“American as Apple Pie”: Reimagining Gangs as a Representation of American Ideals
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Although the two entities: gangs and the United States, seem to act in opposition to one another, Americans who participate in gangs are still Americans; thus, they are susceptible to mirroring their reality in a way that still strives to achieve a distorted kind of American dream. This is because, undergirding the American democratic project are the guiding ideals of family, the right to bear arms, and capitalism. Though seemingly counter to this project, gangs reify these same values, albeit in a different way than America. Using foundational texts on the formation of these American ideologies and scholarly sources on the impact of gangs within a society, I will argue that because gangs and America both embody the same foundational principles but employ them through different means, gang activity ought to be considered a rearticulation of American ideology. My goals are as follows: Explore whether American foundational texts and gang manifestos embody the same foundational principles. Illuminate how both groups employ American ideology. Rearticulate the parallels between American ideology, political embodiment, and the dismissal of marginalized communities as part and parcel of the two.