



# MACHIAVELLI'S CHILDREN

**LEADERS  
& THEIR  
LEGACIES  
IN ITALY  
& JAPAN**

**RICHARD J. SAMUELS**

# *Machiavelli's Children*

*Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan*

RICHARD J. SAMUELS

CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS

*Ithaca and London*

Copyright © 2003 by Cornell University

All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in a review, this book, or parts thereof, must not be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher. For information, address Cornell University Press, Sage House, 512 East State Street, Ithaca, New York 14850.

First published 2003 by Cornell University Press  
First printing, Cornell paperbacks, 2005

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Samuels, Richard J.

Machiavelli's children : leaders and their legacies in Italy and Japan  
/ Richard J. Samuels.  
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-8014-3492-0 (cloth : alk. paper)

ISBN 0-8014-8982-2 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Political leadership—Italy—History—19th century. 2. Political leadership—Italy—History—20th century. 3. Political leadership—Japan—History—19th century. 4. Political leadership—Japan—History—20th century. I. Title.

JN5345 .S25 2003

303.3'4'094509034—dc21

2002015019

Cornell University Press strives to use environmentally responsible suppliers and materials to the fullest extent possible in the publishing of its books. Such materials include vegetable-based, low-VOC inks and acid-free papers that are recycled, totally chlorine-free, or partly composed of nonwood fibers. For further information, visit our website at [www.cornellpress.cornell.edu](http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu).

Cloth printing 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Paperback printing 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

## *Preface:*

### LEADERS MATTER

[It is] essential to recognize in the great man an outstanding individual who is at once a product and an agent of the historical process, at once the representative and the creator of social forces which change the shape of the world and the thoughts of men.

E. H. Carr, *What Is History?*

This is a book about great leaders and historical choices. It starts with a puzzle: our common sense tells us that leaders and their decisions matter, but our social science theories tell us that constraints determine all major societal outcomes. My ambition here is to expose how much we have to gain by exploring leadership and the strategic, tactical, and moral choices that leaders make. History is not only a tale of great men, their will and their imagination, but it is partly that story. We need to include leaders in our understanding of the world and in our reckoning of what is possible and desirable in human societies.

The past is as restless as the present, and as elusive as the future. It never stands still in its retellings, and its retelling takes many forms. Versions of history that put great leaders at center stage became passé long ago. The impersonal, offstage forces that replaced them—ideology, social movements, class conflict, culture, state power—have dominated our discourse. More recently, these forces too have been discounted, as newer great forces—personality, cognition, representation, rationality, social networks—have taken their place. The retelling of history continues, and it depends on the shifting preferences of the viewer.

The range of our preferences and the speed with which they shift seem to doom us to live in a babel of parochial conversations about history and political change. Oddly, although we focus on change, the “great forces” we privilege are biased toward inertia. That is, each one privileges *constraints* that trump the capabilities of individuals.

## PREFACE

Karl Marx was one of the earliest—and certainly the most famous—opponent. He addressed political choice directly in his *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, written immediately after a French coup d'état in December 1851. Arguing against other chroniclers who, he felt, made too much of Bonaparte's leadership, Marx proclaimed his well-known dictum about the limits to autonomous political action:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries, and costumes, in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language.<sup>1</sup>

For Marx—and for most who have written since—leaders pick from the menus they are handed, and dine on cuisines not of their own choosing. They read scripts, but they do not often write them.

We know too much about constraints and not enough about choices. In this book, I pair leaders at (nearly) the same moment and place in history—in late developing Italy and Japan, two of the world's most constrained settings—to show how leaders routinely strain at and stretch the constraints they face. I focus on how they use Marx's "names, battle cries, and costumes" in remarkably creative ways, often tipping the balance of historical inertia in directions of their choosing and thereby transforming economic, social, and political institutions. We will see how different individuals can make different choices under similar constraints. Some act strategically, others do not. John Dunn responds to Marx well: "Humans may seldom know very well what they are doing and they certainly make their history under conditions unchosen by themselves. But there is no escaping the large measure of discretion which they enjoy in making their history."<sup>2</sup>

The contemporary Middle East offers particularly good examples. In the summer of 2000, U.S.-brokered peace talks between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat moved the two sides closer to an agreement than ever before, though not close enough to achieve peace. Renewed violence erupted in the Middle East after conservative Israeli politician Ariel Sharon visited a Muslim holy site in Jerusalem in the autumn of 2000. As a result, U.S.-brokered peace talks were not resumed until shortly before elections in Israel, which Sharon

won, defeating Barak. One influential columnist, Thomas Friedman, wrote in the *New York Times*:

