

R.A. Pérez, *Estrategias de comunicación* [Communication Strategies]. Barcelona: Ariel, 2001. 34 euros. 725 pp.

Rafael Alberto Pérez, lecturer in the Spanish University, the Complutense of Madrid, tries to explain in this book, which is based on the theory of games, the secrets of communication strategies. This is a long book, more than 700 pages, and while originally conceived for students, it is not only for them, since any professional practitioner or scholar would derive some profit from it. It is divided into four parts. In the first one, titled 'Strategic Knowledge', Pérez examines the most important theories on strategy, from war strategies such as Sun-Tzu's and the logical-analytical paradigm. He refers especially to the theory of games, though in this part giving only a brief explanation of its main characteristics since they are later developed in the second part applied to communication. The second part could perhaps be thought of as the main one in the book and is called 'Towards a New Theory of the Players'. The author avoids the term 'theory of games' and prefers to develop such theory in his own field of knowledge – management and communication – focusing on the players. Divided into five chapters, this central part of the manual begins with an explanation of the game as conflict versus the game as negotiation, proposing in the last epigraph 'a new game model', not static but dynamic, changing, to be negotiated among all players. Then a chapter on 'man' follows: a rational 'man' and a player 'man' or, using Pérez's own words, 'from rationality to complexity'. To some extent he criticizes Habermas and his theory of the communication action. In the next chapter, Pérez goes beyond this, proposing a new paradigm including the concept of a person (a player in the communication game) dressed with a wide range of abilities – cogitative-communicative, prospective-imaginative, strategic-elective. Language is the main tool enabling our cogitative-communicative abilities. Finally, a theory of matches – or, if preferred, of every communication action – is proposed, setting the player in a collective situation. This leads the author to the Internet. The third part, the longest and most practical one, deals with the management of public communication, the application field in which the author usually works. Pérez focuses, first of all, on the politics and the economy of communication, trying to explain, once again, the difference between information and communication. In trying to cover every relevant aspect of the subject, he offers a couple of chapters on propaganda, rhetoric, advertising and public relations. Then he moves to the management itself, and the final chapter of the third part is on the director schema. Finally, the fourth part – logically, the shortest one – is dedicated to certain conclusions and prognostications: a forthcoming panorama which must be negotiated as well as anticipated. Rafael Pérez tries to show the major changes in our society in terms of, for example, power – which is, without doubt, one of the goals of communication. In conclusion, he defines a strategic theory for everyday communication. The book is supplemented by a text to be read at the end of every one of the 20 chapters, written by a different author, and proposing several subjects linked to the main one explained. And, last but not least, Pérez gives a very complete bibliography, demonstrating his wide knowledge of this area.