Trends in T-Visa Applications

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1. Motivation/Background

The Boston University School of Law Immigrants' Rights and Human Trafficking Program, launched in July 2017, combines BU Law's nationally recognized Immigrants' Rights Clinic and the Human Trafficking Clinic and creates an integrated new clinical program. In the Program, students learn practical legal skills while providing pro bono representation to vulnerable non-citizens facing deportation and survivors of human trafficking. Law students participate in a seminar led by experienced faculty and focus on clinical fieldwork in the areas of immigrants' rights, human trafficking, or both. In addition to pro bono legal representation, students and Program faculty will work to increase protections available to vulnerable populations and contribute to the national policy landscape by providing new models that address emerging challenges in the immigrants' rights and human trafficking contexts.

2. Goal

- How many cases were **decided**? (separated by year)
- How many cases were **dismissed**? (separated by year to demonstrate trends)
- How many cases were granted (this can be indicated by language including: **grant, sustain, or withdraw** and **remanded** back to the agency)?
- What grounds were cases **denied**? (separated by year to demonstrate trends)
- How has this changed over time?
- Any patterns?

3. Datasets

- All AAO Decisions : https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/directorates-and-program-offices/the-administrative-appeals-office-aao
- Non-precedent decisions: https://www.uscis.gov/administrative-appeals/aao-decisions/aao-non-precedent-decisions
- Precedent decisions: https://www.justice.gov/eoir/dhs-aao-ins-decisions

*Search "Form I-914" or "Application for T nonimmigrant status." to get the AAO decisions for Applications for T nonimmigrant status.

*For non-precedent decisions and precedent decisions, we need to separate the decisions in each category and analyze separately and compare results.

4. Methodology

4.1 Technologies

- We can use python framework Scrapy to crawl all the links to the pdf files.
- By applying regular expression operations and urllib2 packages to the above-mentioned list of links, we can download all pdf files separately into different directories by years or months for the purpose of demonstrating trends. E.g : We can know the date of decisions issues from the following links: https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/err/D12%20-%20Application%20for%20T%20Nonimmigrant%20Status/Decisions_Issued_in_2020/JUL302020_01D12101.pdf
- In order to read the content of these files, we can use python packages like pdfreader to convert it to text. By analysing the text, we can then answer all the questions in section 2, and save them into csv/json/… files.
- For exploratory data analysis, we can use packages like Pandas to organize the data, and Matplotlib and Seaborn to visualize the data and generate thesis.

4.2 Data Analysis Methods（High Level）:

- Get the number of decided cases: Separate all the decisions by years, and then separate them into two categories(reopen and reconsider). Also need to exclude derivative applications.
- Get the number of dismissed cases: find the keyword in ORDER. separated by year to demonstrate trends.
- Get the number of granted(sustain / withdraw/remanded) cases: find the keyword in ORDER. separated by year to demonstrate trends.
- Get the number of denied cases: same method, find the keyword in decisions to determine the type of cases. Also separate by years.
- How has this changed over time & any patterns? After finishing 1 - 4, we will get several categories for us to analyze the pattern.

5. Conclusion

As the goal, we should be able to get a data set containing all non-precedent decision cases and precedent decision cases, including all information like case ID, the reasons of denial, and etc, at the end of semester; then, we can find the pattern and trend of data by applying data exploratory analysis to the data set. If we have enough time, we can build a website to present these information that allow users to sort and query them very easily.