type of slope graph as before. Therefore, I decided to calculate the percent difference in asylee population between 2012 and 2022. I later realized that it would be better to calculate this with respect to the asylee population per million residents to account for the fact that some states are more populous than others (and hence would probably draw more asylum seekers in). I colored my map using this statistic and looked at the distribution of numbers. I noted that only 3 states were major outliers with percentages between ~900-2000%, so I decided I could work with this and just note the outliers. I used a diverging color palette because in this case we have a natural break point at 0% (no change in asylum population), while negative numbers (red) meant a decrease in population and positive numbers (blue) meant an increase. I made the colorbar stepped instead of continuous since this gave better color variation between states and because I didn't think it was necessary for viewers to understand the exact numbers, just ranges. I decided to cut off the positive side of the colorbar at 300% since this was more than the maximum of any state excluding the 3 outliers, and just color these outliers as "300% or more". Both Montana and Wyoming also had "D" in their data for either 2013 or 2022 so I grayed those out as data that was withheld for privacy purposes.

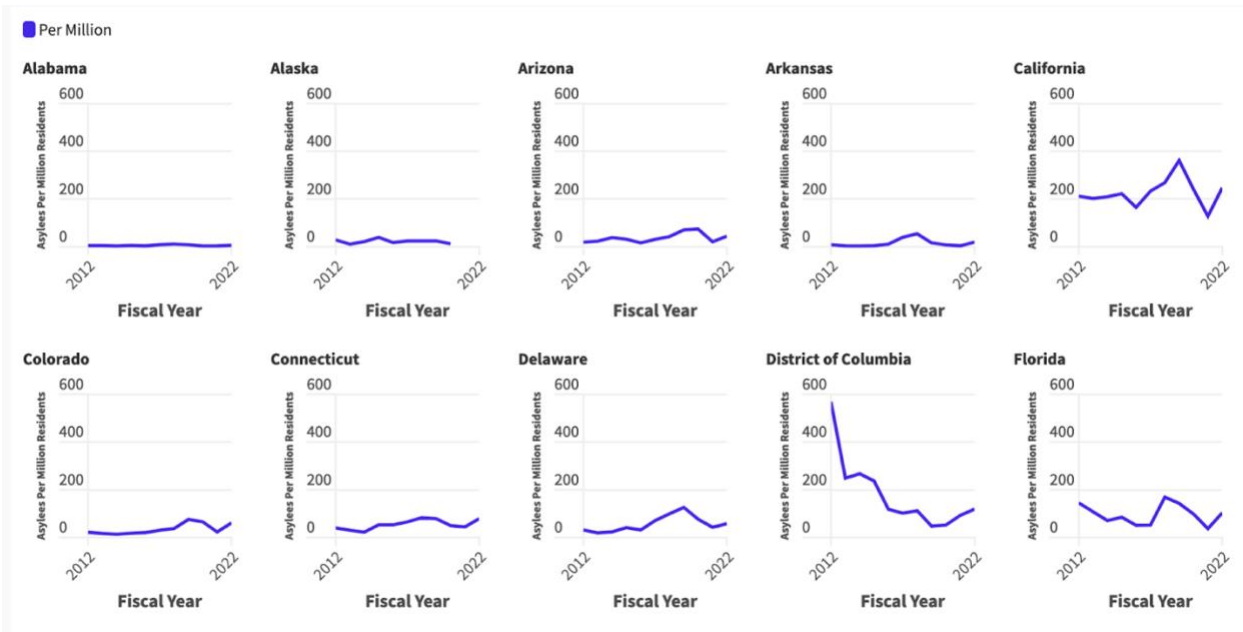
I wanted to include something else in the map as well because I thought that viewers might also be interested in seeing how each states' asylum population changes each year rather than just from 2013 to 2022. I created a "small multiples" set of box and whisker plots for each state, but didn't like how cluttered it was and it didn't show the flow of data over time. I switched to a simple line chart for each state, which I liked much better, but I didn't want to put this and the map all together because that felt like an overwhelming amount of information, and most of the line charts weren't very exciting or time-varying. I briefly thought about making my map into a hex map (showing each state not as the shape of each state but as a hexagon in the



*My box and whiskers plot for each state that I ended up discarding*

approximate position of each state) and putting each state line graph inside, but decided it would be hard to read and interpret especially with the varying colors in the map itself. In the end, I decided that the viewer didn't need to see every single line graph for each state, and I chose 6 of the more interesting ones to highlight and put around my map for more context. I chose the ones for the 3 outlier states (Louisiana, New Mexico, and Utah) as well as New York and California because they both had more drastic changes in asylee population than other states. Lastly I chose Washington D.C. because 1) it's so tiny it's hard to see on the map itself





*Line graphs of state asylee populations per million residents over time. I liked how this allowed easy and direct comparison between states and was clean, but with 50 states + DC and Puerto Rico I thought this would have been too overwhelming to include with the map.*

and 2) interestingly, it had a very steady decline in asylee population as compared to other states.