Mr. Arafat had a dilemma: make some compromises, build on Mr. Barak's opening bid and try to get it closer to 100 percent—and regain moral high ground that way—or provoke the Israelis into brutalizing again, and regain the moral high ground that way. Mr. Arafat chose the latter . . . Imagine if when Mr. Sharon visited Temple Mount, Mr. Arafat had ordered his people to welcome him with open arms and say, "When this area is under Palestinian sovereignty, Jews will be welcome, even you, Mr. Sharon." Imagine the impact that would have had on Israelis.<sup>3</sup>

That such choices for peace were possible despite considerable constraints was made clear one week later by King Abdullah II of Jordan, who signed the first-ever free-trade agreement between the United States and an Arab country. It looked as though it would have been easier for him to concede to the pressure of his neighbors—and to the demands of his large Palestinian population—and maintain his political distance from Washington. He chose instead to innovate, to write a new script that could transform fundamentally the political economy of the region.

In this book I argue for the benefits of leaving room for an active voice in political analysis. Many commentators stress constraints and preach, in effect, that necessity is the mother of invention. I consider the reverse, that invention need not be born of necessity at all. Indeed, creative choice may have no particular parent: creativity can overcome existing constraints and create new ones. Of course I acknowledge that all choices are subject to powerful constraints. Still, it is clear that political actors—particularly leaders—routinely *stretch* these constraints. How much, in what direction, with what tools, and with what consequences—these are critical questions for political analysis. I address these questions in the rich and remarkably parallel histories of Italy and Japan.

Like Neil Simon's Oscar Madison and Felix Unger, Italy and Japan seem to make an odd couple.<sup>4</sup> In the popular imagination, Italy seems more the undisciplined, slightly antiauthoritarian and insouciant Oscar, Japan more the disciplined, neurotically fastidious Felix. One of Italy's most respected observers offers a catalog of Oscar-like stereotypes of the deficits in Italian political culture, and concludes: "Governing Italy is not difficult, it is useless."<sup>5</sup> The late psychiatrist Miyamoto Masao wrote that Japan was "excessively conformist and that the system was "neurotic."<sup>6</sup> Japanese wonder why they do not cross the street against a red light, even if there is no car in sight, while the Italians wonder why it takes so long to get their traffic lights fixed when they are broken. Japan and Italy seem completely different.

## PREFACE

But few nations have as many important common features; their political lives have proceeded in uncanny parallel for more than a century. Neither Italy nor Japan even existed as modern states when Great Britain and the United States embarked on their industrial revolutions. In both Italy and Japan rapid late industrialization was accompanied by a groping experimentation with parliamentary democracy before each succumbed to authoritarianism. And they paid the same price—devastation in the Second World War and subordinate roles in the new American world order.

Close comparison may be the most powerful tool in the social science tool kit. Similarities and dissimilarities illuminate important mechanisms of social change. Italian and Japanese leaders who sorted through similar options and made different choices offer up many compelling comparisons. But so do those who made similar choices when their options were different. Pairing Italy and Japan provides a rare chance to compare across wide terrain while illuminating the narrow band of factors that animate power, wealth, and identity.

Long ago, when I knew only that this book would be a comparative political and economic history of Japan and Italy, I was discussing the project with a Japanese government official. He was very uncomfortable with the comparison. He told me that his father, a veteran of the Pacific War, used to say “*kondo itaria nashi de yaroo*” (Next time, let’s do it without Italy). I heard variants of that story on other occasions, and I concluded that (beyond a dissatisfaction with the outcome of the war) there must be a widely held view in Japan of an incompetent and backward Italy. The idea was reinforced when I interviewed a member of the Japanese House of Councilors who confided that it was one thing to be bested by Germany or by the United States, but “we don’t want Italy to be ahead of us” (*itaria ni wa maketakunai*). Meanwhile—after they get over the shock that I could find anything in common between the two cases—Italians to whom I have spoken usually puff up with pride at the comparison to the Japanese, whom they admire but whose rules and rigidities they do not quite understand. Then, unfailingly, they would ask: “But how could you live in such a place?” “Do they ever have fun?”

