November 16, 2007

BILL MOYERS: Welcome to the JOURNAL. And to some stories of how regular Americans have decided that if democracy is going to be rescued from the powers-that-be, they will have to do it.

We begin with big media, our favorite beat for years now. There's a new twist this week. Despite overwhelming public opposition from across the country and the political spectrum, the Chairman of the FCC, Kevin Martin, isn't letting up in his relentless push to allow a handful of media giants swallow up more of your local media.

He made it official on Tuesday: He intends to lift the longstanding ban that keeps one company from owning both the daily newspaper and a radio or television station in the same market. For ten days this has been a fast-moving story and we have a quick update from our media team, producer Peter Meryash and correspondent Rick Karr.

RICK KARR: Last week on Capitol Hill, members of Congress sent a sharp message to the FCC: Maine Republican Olympia Snowe was among the Senators who said, "No more media consolidation."

OLYMPIA SNOWE: It seems like "Here we go again" in this pursuit of easing up on these restrictions and regulations regarding the consolidation of corporate ownership of media, and I think that is truly disturbing.

RICK KARR: North Dakota Democrat Byron Dorgan said the FCC was rushing to grant media conglomerates' wishes.

BYRON DORGAN: One of the concerns I have, and a significant one is there will be, it appears to me, perhaps a month maximum for the American people to weigh in on a new rule that will be proposed for a final action on December 19th. That doesn't meet any test of reasonableness or any standard that I know that makes any sense.

RICK KARR: But FCC Chairman Kevin Martin ignored the Senators' concerns. The very next day in Seattle he convened the Commissions last public hearing on media ownership — a meeting he'd called on just one week's notice. And that put the hundreds of people who'd shown up for the hearing in a foul mood.

KEVIN MARTIN: You're asking 'why the rush and why no notice?' Let me respond. Throughout this process, I've been as transparent as I could be.

RICK KARR: But members of the audience weren't buying Martin's explanation because whatever the process had been, he'd given them only seven days' notice for the hearing.

KEVIN MARTIN: No I'm not done, No, I'm not quite done. And I'll sit down in a second and you'll have your chances tonight.

RICK KARR: Throughout the nine-and-a-half-hour hearing, members of the crowd slammed Martin for not giving the public enough time to weigh in.

JIM BOWMAN: I would like to thank the FCC, and Kevin Martin, you in particular, for coming to Seattle on such short notice.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: Running this hearing with five days notice and then trying to
jam media consolidation through by mid-December to me is damning evidence by the total abuse of the process itself that you’re up to some kind of no-good. If this is a legitimate issue, then it deserves and demands a legitimate public process to determine the outcome. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves for not respecting the democracy you live in.

RICK KARR: Other speakers said they’re angry because they think Big Media is already too big — and shouldn’t get any bigger.

SUSAN MCCABE: We told you a year ago, when you came to Seattle, that media consolidation is a patently bad idea, no ifs ands or buts about it. So with all due respect, I ask you: What part of that didn’t you understand?

Do you think that another year of listening to the same homogenized, formulaic, mindless crap that passes for news and entertainment on the commercial dial has suddenly caused us to say, "Please, I'd like a little more of that."

ROBERTO: I think I heard them justifying, encouraging you all to monopolize the media even more than it already is. I mean, have I died and gone to Hell, or what?

KING COUNTY COUNCILMAN REAGAN DUNN (R): I’m a Republican and I’m a capitalist, but some areas of our private sector must be regulated. Freedom of information is too important. We must be proactive in protecting that fundamental freedom.

RICK KARR: But the FCC’s failed to protect the public's fundamental freedoms, said Democratic Commissioner Michael Copps.

MICHAEL COPPS: Did you ever notice that the FCC is always ready to run the fast break for big media, but it’s always the four-corner stall when it comes to serving the public interest?

RICK KARR: The FCC’s other Democrat, Jonathan Adelstein, warned the audience that the Commission’s Republican majority wasn’t really interested in listening to the public.

JONATHAN ADELSTEIN: Unfortunately, judging from the way this hearing was arranged, it looks like the media conglomerates’ agenda is far ahead of yours at the FCC. Now, if you see a proposal for more consolidation made quickly after this final hearing. You'll know your input was dismissed.

RICK KARR: And, in fact, FCC Chairman Kevin Martin announced his proposal for more consolidation as soon as he was back at work in Washington, D.C. after the long weekend.

In a NEW YORK TIMES op-ed article on Tuesday of this week, he argued that "newspapers ... are struggling financially" ... and "will ... wither and die" unless they're allowed to get into the broadcasting business. So he wants to allow "[a] company that owns a newspaper in one of the [twenty] largest cities in the country" ... to "purchase a broadcast TV or radio station in the same market". That could affect the newspapers and radio and TV stations that nearly HALF of all Americans depend on for information - in places from New York and Los Angeles to Orlando and Cleveland and sixteen other cities — including ,where just last week at the FCC hearing, members of the public made it clear that they’ve had enough.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: If you will not stand up for we the people, then I have news for you. We the people are standing up for ourselves. This is our media, and we are taking it back.

BILL MOYERS: The story's not over, and we'll be returning to it. But keep these points in mind for now.

