

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO AMERICAN CONSERVATISM

July 11, 2024 | 12pm ET | 6pm CET

Hybrid Panel Discussion | Speakers: Manfred Berg (Heidelberg University), Michelle Nickerson (Loyola University), moderated by Wilfried Mausbach (Heidelberg Center for American Studies)

HCA Atrium and online

In recent years, historians and political scientists have emphasized that conservatives bear a special responsibility to defending liberal democracy against the current onslaught of authoritarianism. All democracies need parties that represent the values and interests of conservative voters while remaining firmly committed to majority rule and the rule of law. In modern American history, the Republican Party has played that role. However, since Donald Trump took over the Grand Old Party, it has come to resemble a right-wing extremist movement. How did this transformation happen? What are the political, social, and cultural forces that have driven the radicalization of American conservatism since the 1960s? And is there a chance that the GOP will become a respectable conservative party again?

This panel will bring together two leading scholars of American Conservatism. **Manfred Berg** is the Curt Engelhorn Professor of American History at Heidelberg University. His work focuses on the history of the African-American civil rights movement, race relations, popular violence, and U.S. political history. He is the author and editor of twenty books, including *The Ticket to Freedom: The NAACP and the Struggle for Black Political Integration* (2005); *Popular Justice: A History of Lynching in America* (2011), and *Das gespaltene Haus: Eine Geschichte der Vereinigten Staaten von 1950 bis heute* (A House Divided: A History of the United States since 1950, 2024). **Michelle Nickerson** is Professor at Loyola University Chicago, where she teaches courses on the history of women and gender, U.S. politics, and urban America. She serves on the Committee of the Scholars for the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum. As a Fulbright Fellow, Nickerson taught at the Heidelberg Center for American Studies in the summer of 2021. Michelle Nickerson's scholarship focuses on politics and social movements from right to left. She has published two books, the monograph *Mothers of Conservatism: Women and the Postwar Right* and a volume of essays she co-edited titled *Sunbelt Rising: The Politics of Place, Space, and Region*. Nickerson's most recent book project, *Spiritual Criminals: How the Camden 28 Put the Vietnam War on Trial*, examines the relationship between Catholicism and radicalism in the peace movement of the Vietnam War era in the United States. It will be published by the University of Chicago Press in August.

With support by the German Association for American Studies (DGFA), this is the second event in the online series "The Bigger Picture" that explores current events against the backdrop of American history. "The Bigger Picture: American Politics and Culture in Historical Context" is jointly organized by the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI) and the Heidelberg Center for American Studies (HCA). Panels in this series bring together experts in American history and culture to help shed light on current events and developments.