Over the past two decades, my work has volleyed back and forth between structural and cultural explanations for the dynamics of Japanese politics. In a book on local politics and regional policy, I went out of my way to dismiss sociological explanations and argued that there were no cultural impediments to horizontal solidarity in Japan. In a book on energy markets, I struck the same general tone; the efficacy of Japanese industrial policy is due to the stable structure of business-government relations. But the next book—focused on the aerospace and defense



industries—took a different tack; I suggested that institutions are informed by enduring ideas that constrain elite choices and shape institutional development. I do not believe that any of these accounts is wrong. Nor do I even believe they are contradictory. Structural and cultural explanations can and do coexist because they can and do explain different things. The problem has been that few authors (myself included) have been terribly clear about which and what and when and why. For me at least, such a sorting out is the next natural step in my intellectual journey. When I first characterized the journey in this way to one colleague who understood immediately how difficult this project would be, I was told (only half jokingly) that I ought to “quit while I’m ahead.” This may have been the best advice I never took.

Along the way I sought and received plenty of advice—all of it generous and well intended, only some of it heeded. I have never had so many colleagues to thank and I have never done so with more heartfelt gratitude. In the United States, Gabriel Almond, Donald Blackmer, George Breslauer, Kanchan Chandra, Joshua Cohen, Gerald Curtis, Giuseppe Di Palma, John Dower, David Friedman, Sheldon Garon, Andrew Gordon, Chalmers Johnson, Peter Katzenstein, Ira Katznelson, David Kertzer, Herbert Kitschelt, Ellis Krauss, Ed Lincoln, Richard Locke, T.J. Pempel, Susan Pharr, Roland Sarti, Frank Schwartz, Sidney Tarrow, and David Titus each read and reacted to various pieces of this manuscript. I am particularly indebted to Suzanne Berger for wrestling vigorously with the entire manuscript and for helping me see clearly what it really meant. She has been a teacher and colleague of unbounded insight and generosity. I must also thank Professor Almond for gently pointing out that I had “reinvented Plutarch’s wheel.”

My colleagues in Italy were extraordinary in every way. Paul Ginsborg provided incalculably important support by bringing this project to Einaudi and by trying (without conspicuous success) to protect me from my disciplinary instincts. Paolo Pombeni deserves special mention for his unflagging enthusiasm and close reading of the manuscript. I am happy to acknowledge also the long conversations with Fulvio Cammaranno, Roberto Cartocci, Donatella della Porta, Giuseppe Di Federico, Ronald Dore, Giorgio Freddi, Mark Gilbert, Carlo Guarnieri, Giovanfrancesco Lanzara, Fernando Mezzetti, Gianfranco Pasquino, Patrizia Pederezoli, Marino Regini, Michele Salvati, and Carlo Tregilia, all of whom struggled to educate me on *le cose italiane*.

In Japan there are also a great many friends to thank, both old and new.<sup>7</sup> Aburaki Kiyooki, Ariga Kenichi, Moreno Bertoldi, Herbert Bix, Verena Blechinger, Fujiwara Kiichi, Hara Yoshihisa, Hiwatari Nobuhiro, Honda Masaru, Andrew Horvatt, Llewelyn Hughes, Inoguchi Takashi,



## PREFACE

Ishida Hiroshi, Kitaoka Shinichi, Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Christopher Redl, Suzuki Masabumi, Takahata Akio, Tanaka Akihiko, and Yamakage Susumu all needed, cajoled, and/or advised in very constructive ways.

I am particularly grateful to Shimizu Isao in Kawasaki and to Cinzia Bi-bolotti in Forte Dei Marmi for opening their cartoon archives to me. Ted Postol helped enormously with the digital camera and the images derived therefrom. Thanks too to Lucia Bonfreschi, Patrick Boyd, Brett Kubicek, Sara Jane McCaffrey, Sakaguchi Isao, Lisa Sansoucy, and Andrew Tagliabue—wonderfully able research assistants all. Finally—though he deserves better—I thank Roger Haydon, whose editorial judgments were, as always, as extraordinary as they were indispensable.