First, the claim that newspapers are in dire financial straights depends on your definition of dire. The average profit margin for publicly-traded newspaper firms last year was 17-18% - that's higher than the average Fortune 500.
Second, Chairman Martin says his new rules would just affect the 20 big markets. Not so. A giant loophole buried in the fine print could open the back door to runaway consolidation in nearly every market, large and small.

Third, it’s the FCC’s charge to ensure ‘competition, localism and diversity’ in media. These new rules fail on all three accounts. The FCC’s own data shows that markets with cross-owned outlets provide less news as a whole. And when it comes to diversity, these new rules will make a disgraceful situation even worse. The very few commercial TV stations owned by people of color — hardly 3% of the total — will be in the crosshairs of the media giants.

Fourth, who do these guys work for, anyway? As you will see on our Web site at PBS.org, one FCC commissioner after another has gone to work in the media world. How can you serve the public when in the back of your mind you think that one day Rupert Murdoch may have a big job for you?

Remember Michael Powell? He was the last FCC chairman who wanted to let big media have all it can eat. Powell is now in the pay of “the world’s leading private equity firm focused on media, entertainment, communications and information investments.”

Finally, whatever your position on this, you have until December 11th -December 11th - to let the FCC, Congress, and the White House know what you think; that’s when the FCC’s public comment period closes. Check it out on our Web site.

BILL MOYERS: We turn now to some other people who, like those outraged residents of Seattle, also think they are being shafted by the government and are doing something about it.

Since Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast two years ago, the media has largely focused on New Orleans struggling to get back on its feet. But nearby Mississippi was also hit hard, and its being praised for its recovery efforts. But there’s a story in Mississippi that’s not been told. A couple of months ago I received a letter from a woman on the Gulf Coast who heads the organization called the Steps Coalition. She invited us to come down and see what the recovery of Mississippi looks like from the perspective of people who have been left out of it. I asked producer William Brangham to go down there and check it out.

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: This is what you see when you’re not on the official tour of Mississippi. Houses that were flooded sitting empty and un repaired. People still living cramped inside those slim FEMA trailers. Across this state, tens of thousands of people are in similar circumstances. For these places, the heralded recovery in Mississippi seems to have skipped on by.

DERRICK EVANS: You know, the popular myth is that Mississippi’s doing fine. But it doesn’t take a whole lot of time spent here to realize that there is no recovery to speak of in this state, when you talk to people, when you go into homes, when you go into communities.

DERRICK EVANS: This is what I showed you on the map.

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: Derrick Evans runs a local community preservation group. And he can point out plenty of things that are changing down here but he says those changes are leaving a lot of poorer people behind.

DERRICK EVANS: See, this has all been cleared since Hurricane Katrina. This here, you can see is wetlands. This is the airport, and there’s hotels coming up over here now. This is not “re-building.” This is not “re-covyry.” This is new stuff with federally subsidized tax credits and CDBG funds. And it needs to be going into these people’s houses, and that’s not housing for nobody that’s down here.

DERRICK EVANS: This was an environmental disaster of Biblical proportions. This was a housing disaster unprecedented in, you know, our history. This is probably going to be the biggest land grab in American history since the 1930s right here along this beach. And it
amazes me that people don't get it. That it's such a big story.

ROSE JOHNSON: At all costs we have to stop wetlands fill..

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: Last year, Evans and a band of other local activists, got together to push for a recovery that would help all Mississippians.

ROSE JOHNSON: Our parents worked themselves from sunup to sundown for that land in North Gulfport, we can't allow speculators to buy up our land.

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: They've come from across the Gulf Coast. There's clergy and local merchants civil rights activists and environmentalists all banded together because they say the recovery from Katrina has put the needs of the wealthy over those of the poor. They call themselves the 'Steps Coalition.'

DERRICK EVANS: Some people think Steps is an acronym. And it is not. I suppose it's a word that has multiple meanings. Like the steps that need to be taken to get us where we need to go. The steps are often the only thing that people have left of their homes. It could've been an acronym, you know, the world doesn't need another acronym, right, does it?

SISTER MARTHA MILNER: I would like to invite you...

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: Sister Martha Milner works for a Catholic housing group. And she was one of the first members of Steps.

SISTER MARTHA MILNER: From the very beginning, the people had no voice. We really came to realize that we had to get all the organizations together and see if together we'd have enough strength to push some doors open.

MEMBER: If you come up to speak ...

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: They've had some successes already. One of their groups helped expose the abuse of immigrant workers. Another held off the destruction of local wetlands. Another guided hundreds of people through the bureaucratic chaos that followed Katrina. But these were just skirmishes in the bigger battle.

MELINDA HARTHCOCK at podium: From the beginning we have known that any recovery...

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: Melinda Harthcock is the executive director of the coalition.

MELINDA HARTHCOCK at podium: ...we have to include affordable housing, economic justice, environmental justice..

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: Harthcock's the one who wrote us the letter, saying 'come down here, see what we're doing.'

MELINDA HARTHCOCK: What we have is an attempt at an awakening. We had an affordable housing crisis before the storm. Corporations were importing workers. Developers were filling in wetlands. And basically, our quality of life was tanking before the storm. But few noticed the danger. Katrina dramatically accelerated everything.

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: Everywhere you look down here, the contrasts are striking. New condominium towers sprouting up next to storm wreckage. Along the beach in Biloxi, brand new casinos so big and so shiny that for a few blocks at least, you can almost forget what Katrina did to this place.

