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Comparing Theory and Practice: An Application of Complexity Theory to General Ridgway's Success in Korea

By Eldridge D. Browne

Biblioscholar Okt 2012, 2012. Taschenbuch. Book Condition: Neu. 246x189x4 mm. This item is printed on demand - Print on Demand Neuware - Complexity theory has attracted considerable interest from operational artists in recent times. However, because it is still an emerging field, there are few -- if any -- historical case studies that show how complexity applies to military operations. Using the comparison method, this review compares the similarities and differences between a historical case study and insights from complexity theory in order to evaluate the utility of complexity theory for military practice. The first three months of Lieutenant General Matthew Ridgway's command of the Eighth Army during the Korean War is chosen for the historical case study, as an exemplar of successful operational command. Complexity theory is compared with how Ridgway understood, perceived, and approached the complexity of his operational environment. Complexity theory offers broad guidelines for action, such as: use simple rules to generate complex behavior; look at the system from multiple scales to gain better perspective; achieve a holistic picture of the situation by recognizing interdependence; and continually adapt to a changing environment. The comparative analysis shows good agreement between these recommendations of complexity theory and Ridgway's...


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