To hear many on the Right tell it, we are in an era of big government, in which individual liberties are trampled by bureaucrats. Many on the Left, on the other hand, see a decentralized and divided federal government consistently fail to solve problems as efficiently as European governments.

But which is it?

In this public lecture, Boston College professor Shep Melnick will look at the surprising link between civil rights advances and government growth over the past 50 years, and the federal and state judges who have quietly shepherded both.

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