DERRICK EVANS: When Hurricane Katrina hit, legislators went to Jackson in their pajamas and immediately enacted legislation to allow casinos to rebuild on land, so as to
not lose any of them and to increase there number. In the meantime, it took the governor's commission weeks, to realize that in addition to tourism infrastructure and finance, they needed to have a committee on housing, affordable housing, to deal with the fact that over 70,000 houses were destroyed, rendered uninhabitable by Hurricane Katrina. So, housing was not anything that was on their mind.

**WILLIAM BRANGHAM:** That's what you notice next. What's not here. Occasionally you'll get a glimpse of what used to be. But in so many places along the Mississippi coast, it's the weeds that have made the biggest comeback.

**SISTER MARTHA MILNER:** When I ride down those streets, it's a terrible sadness. It is like a ghost town. I take people on tours, I keep saying over and over again, “And this area was house after house after house after house.” A person who didn't have a guide wouldn't understand the dense population that was in these areas. It's like your memories are erased. And, and what's in place of them is sort of a twilight zone.

**REILLY MORSE:** Hi Dorothy

**WILLIAM BRANGHAM:** Reilly Morse came to the Steps Coalition as a civil rights lawyer. He’s been working in Mississippi practically his whole life.

**REILLY MORSE:** What people still don't get two years after the hurricane is that tens of thousands of Mississippians and people in other states across the Gulf Coast still are displaced. They're not in their own homes. They're not in a new, permanent residence of some form or another. People are stuck in limbo and there doesn't appear to be a solution to them returning to a normal life in sight.

**CONGRESSMAN:** Governor Barbour.

**GOVERNOR BARBOUR:** Mr. Chairman and Distinguished members of Congress I thank you for the opportunity

**WILLIAM BRANGHAM:** Mississippi's governor Haley Barbour has received a lot of money to rebuild homes. Congress gave the state over $3 billion dollars specifically for housing. Federal rules required that half that money be given to lower income families.

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** It's good to hear people hammering isn't it.

**WILLIAM BRANGHAM:** But governor Barbour wanted to loosen those federal rules. He argued he could do a better job if Washington wouldn't tell him how to spend the money.

**GOVERNOR BARBOUR:** Let me just thank you.

**WILLIAM BRANGHAM:** In his former life, Haley Barbour was one of the most powerful corporate lobbyists in the county. He was also chairman of the Republican National Committee, so he has friends in Washington. When Barbour asked for waivers of those federal rules, he got them.

**ANNOUNCER:** The Governor of the great state of Mississippi

**WILLIAM BRANGHAM:** Mississippi was the only state granted this kind of freedom with its recovery funds.

**GOVERNOR BARBOUR 2007 State of the State speech:** I especially appreciate and want to thank HUD Secretary Jackson who has not tried to substitute Washington's judgment for judgement of Mississippians about how best to rebuild and renew our state.

**WILLIAM BRANGHAM:** The Steps Coalition argues that the governor has either excluded poor families from his recovery plans, or put them to the very back of the line. Here's what happened: Katrina hit in the summer of 2005. Eight months later, Phase I of the
governor's housing grant program starts. Over a billion dollars goes out mostly to more affluent families. But it took more than a year after the storm for Phase II to begin - that's the program specifically targeted to lower income families. And to date, it's given out a lot less money. And now, two years on, not even half the people who've applied for Phase II have received grants.

SISTER MARTHA MILNER: There's no oversight whatsoever on the expenditure of funds. Everything is, it seems like everything is okay. Where the intent really was to help lower income families. And that's mostly who suffered in this.

MELINDA HARTHCOCK: The people who have the least amount of backup, the least cushion in their budget, have been asked to wait two years before they got any help.

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: The prominent research group the Rand Corporation echoed the Steps position. Rand reported that the recovery of affordable housing was lagging in Mississippi. Today, according to the federal government, there are 14,000 families still living in FEMA trailers across the state.

State officials told us they know the recovery feels too slow to people. But they say there was no textbook showing them how to respond to a disaster as big as Katrina. But two months ago, those same recovery officials did something that astounded the Steps Coalition — they announced they were going to redirect $600 million dollars from housing funds to the state port. They said there's plenty of money for the housing grants, so this money could be moved.

REILLY MORSE: It's a four-fold expansion of what was there previously. And it is an extraordinarily rich expansion. I think a lot of the homeowners down here wish they could do a four-fold expansion of their meager homes. And it wouldn't cost $600 million to do it.

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: The money would be used to repair and improve the port's shipping and container facilities - a move which could also open up space for cruise ships and more casinos.

REILLY MORSE at press conference: So we learned about that on a Friday, by the following Monday, people started mobilizing.

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: The local press didn't pick up the story until the Steps Coalition protested. But soon even the national media was taking notice the LOS ANGELES TIMES ran this story. THE NEW YORK TIMES wrote this editorial urging the feds to "take a hard look" at the governor's plan. Two Democrats in Congress joined in as well - asking federal housing officials to block Barbour's proposal.

SISTER MARTHA: None of us are against the expansion of the port. We know it's needed. But the money should not come from the housing monies because we have so many people in need of housing.