Institutional support was of enormous importance. I am delighted to acknowledge grants from the German Marshall Fund and the Abe Fellowship Program of the Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership (administered by the Social Science Research Council), which kept me afloat in Bologna and Tokyo. The Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Study and Conference Center is any scholar's paradise. Thanks to Gianna Celli and her staff for their pampering. Visiting appointments at the Dipartimento di Politica, Storia, Istituzioni at the University of Bologna and at the Shakai Kagaku Kenkyūjo at the University of Tokyo were critical as well. They were made possible through the enthusiastic sponsorship of Professors Pasquino and Hiwatari, on both of whom I heaped a great many administrative burdens. In Bologna, Antonella Cuccoli did everything she could to help us get settled comfortably—and always with a smile. At MIT, Paula Kreutzer's indefatigable assistance afforded me complete peace of mind. Nothing was going to fall between the stools on her watch! Laurie Scheffler inherited me, and made finishing this book passably pain free. I am grateful as well to my enthusiastic Italian teachers at the ABC Center in Porto Azzurro and at Harvard University Extension School, where Professor Ubaldo DeBenedetto was a charismatic presence and a great teacher.

There was never any greater support than that from my wife, Debbie. She remains a woman of endless beauty and grace. Thirty years together is still not enough. It is simply not possible to thank her adequately or to acknowledge her properly.

RICHARD J. SAMUELS

*Cambridge, Massachusetts*

*Machiavelli's Children*

## Contents

Preface: Leaders Matter	ix
Introduction: Why Leaders Matter	1
 <b>PART I. CREATION STORIES: THE NINETEENTH CENTURY</b>	
1. Chasing Prestige and Security	21
2. How to Build a State: Count Cavour, Itō Hirobumi, and Yamagata Aritomo	41
3. How to Build Wealth: Alessandro Rossi, Ōkubo Toshimichi, and Shibusawa Eiichi	69
 <b>PART II. LIBERAL EXHAUSTION: THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY</b>	
4. The Death of Liberalism: Giovanni Giolitti and Hara Kei	99
5. The Birth of Corporatism: Mutō Sanji, Alessandro Rossi, Kishi Nobusuke, Giovanni Agnelli, and Ayukawa Gisuke	124
6. The Total Leader: Benito Mussolini	152

## CONTENTS

### **PART III. IN THE AMERICAN IMPERIUM: THE COLD WAR**

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 7. Chasing Democracy  | 179 |
| 8. What Kind of Ally to Be: Alcide De Gasperi and<br>Yoshida Shigeru      | 197 |
| 9. Putting Corruption in Its Place: Kishi Nobusuke and<br>Aminore Fanfani | 225 |

### **PART IV. DEGREES OF FREEDOM: AFTER THE COLD WAR**

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 10. Chasing Normality  | 263 |
| 11. Choices on the Left: Achille Occhetto and Fuwa Tetsuzō   | 299 |
| 12. Options on the Right: Umberto Bossi, Silvio Berlusconi,<br>Ozawa Ichirō, and Ishihara Shintarō | 316 |

Conclusion: How Leaders Have Mattered in Italy and Japan	344
--	-----

Notes	363
-------	-----

References	411
------------	-----

Index	445
-------	-----

## *Introduction:*

### WHY LEADERS MATTER

For my part, I detest these absolute systems, which represent all the events of history as depending upon first great causes linked by the chain of fatality, and which, as it were, suppress men from the history of the human race. They seem narrow, to my mind, under their pretense of broadness, and false beneath their air of mathematical exactness.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Recollections of Alexis de Tocqueville*

It is obvious that leaders matter. What Bismarck did, what Churchill configured, and how Mandela calculated all clearly changed the world. Few will disagree that Mrs. Thatcher transformed Britain or that Mao and Gandhi inspired epochal change in China and India. Indeed, it is so obvious that it is puzzling that so many intellectuals routinely subordinate the choices made by individuals to large and impersonal forces. Few embrace the idea that there is no choice in history, and no one admits that leaders do only what the “great forces” dictate. Yet, in our collective retelling of the past, we routinely limit choices. Our histories privilege constraint over choice.

Not everything under the sun is possible, to be sure. A great deal always lies beyond the control of even the most able strategist. Moreover, we can be certain that far more opportunities are lost than are seized in history. But if determined individuals can make their political space more capacious—if they can “stretch their constraints”—then those analysts who privilege constraint risk missing how actors mobilize creativity, prejudice, spite, passion, history, and philosophy. In the real world, some leaders do little more than bob like corks on a restless sea. But others—many others—do much more. Some revolutionaries invent futures using wholly new materials. Others tinker with the materials at hand, first making a new past before constructing a future. And even those who are not revolutionaries, “normal” politicians, will routinely select among equally plau-

## INTRODUCTION

sible alternatives. In short, constraints may be greater in the historian's narrative than they are in the real world, where social, political, and economic forces can be tipped into the balance to abet the leader's scheme.

