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## Metin Heper & Sabri Sayari. (Eds) 2013. The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey. London and New York: Routledge.

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**Metin Heper & Sabri Sayari. (Eds) 2013. *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey*. London and New York: Routledge.**

Following a growing interest in Turkey as a result of its development as a regional and global power, this book discusses the politics, economic strength, and identity of Turkey as a predominantly Muslim country with a combination of historically secular and religious political institutions, along with the country's democratic processes. The handbook responds to recent developments and debates in order to foster an awareness that would be both beneficial and illuminating and offers a definitive resource with regard to information that could be used as both primary and secondary literature for case studies. The handbook provides a detailed and comprehensive overview of modern Turkey. Offering a selection of articles by leading scholars from a wide range of perspectives, this reference work offers a new, in-depth survey of contemporary Turkey. The handbook traces a number of historical developments relevant to the contemporary context while also looking at recent phenomena. The book is thematically organized, and the articles are divided into a number of sections. The sections in turn describe and give an account of the history, culture, politics, society, geography, and economy of modern Turkey.

Heper and Sayari's edited volume *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey* gives insight into a country that is often regarded as unique in both in Europe and in the Middle East. The handbook is composed of six parts, each of which has been selected to present various aspects of the Turkish context, and each part in turn consists of a collection of articles that together form chapters offering a complimentary overview of relevant sub-topics or issues. Presenting diverse and often competing views on all aspects of Turkish history, politics, society, culture, geography, and economics, this handbook will be an essential reference tool for students and scholars of Middle East studies, comparative politics, and culture and society.

First, a strong set of scholars provide an overview of Turkish history from the early Ottoman period to the contemporary Turkish republic. This section accommodates the Ottoman legacy of modern Turkey, and the chronological order makes it easy to follow historical developments.

In the second section, a number of cultural aspects of contemporary Turkish society are presented through the discussion of seven sub-topics: cinema, literature, fine arts, music, architecture, and the media and television. The authors discuss and evaluate the issues in this section while regarding Islam as an overarching frame that has determined values and shaped cultural life for centuries in a variety of ways; the impact of Islam is studied and explored by the authors.

The third part of the text presents a political overview of contemporary Turkey. The first article in this section is historically situated, and the reader is introduced to aspects of Kemalism and Atatürkism that have shaped the contemporary political domain in Turkey. What follows is an adequate explanation of the historical and cultural developments of Turkey, thus allowing the reader to critically assess the historical issues that play into the political dimension of modern Turkey. This section is also the largest and is composed of eleven chapters that consider a range of topics, including secularism, the status of the Kurdish community, relations with the European Union, and civil-military relations in Turkey. Although not all dimensions of the socio-political domain have been covered (such as the role of leftist, alternative, and resistive movements, which are not really dealt with and potentially should warrant a section of their own), the section in general covers a number of particular facets of Turkish politics in a satisfactory manner and gives the reader insight into the basic and primary issues facing the Turkish state.

The fourth section discusses the pillars of Turkish society. There are sections devoted to the place of women and young people as well as analyses of minorities and the impact of increases in urbanization. Many of the constituents of modern day Turkey are found in cities; as such, next to the process of urbanization a section is devoted to the makeup of Turkish cities. Turkey's geography is discussed in the fifth part. This section discusses the environmental and demographic aspects of modern Turkey. Although some of the material could have been provided earlier to give a better idea of numbers and proportions with respect to some of the topics discussed in earlier sections, this section provides a clear and concise explanation of the issues that are at play in this domain. In the sixth and final section, four chapters review Turkey's economic status and development. One of the most significant aspects of contemporary Turkey has been its economic growth and development. This section starts with an introduction to Turkey's political economy before discussing and analyzing the major issues facing the Turkish economy. As a consequence, this chapter is not as introductory as the others but does offer more of an argumentative side to the proceedings.

One example of a shortcoming in this book is that Sayari asserts in the introduction that the guidebook represents a "falsifying model" against the arguments regarding the "incompatibility of Islam and democracy" (p. 1). Problematically, not a lot of evidence is provided to actually falsify this sentiment. Instead, the authors leave the book itself as an argument and expect the reader to piece together the facts provided within the text to substantiate the claim made in the introduction. Perhaps this is slightly symptomatic of the type of literature the book represents, namely, an introductory work or textbook that provides in-depth information and material in the form of a recent survey of literature and data, but cannot be considered a work that puts forth new or controversial theories or standpoints. The primary shortcoming of the book is that while it provides an excess of information, it does not provide a critical voice to each of the sub-specific texts and therefore remains a one-dimensional, informative resource rather than a critical expose of modern Turkey.

Overall, *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey* offers the reader a promising handbook that serves as a reference for scholars interested in Turkey. Its separation into different research domains with case studies of specific aspects within those domains works very well to offer the reader a simple guide to follow, with quality information easy to find. The guidebook's interdisciplinary authorship will serve students from different backgrounds as well as help researchers with case studies within a variety of sub-disciplines.

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