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: Governor Barbour is now denying that this is a diversion of money from the housing fund. His officials are now backing away from their earlier comments. Officials also stress that a revitalized and safer port is a crucial part of this state's recovery: it will create more revenue and create more jobs. But with a $600 million dollar price tag, Reilly Morse says those are some pretty expensive jobs.

REILLY MORSE: So, you're buying a 1,000 new jobs for $600,000 per job. That's an extremely rich ratio. And most federal programs would turn you down flat on that. In fact, the state's asking the federal government to waive those requirements. It would normally be $35,000 per job created, and we're doing something that's almost 20 times that.

WOMAN at STEPS meeting: We depend upon our government to protect us.

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: To the Steps Coalition, the bigger issue is this: tens of thousands of people across the state are still badly in need of help, so using $600 million dollars to expand the port is just the wrong priority.
MAN at STEPS Meeting: So that's what happens when you give Haley Barbour $3 billion dollars with almost no controls.

BILLIE RAYBORN: This is our kitchen. This is where we cook. This sink is not even in a permanent base. It moves.

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: Billie Rayborn and her husband Travis are both retired, and both on disability. Like thousands of others, they've applied for phase 2 recovery funds to help rebuild their home.

BILLIE RAYBORN: The water was up to approximately here in the in the house. Our bathtub had sewage matter in it when we got back home. Needless to say we never used it again.

WILLIAM BRANGHAM: The Rayborns did get some help early on, but the $20,000 has been nowhere near enough to bring their house back together. Their local church has had to help out too. But for now, the Rayborns are stuck. Waiting.

BILLIE RAYBORN: Do we have faith in the government? No, not anymore. There's too much greed.

TRAVIS RAYBORN: We're doing everything possible we know how to do. But we're butting against a stone wall. And that's, you know it's, we're getting no help from nowhere. So we don't want everybody to give us a doggone thing. You know? But we do need help. And it's not just us. It's several thousand people here on the Gulf Coast.

MELINDA HARTHCOCK: One of the most profound shifts that's happening down here is that people, even solidly middle class people who thought that they were respected members of society, who thought they'd done the right thing to protect their assets, who thought their voices counted for something - are finding that they don't.

SISTER MARTHA MILNER: This is a good test for democracy, I believe. The will of people were that we were to get help here. And the way that the help is being administered is not working. And I believe that if the American people really knew what was going on, they'd be up in arms that their will is not being carried out.

BILL MOYERS: Last year, Haley Barbour was awarded GOVERNING magazine's "Public Official of the Year" for his stewardship of Mississippi in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. And last week, he easily won re-election for a second term and is now being talked up as the Republicans' vice presidential nominee next year.

BILL MOYERS: Back in the summer it looked as if we were about to get a new immigration policy, thanks in no small part to an unlikely alliance between President Bush and leading Democrats. But the night before the vote, a tidal wave of angry phone calls swept across Capitol Hill and shut down the switchboard. The next day the bill was defeated. The country is once again polarized between immigrants and their supporters and those who would have them driven out. At times, it's been more brawl than debate.

O'REILLY: He shouldn't be allowed in here. He doesn't have a right to be in this country!

RIVERA: What, but that has nothing to do with the fact that he was a drunk! He was a drunk!

O'REILLY: Yes it does. He should have been deported!!!

POLICE OFFICER (O/C): Police, open up!

BILL MOYERS: At the peak of the debate, the government struck fear in the immigrant community with early morning raids that rounded up and deported undocumented workers. When the governor of New York proposed that illegal immigrants be issued driver's licenses for reasons of public safety, Lou Dobbs went on the attack.
LOU DOBBS: An overwhelming majority of New York voters oppose the governor, but he refuses to back down.

BILL MOYERS: Spitzer's Democratic colleagues went wobbly.

MR. RUSSERT: Do you support the New York governor's plan to give illegal immigrants a driver's license?

BILL MOYERS: Hillary Clinton's campaign, in particular, was shaken during the next debate.

MR. RUSSERT: Do you support his plan?

SEN. CLINTON: You know, Tim, this is where everybody plays gotcha. It makes a lot of sense. What is the governor supposed to do? He is dealing with a serious problem. We have failed, and George Bush has failed. Do I think this is the best thing for any governor to do? No. But do I understand the sense of real desperation, trying to get a handle on this? Remember, in New York, we want to know who's in New York. We want people to come out of the shadows. He's making an honest effort to do it. We should have passed immigration reform.

BILL MOYERS: Just this week, Spitzer backed down. So, is it possible now even to reach any compromise on immigration? My guest says yes, if we remember who we are as a people.

Manuel Vásquez teaches religion and sociology at the University of Florida in Gainesville, but he spends much of his time in the field exploring what he calls "The Politics of Encounter: What happens when new immigrants come to town?" Right now he's in the middle of a three-year project, funded by the Ford Foundation, looking at immigrants in Atlanta, Georgia. Manuel Vásquez is himself an immigrant. Born and raised in El Salvador, he received a scholarship in 1980 to attend Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. He's been here ever since.

Welcome to the JOURNAL. MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Thank you very much, sir.

BILL MOYERS: From El Salvador, what was the most appealing feature of America to a young man?

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Precisely the capacity to ask questions, the possibilities that you could have to explore things that in El Salvador were impossible to explore. Because to be a social scientist in El Salvador was, at the time, to be a subversive.