In this book, I conceive of leaders as political actors who have a greater range of assets than others in the community for "stretching" the constraints of geography and natural resources, institutional legacies and international location. This book uses dozens of episodes from Italian and Japanese history to show what difference individuals can make. No societies have been so constrained as those that developed late and lost wars. Italy and Japan did both, and so they are particularly useful as laboratories. Here we can show how even under the same constraints, different leaders can choose—and choose differently. Some use history, or invent a usable history. Others create alliances where none ought to have existed or were even perceived as possible. Some find new, more effective ways to compel or deter rivals. We shall learn that choices can be constructed from a range of often-contradictory possibilities—each legitimate in its own context, but none predetermined. We shall see how individual agents use and even perturb the inertia of great forces. We shall examine how individuals often nudge political trajectories in new and unexpected directions. Some read from the scripts they are given, others write their own, and still others *ad lib*. In this book, in short, we will take choice and creativity seriously in our account of change. And, in so doing, we will revalidate notions of individual responsibility and culpability—a normative lesson of transcendent importance for the continued health of the body politic.

## THE GREAT FORCES

Sidney Hook derided historians who presented leaders as little more than "colorful nodes and points on the curve of social evolution to which no tangents could be drawn."<sup>1</sup> But such historians have distinguished company. Each discipline tells its own version of history, and the broad repertoire of scholarly explanations has left very little room for human agency in general, or for leadership in particular. Each one partially explains historical change while simultaneously discounting the importance of leaders. Although a range of great forces is invoked, it is as if none of the blind men in the famous parable had found—or tried to describe—the elephant's brain.

*Personality* is the great force most closely linked to the brain. Psychological accounts of history were wracked for decades by debate about whether personality was fixed or variable. Cognition has now dislodged personality as the great force for psychological accounts, and the dominant metaphor

for the brain has become the computer. Either way, though, psychologists and psychobiographers have trouble explaining how the same individual could act so variously. Harry Truman, the meek haberdasher and failed Kansas City machine politician, wrestled General Douglas MacArthur to defeat and committed the United States to a Cold War against communism. Ulysses S. Grant, a Civil War general of great self-assurance, honesty, and unquestioned authority, proved a bewildered president who associated with known scoundrels and failed to control the widespread corruption that marred his administration. Psychology does a better job explaining how leaders might fail to use information than explaining how they might transform a political landscape. And it has largely abandoned charisma, that particular personal quality of some great leaders.<sup>2</sup>

*Culture* is an alternative that works at the group level. It explains choice by means of norms and values that are derived from shared historical experience and reproduced through education, family, and civic participation. These norms and shared experiences powerfully limit options. What is possible in one culture is impossible—even inconceivable—in another. But culture is simultaneously too ambitious and underspecified.<sup>3</sup> Who was acting more “Chinese”: Mao Zedong, the Marxist revolutionary, or Chiang Kai-shek, the reactionary generalissimo? And which was more characteristically “American”: Alexander Hamilton’s preference for manufacturing or Thomas Jefferson’s preference for agriculture? Culture—at least in this reified application—is a “great force” that fails to provide for the possibility of different brains. A good example is found in twentieth-century Canada. Pierre Trudeau and Rene Levesque, both leading Francophone politicians, were born after World War I, just three years apart. The former held a vision of a strong, federal Canada, whereas the latter dedicated himself to leading a strong, independent Quebec. Although the choices of both had great consequences, it is hard to argue that culture animated their fundamental differences.<sup>4</sup>

Then there is *structure*—those elements of a social system that produce regularized patterns of behavior that we call social roles and functions. When these roles and functions become routine, structures can empower a strong, *causal* argument about historical development.<sup>5</sup> On this account, individuals are highly constrained by processes such as secularization, market rationalization, and scientific revolution. Structures powerfully shape choice, often setting in train particular courses of action that may prove to be difficult if not impossible to reverse. Accounts of revolution may omit the revolutionaries.<sup>6</sup> Political actors are “embedded agents operating within relational structural fields that distinguish the possible from the impossible and the likely from the less likely.”<sup>7</sup> Scholars thus bet against the likelihood that individuals will select against the logic pre-



scribed by their social role. This sort of "probabilistic wagering" can lead to big surprises. When Mikhail Gorbachev selected glasnost and perestroika and against Soviet communism in the 1980s, when Pol Pot selected against Cambodian modernization in the 1980s, and when Helmut Kohl voluntarily surrendered German autonomy to a stronger Europe in the 1990s, each was selecting against their prescribed role.

