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THE EMERGENCE OF ILLEGALITY: PSYCHOSOCIAL STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES IN UNDOCUMENTED COLLEGE STUDENTS



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Multipurpose Room, Sheehan Hall



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"The emergence of illegality" is used to convey the creation of illegality—the fact that immigrants are made "illegal" by the nation-state and that illegality is not a natural occurrence. This first part of the title sets the stage for the consequences of illegality—the second part of the title—"psychosocial stressors and coping strategies in undocumented college students." In this presentation we will discuss how legal vulnerabilities such as the uncertainty around keeping or ending DACA afflicts day-to-day stressors in undocumented college students with limited ability to navigate supportive resources. We argue that not recognizing the structural and symbolic ways that immigration laws serve as legitimizing sources for afflicting legal violence (social, psychological, material harm) in higher education institutional settings, places undocumented college students at risk for poor mental health. We discuss the practical implications of our work to help improve how higher education institutional agents can address the needs of undocumented college students.