BILL MOYERS: How so?

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Well, because asking questions about the government or asking questions about the social structures was to discover that things were unfair. And that vast numbers of people were basically exploited by a system that used them. And so-

BILL MOYERS: -Well, tell us what that government was. What was it?

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Well, it was a military government. It was a military government that unfortunately was supported by our government.

BILL MOYERS: The United States.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: The United States. And so, it had, it was supporting a system where you had an accumulation of land in the hands of few. And so, the vast majority of the population, the peasants, were basically disempowered.

BILL MOYERS: You know, you just did something very interesting. You said the
government of El Salvador was repressive and our government was supporting it; our government meaning the United States government.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Yeah.

BILL MOYERS: At what point did you cease to be an El Salvadoran and become an American?

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: I think that that's where the literature and transnationalism can tell us a lot.

BILL MOYERS: Transnationalism.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Transnationalism is a concept that allows, that says basically, that today's immigrants are able to have dual loyalties. That it's not one or the other, but that one can have roots in the country of settlement, but also one can still have ties with your home country.

BILL MOYERS: And that's different from when Germans came or when the Irish came. They cut their ties to the old country. They made the choice to stay here, right?

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Well, I think they were to some extent forced. Or, to some extent, they were expected to assimilate. They were expected to become American and to forget about the old country, right?

BILL MOYERS: Yes.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Because the old country was, you know, was in the past. And, all of a sudden, now you need to make yourself anew in the new country. And America represented the future, the city upon a hill. And so, you needed to basically reform yourself in America.

But, today, because of changes in technology, because of globalization, it is possible for immigrants to at the same time become integrated into the American system, into the American dream. To buy houses, to send your kids to school. For example, my three kids are born in the United States. I have a, you know, an American born wife who is a university professor. So, in other words, you can become integrated into the American system.

BILL MOYERS: You'd be a stranger in El Salvador.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Exactly. When I go back, you know, "oh, he's changed. He's very different. He thinks very differently from us." Right? But also, here in the United States, I'm still, you know, a Salvadoran.

BILL MOYERS: Yeah, yes.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: So that is the kind of dual sort of identity. Some people use the term bifocality to talk about that. That is that in the bifocals, you are, you have in the same lens, you have an integrated dual vision that allows you to see near and to see far at the same time and to function in both situations. And perhaps that's one of the things that threatens some of the people who are restrictionist, that they see some of these immigrants maintaining loyalty: maintaining their language, maintaining their culture to some extent. And, for them, this is a threatening situation because they think of sovereignty very much in an exclusivist way.

BILL MOYERS: But yet the debate about immigration today is framed in terms of illegal immigrants and amnesty.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Amnesty.
BILL MOYERS: What does that do to the conversation?

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: It closes the conversation. And I think the term illegal really forecloses any kind of discussion. And I’ve asked myself, why is it that the term is being used? And so, my answer is that I think America is going right now through a very tough period. You know, we have all sorts of moral questions, you know, whether this is torture, whether this is not torture. Should we have gone to Iraq? Should we not have gone to Iraq? In a certain sense, we want moral certainty. I mean, these are moral uncertain times for America. We, you know, we’re under attack from the outside. We perceive ourselves under attack. Our economy is not doing as well as it was doing ten years ago, right? And so, we have all sorts of pressures. And I think the population, the native population is feeling this.

The average worker in Peoria, Illinois, is, I think, feeling all these pressures and feeling the pressures of globalization. And so, I think when you use the term illegality, you have a certain moral, you have a moral certainty that I think provides a, almost like a sense of satisfaction, right? You know, for once, I can say that this is a black and white situation. So, trading on moral absolutes I think at a time of uncertainty is a, it pays off. And that’s why I think a lot of these politicians are having a lot of traction with the term “illegal.”

BILL MOYERS: But the paradox is that affluent Americans - their homes are cleaned by immigrants. Their children are cared for by immigrants.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Yes.

BILL MOYERS: The lawns are tended by immigrants.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Yes.

BILL MOYERS: And yet, they feel uncomfortable and uneasy. How do you explain that?

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Yeah. It's fascinating. Because what we're doing is we're welcoming immigrants to our most intimate spaces. Basically, we depend for our every day life, the fabric of life is basically held together by these immigrants who are doing this invisible work. And it's this ambivalence. We want them there to do the work, but we don't want them there after they do the work, right?

And I see the same thing in our churches. We've had cases where we've interviewed native Anglo Americans who basically say, well, you know, in the church, we're all part of the body of Christ, right? A single church. Christianity is universal. There are no divisions, right? And so, I can welcome anyone. Anyone can come to my church. I don't ask anything about their legal status. But when I cross that threshold outside, right, and I go into the streets, that's America. That's our nation. And we're a nation of laws. And, as a result, there, out there, I don't want them to be, you know, standing around in corners. I don't want all these single men to be hanging out there because they're a sore spot in my neighborhood. And so, this tension is a tension that's very much part of the situation. But we're not talking about it.

BILL MOYERS: Yeah. When some people, when some people hear the term illegal immigrants, they think criminals.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Exactly.

BILL MOYERS: And some people hear a code word of racism and hatred.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Right.

