Chapter 3 of our reconnaissance of Mediterranean paradiplomacy aims to offer a theoretical and analytical framework by formulating the various types of relationships that underpin our take on the phenomenon. Diplomacy is indeed all about relations, and this is, this book argues, not different for paradiplomacy.229 This statement, however, raises an important conceptual and theoretical problem. On the one hand, as Jönsson and Hall point out, the majority of literature on diplomacy has been written by either diplomatic historians or by practitioners,230 who have paid little attention to conceptualizing diplomacy in the light of relational theories. Relations or relationships, on the other hand, are the core of the scientific field of International Relations – with capitals. Still, IR theory has a tendency to bypass or minimize the importance of the vehicle of these relations between international agents, namely diplomacy. For example, the standard handbook on IR theory, Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches by Robert Jackson and Georg Sørensen, only mentions diplomacy three times and then only as a tool for foreign policy.231 Charles Beitz’s Political Theory and International Relations only regards diplomacy in the context of coercive diplomacy and “low politics,”232 while Fred Chernoff’s Theory and Metatheory of International Relations limits diplomacy to “ping pong diplomacy.”233 Even Alexander Wendt correlates diplomacy to the art of war,234 somewhat echoing the adage of Prussian king and meritorious musician Frederick the Great that diplomacy without

229 Theory is also about explaining or interpreting the relations between the main factors, causal or other, that together form the mental picture of a part or aspect of the world. Diplomatic theory itself is related to political and social theory, as well as to history and philosophy. See Dryzek, J.S. and B. Honig et al. (2006). The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 6–11.


231 Jackson and Sørensen, Introduction to International Relations: 81.


arms is like music without instruments. As a result, there exists a gap between IR as a site of theorizing relations, and Diplomatic Studies as a field of inquiry that primarily deals with international relations. In his book *Diplomatic Theory of International Relations*, Paul Sharp has endeavored to uncover this gap, as well as to bridge it, especially by borrowing from the English School, and particularly the idea of traditions of international thought, as they were elaborated by Martin Wight. After having sketched the strengths and weaknesses of the rationalist, the realist and the revolutionary traditions within IR, Sharp proposes considering diplomacy first and foremost as a means to mediation or as a site to ponder inter-human relations in general.

This chapter will first explore what needs to be explained in the following chapters of the book, the *explanandum*. Second, it will deal with the *explanans*, the “class of those sentences which are adduced to account for the phenomenon” – that is, the variables that explain the *explanandum*. At the core of our linkage between *explanandum* and *explanans* is the theorizing of diplomacy as the management or mediation of relations between the Self and the Other, as well as the formation and formulation of the Self by its relations with the Other.

It was the great contribution of James Der Derian in his seminal work *On Diplomacy* to free diplomacy of the confinements of too traditional conceptualizations and theory-building. His genealogy of diplomacy considered diplomacy as the mediation of various degrees of alienation or separation between peoples and groups of peoples, thereby surpassing the Westphalian trap that limits diplomacy to “the official relations between the governments of independent states” and the subsequent “conduct of business between states.” This take on diplomacy opens possibilities to consider other diplomatic agents (such as substate entities), but also to ponder on the boundaries between inside and outside, between domestic and foreign, between strangers and