

# Team 7 Executive Summary

Between the 1950s and 2000s, the Gambino crime family was the most successful and feared organized crime family in the United States. Recent years, however, have seen the family relegated to the background. This report seeks to address the question: how did leadership style contribute to the declining influence of the New York Mafia?

Starting from the 1930s, five major Italian-American Mafia crime organizations dominated crime in the New York City. The five organizations were later named as the Five Families, namely the Bonanno/Massino Family, Colombo Family, Gambino Family, Genovese Family and Lucchese Family, with the Gambinos as the most notorious mafia crime family. It was founded after the Castellammarese War of 1931 and was promoted by Carlo Gambino starting in 1957. Gambino's regime was marked by his iron-fisted toughness and private lifestyle; it was upon these two pillars coupled by his criminal and business savvy that allowed Gambino to lead the family to dominance and made him almost untouchable to the FBI.

Castellano had a natural ability as a business leader, but lacked the leadership qualities that were necessary to lead an organization as rooted in tradition as the Gambino family. Though he was the most successful economic leaders in the American Mafia, there was a major disconnect between himself and his employees. Ultimately, neglecting tradition and the "family" aspect of the organization led to his downfall. However, his impact stretched past his own tenure, as he left the organization in a more fractured state than when he arrived.

Gotti took an entirely new approach through his irresponsible leadership style by working around core family rules and adopting his own personal idea of what a leader should be portrayed as specifically through his obsession with publicity and fame. Most notable was his illegal means of operation through drugs trafficking, racketeering, and gambling to generate income. This success came at the expense of being closely investigated by the FBI and ultimately decided his fate through the lack of loyalty from within his own family. As a result, through his poor leadership, Gotti severely crippled the Gambino family to a point where they could never return to its former status of power within the American Mafia.

While Carlo Gambino set the "golden standard" in mafia family practices during his tenure as leader of the Gambino crime family, he did not establish a thorough transition plan due to illness. His successors in Paul Castellano and John Gotti failed respectively through distrusting subordinates and seeking too much attention, and they squandered away the competitive advantages that the family had built over the years in becoming New York City's most feared crime organization. Leaders of other organizations should take note from the Gambinos and ensure smooth power transition and compatible personal-organizational values in order to drive continued success.