BILL MOYERS: I mean, they're - we're - polarized.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: We're polarized.
BILL MOYERS: In 1965, I was a young assistant to President Johnson at the White House. I flew in a helicopter to the Statue of Liberty right here in New York Harbor where he signed the Immigration Act of 1965.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: A very progressive - a very progressive piece of legislation.

BILL MOYERS: We had no idea--

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: --You were changing American history.

BILL MOYERS: But, we didn't know. We just thought we were changing a law.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: You were changing American history. You were introducing a new regime of immigration.

BILL MOYERS: Meaning?

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Because for a while after, after 1924, when we basically shut the door on immigration, right? Because we had the Depression. We had the first World War. We shut the door. And for a while, that door was pretty much closed. And we had very tight limits on who could be admitted. And of course, before that, we had the Asian-

BILL MOYERS: Yeah.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: --The yellow peril, right? The Chinese Exclusion Act. But then, '65 opens up once again the doors to immigration. At a critical time when America is going into this period of expansion, of economic expansion, right? And so, and it sort of feeds into the civil rights movement. So, the legislation reflects that civil rights angle where you don't have specific groups of people. We don't want just Europeans. We want Latin Americans. We want diversity, right? And so that's where we get immigration from Latin America, from Asia-

BILL MOYERS: Yeah.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: --And from Africa. And they're changing the cultural and religious landscape of America by bringing traditions, religions, that are beyond the Judeo-Christian canons that we have in this country, right?

BILL MOYERS: You are a scholar of religion. And I've greatly enjoyed reading some of your work on this. And you say that almost the first thing that these immigrants do, particularly in the south, where you are living, when they get here is to join a church.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Yes.

BILL MOYERS: Why is that? Is that cultural? Is it religious?

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Yes. I think, I think it has to do with both. A lot of the debate about illegality has to do with that these immigrants can not be assimilated, right? For example, Professor Samuel Huntington-

BILL MOYERS: Harvard University scholar.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Clash of civilizations, that we have an internal clash of civilizations. Hispanics are bringing cultural values that are different, including the language. They're refusing to give up Spanish. They're refusing to give up some of their, some of their values. And, as a result, we're going to be changing the Anglo-Saxon values of this country.

For me, they're no different than the Pilgrims, than the Puritans. Because the first thing they do is to form churches. And, in many ways, these churches are incubators of
American citizen, citizenship and sort of liberal values. And they point already to the fact that these immigrants are seeking assimilation. Now, it is true that some of these churches become ethnic enclaves. And that’s a penchant that we’re seeing in Atlanta.

BILL MOYERS: Tell me about the work you’re doing right now in Atlanta. You are looking at what you call the politics of encounter.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: “Politics of encounter” refers to what happens when you have immigrants coming in, changing the racial dynamics of a particular place, especially a new destination. Because the, part of the reality of immigration today is that immigration is not just impacting or affecting New York-

BILL MOYERS: Yes.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: --And Los Angeles and Miami, the traditional so-called gateway places where immigrants come in. But now, we have immigrants in Siler City. We have immigrants in, you know, Dalton, Georgia. We have immigrants all over the place. And I think that’s part of where the conflict is emerging: that we have immigrants coming into communities that are not used to seeing difference. People speaking a different language; the smells of the food are different. People have different ways of carrying their body. You know, hanging out on porches in ways that, that some of the natives get offended. And so, part of the idea is to see what happens when you have this influx. What happens? Do people hunker down as Professor Putnam, Robert Putnam from Harvard University, says, that diversity initially makes people hunker down, right? They protect their turf because there’s difference. And automatically, you want to say, well, they’re not like me. They’re different. They’re them. We’re us, right? And there is no communication.

BILL MOYERS: I think of Atlanta, most Americans think of Atlanta, as a place of tension and conflict between blacks and whites.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Blacks and whites.

BILL MOYERS: What are these encounters with brown people doing now in Atlanta?

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: What’s happening is that African Americans and Latinos for the most part don’t know each other. We’re not, we don’t know each other. And I think we’re ignorant about, you know, the complexities of our communities. And as a result, we tend to function with the frames that are given to us by the mainstream media, which tend to be simplistic and tend to be polarized.

So if you ask African-Americans what they think about Latinos, they say, “oh, I know they’re around. I know that they’re around but a lot of them are illegals.” So, they might use that language. So, part of our study is to get African-Americans and Latinos to talk to each other, so that they learn to see the humanity of each other, right? And, because the Latino community has a lot of racist elements also, bring some preconceptions from Latin America-about African-Americans. And so, for us, it’s also an education opportunity for Latinos to get to know their African-American brothers. And-

BILL MOYERS: You think that. But is it happening?

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: I think they’re beginning to talk about that. That the whole example I gave you of the person who’s saying, “well, you know, he is my brother in Christ, right? Even though I don’t know whether he’s illegal or not, but he’s my brother in Christ.” And, then, going out there. You know, there’s this kind of cognitive dissonance that I think is already beginning to filter. And there are examples, very interesting examples, in Atlanta already of multi-cultural churches. Conscious attempts by Anglo churches to invite immigrants -- Koreans, Brazilians, Latinos, Mexicans -- to form part of their congregations. Because, you see, immigrants are bringing a new vitality to many of these congregations, especially mainline congregations.

