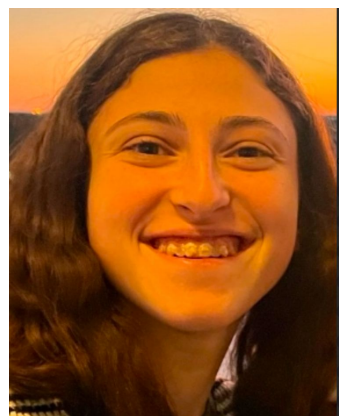


Rhetorical Weaponization:
Donald Trump's Promotion of Political Polarization



PRESENTER:
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BACKGROUND: Americans denounce the argument that Trump can erode America's democratic institutions due to his political inexperience, but his strategic rhetoric proves that he is aware of the exploitable weaknesses of American democracy.

METHODS

1. Collected information on Trump's rhetorical strategies in 2016 from *Demagogue for President: The Rhetorical Genius of Donald Trump* by Jennifer Mercieca.
2. Analyzed these strategies in several of Trump's 2016 and 2024 speeches, including his MSG and Super Tuesday Speeches.

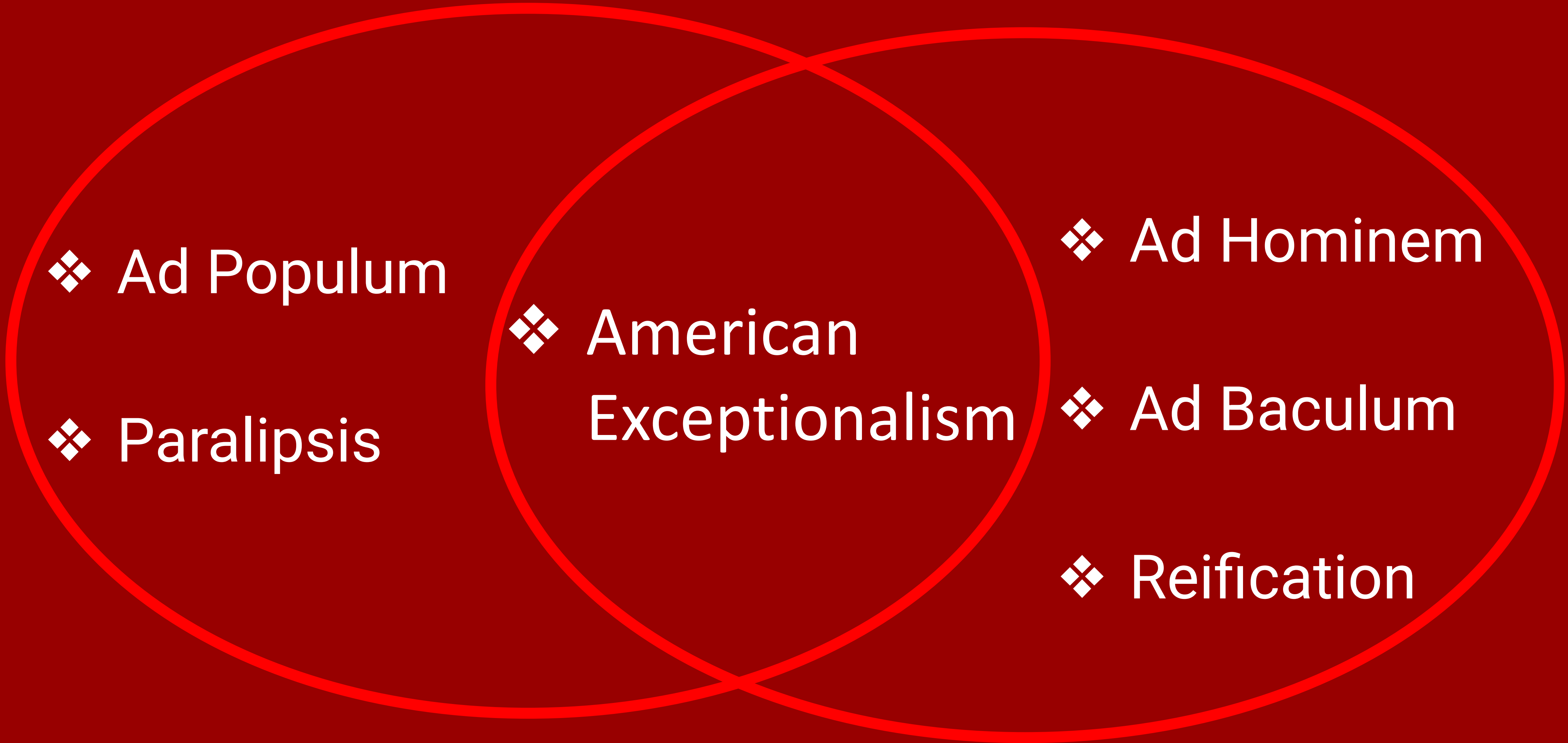
Formula for Trump's Speeches (2024)

1. America is so great because....
2. America's status has declined because of democratic policies on...
 - i. Immigration
 - ii. Economy
3. Trump portrays himself as a strongman who will fix these problems
4. Then Trump explains how he has been unjustly attacked by the.....
 - i. Press
 - ii. Weaponization of the Judicial System

Donald Trump's *rhetoric* has furthered *American political polarization*, allowing him to unite his supporter base, while alienating the political left

Trump's Unifying Strategies

Trump's Divisive Strategies



“In 2016, I declared: I am your voice. Today, I add: I am your warrior. I am your justice. And for those who have been wronged and betrayed: I am your retribution”- Trump



- **Ad Populum:** Appealing to the crowd
- **Ad Baculum:** Threatening the use of force
- **Ad Hominem:** Attacking person rather than issue
- **American Exceptionalism:** ultranationalism
- **Paralipsis:** Drawing attention to an issue without explicitly stating it
- **Reification:** referring to people as objects

Trump's rhetoric has become increasingly divisive:

2016

“Countless innocent American lives have been stolen because our politicians have failed in their duty to secure our borders and enforce our laws”

2024

“Kamala has imported criminal migrants from prisons and jails, insane asylums and mental institutions from all around the world, from Venezuela to the Congo.”

“America's hero and America's villain”- Jennifer Mercieca