The border between society and politics is highly permeable. The great forces of structure and *power* are often twinned. Like any other structure, power relations—as embedded in received institutions and norms—constrain, resist, or transform individual preferences. As a result, politics is biased toward inertia and power is slow to change.<sup>8</sup> But since power relations *do* change—sometimes violently and unexpectedly—"contingency" becomes the scholar's wild card. Contingency is an important but ambiguous concept with two equally relevant meanings. The first refers to something accidental—an unforeseen and unexplained occurrence that happens by chance. The other refers to the dependence of one event on a prior one. Both meanings suggest that once something happens, new trajectories of change are created. These trajectories, informed by the past, become in their turn difficult to reverse.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, much power is contingent—both on accident and on what the past bequeaths. Still, we do not always understand what is internal to the system. Contingency cannot adequately explain why Czechoslovakia, a pastiche of Czech, Romanian, Polish, and Germanic peoples, split peacefully after the end of the Cold War, whereas Yugoslavia dissolved into civil war and genocide. The contingency here may have been leadership itself, and so we may be overlooking a regular element in historical change. Leaders such as Gandhi and Lenin may have become colossal figures not only because they seized opportunities presented by shifting global forces but also because they constructed the most consequential "contingencies" of their age. Power sometimes is bequeathed, but at other times it is built—and building requires builders.<sup>10</sup>

Often, we think of such building as a process animated by the rational, cost-benefit calculation of individuals. *Utility* becomes the greatest "great force" of all. Although self-interest works at the individual level, it has joined these other great forces in focusing scholars on the constraints that channel action.<sup>11</sup> Individual rationality is presumed in order to test models; it is not an object of testing itself. But there are many ways to calculate utility, and when a model predicts many outcomes, there is no way to tell which will be chosen.<sup>12</sup> Even Douglass North, one of its most distinguished theorists, rejects the "instrumental rationality" of rational choice in favor of incorporating ideology and other "subjective models."<sup>13</sup> He and others acknowledge that even with full information about the prefer-

ences of particular leaders, it was not possible to have known a priori when—or even if—Richard Nixon would unilaterally dismantle the Bretton Woods system of world trade and international finance; when/if Charles de Gaulle would remove France from the joint military command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; or if Winston Churchill would yield to Hitler in the dark months prior to U.S. entry into the Second World War.<sup>14</sup>

To be sure, scholars have begun to entertain a more ecumenical, agency-based view of how to think about historical change. Political psychologists appreciate how individuals fix new bounds to rationality; political anthropologists have provided for the possibility that culture can be constructed and wielded by determined leaders; historical sociologists have reassessed the impact of contingent events on structural change; political economists now accept that ideology plays its part in the construction of self-interest; political sociologists have begun to mix contingency with structure in creative ways; economic historians have infused their narratives with game theory; and economic sociologists have identified how leaders matter in institutional transformation.<sup>15</sup> Still, a range of constraints continues to dominate our analytic lenses. We must address two questions: Are real leaders as constrained as most scholars assume? What alternatives do we have to the privileging of constraints and the discounting of choice?

#### STRETCHING CONSTRAINTS

Let us begin by imagining political leadership as the “stretching of constraints.”<sup>16</sup> By “constraints,” I refer to the great forces that seem to limit the choices of political actors. By “stretching,” I refer to the ways in which these actors bring resources in, take resources out, or mobilize existing resources in new ways. These resources may be institutional, ideological, or material. Complicating matters, the constraints that leaders confront may reinforce each other more tightly at some times than at others, making the job of stretching them all the more difficult. But, unless they manage to stretch these constraints, leaders are unlikely to mobilize the resources that give them power or that transform their systems. Able leaders may regularly figure out how to circumvent the constraints that bind other, less effective ones. More important for our purposes in this book, the solutions devised by “transformational” leaders may leave legacies: changes that constrain or enable their successors (hence demonstrating that invention may be the mother of necessity).

Change need not be accidental or compelled by great forces. Even if it