BILL MOYERS: Which are, which have been dwindling in numbers.
MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Dwindling in numbers.

BILL MOYERS: I would look upon them as new recruits.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Exactly. Immigrants come in with this new force, this new vitality. They are, they bring this new charismatic Christianity that is very much a zealous Christianity, a Christianity that has force, that has conviction. And a lot of these Anglo old-timers look at Latinos and say, "wow." You know, these are, this is powerful stuff. But, it's threatening, because we, these are not the ways that the Anglicans or Presbyterians do things. They're doing it differently. And they are going to change our churches.

So there is ambivalence. On the one hand, you welcome them because they're revitalizing the churches and they're bringing resources. In the case of Koreans, they're bringing economic resources that are sort of lifting churches, lifting congregations that were in financial crises. And all of a sudden, now they're in, you know, in good economic health.

BILL MOYERS: You know, back to Samuel Huntington Harvard scholar.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Yes.

BILL MOYERS: Wrote the Clash of Civilizations, as you say, sees a new clash of civilizations within America.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Internal.

BILL MOYERS: He sees America being subverted.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Under siege.

BILL MOYERS: Yeah, under siege. And changed totally by this re-conquest.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Yes.

BILL MOYERS: By the Hispanics.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Right.

BILL MOYERS: Who were here before the Europeans came.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Right.

BILL MOYERS: What would you say to Samuel Huntington if he were sitting right here with you?

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: I would say that Samuel Huntington is taking the rhetoric of the extremists, of the Latino power movement. But when you go and interview actual immigrants, when you talk to them, they're not interested in the re-conquest. They're-re-conquest doesn't figure, I never heard that rhetoric of their re-conquest. What I hear is that they want a piece of the American dream - they are seduced, they are incorporated into the American dream.

Let me give you an example of a church member that, in a Catholic parish in Atlanta, where he is undocumented, where he's unauthorized, which I think is a term that perhaps is better in this case. He's unauthorized. He came in fourteen years ago, right? And he's very hard working, right? He has gone to take classes, English classes, at night, while working very hard. Now, he's made it up the - he was in the construction industry. He made it up, all the way up, to become a supervisor. So, he's now making, shall we say, a middle-class salary. He bought a house, right? He has children here who are US citizens. The children now go to school. They win citizenship awards because they're model citizens - while he is undocumented. And, now, the mother is really afraid of taking the kids to
school because she might get caught under the new law that they have in Georgia that is a very punitive law against illegal immigrants. And so, what happens if we deport these people under the draconian laws that we have?

Basically, we're damaging, you know, a generation, a second generation. And it's a generation of American citizens. We're doing them harm. And so, that's why this whole concept of illegality again is really problematic: because it really doesn't go to the complexities of the situation. We, you know, we already are sort of opening ourselves up to these immigrants. And I think that's a shining example for us of the possibilities that the immigrant debate can go beyond this whole question of illegality. That it is a non-starter from the beginning.

BILL MOYERS: The dilemma is that we fear being colonized by immigrants whose labor we desperately need.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Yes, the dilemma is that we tell ourselves about, you know, immigration, that we are an immigrant nation. That America is unique because America is not like Europe which - or Japan where you have a high homogeneity. These are nations that have opted to maintain tight homogeneity. America is always, we always present ourselves to the world as a nation of multiple origins. And that our strength is this diversity, right? And so, we have it in our mythos, we have a, you know, the idea that we are an immigrant nation. And some of the stuff on illegal immigration, some of the rhetoric on illegal immigration, is really going at the heart of this narrative that we tell ourselves about America. So, we need to resolve that tension.

BILL MOYERS: Manuel á, thank you very much for joining.

MANUEL VÁSQUEZ: Thank you.

BILL MOYERS: Any day now I expect to see cable news break in with the story, "Entire city buried by an avalanche of catalogues." Catalogs — the great American dream machine. You name it, there's a catalogue for it. LL Bean, Land's End, Eddie Bauer, Pottery Barn. I have them all. In my closet, under the bed, out in the hall, in the backseat of our car, right here in the studio. And I don't dare open those doors from fear more will come flooding in.

What started as a free choice by a casual shopper became catalog creep. Some wanted, most not.

As the holidays get close you can hear the buzz saws felling the trees that become uninvited guests in your living room. But there's hope. But there's hope...A recovery group for catalogue addicts. Daniel Katz is here to tell us about it. Dan Katz is the Dr. Phil of catalogue clutter. The maven of the overstuffed mailbox. Actually, most of the time he's the Environmental Program Director of the Overbrook Foundation here in New York. Overbook joined with the Kendeda Fund and the Merck Family Fund to create CatalogueChoice.org. Catalogues, you have met your match. Welcome Dan Katz.

DANIEL KATZ: Thank you.

BILL MOYERS: Alright. You heard my SOS. Stop me before I kill another tree. What do I do?

DANIEL KATZ: Well, first of all, you've got to get rid of the catalogues that you have.

BILL MOYERS: But you can't, it's impossible.

DANIEL KATZ: We can help you. We can help you. So-

BILL MOYERS: Yeah.

DANIEL KATZ: So there's a new website.
BILL MOYERS: Yeah.