I got the SVG from Flourish of the map and imported it into Illustrator and had to remake the legend by hand because it didn't export for some reason. Then I imported the selected line graphs into that Illustrator file and populated them around the map close to their respective states and added appropriate annotations. Overall, the visualization is effective in capturing the change in asylee population per million residents of different US states and also lets the viewer see how this changed year-by-year for a select number of more interesting states using the "small multiples" idea. I would have liked to dig deeper into why certain states had dramatic changes in asylee population over this time period – I tried looking for this info but couldn't find much and didn't want to spend more than I already had on this.

### **Diverse Asylees, Stagnant Offices**

For my last visualization, I wanted to explore the idea stated in the article of the overwhelming asylum application backlog and also make these statistics a little more human by exploring *why* people leave their countries to seek asylum. I wanted viewers to understand what the basis of claims were for affirmative asylum through recent years and what the most common ones are, as well as if these reasons have changed in popularity over time. I also wanted viewers to realize that though there are many reasons why people need to leave their homes and families behind, all of the USCIS offices have been completely overwhelmed with pending applications and only complete a handful of applications each year. This backlog is only getting worse, in some cases doubling in just one year.

I found the asylum reasons data from the Department of Homeland Security's Annual Flow Report 2023 and data about how many I-589 asylum applications were submitted, completed, and pending for each USCIS office in the USCIS Asylum Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023 To Date Stats spreadsheets. For the basis of claim, the data was a table on a PDF file so I manually

transcribed those numbers into a spreadsheet. I also calculated the percentage of each reason occurrence in Excel. For the USCIS data I combined 2022 and 2023 data in Excel, including totaling the number of applications for each year since the data was formatted by month. I also re-formatted the table, including sorting it by total 2022 applications, to be read in by Flourish.

For displaying the reasons for asylum, I didn't want to do a pie chart because we can't differentiate differences in area very well and I didn't want to run into the problem of having to display numbers ranging from 7-4000+ with something like a bar chart. When looking through different visualization types, I ran across the pictogram, which uses icons to represent some unit of a value to display large amounts in a more readable display. I wanted to try this out, so I displayed the number for each reason as a separate pictogram bar, and then decided to put them together and display separate years as stacked bars of pictograms. This looked good, but I decided to display percentages instead of raw numbers so that each bar stack was the same size so it was easier to compare between years. I also made it so each bar had a 10x10 grid to make it easy to count percentages by eye.

After I visualized the reasons, I wanted readers to see that the backlog of asylum applications was large and growing. I had data from the different regional USCIS offices for the most recent 2 years with completed, pending, and submitted applications so I first tried out a radar plot for each office with both years displayed, but the pending applications completely overwhelmed the other two categories. This is a struggle I had with any type of chart I tried for this data, but I decided that this is part of the story I was trying to tell. Having successfully just worked with percentages instead of raw values, I tried out a percentage stacked bar chart, where each bar was a different office and had two charts, one for each year. This was good to show just how many more pending applications there were but failed to show how the number of applications got larger from 2022 to 2023. So, I decided to *not* do percentages and just show raw numbers this time, and also ordered the offices by the total number of forms submitted in 2022 so readers could make a better comparison of rankings as well. Though the filed and completed application bars are very difficult to see, that is part of the point of this visualization – having the reader overwhelmed with the number of pending applications mimics how the USCIS offices probably feel about the number of applications they have.

I combined both the stacked bar charts and the pictograms into one in Illustrator and added annotations. Since this viz is based on color, I also had to slightly change the default color palette I've been using to make it more color-blind friendly. I also made the "pending" part of the bar chart almost transparent so one can make out the other two categories, though the "completed" number of applications are still very thin lines, almost imperceptible.

I think this viz effectively gets across the idea that asylum offices are insanely overwhelmed with applications and that this has increased by quite a bit in only one year, along with the fact that immigrants ask for asylum for many reasons, the most common being their political opinion. One of the things I would improve is playing around more with colors to make the thin lines stand out more in the bar chart, maybe making the visualization with a black background and neon colors to make it "pop" out more. I would also try to figure out a way to encode the reasons for asylum not just by color so colorblind folks might have an easier time reading it, maybe playing around with line borders, etc. that are things I would have had to implement by hand in Illustrator.