DANIEL KATZ: www.catalogchoice.org. and what you should do, probably, is take your catalogues, rip off the back page, recycle these, the big parts that you don't want, and you stack up the pages here that have your name and customer number on it. You go to the website, and you sign up. And in about, well, in your case, it may take you a few more minutes. But, ordinarily, it would just take you a few minutes to opt out of the catalogues that you don't want to get. You can keep getting the catalogues that you do want to get.

BILL MOYERS: You tell each merchant, in my behalf, that I don't want their catalogue.

DANIEL KATZ: Exactly.

BILL MOYERS: Don't they said, "But, wait a minute, let Moyers call us himself."

DANIEL KATZ: You would think it would be that easy. But, you know, if you want to place an order, if you want to get a catalogue, it'll take you a couple of seconds, no problem. But, unfortunately, to get off of a catalogue mailing list it takes quite a long time. It's arduous. And one of the reasons that this site and this program was created is because it was just taking too long. And it was too hard for an individual and we didn't think that individual customers were being respected enough. So we created CatalogueChoice.org to help customers, and will help — we'll do it for them.

BILL MOYERS: But isn't there a law that requires the merchants to take my name off if I ask them to?

DANIEL KATZ: No. There's CAN SPAM legislation on the Internet so you can't get spam. But in terms of your mailbox, unfortunately, there is no law like that. You can get off of getting phone calls, right?

BILL MOYERS: Yeah. Oh, I signed up for that. But-

DANIEL KATZ: Yeah and, you know, and 72% of Americans have signed up for that. But in terms of your mailbox, no, that's public property. And anybody can get in. But we don't think anybody should be able to get in. Especially if you don't want them there.

BILL MOYERS: Do you charge a fee for this?

DANIEL KATZ: No. It's totally free. And, you know, it's pretty remarkable. The site's been up for less than a month and about 120,000 users have already signed up opting out of about a million catalogues. But, in fact, that number's really small. Because catalogue companies don't normally prospect with one catalogue. They're going to prospect several. You know, it's going to be-

BILL MOYERS: What do you mean prospect?

DANIEL KATZ: Well, catalogue companies try and get new customers. So you may have shopped at one catalogue, and, one company, and want to get that catalogue. But you may have the demographics, you may purchase like-- another company and they think you might be a good customer. So they're going to mail you catalogues. They're going to prospect you.

BILL MOYERS: So that means the merchants are sharing the information that I bought from the this catalog. In fact that's the frustration, to be frank. I'll order something from this catalogue, something for my grandkid right there. And then, six weeks later, I'll start getting catalogues from companies I never heard of and don't want.

DANIEL KATZ: It's pretty remarkable. Around the country nearly 20 billion catalogues are mailed every year. Every American, man, woman and child, are getting 63 catalogues a year. Man, woman and child. Sixty-three catalogues a year. It's about 40 pounds of catalogues. And it's just too many. And here's an amazing statistic. A prospecting rate of
return of 1.2 to 1.5 percent is good. So all the other catalogues, 98% of the catalogues go from the mailbox to the recycling bin, if we're lucky. Or they just end up in the trash. Ninety-eight percent. Probably 50% of the people never even look at the catalogues or look at that mail. They just take it from the mailbox and it goes to the trash.

BILL MOYERS: What is the environmental impact of 20 billion catalogues being mailed to consumers every year?

DANIEL KATZ: Well, from a climate change perspective, it's about putting an additional two million cars on the road, if not more. Catalogues take up a lot of energy. They use up a lot of trees. Something like 53 million trees a year are used to produce all these catalogues. The water waste — the landfill costs are enormous. And, you know, most catalogue companies also use very little recycled paper to make their catalogues. And that's got to change.

So another part of Catalogue Choice, by the way, is, next year, the groups that are involved, National Wildlife Federation, NRDC and Ecology Center, will be coming out with a set of best practices for catalogue companies. So, that would mean are you using the best paper? Are you not buying paper from endangered forests? Are you using the right size? Do you have an easy opt in or opt out mechanism? There are a lot better things that catalogue companies could do.

BILL MOYERS: Yeah, but the industry will tell you that, first of all, they plant 1.6 million trees every day to replace the trees they use in their wood and paper products. They also will tell you that this helps the environment by saving a lot of trips to the shopping mall. So that that gasoline you would have used, isn't used.

DANIEL KATZ: Yeah, it does save some energy if it's efficient. But, you know, we've heard these statistics about the savings of energy by not driving to the mall. But no one has looked at the savings of just walking into your computer and making a purchase there. And, look, there's nothing wrong with getting catalogues. People complain to us all the time, now they get the wrong catalogues, and they get the same catalogue too many times. They're getting the catalogue eight or ten, 12 times.

BILL MOYERS: Are there catalogue companies that have already asked your help?

DANIEL KATZ: Yes. Land's End, LL Bean, Gardener's Supply, have already signed, and they're going to be working with us. And we know that there are dozens more. I would imagine that, at the end of the day, every catalogue company will want to be a part of CatalogueChoice.org. Because we're going to-- we want to make it more efficient for them to send less catalogues.

BILL MOYERS: You can find more information about CatalogueChoice.org our Web site at PBS.org. Dan Katz, thank you for being on THE JOURNAL.

DANIEL KATZ: Thanks for having me.

BILL MOYERS: That's it for the JOURNAL. See you next week. I'm Bill Moyers.